

Elizabeth: Hello, everyone, and welcome back to the Primal Potential podcast. I am Elizabeth Benton. Can you believe, that as of the date that this airs, which will be, I think, the Twenty-Ninth of November, there's only five weeks left in 2016? In five weeks it will be 2017, which looking at that number, it's sort of like, "2017, really?" I want to establish this right out of the gate. We, you, me, everybody, we can make serious progress in the next five weeks. It's not a lot of time, and yeah, it will fly by, but we can make serious progress. We can also blow it. We can also choose to not take advantage of the moments. To not do the work. To make lots of excuses. To put off taking action. I think we can agree that that would not feel very good.

We would not end the year feeling as good as we can, as hopeful as we can, as positive as we can, as happy as we can, if we choose not to take advantage of the next short five weeks. That's not what we want, so how do we create an amazing five weeks of progress and pride without feeling like we're on a diet? Without being miserable, without feeling like it's consuming all of our time, and energy, and attention? I want it to feel great. I want it to get easier, day after day, after day, and that's possible. It's totally possible. That's what we're going to talk about today. How we can insure that we won't give in or give up, or create excuses day in and day out, for the next five weeks? That's what we're tackling today. I want us to do this together. Seriously. All of us. All of us can make these last five weeks of the year the best five weeks of the year.

I've shared recently in past episodes that one of the biggest threats to success is setting a standard of perfection. Setting your expectations too high. Basing your behavioral hopes on perfection. That is not the approach that I want anybody to take over these next five weeks, or ever. Because it's harder than it needs to be, and it's far less successful, and sustainable than an approach that's not based on a standard of perfection. Now I won't argue. I will not argue that the principle of quantity over quality is always true, right? I don't think that it's always true, but when we're talking about an area where we want to get better at something, quantity does trump quality. I'll tell you what I mean by that. We have this unfortunate habit of focusing more on the quality of our choices than on the quantity of the good decisions we make, right? We want and expect our choice to be of the highest quality, that perfection standard. We overvalue the perfect choices we make, and we discount any choices, even if they're good choices, but the ones that fall short of this standard of perfection, right?

We beat ourselves up if we have one cookie, discounting the fact that we wanted three, so having one was actually a heck of an improvement, right? I want everybody to spend the next five weeks looking to make the highest quantity of good decisions. Not perfect decisions, but making as many good decisions as possible. What if you approached each day thinking, "How many good decisions can I make?" Right? "How many decisions can I possibly make today that are an improvement for me?" Instead of beating yourself up for everything that falls short of your standard of perfection, and only giving yourself credit for the ones

that are perfect, no, no, no, no. What if you just said, "How many good choices can I make today?" Really actually paid attention to that number, and I'll give you an example of what I mean in a few minutes, but let's focus on stacking up, on accumulating the highest number, total quantity, of good choices instead of striving for strict and perfect adherence to a plan? Right?

There's this story shared in a book called Art and Fear, that demonstrates this so well, but also brilliantly shows us how we think backwards, and really hold ourselves back from success. I'm going to read you this story. It says, "A ceramics teacher announced on opening day of the studio that he was dividing the class into two groups. All those on the left side of the studio, he said, would be graded solely on the quantity of the work they produced. Right? Everybody on the right was going to be graded solely on the quality of work, so on the left, they were just to produce as much work as possible. As many pieces as possible, so his procedure was simple." On the final day of class, he would bring in bathroom scales and weigh the work of the group in the quantity group. Who produced the most work, right? 50 pounds of pots was rated an A, 40 pounds was rated a B, and so on.

Those being graded on quality, they only needed to produce one pot, but a perfect one, to get an A. Grading time came around and he was really surprised by what happened. The works of highest quality, the best pieces, were all produced by the group that was being graded for quantity. Right? The quantity group was just churning out the work. Produce, produce, produce, and then learning from their mistakes and getting better. The quality group was theorizing, and being nitpicky, and focusing only on perfection, and they didn't have much to show for it. Right? They spent a ton of time and effort, but most of it was based on theory. "How do I make this perfect? Where do my hands need to be? How do I need to move the wheel?" Instead of just, "Do, learn. Do, learn. Produce. Produce. Produce." The quantity leads to the quality.

