

Introduction:

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There are about 15 minutes of my life that I can't remember. I can't honestly say I'd want to though if they were available to me. It's January 2005 in Shippensburg, PA. It's cold as hell on a Thursday night. That doesn't stop college kids and sure wasn't going to stop me from living out what I was on the path for. I soaked that night up with my friends singing Sweet Caroline, slugging 25 cent High Life Drafts. We celebrated Thursday, every Thursday like it was the day your best friend was coming home from war.

Of course, after the bar we'd hit the club. I was not about to miss that co-ed energy with the guys. Sweating, dancing to Lean Back by Fat Joe with something pretty pressing herself into me made you feel like you were a fucking god. Beers at the bar became shots of whiskey. Eventually, sadly, the light would always come on, which meant that we had to take our drunk asses home. The club would empty out and drunk college kids would stumble home through the college ghetto.

I was a missile headed for something different that night though. I left the bar to walk home like always, a couple blocks away to Penn Street. What I didn't do though was to look both ways crossing the street as I was taught my whole life. I walked anyway and was knocked to the ground unconscious by a Nissan Altima.

What I do remember is the pain. Getting hit by a car hurts. Staples in your head hurts. Then came the scared faces for me as my parents checked on me the next day. My pride may have been wounded more. I had to admit the accident had put me in legal trouble. Multiple citations from those 15 minutes I can't remember. The last punch of it, the shame, came the next day when the University sent me a letter declaring that my behavior was an unfit representation of what they were expecting from their student body and that I would be dismissed as a student. I was a Senior, 15 credits from graduation, 6 months from being grown up and living my future, and I had fucked up my life.

Then there are another 15 minutes of my life I'd trade anything to forget. It's February 2019 in Martinsburg, WV. I had the job. That big boy job I went to school for. I was a Director of Admissions at a Psychiatric Hospital. I put heads in beds better than anybody during that time. I had the house, sprawled out on two acres like something out of a Town and Country magazine. I had the wife. A teacher, a leader, what kind of a fierce team did we make? I had those kids, 2 and 3, girl and boy. Beautiful kids to complete the picture.

That picture might say 1000 words but it's not the whole story. What it misses is that I engaged in about as much behavior as I could to tear that picture up. I cheated on my wife pretty much from the minute we started

dating. I had an on switch with women that couldn't be turned off, didn't want to be turned off, and didn't know how to be turned off. I walked through every open door available to me. I assumed I'd grow up at some point and get into being that family man I had set myself up to be.

Yes, she knew about it. And oh did we fight too. The vicious words, finger pointing, posturing, intimidation and intensity. Almost every night ripping each other apart. We heard "Piece of Shit" and "Fucking Bitch" more than we heard our names during those years. Let's have a kid and hope it gets better. Oh that didn't work, let's do it again, two kids will solve the issue.

And then she needs a night out with a friend. I'm at home reading admissions packets distracted by the phone. Except it's not ringing with someone to check in. It's not texting me updates or pictures updating the fun she is having, or even texting me back when I ask how the night is going. It's distracting because of how quiet it is, and the meaning of that. She's gone, and I know it. In the morning she gets home and it's written on her face. I ask her and she admits it all. My stomach falls through the floor with shame. I got what I deserved.

Why would someone teaching men how to be better guys, start a story like this? I am Mr. Undefeated right? I am a therapist with more than 20 years experience. I am the one that's worked in the trenches, the toughest of

places, where I honed my skills as a clinician and leader. I should be the sparkling example for all the guys reading this. It's important that this hits you in these early pages; I am the defeated man. I have almost killed myself. I have been fired from my job. I have fucked up my family. I am not going to tote my credentials to you or that I've led in some insane places. I have, but its not worth the paper. What is important is the crucible moments I've experienced and the man those moments have made.

There was a moment, shortly after my marriage started falling apart that I had to get real with myself. I couldn't hide from the fact that these things were happening to me too often and that I was the common denominator. I didn't know what it was in me that made these things all go this way but I did hate it about me. Why was the opposite of what I wanted out of life happening? I didn't want to get hit by a car, or get fired from a job or to see my kids 50% less, but I made them all happen. What the hell Chase?

I also had to come to grips that I was a therapist hiding out from the things people paid me to do. I didn't need that, had a masters degree in it already, and most importantly was better than the guys that went. Those people were fucked up. I was the fixer not the broken one. I was at a crossroads with myself and I knew I wasn't going to have the change I wanted living the way I did. I needed help.

