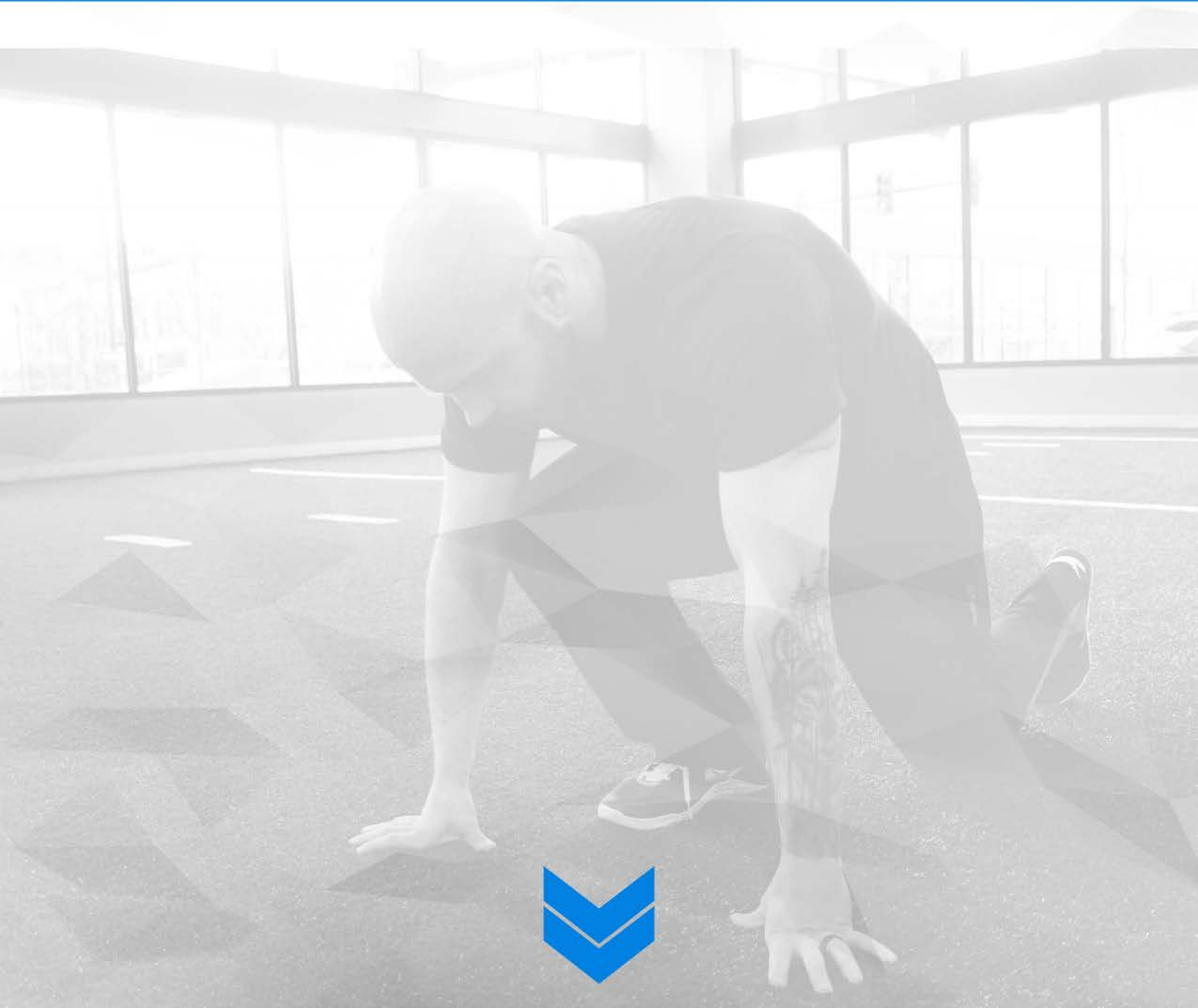




**THE ULTIMATE  
TRAINING MENTORSHIP**

# **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENCE OF PROGRAM DESIGN**



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Just like the profession of being a strength and conditioning coach or personal trainer, the science behind optimal training program design is still in many ways in its infancy. While many other sciences have several hundred years of development under their belt that has allowed them to evolve methods on a foundation of scientific reasoning and validity to them, training in general is largely based on a mixed assortment of people's experiences, some good research (this is finally coming a long way now), old-school know how, and unfortunately a cauldron of marketing and fads. The latter mostly being without any reason or understanding of what it takes to truly design a program to create a desired result.

At high levels of performance, you will see some good metrics being used. For example, Michael Phelps would be able to tell you every workout he has done over the past decade as well as a comprehensive breakdown of his VO2 max, heart rate predictions at rest and maximal output, anaerobic threshold, absolute strength, total swim distance covered per week, etc.

Most trainers though, have no idea what their client's resting heart rate is or why that's even important – even fewer own a heart rate monitor. Moreover, I've seen dozens of trainers not even have a stopwatch or clipboard with them out on the floor to measure objective progress. Let me tell you something, progress is measured by objective results, not by effort per workout. Any dingbat can make someone tired by making them do 150 burpees, but it takes a real trainer to design a program to create a desired result.

Effort doesn't always dictate a quality workout. Put another way, if you're putting effort into the wrong areas, don't expect to get the right results.

Throughout this course, we're going to dissect piece by piece how you can confidently put your energy into the right areas and put your client's energy into the right areas so you can both experience a productive coaching process.

But first, I want to talk about one of the most underrated and indisputable important components towards optimal program design – your mindset and your client's mindset.