Think about how much effort, and focus, and time, and attention those quality groups were putting forth trying to create one perfect piece? Right? They were working as hard, if not maybe harder, putting way more pressure on themselves than the group that knew they were just being graded for quantity. "Do it. Create another one. Create another one. Create another one." Your improvements happen naturally, right? Instead of obsessively focusing on perfection, the group in the quantity area, they were just learning from doing without putting on this pressure, this burden of perfection.

Guys, think about how we do that with our dieting attempts? We're going for perfect and then we scrap it when it's not perfect, just like the people who were being graded on quality and one perfect piece, they would mess something up, and then they'd toss it. They'd mess something up and then they'd toss it. Right?

They weren't getting more confident every day, like the group focused only on quantity. They were getting less confident. Right? They were taking fewer risks, because they were so focused on perfection, and every thing was theory and not practice. Think about how we do that in our attempts to improve our bodies, to improve our food choices. "I wasn't perfect. Crap. I'll start again." "I blew this one, I'm starting over on Monday." "I'm trying for perfect. Oh, I messed up again." "I need to start over." No. No, not only is that exhausting, it's not necessary. It's inefficient. It's so much harder than it needs to be.

I read an article on Medium, talking about the same sort of thing, and it was about this lady. Her name is Jennifer [DeWalt 00:08:10]. She wanted to learn to build a website. Now one option would be study, study, study, study, study, and then create your perfect site, right? Well, that's not what she did. Instead she said, "I'm going to build 180 websites in 180 days." A website a day, right? Think about that first day and how awful that first website might have been, right? She could have spent 180 days trying to create one perfect site, and think about where her energy would have to go in order to do that? If she took a different approach and said, "I want to create an amazing website," just like we tend to think about losing weight, or improving our physique in any way. Like, "I want to do this thing," and we have this end goal in mind, like the perfect website.

Think about how much time she would have spent studying, and theorizing, and getting ideas from other people, and trying to learn all of these skills? Instead she said, "I'm going to dive in and I'm going to do it." Yeah, the first one probably sucked, and the second, and maybe the sixteenth, and the twenty-fourth, but don't you know, that she was getting better every single time, and the end result, that 180 website on 180 days, would have been so much better than one she could have produced if she said, "Well, I'm going to give myself 180 days to create a perfect one." The challenge she took on, almost all of her time was spent doing, taking action, learning from doing, and that's what I want to encourage you guys to do. Spend your energy doing. Screw perfection. Quantity. More good choices. More good choices.

A few months ago, I think it was over the summer, in one of my Fat Loss Fast Track Veterans Groups, they get a challenge every week. Just one challenge every single week, and I gave them a challenge that was kind of peripherally related to this concept of quantity. We were focusing on one specific type of behavior, and their goal was to create a tally. A tally, a total count of the number of times in a day that they demonstrated this behavior. It wasn't about perfection or quality. The focus was quantity. Now their challenge was in a specific area, but what if you tried to just get the highest total quantity of good choices each day? The highest total number, not a perfect, but a good, of an improvement for you. Seriously. Keep track. Count them. Write them down, and every day, increase the number.

"I got up when my alarm went off." "I made the bed." "I started my day with a glass of water." "I did five minutes of gratitude journaling." "I made a fat loss-friendly breakfast." "I cleaned up the kitchen right after." "I visualized my day while I was taking a shower." "When I got to work, I focused on and tackled my biggest priority of the day without distraction." Retrain your brain, so that you stop fixating on every thing you missed, and start focusing on what you got right. Stop fixating on what wasn't perfect and adopt a focus. Choose to focus on the quantity, the number of good decisions each and every day, and aim to increase that number. Quantity. Practice. Learn by doing. Don't get hung up on perfect. Be a tactician instead of a student, or a theory person.

