

Hey, everyone,

In this week's lesson, we're going to talk about another crucial factor in increasing your productivity and doing your highest value work—and that is “unique ability.”

Unique Ability is a concept that was introduced by Dan Sullivan. Dan is the founder of Strategic Coach, a coaching program for entrepreneurs that I have participated in.

In short, your unique ability is what you love to do and do extremely well. It has four components:

The first is superior ability. It's something that everyone notices about you and brings value to others.

The second is passion. You are passionate about this skill and love using it as often as possible.

The third is energy. It energizes you and those around you.

The fourth is never-ending improvement. It's something you are always looking to gain more skill at.

Unfortunately, many of us were taught as kids that success comes from improving our weaknesses. This creates a certain set of beliefs about ourselves and our limitations. When we focus on our weaknesses, we develop a sense of deficiency, failure, and guilt. As a result, our lives are filled with frustration, untapped potential, and missed opportunities.

Letting go of these limiting beliefs about yourself and learning to focus on the things you love and excel at is the secret to maximizing performance.

Most people who choose to become an entrepreneur—and that's definitely what you are, if you are running your own healthcare practice—make this choice because they feel they can achieve bigger and better results on their own than they could working for someone else.

But the problem is that as they become more successful, they become increasingly busy. They get distracted by non-productive, energy-draining, and unprofitable activities. This is why so many entrepreneurs end up working eighty-hour weeks and eventually quitting or having a health crisis because they are so burned out.

Unique Ability is the way to escape this problem. When you know your unique ability and you set your work life up so that most of your time is spent working in it, you not only get more done, you actually gain energy and enthusiasm instead of losing it. At the end of a day spent working within your Unique Ability, instead of feeling drained and frustrated, you'll feel energized and satisfied.

This concept has been incredibly helpful for me. My business and private practice have grown rapidly over the past few years, and as that happened, I started to get pulled in a million different directions. I found myself engaged in activities that were necessary, but time-consuming and

depleting. I was working longer hours than I wanted to and starting to feel the effects of that on my health and in my relationship with my family.

Then I discovered Dan Sullivan and read his book on Unique Ability. After going through the process he outlines in his book, I determined that my Unique Ability was creating content. This content could be a blog article, a podcast, a treatment protocol, a digital education product, or a training program. Creating content is what I love to do, what I excel at, what gives me energy, and what I feel like I could continue to improve at and stay fascinated by until the day I die.

Once I got clear on my Unique Ability, the next step was to start organizing my work life so that I could focus almost exclusively on it. In theory, the goal would be to spend 100 percent of your time on your Unique Ability. In practice, that is probably an unattainable goal, but it's one that we can continue to work toward. I would say I'm about 70 to 80 percent there now, depending on the week.

Occasionally I'll find myself working on something and feeling frustrated and drained. Once I realize that's happening, I'll ask the question, "Is what I'm doing right now my unique ability?" If the answer is no, it's time to find a way to stop doing it.

Getting clear on my Unique Ability means that I delegate a lot of things that I used to do myself. For example, managing people is not my Unique Ability. Neither is managing projects—dealing with all of the endless details that go into producing content or launching a new program or product. So I ended up hiring a COO and a few project managers who could do these things, which left me more time to focus on my Unique Ability.

Of course you may not be able to do this when you're just starting out. When I initially launched my website and practice, I did just about everything myself. But if you keep Unique Ability in mind and hold it as a goal, you'll create a foundation for growth and success. You'll know that it's best to hire people to do things that aren't your Unique Ability as soon as you possibly can, even when it may be a stretch financially.

When I hired my COO, for example, I wasn't really in a position to do that. My company wasn't the size that would typically support a C-level position, but I knew that hiring a COO would free up my time to focus more on income-generating activities. If I didn't hire the COO, I would be stuck at the same stage of growth and never be able to expand. I would be the bottleneck ... which is exactly what happens to most entrepreneurs.

But Unique Ability isn't just the key to personal success; it's also a crucial factor in setting up a successful company. If you as the entrepreneur and founder are focused on your Unique Ability and every employee that you hire is in a position that maximizes their Unique Ability, you will have what Dan Sullivan calls a "self-multiplying" or "self-managing" business.

This means that your company will grow and expand without your direct involvement in every little thing that happens. And that is absolutely crucial if you want to escape the common trap of micro-management and endless complexity that most entrepreneurs fall into.

In the materials for this week, I've included a worksheet that will help you to define your unique ability. I'd also highly recommend that you read Dan Sullivan's book, because it includes a much more detailed process for understanding your Unique Ability. I've included a link to it on the handout.

Okay, that's it for now. See you next time.