



BROTHER IRON SISTER STEEL

A Bodybuilder's Book

DAVE DRAPER

MR AMERICA • MR UNIVERSE • MR WORLD

**Brother Iron
Sister Steel**

A Bodybuilder's Book

Dave Draper

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Brother Iron, Sister Steel: A Bodybuilder's Book

by Dave Draper

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Contents

Brother Iron, Sister Steel is a saga about you and me, lifting weights and building muscle. The plot is as simple as ABC and 1-2-3, although I never found anything particularly simple about the alphabet or mathematics. To contribute to the book's simplicity I offer in less than a hundred words an outline of the subject matter contained and its sequence.

It goes like this—

- 1 The Soap Opera**
- 2 Keys and Guideposts**
- 3 Train with Style**
- 4 Mighty Warriors**
- 5 Push that Iron**
- 6 Lift that Steel**
- 7 Exercise X-rays**
- 8 Nutrition Rules**
- 9 Overcoming**
- 10 Memories are the Stuff**
- 11 Rare and Old Magazine Covers**
- 12 Stoking the Training Fire**

Disclaimer

The words that compose this book are written with a logic that comes only from experience, with passion and excitement that come only from a long-time love of the iron. The facts of how to train, how to eat, why and when are presented to you clearly, as insights, not cold precepts that bind you like laws and classroom underscores. Here you'll find exactly what you need to get you going and keep you going with knowledge and understanding, spirit and zeal, purpose and ever growing clarity. Bodybuilding, weight training, nutrition, fitness and exercise comprise an engaging diversion, a healthy sport, a rewarding challenge — a robust lifestyle that lifts you higher and higher.

The writing of this book is based upon my personal experiences. Your experiences and results are certain to be different. Medical experts recommend that you see a doctor before starting a diet or exercise program and that you start slowly.

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Please note: This text was written in 2001 and has not been updated for this electronic edition. A few things have changed in Dave's recommendations. In particular, he no longer recommends the volume of crunches he once did, and in fact for many people the recommendation should probably be none. He also warns against excessive bench pressing and suggests using dumbbells more often than the bar and regular overhead pressing and horizontal rows to help protect against the shoulder issues that often come with long-term heavy benching.

THE SOAP OPERA

A person can arrive at a place and not be entirely sure how one got there. The Brooklyn Academy of Music, as I recall, was a gothic structure composed of tall shadows, massive granite stone steps, arches, columns and pigeon-crowned portals. It was tightly pressed into a space amongst towering angular buildings, mortar and concrete that had hardened at the turn of the century. The elegance of its gilded and velvet-curtained opera boxes was not lost to me but the center of my attention focused on the dark and dusty backstage closures, the grandness of which was expressed in bewildering height, intricate pulley and cable systems that raised, lowered and controlled vast curtains, backdrops, scenery and props, microphones, lights and speakers. There, where the strings of the Philharmonic once rejoiced and Caruso had pleaded, wept and conquered, I found a corner to drop my gym bag and prepare an ad-lib strategy for the unknown reckoning ahead: the Mr. America Contest, September, 1965.

I wasn't alone. Tough union stagehands, an amateur crew of fledgling assistants and volunteers, a team of Roloflex photographers and a splat of magazine and newspaper writers spilled over the stage and flowed into the theater's front rows as the judges congregated, shared war stories and sharpened their pencils. Pre-judging would start without fanfare when all the contestants seemed to be present. And, of course, there were the contestants, prime ragtag and mighty—Mr. America and Mr. Universe look-alikes, dressed funny and still a little wet behind the ears. They were a new breed, putting on Man Tan and pumping up with The Samson Twister and Kool-aid.

I stood in the shadows and peered like a wary owl in a thick forest at the slowly growing commotion around me. I don't mingle much and I mingled less then. I took the long, serious road to get to New York, leaving New Jersey in the spring of '63, stopping off in Los Angeles for a few years and arriving at La Guardia International in mid-September of 1965. Gave me a chance to think and see the sights. They've got sunshine out West; The Beach Boys were right.

A sociological fact stands out: You make friends when you're under stress and wearing the same witless outfit. There was a strong showing of primed bodies from the Islands (Puerto Rico, Trinidad, Tobago and Jamaica) and they were jolly-good. We laughed and had fun, and I'll never forget them. It was a time when I thought I'd never laugh—ever.

And then there's the ritual of oil application done with machismo and very particular care. "Pumping up" presents no problem 'cept for the sliding around and the overtraining, dehydration and hypoglycemia. The dapper fellow who brought the bananas, tuna and water bottle knew what he was doing. He was the only guy who wore slippers, had a towel

ever ready and didn't look like he'd been rolled in the back alley as he presented himself before the judges. He even had spray deodorant in his giant gym bag. Big dandelion. The next year I'd be sure to stock my gym bag with similar backstage contest survival gear.

Pre-judging was a mass of confusion which suited me just fine. The more distracted everyone became, the easier it was to relax, observe and enjoy. Self-conscious mistakes the size of a cow went unnoticed. The immediate post-judging challenge was fueling up before the evening show: no fuel, no energy, no pump, no fun. This I accomplished with Freddy Ortiz and his entourage at an authentic New York delicatessen around the corner, the original fast food of the Big Apple.

Crazy Freddy removed his shirt for no particular reason in the middle of an intersection and stopped traffic as I ate a roast beef on sourdough and drank a container of milk. He was warmin' up for the night's performance. I envied his brashness. It took hooks to pull off my clothes and a net to get me on stage. Good grief. Earl Maynard had his shirt off and was trying to pull down Freddy's pants—I was howling, down to a tank top and hitting double over-head biceps shots before a cheering yet ever-flowing stream of busy citizenry. It must have been the carbohydrates, the release from the dark scrutiny of the judges or the relief that accompanies a realization of one's finiteness; standing at the foot of skyscrapers among millions of souls is liberating.

