

The Underground Marketer Podcast – Episode 23 – Full Transcript

Introduction 00:00:03 Marketing, explosive growth, and revolutionary secrets that can catapult your business to new heights. You're now listening to The Underground Marketer Podcast with your host Tudor Dumitrescu, the one podcast devoted to showing new businesses how to market themselves for high growth.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:00:24 Welcome to the underground marketer. This is the place where we deliver the real truth about marketing and explore big ideas that can help new businesses thrive and grow into big ones. I'm your host Tudor. And today I want to address a mindset topic. That's very frequent in personal development circles and for people who are looking to achieve peak performance, and that topic is habits versus willpower because there are basically these two opposing camps, which have completely different ideas about what it actually takes to be successful and achieve your goals. There is the willpower camp, which basically believes that you can achieve your goals by pursuing them through your own willpower and pushing yourself through whatever obstacles come your way. And the way you do this, of course, is by developing and cultivating your desire for the outcome, and then your desire for the outcome and your willpower crushes through whatever obstacles stand in your way.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:01:31 And then there's the opposite camp, which basically thinks that willpower is limited. And it's a mistake to use your willpower because you will run out of it. And when you run out of it, what happens is that you can no longer sustain the challenging things that you were doing, because you simply lack the willpower that you need to actually push yourself through it and achieve whatever it is that you're trying to achieve. So, um, the difference between the two of them is that one focuses on a brute force approach of making progress. And the other basically focuses on developing habits, you know, basically, routines that no longer take effort or willpower to go through and sort of it sort of creates a system. And once you get into that system, that system really pushes you towards your goals. The first theory that really showed up was that willpower is limited theory and you need habits.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:02:34 And it really showed up in the 90s and in the 2000s with research that basically showed that people who are given a task that requires willpower to perform, they're less capable to resist temptations afterward, you know, when they're exposed to them. So for example, if they're given a challenging task that requires their willpower and after they finished the task, they were presented with the choice between broccoli or pizza, they will more likely a higher percentage of them is going to choose the pizza over the healthier alternative. And that's because, so the theory goes, they have a harder time to resist because they've used their willpower to do the challenging task, and now they have less of it. And that's why they're not capable to resist, you know, in a higher percentage at least. And we can sort of notice something similar in our own lives, you know, after you've had a long and tiring day at work or wherever you have a harder time resisting the chocolate in the evening, or, you know, sitting in front of your TV and watch, and you have a harder time doing productive tasks, like reading that require your willpower.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:03:51 So we sort of noticed this in our personal lives, that's where the theory is coming from. That's the sort of experiments that they've run to sort of proving this point. And it actually goes by the name of ego depletion. And basically, it suggests that your ego and the strength of pushing yourself get diminished over time. The more that you use it now,

there are ways to replenish this. You know, so sleep is the biggest one. So you should go to sleep. That's why power naps can be popular in the business community. You know, if you can afford it taking a power nap, 20, 30 minutes can renew you, give you renewed strength. So sleeping is one of them getting eight hours of sleep per night, or however much is the amount of sleep that you work with. These are all ways to replenish willpower. Another very frequent one is by eating sweet stuff.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:04:45 You know? So when you actually eat stuff that contains sugar, you know, that your brain uses up the glucose. Very, it burns a lot of it, you know? So if you think about how much, what percentage of your body, the brain accounts for it's a very small percentage, right? So it's, it's a few grams really of matter compared to the 60, 70 kilos or whatever your average person has. So it's a very small percentage, but yet your brain consumes 25% of your body's glucose, you know, so a very large amount relative to its size. So, um, the, if you eat sugary stuff again, so the theory goes, your willpower again, will be rejuvenated. So there is this camp. And the reason why that the two of them are important is that in sales development, we always ask ourselves, what's the missing key. What's holding me back from achieving the goals that I have, what am I missing?

