

WHY You Need To Be Mentally Strong To Lead & HOW To Become Mentally

Jacob Morgan 00:00

Great news, my brand new book leading with vulnerability is now officially out. And I'm so excited to share the insights from the 100, CEOs and a 14,000 employees around the world that I surveyed. And the whole book explores why you should not be vulnerable at work, but why instead, you should lead with vulnerability. In other words, don't just focus on exposing your gaps, but also talk about what you are doing to do to close those gaps. That's the difference between being vulnerable and leading with vulnerability. If you want to learn more and grab a copy, head over to [lead with vulnerability.com](https://leadwithvulnerability.com). Again, that is [lead with vulnerability.com](https://leadwithvulnerability.com).

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Hey, everyone, welcome to another episode of great leadership. My guest today, Amy Morin. She is a psychotherapist and author of several best selling books, including 13 things mentally strong, people don't do or no 13 Things Mentally strong people don't do, which was the number one best seller on Amazon, USA Today. Wall Street Journal best seller and has been printed in over 40 languages has 1000s of reviews on Amazon as well. Amy, thank you for joining me.

01:12

Thank you so much for having me.

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So as I was saying, Before we hit record, we actually tried to get you on the show a couple years ago. But at the time you were working living on the boat, and we had really bad connections. So we had to reschedule. And now here we are three years later.

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And here I am still on a boat. Yes. Thank you for inviting me back on your show.

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Yeah, yeah. So I'm actually really curious before we jump into the book, and all that sort of fun stuff. How has it been living on a boat for seven years? Why did you decide to do this? And how I mean, are you running your entire business off the boat?

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I am. So these days I write and I have my own podcast and we do it all from a boat. Now we do have superfast Internet. In fact, I still have a house in Maine. But the internet there's a lot slower. So people are always like you have to go to your boat because it's faster internet. Yes, actually. That's true. So it started out as a six month adventure. But it's been seven years and my husband had always wanted to

live on a boat. Like when he was four years old. His bedroom was decorated in a sailboat theme. And we were always like, oh, yeah, maybe someday. But if anything that we had learned along the way, it was that you're not always promised someday. Yes. We said, you know, let's just go do this. And so we had bought a boat slip as a rental property. And our tenant gave notice in November. And by December we'll have we're like, oh, we're just kind of like, oh, well, we'll re rent it. And then like the light bulb went off. Why don't we just move and let's do this. So we bought a boat loaded up the car, drove down here, pick the boat up in Florida and expect it to stay about six months, but again, kind of fell in love with the boat life. And here we are seven years later still living on it.

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So are you cruising around on the boat? Are you guys mainly just parked somewhere and kind of living off like by the dock?

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Yeah, we're mostly in the marina. So in order to manage my business, have high speed internet and do all the things I need to do and make sure it's quiet for my own podcast. But you know, we're in a canal with oceans just around the corner. So it's easy to go and we have a jetski and things like that it's easy to go just around the corner and go for adventures all the time.

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Very cool. Well, that's not why I brought you on the show, obviously, to talk about the boat life, although that's fascinating and probably worth a whole separate podcast conversation in and of itself. But obviously, you wrote this very, very wildly popular book 13 Things Mentally strong people don't do. Why did you actually write that book? And did you have any idea when you wrote it that it would become so popular in so many countries around the world, I

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certainly had no idea and certainly never even imagined I would write a book. So I was a therapist in rural Maine. And I had gone through a series of losses my mom had passed away. And then my first husband passed away when I was 26. And really writing was a way to earn some extra income because I had to keep the lights on. So I started writing articles for about \$15 each. But then it was able to earn enough money that I didn't have to move. And that was the most important thing to me at that moment in my life was I had lost so much the last thing I wanted to do was have to move before I was ready to move. And so writing was just something I did for a little bit of extra income work as a therapist the rest of the time and took a few years. You know, after my mom passed away, it was three years to the day that I lost my husband and like I just felt this cruel twist of fate that I would lose the two closest people to me on on the same calendar day three years apart. Yeah, that's crazy. Right? And so it took me a really, really long time to figure out okay, what am I going to do all these hopes and dreams I'd had for my life, my predictions for the future, all the things that I thought life was going to be were gone. I had to figure out what do I want to do instead and What dreams do I want to let go of like my husband and I had just become foster parents. and had all sorts of ideas of what we wanted to do and figure out what do I want to let go of? What do I want to hold on to? And what do I want my future life to be like. So it took years and years, but was fortunate enough to find love again, I got remarried. And at that point, I was ready to move. So we moved to a different house, I got a different job. And I was like, oh,

