2 Practical Ways to Build the Mental Toughness You Need in Business -- and in Life.

If I had to pick just one quality and characteristic I was able to take away from the game of football that greatly impacted my life as an entrepreneur, it would be mental toughness, without a doubt. Playing the game of football since I was a little kid and then eventually getting the wonderful opportunity to play at the highest level in the NFL has transformed my mindset more than anything else.

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Of course I learned the incredible importance of teamwork, culture, leadership and other important qualities, but the resilience that was instilled in me from the game of football is what I am most grateful for.

**Why mental toughness is so important.**

If you feel mentally defeated, chances are small that you will ever get to where you want to go. Whether we are talking about athletics or business, winning, first and foremost, will be absolutely everything. There is nothing that you can't do or become when you have a phenomenally strong mindset.

A big part of having that focused mindset is being able to keep pressing forward when the going gets extremely tough, staying positive when negativity attacks and persisting over and over again until you finally reach your destination. That's the true definition of mental toughness: displaying an enormous amount of belief, fight and dedication toward a goal that you are passionately pursuing. If you take a look at any category of high achievers regardless of industry, you will quickly realize that they have displayed an extraordinary level of mental toughness to get to where they are.

**How to build mental toughness.**

The University of Miami study showed that one of the best ways to build mental toughness is through practicing mindfulness on a consistent basis. Mindfulness is all about directing your energy and thoughts on the present moment without any judgment. I was first introduced to the power of mindfulness training when I was in college playing football for Indiana University.
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Once a week, we would have a sports psychologist come in and lead the team in practicing different breathing exercises and body scans (guided meditation focusing on different parts of the body). When we first started these routines, I was skeptical, to say the least. I thought there was no way all of these weird-looking exercises and the act of focusing on my breathing could impact the way I played on the field.

But I was so wrong. Not only did my focus on the field increase, but my anxiety and stress decreased after a few weeks of really giving these practices a try.

Based on my own experiences, I can offer two practical ways that may help you -- as they did me -- build mental toughness and resilience, starting today.

### 1. Practice mindfulness daily.

Practicing mindfulness daily is a game-changer. Not only are studies showing the importance of mindfulness and detailing the amazing benefits that it provides, but people like me are extolling it based on personal experience.

Mindfulness calms your mind down from the noisy and chaotic world that we live in; and that calm, in turn, equips you with the strength and peace of mind to keep moving forward even in the face of extreme difficulty. Being in tune with the present moment and living fully right where you currently are helps diminish the fear that holds many people back and provides them with the clarity to focus on what's most important.

I use the Calm app, which has worked wonders for me. It has a variety of different breathing exercises and body scans that the app walks you through step by step. Practicing mindfulness daily doesn't just help you build mental toughness, it can change your life in so many different ways such as decreasing daily anxiety and drastically increasing your overall well-being.

### 2. Step out of your comfort zone daily.

This one may be a lot more difficult than practicing mindfulness, but making it a daily habit to step out of your comfort zone builds an incredible amount of strength.

Just as you would go to the gym to get stronger physically and strive to make your muscles grow, stepping out of your comfort zone daily is what helps you expand your capacity for mental toughness.

The more I seek to step out of my own comfort zone, no matter how uncomfortable it may be at the time, the stronger and better I feel. When I plan my day the night before, one of the first things I do is ask myself how can I step out of my comfort zone for that particular day. You can't build mental toughness and become resilient by always playing it safe and operating only out of the confines of your comfort zone.

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In short, being resilient and mentally tough is a non-negotiable if you want to step into your greatness and become the best version of yourself. Give these two practices a try. They may well help you get there.

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