



You Have To Plant An Apple Seed To Grow An Apple Tree

Dear Reader

This time last week I was in London speaking to a group of leaders as part of a client event for Executive Athlete Club (EAC). It was a super event that included a workout, some yoga/breathwork, a wonderful lunch at Sophie's Soho and then I had a chance to share my journey both professional and personal and lift the lid on the sort of

transformation that is available for us when we take an inside out approach.

When we are clear about what we want and know who we are, we can use our way of 'being' to create just about anything.

More about that in future editions.

Once the EAC event was wrapped up, I headed to Sevenoaks in advance of my VO2 max test the next morning. In addition to the VO2 max test Jordan would be testing my grip strength, my lower body power and doing an InBody scan which gives reading on things like muscle mass and body fat percentage.

If you read last weeks newsletter, you'll know that my last VO2 max score taken in September 2024 was 50.4 and Jordan had challenged me to raise it to 53.

I had put a plan in place and done in the region of three hundred hours of training over the eight months. The training plan included zone 2 running, zone 5 running and strength training. I had stuck to the plan, injury permitting. Off and on I'd had achilles issues which stopped me from running fast at times. This meant my running had been more balanced towards the zone 2 training than the zone 5 training.

I thought it was fine. I hadn't done a lot of running ahead of my previous VO2 test and the result had been well beyond my expectations. With the exception of two or three periods of a month when I had backed off the zone 5 running everything else had gone really well. I felt fit and ready. Much more ready than the last time and was optimistic I was going to beat my last score. I just wasn't sure by how much.

That is NOT what happened.

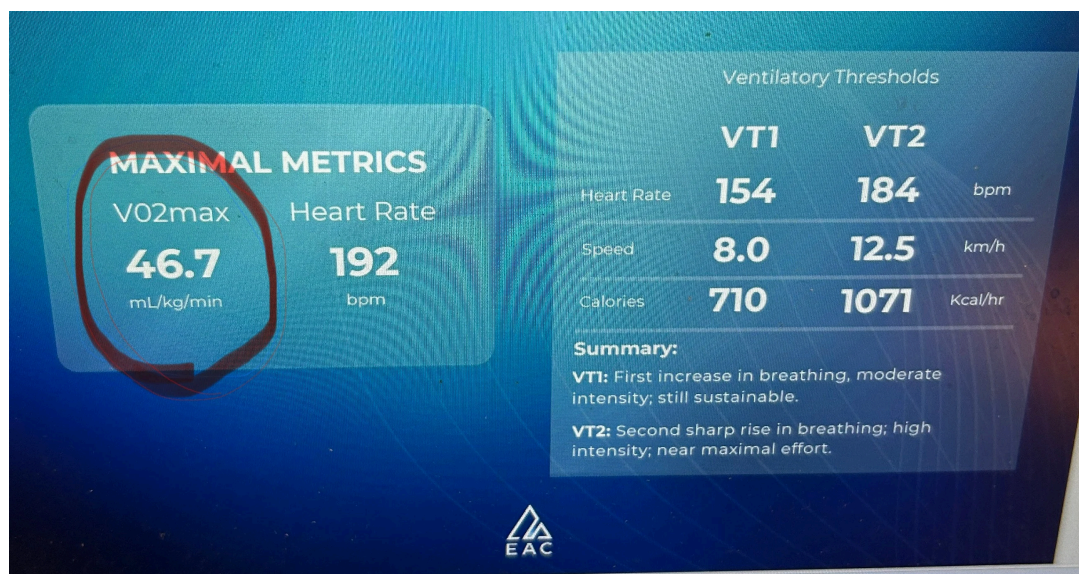
The day started great. I slept well the night before, got up early and had a great breakfast a few hours ahead of the test. Jordan did the InBody scan which went up from 88 to 89, which is a great score for my age. We then did the grip strength which went well. I hadn't done it before but my score put me in the top 25% of men my age. So far, so good. Jordan then took me through a brilliant warm up before doing the lower body power test. That was my first crack at that one and the

score put me at the 50th percentile. Not bad, though there's definitely something there for me to work on.

Then before I knew it Jordan had me on the treadmill and we were into the VO2 max test.