Asking for help turned out to be one of the best things that's ever happened to me. It started as my own therapy journey. I began a deep dive into my subconscious or my shadow as some people call it, those two terms will be used throughout this work, at times interchangeably. I began to understand that I was a completely static human being that had learned habits to protect myself and then thrown them into autopilot as they worked so efficiently.

I continued to explore myself, working to heal old wounds, going deeper into hypnosis, EMDR, meditation and retreats. Every time I felt like I had something figured out, a new adversity would hit, I'd get broken up with. I would get turned down for a job I wanted. It seemed like suffering would hit me in any number of directions each time with new questions. Why does all this pain feel the same even though it's about different topics? Why is it so hard for me to be alone but at the same time so hard to connect with people? Why didn't having all the right stuff and right people make me happy?

Through the constant feedback loop of a much wiser therapist than me I began to be able to see my blind spots, accept, forgive and work with the parts of my personality that I hated and was avoiding. I learned this thing we call adversity isn't bad. It's an absolutely needed phenomena in life that shows you what you need and gives you opportunity to grow.

Masculinity is changing. Some in my field would say it's under attack. For sure it's a confusing world for men. The forces around us to engage in all the classic male archetypes still exist. We still make legends out of the strongest of us, or the best athletes, the guys who crush it on the stock market, and the guys that can catch any woman's eye wearing a 3 piece suit walking down the street. Many of the men that will read this book had fathers that went away most of the day for work and were heroes because of it.

If you get on social media though you'll see a lot of other ideas. Men, sometimes the same guys glorified above are called narcissists, dismissive, or abusive about how they handle their interpersonal dynamics. Men, who have no background in it, are expected to be vulnerable, empathetic, and compassionate. Men are working in and from the home more often, and are being expected to get into the grey areas of family life in ways they never had prior. The same guys that we train to be killers are supposed to roll over and show their bellies? How does that work?

The most amazing thing that's happened through my journey is how it's shifted how I work with the guys that end up in my world. Like I said, I'd judge you men who ended up in my office as fucked up or broken in some kind of way. I realize this makes me sound like a pretty shit therapist and

maybe I was at some points. I started to share that I had a journey going on that was like theirs in a lot of ways.

Even though I kept that mental space from the people I worked with it was impossible not to see how many guys had stories, and suffering similar to mine. When I started to talk like I was a guy like you all I realized how much better a therapist I became. My clients sought more of my time, seemed to like doing the work more and ultimately started having some amazing outcomes. The best part was I liked what I was doing a hell of a lot more, even working more.

The next needed step in leaving the defeated man experience is this book. I need to share more of my defeated man experiences. I'll bring along stories of other men, their challenges and the important science you need to know about what works. The modern man requires more than brute force and stoic silence to survive. He needs an architecture built on awareness and governance.

I realized through my work personally and the hundreds of men that I've been lucky to work with that there are different buckets that we struggle in. This book is aimed to target these patterns. I am calling them the Pillars of the Undefeated Man. Men that do work in any of these 10 areas will improve their masculine functioning. These are non-linear focus areas. This means

that you could pull any one of them out and work on it solely without needing to address the others. Nor do you need to tackle these principles all at the same time. You do not need to follow them in sequential order. They are ongoing processes you will build and rebuild daily. They are the foundation required to become the Undefeated Man. You will use these tools to build an unshakeable inner architecture to prepare for your personal crucible.

The Undefeated Man builds himself towards being Antifragile, a term coined by statistician and risk analyst Nassim Nicholas Taleb. Antifragile refers to individuals, or mindsets that do not merely withstand stress, shock, or volatility, but actually grow, improve, and thrive as a result of them. Unlike fragile men, which break under pressure) or resilient/robust ones (which resist shocks and remain unchanged), an antifragile man requires stressors, challenge, and adversity to adapt, and adapt well.

I offer a specific promise regarding this book. Engaging these pillars, each one, is inviting a crucible, or adversity, to your life. It's going to put stress on your job, partner and/or kids. The Undefeated Man is not built in a silo. He needs others to reach that level. There will be friction as you shed your defeated tendencies. People are used to that version of you. With that being said I strongly encourage you to think on this, and talk with the people that

rely on you about doing self-work. Inform them about what you are considering and ask them to allow the space and patience to let it happen.

Why is adversity important? You are at a starting point different than mine. You may not have got hit by a car or yet blown up a marriage. If none of these things can be fathomed by you then this book is not for you. Most of us though, men that have a career or a relationship or children or parents, most human males have some kind of adversity in our lives. This is who this book is for. We know there are two truths about adversity. A crucible moment rarely arrives when we want it to and one is always coming our way.

