

Fitness Business Summit

– Session 21 with John Berardi

April 18, 2017

JB: So, today, I have a couple of goals with you guys and the story arc of today's presentation is going to first talk about, I guess, my early career.

Second of all, we're going to talk about where PN is now and then I want to talk a little bit about the things I think have really revolutionized our business.

So, quite frankly, there's three things that really I could boil it down to and I think you guys are going to really like it. I was actually at lunch with a group of people today and one of the young women that was with us was talking about her business and I was like, "oh my gosh, you're going to so love my talk."

So, I think this is going to land for a lot of you guys actually.

So, I guess I started in this field, I don't know if I should admit this or not, in 1991. So, I was about 17 years old and I got hired to work at the front desk of a gym. That was my first job in fitness.

Then they're like, well this guy doesn't suck too bad, so maybe we'll have him take people through circuits. Do you remember when that was a thing at the health club? There was like a weight circuit and it was a seated bench press and next to that was the seated row and you had cardstock workout programs that sat in a little bit in the corner of the gym...you young people are like, "dude, be quiet, what are you even talking about?"

For you other folks, that was my first gig in fitness and then I went on and I got certified and I started training clients and I put my wife through university and I really got my first go of full-time training right after university. I moved to Miami Beach and I started a personal training business down there.

I was really lucky because I stumbled into this crazy environment. I don't know how many of you have spent time in Miami Beach in the 90s (whistle), yeah, there you go. I was on South Beach, right, and I mean, I walked into...like I had TV stars, movie stars, musicians, professional athletes who were just hanging out on South Beach working out with me, right, so it was a really crazy learning environment for me.

It took me a little while to get over myself, right, because I went from college student to making \$15,000 a month training people in my first month and this was in the 90s, right, and so it took me a while to actually start looking at my business, you know, once I got over the fact that I had money in my bank account for the first time ever and I was rolling with A-listers or whatever.

I basically had two major concerns. The first concern was this; I was passionate and on fire about fitness at this point in my life. I still love what I do and PN does today and I really felt like, not only did I want to change people's lives, but I wanted to change the industry. I wanted to have a huge impact and make a big, big difference, but the truth was whenever I was totally full and booked up with clients solid, I had only about 20 clients, and I couldn't handle much more than that.

Have any of you guys ever had that experience where you're like, okay, 20 clients three times a week means 60 hours a week on the gym floor, right? That's simple math. You don't have to be a genius to get that...and then what else do you have to do on top of that?

It's business management stuff.

You're writing programs, record-keeping, managing billing, you're trying to do some lifestyle coaching, like my clients would call me from the grocery store and ask what kind of peanut butter should I get?

Then you're marketing and you're obviously trying to acquire some new leads in case clients leave, right?

So, how many extra hours of that are you spending? Ten, 20 hours a week. So, that was problem # 1.

I wanted to have a huge impact, but really if I thought about it, if I had good retention, I might only work with 40 people total over the course of a year.

So, that was problem # 1 for me, okay.

Have any of you guys experienced this kind of thing where you're like, oh my gosh, I'm impacting 40 people this year and I'm working 80-hour weeks.

Yeah? Anyone? Raise your hand. Woo!

That's exciting for you. It's true, right?

And I expect a lot of you are either coming to the dawning realization today or this week or at some point in your life recently that, wow, there's got to be a better thing than this and some of you have already solved that and you're looking for the next level. So, I want to talk to both today.

The other big problem, and this was the much harder one to admit. It's way easier to be like, oh poor me, look how hard I'm working.

You know, the more difficult thing is when you actually start looking at your client results.

So, think about it, you're working 60 hours a week on the floor plus all those supplemental hours trying to grow your business, replace clients that might leave and you're still trying to get great results for them, right?

And for me, when I actually first started looking into my data, I started to realize that one out of every 20, I might get the kind of jaw-dropping transformation that I actually want to achieve with all my clients and you know what I'm talking about there, like when they walk around on South Beach or wherever they walk around, people are like, is that Daniel? I didn't even recognize you. You look amazing, right? That's what you hope for for all your clients, but I'm getting that one out of 20 times and that feels like a little bit of a bummer.

Then, nine out of 20 times, I might get noticeable results, so someone, maybe their blood profile changed or their body changed in some meaningful way and it wasn't jaw dropping and it wasn't spectacular and I couldn't splash them all over the cover of my marketing materials, but they did fine. They did well.

Then, there are these people that are getting poor results, but they kept training with me and at the time I could never really figure it out, I was just a young dude on South Beach and I'm like, doesn't everyone just want to look hot, you know? And they're just still training and they're not looking hot yet. What's going on here?

I was like, oh maybe they're just happy having a trainer and they like to tell people, well, you know my trainer said...or, I don't know, maybe they just felt like they weren't dying as rapid a pace as they might have been otherwise. I didn't really get it at the time, I've figured it out now.

Then there were the last five. What happened to them? They just dropped out.

So, I looked at my metrics and it wasn't that impressive. So, I was making a ton of money, I was working my ass off and I don't know, what did I have to show for it? I wasn't making this huge industry impact and I felt like I was only impacting like one or five people a year as a trainer.

Kind of a bummer, right? And so it kind of went on like this for a few years and at that point, I kind of got bummed about the whole fitness industry in general. I externalized it a bit, like, yeah maybe I just shouldn't work in fitness. Work in fitness sucks. Maybe I'll go do something else, right? So, I went and I did a master's degree. I figured if I went to school and I learned more, I could figure

out how to be more effective as a coach and you guys can all laugh at me now because it was obviously flawed thinking, like, my exercise science master's degree is going to change everything about my client results, oh and give me a better business that's scalable and automated and all these things, right? Did none of that. I don't regret it, but nevertheless, that was the next few years and I continued to work with clients during this time.

