



ANABOLIC MIND

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INTRODUCTION

Your buddy asks if you can meet him at the gym at 7 p.m. for a training session. You were about to head to the gym now, but you haven't seen your friend in a few weeks so you decide to hold off and meet up with him later. You arrive at the gym around 6:55 p.m. He texts you at 6:59, "Hey, sorry man! I can't make it."

What are your immediate thoughts?

Are you pissed?

Disappointed?

Ready to delete his number and never talk to him again?

Maybe you're flailing your arms and screaming obscenities because he wasted your time. After all, you could have come to the gym earlier, right?

If you're judging or blaming your friend, then you've got a catabolic mind... at least under these circumstances.

Here's what someone with an *anabolic mind* would have thought...

"Oh, I hope everything is ok with John. Maybe there's an emergency. I should call him and make sure everything is OK."

Another anabolic thought would be something like, "no worries, I had to come work out anyway. I'll just see him another time."

Now tell me, if you were running late to work and had to text your boss to let her know, would you rather deal with the catabolic thinker or the

individual with the *anabolic mind*?

Chances are, you'd much rather deal with someone more level-headed. Irrational people with irrational thoughts make irrational decisions. They let their negative emotions get the best of them. They focus so much on the problem that they fail to come up with a valuable solution.



Rational thinkers with an anabolic mindset, on the other hand, are calm and composed. They're focused on finding solutions rather than obsessing about the problems. In fact, they see what most people consider to be "problems" as situations, and nothing more.

They understand when something is out of their control, and they don't allow those situations to distort their vision.



Having an anabolic mind isn't just about being cool and collected. It's about being a critical thinker, a problem solver. It's about being a person whom others aren't afraid, yet they respect. It's about being an effective leader who doesn't sweat the small stuff.

This is both psychologically and physiologically beneficial. An anabolic mind is worry-free, confident, calm, and proactive.

If you want to lead a more meaningful and enjoyable life, you've got to switch your thinking from catabolic to anabolic. In this guide, we're going to go over a few techniques you can follow to start becoming a more anabolic thinker, so that you can lead others and, more importantly, become a more effective man or woman.

REFLEXIVE THINKING

In his book, *The Power of Self-Coaching*, author Joseph Luciani, Ph.D., refers to *Catabolic Thinking as Reflexive Thinking* and states that this type of mindset depletes you rather than restores you. In other words, a catabolic mind drains you of precious energy, and, over time, rears its head in the form of self-sabotage.

Think about the writer who's been writing for decades but is insecure about his abilities. He's spent years writing his book, editing and perfecting it. His catabolic mind kicks in every time he thinks about sending it off to publishers. He tells himself it isn't ready. He's worried that it will sound silly to whoever reads it. He's spent some much time working on it, that it's almost as if he'd rather not want to hear any negative feedback, even if that means never getting it published. So, the old writer dies never having published his masterpiece.

Is your catabolic mind causing you to self-sabotage?

Have you been putting off asking your boss for that raise because you don't truly believe you deserve it? Maybe you have earned the raise, but your catabolic mind is too afraid of rejection? In this case, catabolic thinking could be the reason you never earn more money, grow resentful of your boss, and hate your job. Ultimately, you've self-sabotaged and are now blaming others for your misery.

If that sounds like you, here's an exercise you can practice anytime you're faced with this type of scenario.

ANABOLIC MIND EXERCISE: Ask yourself, *what's the worst thing that can happen?* Chances are, the worst case scenario isn't actually that bad. Especially when you compare it to never trying at all.

Let's go back to the previous example of the individual who's hesitant to ask for a raise. What's the worst thing that could happen? Well, your boss could say no and you'll be exactly where you are now. If you're proactive, you might even follow up and ask what you could do in order to earn the raise. This will show your boss that you're committed to growing in the company, so she'll likely have no problem setting some standards for you. On the other hand, it's also possible that you get the raise and earn your bosses respect for speaking up and demanding growth.

