

Elizabeth: Hello, everybody! Welcome back to the Primal Potential Podcast. I am Elizabeth Benton, and I'm looking forward to diving right into today's episode. It's kind of when I geek out on a little bit, but before we do that, just a quick reminder. I mentioned in the last episode that coming up on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 13th and 14th at 8pm. ... Oh no, 8:30pm. Forgive me, 8:30pm eastern time, I am hosting a totally free two-part webinar series on losing weight for the last time, getting off of the all-or-nothing train, and ending the on-again-off-again cycle. Getting rid of the dieting rules and restrictions, but finding that middle ground between restriction and rules and total overindulgence, right? This is a totally free two-part webinar series.

This isn't one webinar offered twice. It is a two-parter, and it's going to be Tuesday night and Wednesday night, December 13th and 14th 8:30pm eastern time. You do have to register because space is limited, and you can register at [primalpotential.com/december](http://primalpotential.com/december). [primalpotential.com/december](http://primalpotential.com/december), and I will link that up over on the show notes at [primalpotential.com](http://primalpotential.com).

I'll just want to help you guys capitalize on the start of a new year and the motivation that comes with that, but not getting you all amped up for the next sugar detox or whatever other diet plan you have done over and over and over again. I want you to do something different, something that's sustainable. Something that's forever, not something where you're going to do the work and then do the work again. Then, do the work again and do the work again.

I would love to have you there. I love webinars because I'll be on there live. I'll answer your questions. I'll stay until all of the questions are answered, [primalpotential.com/december](http://primalpotential.com/december) to register for that.

Today's episode comes from an article that I read. You guys know I love to read. The other day I was reading this article from an author that I love, Ryan Holiday. He wrote *The Obstacle is the Way* and *Ego is the Enemy*. I was reading this article, and I often read with my journal. The reason I do that is because otherwise, I'll read with all these great ideas, and I'll be momentarily inspired by them, but I forget them. If I forget them, then they don't really have the ability to change what I do or how I think or how I act to really improve my life, right?

What I often do is read with my journal. As I read things, I'll say, "What does this mean for me? How can I use this? What can I do with this tool or this information? What does this inspire me to change?" I was reading this article written by Ryan Holiday with my journal, and as I started to write down what is this mean for me I thought, "There's some good stuff in here. I need to make this a podcast." Here we are.

In this article Ryan Holiday was sharing 29 lessons from what he calls *29 Lessons From The Greatest Strategic Minds*, the greatest strategic thinkers, the greatest strategic minds. What I was doing in my journal, was drawing parallels between

what this means in politics, business, or war and what it means for me and my life, what it means for me and how I make choices, how I take care of myself. What we're going to do today is I'm not going to go through all 29, however, I am going to link to the full article over on the show notes on primalpotential.com, so if you want to see the full article it's definitely worth the read.

I will link that up in the show notes, but I'm going to go through some of the ones that really resonated most with me about how we can use these lessons, these tips, these tools or strategies from these great thinkers from history, from politics, from business and make them help us be better, choose better, think more strategically, be more successful, achieve our goals with more regular and consistent progress. What I would actually recommend that you do ... I recently started creating transcripts for these episodes. I'm just trying it out to see how it goes, but you can go to the show notes page for this episode.

You just go to [primalpotential.com/podcast](http://primalpotential.com/podcast). When you hit that you'll see all of the episodes with the most recent at the top. When you're on the page for this episode, you can download, for free, the transcript. I would recommend that for this episode in particular, and what I suggest you do is go through each of these things and ask yourself, what does this mean for me? How can I use this today, this week, or this month? How can this help me? What does this mean for my journey, for goals, for my challenges?

