

In the book *Can't Hurt Me: Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds*, David Goggins sums up the amazing story of how he was able to turn the devastating experiences such as his childhood trauma to the obesity issues of his twenties into becoming one of the world's fittest soldiers.

This summary takes you through his extraordinary transformative experiences, explains his daily routine and his formula for success in fitness. The book explains how Goggins is able to have a system in which he can successfully reach the limits of his physical fitness.

This is especially useful for those of us who frequently complain about a lack of time and finding reasons not to hit the gym. If you find it hard to motivate yourself to hit the gym, Goggins' experiences can serve as the perfect reference due to his relatability and his success will be an inspiration for those who think that they have an uphill task to achieve fitness.

Early life trauma and violence from his father

Goggins was born in 1975. Unfortunately for him, he did not get to enjoy the pleasures of childhood. His family was essentially enslaved to working for his tyrannical father, Trunnis, who owned a roller-disco rink.

Almost every night between the ages of 6 and 8, he was forced by his father to oversee skating shoes at his skating rink. Here, he and his brother would be subjected to tough conditions of long working hours and loud music while their mother prepared food for the family.

The forced routine of working till midnight and sleeping through the loud music meant that he could not have enough energy to focus on his school. He would often fall asleep in class. As if this was not enough, he frequently had to go through the trauma of watching his father physically hurting his mother over trivial matters.

In addition to his brutal nature, his father was a very miserly person. He opted to utilize his family's slavish labor and subject his children to really tough conditions rather than hiring.

Not only this, he never liked to spend more money than he had to on his family. At any chance, he would find a way to avoid paying for any of his family's expenses. In fact, he was so miserly that he could even deny his children basic health necessities.

At one time, when Goggins had contracted a bad ear infection. Trunnis refused to take him to the hospital. Despite this, his mother defied him and took him to the hospital. Upon returning, she was brutally beaten by him, all happening before Goggins' eyes. It was not unusual for him to witness his father beating his mother.

Sometimes, he would protest. But when he did, he too would get a beating. He would often hide the belt marks from the beating his father would give him. This was an absolutely horrendous time for Goggins and his mother and they needed to be freed from this.

Further life struggles after escaping from his father

Luckily, at the age of 8, they managed to escape from his father. His mother was able to wittily convince his father to obtain a credit card that was in her name. Also, she got a little help from a trusted neighbor.

Eventually, Goggins and his mother had enough of his father and thought they could escape from the torture of Trunnis. They escaped successfully to go live in a small town Brazil, Indiana. His brother opted to stay with their father and as a result, they have not seen each other frequently since then.

Their new life away from their tormentor was not easy either. After the joy of being free from their tormentor wore off, they found themselves in numerous difficulties. They were faced with abject poverty. They lived in a public housing block where they paid seven dollars a month in rent. They had to rely on a \$123 welfare and meager income from her part-time job.

As if things couldn't get any worse, at third grade, Goggins developed a nervous stutter due to toxic stress. This is a condition which young children subjected to severe abuse experience long-term changes to their brain chemistry causing a permanent state of "fight or flight."

He had been through so much that his brain and body were in constant lookout for danger. His hair started to fall out, and his skin turned a different color.

This meant that his memory power was vastly affected. He could not remember the things he learned from school easily. This meant he suffered a lot. He got ridiculed in school as the stupid kid. He resorted to cheating on even simple tasks such as homework and

standardized tests while his teachers remained oblivious to it. His education suffered greatly as a result. As a teenager, he could barely even read.

Struggling with disappointments in his formative years

Struggling with literacy, he faced a desolate and difficult future. Therefore, he tried to find solace by joining the United States Air Force with the dream of becoming an Air Force pararescue – a special type of soldier that parachutes into war zones to rescue injured soldiers.

The prospect of working with the Air Force gave him new motivation. However, just as in his previous life experiences, his dream of success in the military would not come easy either. The main problem this time – swimming.