# WHAT MAKES CHAMPIONS?

**Is it genetics?** Yeah, can't deny their role.

**Intelligence?** Not really, you don't need to be very smart to be the best. I'll leave out the examples that come to mind.

**Hard work?** Yeah, this plays a role too. But we all know people who work hard and still don't reach the big stage.

**Luck?** No. Luck is merely the intersection between an opportunity and someone who is prepared enough in order to capitalize on it.

**If none of these are the answer, what is it?**

MINDSET.

Athletes spend incredible amounts of time dedicated to training their bodies, yet the body can only achieve what the mind tells it to do. In other words, mental performance is senior to physical performance in every single case.

Think about all the times you:

- Didn't want to do something really important, but did it anyways
- When you were intimidated, but faced your fear anyways
- When you fell down for the 7<sup>th</sup> time, but got back up
- When you stayed positive in the face of downfall
- When you searched and worked endlessly for strategies and solutions rather than throwing in the towel

This is all mental strength, and it separates the greats from the amateurs. Progress from plateaus. Winning vs. losing. Getting results vs. "I just don't have the time"

"That's what discipline is. Discipline is going there and doing something you don't want to do but doing it like you love it."

-Mike Tyson



# IN OUR MINDS, THINKING IS REALITY

Ever remember a moment that made you angry and you felt your heart rate increase, your fists clench, and blood rush to your limbs for combat?

Yeah, me too.

You know what? Neuroscience tells us that you use the same brain centers to imagine things as you do to actually experience them. In another example, if you imagine a song, you'd use the same parts of your brain that would actually hear that song if it were playing. This is one of the main reasons it's hard to focus if you have a song in your head.

The good news here is that you can use this imagination in your client's favor. When you imagine yourself moving or progressing in whatever it is you want to accomplish, your brain centers will light up on a brain-scan as if you were actually moving.

Put very simply, what we think and imagine is reality in our minds.

Since this is reality, it becomes true to our brains and it will react accordingly. Ever watch a horror movie and feel your heart beat faster, feel a little sweat coming through your shirt, and have giants rushes of energy flow through your body?

The movie is fake and the feelings are real, even though you're not even experiencing the horror yourself. In contrast, you're probably totally comfortable in your own home eating popcorn with loved ones. Brain doesn't see that though, brain sees axe murderers and Blair witches.

Despite my examples of anger and horror movies, you can flip the script here and think about a motivational video you saw on YouTube that made you want to run up stairs, punch frozen deer meat, and beat that Russian once and for all! Wait, I think that was Rocky 3...

In any case, your mindset and your client's mindset has unbelievable implications towards your ability to design training programs and your career success as a coach.

The mind is powerful, as much as some gurus like to claim, it's not all about muscle physiology. The mind is always senior to the muscle.



If you instill positive thinking into your client and reinforce their buy-in to your training program on a regular basis, your client will eventually succeed. This positivity will create a realness of confidence and success in their mind that will become unstoppable.

If they have setbacks, they will see them as learning opportunities as opposed to failures.

If they totally fail, it will be seen as a life lesson and not a reason to quit.

I want you to focus on being a problem solver both mentally and physically. I want you to be someone who meets challenges with resilience and creativity.

Because remember what I said, what you think is your reality. If you focus on failures, or if your clients focus on failures, you will be stuck, hopeless, and paralyzed. Even your achievements will be put through the brain's failure filter before they reach the surface.

**YOU** are in charge of your mental environment, and I want you to bring these lessons to your clients. All of your thoughts and mental images become apart of the road you travel.

- What thoughts are you having on a daily basis? Do they serve you?
- Can you think of a client that you have been neglecting who may just be crying out for some positive reinforcement?
- Are you focused on success and resilience? Or failures and setbacks?
- When you observe these images, how does your body respond to them?

## PROGRAMMING FOR SUCCESS

Arguably the biggest mistake I see among coaches today is the confusion between tactics and strategy.

**Strategy** is the big picture thinking, it's the art and science behind your coaching approach.

**Tactics** on the other hand are the specific tools you use at a particular time for a particular reason.

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Your strategy is your overall battle plan for the war, and the tactics are your surprise attacks against the opponent. I want you to remove yourself from this confusion and understand that tactics accomplish a particular thing, and a strategy is a long-term plan to achieve their goal.

So many coaches get obsessed about new tactics because you can market them to sound really sexy (for example, a new biceps pump protocol of 100 reps per session. Or, a “glute finisher to blast through plateaus!”), but this comes at the expense of missing the bigger picture.

But that’s not you anymore. You’re going to learn big picture program design and periodization so that you can use the appropriate tactics **within** the strategy. To develop your program design strategy, you must run through an analysis of what you’re dealing with:

1. Who am I working with?
2. Where do they want to go?
3. What method should I use?
4. What order of action is needed to get from A to B?
5. How will my client understand what to do?
6. How will I communicate, evaluate, and provide feedback?
7. Does this work for my mindset, and the client’s mindset?
8. What do they need most, right now?
9. What can I do if things go wrong?

Think about the above questions and create a mock strategy right now, or better yet, create a strategy for one of your existing clients. You will find that the tactics sort themselves out once you have a strategy in place.

If you feel confused because we haven’t gone into the meat and potatoes of the course content yet, don’t feel worried. I just want you to review the components and develop a plan to the best of your ability.

Whatever goal you choose, come up with a purposeful and long-term strategy to make it happen. A strategy that would earn your ironclad guarantee for results!

Until next time coach.

**Get strategizing.**



*-Dan Garner*

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