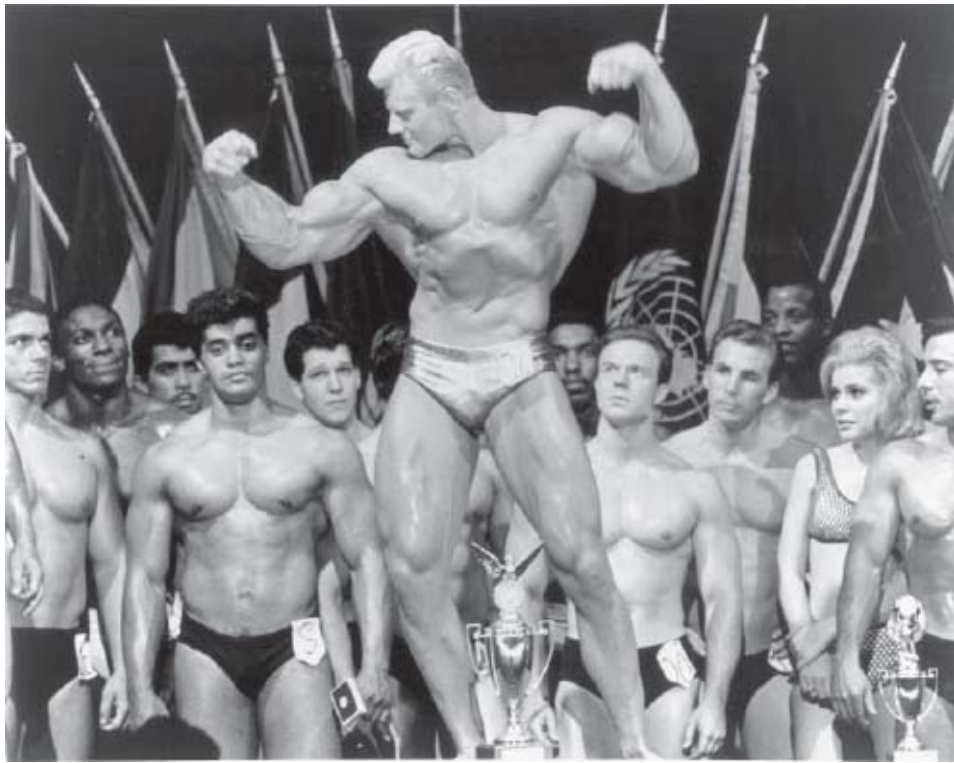
As the evening progressed, Larry Scott and I stuck together behind the thick and impenetrable curtains. America's Mr. America, he knew the ropes—he'd been here before. You might say Larry had already ascended the heights of the famed landmark and returned to reminisce—The Dungeon of Santa Monica meets Vince's Gym of North Hollywood. There's gonna' be a party tonight.

Nothing that takes place backstage can compare with what goes on in a New York City audience, especially a bodybuilding audience, especially in 1965. The enthusiasm arrives in carloads, empties from subway stations, buses and taxicabs. Guys with wives and dudes with chicks on Saturday night, and they are looking cool and feeling no pain. But, wait, my friend. It's beyond that; there's something more and you can taste it. There's a tremor, a stir of expectation, a charge in the air, on the street and in the bowels of the elegant auditorium. It's not frightening; yet, it's not exactly without fright. It's an unknown, a mysterious, penetrating feeling.

Activity becomes more of a blur as the night goes on. I pump up again and again, smear more oil around, tire of nakedness, conversation and my now-greasy hairstyle gone ugly. Smudged, fat and skinny coetaneously, with nothing more constructive to do, I relent and turn toward the pulse of the crowd and the throb of the night. The audience hasn't missed a beat. They like the dark rippling men from the Islands of the Caribbean. They like the spiffy homeboys and the thick Europeans. Freddy poses in slow motion and shakes the century-old halls of grandeur; he tears down the house as he flexes his biceps and spreads his lats. No one has seen this stuff before tonight and they're going crazy.

I stood behind Larry, Mr. California and the reigning Mr. Universe, as he edged toward

the center dais. Excitement was building as the show neared its crowning moments. He was about to be introduced as the overwhelming winner of the Mr. Olympia title and pass the Mr. Olympia title on to me. The backstage grew soundless, the stony veteran stagehands whispering now captured and suspenseful. Contestants froze in a line.

