

we call it conditioning for a reason.

simply put, physical fitness is boring.

not boring, just not what i am looking for. it is the tool. the hammer, not the house.

physical work is exciting to me not as a goal in itself, but as a tool to craft the type of man i wish to be. it is useful, both as a test and as a grindstone - but like any tool, possessing it is useless. its worth lies in the application. the beauty of the gym is that we can fine tune the stress - we can push, just right, just to that place where things get scary, just to our breaking point and then hold on, and teach ourselves to improve. teaching. learning. that is the point here. to become more than we are, to improve in a meaningful way. and that is where things can get messy.

because this is conditioning in its truest sense. deliberately crafting our unconscious response. we change the meaning of commands, we unpack and repack their contents, distill complex neurological responses, train ourselves to react to simple thoughts. we test this, build this, and own this. it was that fact more than anything that made me realize what training could be; what it was, regardless if we recognized it as such.

we must always question the lesson we are sending - both physical, and psychological. from a physical prospective- what would have to be different to make this workout less stressful? what is the weakest link? am i not strong enough? not fast enough? does my form degrade as i fatigue? what breaks and am i fucking fixing it? but those are the simple questions. easy to measure. easy to test. it is the other conditioning that intrigues me more. how are you training yourself to respond to stress? how do you respond when things are scary or difficult? do you move the goalpost? change the work to fit your strengths? are you training yourself to quit? or to redefine a loss as a win? how do you respond to failure? to success? are you training to get better or to convince yourself that where you are is acceptable? even desirable? simply put, are you becoming the person you wish to be? it is difficult for those without true outside tests to avoid this trap. it is so easy to stay in our comfort zone, to delude ourselves into thinking that we are doing something difficult, something new, when we are simply spinning our wheels.

vigilance. vigilance and hard questions. friends and training partners who call you out. force you to defend your actions. question your logic and your conclusions. arguments over dinner and uncomfortable silences. be aware of the behavior you are reinforcing. realize that there are many forms of uncomfortable, and even more ways to hide. the gym is an experiment, it is an environment where failure comes pretty cheaply. utilize that fact, understand that these failures are only teaching you. understand that your fears are probably the greatest indicators of where you should be headed. all things have their place, every tool is useful in its own way. but just because it is your favorite tool does not mean it is the best one for the job. scarcity breeds necessity, and as soon as you "like" a particular lift or exercise or energy pathway, you are probably at the point of diminishing returns\*. try new things. fail. leave your favorite tool on the shelf, go without it for a bit and see what you can come up with. after all, this is the gym, for 99% of the population it is really unimportant. what is important is how we let it affect us. who we become and how deliberate and invested in that construction. are you using it to its full potential, or are you just reinforcing your comfort zone?

be honest, and make better decisions.

-the station



*these are merely the tools. you are the weapon.*

\*this is specifically addressing the gym rats (myself included) who do not have a specific sport that we are training for. sport - specifically competition - tends to wash away the misconceptions we create about how "fit" we really are. the road, the mat, or the mountain is a true test of your plan and your execution, as long as you are still willing to learn.