Let me share with you part of the introduction to this article. Again, the full article will be up on [primalpotential.com](http://primalpotential.com). This is what Ryan Holiday says as he starts it out. He says, "Most people are not strategic. They are reactive. There's no plan. There's no vision, no sense of how one thing leads into the next." That's not to say we don't work hard, but with passion and energy, we aren't necessarily productive. I think that we find ourselves that way in the pursuit of better choices, a leaner physique, more control over our emotions and our emotional eating or our emotional drinking. We're working hard, but there's no vision. There's no coherent strategy. It's sort of, "Oh, I'll try this, I'll try this. Today I'm not trying at all, and so and so mentioned this thing." We get really distracted.

What Holiday does in this article as he shares these lessons from these visionaries, these titans of business, history, politics, and just wherever, literature ... I think there's so much crossover in these lessons. Again, I think this would be one where it would be helpful to download the transcript, and ask yourself what does this mean to me? How can I apply this?

The first one is avoid tactical hell. Avoid tactical hell, and this what Holiday writes here. He says, "Robert Greene, the strategist and best-selling author of *48 Laws of Power* and *33 Strategies of War*, explains that most of us exists in the realm of tactical hell." As he defines it, tactical hell is a place where we are perpetually

reactive to other people's demands and needs, driven by emotion instead of logic, and you're overcome by impulse, fighting battle after battle after battle. When we are stuck in tactical hell, what Greene is saying what we should avoid ... When we are stuck in this tactical hell, it's this diet-hopper mentality, the shiny thing mentality.

Cut more carbs, do a ketogenic diet, resistant starch. Whatever it is, intermittent fasting or the latest, greatest exercise fad. We get caught in the weeds and the details. We are driven not by a strategy that's based on where we want to go, what works for us, or what is going to help us. We're not driven by that at all. Instead, we're just kind of creating this whiplash sensation of, "Well I'll try this. Maybe today I'll do this," and, "I ate too much yesterday, so I really shouldn't eat much today. I'm going to see how little like to eat or I'm going to cut out soda or I'm going to stop drinking alcohol." That is tactical hell that we are being advised to avoid.

Constantly responding to the latest, greatest thing. Avoid tactical hell. Don't get lost in the details. Instead, look at what can I do to get me where I want to go that I'll be able to keep doing? As opposed to, I'm going to do this for seven days or 21 days or 30 days, no. What is my long-term strategy? What works for me? The people who are in this tactical hell, they have to have answers, strategies, food rules, plans, restrictions, and they're working really, really hard, but not necessarily being efficient or effective. Ask yourself, am I in a tactical hell where it's always the strategy or that one? This one or that one? No real sense of coherence or a big picture.

The next one I want to talk about is thinking long-term. Thinking long-term, which really relates to avoiding tactical hell, right? We don't want to get lost in the weeds. In this article he writes, "Jeff Bezos, the Amazon founder and CEO, explained the importance of long-term thinking nearly two decades ago in his 1997 letter to shareholders. As he said ... First of all, can we all believe it's almost been 20 years since 1997? How is that possible? Anyway, sorry, I digress, random. I thought of that number, and I was like, "Oh my goodness."

Anyway, he said ... As he said in this letter to the shareholders nearly 20 years ago, "We believe that a fundamental measure of our success will be the shareholder value we create over the long term. For companies, as is the case for individuals, there are always pressures to be myopic and narrow in our focus and vision. Bezos, unlike most business leaders, refused to play that game," and by that he means the short-term gain, the myopic game, the narrow focus and vision game.

As he explained, "Amazon will always focus on the long-term rather than short-term profitability considerations or short-term Wall Street reactions."

Dude, how often do we get lost in the short-term payoff considerations? The eat less, move more? The fasting, the rules, the restrictions, the complete 180 from your normal, as opposed to long-term strategy, the big picture win. What is this choice or this strategy doing for you over the long term or are you being myopic and narrow in your focus and vision? You have to think long-term. The short-term thinking, being myopic, being narrow in your focus and vision, focusing only on the immediate short-term, it backfires.