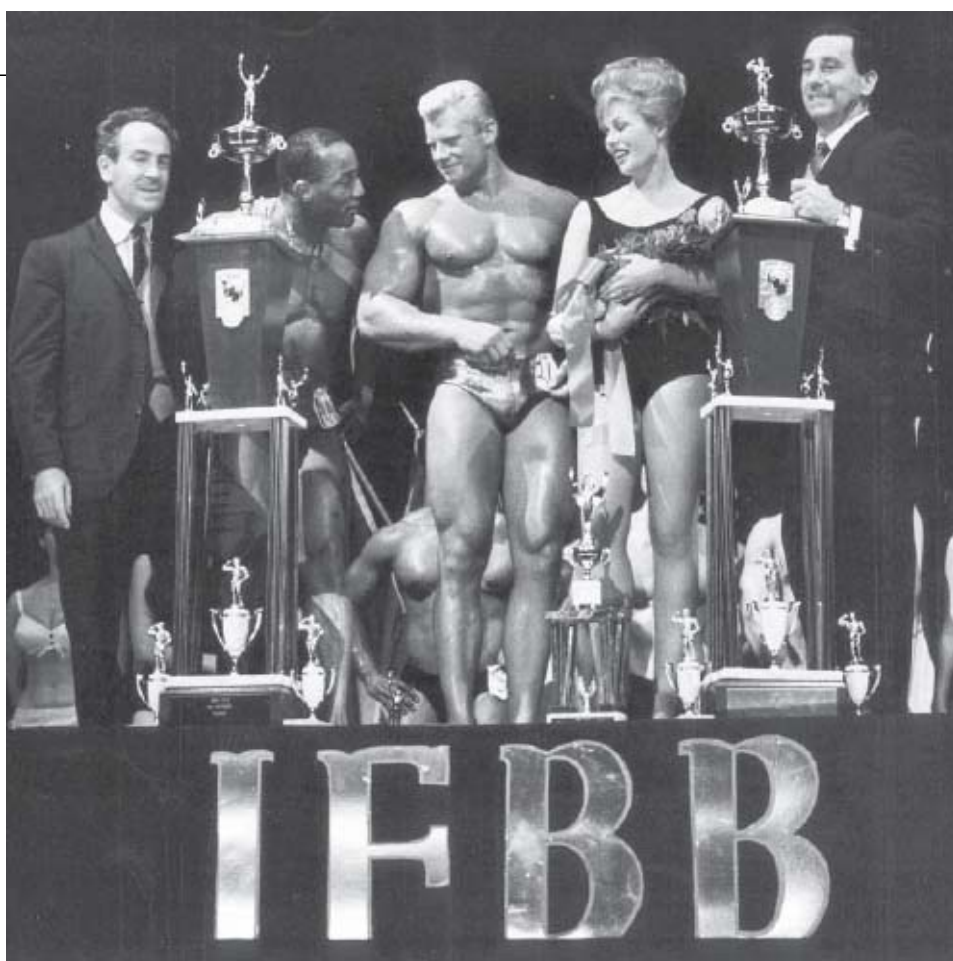


Mr. America, on stage at The Brooklyn Academy Of Music, 1965. History speaks a clear language in this nostalgic picture. Close inspection of the innocent competitors reveals no tattoos or pierced body bangles. I received an 8x10 of this classic personal prize from a popular female bodybuilding champion who dragged it out of a trash heap that collected in the ground level parking garage of Weider Barbell Company in Woodland Hills, California, winter of 1994. "Thought you might like a copy."

An unnerving silence possessed the spectators, a restless stillness that gripped everyone once; no one moved as if waiting for a heartbeat. Larry stepped closer to the spotlight and paused as a silent, motionless silhouette. The hush ached in our bones and tightened our jaws. One more teasing step and the man loomed forward, raising his massive arms overhead, and the first and last note of music was heard.

The sound that broke from the crowd was chilling. It was as if from one deep place a long contained emotion was discharged...a rolling thunder never before expressed in this tarnished and fading opera house; the chorus built upon itself, stunning its maker, an awesome rumble that stopped the heart.

I joined Larry to receive my trophy, the loving-child embrace of the Big City crowd. The spotlight, the applause, the center-stage dais were mine for long, fiery moments like the continuous striking of stick matches, suddenly ablaze, hot, hissing, smoking and gone. Another followed by another, then gone.



The trophies awarded in '65 for your achievement as a muscle builder were towering. We who were so fortunate to win the grand prizes struggled till 2 a.m. with wrenches dismantling the things in order to get them out the back door and into waiting taxis.

I spent the last half of the Twentieth Century pursuing muscle and might; and I am no less involved in the pursuit early on in the Twenty-first Century. Were I given the opportunity to repeat things, I would, glaring mistakes and all. The urge to edit out a few embarrassments and hurts exists, but who am I to tamper with the work of God? As it is, so let it be.

Serendipitously and coincidentally I have achieved a place of recognition amongst a world of like-minds. I'm persuaded and compelled to write a book to teach, encourage, affirm; to share and compare notes, to clarify, to affect pause and consideration; to brighten mind and spirit and speed one along by slowing one down.

If I'm proud it's because I'm a muscle-building original. I invented, improvised and rooted about along with a small, disconnected band of rebels with a cause: to build solid muscle and might through the austere, hard labor of love—the lifting of iron. Our shirts were not torn to be fashionable; they were shredded by use and outgrowth. We didn't imitate. Who would be the model before us?

The last thing I want to do is dictate your ways, force round pegs into square holes. Yet, I will shout the sober reminder, "Get to work and quit complaining!" to those who need it. A compliment was directed to me recently over the loudspeaker of the Internet: "Drappeau doesn't tell you what you should do; he tells you what he did himself." I'm grateful for the observation.

And now the project is before me. There are hundreds of books written by professional

bodybuilding champions, researchers, doctors, coaches and scholars. Where do I fit in?

I, like everyone else, do not care to be ordinary. Already, a contradiction. I seek to arrange order and logic within my suggestions, both in exercise and menu. I offer you sound facts and establish sturdy landmarks to guide you, affirm you. Mostly, I don't want this to be a textbook but a view of life as seen by me, a person who did, does and always will lift weights as he eats and breathes.

FROM THE GRIPPER TO THE DUNGEON

Time appears to be a cool character: unchanging, forever on the go, showing no favoritism. Yet time, upon which I never impose gender, is healing. Time forgives. My life inches along, and, may I presume, yours does as well. Two steps forward and one step back. The dance of men, women and children doing the best they can.

I can think of few acts more profitable to growing up and becoming more complete, than the honest, hard work of lifting weights and eating right.

I have two objectives as I set out to write this book: to underscore the things you need to know and to encourage you to do them. Get rid of the notion that you need to know more and more. The learning is in the doing.



Chris Lund and his jolly-good camera, pointing our way in the mid-90s. The Venice World Gym is the mirrored backdrop and I weighed 225 pounds eating meat and potatoes. Lou Ferrigno stood to my left as Chris composed the shot and commented that few of the current wave of bodybuilders squat or deadlift. "It's not like the old days, Dave."

Muscle and power building are not and need never become brain surgery or astrophysics. Information beyond the ABCs and simple math only leads to confusion, doubt, controversy and frustration. These conditions distract from the wonderful work at hand and confound the

basic instincts and investigative courage to discover. Thus limited, one imitates instead of seeks, copies rather than improvises, becomes dull in place of shining. One stops growing leaf and grows only in knurly root.

There comes a time, sooner or later, when you must listen to yourself and not those around you. You must become the student and teacher at once. Look directly to yourself and your training as the masters. If you enjoy the magazines and science and research, sip of them as one does afternoon tea. Enjoy the aroma, swirl the flavorful liquid about the palate, note the heady summaries but don't expect sustenance. This comes from you, the gym and hard work over and over again. Insight and revelation fall like sweet rain from above on the sunniest days.

I think I can safely say that I am writing to a diverse audience. And though I may not be penning a bestseller, my ramblings might wind up in the hands of beginners of all ages, resolute former enthusiasts, struggling mid-level bodybuilders and even a nip of award-winning collecting pros curious about what I have to say. With that in mind, and firmly believing that the basics cannot be overstated nor simplicity replaced, I'll begin.

