

David Sandler KEY Address “Edited”

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(Rough Draft)

About Transcription

The following speech was given to the 2020 CPTN Online Summit delegates in raw unscripted form. There is no official script and the language spoken is natural. This is our first attempt to transcribe a speech of this length into a semi-formal condensed format that is suitable for reading.

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Introduction

I'm David Sandler, and I am your keynote speaker for this CPTN Conference.

Unfortunately, I have to deliver this keynote from my home here in Colorado. I would much rather be [in Toronto, Canada speaking] about all the great things that the future holds for us in our industry. Without a doubt we're in strange times. I don't think any of us could've ever predicted this, nor prepared for this [COVID-19 pandemic and financial hardships]. So, this has made it a little difficult for me to bring to you the kind of Keynote address that I really wanted to do. I rely heavily on my network, and heavily on the people that I work with. [I am accustomed to working in a group setting]. So, I have to admit, this was a heck of a challenge for me to come up with a way to get [the CPTN trainers] really excited about this industry given the times that we're in. I know it has to be frustrating for most of you. It's frustrating for me, and for sure it's [going to be frustrating from the [clubs and fitness studios as well due to closures]. Maybe many of you have either lost your job or have been furloughed [leave of absence for us Canadians] or having some issues with how to continue to make money. Maybe you're already [working in a different field or preparing to return to work slowly, but with new regulations]. So [you're not alone as it is also very concerning] for a lot of people. [As fitness trainers, we are more resilient than most people, we tend to get around these kinds of situations, but now we have the added frustration of the economic hardships]. The buying power of [our customers, is certainly going to be impacted]. We know that a number of our [customers or clients will] have financial troubles as well. Of course, as [CPTN Personal Trainers, you rely on disposable income of high-profile clients]. [Another issue for me is being unable to meet people and hang out, and that gets frustrating for me because I rely, heavily on the skill sets of those that I work with. Much of what I do and much of the successes that I've gained, were done in groups. I love going to events such

as this that help us learn more as a whole. It brings people together. There's a great knowledge base from the event and from the networking opportunities with presenters. I've lived in Canada for 18 years of my life and I was really looking forward to getting back to Toronto this year. So, let's begin with a little bit about myself].

Background

[My journey began, ever since I discovered I was unnaturally strong, and I mean unnaturally strong. I played sports but I had never exercised at a big box gym or trained with weights. At [the age of] 18, I discovered that I was able to lift more weights than most men]. I bench pressed [more than the total weights that] we had in my basement. My dad had those vinyl cement loaded plates with a bar. We loaded the bar up and it was like three 300lbs, and I was able to bench press that very easily. I weighed about 180lbs at the time. [My father thought that was fairly unusual given my age to weight ratio]. He had friends at that time who were Ottawa Rough Riders CFL football players, and many of them could not bench that [number of weights]. So, he went and found some people that knew about power lifting, [and that's what got me involved in power lifting]. Before I know it, I was setting the Canadian and American records. I found that I was able to do things that people my age, just really weren't able to do. I was just getting through high school, and looking [at what program I should enroll for at college].

Education

I thought I should go into business, because that would be the smart thing to do. Since business, is going to [help me much better in the future]. I spent a year in business school, and hated every minute of it! I [preferred bench pressing, competing, power lifting, squatting and doing those record setting challenges instead]. I [started Personal Training instead, and I started back in the late 80s, and we didn't even have real structured Personal Training organizations back

then]. I decided that, business wasn't for me and I wanted to go into exercise science and rolled [with that as the plan]. [I studied biomechanics to learn and understand why I was good at lifting. I had questions as to the reasons people weren't as strong as me, why was I able to bench press the number of weights that I could with very little effort]. So that [experience got me started in learning] about human physiology, and, of course, the [biomechanics] of bench pressing, power lifting in general. Once I learned [the proper mechanics of lifting, I became better and stronger] and I was able to really start helping people. That's really what pushed me into the industry, because I started working with athletes helping them get stronger. I basically started Strength and Conditioning back when there were very few people doing Strength and Conditioning. A [few NFL teams had strength coaches at a time when there wasn't a formal Strength and Conditioning program]. The National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) was just starting to [assemble] and I joined along with a few other strength coaches and we would start meeting and discussing how to get athletes stronger and faster. I continued working in the field of Strength and Conditioning and [continuing my academic education]. I went on to do my master's degree and doctorate work which led to some of the other great opportunities that I've gotten and it is also the foundation of how you can reinvent yourself and rebuild yourself].