Five minutes at 5km/h. Then every minute on the minute he increased the speed by 0.5km/h. By the time the speed was 10km/h my VO2 max score was rising nicely. Jordan let me know every couple of minutes. I was comfortable. I just had to keep going for another fifteen minutes. At around 12km/h I still felt comfortable but my VO2 max wasn't rising as fast as I expected. We were still in the low 40's. By the time the speed was at 13.5km/h my VO2 max had risen to 43-44. I knew my heart rate was rising faster than my VO2 max. Ninety seconds later my heart was in my mouth ... 192bpm and Jordan let me know the VO2 max was sitting at 46-47. Instantly I knew it wasn't happening. I was getting close to having to step off the treadmill and I wasn't even going to get my VO2 max to 50, never mind the 53 or 54 I had been hoping for and training for. I brought the test to an end and stepped off the treadmill.

Once I was able to speak again, I asked Jordan for the score ... 'It was 46.7 Pete'. I said a few words that I'll leave to your imagination. My head was spinning. What went wrong? What about all that running I had done? What just happened?



Jordan left me on my own for a few minutes and went to clean the mask I had been wearing. His passion for what he does and for his client's growth is high. I knew he was as gutted as me in that moment. I don't know for sure, but I think he was expecting to come back into the room and spend some time picking me up off the floor ... mentally and emotionally.

While he was out of the room, I got really present and stopped judging myself. Not planned, it just happened. I saw that 46.7 is still a good score. I saw that the work I had done wasn't lost or wasted. In the words of Richard Rohr, 'everything belongs'. My strength had increased. My muscle mass had increased. My body fat was down to 13.7%, the lowest it had been since I started tracking it. My Inbody score at 89 was the highest since I had started tracking that.

But something had gone wrong with the VO2 max. Then the thought came, you didn't get enough treadmill sessions in at zone 5, especially over the last eight weeks. My achilles had been tender while in Australia visiting the kids so I had stuck to mostly zone 2 training and then the last three weeks it hadn't been an option to do any zone 5 training due to the pre-achilles bursitis inflammation I had experienced on the way home.

My next thought was, 'This is just a game, it's not over and I am staying in it.'

By the time Jordan walked back into the room a few minutes later, I smiled at him and told him what I was thinking about why my score had dropped and what I needed to do to get it back up. He agreed then sat down with me and broke down the 'exact' system I would need to follow if I wanted to get it back up over 50 and up to the 54, I really want to get it to.

Our next stop was Wagamama's for a protein heavy lunch.

As I travelled home from Sevenoaks that evening, I let the incredible experiences of the day sink in and allowed what was available for me to learn to bubble to the surface ...

Two big lessons ...

First ...

Love Wins ... But only always. Three years ago, I know I would have spent hours, maybe days, judging myself relentlessly and harshly for what happened. I certainly wouldn't have landed on what went wrong and how to get 'back in the game' during the three minutes that Jordan was out of the room. I'd have wasted so much time. The difference? Simple ... 'my document'. As I have let go of judgement and allowed self-love to emerge, the huge amount of time I used to lose to pointless judgments has been reclaimed. The result of this is that I am making better use of my time and spending more time working on winning the games in life that I am choosing to play.

Second ...

'If you want to grow an apple tree, plant an apple seed, not an orange seed.'

I heard Steve Hardison use words like this for the first time in April 2022 when I heard him speak in London. I mean the words made sense, but I didn't really know what he was pointing to.

In the context of what had happened earlier that day, I could see that my system for training had got derailed by an injury and the idea that I could replace zone 5 running with zone 2 running and still get the same results.

To get a high VO2 max you must do precisely what needs to be done to produce a high VO2 max ... and I hadn't. I had done precisely what needed to be done to build muscle mass, to build strength, to lose fat and to build a great cardiovascular foundation. But the exact actions I needed to take to build VO2 max hadn't happened nearly often enough.

I had stepped off the exact path I needed to be on without realising it.

It's so easy to step off the path we are on, often without even realising it.

To build a great relationship you have got to do what builds great relationships.

To build a great coaching practice I must do precisely what builds a great coaching practice.

To build a great business you must do precisely what leads to building a great business in whatever sector you are in.

Somewhere in the middle of this, clarity is critical for me. To have or create what we want in the world we need to be clear about what that is. When we are clear about what we want, we can be clear on who we need to be to make it happen. When we are clear on who we need to be, we can get clear about precisely what we need to do.

When we have this kind of clarity, when we know who we really are, when we stay on the path and stay on it especially when things don't go as we hoped or expected ... anything is possible, well almost anything.

My belief in a VO2 max of 54 has not diminished at all. I am back on track with clarity about what I need to do and about the consistency with which I need to do it. As far as I am concerned, it will happen. I have had a great week of training since I got home and am already in discussion with Jordan to get retested in September ... I will report back on my VO2 max journey then.

Much love.



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I recently appeared as a guest on the Ultimate Coach Podcast. I'd love you to take a listen and let me know what you think!

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