

How to Improve Online Coaching Client Engagement. Also... Communism

[music]

0:00:11.9 Mike Vacanti: Hello Jordan.

0:00:12.0 Jordan Syatt: What's up, Michael? Welcome to the How To Become a Personal Trainer Podcast.

0:00:16.7 Mike Vacanti: "The Online Trainer Podcast..."

[laughter]

0:00:23.9 Mike Vacanti: How are you?

0:00:24.7 Jordan Syatt: It really sort of is the online trainer podcast, because we don't really talk about in-person stuff or brick and mortar, we talk about in-person, but not brick and mortar.

0:00:31.5 Mike Vacanti: I would say 25% of the questions in Q and As in the Mentorship recently have been client-specific questions...

0:00:37.5 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, that's true.

0:00:38.8 Mike Vacanti: A lot of which relate to in-person coaching.

0:00:40.6 Jordan Syatt: That's true. Yeah, that's fair.

0:00:42.1 Mike Vacanti: It's so hard to build... I'll phrase it this way, it's much easier to build an online personal training business if you have in-person coaching experience.

0:00:53.2 Jordan Syatt: Facts. I think it's even easier to build an online personal training business than an in-person one, just period. I think it is way easier to build an online personal training business than an in-person personal training business.

0:01:02.7 Mike Vacanti: Correct. The whole world can be your client instead of just the people who live in a 15 mile radius of you.

0:01:11.2 Jordan Syatt: Yep, yep. I was talking to Dave Tate about that, and he told me a really great story. I won't tell the whole story, but he was telling me a story, basic because of the story about how you and I actually got connected because of the story about how you left a comment on my website on an article that no one ever read or any of that stuff, except for you in 2012, 'cause it was posture based, so and now you're fixing your posture. [laughter]

0:01:36.2 Mike Vacanti: Well, now, I gotta take breaks from sitting. A double meal. A solo meal. Other side single meal. [laughter] I'm telling you.

0:01:47.3 Jordan Syatt: We were talking about how you just never know who's looking at your content, and Dave was one of the earliest people to ever make content, ever. Dave was... Dave Tate

was making training logs before anyone was doing training logs, he was posting his training logs on the EliteFTS websites in these forums back in the day when no one was doing it. This is like the late '90s, early 2000s, where he's posting his workouts, and the only reason that he would make YouTube videos is not because he looked at YouTube as a platform for its own content, but because he could then embed those videos into his website articles, into his training logs. It was not trying to grow YouTube, it was like that was just a place to store his videos. And he was telling an amazing story about how basically, you just never know who's reading your content, who's looking at it, and one of his... His first ever "online coaching client", which actually, this is really funny, 'cause you and I laugh, we saw someone recently say they were one of the first people to be an online coach in 2014, which is just hilarious because he's in the '90s and he was doing online coaching. But he said that in this online coaching, he didn't do anything, he would just get on the phone with this guy once a week, and it wasn't a video call, he wasn't even sending him an email with programs. He would just get on the phone with him and tell him what to do on the phone.

0:03:11.9 Mike Vacanti: That's awesome.

0:03:12.9 Jordan Syatt: And that was his online coaching, and he didn't know anything about this guy, he didn't know anything about in terms of his... How wealthy he was or any of that, just like... He was a cool guy. And this is Dave's first ever online coaching client who he got from posting his training logs in EliteFTS forums. And this guy, he lived in Boston, and one day he asked Dave if Dave would do a seminar for him, and Dave was like, yeah, usually I get this amount plus X amount per head, like here's flat rate, plus X amount per head of people that come. And the guy was like, "No, I don't wanna do that. How about you just tell me a flat rate?" And Dave was like, "Okay. Like five grand, whatever it is." And he goes like, "Okay, awesome, done." So flies Dave out to Boston. Dave goes there, and then they drive him to a huge office, a massive skyscraper office building. And Dave was like, "What are we doing here?" And this guy is like, "This is my building." And Dave was like, "Oh, you work here?" He's like, "No, I own the building."

[laughter]

0:04:14.3 Jordan Syatt: And then they go up to the top floor of this, of the penthouse suite, and it's this guy who is the CEO of the company and owns the building and apparently owns multiple buildings, and four other people that are just like... And a couple of his CFO and a couple of other people, and that was it. That was who he was giving this seminar for. And so Dave was like, "Holy shit, what is going on here?" He did this whole seminar, and basically it was an amazing client, a really nice guy, all of that. And Dave was like, "You just never know who you're talking to," which is like going back to online training, you just... You never know what piece of content is gonna go nuts and gonna get you an amazing client or a number of clients, you never know who's seeing your content, who's looking at your stuff.

0:05:00.1 Jordan Syatt: And I've heard a story like this, have experienced a story like this. I see this all the time, you just... The thing that most people, especially coaches, don't realize is, I think most coaches think that they need to come up with the perfect piece of content, when the reality is you just need to come up with content over and over and over and over and over again, and oftentimes, it's that process of coming up with content, the vast majority of which is probably shitty, that will lead you to write or create one piece of content that actually hits the right person at the right time in the right place that reaches out that will change your life forever. I thought it was a really good story.

0:05:31.5 Mike Vacanti: That is a great story. That's definitely YouTube SEO clip-worthy too, of like...

0:05:36.7 Jordan Syatt: Oh yeah.

0:05:37.8 Mike Vacanti: Dave Tate.

0:05:38.9 Jordan Syatt: Oh yeah. Let's go. Click that up.

0:05:40.0 Mike Vacanti: Like something... Yeah, yeah, yeah.

0:05:42.3 Jordan Syatt: Also, by the way, stories. See what I just did there? Tell a fucking story, get you in there. Stories are everything.

0:05:49.4 Mike Vacanti: I agree, I completely agree. Yeah, there's a... You don't build a great physique by infrequently doing perfect reps, you build a great physique by getting in there day in, day out, and performing rep after rep, set after set, slowly and painfully increasing your weights over time, similarly with making content like most content isn't gonna do anything crazy, but you're gonna get better at it through the process, you're gonna have more shots on goal, more goals you score, period.