Thankfully, late in my PhD studies, I met a guy named Phil Caravaggio. So, Phil was a systems design engineer from a big University in Canada, Waterloo, it's kind of like the MIT of Canada.

People know this stuff. It's amazing. You guys are so excited, just clapping for everything. Where are you from? (Waterloo) Waterloo, fantastic.

So, Phil was in their engineering program, which is a big deal for people from where we're from, and so Phil was passionate about fitness too, but he came from this whole other world, right, he was designing web interfaces for IBM and companies like that.

So, we got to be friends and I told him some of the problems of my early training business, and he's like, dude, you just want to help people, I call tell that. Why are you leaving? You're going to go be an academic when you actually want to do this, that's stupid. So, tell me about your problems.

So, I kind of described exactly what I described to you guys in a little more depth, and he's like, well, being a better coach I can't necessarily help you with that, but there are a whole bunch of ways to automate and scale what you're doing so you can work with way more people than what you're working with now.

I was like, oh tell me more. So, we kind of, I don't know, started with some questions, we started just exploring this lightly, and I feel like all great innovations in your personal life, in your business life, in the world start with questions more than anything.

So, our questions were simply what if you could help more people? Like a lot more people.

And we usually assume there's a tradeoff between helping more people and the efficacy of what you're doing, right?

We assume, yeah, yeah, you're going to scale it, but the quality is surely going to drop off, and we said, but what if we tried building something where that wasn't the case; where we could help way more people, but so the quality actually got better.

Then, we asked another question; could we have better leverage, and here leverage meant over our own time. So, in other words, if I was capping out just by the simple limits of my human energy and time capabilities at 20 clients, could I have more leverage to coach way more clients than that and could we have better leverage over the clients themselves?

In other words, help facilitate change in a better way with way less input than an exclusively one-on-one, heavily intensive coaching program, and last of all, could we do it in a much more profitable way?

So, these were the questions we started with to solve a particular problem; my original problem, which I described to you, and today, things are a little bit different. I want to show you a two-minute video here about what it looks like today.

(start video)

JB: So, this is what we do or a portion of what we do at Precision Nutrition. We've coached to date, the number has to be updated, over 50,000 clients now and we've lost over 1 million pounds.

(video–

Coach: Congratulations, you have won \$25,000 on behalf of Precision Nutrition.

Client: Oh my god.

Coach: You did it!)

JB: And we do this crazy thing where we go around the world and surprise our best clients with money.

(video–

Coach: You've lost so much this year!

JB: Like even in the dark of night we're outside their house.

(video–

Client: Oh my God, thank you. Really?

Coach: Yeah!

JB: Now, this is an all online coaching program, so what you're watching here is clients meeting their coach who they've interacted with for like a year for the first time...

(video–

Client: Oh my God!

JB: ...and their coach is giving them lots of money at the same time.

(video–

Coach: Look at you.

Client: Oh wow.

Coach: Woo!

Client: This has been one hell of a journey.

Coach: It's worth it!

(video–

Coach: Chin down, straight down so you can take a look at that.

Client: Oh awesome! Thanks dude.)

(video–

Client: I wanted to lose weight and permanently lose weight and if I had habits that you could stick with and make part of your life.)

(video–

Client: What's been most profound for me is not the kind of losing weight, it's the whole how I am different.)

(video–

Client: I feel like anything I want to do is possible and I gotta say there's never been that point in my life that I felt that way.)

(video–

Client: I just can't believe it sometimes how well it has worked. I just, it freaks me out.)

JB: And sometimes we bring our stacks of cash for the young dudes because they seem to love that.

(video–

Coach: You can't bring this [the check] to the bank.)

(end video)

(Applause)

JB: Thanks, guys.

So, I always get a little choked up when I see that. It's one of the favourite things that I do and at PN, it's one of our most exciting times of the year. Two times a year, we get to go out and surprise people all over the world. We've been to Italy and Australia and England just showing up on people's doorsteps and concocting some elaborate schemes to surprise them with their coach and with money.

So, the original questions we set out to answer were could we coach more people and have more leverage and have better results and make more money. So, you've seen we've coached 50,000 people now.

I mean, how many coaches would that have taken to reach 50,000 people at the rate that I was coaching before?

We've done it with 20 coaches, 20.

Each coach doesn't work with 20 or 30 people; they work with 350 people at a time.

Now, everyone's first thought goes to, oh my God, how can you coach 350 people at the same time and have quality and results?

Well, don't forget what I just showed you. Amazing body transformations all the time.

Thousands and thousands of them. Our PN hall of fame, our women's hall of fame, people who have achieved this level of kind of transformation is like 1500 and our men's hall of fame is like 900 or something like that.

And I only say this, not to brag about it, but because I want to eradicate the notion that coaching more people or having a lot of clients per coach somehow makes it worse.

In many ways, I think it makes it better. I want to show you the stat I'm most proud of, which is our rate of compliance.

How often, over the course of a year, because that's how long our coaching program is, do people do what we ask them to do?

Okay, we call it consistency because compliance sounds very policing and militaristic and that sort of a thing.

So, we say how often do they do what we ask them to do?

And so I pulled up some aggregate data from a friend of mine who works in the pharmaceutical industry and when we look at the rate of compliance with prescription medication for heart disease, cancer and diabetes, so a lot of these meds are life prolonging and, in a lot of cases, life saving, people take that medication about 55% of the time, okay?

If you're shocked, I was at first too. We often joke in fitness, oh, my clients are just looking for the magic pill.

Well, I submit, even if we had that pill, they'd only take it half the time.

