

The Secret applied to strength and conditioning.

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I was about 6 years old. My father had his own business and it was in financial trouble. Every night I prayed that everything would go well and miraculously it did – for a while. A couple of months later the problems reappeared and this time I did not know about it. The problems forced my father to close his business.

NOTE: I am incredibly proud of what my father has accomplished throughout his life and at 65 he works harder than anyone I know.

The above story is not told to claim that I alone had the power to save his business. But it was my first experience of being able to - at some level – affect what comes into my life.

“Everything that comes into your life you are attracting”.

That is a provocative and hardcore statement, especially if you have experienced sickness, diseases, accidents or the like in your life. That statement however is the cornerstone in the book and DVD entitled The Secret (1). The book and DVD has sold millions and has been featured on Oprah. You probably have heard of it and have formed your own opinion.

The Secret right now must be considered “hype” and as such we must expect it at some point in time to lose the awareness it has at this moment. This is sad because the Secret is built on The Law of Attraction ⁽²⁾, a very powerful law that has been recognized for centuries.

And since this is a law – it does not make sense “not to believe in it”; not believing would be equivalent to saying that one does not believe in Newton’s Laws of gravity.

Sometimes, however, it is nice to have information backed up by several sources. That is why it pleases me to know that cutting edge physicists are able to back up what has been said for centuries:

PHYSICS AND SPIRITUALITY BOTH SUPPORT THE EXISTENCE OF THE LAW OF ATTRACTION.

Check out the powerful audio course “The Spontaneous Healing of Belief” by Gregg Braden to learn about the science experiments that supports the Law of Attraction⁽²⁾.

It is not the purpose of this article to explain the Law of Attraction. The purpose of this article is to explain how this Law can be applied to training and I will provide you with several specific strategies.

The strategies are formed by asking two of the central questions in working with the Law of Attraction:

WHAT WOULD I FEEL IF I HAD IT NOW?

WHAT WOULD I DO IF I HAD IT NOW? (How can I act as if I had it now?)

Tip #1: Learn about the habits and beliefs of very strong people.

“I have always loved to bench-press and deadlifting has always been very easy for me, other lifters constantly practice the right positions I just lift”. Those are the words of world champion bench presser Anna Olsson, who bench presses close to 3 times her bodyweight. So practicing “loving to lift” and the feeling of it being “easy” might not be such a bad idea if strength is what you are after.

Old time bodybuilder Reg Park agrees with her. I was very fortunate to experience a live interview with Reg Park at The Arnold Strength Summit, March 2007, Columbus Ohio. He was answering questions from the audience when one attendee asked him “What is the secret to your

strength?” Park answered: **“I never experience the weight as being heavy”**.

This might sound paradoxical since Park, at 76 still bench presses 500 pounds. But think about it: At given lift gives you a certain feeling of tension and exertion in your body. But you have the freedom to INTERPRET it any way you want. Even though you are breathing hard, you can interpret that as being “easy” and it starts to feel easier.

I use this strategy all the time with the athletes I work with, because **it WORKS!!**

Learning from successful people is by no means a novel strategy. In various literature this is called “modelling”.

2: Use specific questions before your training.

Asking specific questions to guide your focus is a powerful technique. It is covered in “Awaken the Giant Within”, by Anthony Robbins ⁽⁴⁾. Design your questions to **make you feel like you had it (your goal) NOW**. Examples of such questions could be:

“How would it feel in my biceps to be able to curl 200 pounds POWERFULLY AND EASILY?”

“How would it feel to be able to touch my toes EASILY AND EFFORTLESSLY?”

“How does the hang time of a 40 inch vertical jump feel?”

“How does my breathing feel, when I can run x miles in x minutes powerfully, easily?”



Experiment with different exercises to find questions that TRULY resonate with and excite you. The purpose of the questions is to make you feel that YOU HAVE IT NOW.

The **absolute key** part to this technique is to make The Feeling real.

Tip #3: Use partials or Reverse Band Technique.

This is a technique only to be used by the experienced lifter seeking strength or increased muscle mass. **Partials are about using a lot of weight, in the strongest position, in a given movement.**

For example, let us say that your one repetition maximum is 300 pounds in the parallel back squat (lowering yourself until the top of the thighs are parallel to the floor) and your goal is to increase your max with **50** pounds.

Partials work best using a power rack. Adjust the safety pins, so you are doing $\frac{1}{4}$ squats (lowering the bar $\frac{1}{4}$ of the full motion). Perform a progressive warm-up until you are ready to do sets of 3-5 reps with 350

pounds (your new goal). Your goal is to perform 5 sets of 5 reps with 350 pounds.

When that is accomplished lower the safety pins.

Now, the exercise gets **harder** and you might only be able to do 3 reps with 350 pounds. Stay with this new setting of the pins until you again can perform 5 sets of 5 reps. Continue this progress until the setting of the safety pins allows the full movement you are aiming for.



As you see, partials allow you to experience the weight you ultimately want to lift from day one. You are loading the bar with the weights you ultimately want to lift – You are acting **AS IF** you had it now.

A down side of using partials in the above described fashion is that when performing the squats with the reduced range of motion, the rhythm

changes and your nervous system never experiences the bottom position, which is the hardest part.

My friend, Kim Lynge, former national coach in Olympic weightlifting AND power lifting and super strong himself (participated in The Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992), showed me how to solve this problem using the reverse band technique:

You need a power rack. You attach heavy bands to the top of the power rack and let the bar hang in the bands.