0:06:23.9 Mike Vacanti: Make them as good of shots as you possibly can, but keep shooting the puck over and over and over again, and over time, good things will happen. And that doesn't mean that everyone is guaranteed to make a \$10 million business, it's not what that means, and there's a survivorship bias to these stories of like Elon Musk just worked and worked and worked and worked and worked 18 hours a day every single day and eventually he made it, or pick anyone like that. There are also people who did that and worked, and worked and worked on a crazy idea and ignored society and put in the reps and ended up not at the pinnacle of everything, and that's okay too, but you're... I can say with certainty that you'll end up in a better spot if you shoot pucks on goal consistently for five plus years straight compared to if you sit and think about doing that or over-analyze or suffer from perfectionism and never actually get started.

0:07:24.9 Jordan Syatt: Clips nation right there. That'll be great YouTube clip too. "Elon Musk... how to..."

[overlapping conversation]

0:07:34.9 Mike Vacanti: I don't think that's clickbait-y at all, I think it's smart to... Even if every title doesn't need to be educational, it doesn't need to be how to make more of this, how to make this content, how to help this type of client, like a lot of stuff that I click on on YouTube are stories that also have lessons inside of them.

0:07:56.5 Jordan Syatt: Man, preaching. The other thing, just to add on to what you're saying about Elon and how he worked 18 hours a day for so long, da, da, da, da, something that I think Jiu-jitsu has taught me is that there's really levels to... I see you're trying not to laugh 'cause I'm bringing up Jiu-jitsu, but there's levels to this and there's... Nothing has taught... I've always known it, and I think we all know it on some level, but Jiu-jitsu, seeing it played out. It's like they're... In Jiu-jitsu there's a phrase, there are black belts, and then there are black belts, and it's that you could take two people who spent the exact same amount of time training. Let's use a basketball example, LeBron versus anyone else in the NBA, like someone who's not nearly as good, maybe they literally spent the exact same time amount of training basketball, maybe the other person actually spent more time training basketball than LeBron did, but LeBron is just fucking better because he's better, because he's just born that way. There's levels to this.

0:09:00.4 Jordan Syatt: Some people are just naturally better. And for example, you take that, the

Elon example, and maybe you worked the exact same amount of hours as him, but he has a much bigger business, okay, that's fine, but there's levels to this and you might not be the literal best in the world at it, but that's okay, it doesn't mean you can't be still super successful and have great work-life balance and all of that. But I think something... Jiu-jitsu has helped me come to terms with this, it has helped me come to terms with that there's levels in different areas of life, and some people are just gonna be better than you, even if you've trained more, even if you've worked harder or any of it, it's like there are some people who are just straight up better than you, and that's it. And there's nothing wrong with it, that's just a fact.

0:09:40.9 Mike Vacanti: And that doesn't mean that you shouldn't continue to work, or in your example, that you shouldn't continue to roll and to train Jiu-jitsu. Because what matters more than you verse that person is you vs you a year ago, is you vs you three years ago, is you vs you five to 10 years ago and continuing to improve against your former self rather than against someone who is smarter, more suited for that specific skill, like whatever, has the natural talent, God given, blessed to have a higher ceiling than you have, just because that person exists doesn't mean that you can't experience great success on your own. And that's why a degree of comparison makes sense, but that's why basing your entire belief about your own success only and comparing yourself to other people is a fool's errand.

0:10:32.6 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, yeah.

0:10:34.7 Mike Vacanti: There's also something interesting here about... And it doesn't work in the NBA example, because everyone who makes the NBA is...

0:10:41.7 Jordan Syatt: Really good.

0:10:43.1 Mike Vacanti: They're all elite, they're all the best of the best of the best. But you could work really hard at making content for 10 years, and someone else could work really hard at making content for 10 years, and they could have five million YouTube subscribers and just be absolutely crushing and on top of it, even though let's pretend you put in the same amount of effort and you might have 8800 YouTube subscribers compared to their 5 million or whatever I just said. Maybe instead of putting all that time and effort into YouTube because you aren't that well-spoken, because you don't love being on camera, because you don't have as much passion for it, maybe you're an unbelievable writer, and maybe that was an avenue that would have better suited you. And I think trying various forms of content creation makes sense, you don't know if you're good at something until you have a certain number of reps at it, or I shouldn't say good, you don't know if you have a natural inclination to be great at something until you have a certain number of reps at it, but definitely be open to the possibility that you're better suited for one area than another and maybe you even enjoy that more, and then putting more of your eggs in that basket will lead to disproportionate returns.

0:12:04.3 Jordan Syatt: And going to the basketball example, I think we still can use it. I don't know any basketball players, but I would imagine that lets... Everyone in the NBA is elite, but I would imagine that there are people who didn't make the NBA who are equally elite. There are people who are, for whatever reason, maybe a certain team needed a certain position or a number of teams needed a certain position player, and they didn't need that player, and so the draft went by or whatever it is, they just never picked that player just 'cause they didn't need that position filled. And so... But then four seasons later, they did need that position filled and then they were no longer as elite as they once were, or they didn't have the connections they needed, whatever it is, you literally might have been just as elite or even better, but you didn't get in the NBA, because of what was needed at that time. And so it also comes back to life isn't always fair, life isn't always fair, there are... But what does that opportunity to give you? Maybe now you have an opportunity to start your

own business like helping youth with their basketball or starting a business in terms of looking at people's basketball technique or their programming, or whatever it is.

0:13:10.0 Jordan Syatt: And there are so many things that can happen, but also understanding there are levels to it in terms of genetic skill, and also sometimes things are gonna happen just because things fucking happen and life isn't fair. And getting mad about it and being upset that there isn't equity among every single thing in life is just like that's a really bad way to live, and it's not gonna do anything for you or any of the people that you could help, so.

