

The Age of Ego

I've had the opportunity to interview many coaches and physical education instructors with two and even three decades invested in their careers. During these interviews I like to ask, "How are the kids today different from the kids you worked with when you started?" Some of these educators, especially those at smaller schools who often see their kids through 12 years of education, say, "Not at all." Others say, "There are more distractions today, and many students don't seem as motivated as their predecessors were to excel to the highest levels in sports or academics." Good answers, but there is one disturbing personality trait I've seen that characterizes many young people today – narcissism.

Narcissism is a complex mental health condition, but a simple definition is that it is a personality disorder in which an individual overestimates their talents and is obsessed with the need for admiration. It's not about being self-confident but more about having an ego that is so overinflated that a person has a sense of entitlement. Think of the "Sharpay Evans" character Ashley Tisdale played in the *High School Musical* movies – that's narcissism.

While Sharpay is a relatively harmless character who believes her destiny is to be famous, narcissism is not a condition to be taken lightly. To back up this statement, I would refer you to a fascinating book on this subject called *The Narcissism Epidemic*, by Jean M. Twenge, PhD, and W. Keith Campbell, PhD (Free Press, 2009).

The authors point out that narcissism is harmful to the person displaying this behavior, because when they fail to achieve the goals they feel entitled to, they can experience serious depression. Narcissism can also harm others, as the narcissist's obsession with their own self-worth can seem to justify treating others poorly. It also affects society in general, as these individuals can engage in behaviors that become a burden on society.

How prevalent is narcissism? The authors found that in tests that measure narcissism, scores are higher today than they

have been in previous decades. In one major study of college students, one out of four students tested as having narcissistic traits. With high school students, the authors report that one out of every three seniors are "completely satisfied with themselves," compared to one out of four in 1975. And there

is also evidence that middle school students are also displaying higher levels of inflated egos compared to their predecessors in the 1980s.

The authors suggest that one possible cause of narcissism is the self-centeredness caused by Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and other social networking sites. But one point the authors make that really caught my attention is that "young people didn't raise themselves. They got these narcissistic values from somewhere, often from their parents or media messages created by older people."

Although BFS is primarily known for its exercise equipment and workout programs, we are especially proud of the Be an 11 program that we started over a decade ago. Rather than fostering self-centeredness,

these BFS seminars teach young people how to set higher goals, work harder and become better individuals with a value system based upon the highest standards. If you are a coach who works with young people, or if you are a parent, encourage your school to hold a Be an 11 clinic today!

Regarding this edition of *BFS* magazine, one athlete who is definitely an 11 is Amy Elizabeth Medina of Mountain View High School in Loveland, Colorado. Medina is the 2010 BFS Female Athlete of the Year, and you can read her story beginning on page 10. You'll also find some great articles about sports coaching, strength and conditioning, and exciting new developments in exercise equipment.

Enjoy!

Kim Goss, MS

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Tiara Lusk is a true 11. A member of the Team BFS Weightlifting Club and a professor at BYU-Idaho, Lusk recently completed a master's degree and is working towards a PhD.



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Pat Mendes: America's Strongest

One of the highlights of the 2010 National High School Power Clean Championships was an exhibition by Pat Mendes, who won this event in 2007 and 2008 and established the national record in the heavyweight class with 350 pounds. On a break during the competition, the 5' 9½" and 286-pound Mendes clean and jerked 485 pounds and then cleaned 507 pounds, just missing the jerk out front. Can you say 2012 Olympics?

Just before his 20th birthday, Mendes achieved the following lifts: 440 snatch, 507 clean, 507 raw bench press, 600 front squat, 706 x 5 back squat, and a 551

back squat for 5 reps in less than five seconds. Video clips of these lifts can be seen on the YouTube channel Brozknows. And for those interested in purchasing the photos shown here, or photos from the National High School Power Clean Championships, email John Broz at snatch400@me.com.

Mendes was introduced to weightlifting at Del Sol High School in Las Vegas, Nevada, where he earned a 4.4 GPA and turned down a college football scholarship to focus on weightlifting. Mendes' first official weightlifting competition was in November 2008 at a small meet in

Photos by John Broz



Utah, where he snatched 286 pounds and clean and jerked 352 pounds.

Weightlifting is considered a sport of development, but Mendes has always been strong. In his freshman year he squatted 405, and two years later he was squatting 585, benching 415 and power cleaning 350. The following May, while Mendes was defending his title and records at the National High School Power Clean Championships in Las Vegas, he was approached by local weightlifting coach John Broz, who helped convince Mendes to take on the sport seriously. Says Broz, “If Pat hadn’t entered

that national power clean meet, he wouldn’t be lifting with me today. This is a great way to give kids an idea of what weightlifting is all about, and we have even given weightlifting exhibitions during the competition so kids can get a closer look at the sport.”

Under Broz, Mendes trains twice a day, up to three hours per session, and the plan was to work up to the level where he is training 17 times a week. When he first started with Broz, their goals were to lift 462 in the snatch and 573 in the clean and jerk. Maybe, based upon his current rate of progress, those goals are too conservative?



A New Look at Food

BFS recommends a quality multivitamin and mineral supplement as part of a sound nutrition program. One nutrition expert who shares this belief is Dr. Robert A. Rakowski.



Dr. Rakowski

Dr. Rakowski is a clinical nutritionist and the clinic director of the Natural Medicine Center in Houston, Texas. His patient base ranges from professional athletes to critically

ill patients. During a recent visit to the Poliquin Strength Institute, *BFS* Editor in Chief Kim Goss asked Dr. Rakowski about the importance of multivitamin and mineral supplements.