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:05:46 And I think that this is the problem for a lot of people, you know, and why a lot of people, they read diverse things and they keep looking for stuff because they keep looking for a solution to a problem. That's not very clear for them. You know, they don't really know what's really missing for them. Are they missing the correct system? Are they pushing themselves too hard? And that's why they're, they're failing. What's really going on. And I think that this can differ from person to person, but for sure there are people who do suffer from ego depletion, at least in certain situations, and who can be benefited, you know, by basically doing some of the practices that are going to increase their willpower again. So stuff like sleeping or eating something, you know, some people, for example, go to work, they eat in the morning and then they don't eat until the evening.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:06:40 That can obviously be a big way for you to get your willpower depleted. And it's, it's not effective for you. Right? So I mean, which theory is right. And I guess before asking that I should briefly detail a bit more about the willpower theory. So the willpower theory says that your willpower is basically like a muscle. So the way you train your muscle right is very similar to the way that you can train your willpower by doing difficult things that require you to push yourself to your limits over and over and over again, your willpower gets stronger. And so this camp goes, so your willpower is not actually limited by any factor. That's not mental, you know, the blocks that you have, it's all mental, you know, so I like when I think about these two camps, I like to exemplify each because it just makes it a bit easier to think about and to put their head to head the work of the willpower can be summarized by something, someone like David Goggins with his Can't Hurt Me book.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:07:48 So for those of you who have read both books, you know, that, that the approaches are quite contradictory. You know, so one of them basically tells you, push yourself as hard as you can and never give up while the other one is basically telling you, look to form habits that made you basically to give you a metaphor 1% better every day, and that will ultimately make you super successful. So those are the two different approaches. And now if you ask me which one is correct, I think that both of them have merit for sure. And the reason why I say that is because there certainly is truth to the fact that willpower is not controlled just by the physical aspect of your body. It's not just the physical resource that you consume and that you need to get more of. And the reason why I say this is because recently in the, uh, after

2010, basically, they have struggled to reproduce to either reproduce the results of the ego-depletion experiments or to reproduce results or differences that were statistically significant to any degree of accuracy.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:09:02 And in addition to that, they have also found that the beliefs that somebody has about willpower will affect the level of willpower that they can access. You know, so if you believe that willpower is limited and you take action, you start pushing yourself towards your goals and you meet with some resistance, some sort of pain, some sort of suffering. Then you are more likely to give up compared to somebody who doesn't believe that willpower is limited. And those results that they have obtained are statistically significant. So it makes sense to me that this is going to be, so we know that mindset has a strong impact on these topics. So it can't just be all habits. Willpower definitely plays a role and it can definitely be manipulated mentally, not just physically. So that's my thought on that at the same time, there's no doubt that developing habits and developing routines that you can do without thinking about them is also very powerful.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:10:09 It saves you a lot of energy, and there is no doubt in my mind that it does make it easier to use your willpower. If you turn something into a habit, you're going to consume less energy doing it, basically your body. If you think about this, even from a physical point of view is going to become stronger at doing that task just because it's done in it repeatedly. You know, they say that our brain has neuroplasticity and every time you do something, you know, like for example, hit the tennis ball. You form new connections inside your brain. And these connections are strengthened. The more you repeat the certain action or the certain pattern or the certain habit and this neuroplasticity and the neural connections that you form and strengthen through repetition is what actually makes a habit, the habit, you know, it's what it actually makes it easier to perform that action.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:11:08 And it makes sense because your body wants to naturally consume the minimum amount of energy possible. And if you make it two things that consume energy, it's going to find over time, the way that's going to consume the minimum amount of energy to do that particular task or activity. So that's why habits can be very useful. At the same time. I don't have much sympathy for the idea itself of ego depletion. While I admit that there will be physical components that go into what creates your willpower and what enables you to access your willpower. I think that the mental aspect of it is definitely more powerful. There's no doubt that somebody, for example, who is low on blood sugar and who's low on glucose, is going to have a hard time pushing himself through effort. You know, so imagine that you, I don't know how many of you have had the experience, but if you have had the experience of your blood sugar is low, you know, that you feel like fainting, you can't stand up on your feet and so on.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:12:17 There are some very uncomfortable sensations in your body and you can actually faint if you don't have enough blood sugar and it can actually be very dangerous for you if that happens. So there clearly are some physical limitations here, you know, no matter how David Goggins you are and how much you push yourself, there are some physical limits that are going to show up. So that's definitely true at the same time, you can push those physical limits further and further away through the smart usage of your willpower. And if you believe that your willpower is infinite, it's more likely to be true than not to put it like that. So I think that in terms of your business and in terms of marketing and in terms of pushing yourself further and further, it's best, if you bring the two approaches together, you believe that willpower