0:13:37.5 Mike Vacanti: Well, I can't believe I'm about to open this can... But I'm going just to get your perspective, I don't have a strong opinion on this. However, Jord...

0:13:45.2 Jordan Syatt: Bullshit. You have definitely got a strong opinion on this.

[laughter]

0:13:46.7 Mike Vacanti: All right. Should we get into the real stuff?

0:13:50.9 Jordan Syatt: I thought we were literally just about to. You were about to say something.

0:13:54.2 Mike Vacanti: No, what we teased the how to increase client engagement.

0:13:57.4 Jordan Syatt: Oh. But I thought you were about to say something else pretty incendiary.

0:14:00.7 Mike Vacanti: I was, I was, I was.

0:14:01.9 Jordan Syatt: I mean, we're only 14 minutes in, we could say something.

0:14:04.1 Mike Vacanti: I was gonna ask you if you think we should legislate... Like, life isn't fair, but I mean we could make it fair through government intervention?

0:14:13.2 Jordan Syatt: You can never make it fair.

0:14:14.4 Mike Vacanti: Sure.

0:14:15.5 Jordan Syatt: You can't.

0:14:16.4 Mike Vacanti: Maximal government intervention into all areas of life, we could create a perfectly fair society.

0:14:21.6 Jordan Syatt: I know you're just saying that. But you can't.

0:14:24.8 Mike Vacanti: Why not?

0:14:25.3 Jordan Syatt: It's impossible.

0:14:27.4 Mike Vacanti: Why?

0:14:28.4 Jordan Syatt: Because it's inherently not fair based on the government mandating it, that isn't fair.

0:14:31.2 Mike Vacanti: The government would make it fair though.

[laughter]

0:14:37.3 Jordan Syatt: And this is how communism has destroyed millions of lives. [laughter] It's inherently not fair. It's just based on balance of power.

0:14:44.9 Mike Vacanti: I'm not smart enough to play devil's advocate well and I don't want to strawman that position. I still think with maximal government intervention, they could make life fair for everybody.

0:14:58.5 Jordan Syatt: How?

0:15:03.0 Mike Vacanti: Well, give me an example.

0:15:04.9 Jordan Syatt: You're the one who brought it up. I don't know. You're telling me. [laughter] I disagree completely. So I'm very interested to hear the example.

0:15:14.0 Mike Vacanti: Hang on, hang on. You said life is unfair, give me one way that it's unfair.

0:15:17.0 Jordan Syatt: Two people who are equally skilled in basketball, one gets in the NBA, one doesn't get in the NBA, because one person, their position was open and the other person, the position had already been filled. I can't wait to hear this.

0:15:34.0 Mike Vacanti: Well, how are we measuring their skill, how do we know they were equally skilled?

0:15:37.7 Jordan Syatt: No clue. One person gets in the NBA, one person doesn't get in the NBA.

0:15:42.8 Mike Vacanti: Everybody should be allowed to play in the NBA.

[laughter]

0:15:46.7 Jordan Syatt: So how do you do that?

0:15:48.1 Mike Vacanti: We mandate that the NBA accept everybody.

0:15:51.2 Jordan Syatt: That's communism. [laughter] I'll just put that out there. And anyone who's like, "No, it's not." It's like steady communism, like, "Yes, it is." [laughter]

0:16:03.8 Mike Vacanti: Obviously, I don't actually think that.

0:16:08.1 Jordan Syatt: Mike is an enemy of the state.

[laughter]

0:16:12.7 Mike Vacanti: Biggs asks would love a How To Become a Personal Trainer podcast episode on maintaining online client engagement.

0:16:23.8 Jordan Syatt: Do you wanna take this one from the start?

0:16:25.0 Mike Vacanti: I think you're good at setting these up, ESTP, so I'm gonna let you...

0:16:30.4 Jordan Syatt: I just wanna make it more fair, so how about you start? How about we say everything at the same time to make it ultimately fair?

[laughter]

0:16:39.6 Jordan Syatt: So we have equal speaking time.

0:16:43.2 Mike Vacanti: Equal words per podcast. I agree. That'll be a great listening experience to have two hosts talking at the exact same time.

0:16:49.7 Jordan Syatt: So the question is how to increase client engagement?

0:16:53.3 Mike Vacanti: For online coaching clients.

0:16:54.0 Jordan Syatt: And you want me to set this up?

0:16:56.0 Mike Vacanti: Well, no, but you can just answer, but in your answer, you generally do a good job of framing the question. It's a compliment.

0:17:03.9 Jordan Syatt: Honestly. And now I'm nervous 'cause I don't really know what that means. But so...

0:17:07.4 Mike Vacanti: Oh, well, just talk. Just be normal.

0:17:09.0 Jordan Syatt: Okay. How to increase client engagement? What my mind immediately comes to is how do you increase the frequency of your clients, or I'm sorry, how do you decrease the frequency of clients ghosting you, is a very simple way to put it, or getting your clients to interact with you more. Maybe they're not sending you as many updates as you would like, or they are not sending you technique videos, or they're not sending you their food logs or any of that stuff, or they're not... What, any of that stuff, how do you increase the frequency of doing that and decrease the frequency of people ghosting you and not doing that? So that's like the framing I think that you were looking for.

0:17:55.0 Mike Vacanti: I think that's right. I think we're asking that question and we're also asking about... I assume that that's a big piece of it, and that adherence to the program is another big piece of it.

0:18:07.9 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:18:08.4 Mike Vacanti: So engaging with you as the coach and engaging with... Following the nutrition plan and doing the workouts.