In PN coaching, though, when we break out the exercise that we ask them to do, our exercise clients get exercise prescription, and nutrition prescription or nutrition coaching, the exercise they do about 70% of the time and just a little bit higher than that for our nutrition recommendations.

Now these data factor in everyone.; the people who might have dropped out of the program, the people who had low consistency, so this is the aggregate of everything, which I'm extremely proud of.

I mean, we're asking these people to exercise a few times a week and eat certain foods and maybe eliminate certain foods and do practices and habits and they do it 7/10 times over the course of a year.

I think that's impressive.

So, the question becomes how and I want to talk about that today.

The next thing I'll just briefly mention about our business is when we first started doing this and having the kind of success that we had, we had professionals, fitness professionals all around the world say teach me how you guys do this, and then we released the Precision Nutrition certification and we've had 40,000 professionals go through that program now.

Many of you are in the room today, I think, and I bring that up because it connects two things that I think are really important to this talk specifically.

One thing we're really proud of with the certification is some of these amazing folks, some of whom are speaking here this weekend, are people who have gone through the program also and have given us beautiful testimonials and video testimonials and things like that because it's made a difference in their coaching and their lives and we have NFL strength coaches on here, we have Jon Goodman from the PTDC and Eric Cressey and people who you know who they are.

The next thing, and this is why I bring that up, is because anyone who has gone through our education program can now use something we released last year, which is called ProCoach.

So, for all of PN's history up until last June, we had our coaching program, which you saw. Coaches can coach a lot of people very effectively and successfully and have a great revenue based on that.

Then we have this education program for fitness professionals, but they're like well what do I use? How do I use your tools? How do I use your curriculum, your program?

And we didn't have a way to do that, we just taught them what it was like.

But with ProCoach, what we've done is given them our curriculum and software to use in the coaching of their own clients.

So, basically, they can coach PN-style coaching, but produce those results with them as the coach, not us, okay?

And the cool part about it is, so we've coached 50,000 people to date since we started and we started this business 12-13 years ago.

Since June, our ProCoaches have coached 100,000 more people, which is incredible.

It took us like half of my career to get to 50,000 and in the last nine months, we got to another 100,000, which I think is super awesome and I'm super proud of it.

(Applause)

Thank you.

Then, you know, again, I don't show you all these things to brag, but remember these things started with questions. I was a solo-preneur personal trainer training 20 people and thinking of leaving the field because I don't know if I can make enough money, I'm working my ass off, this isn't sustainable, I can't possibly do this forever, my clients aren't even getting that good of a result.

I was freaking out and then I got with some smart people, we asked some questions and the answers to the questions panned out in what I'm showing you.

So, here's our revenue since 2003 and we're trending towards about \$40 million in revenue this year.

(Applause)

I love you guys so much. It's like you're just clapping, I feel so much energy from you today, thank you.

So, now, enough about PN. For some of you who are like, "yeah, whatever dude, stop talking about your numbers and all that stuff. I'm here to learn something."

Okay, well, this is that part.

I want to share with you the things that I think made what I showed you just now possible.

So, how can you coach more people in a way that gets more leverage, in a way that gets even better results than you're doing it now, one-on-one, super time intensive and in a way that makes you way more money than you could imagine coaching could ever deliver.

Well, that's what I want to break down. I break it down into three very, very simple things.

One is a practice-based curriculum, and I'm going to dig into these. These are in order of importance, I believe.

Two is expert coaching and three is digital technology.

Now, as we go forward, obviously I have our business to rely on. I'm not a business coach. So, I'm going to share examples from our business and how we've done this.

What I want you to do, it's not necessary to listen to our examples and focus on those, but think about your business. How can the things I'm sharing and the principles I'm sharing translate into what you do? In some cases, it won't at all. In other cases, you'll be like, oh I can totally do that, but I have to do it differently in my business.

That's the goal for the next however much time we have left together, okay?

Your mind has to think about, beyond my example, beyond the Precision Nutrition story right into the heart of your business and say, oh wait, could I use curriculum in what I do? I teach movement; how would I make a curriculum for that? How could I do this kind of practice-based thing or this expert coaching and how could I use digital technology? Is there something out there for that? Could I build it? Could I hire it? That's what you need to be thinking. That's how I think you get things out of events like this, all right? So, let's go.

Curriculum. When you think curriculum, what do you think? Probably school, university, classes you had to take, what was on the syllabus.

Well, that's an apt analogy to a point because ours is a practice-based curriculum.

In this world, I don't think people want to learn how to get in shape. I think they want to be in shape and there's a difference. Do you agree?

(Yes)

Learning how to be in shape activates your frontal cortex, your thinky brain. You can learn all day about getting in shape and not be in shape.

What you need to do when you want to be in shape is activate a totally different part of your brain, the part of the brain that governs change, behaviour, routine.

You know this about business because if you go through any business coaching groups, that's what they're working on.

So, for us, the curriculum has to be a change-based curriculum that's rooted in daily practices and I'll talk about that in a second.

I believe that goal achievement happens reliably when you do two things and I think that we might not always get it right in fitness.

We talk a lot about goal setting and how many times in your life have you sat down with a client and set goals with them? How many times? A lot. A lot, a lot? (over and over) Over and over, yes.

And I don't know how many of us think about it these terms, I didn't for most of my career.

But when I actually look at it and break down how change or goal achievement happens, I think it happens when you break down the thing that you want to achieve, which you can call your goal, into a set of specific aptitudes, which we'll call skills.

And you have to build those skills, there's no other way to build them, but daily practices.

So, if you think about it, practice builds skill, skill leads to goal achievement.

Let's take it out of fitness for a minute. Let's talk about you want to learn to play the guitar, speak a language, do gymnastics, any learned activity.