The Rookie

I want to share with you now, one of my most memorable moments that [I recall as a Personal Trainer 30+ years later]. My very first Personal Training session with a client. [The very first client I ever had as a paid Personal Trainer, was a young man who came to me to get in better shape. The first exercise that I naturally instructed was the bench press, since everybody at the gym was known to start with 135lbs]. I put the plate on each side of the bar and gave him a lift off, and then bar [fell back and hit him in the chest], he could not lift the weight. So [I was

surprised! I panicked and I reached to lift the weights]. We then proceeded to go on with [much safer workouts]. This experience taught me an important lesson that each person is unique and individual. That's one of the amazing and powerful things that fitness does. It allows us to learn about each other in terms of our individual strengths and weaknesses, both physical and mental].

Insightful

I became relatively successful in the industry because of all the choices that I made both good and bad. I did continually try to get better because that is a really important thing. You never can stop working hard at doing things and making sure that you're always trying to do what's best for you. I always had this ambition to do what I wanted to get better. I wanted to be better, I wanted to absorb knowledge. I wanted to take it to another level. When I started doing my biomechanics research [to analyze the effects of forces on the body and working on practical solutions to improving body performance], I always wanted to try to figure out how to do something that no other bio-mechanist were doing. [I wanted to understand why they weren't able to see some of the things that we saw being in the industry. Of course, we didn't know how to extract or perform assessments to obtain that information because we didn't have the tools to extract that information. During that time also came about an opportunity to start writing for some basic magazines]. I [considered myself an average writer based on graded College assignments] but I had never really considered [publishing my own work. So, I thought, let's see where that goes].

The Risk Taker

I took a chance [with writing, and I remember seeing the publication of the first article that I wrote. It looked like nothing like what I had [originally] written. I was taken aback because I thought I did a fantastic job writing and [realized] very quickly that the editors' [thought that

there were] some things that needed to be changed. So fortunately, I had some good guidance from my father [who told me], “don't worry about it don't take it personally this is how the business works” (Steve Sandler). This is how business works in general, they want the product [to appeal to consumers]. So, I picked up the phone, I called the editor and I asked what I did wrong. They went on to explain to me the things that I needed to do better. That was my first real foray into learning [essential skills] that was important for business life in general and [a successful future]. I think the really important lesson here is that even when you're good at doing something, you're always working for someone else. Whether you're working as an employee of a regular type of job or working as a personal trainer. No matter what you're doing, you work for others and your job is to deliver what they really need.

The Continuous Learner

I continued writing to the point where I continued to learn from the editors' and for my audience by reading other articles and talking to my audience. I was able to get much better at writing where there's less editing and what that did was made my value go up tremendously. I got paid a lot more money to write because [my writing skills had reached a point where it was almost considered edited]. I spent nearly twenty years working for Muscle & Fitness magazine as an advisor and as a writer. I wrote my own columns; I started doing videos and various things for them and it was a great opportunity. I [listened carefully] and just did exactly what they wanted me to do. As the Magazine evolved and went through new editors in chief, I continued to maintain my ability to write because I continue to listen and became adaptable. That's why the most important thing I think that that I can I can say to anyone is to be adaptable. Be [satisfied] with not being perfect, be [satisfied] with being edited as I always say. Edited in life, edited in

general. If you're going to deliver something, [then expect that significant effort will be required to get work done].