Someone with a catabolic mind will cave as soon as they're denied the raise and blame their boss or a coworker for their misfortune. An anabolic thinker will look at this situation as an opportunity to learn and grow.



CATABOLIC THINKING VS ANABOLIC THINKING

In this section, I'd like to briefly go over a few traits of catabolic and anabolic thinkers. Go through the list, be honest with yourself, and see if any of these describes you.

If you're a mostly catabolic thinker, then that's great news (you see, that's a prime example of an anabolic mind at work) because now you can be proactive. First, we identify the "problem", we then admit it's something we should work on, and then we take the necessary steps to correct the behavior.

CATABOLIC THINKERS

- Mentally busy and their mind never settles down.
- Would much rather be alone.
- Are only distracted by external factors such as television, social media, or alcohol.
- Never feel good enough for the job.
- Are so focused on "perfection" that they never see anything through to completion.
- Turn to food for pleasure.
- Externally happy for others, but internally they're jealous and bitter.
- They believe anyone who reaches success cheated to get there.
- Always late.
- They're reactive, not proactive.

ANABOLIC THINKERS

- Enjoy having their friends around.
- Meditate or pray.
- Always learning.
- They're process-oriented. They enjoy the journey.
- Confident in their abilities, but honest at the same time.
- Find pleasure in other people's successes.
- Are punctual and respect their time.
- Make health a priority without being excessive.
- They don't think "I can't", they think "how can I?" – They're problem solvers.
- They're proactive, not reactive.

It's likely that you've got a little bit of both in you—I know I do. But when the catabolic thinking outweighs the anabolic mindset, you've got a *situation*.

ANABOLIC MIND EXERCISE: Grab a sheet of paper and draw a line in the middle. Headline one side with Catabolic Thinking and the other with *Anabolic Thinking*. Now, go down each list and mark down 1 point for every one that describes you. If you're a mostly catabolic thinker, then I want you to consider all of your catabolic thinking behavior and write yourself a letter. This short letter to yourself will be used to switch your thinking from catabolic to anabolic. For the next 7 days, I want you to read that letter out loud, twice. Once as soon as you get up in the morning and once before you go to bed at night. That's it.

EXAMPLE LETTER FOR CATABOLIC THINKERS

Dear [your name],

You enjoy solitude, but you love being around your friends, too. You're a hard worker and you're smart, you are good enough. Health is a priority—without it, nothing else matters. Food is energy and you see it only as such. You're happy for others when they succeed—you're not a jealous person, you want the best for everyone, including yourself. You're a positive thinker.

Simple enough, right?

This exercise should be performed by anyone who has a 30:70 ratio of catabolic to anabolic thinking or greater. If you're an anabolic thinker, great. You'll probably still perform the exercise because you see this as an opportunity for growth. If you're a catabolic thinker, on the other hand, you'll likely tell yourself this is silly and can't possibly work. If those are your immediate thoughts as you read through this exercise, chances are, you're the person who'd benefit the most from it.



YOU'RE NOT AFRAID, YOU'RE EXCITED!

Ask one of the top fighters in the world if he's nervous or afraid before he walks into the ring and he'll say, "No, I'm excited."

An amateur competitor might say something like, "if any fighter says he isn't afraid before a fight, he's lying."

What you're witnessing here is an *anabolic mind vs a catabolic mind*... let me explain.

From a psychological standpoint, when we experience fear we're saying to ourselves, "No, this is dangerous. Get out of this situation. You could die!"



Physically, however, we experience fear in the exact same way we experience excitement. Our heart rate is elevated, we perspire a bit, cortisol is increased, and we're hyper-aware and focused.

You see, the only real difference between fear and excitement is what our brain is telling us at that moment.

When we're afraid, our brain is convincing us that we must avoid the situation. Think about the person who freaks out at an amusement park, and, ultimately, doesn't get on the rollercoaster—that's fear. When we're excited, our brain might say something like, "Whoa! This is awesome. I can't wait to do this." Think about the last time you were in line at a theme park, waiting to get on a ride—that's excitement.