I walked into the picture about the middle of the Twentieth Century when I wrapped my skinny, child's hand around a Hercules hand gripper. It lay there with its bright red handle and gleaming chrome coils amidst a heap of crushed display cartons, well-sampled wiry chest expanders and "how to" pamphlets exhibiting sketches of a handsome and rugged he-man with muscles bursting through his T-shirt. WOW. Wide-eyed and transfixed. WOW.

I was seven and in the sports department of Macy's in New York City Christmas shopping with my mother. Mom got off easy. The hand gripper was harmless enough, fit in my back pocket just right and was only a couple of bucks compared to twenty for the rather cumbersome basketball I'd been fondling earlier. Thanks, Ma, for that lovingly cruel steel device and the cable chest expanders to follow, that pinched my nose and tore hair from my head in clumps.

Queeze.Queeze ...Queeze.Queeze. That repetitious grating sound—music to my ears—became like dripping water to the senses of my family, not unlike an ancient Far Eastern torture. We all endured: I, the burn in the forearms and the anxious need to grow, and their loving patience and frazzled nerves.

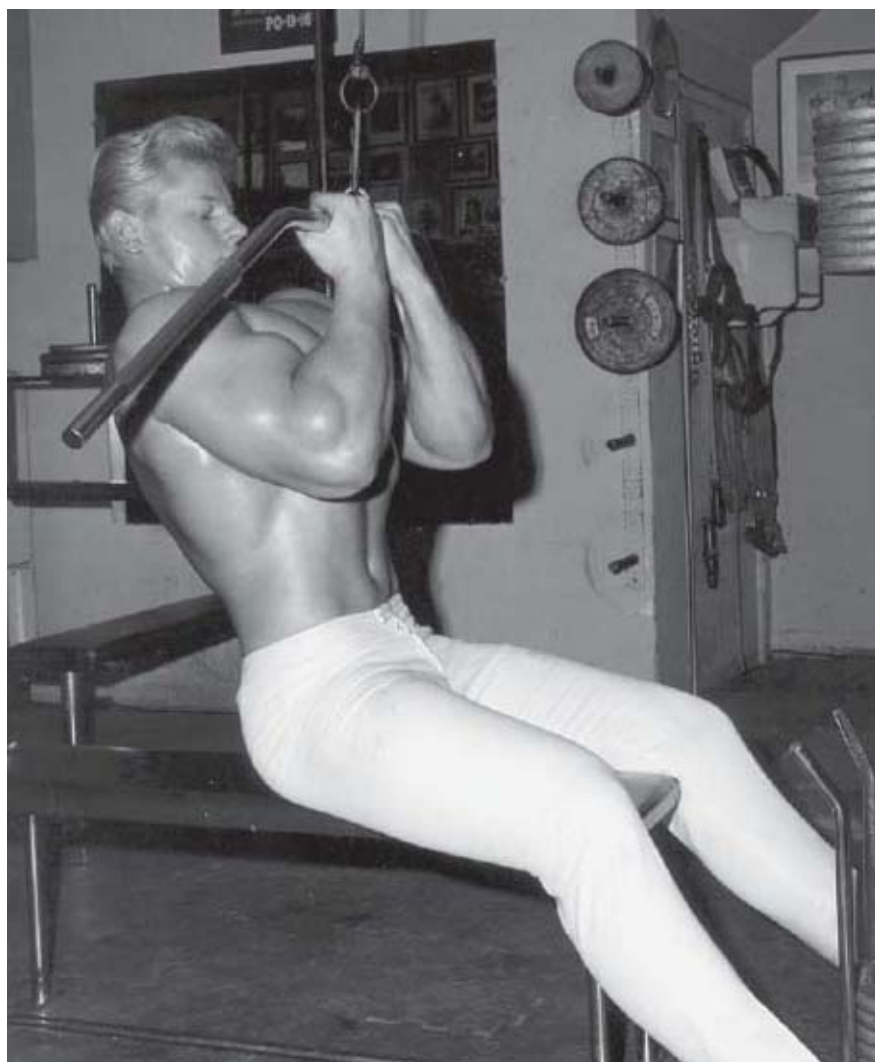
By the time I was ten I had acquired the three-spring chest expander, the five-spring super-expander and a wall-mounted bungee-pulley contraption that hung conspicuously on the kitchen wall. Dear Mom and Dad and older brothers barely noticed. Privately and uninterrupted, I pressed on when they were elsewhere watching the black and white as Tom had just arrived on the American scene. Kitchen chairs back-to-back served as a dipping apparatus and fingertips over the doorway entry-ledge provided a tough chinning structure for a future big back. My home gym non-compare, the only one I imagined.

Vividly I remember one day staring down at a small, immovable pile of metal neatly fixed to a sixteen-inch steel bar. On the barren concrete sidewalk in front of my house in Secaucus N.J., lay my first set of weights, somewhat rusty and full of gravity. My very own purchase.

from a neighbor up the street: for five dollars he was released and I was hooked. My brother each had their own thing, my mom smiled and Dad did a shoulder shrug as he walked off. No one said “no” or “hmp.” I was encouraged. Self-inspiration was anonymously planted, took root and grew, freely and unencumbered.

I was just a kid and virtually nobody was pushing iron. Weightlifting and muscle building didn't have wide public appeal or approval and ninety-nine out of a hundred athletic coaches gave it the thumbs down. There wasn't a whole bunch of encouragement or inspiration from a society that considered you either stupid or egotistical, and probably a sissy. The two guys who inspired me to lift in those days were Anthony Petrowski and Tony Napierski, local dockworkers with powerful arms from hard work, meat and potatoes and some knar badboy weightlifting. Though I never saw his movies, a poster promoting Steve Reeves' “Hercules” deeply branded me, setting me aside for a labor of love to last, evidently, a lifetime.