Opportunities

Writing had opened up some other [opportunities], as I got involved with Arnold Schwarzenegger's Arnold Classic in Columbus, Ohio, as their science [advisor]. I would help deliver science education. I started doing that [sometime in] 2003-2004 and that opened up some [more opportunities] obviously working for someone like Arnold Schwarzenegger. My name was now [publicized] and when a television group was looking to do a television show for National Geographic. [The show was going to be called] the Science of Strength, [so the best people to ask at the time were], Arnold Schwarzenegger and his partner Jim Lorimer. I was their choice to be the shows [science advisor]. That was how I started television. It's just like in writing and first personal training client experience. [Even though I had no idea how to [present on] television. I had only given lectures and other smaller things but I listen to exactly what the producer said. His advice to me was that: ["It is not about you. It is only about the people on the other side of that camera, who are going to watch you"]. If they're happy with what you do, you are going to stay in [television and show business a long time], and if they're not [well we know where that leads]. So, I took that [lesson] to heart. After the very first segment of the [Science of Strength, during an interview of me where we are watching people doing strength feats]. I was on screen testing them and measuring their [strength capabilities], and now I'm supposed to comment on it. In [six seconds of comments, all the science and knowledge that I now had to be condensed for the common person]. [I did it. I thought I did a good job the first time. I asked the producer what I needed to do to improve my commentary better] and he told me. From then on, I listened to the producer and nailed all the lines, and became what we call in show business [a

closer - which is someone who closes lines for the entire episode]. I [did not have to find common ground with the audience or be so worried about making sure the science was one hundred percent perfect]. [I was to focus on delivering science so that the non-science person could understand]. That's something that my father told me a long time ago: "You know your audience is never going to know the things that that you know" (Steve Sandler). Keep that in mind because if you're going to try to make a living in this industry, you're going to have to try to get to them when they don't really know what you do as Personal Trainers [people think we just exercise, but don't realize that we are also continuous learners].

Adaptation

[You know we as personal trainers help people every single day that aren't able to help themselves. Maybe they just need some motivation, or maybe they truly need a whole lot of work, maybe they just want a partner or friend to talk to while they're exercising]. Whatever it is that you guys do, you have to adapt and you have to listen for change. Because of this [adaptive mindset], I ended up filming over 55 television episodes of everything from National Geographic, Discovery Channel, Learning Channel, and the History Channel. I did television shows with Jesse James. I have witnessed a Guinness book of world records. I've worked with William Shatner and Stan Lee on their television shows about understanding [special abilities]. Because I was willing to adapt to what they said, and not what I wanted people to know or what I thought people should really know. [Obviously, the science has to be right but it also has to be consumable and digestible for common people, the audience].

The Discoverer

[I had gotten involved with during that time when we had wires for all devices. I had to wire up celebrities or athletes, and I had to be off the screen but at the same time also collect that

data without tripping over the wires]. So, I was involved [in electronics at a time when wireless receiver/transmitters were not common]. When I first started doing television [shows], we had big elaborate setups where I had to collect muscle activity with these big electrodes, and wires going to the computer that took the data turned it into something that the computer could read. [My team would then try to analyze this data without any really good analytic tools in a very short period of time so that I could] get in front of the camera and [summarize] what just happened. So, I took it upon myself to learn how to work some of these electronics so I could build some of the [Radio Frequency (RF)] signal systems myself and figure out how to make myself very important. [In doing so, it helped me to remain relevant] in the field. Getting paid to do television was one of the best things that ever [happened for me]. When you're working with a celebrity, they're the focus of television, so I spent a lot of time learning [the filming craft] as well. [I've continued to build skills my entire life. I've continued to build them out of the need to have to solve the problem and instead of complete delegation of the task to someone else]. I would work with people to see if I could be involved in learning a new skill as well. I did [acquire a few engineering skills working with electronics, wiring stuff, and building upon a personal interest].

The Advisor

The [lesson to gain from this overall talk is to continue to learn skills and not just better understanding of the physiological system. [Gain new skills in other fields but somewhat related to existing skill field]. Everything I do is about is about trying to help people and make people better, and you guys do that too. So, when you're sitting there saying to yourself: “What am I going to do now with my life and what am I going to do if I can't get out of the house for Personal Training?” All you have to do is go back to thinking why you got into this field, [and