You then load the bar until the weight stretches the bands to a degree that corresponds to your bottom position. It is important to select bands with the appropriate tension to allow the given weight (in this example, 350 pounds) to be set at the appropriate start position. Now you can start your set from the bottom of the squat movement. The bands help you in the lower parts of the movement, but in the top you have to do all the work yourself. Look at the picture below to see how bands no longer touch the bar in the top position.



There are many different ways to use partials or bands. To learn about partials, go to www.strongerman.com. To learn about bands, go to www.elitefts.com and check out their products. Both are very powerful techniques for a variety of goals. **NB: Extreme caution must be taken when loading and unloading the bar when you use bands. Engage the help of a couple of spotters to help with set up and tear down of the bar.

Tip #4: Counting does not have to start with 1.

This tip can be applied if your goal is **strength endurance of any kind**, i.e perform a given movement for any number of repetitions.

Let us say that your goal is to perform 20 strict pull-ups. You have trained for this for a while, and you are stuck at 12 reps. Your pull-ups feel easy until about 10 reps and then you hit the wall. Part of what is causing this is that you EXPECT to become tired around 12 reps.

Now, using this changed counting technique, you start your count with 12. Say it loud or have someone count for you. Now the count of 20 becomes your 8th rep, which is manageable to you.

Again you have created the experience of “**having it (20 pull-ups) now**”.

This technique is unlikely to take you from 12 to 20 reps overnight, but it most likely will give you additional 2-4 reps and help you break the plateau.

Tip #5 : Buy clothes at the size you want to be.

I got this tip from Steve Maxwell (www.maxercise.com). It is as simple as it sounds; buy clothes the size you want to be, be it a larger or smaller size that you are using now.

Each week, try out your new clothes and SEE and FEEL them fitting perfectly.

At the same time, give away as much of your old clothes as possible. This way you are signalling to the Universe, that “I do not need this anymore”. This is another powerful example of “acting as if”.

Another “clothing tip” is to TRAIN WITH YOUR GOAL PRINTED ON YOUR SHIRT. This is a way to remind yourself about your goal. It is an equivalent to the “vision board technique” mentioned in *The Secret* or the “card technique” talked about by Matt Furey in “Magnificent Mind Power”⁽⁶⁾.

There are a couple of key points to make this technique work. It is likely to work best if you train in an environment with mirrors or if you train with others. You should determine beforehand how you are affected by other people knowing your goals. The comments from others or the fact that they are seeing your goal might create a feeling of fear that you won’t make it. It might also be helpful to estimate, in advance, whether people around you will be supportive or if they (consciously or unconsciously) will try to keep you down.

Reviewing various programmes, you can find different opinions on whether you should tell other people about your goals or not. Some programs advise against it, some programmes advocate it. A very powerful ambassador – or should I say, Governor – for making your goals public, is Arnold Schwarzenegger, who has manifested a goal or two in his life!



Tip #6: Move at your target speed and increase the distance.

This technique applies if you are a runner, a cyclist, a swimmer, a rower or having any kind of goal that is about covering a distance. I learned this strategy from Charles Staley (www.staley-trainingsystems.com).

You start by determining your goal in the format of covering the distance in x amount of minutes. Then you calculate the necessary speed to accomplish that goal and train with that speed.

Initially, you train with shorter distances but progressively increase those distances until you perform the entire distance at your new speed.

There are many aspects of successful planning and progression of training for endurance sports. This is only one small strategy that can be successfully implemented.

Another way to use this method can be applied by track and field athletes, especially those who compete in the 200 and 400 metres events. Very often, races finish at the same spot on the track and the athletes may have formed the (sub) conscious connection that “that is where I get tired”. A

way to create new mental connections is to run a lot of 100 meters in the beginning of the training period. But do not start at the normal start line. Start at the last 100 m of the track so every time you run a 100 you cross the real finish line. Every time you cross the line, IMAGINE that you are finishing an actual race – powerfully, easily.

Gradually, move your start line back towards your competitive start line and decrease the number of runs.

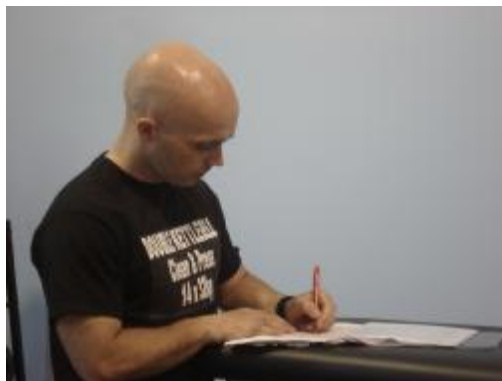
Like in the example above, this is only one technique that can be implemented in an overall plan.

Tip #7: Use a double training diary.

You heard me right: Use a double training diary. This might sound ridiculous, especially if you are not using just a single diary right now.

It works this way: Fill out your training diary before or after your training as usual, but do two sets of diaries. One of “what you would do if you had it now”. For example: How much would you deadlift in your workout today if your recent 1Repetition maximum were 500 pounds?

A simpler way to use this technique is to simply add or detract 10-20% to all your training diary numbers. That way you get used to seeing the numbers that will be there when your goal is manifested. Increase the feeling of actually doing what you are writing in your “cheat-diary”



In this article I've shown you seven ways to apply the Law of Attraction to your training. Select the tips that apply to your own goals and use them.

Remember to have FUN and go through your practice with a feeling of PLAY. FUN and PLAY are two cardinal frequencies for being an effective attractor.

If you come up with other ideas on how to apply The Law of Attraction to your training, I would be very grateful to learn about them.

You can email me at yesttostrength@sympatico.ca.

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