How do you do that?

Well, you have to practice something, don't you? Why do you have to practice the guitar to learn to play the guitar? You can't just be like, "I want to be an excellent guitar player. Great. I'm going to pick up a guitar and do it."

No, you need to practice something and if you have a skilled coach, what they do is take you through a curriculum essentially, and this thing really, really hit home for me when I had children.

My wife and I have four children now and our first, which is our oldest now, started gymnastics when she was 18 months old and I watched how they take these little toddlers who can't even walk properly, they're like ...and their head's too big for their body, right?

And in four years, they're going upside down on these rings and they have the strength and coordination and fearlessness to do these complicated things.

Now, my oldest daughter is 7. She can do those things now and the cool thing is I've watched the progression.

I sit there at gymnastics every time she goes to class.

In fact, as I'll tell you in a second, I decided to take gymnastics myself as an adult because I'm like if I'm just going to be sitting on my ass over here while she's doing an activity, I'm not doing that anymore, so I'm like, hey, gym owner, can you just give me private lessons while she's here. They're like, "sure, that's great."

So, then I started learning things too. How do you learn things? Well, you need a progression. You guys know this from exercise, right? Does someone come in on day 1, want to learn how to do a complicated movement and you're like oh great, snatch, here's a loaded bar, copy me. No, you don't do that. Why? Because you know there's a series of moves and progressions and skills someone has to develop. So, what do you do first? You maybe do a movement assessment. You're like, oh well, the hips aren't in good shape for this and maybe the knees and ankles need some work too and shoulders, there's no way you're even going to be able to rack the bar in that position. We need to start with some movement prep, rehab, prehab, facilitation work, stuff like that before we even give you a broomstick and then maybe a loaded bar. What have you done? You've just had them practice things to build skills that achieve goals.

Now, I'm a visual person; I like to look at this visually. So, I've created this thing much to the chagrin of family, friends and coaches that I work with and the things that I want to work with in my life, but you can download this from our website.

So, when creating a curriculum, it's as simple as writing the goal that you want to achieve at the top, deciding which skills need to be developed to achieve that goal, and then deciding what things you'll practice.

Now, in PN coaching, it breaks out with specific timeframes. So, for us, we look at skill 1 that we want them to develop and we assume it's going to take about a month and then we break that down into two practices, each taking two weeks, and every day they practice something and they do that for two weeks and then we give them the next practice and these aren't random, right? It's just like teaching a kid to do gymnastics. Once they learn one skill, then we build on that, just like teaching a client to lift weights or do any other complicated movement.

Do this thing first, then you do this, right?

But we do it on the nutrition front and lifestyle change front.

So, I'll give you an example of this. So, let's say the goal is to learn how to eat better.

So, month one, we know that focusing on proteins, carbs and fats at the beginning is probably a mistake.

What people need to do is become more mindful and aware of what they're eating in the first place and the simple increase in mindfulness and awareness of what they're eating starts changing how they eat before we even tell them what to change.

So, what do we do to give them more mindfulness? Rather than proselytizing about it and wagging our finger, which is what we often do in the fitness industry when we want people to be more mindful; pay attention to your life. Great, but how do I do that? I'm not doing it now, it's a skill I don't have? How do I do that?

So, for us, practice 1 in the first two weeks might be eat slowly.

So, we teach people how to do that and every day, that's all they have to do. Every time you eat, you eat slowly. Here's what that looks like, here's what that means. It sounds super simple and goofy here, but it's built out in our coaching, right, because we address them, we contact them every day.

Then, the second practice is eat until about 80% full. Another way we call it is eat until satisfied, not stuffed.

If people can practice this every single day, this isn't you should pay attention to your life, but at the end of this four weeks, they know how to pay attention to their life.

They've been doing it. They've been practicing.

Do you get where I'm going with this?

Practice leads to skills, skills lead to goal achievement.

Now, in our coaching program, we have 12 essential skills that we want people to build, 24 habits that they build over that time and if this sounds like Mickey Mouse and simple and that could never work, just remember the pictures that I showed you, okay? These are massive transformations, this is leverage. Small lever, achieves big results.

So, let's talk about how you might think about generating practices because this isn't easy or intuitive at first. What practices can I come up with to teach people the things that I want to teach them? Okay?

So, we have a **5S criteria** for it. The first is **Simple**.

Now, not simple to you, but simple to the client. How will you know if it's simple to the client? Someone tell me, how will you know?

Hey, you can ask them, perfect. It's how you should probably go about doing it. Amazing how we sometimes forget to ask.

The criterion for us is on a scale of 0-10, 0 being there is no way I could ever do this, 10 being of course, is that what you would ask me to do? Do you think I'm an idiot? They have to get about a 9 or 10/10.

That's what we would consider simple. It's something they feel like they could do on their worst day, not something they would do on their best day.

Next is **Segmental**. It breaks bigger things down into their component parts.

So, eating better is this big complicated ball of thing, right?

Even paying attention to how you eat is. How can we break that down further?

Next is **Sequential**. You have to start with thing 1 and then do thing 2 and do thing 3. So, if you're ever struggling with this about lifestyle change with your client, just think about what you already do with movement probably, right?

Sometimes, we just forget. We do this most of the time if we're good exercise coaches and we go to nutrition and we hand them a diet.

We're like, here, follow this diet. That is, and we've all done it in our careers, so there's no reason to feel bad about it, giving them a loaded bar and saying copy me, do the snatch.

That's what it is. That's what giving someone a diet means.

A whole bunch of difficult skills wrapped up into something that you don't even know if they will have the ability to follow for longer than seven days, even one day.