like, this is great. I'm gonna have this fresh start in life. And just about as soon as I breathed a sigh of relief, my father in law was diagnosed with terminal cancer, she's, and I just remember thinking, you know, I spent my entire 20s grieving, I don't want to grieve again. And my father and I were, were so close. And my mom and my husband had both passed away unexpectedly. But like, this time, I knew it was coming. The doctors gave him a really poor prognosis of a couple of months. And it was like, in one of the lowest days of my life, I sat down and I wrote myself a letter of what Mentally strong people don't do. Because I didn't want a to do list. I had enough things in my life I thought I should be doing every day. But I wrote myself a letter of what not to do. And when I felt really overwhelmed, it was like, you know, Amy, just don't do these things today. And you'll be okay. And I found that list helpful. So I thought, well, if it helps me, maybe it will help somebody else. And I published it online thinking it would be read by a handful of people, but 50 million people read the list. And before I knew it, a literary agent called and said, You should write a book. And within the year, I had a book deal. And that's how the, that's how the book hit the shelves. And then I never imagined it's been 10 years now, since I wrote that article, never imagined I'd still be speaking about it all these years later.

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Yeah, that's crazy. So I'm really curious, what does mental strength mean, and then I want to touch on just to give you kind of a heads up for later. So I have a new book coming out later this year in October on vulnerability. And so one of the things that I want to ask you a little bit later on in the show is around the relationship between mental strength and vulnerability, because I see a lot of relationship there. But maybe we can start higher level with What does mental strength actually mean? Is it the same thing as resilience?

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It's not because I think resilience is really about bouncing back from tough times. And while that's great, and that is part of mental strength, like it doesn't end there. Like wouldn't it be awful, if we spent our entire lives just like embracing for the, for the worst case scenario, like, Okay, I'm going to make sure that when this next horrible thing happens, that I can bounce back, like, for me, that would rob me of the joy of the good times in life. So I don't want to just live like I'm waiting for the next shoe to drop. So mental strength is really about saying, how do you get the most out of the good times in life too. And you can really break it down into three parts, the way you think, the way you feel, and the way you behave. And the thinking part is knowing that your brain lies to you. It's overly negative most of the time, but sometimes you're overly confident to and that can be just as detrimental. So it's about knowing how to assess your thoughts and do some investigating to figure out what's true and what's not true. And then the emotional aspect is about knowing that you don't have to be happy all the time. You need to feel the uncomfortable emotions like sadness and fear, too. But you don't have to stay stuck in those feelings, you do have some control over what you do with them. Which brings us to the third part, which is your behavior. So how are you going to behave productively? You don't feel like going to the gym today, but it's good for you. How do you talk yourself into it? Or you know that whenever you're lonely and anxious you tend to reach for for unhealthy choices. What can you do instead and about practicing those things and putting them into play in your life so that you can really reach your greatest potential, not just when bad things happen, but when good things are going on to

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you all know that I spent a lot of time talking about themes like leadership, and the future of work. But there needs to be a company out there that's actually powering the future of work, a company out there that's designing, building and managing the systems that the world depends on. Without those types of companies, there is no future and there is no future of work. And that's why today's episode is sponsored by Kindle. They're a technology services company that advances the vital systems the world depends on every single day. Kindle is the heart of progress. At Kindle progress starts by standing up for something with intention, being pro something with your whole heart. And those of you who've been listening to my program, know that I talk about being able to take a stance for something being able to fight for something and not just being passive and playing in the gray areas. So one of the things that I love about Kindle is they are pro something. Kindle stands up for progress by committing to help their customers digitally transform technology systems with a global team of curious and diverse minds. Again, both themes that I have talked about on this show quite a bit because there's nothing better than taking a step forward together. You can learn more by going to kin.google.com That's KYNDRY I.com you know certainly touch on some of the physical fitness aspect because I'm I'm with you and I've seen your Instagram you're always putting pictures are you working out I'm My, my wife and I were hardcore, like health, nuts, exercising, eating healthy, all that same sort of stuff, which we'll definitely get into in a little bit. But I was curious, at least for me when I think of mental strength. I mean, obviously, it's really important to have in our personal lives. But I also think inside of organizations, it's probably never been more important for leaders specifically to have mental strength. Have you noticed? Are there any specific qualities that mentally strong leaders possess that you think, are relevant in today's business world?

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Oh, yeah, I'm glad you brought that up. Because I agree that right now, more than ever, it's probably more important. And I think really, leadership is about like authenticity, about making sure the words that come out of your mouth line up with your behavior about being honest and upfront with people. And sometimes it's about acknowledging, I guess, not to jump ahead to your vulnerability question. But to be able to say, Yeah, I'm kind of worried about the future, too, or I'm a little anxious about this, or, you know, I'm a little hesitant to get to go forward with the plan. Here's why. And you can have those open discussions. One of the worst things is when you work for somebody who nods and smiles and says everything's great. And clearly the buildings on fire, but nobody's, everybody's pretending like it isn't. And I've been in that situation before. And people are distraught. And you're like, you know, for it takes a while to figure out like, am I the only one noticing this and you're kind of looking around. But when a leader can really own up to those things, then people are like, okay, I can respect you. Or when somebody can say, you know, I'm struggling with something, and you can look up to that leader and be able to say, All right, the things coming out of their mouth are lining up with what we're experiencing. And it doesn't mean that, that I have to, you know, go look, start looking for a new job right away, but it might just mean least we're all understanding where we are. And we're all in this together.