What happens is we put all this time, this energy, and the money, but we don't really get anywhere. We stay busy, we stay working hard, but this is why so many people feel frustrated. You're trying, but you're just playing a short-term game over and over and over. Think long-term. Is this going to be sustainable long-term? Is this creating the relationship I want with food long term? Don't get caught up either on short-term strategies, but also don't get caught up on short-term emotions. Never make a decision based on impulse or a short-term emotion. This is not just about, "Don't embark on these crazy short-term diets," but also don't fall prey to the temptation of the moment without thinking, "What does this mean long-term? If I keep doing this, if I keep reacting this way playing the short-term game, giving in to what I want in a moment, what does this mean for me long term?"

The next one, and I do this all the time, especially in my fat loss, fast track veteran groups and with myself on a very regular basis ... The next one is practice the art of negative visualization. This is what Ryan Holiday writes in the article. He says, "This lesson and strategy comes from the great stoic philosophers like Seneca and Marcus Aurelius. They had a term," which is basically like premeditating bad things, forecasting the negative, "for visualizing failure in advance." Why would you do that?

If you imagine failure, you start seeing all the ways that would lead to that result, and you can start actively working on addressing and mitigating them in advance. I was telling ... It wasn't that long ago. I was telling my veteran group that I had a challenging thing coming up. It was a dinner that I wasn't looking forward to that was probably going to create some negative emotions. When I thought about that, if I didn't do anything to counter the potentially negative backfiring or implications of that, then I would probably not come out that feeling very strong, and I could make bad decisions, but instead what I said is ...

At the beginning of the week, this is when I typically do this. What might throw me off this week? What might represent a challenge to me this week? What could be hard? What situations might come up that would lead to choices that I regret later? In the case of this dinner, I asked myself, "Okay, what can I do to go into that event feeling stronger, more in control, and more capable? What do I need to do differently in terms of how I think, in terms of how I prepare, in terms

of how I eat, in terms of the environment around me afterwards, or the plans for afterwards?"

It's not about being negative or pessimistic, but rather saying what could go wrong so that you can be prepared ahead of time. Again, my challenge to you as you listen to this episode is to ask yourself what does this mean for me? Maybe what it means as you look at the next 24 hours or the next week or the weekend and you say, "What could be a challenge? Where might I tripped up and what can I do to increase my chances of success?" Which leads right into the next one, which is don't get caught off guard.

Don't get caught off guard, and Ryan holiday writes, "General Matthew Ridgway had the following motto behind his desk. The only excusable offense in an commanding officer is to be surprised. As a strategist your job is to see the bigger picture and the potential problems in what you set out to do. Things never go according to plan. Be ready and on guard for whatever comes your way. Here's the deal, and this is great news guys. You have a history. You've probably screwed up many, many times before. That's a good thing. You know where the struggle struggles are. It doesn't mean you can predict everything that might go wrong, right? I get that, but you have a really profound ability to know what might be a challenge.

Don't ignore that. Don't be naive. Don't let yourself get caught off guard. One of your greatest tools is your past experiences, especially the ones that were hard, the challenges. Learn from them. Use them. You don't need to be surprised by the fact that it was hard when your co-workers brought in donuts. You don't have to be caught off guard by that ever again because you can say, "When that happens, I will do this," or, "Before that happens, I'm going to do these things to help me be more successful and those moments."

The next one is utilize the drawdown period. This is the description there, it says, "John Boyd was one of the most brilliant, strategic minds of the twentieth century. He was responsible for the F-15 and F-16 fighter jets, as well as concepts like OODA Loop, used everywhere from the military to business. Before he would jump into an idea and go full steam, he had a pre-production phase, a time he called his drawdown period.

It's the reflective period after you've had the idea, after you put the first round of thinking into your plan, and then step back and say, "Okay, what do I really have here? Do you I actually have something? What is this going to be? What am I hoping to accomplish?" Well, this drawdown period idea can be huge for our ability to make choices. When you have a thought, an impulse, an urge ... I talked about this in the My Success Strategies episode, which I think was the last episode. When you have an urge, when you face a temptation, when you

experience an impulse, give yourself a drawdown period, a five minute "All right, let's just give this a little bit of space, a little bit of breathing room."

