



JIM HARSHAW, JR.

Clarity of Action. Peace of Mind.

Success for the Athletic-Minded Man Podcast

Action Plan Episode #496

Nathan Tanner

What if working harder is actually holding you back?

We've been sold the idea that success comes from grinding, hustling, and doing more. But what if the real secret is knowing when to do less?

Sounds counterintuitive, right?

But that's exactly what executive coach and author, Nathan Tanner, discovered after navigating some of the biggest challenges imaginable— like the collapse of Lehman Brothers (yep, that financial disaster) and the chaos of scaling DoorDash from 250 to 5,000 employees.

Nathan isn't just another productivity guru preaching "work smarter, not harder." He's lived it.

From training for an Ironman while balancing a demanding career to learning the hard way that trying to be great at everything is the fastest way to fail at what actually matters, Nathan shares how **strategic underperformance** might be the key to unlocking your next level of success.

If you've ever felt overwhelmed, burned out, or stuck in the endless cycle of doing more but achieving less, this episode is your wake-up call.

Press play now and let's rethink success before you waste another year chasing the wrong things.

Top Quotes From This Episode

"We can only grow as much as we allow ourselves to."

"Decide where you'll intentionally underperform."

"Life is an endurance sport. It's not just about showing up today or showing up tomorrow, it's how do you string together a series of consistent performance that is going to allow you to operate at your best?"

Show Notes

This episode touches on the following key topics and ideas:

- **The Power of a Challenge (3:02):** Nathan shares how a moment of self-reflection led him to pursue an Ironman. He learned about the concept of Misogi—a challenge that resets your expectations of what's possible.
- **Resilience Through Setbacks (5:25):** Nathan recounts his experience working at Lehman Brothers during its collapse. He struggled with his self-identity but eventually learned the power of rewriting his personal narrative.
- **Telling Yourself a New Story (9:02):** Nathan explains how we often impose limiting labels on ourselves. He asks two critical questions:
 1. What's a story you've been telling yourself that no longer serves you?
 2. What's a different story you can tell?
- **The Internal Game of Leadership (13:44):** Nathan explains that leadership is not just about external skills (delegation, decision-making) but also about mastering the internal game—overcoming imposter syndrome, managing emotions, and thriving personally.
- **Daily Habits of High Performers (17:05):** Nathan highlights core daily habits that help leaders perform at their best:
 - Exercise or movement
 - Prayer or meditation
 - Gratitude practice
 - Continuous learning
- **Strategic Underperformance (19:22):** Nathan challenges the idea that how you do anything is how you do everything. Instead, he advises leaders to intentionally underperform in areas that aren't priorities.

- **Clarity of Vision for Growth (24:08):** Nathan emphasizes that having a clear vision for your life— across relationships, faith, health, and career— is essential for personal and professional growth. A strong vision helps prioritize what truly matters and makes scaling yourself more intentional and effective.
- **Scaling Yourself (26:13):** Nathan shares his experience scaling DoorDash from 250 to 5,000 employees and the biggest mistake he made— trying to do everything himself.
- **The Role of Failure in Growth (30:27):** Nathan discusses how failure is inevitable but should be viewed as a learning experience. He introduces the concept of experiments— small risks that build confidence.
- **Key Habits for Success? (32:53):** Nathan credits his success to daily practices like exercise, prayer, and gratitude, but the most impactful habit has been continuous learning.
- **What's an action item the listener can take in the next 24-48 hours? (34:15):** Nathan suggests identifying and rewriting limiting personal narratives and writing down your goals daily to reinforce them in your subconscious and stay focused on achieving them.

List of Resources Mentioned in the Episode

["The Comfort Crisis: Embrace Discomfort To Reclaim Your Wild, Happy, Healthy Self"](#)
by Michael Easter

["The Unconquerable Leader: Mastering the Internal and External Game"](#) by Nathan Tanner

Other Episodes Referenced

[#312 The Comfort Crisis and What To Do About It With Michael Easter](#)

[#246 & #247 Interview with Tim Ferriss: Secret \(or Not-So-Secret\) Routines, Experiments, and Absurd Questions from a World-Class Performer](#)

Guest Website and Social

Nathan Tanner

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