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Yeah, and at least for me, when I think of like mental strength for leaders, it's, it's kind of like, how do you even define physical strength. Like, to me physical strength is not necessarily about how much you can lift, but it's just, you know, it's a constant thing that you do, you're constantly exercising, you're taking care of your physical body. And so at least when I think of mental strength, I think of the same

thing, like it's hard to put a specific definition around it, or even like a specific metric. But at least to me, the way that I think about it is it's something that you're consistently working on, whether it's resilience, whether it's having confidence, whether it's being able to be okay with vulnerability, all those different types of things that you're constantly working on, so that you can, I guess not not be thrown off and not be bogged down or knocked down when things don't go your way, and also being able to take advantage of things when they are going your way.

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You know, that's just yeah, when you have a leader who says like, you know, they don't need to learn anything new. Or when they're confident, like, favorites, a training or workshop, and somebody is quick to be like, you know, I'm not going to learn anything. So I'm not going to that you're not somebody that has an attitude of, you know, I can actually learn if I listen or pay attention, or I'm working on myself somehow, anybody who thinks that they've already arrived or that they're strong enough, definitely had some work to do whether they recognize it or not.

13:03

Yep, couldn't agree more. So how would you explain to somebody let's say a leader came to you and they said, you know, Amy, how do I know if I'm a mentally strong leader? How would you answer that? What are the attributes or the qualities or characteristics that you would start with to identify mental strength? In a leader specifically?

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I think there's lots of questions you could take a look at, maybe it's about examining their communication skills, perhaps it starts there with checking your ego at the door, do you really communicate how you're feeling? You cover things up? Are you able to be honest with people, but somebody who can communicate effectively, we know that can be three quarters of the battle right there, somebody that and it's not just about how they speak? What can they listen, our employees actually heard? I know, so many leaders who struggle if an employee says, you know, I'm having a hard time, like the leader takes it personal, like, No, our business is fine. When somebody can say, gosh, you know, tell me more about that. It's huge. It's somebody that can again, just listen and try to validate somebody's feelings, even if you don't understand 100%, or you don't agree with everything. They're saying you could still validate it and say That's understandable. And really try to figure out where they're coming from your experience is different from theirs and honoring that. And then it's also about knowing perseverance, but to know that you don't have to persevere through anything. I think. Another downfall of many leaders is pushing onward, even when you're on a sinking ship. Sometimes you need to jump out and say let's, let's change course, but I see so many people who are really scared to do that because they're afraid they're going to look weak or that, that they can't do that. So I think it's that balance between knowing when to quit, but also having enough grit to persevere.

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Yeah, there's actually a big criticism of Mark Zuckerberg Mark Zuckerberg today for that exact reason with his doubling down on meta and the metaverse and some people are saying, dude, enough, you've put billions of dollars into it. It's time now. Like, move on, and he's like, No, we will succeed and put more money into it.

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Time names about you know, like, you know, we're like the gold is just around the corner and you quit too soon. And so so many people hold on to that like, oh, you know, if we just keep doing what we're doing, we're almost there and keep trudging through. But yeah, I think ego is a is a huge liability for a lot of leaders.

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Yep. So there were a couple of things that you mentioned. I mean, obviously, it sounded like empathy was one of them. You touched on vulnerability. You mentioned ego, which is another one. It sounds like there's a little bit of kind of a self confidence element that's in there. Any other attributes that come to mind when you think of mental strength for a leader?

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You know, again, I guess it would just be somebody who couldn't manage their emotions. Well, that comes out at work with emotional regulation. Exactly. Because an emotional leader who doesn't even recognize like, Gee, my anxiety is making my micromanage all my employees, that becomes a problem. We're gonna know how their emotions are contagious, when you have somebody who's nervous, and they're pretending like everything's fine all the time. I mean, again, it's contagious or unknowing to that feelings do have a place in the workplace and allowing people to talk about it, I hear so many leaders who will say like, why would we discuss mental health at work? Or why would we talk about our feelings? Well,

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I got a lot of that in the new book that's coming out ton of good because

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employees mental health affects every decision they're making. If they're nervous about something at home, it's going to affect their job performance today, I guarantee it. So to normalize those things, and to encourage, actually encourage people to take care of themselves, there's so much talk about self care, but a lot of it's like superficial, like, you know, take 20 minutes to take a bubble bath once a week, because if that's not enough, but to really give people the freedom and flexibility that if they need to go to see a doctor during the day, or they need a mental health day, or to see a therapist, like allow that without worrying that, that somehow people are stealing from the company if they need to need a break.