What I did with this pig iron, the tens and fives and three pounders, collars and bar, was vague and unfocused. There were no courses or instructions or peer supervision. No magazines in my library. I invented and improvised and wrestled and played—hard. I arranged and rearranged the makeshift set of weights and within a month I was fully hooked, cooking, bombing and pumping.



Here's a look at the kid from New Jersey relatively new at the underhand-close grip pull-down. 250 and eating.

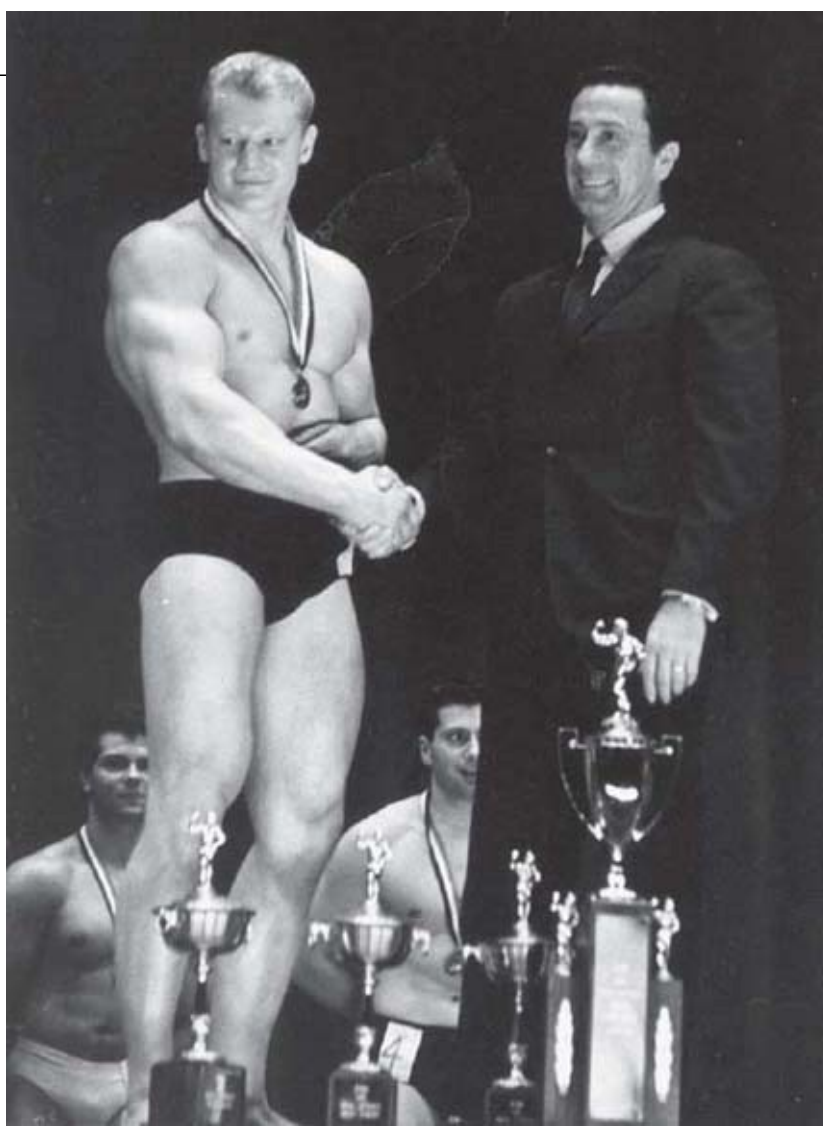
By the age of twelve, barbells and dumbbells had become my life. They were my sole steel friends that I could trust. When the going got tough, when I kept missing the baseball and when girls were far too cute to talk to, the weights were there and they spoke my language. I loved the resistance they offered and without coaching, gymnasiums or teams of players, I could enjoy a basic oneness of the activity where you were in control of being controlled.

I fought with those little monsters for hours on end, pushing and pulling randomly to exhaustion until patterns of exercises formed. Slowly and surely my body took shape and muscle power and size became evident. It's interesting to note that these things took place almost by accident. Simply, the play and pleasure of painfully pressing on was my stimulus. And, too, I admit that the exclusiveness and lonesomeness of the adventure had and still has a quality that reaches to the marrow of my bones. Little did I know the reps and sets, moans and groans that lay before me.

My high school had baseball, football, basketball and wrestling, but no weights. I attended a fine prep school in Connecticut in '58 and '59 and they had a pool and soccer and hockey, but no weights. They allowed me to bring my own little pile and I kept them under my bed, a special privilege. The provost took one look at me and said, "The boy needs his weights. Thank you, sir. Am I sick or what?"

Corners of bedrooms, basements and garages provided the common training areas for the rare breed of lifters brewing fifty years ago. I wasn't the only one stumbling around out there popping his veins, although some days it seems like I was as I look back over the muddy waters. The YMCAs across the country, I risk saying, all had classic weight rooms that housed barbells and benches to rival "The Dungeon." These undersized rooms had low ceilings with hot water pipes traveling in every direction and were invariably located in the basement next to a big boiler room.

The "Y" in Elizabeth, N.J., was my first gym beyond the environs of home. A good-looking Italian kid—Joey Dinetta, Mr. New Jersey at the time—invited me to train with him one summer that he might teach me how much fun weightlifting with the boys could be. There I gawked at a seven-foot Olympic bar as if it was an oversized, outdated relic, the preposterous length of which surely must have presented a hazard to early lifters. I discovered how to cram twenty big guys into a room large enough for ten and how to pitch a bar into a corner, load it with weight and do killer rows. I learned how to do inclines and how to spot incorrectly by dropping a dumbbell on my training partner's head. I didn't learn much, but I learned enough to graduate to the big time.



Mr. New Jersey shakes hands with Joe Weider on stage at the Union City high school auditorium in the spring of 1962. Can I put my pants back on now?