Don't react, and just let it settle. Don't immediately dive into reacting, responding, choosing whatever. Implement a drawdown period to help you slow down and be more strategic and think through the options. Is this what I want? Am I going to feel good about this later? What's driving this desire, the urge, this impulse? What's the right thing? What's the best thing what's a lined with my long-term desires, my long-term strategy? Implement that drawdown period.

The next one is take the indirect way, and he says, "This historian and author of Strategy, B.H. Liddell Hart, condensed William Tecumseh Sherman's strategic genius in the following maxim: attack along the line of least expectation and tactically along the line of least resistance. In other words catch them by surprise where they are the weakest. I think when it comes to our choices, we can flip this a little bit in terms of the least resistance. Instead of focusing on your hardest changes first, what if you said what could make things easier for me? The least resistant to change, how could I just make some small changes that might have a big ripple effect?

I will tell you what one of those things as for me, and I've shared this many times before, but it's what I thought of related to attacking along the line of least resistance. That is, five minutes of planning and organization at night and five minutes of planning and organization in the morning. One of the things that is part of my night time planning and organization is getting the coffee maker ready. It helps me get out of bed in the morning because I program it, but also it's one less thing I have to decide and do, and it makes my morning mornings more seamless.

Then, getting organized in the morning allows me to generate a little bit of momentum and motivation because I feel like I've got it together. I don't know about you, but when I don't feel like I've got it together, I'm far more likely to make food choices that don't make me feel really good. What is your line of least resistance? Is it making sure that your car is cleaned out? Is it making sure that your kitchen is clean? Is it making sure that you have a grocery full fat loss friendly food food? I don't know. Is it deciding when and where you're going to work out before the week starts, instead of winging it every single day?

What are the changes you can make that offer the least resistant? Practice those things. The other way I think about this "take the indirect way" strategy is that often times when we embarked on a diet, "I'm going to do this 21-day this, this 7-Day detox, this blah blah blah," we are thinking of that as the direct way to weight loss, to fat last. It's often not the case because we can't sustain it or we do it and we work so hard that as soon as it's over, we go on a brownie binge. The

indirect way might be the slower path, the more sustainable path, but the path on which you only do the work once, as opposed to doing the work every freaking month over and over and over because you don't sustain your results.

The next one is stuff adds up. This is what Holiday writes here, he says, "A strategist cannot compromise on the essentials, and they cannot allow distractions and tangents to slow them down." One of George Washington's favorite sayings was the Scottish adage, many a mickle makes a muckle. yeah, that's real. That was apparently one of George Washington's favorite sayings. Many a mickle make a muckle. Cutting a corner here and there that adds up. Making this exception or that exception adds up. Waste is contagious.

Related to this concept is mission creep. You start out with a clear goal of what you plan to achieve, but you make this addition and that addition, and let so-and-so at their pet projects too. Soon enough it becomes something else entirely. I see this all the time. There's two different elements to this. One is adding on and adding on and adding on, and that leads to total mission creep and losing focus. I see this in my fat loss fast tracks, and here's what happens. We have one challenge at a time. Week by week there's only one challenge, but they start to feel excited and motivated, so they want to do more and they want to start working out. They want to start improving their weekend behavior. All of a sudden they're overwhelmed. What was really working and really manageable all of a sudden has them feeling overwhelmed and in over their heads because they allowed scope creep to take over. Don't do that. Stay simple.

The other thing is where he starts here is with distractions and tangents, cutting corners. How often do we allow ourselves to be distracted from our goals and say, "Oh, I'll be better tomorrow. Well, it's just this one thing." That's not true, right? When we cut corners, we get some place else altogether. No question about it. This idea that waste is contagious. Cutting Corners, making exceptions, making excuses is contagious. What does that mean for you? What can you do with that information?