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Yep. And so one of the things I also really like is that even though it has the word strength in it, part of mental health is also being okay to be vulnerable and to accept weaknesses and talk about weaknesses. So, I also want to stress for people watching and listening that mental strength doesn't necessarily mean that you are kind of this tank that's just charging through, you are also okay with the weaknesses, the vulnerabilities, the negatives talking about those things. That's part of what makes it mental strength. And if you don't do that, I think it's safe to say that you don't have that mental strength.

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I'm glad you brought that up, because that's one of them. I think the biggest misconception I hear from people is that they confuse like, toughness for being strong. So when you you know, you hear so many like Navy SEALs or people who are really athletes, and they just talk about like pushing through the pain at all cost. But like know, if something is costing you your mental health, by all means take a step back. Or if you're in some kind of pain, like you have to take care of that, ignoring it, suppressing it, that doesn't do you any good, or you don't have to be independent all the time, ask for help. Or just acknowledge, you know, gosh, I'm struggling over here. That takes way more courage than pretending like you're fine. And when you really step back and think about it, and are expressing your emotions, like if you cry at a funeral, that doesn't mean that you're a weak person, it means you're a human being who is comfortable expressing their emotions. Yeah. So I do think there is in our culture that there is this idea that if you don't cry, or you pretend like you're good all the time, and somehow that's a sign of strength, but it's not. It's just that people are trying to act tough because they don't dare be vulnerable.

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Do you think there's a relationship between mental strength and business success? And I don't know if there's any been any research or studies done on this, I know individually, like for the characteristics for things like empathy and self confidence, there have been studies which show how that kind of impacts ROI and the people who work with and for you. But in terms of just overall mental strength and business success, would you say that mentally strong leaders are more successful in the business sense?

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Absolutely. When you think Alright, who Who do I want to follow? Yeah, absolutely. Somebody who's working on themselves, somebody that has all those characteristics, as opposed to somebody who comes in and is trying to force motivation upon their employees or somebody who will be motivated. Right. And I think, you know, there's a lot of motivational books, people read them, and then think I'm going to apply this, but they aren't really putting those things into practice, or people who think they're showing empathy, but they're not. So I absolutely think a truly mentally strong leader is somebody that are going to get their employees to want to be there.

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Well, let's talk about some of the 13 things that Mentally strong people don't do. Obviously, we're not going to get through all 13 We can maybe a couple cover a couple of them and people can grab the book for more. There are some that I am really interested in, but do you have any favorites from your third team that you think are specifically applicable or leaders should be paying more attention to them than the others?

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I would say don't give away your power. Okay, that

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was one that I marked on my list, okay, good,

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good. Because that's the one people people seem to want to talk about the most. And it does apply to the workplace as well as our personal lives. Yeah.

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So what what is don't give away your power mean? Because, again, it has that word power in there. And without context, people might think, Oh, well, great. That means I just need to be powerful and not show weakness. And I just need to, you know, keep the power for myself. But that's not actually what you're talking about there.

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Right. And this is, I think, is often results from when you don't have a mentally strong leader. People in the workplace start figuring out like, how do I am I giving away my power? Am I blaming my boss for ruining my day for making me send all these emails or do all these tasks that don't make sense, and nobody's communicating and gets into this difficult situation. So not giving away your power means just really accepting responsibility for how you think, feel and behave, your boss can't ruin your day, your coworker can't ruin your mood or steal your time, they can't waste your waste your energy. They can't make you feel bad about yourself. And it's really about acknowledging, alright, I'm, I am in control. And so yes, maybe your boss says you should work late, or they give you these huge tasks with really tight deadlines. But they're not making you work late. Like, if you didn't work late, yeah, there'll be a consequence for it. But sometimes just changing your language where you say, alright, I don't have to do this. This is why I'm doing it. Because maybe I don't want to consequence at work, or I want to keep my job. But just acknowledging it's not my boss making me do this. It's not my coworker making me do that. It's me who's doing it. Again, maybe to avoid consequences. But here's why I'm doing it. Something about just changing your language in those little ways really empowers you to say, again, I'm in control of my life. It's not that anybody else can do these things to me,

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is part of it. Also not viewing yourself as kind of a victim like having agency and control over over your success over your future. And to your point, right, not saying Oh, my boss did this, or my company did that, or I can't get budget for this or so and so took my job. Like, it's really having that sense of agency and control, not viewing yourself as a victim. But viewing yourself more is kind of, you know, the the proactive force in your career and in your life.

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Exactly. Because once we start going down that path of this is a toxic workplace. I can't stand it here anymore. It's me. Yeah. Right. It's really hard to get out to break free from that. And to get out of that pattern, you have to say, okay, you know, like, what do I have control over? Well, I can control something about my day, whether it's where I eat lunch, or how many breaks I take, or how which task I'm going to do next, just recognizing like, Alright, what's within my control, focusing on that, and then seeing again, it's all up to me. And if I wanted a different job, I could probably find one. Or if I wanted to do something differently, I could. And here's why I'm going to do that, or why I'm choosing not to.