that reason is to help people]. Don't think that you have to be an Online Trainer as the next step. So, there's always going to be those learning opportunities, but there's also going to be opportunities for you to innovate. There are other ways to be innovators. [I've had a conversation with the inventor of the BOSU ball, David Weck. He told me he started this thing to help hockey players and people with ankle stability issues. He never intended it to be used for other purposes. Other people saw other uses for it, and brought the product into the spot light and it became a market sensation]. Don't sit back and then try to think about what the next best thing is. Try to think about how [you can be better at the things] that you are currently doing. [Maybe that can either lead to an invention, an idea, technique, a tool or something]. My value in the industry that I work in now [came to be] because I've always tried to figure out a better way to do the things that I'm doing now. There's always going to be learning opportunities. [That's what really shifted me into] the things I'm currently doing now. The other thing you [have] to do is always be a teacher. That's [another thing] I think [that has] been very successful for me. Because at the end of the day, the most important thing always has been to me is to teach and to see how I can help people do better, what they're doing and help consumers and teach consumers. One of the great things about personal training is that you teach every single day. [You're not just somebody counting reps, you're someone that is teaching and helping somebody change their life for the better. Finally, remember to keep an open mind].

The Entrepreneur

Personal Training has led to me working with the National Strength and Conditioning Association as their Chief Operations Officer (COO). [I was part of a movement of helping athletes get stronger and faster, so then I thought about what we were also missing as part of our training process]. The thing that we're missing the most at that point in time, was knowing what

to eat. So, I started learning more about nutrition. I never went back to school to become a Registered Dietician (RD). [What I did was worked backwards into that field from researching what people should be eating or should be taking as far as supplements. Because [I was coming into that field with a physiological perspective]. What that [provided was an understanding of] the kind of credence I would need to put together to build nutritional supplements for athletes. This was my moment to reinvent myself. So, I started nutrition supplement industry truck probably [20-25 years ago, and I started mixing products using some of these basic ingredients. This was during a period when nothing on the market tasted good]. You [chugged the protein shakes down or as we called them “throat aches in a cup”]. That’s what nutrition was like when I started out. [It was the right situation and the right time. I asked questions and [sought after] people who understood this stuff better than I did. [I continued to pursue Research and Development to keep an open mind when trying to come up with ways to innovate]. All the things that I've done in the past have all been interlinked, because they're all related. I [have worked with manufacturers of various brands. I actually helped to develop many of the brands for many supplement products you see on the store shelves today]. I was unhappy with the fact that [supplement products] had to taste [awful]. I was not satisfied with a substandard level product. So, I spent an inordinate amount of time working on improving the flavours and taste profiles of those products. [Therefore, I have become well known in the industry as the expert].

The Expert and Mentor

You want to continue to innovate yourself. You can and will need to find a niche so that you are recession proof. I'm not saying sit down and try to think about what you can do to make something that no one else has made. Don't worry about that and don't try to make something no one else has made. Naturally, try to help yourself be better at what you already do but also look

at broadening your coverage. [You can expand into related fields]. I know when we talk about skills, we talk about becoming a real expert in one thing. I think in these current times I would actually move away from trying to be [an expert or specialist] in one thing and try to be [professional and good] at a few things. However, ensure that all those things relate. So [I was dubbed the expert for supplementation because I've researched the ingredients, tested ingredients, mixed ingredients together]. [I make flavours that taste good]. I can make ingredients soluble in liquid or not depending on what the required format is. I know how to blend them together so that they [mix and fill their containers] the right way and that they taste great when the customer opens them up several months later. So now I'm [able to be employable as a supply chain quality manager, as a manufacturer, as a Research and Development (R&D) scientist, as a [flavour specialist]. Or I could do all of those things [at once]. This didn't happen overnight. [This has been a long gradual process, however, as each thing came along. I took that next step and thought: "I needed to understand this piece of a process that I'm involved with better"]. So, what I suggest is to broaden your skills [but keep it related to what you currently do right now].

Conclusion

Since [I can't be there and I can't offer my services to you personally. The least that I could do is try to help you by e-mail]. I encourage all delegates to e-mail me with questions and please use the subject: "CPTN 2020 Summit – Questions" to assist me with spam filtering. I really hope that this becomes something much better for you, [where you turn around these down times and turn it into an opportunity], for you, your clients, your customers, your friends, and your family. Please contact me [at david@strengthpro.com], and I wish you the very best.