My first job working for a gym was as the weekend manager at Vic Tanny's on Journal Square in Jersey City, circa 1961. Friday they gave me a key and told me I started Saturday at 9 a.m. Imagine, nineteen years old and I'm already a gym manager. I'm on my way, I'm a cool guy. As I finished my workout that Friday evening I felt my lats and triceps assume a permanent, flexed position. It sort of hurt, but it was the price one had to pay. Arriving early Saturday morning to take control of my domain I witnessed a miracle. I unlocked the prominent glass doors at the top of the broad staircase and the gym—my gym—all two thousand square feet, was gone. Overnight. Where did it go? I did a series of 360s with my mouth open and it still didn't appear. Squinting, I imagined a sale: "Going Out Of Business Special. Two memberships for the price of one." Gone to the next county, no doubt. I didn't need no stinkin' gym job anyway.

There was no reason why a guy couldn't lift weights and have a family, too, so I married and bulked up along with my wife, Penny. She gave birth to Jamie, a beautiful baby girl, and I was two hundred thirty-five by the time I was twenty-one and Mr. New Jersey. To support a family and my growing bodyweight, I took a part-time job with the Weider Barber Company in Union City, an aspiring enterprise fixing a hold on the swelling world of muscle.

Leroy Colbert, Joe Weider and I did seated dumbbell alternates in the corner of the small warehouse during lunch break. A kid could amass serious arms that way. I can remember Joe saying, "You guys are always bombing it. When do you ever work? Leroy, I'm going to call Draper 'The Blond Bomber.' What do you think, eh?" A month later it was on the cover of *Mr. America* magazine.

Joe, the Trainer of Champions, had filing cabinets full of timeless pictures of the stars from around the world, which we pawed over and chose for upcoming issues of *Muscle and Power*. I'm learnin' and growin.' Weider Company goes west, and I go with it to live in tranquil Santa Monica on the alluring far edge of the earth.

There at Muscle Beach, as it faded into the stunning California sunset, I met and shared with the last of the true erectors of the bodybuilding foundations: the cornerstones such as Joe Gold, Zabo, George Eifferman, Bill Pearl, Armand Tanny and Hugo Labra. A handful of mighty men—heroes—that formed the heart of bodybuilding and lived those golden, carefree days gone by.

These men with instincts intact felt their way around the weights and equipment, lifting more and intellectualizing less. And to them I attribute a certain quality of creativity in my training and an appreciation of the fundamentals. The late '60s have been referred to as the "Golden Era of Bodybuilding," when big men pressed on curiously, methodically and with great concentration. During those years the various training principles were established and stand distinctly today—sound, tried and true.

My most vivid workout memories are set against the backdrop of the Muscle Beach Gym of the early '60s. This famous, beloved relic, once located on the unspoiled shores of Santa Monica, was relocated by the persuasion of the city council to the underground basement of a collapsing retirement hotel four blocks inland. A very long, steep and unsure staircase took me to a cavernous hole in the ground with crumbling plaster walls and a ceiling that bulged and leaked diluted beer from the old timer's tavern above. Puddles of the stuff added character to the dim atmosphere where three strategically placed forty-watt light bulbs gave art deco shadows to the rusting barbells, dumbbells, sagging milk crates and splintery handcrafted 2x4 benches. Pulleys and twisted cable from a nearby Venice boatyard, a dozen Olympic bars bent and rusty, and tons of plates were scattered throughout the twenty-five hundred square foot floor. Dumbbells up to 160s that rattled at broken welds added the final touch that completed what was unquestionably the greatest gym in the world.

You have no idea how proud I am to have had this theater and the real-life plays that unfolded day after day as part of my experience. It's pure gold.

Here bodybuilding began, embryonic: the original, not the imitation. Here exercises were invented, equipment improvised, muscle shape and size imagined and built, and the authentic atmosphere exuded like primal ooze. You were awash in fundamentals and honesty. I loved it then, the memory more now.

The magic didn't come from the pharmacist; it came from the soul, the era, the history of the making, the presence of un-compromised originality yet to be imitated.



Standing on the ramp before the glistening line-up of contestants at the '66 Mr. Universe Contest are my hero, Sergio Oliva, The Master Blaster Joe Weider, muscular (and currently misplaced) Chet Yorton on my left and me in the middle. Thirty minutes later the theater was empty.

Those years, curiously content in getting a head start, I arrived at the gym between 5:30 and 6 a.m. while the city slept. I like the company I keep when I'm alone: I like the sounds of silence; I like the uncluttered space. With a crowd of one there's no one to complain or groan, no self-consciousness, no dividing your attention, no one to impress. By the time I left perhaps three or four other creatures would descend the lonely steps and dutifully take up their arms.

The Dungeon was a refuge from '63 through '66. What kept me going without missing a beat was hope in an era where none permanently resided, bouncing around like a pinball in a jangling machine. There was no glory except a rumor of respect and reputation amongst the weightlifters' underground. People in the real world sincerely frowned at you: a musclehead, a misfit, a bewildered loser who's harming himself and isn't doing us any good either. Maybe that concept taken a spin.

My toughest workouts took place in the middle of those formidable years. I did have training partners from time to time and one in particular, Dick Sweet, pushed me, encouraged me, and goaded me to otherwise inapproachable limits.

My recollection of a late morning workout, one day amongst many, sets a tone of other workouts in general. There existed on the far end of a caving rack the merciless set of 150-pound dumbbells, awesome in length with pipe handles and suicide welds on the ends. These unwieldy contraptions could be further enlarged by strapping five-pound plates on either end with strips of inner tube. You got it—giant rubber bands. Getting them together took two guys, some muscle and engineering. Getting them overhead took temporary insanity. We won't talk about the sixty-degree incline bench constructed of wood and ten-penny nails wedged against the wall. Never did get a good look at it in the dark.

The first set is a growling dog, biting and snapping at the flesh. I love dogs. The second set goes up like stocks in a bull market, fireworks on the Fourth of July, cheers for the home

team. On the third rep of the third set the rubber band snapped and slapped me in the face. Some guy standing in the shadows snickered. Shortly thereafter a five-pounder bounced off my forehead; I saw it coming. This made me serious. I had two sets to go and no more rubber bands. A short length of rope got me through the last two sets.

Did I tell you I was supersetting? Workouts without supersets were not workouts at all. I was doing bent-over lateral raises with 60s. The welds this time were on the inside of the dumbbells, and cracked, not dangerous but sloppy. Every third or fourth rep the web of my left hand between the thumb and the index finger got pinched in the crack. This, too, made me serious. Good thing there's not much nerve ending and the blood flow was light or I would have never finished my workout.