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So once you do give away your power, because that does happen to a lot of people, I think that's when you start to feel. And actually you even become that the typical cog in the machine, right is when you've given given into the you know, the machine so to speak, you just remove yourself from being an active participant and you start to feel and you act like a cog. And it's just well, so and so told me to do this, I got to do it. So if you want to not feel and be and think like that cog I think it's so so important to have that sense of power for yourself.

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I think so too. And there's all this about quiet quitting, or I'm not gonna function well at work, or it's important to set boundaries again, if your supervisor is emailing you at 11pm. And you don't reply, and there's gonna be a consequence. If you don't you evaluate, like, do I really want this job? Or how do I want to respond? And sometimes it's speaking up, sometimes we have supervisors who maybe are unreasonable. So then what are you going to do? Does it make sense to do anything about it or not? But life is really short. If you absolutely detest your job and the people you work with, it's going to take a huge toll on your mental health outside of work, too.

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Yep, couldn't agree more. Okay, let's maybe go over to two more so so don't give away your power. What's another one that you you really like or think is relevant for leaders?

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Probably not repeating the same mistakes over and over again? Ah,

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okay. Yeah, that was another one that I marked. It was that one. And also, I also marked a fear of taking calculated risks. I that was another really good one. So when you say, make the same mistakes over and over? Can you expand on that one? A little bit?

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Yeah, this one, we all have done this. Like when you say I'm never going to do that again. And then like three days later, you do it again? Same thing. Yeah, really, we have the best of intentions and we're emotionally driven so often, so that it's easy to say, when you're calm, like okay, I'm gonna change this or when you're filled with regrets or even shame from something you did, like, I'm never gonna let that happen again. A couple days later, we kind of forget about it already. And we lose sight of it. We make the same mistake whether it's you raised your voice at somebody or you forgot to reply to emails or you said something and you lost your cool whatever it is, but to know that unless you really take some time to figure out what All right, what's my plan next time, you're doomed to kind of make that mistake again. And you don't wanna just keep rehashing the same mistake over and over again, the more that you keep rehashing it, the more likely you are to repeat it, but you want to look for a solution like, Okay, the next time I'm upset, this is what I'll do instead, try it as an experiment, or the next time I feel overwhelmed, here's what I'm going to try and see what you could come up with so that you just don't resort to those same old tactics again.

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And I think if you do keep reverting to the same old tactics, people around, you're going to start to wonder, you should be in your current role. If you're making the same mistake, same situation over and over again, people might be like, Wow, what, what is Jacob doing he this literally happened to him last week, and he's jumping into it again, like it's kind of strange. And one

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of the traps we get into so because we're embarrassed by our mistakes, we think we're gonna get judged. Sometimes we put a lot of energy into covering covering them up, right? People come up with excuses of why they couldn't get something done, or something didn't work, or this broke, or you know, the dog ate my homework. And then because we just don't want to take responsibility, and then but you don't look good. When you have 1,000,001 excuses, you can do something,

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I sometimes do that in kind of an athletic capacity. So I play a lot of competitive racquetball. And I remember there'd be times where sometimes I would play and I would lose to somebody that I should lose to. And I'd be like, I shouldn't have worked out today and then played racquetball. My legs are sore, and people are looking at you like, Alright, why don't you just shut up and take your loss? Like, like, you know, like, you shouldn't be taking it. So yeah, I mean, I've been in that situation before, I've certainly done that. I think everybody's done that, especially in a work context, right? I mean, right, we've all been there. Okay, so maybe one or two more, I, again, I really wanted to go over the fear of taking calculated risks, because I really liked that you had the word calculated risk in there. So in other words, it's not just fear of taking a random risk. I mean, this is a risk that you've collected data, you've talked to people, you're making an informed decision, and then jumping in. And I know that, you know, I've interviewed a lot of CEOs on this podcast, and a lot of them have made really, really bad mistakes during the course of their careers. They've invested in things that have failed to spend billions of dollars on things that have failed. And I always ask them the same thing. I say, Well, you know, how did you deal with that failure? And they always come back and they say, Look, we made the best decision. With the information that we had. We looked at the data, we talked to a bunch of people, and that's where everything was pointing. So I have no regrets about making that decision. Because that's, you know, that's where the calculated risk was, as opposed to somebody who's just like, you know, I had a hunch, and I jumped into it, and it failed. And now, you know, now I feel bad. So, tell me a little bit more about taking calculated risks. Why is that so important? Do you think especially even for leaders?