0:18:14.0 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. So I'll first start, let's talk about engaging with you, the coach, 'cause I think this tends to be the biggest struggle that coaches have, not for the reason that I think a lot of coaches think in their head. I think in their head, the coach thinks that it's because they want the person to do well, like the client to do well, but in reality, it's an insecurity of the coach because the coach is thinking that they're not a good coach. So yes, obviously, you want the client to do well, but a lot of times you want more engagement as a way of the client letting you know that, oh, you're doing your job as a coach. You're a good coach. Every time they do email you, and when you do have a client who does engage with you, it's another indicator for you. They're like, "Okay, good, I'm doing a good job, I'm doing a good job. I'm a good coach," which I get it, I understand that, but it's also important to be aware of that potential insecurity, which I think we all have in some way,

shape or form.

0:19:12.0 Jordan Syatt: From this point, it's very important to understand that you will never have a 100% engagement rate. There will always be some percentage of clients who ghost you, there will always be some percentage of clients who rarely fill out their updates, there will always be some percentage of clients who never send you their food logs or rarely send you their food logs, there will always be some percentage of clients who lie to you, and keeping in mind that it's not malicious lies, it's usually embarrassment lies and feelings of guilt lies and all of that.

0:19:45.1 Jordan Syatt: So it's important that when you have a discussion around it and you confront them over it, that it's not coming from a... You're not trying to be malicious or you're not trying to guilt or shame them, you have to be very open to understand they're lying because they're embarrassed usually. And oftentimes, when someone is ghosting you, they're ghosting you because they're embarrassed, and when they're not sending you their food logs, they're not sending you their food logs because they're embarrassed, so it's funny, a lot of coaches get worried like, "Oh my God, I'm not doing my job, I'm not doing my job I am not doing my job," that's why they are ghosting me. Maybe they're upset, it's like, honestly, if the money is still going through every month, it's not that you're not doing your job, it's that they feel embarrassed and they still want the accountability, but they feel bad because they haven't been following it. If someone doesn't want their money going through and you're not doing a good job, you'll fucking know [chuckle]

0:20:31.7 Jordan Syatt: They will usually make it very clear, "I want my money back, I'm doing already fun, I'm gonna quit." If that ever happens, which should be incredibly rare if it does, and ideally it's coming from a deranged individual, to use Mike's word, then that will happen super rarely, and usually from someone that you're like, "I really don't wanna be working with this person anyway."

0:20:58.0 Jordan Syatt: So the number one tip, and I really just don't like that word anymore because it is... What tips do you have? But anyway, number one tip is set the expectation from the very beginning, whether you get on the phone with them or it's all via email, anything before the coaching process starts, you need to clearly outline, this is what I expect from you. And I would have a PDF in which before we even agreed to work together, I would say, "Here's what I expect from you as my client," and I would say I expect to hear from you this frequently with this much in your emails and these types of pictures and all of this, and these form videos is what I expect from you, and I also had a section on what you can expect from me. A reply in this period of time, and blah, blah blah. So like all of that. I would have... I made that very clear from the outset. But that wasn't enough, there is still a more lack of engagement than I wanted, which I was never able to achieve everything that I wanted because the only engagement that I would just want 100% engagement right, but that just...

0:22:00.2 Jordan Syatt: It's not possible. So from there, the next most important thing you can do after setting expectations is making sure that you are never guilted or shaming them, and that it's always coming from a place of, I don't ever want you to feel embarrassed. I think about it how my mom spoke to me as a kid, my mom would tell me, "I don't care what happens, I don't care what you do, I will always love you." And she would say things like, "Listen, there might be times where I'm upset and I'm mad at you. But no matter what, I always love you and you can always come to me with anything." And that made me feel more comfortable where in a situation where I might not have wanted to tell her and maybe I would have lied to her, maybe I would have just not said anything that made me feel more comfortable going to her over something, and you don't have to tell your clients like, "I'll love you sweetie."

0:22:54.4 Jordan Syatt: I think it'd be a little bit creepy. You don't have to say that, but you should

say, "Listen, I am first and foremost your coach, and as your coach, I don't ever want you to feel embarrassed or guilty or shameful over doing something. I want you to always feel comfortable telling me if you go off track for a day or a week or a month, if you missed your workout, if you're shitty with your nutrition. I'm not gonna say I don't care because that would make me a bad coach, obviously, I care, but what I care more about than anything is your mental and emotional and physical health, and I can't help with any of that if you're not being honest with me in communicating with me. So no matter what, please just tell me 'cause that's how I can help you. If you just stop communicating with me, I won't be able to help you."

0:23:38.7 Jordan Syatt: So that should also be a real conversation that you have at the very beginning and also remind them throughout the coaching process. And then the next one is, well, now how do you actually deal with it when someone does ghost you or when someone isn't being communicative. This is where I think sending a voice memo or sending an email or whatever it is, or getting on the phone with them and having that conversation again, over and over and over again, reminding them that you're not upset with them or you're not disappointed in them, like this is part of the process and you're actually... You're grateful when they do feel comfortable enough to come and tell you, which is the other one is if someone does tell you something difficult, you should go over the top to reinforce that positive behavior, and be like, "Listen first and foremost, before we dive into the issues here, I wanna say thank you so much for feeling comfortable with me to tell me this because many clients wouldn't have told me this, and maybe you in the past, depending on your relationship with them, maybe you might not have told me this before, but because you've done this now, this is actually making our relationship stronger and it's giving me a better insight into how it can help you, so thank you for that."

0:24:41.7 Jordan Syatt: So really go over the top of those behaviors. And as the last thing I'll say here is, this is also why if... Let's say you have a client who is just... They're saying they're doing everything right, or... Let's even take that part out, but let's say you have a client who you see them on Instagram and they're out partying and drinking and eating pizza and burgers and fries and all that stuff. You should not be commenting on that, you should not be going in there and be like, "Oh, okay, so I guess so this is 100% consistent..." Don't do that. In fact, I would often...