is important and you need to have reasons and motivation to pursue your goals and the discipline to do it.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:13:17 And at the same time, you have to do it in a way that's smart. That's going to basically maximize your productivity and the use of the resources that you have. And you do that of course, by creating systems and by building habits that take you closer to your goal on a daily basis, you know, it's much better that you make progress slower, but you do it consistently day after day after day, then that you go into a huge burst. You know, you go at 200% for 10 days, and then you rest the next 20 days because you can't hold that intensity or you struggle to hold it. So, um, there's definitely merit to both approaches. I think that it all comes down to what we're trying to do when we're trying to be productive because there is this saying that you can win every battle, right, and lose the war.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:14:12 And productivity is like that. Because many times we fall into the trap of going, you know, all in David Goggins style and working as hard as possible on whatever task is in front of us without actually stopping to think if we should be working on that in the first place. You know, so perhaps more important than just doing something fast and finishing it faster than anyone else is knowing what we should be working on in the first place and what we should be finishing in the first place. And I think that that's key to it. And I think that this aspect plays a key role in the habits versus willpower debate. So you certainly need both, but I think that when you look at it, in terms of productivity, you can bring the two of them together because the most productive person, in my opinion, is the one who does the right tasks, who chooses, who makes the decisions to do what is actually most important, not what is most urgent.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:15:18 You know, we have a lot of urgent tasks in front of us. Very few of them are important. We can be very David Goggins style and try to do everything that's urgent in front of us and push ourselves through it with maximum willpower and whatnot. But that's not actually being smart about it. We are going to consume a lot of energy. We're going to start burning ourselves out and we're going to remain farther and farther from our actual business goals. It's not actually going to help us get closer to what really matters to the bottom line, whatever that means for us, it's much better to take the habits approach. And really when I think about habits, I think about systems, you know, I think about, and in order to build a system, you need to get very clear about what your goal is and what really matters for you.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:16:06 You know, what are your priorities? And the moment you get clear about your priorities and what really matters for you, then you can start building a system. And for me, habits are actually going to move you every day closer and closer to your goals. And when you do that, you don't actually struggle to move ahead. You know, I know a lot of people who work continuously almost, but they're not getting closer to their goals. And if you look at what they're doing, they're just pushing themselves. They're using maximum willpower, but they're not very clear about their goals and they don't have clear systems in place or habits to take them there. So they're all over the place. You know, they're pushing this massive amount of energy out into the world and into their business, but they're not actually making progress because they have no focus.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:16:57 They have no targets. They're going, you know, they take two steps forward and then three steps backward, two steps to the right. And then, you know, another two steps to the left and they're back in the same place, but they've wasted a lot of effort to do all of that. And the key to stopping this cycle is to realize that willpower alone will not