Strategic. I rarely ever call this simple with clients, by the way, because as most of you probably know, a lot of your clients are more successful than you are; financially, professionally, whatever the case is.

So, imagine, okay, a 22-year-old like I was, comes up to one of my executive clients and I'm like, well I'm just going to give you a simple little baby habit, it's not going to be too hard for you, you know, it's all you can handle right now. Like, my net worth is 100 times yours, young person. You can't be condescending to people like that, so we call it strategic, okay?

It's the strengths, you're leveraging their strengths to address what's in their way first.

People often say this habit change thing feels slow, though, and my clients want results now, but it's not actually slow if the first thing you do removes their biggest limiting factor because then there's a rush of progress.

Then you're like, what's the next limiting factor?

Boom, remove it, rush of progress.

It's not slow when you look at limiting factors, which is strategic, okay?

Last is **Supported**, and this is where the rest of our coaching comes in.

The idea is that through teaching, coaching, mentorship and accountability, you layer that over or under, however you want to look at it, the daily practices, so they have a chance of being successful even when things get hard mentally, emotionally or physically.

So, that's how we create practices and how we display them in our coaching program, and it shows up on your phone or it shows up on your desktop or on your iPad, is every day we ask them and remind them about the habit that they're practicing and ask them to tell us yes or no did they do it.

The habit is articulated when you click on the green box, the green card, you can read about what we're specifically asking you to do, but after the first day of reading it, you know it, so then from there forth you just tell us yes or no.

Then, what we do is we deliver lessons and those lessons come in written form or audio, which you can download and listen to in the car on the way to work, and those lessons are designed specifically to support the habit that they're practicing now, okay?

I find what people do often, as a client and sometimes as a coach, is we sort of give them the fire hose method of learning.

You know, we ask them to practice eating protein, but then we're giving them articles on protein and everything else to read.

So, for us, we're like when it's time to work on protein, we give you two weeks of lesson content around that practice and nothing else. Intermittent fasting may be very interesting to you or the client right now, but we'll learn about that later when we talk about meal timing and not now when we're talking about protein.

See what I mean? That's supported. You support the practice that they're working on right now so that their knowledge acquisition, frontal brain thinky stuff, is in line with the other brain processes that they're working on simultaneously. You get it? Okay.

So, I mean, I don't have a lot of time to go through the entire program, but we don't have any secrets.

Part of the reason why I even share this is because you will sit here, read the practices and start doing the thing that every human should do in this scenario and go there's nothing revolutionary here, I already know all this stuff. Heck, my clients even know to do all that stuff, okay?

If you read it, and we'll go through it together, that's what you should feel right now.

You would also be wrong to dismiss it as ineffective because I already showed you what it does repeatedly, reliably, consistently.

So, now I'm going to teach you why it works; why it looks so dumb and simple and easy and everyone knows this and connect that with why it works.

Okay, so the way that we build, you know, this is one of our programs. We have a few different programs, different tracks people can be in based on how they're coming to us, whether they're male or female, want to gain muscle, lose fat, whatever, but here's an example track.

So, the first practice is really simple. It's getting in the habit of doing practices.

So, we have people, we coach them through picking a 5-minute action that they can do every day for the next two weeks. They get to pick it themselves. They start out the program with a deep sense of autonomy and a belief in the relationship that we're going to have together as being a guided partner relationship rather than an expert telling you what to do relationship.

Next, we work on what I already told you about; appetite awareness and development. We call these anchor practices because even if you forget about protein, carbs and fats or you're travelling and you can't get the right ratio that you think is important, if you just pay attention to what you're eating, eat slowly and eat until satisfied instead of stuffed, it probably doesn't matter for a little while what the rest of the details are.

So, these are the anchor habits. Next we dig into really concrete things like proteins, carbs, fats. You can see them appearing up through week 14.

Then, we start doing meal planning-type activities; how to plan ahead, how to have a cooking ritual if that's what you need, how to envision where you're going to eat at a restaurant if you're in San Diego for a conference or whatever the case might be, and then we start doing things like recording what you ate.

So, we start looking at the diet more holistically at that point, and remember, they're practicing these things every day for two weeks and then we're supporting that with lessons and coaching, and we'll talk about coaching later.

Then, we start digging into other things like sleep ritual, like lifestyle practices that definitely influence what you eat and eating influences this practice. Sleep is so critical to this whole process, so we have to have it in there.

Then, we start to experiment with what we call stretch or experiment practices. So, one of our famous stretch experiment practices is drink only calorie-free beverages for the next two weeks and it is amazing what comes up when we ask people to do that for just 14 days.

The first thing is, oh my God, you're telling me calorie beverages is bad? I can never drink a calorie beverage again? No, that's not what we're saying. We're just saying try it for the next two weeks. It's a little experiment and I want to see what comes up for you, and we find all kinds of crazy things.

Some people are like, man, I'm really dependent on alcohol, I never even expected that.

Other people are like, wow, I drink a lot of fruit juice or whatever the case may be.

Some people just don't want to do this so badly, they look for loopholes, like, but post-workout drinks are good, right? I need my post-workout drink. For the next two weeks, no you don't.

So, we find all these interesting psychological things that come up. So, this is almost like a psychological test as much as it is a physical nutritional challenge, you know what I mean?

So, we have a bunch of these that come up.

Then, we take a little break from practices, like, hey we've been doing this together for about half a year, let's take a little information vacation together.

Then, we come back in and at this point we start building on the things we've learned so far and you can see the practices get a little more open ended at this point, so we're using targeted recovery strategies. We might play around with try and eat whole foods only for the next two weeks and see what comes up there. See how difficult that is for you. We're doing rubber meets the road stuff here. People always preach eat only whole foods; I dare you to try it for two weeks. Legit whole foods, unprocessed only. I dare all of you in this room, you guys are the elite people about this, to do whole foods only, only, for the next two weeks. It's hard.