0:25:14.8 Jordan Syatt: I don't do one-on-one coaching anymore as of right now, but if I did, I would probably... I would follow my clients, but I would probably mute them so I didn't see their stories, because if they see that you're in their stories then they are going to be very cautious with what they post in there because they don't want you to see it. So I probably, I would follow them because I think it's the right thing to do and to let them know that you're there and support them, I don't think you should be playing the game if I don't follow people back like, who the fuck are you? You schmuck. But I would probably mute them, so I wasn't even tempted to look at their stories unless I see that they tagged me in something, and then I can just go into my messages and see what they tagged me in, but I would not go in their stories just because it's probably... It gonna make them more self-conscious, and if they post a picture of a piece of food that they may be a burger and fries, I wouldn't just like it because sometimes just liking it, they might think that it's your way of saying, "I see you. I see you did this."

0:26:13.9 Jordan Syatt: But what you could do is you could be like, "Oh my god, that looks so good. Please tell me where this is so I can go get one." Something like that is a much more supportive piece of a conversation or a supportive comment that doesn't make them feel guilty about it, so it won't prevent them from posting it later on.

0:26:29.6 Mike Vacanti: Great answer.

0:26:30.0 Jordan Syatt: That was a lot.

0:26:32.6 Mike Vacanti: That was really good.

0:26:33.5 Jordan Syatt: I know it wasn't fair to you though, because I just probably gave every fucking answer possible.

0:26:37.1 Mike Vacanti: Life's not fair, Jordan.

[laughter]

0:26:39.3 Jordan Syatt: We should make it fair.

[laughter]

0:26:40.8 Mike Vacanti: You know what, on that subject, 'cause that actually popped into my head while we're doing this, I actually am a fan of fairness. I just think that it's better to... And of course, you can't achieve... You can't achieve true fairness across all of life, but rather than federally legislated fairness, it makes more sense for the decisions of individuals to basically treat people fairly. Coming from a moral individual choice rather than government legislation, and maybe this is maybe an idealistic, and maybe this isn't achievable because it's not line with human nature, I don't know, and I'm open to that counterpoint, but that seems like the better way to achieve, not maximally, not perfect fair, 'cause it doesn't exist, but a more fair society or system.

0:27:38.8 Jordan Syatt: I think what we're talking about is the difference between equality of opportunity versus equality of outcome, or equity versus equality, which is the same thing. People often think equity equals equality, and it's not. Equality is equality of opportunity, which... That's fairness.

0:27:56.4 Mike Vacanti: Which we have in the West or at least in United States.

0:28:00.1 Jordan Syatt: Yes. We have equal opportunity, there are no laws legislating any individual person based on their race, their gender, their sexual orientation, any of that, there are no laws that prevent someone from...

0:28:05.8 Mike Vacanti: Or any of the other infinite... I like that we mentioned those three in society, but there's infinite ways to categorize humans.

0:28:13.0 Jordan Syatt: Correct. Yup.

0:28:14.3 Mike Vacanti: Those are the three that we like to focus on...

0:28:16.5 Jordan Syatt: Those are the main ones.

0:28:16.5 Mike Vacanti: They're not even the main ones, they're the three that... The powers that be have chosen to focus on.

0:28:21.3 Jordan Syatt: Correct. Yeah, so that's a quality in terms of having freedoms and the equality of opportunity, but equity being equality of outcome that isn't fairness for anybody. And so I would... A simple example would be, if you're the coach of a youth basketball team, and you've got... Most will say the coach of a high school basketball team, not like a six-year-old basketball team, but a high school high school basketball team that is more competitive by nature, you have two kids, one is just a better player, better teammate, better overall for the team's goal of winning.

You're gonna play that kid, you're gonna start that kid and you're gonna bench the kid who's not as good just because the goal is to win, not to be fair.

0:29:07.6 Jordan Syatt: They were given equal opportunity to prove themselves as the better player, they were both giving equal opportunity in the trials, during practices, they're both giving equal opportunity to show up and all of that stuff, but one of them is better, so the better one's gonna get to play. You should treat them both fairly and kindly, and you shouldn't favor one in terms of how you speak to them, you should like everything from the perspective of being a nice person, treating them fairly in that sense should be always equal, but the outcome, that should not be equal for everybody.

0:29:41.6 Mike Vacanti: I completely agree. I think that's a great example. I'll give another example. Right now, there's an equal opportunity for both men and women to be brick layers, there's an equal opportunity for both men and women to be garbage men, there's an equal opportunity for both men and women to be plumbers, but 90 plus percent, and brick layers it is like 99%, but 90 plus percent of each of those three fields are men, not women. And so equity would mean instituting a policy where we have 50% male bricklayers and 50% female bricklayers, same with garbage, just... Same with each of those positions. Nurses are something like, I don't know off the top of my head, 80 plus female.

0:30:39.4 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:30:40.3 Mike Vacanti: Kindergarten teachers is 90 something percent female. There is an equal opportunity under law for men and women to be nurses.

0:30:52.5 Jordan Syatt: Correct.

0:30:53.1 Mike Vacanti: There's an equal opportunity for both men and women to be kindergarten teachers. Equity or equality of outcome that you mentioned would mean legislating that half of our kindergarten teachers... And I'm not saying it's good or bad, but equity would mean legislating half our kindergarten teachers are men and half for women, half of our nurses are men half of them are women, that's the difference between those two terms that have gotten convoluted over the last five years, seven years in popular culture, and probably more than that for people who are really paying attention.

0:31:25.6 Jordan Syatt: And I think a lot of the reason that's become convoluted is because political pundits have been using them incorrectly and conflating them, and people there watching and being like, "Oh well, it sounds the same, so it must be the same." And then I don't think any logical person would be like, yeah, we should always have 50% SWAT team members should be men and 50% should be women, 50% nurses should be men...