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Yeah, when it comes to risk, like most of us weren't really taught much about how to evaluate risks, tend to think it's related to how scary something feels. That feels scary, it's probably really risky. That actually is a terrible way to assess how risky something is because you think about it, like, you probably get in a car on a regular basis and go places. And that's not scary. But if somebody said, Hey, I want you to get in a car and go 10 miles, and then you're gonna give a speech to 10,000 people. And he said, What's scarier? Most people would say the speech to 10,000 people is terrifying, but the car ride isn't but like, what's actually riskier? Well, the car ride, especially for taking an Uber with a complete stranger, the alarm bells should be ringing. But because we tend to get used to the risks that we take, we stopped seeing them as risky after a while. And then we do these bizarre things like when they figured out when car manufacturers started adding more bells and whistles and safety features to car

cars are driving got worse, because we're like, Hey, I probably won't die. So I might as well be more reckless. And insurance companies don't like wait, what's going on over here, it took a while to figure this out. But again, our like risk meters are usually quite off. And so we base a lot of it on emotion and there's crazy things that we do like if you're anxious about something in your personal life, it might be that your loved one has a health issue and you're kind of nervous about it. And then somebody at work says hey, I have this new opportunity for you do you want to take it study show you're much more likely to say no. And you won't even recognize that you're actually just anxious about this loved one's health just it spills over into your work life in a way that you don't even recognize that so I think it's really important to just learn some skills on how do you take a risk and how do you make sure it's a calculated risk and I like that that yeah, sometimes we make the best decision we can with what we have and it doesn't work out because we didn't have all of the information but that's what risk is sometimes is there's not a guaranteed outcome but just knowing that and then having a plan in place it's really important

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All right, let's do one more which one should we do before we wrap up this section?

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Um Let's see It's always that don't feel sorry for yourself but failure is a good one too.

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Yeah, there those are both that I was also paying attention to as well don't feel sorry for yourself well, I will you pick whichever one you think is more relevant for for the leaders out there.

29:55

i Let's go with they'll don't feel sorry for yourself because I think sometimes in a leader, leader Ship position, it's easy to still blame stuff on the economy or to blame it on your workers are unmotivated, or the new generation of workers out there or because of the pandemic, and come up with 101 reasons why you aren't able to be as effective as you can, that you think you should be. And thinking, you know, poor me about it, and it's okay to be sad, and it's okay to be disappointed. But feeling sorry for yourself is really the exaggerated view of that when you start thinking, you know, my, my problems are bigger than anybody else's, nobody understands. And you just kind of grow convinced there's nothing you can do about it. And to be helpless. And hopeless is a really bad place to be because you won't take any productive action to fix things.

30:42

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some of your employees, and you're probably thinking, wow, I'm things are terrible. I'm not a great leader. What's, what's the alternative way to think about it instead of feeling sorry for yourself?

31:39

So I think you can back up and say, like, what would I say to somebody else in this situation? The compassion mode? Yeah, the old self compassion strategy, because we tend to beat ourselves up, or thinks that we're hopeless and helpless. And then to just jump into problem solving mode, like, alright, things are bad, but what are you going to do about it? Sitting around and rehashing a problem over and over again, there's no evidence that the longer you think about the problem, the better off your solution is going to be? So to say, Well, yeah, what are my options today? And maybe you can't fix everything today, but you have options in how you're going to proceed. So just recognizing, yeah, you know, here's 10 options, brainstorm some potential solutions, and knowing that there's always something you can do.

32:19

Yeah, I wanted to touch a little bit on the role of a physical strength and looking after your, your, your body plays into emotional health. I mean, this is something I'm a huge believer in. Like I said, my wife and I were both health nuts exercise almost every day, we try to eat healthy. I recently started doing, you know, these hot and cold plunges. So you know, we have a pool here, and it's like, 60 degrees outside. So after my workouts, I forced myself to jump in the pool and stay there for 1520 minutes. And it's been huge. You know, I was even talking to my wife the other day, and I was saying, you know, why are you going in the pool, and she's like, you know, I'm not going there to swim, I go there. Because when I get out, I mentally feel better. And there's something to be said, for the relationship between looking after your physical body and your, your, your mental self, has that played an important role for you? And do you see that as being an important factor for just overall mental mental strength for people?

33:16

Yeah, I do, I think when you neglect your body, and then you expect your mind to be running efficiently, like it doesn't make any sense, if your brain is going to, is going to function at its best, you better take care of your body and all the chemicals in your body and regulating them all. And figuring out how to manage your emotions. I mean, there's so many of our emotions that are physiological, your heart races when you're anxious to break out into a sweat. So there's so many different ways that taking charge of our health is good for our mental health as well. And just knowing what you everything from what you eat, to how much you move to all of that gives you more confidence helps you to feel better. And for me, it's been a tangible way to test my mental strength. I like to run a timed mile and see if I can beat my time for me,

33:58

I was just going to ask you what's your, your physical routine that you do?

