

[It all starts with a leap of faith](#)

The crowd gathered around for an impromptu ceremony. This was a rare occasion where the evening shift people who worked 4PM-2:30 AM were asked to come in for 3 PM. The dayshift finished at 3 and the 1 hour transition was normally a cleanup period. This was a special day as we shared in the announcement of one of the 25-year employees retire from the factory. She had worked the same riveter machine for most of the last 5 years, which was for securing aluminum window frames for pop-out windows in Ford and Chevrolet vans.

It was amazing to watch the joy and emotion as she was presented with a completed, glazed window, sealing inside it a printed picture of her at her riveter. Proudly holding up a picture of her grandchildren, she smiled and held back tears as she knew she would spend lots of time with them starting the following Monday of her retirement. The career started as a job. A temporary gig she took in her mid to late twenties to hold her over and save up for potential college. A temporary gig just like the one I took 18 months earlier here at the same factory at age 19.

At the end of the celebration, I made my way to the door. My time card was punched in at 3:25 and out at 3:50, never to be punched again. I would get on my bicycle for the 40 minute ride home and call Human Resources from there. With enough money in the bank for just a bit more than the next month's rent, I quit. I vowed to the HR person that I would never retire from a factory and thanked them for their help and support over my 18 months of work.

It wasn't about some new dream. It wasn't about not being happy for those who would retire from a factory job if that made people happy. I just knew it wouldn't make me happy. I didn't even have another job lined up. All I had was a countdown to the end of my savings and a desire to do something more.

Make every day a day you decide whether this is the thing in your life you would be happy looking back on.

[Don't Lose the Hunger](#)

Throughout the last few years, I'm continuously being reminded of what makes me thoroughly enjoy the jobs that I do. I make a point of surrounding myself with people who are passionate about their work, and about their community. That can be technology, music, photography, or any of an array of different interests that we may share.

This reminds me of what it is that makes me passionate. The ability to continuously stay hungry for something. This is why I wanted to share this to remind everyone here that it is a responsibility of us all, both shared and individually, to make sure that we don't lose the hunger.

Content over Process

People, process, and technology is the methodology that I ascribe to the successes I've found. This quote tells of the importance of how people and our personal aspirations and efforts drive process

and technology, not the other way around:

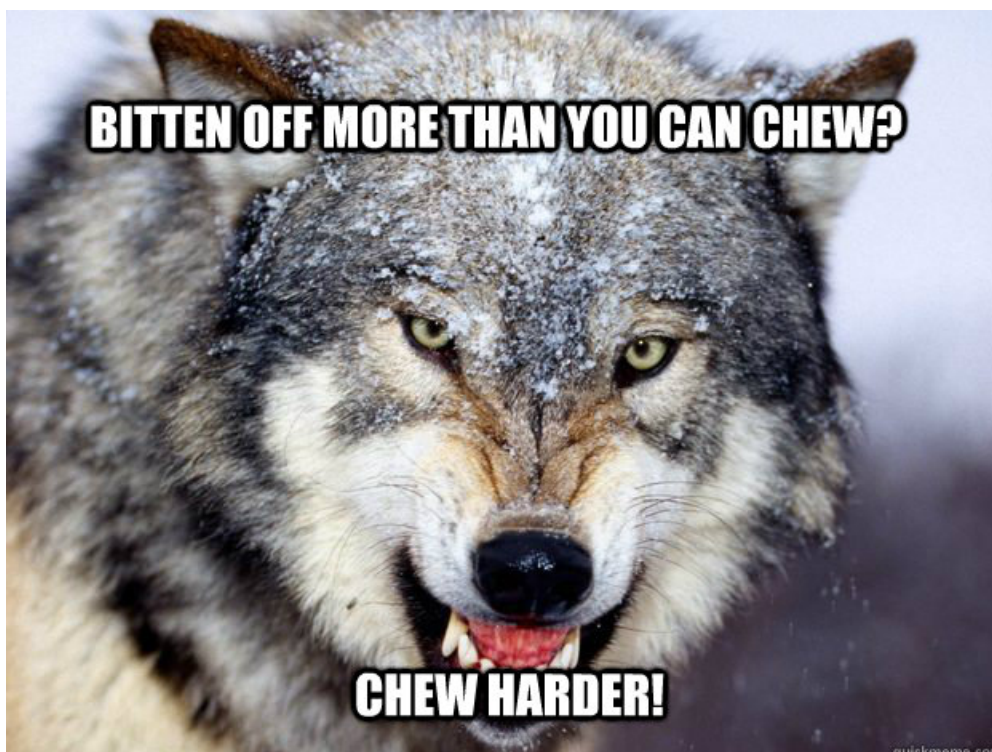
“...people get confused. Companies get confused. When they start getting bigger, they want to replicate their initial success. And a lot of them think, ‘well, somehow there is some magic in the process of how that success was created.’ so they start to try to institutionalize process across the company. And before long, people get very confused that the process is the content.” - **Steve Jobs**, The Lost Interview (1995)

After moving through a few organizations in the past, I’ve seen this play out. Company culture and personal drive can very easily be affected as we evolve. Growing a business means taking something from an idea to a product, and wrapping a business around it. The important balance of the culture that got you there and the gentle cultural shift needed to operate a growing business is what we often lose.

