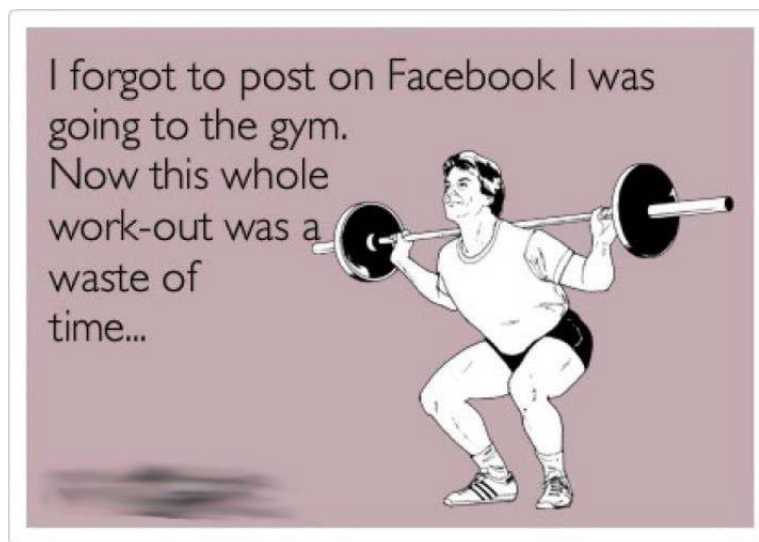


2012 – The year that validation became compulsory?

As we approach the end of 2012 it is for us all a time for reflection, but there are different ways of reflecting – realistically, positively, pessimistically or by putting a whole new spin and a coat of gloss on the events of the year. Personally I only ever use the first two methods but; and this is where the title comes from, it seems that that more and more people use only the other two methods and wouldn't be physically able to reflect realistically.

So, where to start to address an issue that has been a bugbear of mine for far too much of this year, well if a picture is worth a thousand words?



Now here's part of an email that I sent to a newbie gym rat when they actually came to me asking if it was compulsory to tell everyone what you eat and how you train etc. And was it something that everyone did to be part of the bodybuilding community?

No, it is definitely not something that everyone does, some of the top pros do as it may be part of their sponsorship deal or if they are promoting their gym or a product or something similar to that which is quite understandable, but the fact that so many "no-bodies" do it is something that I find ridiculous and frustrating. They do it simply to cover their own inadequacies, they do it for attention and validation and it's the main reason why I don't do social networking. I use the phrase "walk it don't talk it" far too often really but it's just how I feel. I hate this

modern world that is so full of fakery, spin and gloss, why can't people be straight and honest and if they want validation then do something to earn it rather than boasting on facebook, twitter and anything else that they can use about how wonderful they are every day? I was once told "the only time to crow is when you have something extremely special to crow about" that has always served me well and the only time that I crow is when I win a show, and never at any other time.

From there we went on to chat about it for a bit and I was asked why, as I obviously trained really hard and was a well known figure, didn't I like to post about having "awesome workouts" and the like. Here was my reply

Every workout that I do is "awesome" in its own special way, if it wasn't then I'd have wasted my time and I'm no time waster. Look, Usain Bolt is the fastest man in the world, the fastest in history, but he doesn't break the world record every time he races, nobody can do that. So some days I will train better than others BUT as long as I can genuinely say that I did a workout as well as I possibly could that day then I'm happy. So by that rationale I would have to waste everyone's time by posting about "awesome workouts" every single day and like I said I'm no time waster, I don't have enough of the stuff left to waste it!

We spoke some more and I said that if people really wanted to know about what's going on with me then I have a website, only because so many people have asked for it, and they can look at my blog, that way they have to make an effort to find out, whereas with social networking they feed it to you, and they actually call it a feed! I'm not an animal that needs to be fed; thank you but I can actually feed myself. Alright one more picture (dig) and I'll leave your beloved facebook alone

Almost considered doing something with my life. Then I sat down and logged into Facebook.

Let's look at the whole validation thing from a different angle, because a lot of people actually use facebook & twitter for much better things (there, I said it, just to save you whining at me) so who are the people that need the constant validation and why? Well I think that peoples inadequacies are a symptom of modern society, and these difficult economic times make it worse, although I do wonder what we all did during the early 70's when times really were tough. Song lyrics often sum things up far better than I ever could.

She shouts down the phone
Missed a payment on the loan
She gotta be above the rest
Keeping up with the best

That is the world that we live in, never mind about foundation just worry about the gloss, it sickens me. Where do these people think that it will all end? Living in that way is no different to perpetuating a lie, and unless they win some kind of lottery it's bound to end in tears isn't it?

God knows what is hiding in that world of little consequence
Behind the tears, inside the lies, a thousand slowly dying sunsets
God knows what is hiding in those weak and drunken hearts
I guess that loneliness came knocking, no-one needs to be alone

I call it the X Factor generation. The fact of the matter is that these people are fake, in many cases, instead of putting in a shift every day they decide that having a baby is the first rung on the property ladder. Ok that may be putting it a bit too harshly, so try this instead. How many people are driving around in nice cars that they will never own? I decided that I wanted an Aston Martin DB7 nearly 20 years ago but I waited over 15 years and worked my socks off until I could buy it for cash, how many of the X factor generation would wait that long?

Ok, maybe I'm just particularly grouchy this year because all of this brings back memories of my failed engagement. At least I ended it nicely, I was going to buy her a flat in a nice neighbourhood but she couldn't decide whether she wanted to be a blood or a crip! Ok I'm joking, seriously we actually had a great 6 months together and I wish her all the best for the future.

The best 3 comments that I heard to summarise the whole thing were as follows, the first 2 of these came from women by the way!