34:02

Yeah. So every day, these days, I run a time to my arm and do it for years just to see if I can, every single day, I'd say like six days a week, there might be one day that I don't and I've been doing it for

probably on five years now. And my goal was to like to beat 12 year old AMI, which like that actually wasn't that wasn't that hard. And so and I'm 43 now so

34:26

what's your fast mile so far?

34:28

Just over six minutes. I'm trying to break six but I can't quite do it. So and I just found out I have asthma. So an inhaler has actually made life better too. But wow. But it's a great way to test my my mental strength because you know, never fail. I get to the three quarter mile mark and my brain is like, oh, you can't go any further. You can't possibly do this. And it's a great way to be all actually I can I don't have to listen to my brain. I can keep going anyway. And knowing that it's okay to push yourself and obviously, if you break your ankle halfway through, you don't want to keep running. That's when you do You want to listen to your brain and knowing those differences that yes, I can push through when I'm just a little bit tired or when something feels uncomfortable, just like I'm sure jumping into a cold pool, you have to your brain is gonna be all don't do it today or you don't have to stay in here that long. And you really have to force yourself to say actually, I'm gonna challenge myself. So for me runnings been a really a tangible way to do that. But I love lifting weights as well. I think strength training is really good, helps my mood and helps me feel my best.

35:25

So do you have a daily routine that you do as far as your your physical health and tying it to mental health, for example, running every day, weightlifting, eating healthy, do you meditate every day? Like what is your actual routine look like?

35:39

Yeah, so since I, since I live on a boat, like meditation and quiet things, like I live on a sailboat, so we're kind of talking about a slow paced life in general. So I don't really need to like, embrace the quiet meditation for me, like I feel most alive if I jump on a jetski. And I go, zooming around the ocean. So I tried to find things that you know, do the get my heart racing and helped me feel good in an exciting way. And I spend most of my day a lot of my day is spent writing and working on my podcast, and but I have the flexibility and the freedom so that if I want to go to the gym a little earlier in the day, I can do that I don't have to work the traditional nine to five, and I hit the gym probably five days a week, and then go running in the evenings. And it's one of those things where everybody says, Don't run, you know, or don't exercise at night. That's one rule I thoroughly enjoy breaking is. I live in South Florida and the Florida Keys. So I'm really not going to run it two in the afternoon outside anyway. So in this time of year, it's more like 8pm, before the sun starts to set, which is fine by me. And I still sleep like a log so.

36:43

So is your model your mile that you run to sit on a treadmill? Or is it outside? Outside? Oh, so you do like the hardcore idea of it's much tougher than it is on a treadmill.

36:53

You know, I just I just don't find like joy in running on a treadmill. And I think, for me, I wouldn't stick with it. And so ever since I was a little kid, I love to run, I can remember when I was probably five, my mom would be like, can you even walk because I would just have to run to the car and have to run everywhere. But I never wanted to run far I just wanted to run fast. Like I have no desire to run a marathon and I don't even want to race against anybody else. I just want to race against myself. And strangely, and fortunately for me, I find joy.

37:19

What do you think some of the common roadblocks are when it comes to mental strength? For individuals? Because the you know, the 13 things that you talk about in the book? They're not things that are Oh, like, they're not super complicated. They're things that really make sense, right? But what keeps people back from becoming mentally strong? Is it just their habits is the internal voice in their head? Like, why couldn't everybody just take these 13 things that you talked about? implement them, and you know, be mentally strong.

37:51

Because a lot of us and I say asked because me included, I came by this list honestly, have a belief that we developed in childhood. And it could be about ourselves, like I'm not good enough. But it might also be about other people like you know, no matter how hard you work, other people are going to hold you back. Or you might just have an unhealthy belief about life in general thinking that, you know, kind people never get ahead. And when you hold on to those kinds of beliefs that don't care how hard you try to never feel sorry for yourself, if deep down, you believe you are not a good enough person. Or if deep down you think you know, it's two steps ahead. And then somebody is going to shove you four steps back. I mean, it's you'll sabotage yourself in some way, shape, or form. So I really believe it goes back to beliefs. And so often we develop beliefs like that in childhood, and just carry them around with us. And sometimes we don't even recognize that we have them.

38:43

How do you change them? Or I guess is the first thing to identify that those beliefs even exist? For example, if you were to take leaders through some sort of an exercise on what is keeping them back from implementing some of these things are far from becoming mentally strong. It seems like step one would be what are the beliefs that you have? Like examine the internal beliefs that you have? What is it maybe about yourself the world at large?

39:07

Yeah, so a good way sometimes to uncover those unhealthy beliefs is we just say, ask a question, what would it mean? So let's say somebody says, you know, I can't call into I can't call out of work tomorrow and say, I need a mental health today. And so then yes, ask yourself, because if I did, what would it mean? Well, it would mean I'm not a very good worker. And then you ask it again. Well, what would that mean? If you weren't a very good worker? It would mean that other people don't value me and I'm not worth anything. But what would that mean? Well, it would mean I'm and usually it all boils down to I'm not a good enough person and I don't belong here. So yeah, ask yourself what would it mean three times so when you encounter something that you think you can't do? And almost always you'll uncover then what the unhealthy belief is, it's that I'm bad other people are bad or or the world is a bad place.