0:31:50.1 Mike Vacanti: Army Rangers, Navy SEALs. [chuckle]

0:31:53.3 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, it's like, I don't think any logical individual would say that at all. There should absolutely be equal opportunity for men and women to join Elite Combat Forces, but there should not be a change in the standards. If a man needs to run a certain mile time in order to be qualified to become an elite combat specialist in whatever it is, then the woman should be required to run that same time, because it's not just her life at risk, but the life of her co-workers or her colleagues or her teammates, whatever you wanna call it, who are also putting their lives at risk. Not to mention the lives that they're trying to save on the job. So equal opportunity for everyone, regardless of race, gender, religion, all that stuff, for sure. But not changing the standards, just not for the change in standards for the sake of equity.

0:32:52.3 Mike Vacanti: People might be wondering why are you having this conversation on the How To Become a Personal Trainer Podcast? I think that we have a moral obligation to... Because I know so many people who have the same thought process, and this makes sense to them logically, but for many reasons, are afraid to voice it, not even on the internet, but to friends and family or at work, like fear of getting fired, fear of being an outcast. I think it's really important to... Because of what is happening to the loudest people having these conversations and making these points, I think that all of us who may have benefited from learning from those people and the literal or... The figurative or literal persecution that these individuals have gone through or are going through, I feel a moral obligation to say something even if it pisses some people off, and even if it isn't the sexiest, and even if it hurts our bottom line a little bit, I think it's the right thing to do, and so that's why...

0:33:57.5 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:33:57.6 Mike Vacanti: That's why I think these conversations interspersing them into how to maintain or increase online client engagement is important.

0:34:03.7 Jordan Syatt: I also think. I'm glad that you explained that, 'cause it's important, it's also... It's not like... It's simply saying what you believe is very, very important, especially in a world in which a lot of people want to... [chuckle] Want to remove your ability to work and to provide for your family just based on having potentially different beliefs. And so being able to just state what you believe unapologetically is, I think, a very good practice, which by the way, not just a good practice for you mentally and emotionally and by you I mean like... For you listening and for me and for Mike and all that. But it's also a really good strategy for business as well, just to be like, being open and honest with what you believe.

0:34:50.2 Jordan Syatt: I've seen a bunch of people who not only are not open and honest what they believe, but they express different beliefs than what they truly believe out of a fear of being seen a certain way or being canceled or whatever, so then their audience becomes a group of people who actually disagrees with what they truly believe, because they were expressing different beliefs, so then that audience found them and now they feel like they've dug themselves into a deeper hole because they can't actually express what they truly believe, which makes...

0:35:21.8 Mike Vacanti: Then you're living in a prison.

0:35:23.7 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, you're in a prison, you don't... You're scared, you feel like you're gonna hurt your business if you express what you believe, so then you end up feeling burned out, whereas if you just express what you believe, the people who don't like you and don't like what you believe will not follow you and they will not hire you. But the people who do agree with you and who do see eye with you, or maybe they don't even agree or see eye to eye, but at least they're open to you having a different opinion and they don't take it personally, and they don't get upset about it and they don't wanna tear you down. Those are the people that you're gonna wanna work with, and that's how you're gonna end up loving your business and loving what you do because you can be honest about it.

0:36:00.7 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, that's a good point. I wanted to push back on it being better for business. I completely agree with creating your own prison completely. I think the one area where it might be better for business, or at least not hurt business, but it definitely is more painful in the short term, is for people who are not as disagreeable, the conversations and negative feedback and pushback are going to be more difficult and neither of us were both on the disagreeable side of 50% of the population, we're not Ari Gold, neither of us enjoy firing, literally enjoy firing people, [laughter] but we're also not on the other side of highly agreeable, but that is one difficult

component doesn't make it wrong, but something to consider.

0:37:05.3 Jordan Syatt: What are your thoughts on client engagement.

[laughter]

0:37:08.9 Mike Vacanti: I love it. I love the way. That was gold. This is a fun episode. I mean, you covered it...

0:37:17.2 Jordan Syatt: "Thanks for listening, we'll talk to you later."

[laughter]

0:37:20.3 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. You covered it so extensively. No, that wasn't where I was going. So you hit on a lot of what I would have hit on. You know what? So I'm going to very quickly reiterate a couple of points that I liked that you made, if I can remember them. Not shaming and creating like an open dialogue and making sure that your client feels as comfortable as possible, admitting fault. It's very, very important. Setting expectations upfront with your client, very, very important. Following up openly and non judgmentally when you haven't heard from someone in a substantial amount of time. All great strategies and ideas and should be implemented. Maybe I'll make a couple of points related to engagement with the program rather than engagement with you. Which there's overlap, right? But you also have clients who aren't the best at filling out their updates, don't wanna be doing daily emails but are getting in the gym consistently, are doing solid on nutrition, are making progress over time.

0:38:40.0 Mike Vacanti: And two things that foster that environment maximally and they both kind of fall under good program design are, don't get your client hurt and program both nutrition and training for your client's actual goals. And these are two things that we'll start with don't get hurt. If we're talking about engaging with a workout program. If you are not requesting technique videos, if you are programming exercise selection that is beyond the skill level of your client for whatever reason, laziness maybe you're sending out cut paste programs like completely, whatever it is, you programming in a way that leads to your client getting hurt is obviously by definition going to negatively... They're not gonna be able to adhere the program. They're not gonna be engaging with the program because they're out for six weeks, eight weeks with a hamstring strain or whatever happens.

0:39:41.9 Mike Vacanti: Programming for a client's goals, the biggest mistake here that we see is a coach programming a client for the type of progress you want that client to make rather than the type of progress that they stated they want to make. I'll give you an example. Onboarded a guy just last week who told me he's done like, I don't remember all the exact programs but a bunch of the main barbell strength power lifting based programs and told me like, "Hey I wanna lose weight. I want to become healthier. I want to enjoy my workouts. I don't really care about setting PRs on big three moves, military press, all of these exercises." And so I didn't eliminate barbells completely from his program but it's like, okay, well then we're not going to be making the the focus of the program around getting stronger and setting PRs on big three even though there might have been a different time especially if I were more into that personally myself at the time, where that would've been my default. Like, hey I know you don't want this but man when people are set in PRs they're making good progress at their office. You can lose fat and continue to get strong for this much time. I think based on where you're at now. I don't really want this but we're doing a barbell based program. Sound good? Cool here you go.