Unfortunately for him, he had barely swum in his life. He saw a pool for the first time at age 12. They were too poor to afford swimming lessons. Given that he lacked the required swimming skills necessary for the training, he feared the intensity of training that he anticipated ahead. He felt that he was not up to the task.

This caused a lot of fear in him and drastically demotivated him. He was convinced that he could not continue. He wanted to give up.

Conveniently, a scheduled medical test result showed that he had a predisposition to sickle cell anemia. This gave him the perfect excuse at the time to disengage with the Air Force and he jumped on it even though a part of him knew he should probably stick it out.

Fast forward at 24, he faced a misty future of poverty and the constant reminder of the disappointment he had in himself for the failure at the military. He was in constant wishful thinking, wondering how his life would have turned out if he had not quit. He regretted that he quit so easily. To pile on his misery, he had a pathetic job as a night shift pest exterminator.

Every day after his shift, he had accustomed himself to an “eating routine” where he would start with chocolate milkshake and donuts and accompany this with bacon, eggs, cinnamon and all sorts of breakfast junk from his mother.

Sadly, he developed compulsive overeating to mask his emotions and as a result, he gained a lot of weight from about 255 to 300 pounds. Sad and dejected, Goggins lacked the motivation needed to change his habits until a transformative moment later in his future.

Goggins' amazing transformation to become a Navy SEAL

One day, during an ordinary breakfast over some television, he watched a documentary about Navy SEALs in training. He was amazed by the mental strength and endurance levels that Navy SEALs went through to fight through peak physical conditions.

He watched the trainees struggle through the mud and grass with total awe. Only the toughest went through. The thought of how tough one needs to be in order to be successful in the training was a tipping point for him. This would be the spark that he needed to turn his life around.

He suddenly got a renewed sense of motivation to make something of his future. Unlike the case with the Air Force, he wanted to grab on to this chance and not have any regrets about it in the future. He had made up his mind. He decided to enroll. Lucky for him, after enquiring, he found out that there was an open training program to which as a former military recruit, he could be enrolled for training in the Navy.

However, he faced two problems. First, the program was due to close within the next three months. Second, he was way above the recommended weight. He was 297 pounds and the maximum weight allowed was 191 pounds. He now had to take up the challenge of losing enough weight, over 100 pounds before the program got closed.

Following the renewed sense of hope, Goggins embarked on a life-changing journey. He set out to be fighting fit as required by the program. It is with this motivation that over the next three months, Goggins was able to develop an intense punishing weight loss and fitness plan.

He would get up very early in the morning, at 4.30 am. Then he would go on a bike exercise for two hours. After cycling, he would then go swimming for another two hours at the nearest pool. Later, he would hit the gym for an intense muscle workout.

At the gym, his regime would include circuit training and at least five sets of 200 reps for all the major muscles. Later, he would top this up with another two bike exercises. One after the gym and another after dinner. He lost a staggering 25 pounds within two weeks.

Following such milestones, he further intensified his daily routine exercises by adding four-mile runs. It is no wonder that he was fighting fit by the time the deadline came and therefore joined the Navy SEALs training program.

In the training, Goggins had to go through extreme conditions such as minimal sleep and grueling exercise drills while being soaked and covered with water or sand. Despite all the difficult training regimes, Goggins bravely took on the challenge. Unlike the past, when he gave up and quit the Air Force, he was determined to take this opportunity by the scruff of the neck and make a success out of it.

And sure enough, with his determination, after undergoing the tough adverse training drills of the program, he finally graduated and achieved his dream of joining the Navy SEALs which was a splendid achievement for him on many levels.

Goggins' greater success comes from ultrarunning

Goggins finally became a Navy SEAL as he had wished after enduring all the intense training regimes that it is associated with. This on its own is a massive achievement. Especially on the back of his troubled childhood health conditions and his overweight problems. He had clearly come a long way.

However, even these achievements did not satisfy his new-found hunger for new challenges. He would later test his physical abilities by taking part in extreme long distance running of ultrarunning.

In 2005, some of his Navy SEAL comrades were killed in Afghanistan. As a charity event, to raise money for their families, Goggins decided to organize an ultrarunning event. This would give him the perfect chance to test his limits while making money for a good cause at the same time.