Be someone who does, who takes action. One who seeks out opportunities to make a good choice. It doesn't mean that every single choice is going to be a good choice. Just like every single pot that group produced in the quantity group, probably wasn't good. Some of them were probably awful, but they just set it aside, keep going. Next one. Next one. Next one. Go through your day grabbing up, seizing opportunities to make good choices. "I didn't snap at somebody when I was irritated. I took a deep breath and I walked away." "Instead of getting frustrated in that traffic jam, I put on a song, and sang at the top of my lungs. That's a good choice." "I got a black coffee instead of a latte. Good choice." Tally it. Keep the number. Grow the number. You'll be so proud of yourself. You'll notice that your perspective, your attitude, naturally gets better. When you find that you've made a choice that you don't think is a good choice, that you don't feel proud of, don't stay there. Move on. Keep going. Get right back to, "What's my next good choice?"

What about those times when you find yourself really battling temptation or a case of, "I don't give a fudge?" Here's what I've found to be true in those moments. What we start to do in a moment of emotion, or frustration, or disappointment, we start spinning the story about the past and/or the future. "Well, I haven't eaten much today." "Well, I got in a good work out earlier." "I guess I could be super strict this weekend and really compensate for it." I want you to practice catching yourself in those moments, recognizing when you're trying to use the past or the future to justify a choice now. Just say to yourself, "Wait. Now is all there is. Now is enough. I'm not dealing with what happened earlier or what might happen tomorrow. Let me just focus on now. What's my best choice now? Not because of what happened earlier or what I could do tomorrow. Just looking at this moment, for just this moment, and not bringing in tomorrow. Not bringing in five hours ago, or five days ago, just now. What would be the best way to handle this moment now?"

Otherwise, guys, we're just over-complicating the decision making process, and incorporating elements that don't belong there. That aren't relevant to right now.

It's completely normal and understandable if you instinctively find yourself using the past or the future to justify quitting, or giving up, or giving in, or making an excuse. Don't beat yourself up for thinking that way. You've just practiced thinking that way more than you've practiced thinking another way. Justifying decisions without yesterday or tomorrow, just based on now. I always tell my Fat Loss Fast Track Clients, "You have one more good choice in you. You do. You're not giving up something forever. You're not telling yourself no forever, but in this moment, I know you've got one more good choice in you. I know you do. I know you don't have to give in, or give up, or make an excuse right now. Tomorrow, we'll deal with tomorrow, but I know, I know you have one more good choice in you. You can make an excuse later. You can make an exception another time, but for right now, I know you've got one more good choice in you, so make that good choice."

Over the next five weeks, beginning right now, right this moment, focus on the quantity of your good choices. I want everybody, right now, to write down, "The next good choice I can make is," and then start a tally. When you make it, put a little slash line, and keep track every day. "Today I made 19 good choices. Tomorrow I'm going for 20." Look for the opportunities. Not only will this improve your habits automatically, it's also going to improve your attitude. You'll find that you're excited, that you're hopeful, that you're proud, that you're not beating yourself up for everything you did wrong. You're saying, "What can I do to get that tally up?" "How can I increase the quantity of the good choices I make?" Surrender this notion that you should be, or can be, or need to be perfect. You don't. Increase the quantity of the good choices you are making and you will make tremendous progress over the next five weeks. I am sure of it. I am sure of it.

I'd love to see on the Primal Potential, our Facebook page, or maybe over on Instagram, or on the show notes for this episode, how many good choices are you making? What are you going to do to beat that number today? Right? What can you do to increase the number, the total quantity of good choices you make? It's a game-changer, guys, and I really hope you'll take on this challenge. Before we say goodbye for now, just a reminder that I have made transcripts available for this podcast episode. They're totally free. I just started doing it, so they're available for this episode, and the past few episodes. I'm going to try this out, putting them up on the show notes, over on [primalpotential.com](http://primalpotential.com) for free, if and when you need them. I'll see how that goes. Maybe between now and the end of the year. I hope you find them helpful. I hope you have a great day and I'll talk to you soon.