The ten years between 1960 and 1970 boiled like a witch's brew. They gurgled and steamed and splattered in an interesting and seductive manner. We ran about rejoicing in freedom as one foot was placed carelessly in a bear trap. I was Mr. New Jersey in '63, "David The Gladiator" in '64, Mr. America in '65 and Mr. Universe in '66. I wandered around Hollywood and was fascinated. Remember *Don't Make Waves*, "The Beverly Hillbillies" and "The Monkeys"? More fun than an amusement park with Uncle Johnny when you were six years old.

In 1970, after winning Mr. World in New York City, I sensed a shifting of the gears in bodybuilding and stepped out of competition. The sport took off like a rocket to the moon, soaring into the '80s with ever-increasing momentum.

Allow me to sneak within a few thin pages a sufficient discourse of my life out to pasture between the years of 1970 and 1985. The weights never left my side, no more than a good old sheepdog leaves a gritty shepherd tending the south forty. I trained every morning with fire in my gut before the cock crowed. Got along fine with the bird, 'twas people who presented me minor distress. Or, was it the other way around?



Somewhere people were no doubt dashing about frantically to accomplish something or another. Artie Zeller and I were absolutely content in our afternoon separation from the rest of the world. No pumping, no oil, no expectations; only the sun and warm breeze off the ocean. Circa '67.

Living in Venice in the '60s was like living in a junkyard with a bunch of junkyard dogs. Biting was allowed and the food wasn't free. I had to make a living, learn and grow. My workouts served to stabilize, fortify and entertain me, but no way could I see training to be Sergio Oliva a real wise career decision—baby needed shoes. (As if I could have; he's from another planet, you know.)

I found myself making rugged oversized furniture out of old wood, loving it and making enough money to pay the bills. Very cool. Tranquil, alone and natural, woodworking matched my workouts. Someone could say the '70s never happened and I'd believe 'em.

I became, quite by accident (as is commonplace in all my pursuits), a carpenter of sorts. To keep me company as I sawed planks and carved wood into oversized objects of furniture, I drank a little wine and smoked a little dope.

This pattern—smoking, drinking, eating, training, carving and sleeping—kept me busy. The world around me, but for a handful of friends and family, spun on its own familiar axis. Frank, Arnold, Mentzer—whoever—did their thing and I did mine, light years apart. I didn't ignore or neglect, judge or deny competitive bodybuilding. I simply lost interest as one does.

for racing cars on the boulevard or watching corn grow season after season. My respect and affection for the guys and our experiences were cast in bronze. Creating in wood and trips to Big Sur and Mendocino became my preoccupation.

The bodybuilding world expanded; it appeared to grow tentacles and I found it alien to my perception of muscle and might. I dug the metal then and now: the single-mindedness, the struggle, the intense body feelings, the pump and burn and heat and sweat, the battle, defeat and mostly the victory, the wordless communication and knowing amidst a very small tribe and the muddled or vacant stares I captured from puzzled, stumbling on-lookers—the rest of the world, really. Not so much an ego trip, as an amused ape, comfortably aware of itself.

I came to understand that staying big and muscular and strong was inherent and a chosen function for my new passion to build my large wooden forms. The egocentricity I shared primarily with myself was fulfilling and harmless enough. Far as I could see the world nearby was kicking itself up and down the freeway and maybe I could help it by not participating. Somewhere, halfway through the '70s, my family and I escaped from the expanding and deteriorating Los Angeles scenery to settle like toadstools in the midst of the Santa Cruz redwoods. Heaven, one would conclude, a dream come true: a wooden house in the middle of twelve wooded acres, lovingly cultivated by God Almighty.

Not quite. I saw my family depart and my sinister, cynical companions, drugs and alcohol lead me from my home to a barren gardener's shed in a little orchard on the edge of Nowhere. No power, no running water, no bucks, no buddy.

Hey, I still had the weights, was still lifting, never stopped. Commendable. Add to that the booze and dope stopped. Suddenly.

However, not until after, at one point in '83, so did my heart. The doctors and staff at the Dominican Critical Care Unit treating me for acute congestive heart failure expected my life to cease as heartbeats strained and failed repeatedly. Three weeks after this bout I was wheeled out the side door to resume my tortuous journey.

My eyes cleared and I looked at the black and white and smoldering landscape around me in silent ashes. If I didn't do one good thing each day, I still plugged into the gym and resuscitated the soul. Two years of one day at a time, sets and reps, iron and woodwork, therapy, fear and trembling, prayer and God, and I stood upright. Apples grew in the orchard, grapes on the vine and the bees pollinated as they gathered their makings for honey.

From the earliest day to this, I trained to build muscle and might. As the crazy '60s lengthened, bodybuilding took on critical mass and an acute change of direction. The contraptions failed and the flood was sudden. Bodybuilding was about to be exploited, big-time. There was money to be made, accompanied by greed, power and frenzy. Muscle magazines resembling catalogs appeared ubiquitously. Merchandise, apparel, miracle supplements for overnight muscle, equipment of every description, gym chains, mondo contests and promoters swamped the fields of green.

Lo and behold, I joined the gold rush. No, not really. I did, however, determine to get out from under the hooves of the stampeding horses. One fine day in September 1989 in the

corner of Santa Cruz, California, a small gym opened its doors, freshly painted and filled with new equipment. The banner read "World Gym" in large print, my name in the corner along with the hours of operation. February rolled around and Arnold arrived in a police-escorted limousine followed by Joe Gold and a Hollywood-style Venice entourage. We had a grand opening and I established a long-term relationship with the World Gym gang.

Scotts Valley is nestled five miles away and is home to a second World Gym planted by my partners and me only two years later. One of those partners is Laree, my wife and confidant since the gyms' inception.

A website of prodigious proportion has been created by Laree and me with regular updates and a weekly newsletter going out by email to thousands. IronOnline, an email discussion group composed of hundreds of avid muscle-building fans, provides truckloads of inspiration and real information day-by-day. Oaks and redwoods again surround me; a laptop sits at my desk.