Psychologically, they're much different, but, physically, they're the exact same feeling. When we're in a high-stress situation (i.e. before a fight, when we're about to jump out of a plane, while in line at a theme park, etc.), our mind will either work with us or against us.

If we experience fear, it's working against us.

If we experience excitement, it's working for us.

In this section of the *Alpha Mind* guide, I want to share a simple tactic that I learned from author of *The 5 Second Rule*, Mel Robbins. A strategy so powerful, that you'll be able to turn fear into excitement at the drop of a hat!

A strategy she uses before getting on stage in front of thousands of people; a technique I implement before loading up the bar for a heavy bench press; and a trick you can incorporate to finally ask that girl on a date!

ANABOLIC MIND EXERCISE: The next time you're going to go into a high-stress situation (i.e. asking a girl out, requesting a raise, getting on a plane, etc.), come up with, what life coach, Mel Robbins, calls an "anchor thought." A thought that will anchor you in order for you to maintain control and avoid panicking. For example, if you're about to ask a girl out, start visualizing what it might feel like when she says *yes*. Picture her smile and think about how you'll feel when she gets excited that you finally asked her out. If you're going to ask your boss for a raise, imagine what you'll feel like when he praises your hard work and agrees to your request. From there, start telling yourself that you're excited. Repeat it a few times, "I'm excited...I'm excited!" This will send a message to your brain to let it know why your body is agitated and excited.

This strategy can be used for virtually any situation where you'd typically experience fear. The better you get at visualizing the positive outcome, the simpler it becomes to turn fear to excitement and dominate the situation.

THE VICTIM MENTALITY

You're at the airport going through security when suddenly you're pulled off to the side for a "random" security check. Your flight leaves in under an hour and these people are grilling you about everything imaginable. You realize that, no matter what you say or do, you're not going to make the flight. Oh, and did I mention that it's the last flight available that day and you're going to miss your daughter's wedding?

Here's how someone with a victim mentality (a.k.a. catabolic mind) would react to the situation.

First, you'd bitch, moan, and plead with security. You'd explain your circumstances and beg them to let you go. Then, when faced with the harsh reality that these people have very firm procedures to follow, you flip out and call them racists. You begin asking why this is happening to you, and then, *if they allow it*, you call your family to explain that it's their (the security) fault you'll miss the wedding.

That, my friend, is a victim mentality at its finest.

Now let's take a look at how someone with an *anabolic mind* would handle the situation.

First, you'd be understanding of the situation; that these people are just doing their job. You'll be compliant and remain level-headed. Since this is all out of your control, you'll accept your fate. Rather than ask why this is happening to you, you'll take extreme ownership and realize that you should have booked an earlier flight. You view this misfortune as a learning experience that you can apply in the future when you need to fly again.

To take it a step further, who do you think will get their situation handled more efficiently? The sketchy, disruptive individual who's calling everyone names and making threats—or the level-headed leader who's calm and compliant?

Perhaps neither...

But, one wasted a great deal of energy and will, more than likely, carry this negative experience along with them for a very long time. This situation will likely be at the forefront of many conversations they have in the future. The other, however, will have learned and moved on. If the situation does come up in a conversation, it won't be presented as a negative experience, but, rather, as something helpful that may bring value to others.



ALPHA MIND EXERCISE: Start taking extreme ownership. No matter what happens—you get a speeding ticket, someone cuts you off, a meteor hits your car—think of what you could have done to avoid it. For example, if everyone is doing 90 mph but you're the only one to get stopped, instead of being a victim and yelling at the police officer about not pulling everyone else over, thank him and own up to the fact that, regardless of what everyone else did, you broke the law, too.

I'll leave you with some powerful words from my good friend, Chad Howse.