Rakowski says that one problem in the US is that our fertilizers often only contain nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. "It takes 17 elements to make a healthy plant, and we only put three back in. So what happens is this malnutrition in the plants becomes malnutrition in the animals and becomes malnutrition in humans." He adds that trying to get all the nutrients the body needs is especially problematic for athletes.



"If you're trying to compete on an elite level, the person who has the best nutrient status and the least amount of toxins is going to win, all else being equal. I agree that we should get most of our nutrients

from food. Taking supplements in the absence of a good diet is still a poor diet with supplements. What you want is a great diet, but even with that the literature suggests that a great diet is not sufficient to reestablish depleted systems – that a sick body can't bounce back without supplementation."

Look for more valuable information about nutrition from Dr. Rakowski in future issues of *BFS*.

PLAYER PROFILES

Avery Cunningham

When the Winton Woods Warriors football team hoisted the Division II State Championship trophy, much of the credit belonged to their captain, #36 Avery Cunningham. The championship was the first of any kind for the Winton Woods community.

Avery, who was voted captain by his teammates in both his junior and his senior years, led his teammates on the field, in the classroom and in the locker room. Avery suffered a potentially career-ending injury early in his junior year, but worked himself back through hard work in the weightroom and earned the admiration of his teammates. After not one but two surgeries to repair his shoulder, Avery went through grueling rehabilitation to still achieve a 275 power clean, a hex bar of 505 and a squat of 425 at the team's final testing last July.



His play on the field earned him first team all-conference, as well as recognition as the defensive player of the year in the conference. He was selected all-city by the Cincinnati Enquirer, first team all-district and first team all-state. Avery earned first team all-conference as a sophomore as well. He was also selected to the prestigious Ohio North-South All-Star team. Avery was on the South team,

which pulled out an exciting 23-20 victory.

In the classroom Avery is a student-athlete role model. He has a 3.4 core grade point average. He is on the principal's student ambassadors program, which is selected by the school's principal, Dr. Terri Holden, as the students who best represent Winton Woods High School.

In addition to being an exceptional football player, Avery is a standout track performer. He won the 110 and 300 hurdle events at the league this past season. His performance at the league meet earned him runner of the meet and a school record in the 300 hurdles. At the district track meet the following week, Avery again captured both events.

Avery's talent caught the eye of Coach Dan Enos at Central Michigan, who offered Avery a scholarship after Enos was named the head football coach for the Chippewas this January.



PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT



Primal Bars

In cooperation with the Poliquin Strength Institute, BFS will now be offering Primal bars, a food bar that presents a nutritional alternative to the protein bars offered in grocery stores and other large outlets.

Primal bars are designed to stabilize blood sugar levels because they are free of fructose and contain, instead, polyols that occur naturally in fruits and vegetables. Most protein bars on the market cause a high spike in blood sugar that is associated with an insulin crash that causes drowsiness and carbohydrate cravings. Further, excess consumption of fructose products may be one of the causes behind the insulin resistance and obesity epidemic in America.

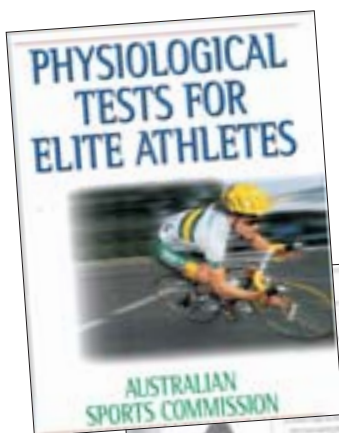
Primal bars do not contain soy. According to Charles Poliquin, soy products are linked to hypothyroidism and attention deficit disorder, and can block mineral absorption and decrease testosterone levels in men. He says soybeans are one of the most sprayed crops, and their high content of pesticides increases the toxic load on the body.

Primal bars are considered food bars because they contain protein, carbohydrates and fats. Trying to design a bar with a significant amount of protein to take the place of a meal would make the product too dense. Says Poliquin, "It's impossible to design a true protein bar that tastes good – a protein bar that would be nutritious for you would taste like a hockey puck!"

Primal bars come in a choice of five delicious flavors: chocolate coated, vanilla/almond coated, uncoated dairy-free chocolate/almond, uncoated dairy-free coconut/almond, and mixed-berry coated. The vanilla almond and chocolate Primal bars are made with an exceptional-quality whey protein; uncoated chocolate and uncoated coconut/almond are dairy free and made with rice protein. Rice protein is considered to be the least allergic of all protein sources available; these uncoated bars will be the obvious choice for those who are sensitive to whey protein.



**To order go to the BFS e-store
at biggerfasterstronger.com**



BOOK REVIEWS:

Physiological Tests for Elite Athletes

Testing is a given in today's athletic environment. Whereas football has taken testing to a high level with its combines, what about other sports? The answer can be found in *Physiological Tests for Elite Athletes*, a superior reference book by the Australian Sports Commission published by Human Kinetics (humankinetics.com).

In a nutshell, this amazing book offers five reasons for testing: 1) Identify weaknesses, 2) Monitor progress, 3) Provide feedback, 4) Educate coaches and athletes, and 5) Predict performance potential. Their criteria for testing include relevance, specificity, practicality, validity and accuracy.

Testing protocols are provided for 17 sports, with standards developed from national- and international-level athletes.

Such information provides practical information for coaches to design individualized strength and conditioning programs.

In addition to providing tests for specific tests, *Physiological Tests for Elite Athletes* presents details on protocols for many general laboratory assessments, including the following:

- blood lactate testing
- anthropometric testing
- blood sampling and handling
- flexibility assessment
- VO2max assessment
- various methods of strength and power testing

This 465-page reference tool is a must for not just sport scientists but also physical educators and coaches involved in strength and conditioning programs for athletes.

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