get you to success by either will systems alone. You know, and the second part of it is what many people nowadays don't get? You know, many people think that if they just follow the system that they've created, or if they just do this and that they are going to get to their desired result in my experience systems without clarifying your goals and what you're trying to achieve and what your priorities are, aren't going to take you in the right direction.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:17:48 You know, what happens with those people who follow systems religiously, but they don't think about their goals is that they will find out in one year, two years, three years, five years, whatever it is that they end up in a place where they don't want to be, you know, maybe they've built this business, they've scaled it to \$1 million or whatever it is. And they realized that they don't actually enjoy running this business. And they've really missed all this time when truly they wanted to run a different kind of business or they wanted to achieve something else with their business or take it in a completely different direction, which they haven't been able to. So that's the risk. If you take the opposite approach, that's why I favor mixing the two of them. You know, you need habits and systems and you need willpower. You need to push yourself and you need to do it smartly by being focused towards very clear goals and purposes that your habits and systems consistently take you to words.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:18:50 So I think that if everybody takes some time, take a few hours a week, I say, take two to four hours a week to think about your business and think about where you're going and where you want to go and what you can do to improve the habits and systems that you already have in place. If you do those two things, then you will find out that you get much farther ahead with a lot more free time. And by using a lot less energy, you know, it doesn't mean that you don't use your willpower and you don't have it available when needed. It just means that you can push yourself much farther and much smarter in this manner. And this brings us close to another topic that I want to address before we wrap up here, which is the role of habits and willpower in supports.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:19:41 You know, a lot of us today, we do fitness and we do things that to improve our physical health and obviously improving your physical health gives you access to more energy in your business. You know, for example, I found out for myself, if I exercise in the morning, I have a lot more energy the rest of the day, and I'm a lot more productive in my business. And when I don't take supersize, the opposite happens, you know, I'm more sluggish, less productive, and so on. So exercise clearly gives you energy, build your willpower. It's very important for you. And I think that this is where the battle between habits and willpower is most visible, you know, in, in the sports world. And clearly, here, you can see that short-term willpower is going to help you, and long term, your systems are going to help you the most in your habits.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:20:33 That's why I think James clear tells the story of the cycling team of the UK of Britain, where their goal was to improve everything, you know, by 1%, every day. So small improvements, you know, adding up and 1% every day is like 36 times better in one year. So it adds up, it compounds on itself, and definitely, systems can do that for you, but you need the willpower to start the system and you need willpower to actually pick the direction that you want your systems to take you in, you know, by getting very, very clear about your goals. So that's pretty much what I wanted to cover for today. Just to summarize now, in the end, I wanted to discuss the issue around mindset and how it's impacted by the two views of willpower being the key to success versus, uh, habits being the key or systems is the key to taking you there.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:21:29 And I think that the truth is somewhere in the middle. I think that there are definitely some physical limitations that all of us have. Willpower can only take you that far. You know, if you do, as I gave the example earlier, if you don't have enough blood sugar, you can want to keep running as much as you want, but you're going to die because your body's just not going to have the resources. It needs to pull it off at the same time systems alone. They're not going to take you in the desired direction. You know, first of all, systems, if you mindlessly create them, if you don't use your willpower to take you towards a certain direction in crafting your system or your habits, you're not going to end up where you want to end up in. You know, you're going to end up in a completely different destination.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:22:15 In addition, willpower is crucial when it comes to starting a habit or creating a new habit because the first times you do it and until you actually get in the groove for it, you will not find it easy to do your habit, you know, and for some habits, you may never find it easy to do them. For example, I am like this with sports, and with physical activity, I never find working out easy, no matter how much I do it, I just never do. You know, it never sort of becomes the habit that takes zero effort to do, and I can just do it. And it's not a problem for me. It's always hard. I always have to push myself. And it's ultimately a skill that you have to learn, you know, pushing yourself through discomfort and through difficulty David Goggins and I was finished with this call, says that we have a governor and you know, our brain, you know, when things get hard, it stops us.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:23:12 And we have to learn to turn that governor off so that we can use more of the willpower that we have inside of ourselves to push further and further. And I think that that's right, and you definitely need that kind of willpower, but you also need the intelligence that comes from systems and goals. That consistency moves you towards your big goal. So that's pretty much a summary and stay tuned for the next episode. And until next time, keep growing your business and providing massive value to the world. Remember you are the reason why we're all growing richer. Our freedoms are expanding and we all living in greater prosperity. Thank you.