You don't have to keep going after that. We're not saying whole foods is the best thing and you should do it for the rest of your life, we're just saying that it's an experiment that you can do that will bring up some interesting things.

Then, we start to consolidate; protein and veg. We do more practice on 80% full and appetite awareness and then we start getting into a little bit deeper stuff like mind-body scans.

We do fitness information vacation and you'll be amazed at how many people freak out on that one. We're like, don't read any blogs, articles, any fitness information for the next two weeks.

It's really challenging for a lot of people.

We look at stress. We look at many things that you guys do in your business. We help them create a fitness mission statement, so that beyond this program, they can start to have an identity for themselves around fitness and then we celebrate progress and we even do a pay-it-forward thing at the end where we have them go out and find someone who is not as far along the path as they are now and mentor them. So, this is one of our full curriculum sets for the full year.

Now, one of the things that many people come in and ask initially is do most of your clients go through this? The answer is yes, they're in this bucket of type of client. If they're a muscle-building client, they might get something a little bit different, but yes, generally, and they're like, well that's like one size fits all, I'm supposed to hate that, right?

The answer is we teach a different kind of personalization.

We call it the owner's manual concept.

So, here's what that looks like. At the end of a lot of lessons within our curriculum, we ask probing, insightful questions.

So, here's just a few examples, but you'll see this at the end of many of our lessons, we'll say *"write your owner's manual"*.

So, some of the questions are here:

“What are three things that will tell you you’re moving closer to your goal?”

“What are other forms of progress besides the scale that will tell you that you’re making progress?”

“List three common situations in which you’re likely to make impulsive decisions around food”

Then,

“For each of those situations, list one strategy to anticipate and deal with that.”

Now, for any of you guys who have been through business coaching, doesn't it sound a lot like what your business coach asks you, but just in the business domain?

Why aren't we doing that with clients? Because we don't know how yet.

Well, we do at PN and this is what we teach every single day how you can ask probing questions so that someone's answer becomes their personalization.

You don't have to personalize for people when you ask them the right questions and doesn't that lead nicely to some of our other goals of scalability, doesn't it?

Instead of me having to answer every client question and tell them how they should behave in a situation while they're travelling and they might not have access to the normal healthy food they have at home, we ask them questions, which are automated, which I don't have to ask every single time, so that they can find the answers themselves and our lessons help them find those answers. Does that make sense to you guys? Okay?

So, this is the real crux of this owner's manual concept is that there is a coach monitoring them, so this helps collect information about the client so that we can help troubleshoot with them when we need to.

It also asks them to test hypotheses and collect personal data for making decisions.

It really engages them in the coaching process in a totally new way that they've never experienced before.

It increases their self awareness and self knowledge and puts them in charge, helping them take personal responsibility and reducing something that's well known in coaching psychology, which is called resistance.

Have you ever asked a client to do something and they tell you all the reasons why they can't? Once you overcome them, they get mad at you and now that you're like an adversary of theirs, well that's kind of a problem, right? If you and your client are adversaries, even if it's just on one issue, and the reason is because you're undermining their autonomy. You're not respecting the fact that they're an independent individual and they have concerns. The owner's manual takes a lot of that away. They answer their own questions and become in charge of their experience.

Now, this leads really nicely into the next section on coaching.

But you can see already that curriculum, I had number 1 because I think it does all the things that I listed we tried to solve.

Notice how if you have a curriculum, a set of habits that are automated that go out to your client every single day, they just say yes or no, you have a set of lessons that are pre-written and prerecorded that they can listen to, that they can interact with, you have a set of questions, which is like homework, if you will, that they can interact with every single day. This curriculum takes away a lot of the things that you don't need to do a thousand or a million times in your career, but you're doing right now.

You're already doing this and you're not scalable because you have to do it or because one of your coaches has to do it every single client every single day until you die or retire.

And we're like, that's what machines do really, really well.

So, that's cool, we're going to let the machine do that, which frees us up to do what the humans do really well, which is coaching.

You can automate lessons and curriculum. You can't automate coaching and that's what you're here for.

So, coaching. We have six things that we teach our coaches that we think are essential in the journey of a health and fitness client:

First and foremost is **understand your client**, which is strangely at odds with how we've mostly been taught to look at clients, and I'll talk about that more in a second, but understanding your client is job #1.

Know who they are, what they need, what they want on a much deeper level than you think you need right now.

The courage phase. **Encourage them during the courage phase.**

We staff up, now we don't hire new people to do that, but we actually get our coaches who coach one of our cohorts to help our newest cohort that just started during the courage phase.

What's the courage phase?

We all have a courage phase in our life. It's when we start something new, but we don't have the skills to actually accomplish that.

So, it makes sense that it would take courage, right?

That's what every new fitness journey is like, we just forget.

A client comes to you and is like, I'm out of shape, I'm overweight, I'm unhappy and I'm unhealthy, I would like to get in shape.

The thing is they're not in shape right now because they don't have certain skills to accomplish that.

It's an act of bravery to actually start. What do they need during that phase?

Certainly not a boot-camp-style kick in the ass from an authoritarian coach.

What they need is encouragement. Now, you can play authoritarian coach at other points of the journey, but at this phase they need the most encouragement.

So, that's what we deliver and we get lots of coaches working on this because we need lots of encouragement when we walk into a dark room and we don't know where the light switch is.

Number three, **support a known cadence of accountability.**

Now, we all know accountability is important, but many of us don't know that it works best when it's on a known cadence.

When I know that every other week I'm meeting with my coach or every Tuesday and Thursday I meet with my guitar teacher.