You walk into work and they are doing unexpected layoffs and you don't make the cut. Your wife detaches and builds a routine excluding you. Your child stops taking you coaching him in sports well. Your parents give more of their inheritance to your brother than you think he deserves. Men react to these perceived failures by applying all kinds of tools that rarely bring the results that feel meaningful.

You rely on self-flagellation pushing down any need to speak on your concern because of how you've internalized toxic shame. You consume

yourself by overthinking the problem and put pressure on other people to fix their shit so you can feel better. You make assumptions that you don't want to bother people or that your feelings would not be heard well and perpetuate your issue, waiting for someone to take care of you. You get defensive to others writing the news on the wall or even yourself as your body gives you signals your breaking down. You do the very shit that only accelerates the collapse of the system you are trying to save.

Likely if you are reading this you have tried one of these things to manage a crucible. I know I have. Possibly you have reached a tipping point of feeling fed up with your own misery. You feel stuck but also know you have something to do with creating the exact circumstances you hate. The pain of this repeated self-violation is presenting you a choice.

Adversity is not the enemy. It is the fuel required for your development as a human. In a *Harvard Business Review* study, leadership experts found that the most reliable predictor of extraordinary leadership is the "crucible" experience: a severe, unplanned trial that forces a person to question their identity. They discovered that elite leaders survive these fires not by working harder or using brute force, but through "adaptive capacity." This is the psychological flexibility to process the trauma, extract meaning and emerge with a new, unshakeable sense of purpose.

Engaging the crucible moments in your life from an integrated place changes your definition of being a man. The work is to help you accept you my man, so you allow you to be heart-led, open and safe to be with others. You'll engage what comes your way with the tenacity of someone that believes they are a gift and needed by the systems of life. You find the value in suffering and the bravery to be with yourself as you apply the lessons. This is the Undefeated Man.

“Im healed”, “I don't need it”, “I got over it”, “I am not like those guys”. I have said all of these things and I know one form or another has come out of most of you reading this. The men I work with build impressive lives and become passengers inside them. They have impressive CV's and bank accounts. Success in this way often qualifies a man as a completed person.

I lived this lie the same as you are. Let's be clear, these achievements are participation trophies. We all have faced down some adversity in life and have scars from it. Your subconscious shadow, the parts of yourself that you hide in yourself, wants to stay hidden. Those words you've said and will say again are the shadow giving you noise that will keep you defeated. There is no heald. There is no finished. Growth may look like different things at different phases of life.

I have had to be the patient. Sit in the waiting room, and be on the couch, that I usually put people on, having a therapist challenge me. I've sat on mountaintops with Yogi's who chuckle at the shallow depths of my relationship to my inner parts. I've sat in 12 Step meetings where I have cried the shame of my affliction out to total strangers.

I've also read self help books, hell I have a whole book case of them. Like most clinicians I can recite the main points and concepts. I have listened to podcasts and gone to lectures. This probably is not the first self-helper you have come across. Reading this book or any other will not heal you.

The secret sauce that will bring the results this book offers is two things. You will here these two things pointed out with neon signs through this book. They are more important than any of the other ideas combined. The first is taking action. There are tools and activities with each pillar in the book. Some of them you can pick up off the page and use right away. The more you get out of your head and give yourself the opportunity to try these things the bigger the impact. The second is to share. Find someone who is not your wife, who is not your partner, another man, and share what you are doing.

These two are the main reason men inevitably stall. We lack an external objective mirror to reflect our destructive patterns in real time. We surround

ourselves with employees who agree with us and partners who avoid our anger, allowing us to remain blind to our own subconscious habits. This idea of the blind spot has been studied extensively by psychologists dating back to the 1950s. Luft and Harrington Ingham identified this as the exact flaws that others see clearly, but you are completely oblivious to. You are unable to fix a flaw you just flat out can't see.

If you read this book and decide it's not for you, you can always turn back. You can go back to being stuck and defeated. I won't keep you from that. What you have here is an opportunity to step into the version of you that was clearly calling you when you picked this book up. So jump in with both feet and let's do this thing. You might come out the other side living the life you always dreamed of. Welcome to the Undefeated Man.

Citations: Definitions

Citations

- Taleb, N. N. (2012). *Antifragile: Things that gain from disorder*. Random House.

Definitions

Antifragile

Coined by statistician and risk analyst Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *antifragile* refers to a property of systems, individuals, or mindsets that do not merely withstand stress, shock, or volatility, but actually grow, improve, and thrive as a result of them.

Unlike fragile entities (which break under pressure) or resilient/robust entities (which resist shocks and remain unchanged), an antifragile entity requires stressors, challenge, and adversity to adapt, adaptively