And once you really recognize that it's like okay, now I have to figure out how do I break that At will just telling yourself No, actually you are good enough, like, that's not going to change it, this core belief for years, and you're not going to talk yourself out of it and one pep talk, but you can chip away at it. And it's often about challenging yourself. So when you think I'm not good enough, every time you think that you just think like, actually, I'm going to try anyway, I'm gonna prove to my brain that maybe I am good enough, and you keep putting yourself out there and trying things that you think you can't do. That's one of the best ways to then figure out like, actually, I'm going to teach my brain to see me a little bit differently. It takes a long time to get there. And sometimes it's little things I was a kind of overweight, really shy kid. And now I'm like, I run every day, and I have a podcast and I give a TED talk. And like, it's not me, but I still have those moments where my brain tries to remind me that I'm still that 10 year old kid, because we hold on to those beliefs so much, even when there's evidence to the contrary. So you just have to keep doing and I think action that shows you that you can do differently, is really what you need. And it has to be consistent over time.

40:57

There's a documentary on Netflix, I'm not sure if you've seen it. I think it's called Stutz about the therapist. It's Jonah Hill's therapist, I forgot his first name. But his last name is Stutz. And he talks about this as kind of like the shadow self, like the the part of you that is there that you're kind of embarrassed by that you don't want to have around. And one of the things that he encourages is you invite your shadow self to be there, you acknowledge your shadow self, and you don't block them out or delete him or her, but you let them kind of be present and stuff. Like it's kind of an interesting, interesting way to think about it. So if people want to watch that documentary, it's on Netflix. It's pretty good. So maybe one more question before we jump into the leaders toolkit piece. And this is examples of where you think mental strength is relevant. Because from a high level, I think it's it's obvious why mental strength is important, the same way, why it's obvious why physical strength is important, just because, to get around in this world, if you don't have that physical strength, it's going to be pretty hard to you know, bring in groceries to help around the house to do whatever you need to do. Why is mental strength so important? Like are there any, I don't know, situations or examples, where that you can think of where mental strength is going to be crucial to either figure out the next step, or to kind of get through something.

42:18

You know, I think it plays out in every aspect of our lives, from our relationships that we have with people to the energy we put into our day to how much we do. And sometimes people think it's really about accomplishing more, being more productive when you're mentally stronger. But for some people, it's about saying, you know, I'm gonna give myself permission to pause or step back, or to not constantly be an overachiever. And so I think in the end, it's really about just knowing what are my values in life, and one of the best ways to figure that out is the you know, I'm 100 years old, sitting on my rocking chair on the porch test, and what would I want my life to have been like? And then what am I doing to live that right now. And so often, we think I'll do that later, or I'll make that change down the road. But again, like later is not promised. And I've never had anybody who came into my therapy office and said, You know, I wished I would have waited like another five or 10 years to change my life. Instead, it's everybody comes in and says, you know, why didn't I come in sooner? Or why didn't I start changing my life five years ago? Or how could my life have been completely different? If only I had

learned these things? When I was a kid? So just knowing that, yes, you can absolutely change and having the confidence that that you can do it today?

43:28

Yeah, having that growth mindset, I would imagine, is important. So I'm actually curious, when you work with a lot of leaders, it sounds like there's a little bit of therapy that goes into leaders as well, right, that you work with kind of like coaching, a little bit of therapy in there as well to kind of get them to think differently about stuff.

43:43

Right? Yeah, we don't want to like be like, well, let's talk about our childhoods when we were 10. But sometimes it's really like, it's like right there where you can just, you can try so many things that triggers things that set people off. Again, we're all human beings, no matter what position you're in, you're a human being who all experienced the exact same emotion, different things, trigger those emotions, but so much of it is just about self awareness and figuring out, you know, what's going on with me? And how do I manage that?

44:11

Let's jump to the leaders toolkit now. So this is a section where we dive a little bit deeper in some of the How to elements for these things. And I thought maybe we could start high level so somebody comes to you and they say, Amy, I want to be mentally strong. Where do I begin? Do you want more of my conversation with me more and as well as conversations that I have on other amazing guests, authors and CEOs? If so, then head over to greatleadership.substack.com Where every single week, I release bonus 15 minutes episodes called the leaders toolkit. I also released something called what I learned this week, and also something called The Five Minute leader. If you want to start your day with the world's top CEOs, business leaders, thinkers and authors head over to greatleadership.substack.com How could you afford not to do this It's less than the cost of two lattes a month it will be the best money you ever spend on your leadership development so head over to [Great leadership.substack.com](https://greatleadership.substack.com) I'll see you there