"A man cannot be a victim unless he allows it to happen. It doesn't matter if you're physically or emotionally oppressed. It doesn't matter if you're unjustly imprisoned. It doesn't matter if you're a slave. A man cannot be a victim unless he allows it to happen."

PROACTIVE VS REACTIVE

There are two types of people in this world: those who are proactive and those who are reactive. Having an anabolic mind will ensure that you're a proactive person while the catabolic mind handcuffs you to the proverbial basement of reactivity.

PROACTIVE PEOPLE

These people take the initiative. Their actions are predetermined based on their agenda.

REACTIVE PEOPLE

In contrast, reactive individuals fail to take initiative and let the world take them where it may. Their agenda is determined by random events.

The man who wakes up, performs his morning ritual, and focuses on the tasks that will move the needle in his life and business is proactive.

The crusty-eyed baboon who rolls out of bed, drags his feet, and jumps right into his emails to see where the day will take him is reactive.

Though they both have the same 24 hours in a day, the proactive individual is using his time wisely and adhering to the agenda that will get him closer to his goals. Conversely, the reactive person is wasting his time mindlessly reacting to the agendas of other people.

If you want to achieve grand things, you've got to hop off of the reactivity hamster wheel and become proactive.

ANABOLIC MIND EXERCISE: if you have a goal you want to achieve, you'll have to base all of your actions around the activities that will get you closer to that goal. First, identify what the goal is. Second, reverse engineer that goal by figuring out exactly what steps need to be taken in order to accomplish it. If you're writing a book, this is where you'd lay out how many hours per day you have to write and/or how many words you'd have to get down on paper each day to ensure you're meeting your deadline. You might also lay out all of the chapters you want to include, break those chapters down into smaller bullets that identify the important points you want to mention, and so on. Next, create a schedule you can adhere to that will ensure you're (1) sitting at your desk during your most creative hours and (2) giving yourself enough time to knock out the word goal for the day. Lastly, take relentless action.



I'd also recommend that you plan the following day each night before bed. Identify exactly what you'll be doing and give each item a timeframe. This will ensure that you wake up with an agenda that you can follow.

DECISIVE

An anabolic mind is a confident one. If you're confident in your values, beliefs, and trust your own judgment, you'll have no problem making decisions. On the other hand, a catabolic thinker finds it extremely difficult to make decisions. They're too worried about what others may think if they make the wrong decision.

This isn't to say that you shouldn't ask your significant other what she wants for dinner—but if she hits you with the infamous, "it doesn't matter," then make a damn choice. You're not disarming an explosive device here, my friend... you're choosing between Italian and Chinese!

In regards to bigger decisions—ones that can have a huge impact on your life—you must still move with haste.

Here's what John Braddock, founder and CEO of My Life & Wishes, had to say about making big decisions:

"I never sleep on an idea. Instead, I give myself a short timeline of 5 to 10 minutes to process the information. Next, I evaluate what might be the best possible outcome, followed by what is the worst possible scenario. I ask myself, Can I live with either outcome? If the answer is yes, I move quickly. If the answer is no, I walk away."

ANABOLIC MIND EXERCISE: Next time you go out to dinner, look over the menu for 10 seconds and make a decision. Though this may seem small and insignificant, it's a great exercise for practicing quick decision making.

Another tip I'd suggest for becoming more decisive is this: anytime you're faced with a tough decision, ask yourself, is this going to get me closer or my go? If the answer is 'no', then there's nothing to deliberate. Likewise, if the answer is 'yes', there's no reason to question whether or not it's a good decision.



One last parting piece of guidance as it relates to decision making: go with your gut. Often times we ignore our gut instinct because we don't take it as a serious indicator that we're making the right or wrong choice. Unfortunately (or fortunately—depending on how you want to look at it), our gut instinct is typically right on the money! You see, our subconscious stores information based on our experiences and knowledge and connects them whenever we're faced with certain decisions. It's no surprise that you've probably made many bad decisions in your life when you ignored your gut.