The next one. Boy, I love this one. It might be my favorite. Avoid the competition. He writes, "One of the best strategy books out there, Blue Ocean Strategy, the authors explain the difference between a blue ocean and a red one ocean. One is the Virgin space without any competitors, and the other is where you go to get eaten alive. Where would you rather go? It's why billionaire investor Peter Thiel says competition is for losers. You're right. If you go out there where the competition is, you will get eaten alive. What does this mean for you and your journey? Keep your eyes on your own work. When it comes to you being your best, when it comes to you improving your choices, when it comes to you reaching your goals, there is no competition.

There is no competition because it's not a contest. It's you and you alone. Do not go out there into the space where you compare yourself with everybody else because you will get eaten alive. It's unnecessary. It's not helpful. You keep your eyes on your own work. It's not about what somebody else is doing or what results they're getting or not getting, you have no competition. It's just you. Stop looking around. Keep your eyes on your own work so you can harness your focus.

The next one here is adopt system and processes. Holiday writes, "According to Ron Chernow's biography of George Washington, another one of Washington's favorite sayings was, "System in all things is the soul of business." As you see what you are after in the distance, you need to insure you're taking the right steps necessary to get you there. Part of that comes from systems, routines, and rituals. Structures that prevent you from sliding off track. With a system in place, you can do better. You can do the most essential job of a strategist. Think long-term.

Guys, I want you to be a student of what works for you. That is the system and process of the fat loss fast track. It's not like I created this 12 week diet program. I created a series of 12 challenges that allow you to be a student of you, to create your own structure, to implement your own processes and systems that don't feel like a diet. This doesn't mean some crazy intense structure that feels restrictive and miserable, right?

This actually makes me think of something that came up the other day in a fat loss fast track veteran group. One of my clients in there posted a quote and it says, "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood, and don't assign them tasks and work but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea." Yeah, you want a process. You want a system, but they have to be something you're excited about, something you enjoy, something that makes you feel good as opposed to all the crazy strategies you've been doing that make you feel awful, overwhelmed, restricted, or deprived. You want to create your process, and you want it to be a process that you look forward to, that you get excited about.

In one of my fat loss fast track rookie groups just the other day as well, somebody posted that they love going to bed at night now because they established such an enjoyable morning routine that they can't wait to wake up and get started. That's what I want for everybody everyone of you.

The next one here, the next tip or strategy from these great minds as shared by Ryan Holiday is see things as they are. The samurai swordsman, Miyamoto Musashi, that's a guess, no clue, has stressed the difference between perceiving and observing. The perceiving eye is weak he wrote. The observing a strong. Why? Strategy, whether in business or winning sword fights, requires objectivity

and seeing things as they are. It requires us to put aside our emotions, which cloud our thinking with fear or brimming over confidence and see the situation as it truly is. Oh my goodness, we load in so much emotion and subjectivity that isn't even real, but we create this emotional cushion around facts that make it bigger and more powerful. We're not objective at all about our choices.

My sister the other day sent me an article called The Tyranny of Always and how so many times we load in emotion and not truth either. We lie about the situations and say, "I always eat when I'm stressed. I always quit when start to make progress." Then, we become attached to that belief that's completely subjective. It's not fact-based. It's based on our emotion, our feelings about our past. Your history isn't your destiny, right? I say that all the time, and in this article it says your past doesn't dictate your future, it informs it. It's relevant. The more times you've made a choice, the more likely you'll make it again, but you don't have to. Don't expect negative outcomes. See things as they are, and the reality, the way things actually are is that you can change things. You have the power to choose something different.

All right, the next one here is don't straddle. Holiday writes, "Author Greg McKeown in his book Essentialism says that straddling simply means keeping your existing strategy intact while simultaneously trying to adopt the strategy of the competitor. I think the parallel here for us is that we're not all in on taking care of ourselves. We're not all in on choosing what is best. I'm not saying that we're not all in on clean eating and we never indulge, no, but be all in on taking care of yourself, on paying attention, on doing the work, on not making excuses, right?"

