

Ep #017: Short-Term Dopamine vs. Big Results

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With Your Host

Aaron J. Jacobs

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What if you could write your own life story? How would you spend your time? What would your career or business look like? What kind of parent or partner would you be? Welcome to *Storied Life Coaching*, the only podcast that will show you how to stop living life by default, and teach you how to build a thriving business that fuels an amazing life on your terms. I'm Aaron J. Jacobs, and as a master coach and CEO of OMH Creative and Storied Coaching, I've had the privilege and opportunity to learn what it takes first hand to rewrite your own life story. It's never too late for a rewrite.

Well, hello, my friends.

I can't believe what I just had happened to me, and I have to share it with you. I'm telling all of you first, as a matter of fact. My wife just surprised me with the most epic gift I think I've ever gotten for a Father's Day. I was thinking that maybe she would do something fun, like go on a picnic or something like that. Like, she always brings it. She always, always bring something that's gonna be super fun for Father's Day. We kind of have fun trading back and forth with what happens on Mother's Day, what happens on Father's Day. She always, she says something—it's very true—which is, what happens on Mother's Day is a good indicator of what will end up happening on Father's Day. So we have a little bit of a competition going there, but she just completely blew me out of the water. I'm really going to have to between now and next year bring a completely different game because she just told me that I need to pack a suitcase because she's sending me on Father's Day to Mexico for three days. She's sending me for a break to get some sun, to relax by myself at an all-inclusive resort for three days, which is just amazing. I can't believe—I think I said “Are you serious?” like 10 times before it actually sunk in that that, that that was going to happen. And I am feeling so grateful, too, that we've reached this place in our lives and in our business where we can do fun things like that for each other. Something that would have seemed completely just out of the realm of even possibility, of something that we could do or afford or, or even get the time away from work when we work for other people and we weren't working for ourselves. And I'm just feeling very, very grateful for it.

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And I'm excited. It's gonna be super exciting. When she told me this, though, I did notice something that happened to my brain, and it made me know exactly what I wanted to talk to you about today. I had a whole other podcast planned but I want to talk to you today about something that came up for me as soon as she told me that I was going to go and do this. My brain immediately went to all the things that I would need to account for in order for a bracelet vacation—anyone that's ever been on something like that, usually what happens is all inclusive food and alcohol as well. Now, 20 year old Aaron would have been like “Sweet, let's think about exactly what our drinking plan is going to be” and by plan I mean, like, “Let's get the most out of this bracelet, this pink bracelet they put around our wrists, okay. I want to get my value for my money, folks.” And since then, I've gone on my own journey where, like, alcohol is not really a priority for me anymore. I don't like the way it affects my body as I've gotten older, I don't like the way that it, it hurts my goals as far as my bodybuilding goals. And, and I'm right now being very specific about what is going into my body because I'm I just went through a cycle where I built a bunch of muscles and it was really satisfying and now I'm kind of getting ready for another trip that my wife and I will be going on and I'm doing, like, what's called a seven week cut so I'm doing, eating very high protein and eating in a very specific way in order to feel really good about my muscles and progress I've made and all this kind of stuff. And it made me, like, hesitate for a second because I was like “Oh my gosh, am I going to be able to resist? My brain is going to want that dopamine, right? It's gonna say like, ‘Oh my gosh, everybody's going to the swim-up bar and like getting drinks and you don't want to not be fun,’” and, like, all these things started to come up for me and I thought that was so interesting because this is what our brains do, right? We naturally seek dopamine, that's what our brains do. They're, they specifically see seek dopamine because they're hard wired to do that and it made me think about how I've learned to train my brain over the last several years, to look at what I want as my long term results instead of my short term dopamine fix.

Now, I want to talk a little bit about dopamine for any of you that don't already know a little bit about this. You probably have some more key

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knowledge about it but this is the way that I think about it, and that I coach on it as well when we're working with our students, especially entrepreneurs—they're entrepreneurs, they're working on their stories, they're working on their business stories, things like that. Like, things will come up that would be super attractive to do in the short term, instead of keeping your eye on your long term result thing that you want for your business, for your life, to grow for your personal life. Now, our brains are hardwired to do this, because of the fact that, evolutionary-wise, it's a reward system. So we, our brains seek out easy, immediate pleasure. Dopamine is the reward that our brain gives us for making that choice, for making the choice that is, is easy, and makes our life better right now, because who knows what might happen in the future. A very immediate caveman, like, back-part-of-the-brain response. We're wired to the fastest path of immediate pleasure, you know. It's, it's involved in helping us get rewarded so, you know, things like sex, shopping, alcohol, food, sugar, high sugary foods, things like that or in case of running a business, it having a Netflix, go watch a Netflix show instead of doing that thing that you put on your calendar you don't really want to do and you're feeling some dread come up about doing. It right now it feels like it would be a much better decision to go and Netflix blink binge for a little while, or, you know, "I really wanted to go, you know, I should make myself some cookies or do something different" something, it's an immediate, immediate rush something, is immediate pleasure but we want the long term result, right? And these two areas of our brain are in conflict with each other.