He chose the race Badwater 135. This is the toughest foot race in the world.

The race would be 135 miles with the most intense conditions of altitude and heat. It would

begin from California's Death Valley, which is below sea level and finish at an altitude of 8374 ft. Through it, competitors would be exposed to varied intense terrain conditions.

Moreover, it would be run in July, the one time of the year that the Death Valley is potentially the hottest place in the world. Prior to running, competitors need to qualify by taking part in another 100-mile race. Top competitors require at least 48 hours of training to be ready for this.

In order to qualify for Badwater 135, Goggins took part in the 100-mile San Diego race. He finished this race without needing any special training. Only 20 minutes a week of cardio was what he needed.

Despite the loss of bladder and bowel control that haunted him during the span of the race, he was able to finish in only 19 hours and even added an extra 1 mile just to ensure that he had covered the complete race distance. Following this triumph, he was admitted as a participant in the Badwater 135 to race in 2006.

To prepare, he studied and subjected himself to extreme terrain conditions. He trained as hard as he possibly could. Finally, in the highly awaited Badwater race, Goggins training bore fruit as he completed the race in only 30 hours while finishing in fifth place.

Goggins can be an inspiration for anyone

Goggins made a name for himself by becoming one of the few African American Navy SEALs. Clearly, his profile is one that smells of success. His successes can be largely attributed to his work ethic. The crucial matter for his success has been his readiness to put in the necessary work. He offers words of wisdom for those that aspire to achieve their goals.

Given the need for instant gratification that people are generally accustomed to, Goggins serves as an inspiration for those that continue to face obstacles. He believes that if you want to master yourself and harness your true potential, there's no quick fix – only hard work. Talent and passion are nothing without a proper work ethic.

Goggins puts a high emphasis on hard work. Moreover, he rejects the excuses people frequently use avoid putting enough effort for their goals such as spending time with family or being occupied with their desk jobs.

According to him, all these doubters need to do is in the morning. He has been able to achieve so much because he gets up early to do it. Similarly, you need to be an early bird too.

In a typical morning, Goggins wakes up at 4 am, does a 6-10 mile run. He heads back home by 5.15 am to shower and have breakfast. Afterward, he heads to work at 7.30 am and does so by cycling.

This is not the end of his fitness regime. He also finds time for a workout session during his lunch break. Either he does a 6 mile run at a nearby beach or hits the gym for a while. He again cycles back home. The amazing thing is that on a more or less normal nine to five job, he manages to do at least 50 miles of cycling in a day.

So there can be no excuses such as “being at work all day”. Get up early tomorrow morning and start pushing yourself. Because if David Goggins can do it, you can too!

Can't Hurt Me: Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds by David Goggins Book Review

Having gone through a violent, unpleasant childhood of forced labor, trauma and health problems, David Goggins is able to put these painful experiences to become a fit, successful military man.

The challenges of poverty throughout his early life and disappointment and having to overcome obesity eventually serve as a recipe for motivating him towards a life of physical perfection leading him to become a superfit Navy SEAL and a successful ultramarathon runner. David Goggins' transformation into a fitness master through the strict, honest approaches is an inspiring message drawn from his book.

Throughout the book, he emphasizes on the 40% rule. He believes that this is the illusion that one has reached their limits and can, therefore, stop yet actually they still have a lot more left in the tank. We still have 60% more to give.

He claims that the mind often tricks us into thinking that we have exhausted all we could give in order to protect us from suffering and hardship. It is therefore important to become the masters of our minds and push through so as to give our true best all the time. In other words, seek more with the forty percent rule.

He was able to achieve a lot of success in the Navy SEALs and in the ultramarathon because of his relentlessness and absolute determination to be fit. This is, therefore, an encouragement to keep going and always strive for perfection through all the difficulties along the way. This will take you a long way.

The book is a call of inspiration to emulate Goggins' approach to fitness and in light of all obstacles like laziness and procrastination to reach your goal. Keep in mind that if he could do it, so can you.

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