When I know that's coming up, it makes more of a difference in how I engage with the material or my practice than if it's random.

If you get random check ins from your coach, it's not as effective as regular check ins.

Now, part of our known cadence is built in. Every day, you have to tell us whether you did your exercise and you did your habit, and then our coaching check ins are a little more scheduled also.

So, now we have two cadences that they know about.

Next, **take a positive progress focus.**

I remember being at a fitness event and it was like an awards thing and this guy won trainer of the year and I remember being really interested because he had crazy billable hours and a crazy number of client sessions and I was like, man, how does a guy even pull that off?

So, I asked him why he does so well and he had a brilliant answer.

I was like, man, this guy, he should be out in front of cameras talking because he was amazing.

He was like, what I do is I find any progress that my client made, any, and I celebrate it as often as I can.

So, instead of what we call an awfulness-based approach, which is where we look for our clients' flaws and constantly help them correct them.

We're not doing it to be mean, we're not doing it to be an abusive dad or mom or coach, but we're like they're here to learn and grow, so I'm going to find all the areas they can grow and I'm going to help them grow in that way, right, that's how it manifests to us, but to the client, what we're doing is constantly finding their flaws and seeking to eradicate them, sometimes without even their permission.

This guy had a totally different approach and this is how we coach now; positive progress, any progress.

Now, this isn't just you lost weight, let's have a high-five and go for cheesecake, this is oh my gosh, you forget your workout drink four times a week, but you brought it today, let's talk about that and celebrate that.

Even if it seems goofy and little to you, anything that they've done better than last time, you call it out. Some people call that catch people doing something right.

It's a business practice that some people talk about.

The idea is we often catch our employees doing wrong things, but how often do we catch them doing something right and make a big deal out of it; same with clients.

That's what positive progress is, focus.

Then, **do proactive obstacle identification.**

We find the things that are likely to come up and we tell them about them in advance.

Now, we can do that really nicely when we have a curriculum, can't we?

If every person's path was totally different, I won't know what's going to come up for them, but when there's a curriculum, I know that when this happens, coming up, 90% of our clients are going to have this experience, and we can tell them about it in advance and then we look like freaking superstars.

Honestly, they're like, how did you know I was even thinking this?

And you're like, because I've done this 50,000 times before.

So, proactive obstacle identification, it buys you big points with your clients, but it also does the amazing thing of helping them avoid the obstacles that are likely to come up.

Last, and this is the only place where this needs to happen, **troubleshooting when stuck**, and this is when you can put your coachy hat on and you can take out your exercise science or your nutrition science journals and you can troubleshoot.

We sometimes try to do that the whole way through and there's no reason. The only time you need to do that is when they're stuck and if you have this whole other support system around it, they don't get stuck as much.

We call this whole practice, and it goes a little deeper than this client-centered coaching at PN, and I want to contrast two styles.

One is client-centered coaching or first, coach-centered coaching. So, coach-centered coaching is everything we're taught and indoctrinated with in the fitness industry.

Coach as expert, sometimes drill sergeant and dictator.

In other words, it's your job to know everything, to be deeply learned and studied in exercise, in movement, in nutrition, in lifestyle and to tell our clients what to do and everything they do is about you.

You ever heard people say this; I had to fire that client because they were a bad reflection on me and my business, right?

That's a little bit myopic, isn't it? It's about you. That client interaction somehow became about you personally.

Well, that's a coach-centered approach.

A client-centered approach is what we practice and we teach is the coach is a student of the client and a collaborator and guide.

It's my job to become a student of you, to study you like a subject, to learn about you, to learn about what makes you tick and what matters to you and why you're doing this in the first place and coach from that place, and then if the expert is someone who stands face to face with a client if you want to visualize it as a single interaction, this collaborator and guide is someone who stands next to a client and walks with them on the journey together.

It's your job to understand your client best, help them discover their own motivations and next actions.

We believe every client has all the motivation that they need and every reason they need to do this.

It might just not be unlocked yet.

You unlock it and then you don't have to do any of the drill sergeant stuff, you almost have to do nothing. You just point them in the direction, let them go if you unlock their motivations.

One way I often describe this is a coach-centered coach versus a client-centered coach might be the difference between these two interactions.

One, someone comes up to you at the gym and they're like, man, you're in great shape. It looks like you're a trainer. What should I eat after a workout? Now, think about what answer you might give. What should I eat after a workout? I want to get in better shape, what should I eat?

Now, a coach-centered coach focuses on you and your expertise.

You tell them, well, you see, this magical thing happens after you work out, you're really, really receptive to carbohydrates and proteins, so if you eat a carbohydrate and protein mix after your workout, you'll stimulate protein synthesis, you'll replenish the energy that you lost, it's called muscle glycogen and that's the best thing to eat after a workout.

Nothing feels wrong with that. We all know most of that's true and can look at science, but it's coach centered. It's about you and what you know.

Client-centered coaches might say this; hmm, well first of all before we even start, I have some ideas on this, tell me what you like to eat after a workout.

You become a student of the client. It's not about you and your expertise, it's about how you can take what you know, keep it a secret, find out what they know and where they are and somehow kind of meet in the middle.

It's really hard for most of us who have spent most of our time in fitness, taking seminars and reading books on stuff and facts, to not just tell people what we know, but that's the antithesis of actual good coaching.

The last phase here and again, we talk about this a ton and if you guys want to experience some of this, the thoughts and theories of what I'm talking about here, a great book is Motivational Interviewing.

I don't know how many of you have familiarity with that, but it's a coaching and counseling psychology practice set that we think works phenomenal in health and fitness and, you know, it's full of AH:-ha moments for you.