You take care of yourself whether you feel like it or not. You pay attention to your choices whether you feel like it or not, don't straddle. More than anything else, guys, that's exhausting. Think about this. What does that mean for you? What does that mean for you to not straddle? What can you do about that today? A couple more here I want to go through with you.

Deal with problems early. Holiday writes, "There's a cliché. The best time to do it was yesterday. The next best is right now. Don't put off dealing with your problems. They will only grow." Yeah, and I say that because I'm so familiar with that. I used to avoid, avoid, avoid until one day of overeating turned into a month of being out of control and feeling awful. Deal with problems early. Don't use a choice that you'll feel good about to justify more choices that are only going to make you feel worse. That's like saying, "Well, I went over my budget, so I might as well go shopping."

Be someone who deals with problems early. Tell yourself that I am someone who deals with problems early, ideally before they become problems. Use that feeling of, "Why did I do that?" Not to justify another choice that's going to make you

feel that but even stronger, instead to say, "Blank slate. I don't want to feel that way anymore."

I shared with my friends at Ascend, the event in Nashville in November, the first rule of holes is to stop digging. The first rule of holes is to stop digging, and I think that's a big part of what it means to solve problems early. Deal with them early. Don't let them grow, right? There's so many important lessons that we can learn. Everything from beware of specialization, right? Not getting lost in the nitty-gritty weeds. I shared a picture on Instagram the other day. It was a post from my friend, Mary Shenouda, the paleo chef and it's so true. She said, "People eat junk food without batting an eye, but offer them something healthy and they become researchers."

We'll say, "Oh, mozzarella sticks," but we'll look at salmon and go, "Oh, is that a good fat or a bad fat? Is that too much fat? Is that wild caught salmon?" Beware of specialization is what I call like being a purist. Doesn't make sense you to fixate on that. Why is it that you don't bat the eye at the junk food, but then when it's something healthy, you've got 7,000 questions? Some of these other strategies, regroup and stay focused. Slow down, catch yourself. Ask yourself, "How are things going? How can I make them better?"

Another one, learn to wait it out. Learn to be patient, to not have to respond or react right away. Let it pass. Boost morale. How can you boost your own morale? Gary Vaynerchuk says that the secret to success is being an optimist. Are you an optimist about your goals? How can you become one? How can you be more optimistic right now? Crush your enemy. I really think that we are our own greatest enemy. We really are. Somebody emailed me the other day and said, "Stop emailing me. Your emails are making my emotional eating worst. Every time I hear your voice, I feel guilty." That's not me, my friend.

I don't have the power to make anybody's emotional eating worse. If I could, that would be a heck of a way to get revenge on people. If I could be like, "Poof! I'm going to make your emotional eating worse," but I can't do that. You are the only one who can keep you from your goals. I am the only one who can keep me from my goals, so when we think about crushing the enemy, figure out how your internal enemy shows up in your life. What does that mean? How does that enemy show up in you? How do they talk? How do they think? How do they feel?

Recognize those voices and say, "I don't choose you. You aren't what I want. You aren't the voice I'm choosing to believe just for today. You won't take me to the future I want, so no, thank you. I'm not listening." I hope you guys will check out the transcript for this episode. You can download it for free over on [primalpotential.com](http://primalpotential.com). Also, Ryan Holiday's full article and all 29 because I didn't go

through all of them here will be up on the show notes at [primalpotential.com](http://primalpotential.com) as well.

Lastly, don't forget! Free two-part webinar December 13th and 14th 8:30pm eastern time. You do have to register. I will be on there live. I will answer your questions. To get your spot, you can go to the show notes page for this page over at [primalpotential.com](http://primalpotential.com) or you can register directly [primalpotential.com/december](http://primalpotential.com/december). I'll talk to you guys soon. Hope you have a great day, stay in touch.