0:41:02.6 Mike Vacanti: Don't do that. That's gonna decrease engagement with the program. And

that's just one of like the many examples around designing a training and nutrition program around what your client actually wants to achieve rather than around what you want them to achieve.

0:41:20.1 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. I love that. I'm gonna keep going on this topic 'cause I think there's a lot of things here that take you from a good coach. A good coach writes good programs and has good communication back and forth and they do a good job. I was about to say they does a good job. They do a good job overall. They're a good coach. They're educated in all of that. A great coach goes above and beyond. And what I mean by that is for example I am, in a way, gonna about to call myself a great coach which I don't mean to do but one thing I used to do that got a really good response from people is when I would put hidden notes in their program. So for example, if let's say I did Bulgarian split squats put Bulgarian split squats in the program, if I needed a note like maybe like technique wise, I don't know drive through heels or squeeze your butt cheeks whatever it is. Sometimes I would just add a note and be like, mwa-ha, ha, ha, like suck it. Something like that. Something simple like that just to make them laugh. Or I would give them a nickname so the top of their program would have their name and it would be like... It would be instead of just saying Mike Vacanti, this month's program would be like Mike "The King of Equity" Vacanti, whatever it is.

0:42:40.9 Jordan Syatt: And I would use a very recent interaction that we had that would allow me to put a nickname in there. Maybe if it was like if I knew they got a dog or they love their dog, I would put like their dog's name instead of their name in the title of the program. Very simple things like that that will show up almost when they're not expecting it. They're not expecting it 'cause... They expect things when they open the email but when they're going through the program they get to the gym who knows maybe they have a tired day whatever it is and then they just see their dog's name or they see something funny that their kid did or they see you say like, ha, ha, ha suck it. Whatever it is. They'll laugh and then they'll just send you an email be like, "Ah that made me laugh. Thank you so much." Or they needed that today. Or like, "I love your programs. I look forward to your notes every week or every month," whatever it is. They'll look forward to that stuff and they'll literally be excited to see what you come up with. Now the downside of that is then you have to come up with new shit every month that isn't even program related which can be a little bit difficult and extra time but that's part of, I think, going above and beyond as a coach is. Especially if it increases engagement.

0:43:47.9 Jordan Syatt: So that, I think, is something super helpful. The other thing is and this goes more to the points that you were making like if they don't like something, don't do it. Is I used to put notes next to all of my clients so that when it was time to write their new program, I knew what they liked, I knew what they didn't like, I knew what equipment they had access to and it was all right there. I didn't have to dig around in my computer. It was like, all right here's Mike "King of Equity" Vacanti and I know that he absolutely fucking hates front squats but he loves doing... He loves doing hammer curls. So even though they're completely different muscle groups and whatever, but I will have those notes in there so that I know on lower body day I'm not giving him front squats. 'Cause if Mike sees front squats he's gonna tell me to fuck off or whatever it is. But if he sees hammer curls he's gonna be like, "Yes all right let's go. I'm gonna do this workout." So maybe I'll give him some type of a squat variation at the beginning but I'll put hammer curls at the end. That will get him excited enough to go to the gym and do the workout.

0:44:50.3 Jordan Syatt: So it's little things like this that will remind you and help you to increase communication and engagement and actually make your clients excited and also not feel just like another number but also know like, "Oh, he knows me or she knows me and they get me and they're here for me."

0:45:08.1 Mike Vacanti: That's really, really good advice. I'm a huge fan of everything you just said.

0:45:10.9 Jordan Syatt: Thank you, bro.

0:45:13.4 Mike Vacanti: This is such a minority like small percentage issue that I don't even know if it needs to be mentioned but that is perfect. If you have a list of 26 exercises that someone says that they hate and they really wanna do and there's a list of seven exercises that are not very good movements for their goals, then there might need to be a conversation in terms of giving the client what they want. Because we all run into a client like that eventually.

[laughter]

0:45:46.1 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. Yep. "I hate front squats and back squats and goblet squats and split squats..."

0:45:51.1 Mike Vacanti: "I don't like lunges."

[overlapping conversation]

0:45:53.0 Jordan Syatt: "And single leg..."

0:45:54.0 Mike Vacanti: "I don't like single legwork. I really don't like using dumbbells in general." [chuckle] This happens.

0:46:00.2 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. The worst is when someone like, "I don't like front squats or back squats or Zercher squats or lunges, forward lunges or reverse lunges. Bulgarian split squats, leg extensions, leg press. I don't like any of those but I really wanna grow my quads."

0:46:10.7 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

0:46:12.6 Jordan Syatt: For fuck's sake.

[laughter]

0:46:13.2 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. Yeah. And then it's like why don't you like them? "Well they're hard. I just don't." It's not like, "Oh, well they cause an issue with this injury that I'm getting checked out at the moment." Yeah. But for 98% of clients, what Jordan just said, having those notes about likes and dislikes, programming around likes and dislikes, making personalized comments to them, these things are gonna massively improve client engagement especially over the long haul.

0:46:43.7 Jordan Syatt: Yep.

0:46:45.2 Mike Vacanti: A lot of clients are gonna engage with the program a month in, two months in, but to maintain that degree of psychological stimulus, increased customization definitely helps.