So we have the short term dopamine that could we could have it right now, super attractive, you could have it right now. Or there's that goal that you said that you wanted, that thing that you said that you wanted for your business, you wanted to build your marketing campaign, or you wanted to get that piece of marketing material in place, or that sales page built, or redo your prices, or do something different for your clients. There was something that you wanted that was a longer-term result that you wanted. In your personal life, it could be a weight loss school, it could be all kinds of different things that you want to do, but that takes time. And your brain's like "No, but we can feel good right now. Isn't that so much better if we felt

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good right now?” And yeah, it would feel good but there's that other part of our brain, the logic part of our brain, the forward part of our brain that knows and it's trying to tell us, “Yeah, but we said we wanted this thing, we want to be this future version of ourselves where we've accomplished, this thing. If you've listened to anything that I've talked about in the past, about the hero's journey, and about going through that cycle until you're back, at any point you could have gotten sidetracked with short-term pleasure, short-term dopamine. It's a great way to hide from doing the work you need to do in order to get the result that you want.

And so that's what started to come up for me when I was thinking about this trip and I want to offer you that there is a way to think about this in a different way, whether you want to drink less, whether you have some weight loss goals that you're working on, whether in your business or your career, you have something that you're working on, that you want to get done and you know that long term result is the best for you but that there are distractions, short term dopamine, that would be so much more fun to do. Just know that you have that other part of the brain available for you and what I want you to do is, I want you to attach a motion to it because that's what dopamine does, right? Your brain is like, “Hey, we've had that drink before,” or “We've had that piece of chocolate cake before. We've watched that TV show before” and it feels good right then and your brain is already two steps ahead of you and going, like, emotionally, “Remember how that felt?” Oh, and that, that wash of emotion comes over you—they felt really good. I want to feel that way again. So it's using emotion in order to pull you off of maybe that longer-term result that you want. So I want you to use that very same impulse. This is what I do as well: use emotion to pull you towards your longer-term results in order to forego the short term dopamine hit. So for instance, picture your future self and how you are. Close your eyes for a moment. How are you going to feel when you have that longer term result? In my case, right now. How am I gonna feel if I don't have alcohol and I don't feel blurry that next morning, I don't get a crappy night's sleep, I don't feel feel gross? In the morning and maybe have a little bit of a like a chemical induced depressive state, like, I will have a better time, a longer term result. I can see myself in the future,

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having that restful night of sleep, getting up in the morning, being really grateful for my day that I'm here, opening those curtains onto my patio, then going down to breakfast and being excited about grabbing my big thick science fiction novel and laying by the pool and feeling the heat of the sun and not feeling dehydrated. And I can emotionally start to attach how I'm going to feel to my longer-term result that I know is better for me in the end and gets me the actual result that I want, moves me forward towards my ultimate larger goals instead of that short term dopamine. You can do the same thing in your personal life, whether you have something that you want to work on as well, your business goals, things like that. Emotionally, think about if you're building your business, and there's something on your calendar that you're avoiding right now and Netflix sounds like such a better-off option, or doing something else, going out with friends. But how are you going to feel when you're done with that? And how will you feel your future version of yourself feel if you do that thing on your calendar, and then you do the next thing in your calendar that moves you incrementally, slowly? You're not getting that dopamine hit right now but you're, you're delaying that pleasure in order to get to the point where you're that future self or your version that you are so excited about. You are just so over the moon about the fact that you've grown your business to that point. You are done making that marketing funnel. It is out there, your customers are seeing it, they're going through it, there will be more things that happen after that, but that you've done it.

Or you can get pulled off track like you have in the past, have that short-term dopamine and make almost no progress towards the future self you wanted to be. And you've been down that path before. I know I have, too. We all have brains like this. It's perfectly natural that your brain tells you all of the different rationales all of the different reasons that it would be so much better to get the immediate pleasure right now, that dopamine hit right now, to light up your pleasure center right now in your brain, because of the fact that it's now, it's immediate, and it's pretty much guaranteed. The longer-term result is not absolutely guaranteed but if you don't move towards it, you're gonna stay in the same story that you're in right now and that's not what you want, is it? That's not the reason you listen to this

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podcast, that's not the reason that you decide to build a business, it's not the reason you decide to grow your career, it's not the reason that you decided to work on your story so the next time that you feel that pull, I just want you to think about, just be curious. Don't beat yourself up. But is this, are you making a decision based off of short term dopamine and the emotion that your brain is trying to tell you that you'll get right now? Or are your eyes towards the future version of yourself where you get a result that you never thought was going to be possible maybe, but you moved and you sacrifice short term dopamine in order to get that longer term result, that new story that you want to step into?

Alright, my friends, thanks again for listening. I'm off to Cabo. I'm gonna have a fantastic time, been a very super grateful place for it and I hope you have an amazing week. I can't wait to talk to you next time. Bye, for now.

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