As a firm believer in the Eric Ries model of being an Intrapreneur (internal staff, entrepreneur focus), I’ve been able to find successes by keeping that hunger to innovate, collaborate, mentor, and grow teams and companies. We do that by reminding ourselves continuously to strive to create content. That is through direct creation ourselves, through collaboration, through interactions, and through learning. It happens every single day. It always should.

This could be a 10,000 word post that talks about the techniques to stay productive, and to always drive and strive for bigger goals. We could talk about the fine art of dancing on the line of burnout, which many are at risk of. Most of all, I just thought about all of the folks that I continue to surround myself with. There is a commonality amongst them all. They create incredible amounts of content, and collaboration. They push themselves hard, and bring others up with them. I hope to do the same every day for myself and for others.

It boils down to this for me: as we evolve in our own personal journeys in technology, community, and life, don’t forget where we came from. Don’t lose the hunger.



[Finding your thinspiration](#)



This time of year is always a challenge. It is a time to celebrate, which we usually pair up with lots of dinners, treats, drinks with friends and so much visiting that the personal schedule is pretty much thrown out for the month, which also includes fitness time.

As a cyclist, I usually have summer targets for peak fitness. And by peak fitness, I mean to be able to generally keep up with the cycling group that I ride with. I've been cycling semi-competitively for about 6 years now which has helped me to maintain a fairly healthy lifestyle.

Challenges in life come along of course, and along with that can be unexpected changes in lifestyle. In the last year I had a number of changes in my lifestyle that resulted in a gentle decrease in fitness with a gentle increase in my intake. These two things combined together resulted in a 20 pound increase in my body weight.

This year I participated in the Tough Mudder event in Toronto. Because I knew that I was increasing my strength, I was more focused on doing resistance training and relying on a reasonable aerobic base to get me through the race. My diet plan was simple...no plan. I just ate at a typical North American rate of around 2400-2700 calories a day.

Diet and exercise are paired together...always. If you have one, or the other, but not both you will slip out of your overall fitness regardless of how much you increase the other.

Thinspiration

There is a term called "thinspiration" which is meant to be your thin-inspiration, or what it is that you see as your goal to reach a body image. I use a fitness goal as the only target, with the body image being the result rather than the desire. For me, there was a simple way to become "thinspired". I saw a picture of myself at the event and realized that although I was physically stronger because of my workout routines, that I was definitely carrying some extra weight.

This was my kickstart moment to get aggressive about my health and fitness again. On the heels of a great training year, I have now reduced my intake and changed my diet to be much more balanced. That being said, I also still enjoy great food and some sweet treats, but with the goal to either counter that intake with exercise, or to reduce intake at other times to reach that balance overall.

Within the 12 weeks following the event I had achieved my goal of levelling my weight back to my "race weight" goal and also to ensure that I continue to use aerobic base training and resistance training to increase my power to weight ratio and build on my core fitness to be over and above

where I have ever been in the past.

#plankaday

✘ Part of my every day goal is now to add something called [#plankaday](#) to my routine which is to do a plank at least once a day, every day and make your goal to reach and increase your plank time each day. More than anything, the goal is to be consistent and to add that fitness regime to your daily tasks so that it becomes a priority, which is what your health and fitness should be!

In a week I have been able to get my daily plank time up to 2:17 and I have set my goal to reach 3:00 by January 15th which is a reasonable and achievable goal, but more than anything it is a goal.

Gentle changes make for simpler adoption

The long and the short of my story is that I was able to make gentle changes to my lifestyle in order to have reachable goals, and more easily make the diet and exercise plan easy to achieve within my schedule. I'm a single dad with two kids, so I've learned to be creative with squeezing in workouts including using home routines as simple as push-ups, planking and crunches when I don't have a chance to get to the gym.

Not only has it helped me to feel better about my health, but it has inspired my kids to also make exercise a fun part of their day. There is not much better to inspire me than to know that my family will be inspired by ourselves.

I'm sharing my story because I want to be able to do anything I can to help others see that there are successes possible without having to make massive commitments to time and crazy diet changes. It's also important to see that every day lifestyles can easily make simple changes to get you to feeling better about things.

I hope that you can find your thinspiration, and if anyone wants to learn any tips on how to make the same kind of gentle changes to their lifestyle to reach real, attainable goals, then feel free to add a comment, or [Tweet me](#) and I'd love to share in your journey to your own personal goals.