0:46:58.7 Jordan Syatt: If I was doing one-on-one coaching now, one thing that I might do in my client intake form, like once they've agreed to sign on and and they've paid and we're ready to get going, I might say... I might have a section in there saying, "Tell me which exercises you absolutely hate and never want to do, give me up to five at most. And tell me which exercises you love and want to do very frequently, give me up to five at most." And that way you have their top five most favorite and top five least favorite. So that you know I'm never... If someone's like, "I hate barbell hip thrust," that would be probably my top one. I would put barbell hip thrust on there and so my

coach would hopefully know Mike is my coach. Mike knows never gimme barbell hip thrust. 'Cause when Paul Carter was writing my programs and he would put barbell hip thrust in there I just wouldn't do it. I'm like, "I know what to do." I would find something else that would be equally beneficial but I just wouldn't do it. Like I'm not taking the fucking time to set up a 405 pound hip thrust. Just like, "It's really annoying. It takes a lot of time. It's super uncomfortable and I fucking hate it."

0:48:02.2 Mike Vacanti: What's the real reason you don't hip thrust? Let's get to the bottom of this right.

0:48:06.0 Jordan Syatt: Dude, that's why. It takes so much time.

0:48:08.4 Mike Vacanti: Deadlifts take the same time.

0:48:10.6 Jordan Syatt: That's why I don't deadlift the lot anymore.

[laughter]

0:48:15.3 Mike Vacanti: Okay. Touché. Touché.

0:48:15.4 Jordan Syatt: It's the same. I'm not pulling 500 anymore, the most I'll do like 365 and I'm good.

0:48:21.6 Mike Vacanti: Jordan spent too many years racking and un-racking so many plates.

0:48:27.1 Jordan Syatt: Yes.

0:48:28.0 Mike Vacanti: Every human being has a certain number of plates they can rack and un-rack on a barbell over a lifespan. And Jordan reached his by the age of like his late 20s and is like, "no more!"

0:48:38.3 Jordan Syatt: Dude, I really think that you're right. It's like with the whole 10,000 hour rule, you have 10,000 hours to become an expert and some people get those 10,000 hours in more quickly 'cause they spend more time. And some people it takes a longer period of time. It's like the 10,000 plate rules. I hit my 10,000 plates in a very short period of time and I just hate... And it is also uncomfortable. It's just, I don't like even if I have the fucking pad which I don't like using the pad, I feel a pussy. Mike's like, "I just don't like putting the pad on there. I just don't like it." It's just like, "I don't want. Oh, do you guys know where the gym pad is? I can't find the bar pad." No, I don't want and I'm not bringing my own. People say, I'm not bringing my own fucking bar pad to the gym. Absolutely not. And this is no... This is me. I'll do a leg press. I'll do a squat. I love front squats. I'm not doing a hip thrust. Single leg hip thrust, body weight hip thrust. Absolutely. Program all day. Put those in the inner circle, do those for myself. I think that's such a great exercise. Barbell hip thrust can suck it.

0:49:42.2 Mike Vacanti: Mic drop. Clips Nation with the pussy and the all of it, just Clips Nation. Let's get that thing. I'll share that on my story. Let's get this thing going.

0:49:52.2 Jordan Syatt: I'm gonna hold you do that. When that one comes out I'm gonna be like, "All right Michael, here we go."

0:49:56.0 Mike Vacanti: That will be a clip ready to be on Instagram probably in June and by June of 2023 at the rate I'm going, I'm gonna be dominating content. You'll see. Hope no one clips this

and sends it back. This was really good. I feel feel we... Biggs, thank you so much for that question about maintaining client engagement. info@fitnessbusinessmentorship.com... Actually no, you know what? DM us @personaltrainerpodcast on Instagram. Here's why. Because answering Q&As and DMs, this was a great poignant question. Maintaining online coaching client engagement. Some of the emails that have like four or five paragraphs aren't quite as like podcast. They're not quite podcast material, even though we love you all and you're all wonderful.

0:50:48.1 Jordan Syatt: Yeah and for some reason people email, they feel like we need the entire backstory of their whole life from conception. It's like, just ask your fucking... Engage, that's all we needed, engage. Cool. Boom. We don't need to know where you were born and how... I appreciate it and if we were friends like I'd want to hear about it if we sit down for coffee but we don't need to hear all of that especially 'cause no one else on the podcast is gonna want to hear that whole email. So DM, like Mike said, it's gonna be perfect.

0:51:15.4 Mike Vacanti: Yeah.

0:51:16.1 Jordan Syatt: Mike is like, "all right that was a little harsh, Jord..." [laughter]

0:51:18.0 Mike Vacanti: No, no, no that was great. I was gonna make a political joke. If you listened to this point... If you've listened to this point.

[laughter]

0:51:30.9 Mike Vacanti: Please. We have a gentle men's and woman's agreement to...

[laughter]

0:51:39.3 Jordan Syatt: That was the most awkward thing [laughter]

0:51:48.2 Mike Vacanti: I'll actually give backstory. I stole this "gentleman's agreement" idea about subscribing to YouTube from Sam Parr and Shaan Puri, they host, it's called My First Million. It's like a business finance kinda interesting podcast. And they do this thing where they, "Hey this is free content in return subscribe to our YouTube." Their audience is 99% male. So they have a gentleman's agreement and then they joke that we don't have any female listeners. As soon as I was saying gentlemen's agreement, I was like, "We have a lot of female listeners." And so...

0:52:20.7 Jordan Syatt: Gentlemen's... and a woman.

0:52:21.0 Mike Vacanti: And a woman. It's a one-take show. This is what one-take content is all about is just letting it rip on the internet. And so back to the agreement. If you haven't subscribed to our YouTube channel please do. Those subscriptions are gonna help us grow our YouTube channel reach more people. We're making weekly content just for you answering questions. We don't charge for this. This is free, it's complimentary, says Dave Tate. And so yes, we would greatly appreciate an exchange for what we're giving you. If this is your second or more time listening to the podcast, please subscribe to our YouTube channel Personal Trainer Podcast on YouTube. We greatly appreciate it. Anything else?

0:53:04.7 Jordan Syatt: Thanks for listening. We appreciate you. Have a wonderful week and we'll talk to you soon.

0:53:05.4 Mike Vacanti: Goodbye.

[music]