Jesus Christ is our Lord; that Laree and I are Christians we hope is evident in these pages and in our work.

Penny, my wife of years gone by, trains at our gym in town and shares in the plans and schemes of Laree and me. Jamie, my daughter and secret delight, visits now and again with her tender brood (also known as grandchildren), Taylor and Cooper, and her husband, Scott. We're alive.



My daughter, Jamie, and me as we posed for a local periodical encouraging health and fitness. I have a twenty-year head-start on the precious girl.

And today muscle building has continued to gain amazing popularity worldwide, both as sport and as a way of life. The image associated with muscles has been appropriately lifted and the respect and appreciation a bodybuilder deserves is clear. Big muscles have become big business.

We live in a crowded and intense world where computers spit out information faster than we can use it and the media has us confused as to who we are and what to expect of ourselves. We've arranged a high-tech world and often find ourselves trailing far behind frantically trying to keep the pace. The world of bodybuilding has not escaped this dilemma. We want results and we want them now: lean, hard bodies from QuickStop bodybuilding and fastfood appetites. And from this hurried attitude the only sure results are stress, injury and frustration.

Powerlifting, Olympic lifting, Strongman competitions, physical culture, fitness and bodybuilding have grown. High performance athletes in every sport lift weights as they strive to become champions. Moms and dads and their moms and dads lift weights for fun and fitness, therapy and diversion. Can't watch CNN for a week without seeing a gym full of men and women pressing on as the newscaster cites research commending weightlifting for kids, the aging, the AIDS patient, the arthritic, the overweight, the underweight, the depressed, the pregnant, the diabetic.

The once-obscure, male-dominated peculiarity that raised eyebrows is now practiced by everybody, from primitive settings in basement corners and garages to the glittering, splashy spas stretching sometimes over fifty thousand square feet atop high rises in the big cities. We've become a mob.

There are no secrets. You simply have basic God-given genetics, body chemistry and bone structure. And provided the attributes of discipline and determination, you apply yourself faithfully, and your body potential emerges, slow and sure.

KEYS AND GUIDEPOSTS

I attempt to present a simple, clear and direct way for you to become involved in muscle building and health through weight training, thoughtful eating and discipline—the process commonly known as bodybuilding. Bodybuilding is not a term to be reserved for the development of champion physiques. It is, as the word implies, the building of one's body healthfully to satisfying muscular proportions. This incomparable sport is for all of us.

I particularly underline the exercises, sets and reps, poundage, protein, other nutrients and factors that have been established and proven over the last half of the last century, the good stuff that has worked for my peers and me and is certain to set you in motion as a beginner or further you as an ongoing or returning enthusiast. Bodybuilding, I promise to remind you is an exciting, fulfilling and priceless adventure in seeking a good life.

What are we doing here?

How did we get here?

Where are we going?

THE EARLY MOTIVATORS...

The question “To whom am I writing?” begs an answer. The spectrum of motives of the men and women who pursue the iron and steel is as broad and deep as the human mind. There is a throng of seekers that are broken and need to be repaired. They fret and painfully grumble, “I’m overweight, sluggish, weak, unmuscled, unshapely, ailing and frail. I need help. Fix me.”

Others in hot pursuit of the weights gather with smiling hearts and the keen desire to be bigger, stronger and faster. They want to excel in their sport from the fields to the courts, from the mountainside to the poolside, in the air, on the bike, on the horse, board, skates or skis. Some are called “bodybuilders” and seek a muscular and sweeping physique that will stun the beholder.

Weightlifting and its attachments, of course, provide the surest and fastest and sweetest way to accomplish the wonderful mission before them. Some metal-geeks just want to hang out and be cool. Every year a number of men and women buy a membership to a gym under the illusion that ownership alone sustains, heals and builds. Do you exercise? I’m a member of a gym. Really?

SIX KEYS TO BODYBUILDING SUCCESS

To make clear the simplicity of bodybuilding I've arranged a list of six basic keys to successful training. They're nothing new and read like the same stuff in any motivation book on the market today. Yet they are a valuable reminder of the essentials to getting started and sticking to it.

1. Set realistic goals—short and long term.
2. Plan an orderly and thorough routine to train the entire body.
3. Make a commitment to stick to your routine for four to six weeks to realize the changes and benefits, develop perseverance and create a habit.
4. Establish enthusiasm for your training, the driving force to perform successfully.
5. Ease into an appropriate training program with a wholesome, thoughtful nutrition plan: proper foods, amounts and order of consumption.
6. Be confident from the beginning that the application of these sound principles will produce the desired results.

Muscle shape, leanness and a strong, healthy system are the early motivators, worthy and always before us. However, if you expect that the benefits of iron are limited to those goals only, you are in for a grand surprise. The flesh alone is not the reaper of the advances you acquire. Look for—better yet—hunt for and gather the riches along the way that develop solidness, depth and width to the character and mind. Each and every workout provides reward, encouragement and good cheer. The gym experience never fails; the lifting, the straining, the winning and the losing make you stronger.

I mention this hazy thought now and forewarn you that I repeat myself loudly and frequently throughout the book to emphasize concepts I fear might get lost. The simple and commonplace, due to their ordinary nature, are almost always reduced in importance and misplaced. These—the basic things—comprise the ore, the raw material from which the gold and gems we seek are extracted. Every workout is an uncovering of fortitude, the further excavation of patience and persistence and a prosperous mining of discipline and humility. I don't want you to give up because you didn't dig deep enough or long enough and, therefore, missed priceless buried treasure.

The uncomfortable truth is too many of those who venture to the fields of iron and steel give up, quit, abandon the glorious task too soon to realize the sub-surface bounty of exercise, good eating and training. The qualities they lacked to keep them going were amongst the qualities they were about to discover. Strength is a product of strength. One does not become strong unless one is strong. Or as they say in my native language, "No ticky, no shirty."

A charge to your advantage: Be strong and courageous; above all, be wise. Reach, but not too far. Too rigid a menu plan or too ambitious a workout scheme will be discouraging.

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