1 Women are just snakes with tits (I do not agree that ALL women are and I didn't even get that particular benefit!)

2 It would have been cheaper to put a hooker on a retainer

3 As long as there are shallow, crazy, gold diggers out there you will always have girlfriends Kev, and reality TV shows will always have participants

I love my friends dearly, simply because “they get me” they know that I dislike self pity and those comments are about as sympathetic as they get. With friends like that what more could I possibly need?

Anyway I should talk a bit about bodybuilding I suppose. Well the 2012 documentary was a massive success, so much so that they are showing a follow up on Monday January 7th 2013 at 8.30 pm. In these TV shows, shown on the community channel (sky 539 & freeview 87) I address far more than I could ever write about here. However, there is one thing that I didn't mention in them that I can here and it is linked to whole theme of this piece.

Another way that people seek validation is to walk around with “all the gear and no idea”. I mean all of the latest gym clothing that suggests that they were a VIP guest at Mr. Olympia when really they watched it on the internet in between surfing for porn. They walk around spouting the latest “research” from the internet or some or other magazine and they quote it like it was the bible. I swear that some of these people would join the Taliban if someone told them that it was organic! And they do all of this despite having achieved nothing. So this is not so much seeking validation as screaming out “someone please justify my existence!”

These people have to get over themselves. I went on a lot in the last special feature called “not a social event” about how important it is to just get on with what you do at the gym and then have as normal a life as possible. Obviously dietary requirements will make you different to the rest but there's no need to announce to the world that you are a bodybuilder every time you eat, drink or go about your day's business. Yes be proud of what you do, especially if you actually have a record that proves that you really do know what you're doing, but don't stick it in

people's faces, it gives us proper bodybuilders a bad name and heaven knows we already spend enough time debunking the myths and preconceptions that come with the sport that we love. I actually have some baggy clothes that I wear if I'm going out and don't want to look like a bodybuilder, they disguise the fact just enough to stop people staring and making little comments, sometimes we all need that little bit of space and anonymity don't we?

Finally then, the highs and lows of the year. Well there were plenty of highs for a start. I won 2 shows and proved that I can still do it at 53, everyone that I coached did well and of course I had a great surprise meeting with Shawn Ray that I really enjoyed.

There was only one low, no not losing Danny, that was always going to happen. The only real low was the way that Natalie degenerated after her show. I have been in this game for a long time and I have never met anyone with so much potential in my entire life. I did more for Natalie than anyone else this year because she needed massive support, mostly motivationally but also just about everything else too. For example, nobody came to watch her compete except her best friend, and I paid for her to be there too! I believed so much in Natalie and she responded amazingly and did well in her first show. Without doubt, she was the biggest coaching challenge that I have ever had. Although spending so much time working with her undoubtedly affected my season; I was only really at my best at the "Stars" after I had finished coaching her, I am still very proud of what we achieved together. You have all seen the before and after pics so you will know why I say that.

Sadly, a matter of days after her show she walked out on everything and the last time I saw her she looked like she had never been in a gym or on a diet in her life. I don't have any contact with her anymore and I don't even know the person that she has become. It's heartbreaking to see someone with unlimited potential walk away and start a new life that is likely to end up with her having more wheels on her house than on her car, if she ever gets either! It actually hurt me, but that's what comes of being too close to people that you genuinely care about.

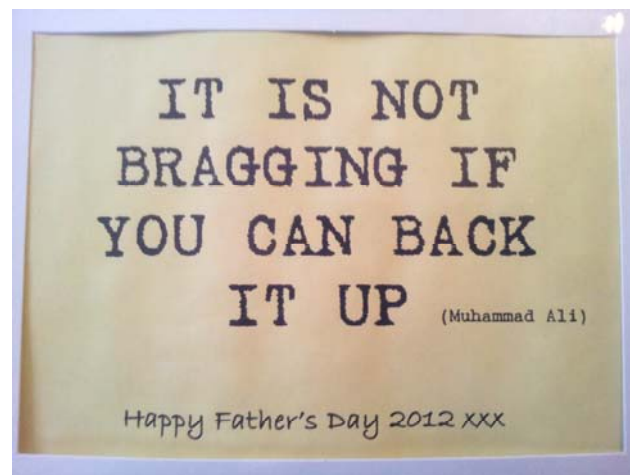
It's not hard to fall, when you float like a cannonball

She honestly did have the whole package and if she had trained on under my guidance like I told her to, she would have been a drug free

British champion in 2013 and from there could have gone wherever she wanted to, I am absolutely certain of that, but she simply walked away instead.

You see the period for about a month after a show is critical, especially if it's your last show of the year. The body will "rebound" you can't stop that, but you can make it rebound exactly how you want it to. My good friend Neale Cranwell once explained it to me and gave me very good advice for rebound time, which is why, even at my age, I am getting bigger and better every year. The general consensus of those in the know is that my physique at the Stars of Tomorrow was the best that it has ever been, even backstage before we went on people were telling me that, but it was two other things that made me realise that it was true. One was the show photos but more importantly my coach and friend Eddie Abbew sent me a text after the show simply saying "you looked great on stage today" and it bought a tear to my eye. Eddie doesn't do praise or compliments, that's why I chose him as my coach and I have never wanted to be coached by anyone else, so you can see why this meant a lot to me.

To wrap this whole thing up I'll show you a picture of what my dear son Steve & his gorgeous fiancée Amy got me for Fathers Day this year, as we have always both been in awe of Muhammad Ali and have the same sentiments, I think that Eddie would appreciate it too.



Merry Christmas 2012 my friends, I hope that everyone gets the 2013 that they deserve.