So, the last part, technology, the whole thing is underpinned on our side with technology.

Now, you could ignore this whole thing.

You could do curriculum with handouts.

Part of your curriculum could be text messages that you send to clients.

Again, forget what I'm about to tell you, I'm just going to show you how we've done it; think about how you can do it in your business based on the level of technical sophistication you have or you don't have.

So, for us, when someone joins our coaching program, they get an intake questionnaire, right?

First thing they do, they pay online and then they go right to this; tell us about yourself, and this is our intake.

It asks them all kinds of things designed to get to know them.

We rate and assess their nutrition knowledge, their exercise knowledge, who they are in the world, obviously demographics statistics and data, it's also our medical release and our legal stuff and all that, but it's automated, right, and they just fill it out online.

The next thing is they are put in a curriculum track appropriate for them.

Now, when it comes to exercise tracks, we have like 100 or so various exercise iterations that they can be put into, and then there's a bunch of habit tracks as well that they go into based on their intake questionnaire.

So, a human doesn't have to decide this.

The computer does.

The answers to certain intake questions determine what program they go into and they're just served that program.

Next up is on their phone or on their iPad or whatever, they get a daily email that tells them what they ought to be thinking about for the day and if they click on that email, they get to their homepage and it's designed to be very simple, frictionless.

Their lessons are in blue; how to get your colors, this is a fruit and vegetable thing we're working on, eat five fruits and vegetables, and so the habit is the green thing. You already saw that slide. Every day, they tell us yes or now whether they did that and every day there's a lessons that supports it. Some lessons are like what are fruits and vegetables because we can't presuppose people know that.

Other lessons are how to try new vegetables that maybe you've never tried before, how to make vegetables taste better if you hate vegetables, et cetera, right?

This is the simplest one. You saw there's a whole bunch of other habits and we have lessons for all that.

Then, there's the accountability process.

So every two weeks, we ask them to share something about their progress.

Sometimes it's girth, sometimes it's weight, sometimes it's subjective assessments.

"How are you feeling about your progress over the last two weeks?"

"Have you moved closer to your goal over the last two weeks?"

It's not just about weight, we have all these other assessments so we can take the focus off of that single-minded thing that people will do and look at the number on the scale as the only marker.

Then, we do these surveys periodically throughout where we are constantly asking people how we're doing and how they're doing.

There's the opportunity to interact with them right through our program, so if they do one of the owner's manual lessons, this is coach Krista, one of our amazing coaches and one of our curriculum developers, giving a response;

"that was a really thoughtful response to the owner's manual thing, I really liked that you said this, that represents progress from the last time we talked about this subject, high five"

or whatever.

It gives you a chance to just ping them in the context of the work that they just did on the program.

Their interface is this right here.

So, it shows their weight changes, their girth. If you click into any of these, you see graphs, all that kind of fancy stuff, their photos, their lesson and habit practices.

Our interface is this. So, this is a client overview page on the left, so you see our clients and you see an overview of their data, and then on the right is when you dig in and you can see all the lessons and assignments that they've done and you see their compliance and at a glance, you see what they're allergic to and what their fears and challenges are, so it's super cool because when you're messaging them, you know they're allergic to dairy and don't eat meat or whatever the case may be.

If you work one-on-one with 10 clients, you already know that in your head, but when you have 350 clients, you will not remember that Nico here decided to be a vegetarian last month, right, and when he's like I'm really struggling with getting protein and you're like, well why don't you eat more chicken....wah, wah, wah.

Nico is like, my coach sucks, right?

So, we want it all on the screen while you're messaging Nico or whoever else your client is.

So, I'm coming to the end. This thing is flashing I'm like 13 seconds over now, but I have a couple more slides to go only, okay?

So, now, I already told you in the beginning, we've done this and we've made it available to fitness professionals. Everything I just showed you is available to you guys if you want to use it.

So, basically, you can sign up for ProCoach and you can be the coach that delivers this to your clients in the context of your business, but that doesn't matter today, honestly, I don't have to sell anything to you guys.

What's most important to me is that you start thinking about these things within the context of your business and how you'll solve some of these problems and answer these questions; how can I help more people, because you're here because you want to do that. I honestly believe that. You don't come to stuff like this just to make more money.

You want to make a bigger difference and help more people. How can you be more effective? How can you use what you learned today? How can you get better leverage, and you know what I mean by leverage now; and how can you do it in a more profitable way?

I want to leave you with a quick thought exercise, okay?

If you spend the next six months trying to answer these questions, it will be a great use of your time:

What are my clients trying to accomplish?

What skills do they need to accomplish it?

What's the progression of practices they might need to build those skills?

How could I actually turn that into a curriculum no matter what you coach? It doesn't have to be nutrition, it doesn't have to be exercise. Heck, if you want to coach business, this equally applies.

How can I outsource some or all of that to technology? What can I outsource? What technology will I use to do that?

This is my favourite question. Once I've done that and I have all this amazing time freed up, what will I do with all that free time that I have now? One is you could work the same number of hours and just coach 20 times the number of people, right? Two is you could work a little bit less and still coach a heck of a lot more people and three is you can coach the same number of people you have right now and just fucking rest for a change with the rest of your time.

Final thought exercise and then I'm done.

So, my friends call me JB, we just spent the last hour and 2 minutes together, someone's pissed at me right now.

If JB is here, so you can call me JB now, at Fitness Business Summit next year, okay, and I see you and I'm like hey, you're the dude in the front row with the BK hat on and I call you aside and I'm like hey, based on what I talked about, over the last year, what have you done and then the next question is will you be proud of your answer?

Because I may come back next year and I may find you and I'm going to ask you and I'd love for you to be proud of your answer.

Thank you.

(Applause)