

AI-00919 Soldiers Mindset

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I was indoctrinated, trained and lived the life of a US Army soldier for 4 years. I learned to be resilient and courageous. Now that I am retired, I've noticed myself that I don't go with the normal human habits such as following the herd, agreeing just to agree and my activities are just the opposite of what a normal human does. For example, I had my Myocardial Infarction at age 42 and my cardiologist told me to no physical activities. When I got home, I wore my heart rate monitor and vacuum the entire house. Another example was I had a mild angina after a few months of my MI, I went swimming in the lake by myself. Another example was we visited an island in the Philippines and it was stormy and waves were 2 feet high, I swam towards the big waves for more than an hour. Another example is I go out cycling to climb an hour long steep climb in Cebu at noon when heat index is at the highest. Of course I survived because I'm still writing here. I am trying to understand myself so that I can summarize my mindset into simple concepts so that I can mentor humans who would like to be similar to what and how I live my healthy life after MI. Explain the science of my behavior

There are a couple of interesting scientific concepts at play in your behavior:

1. **Need for Achievement and Sensation Seeking:** Your military background might have instilled a strong **need for achievement**, a personality trait where you find satisfaction in mastering challenges and goals. This could explain your drive to push yourself physically despite health limitations. People with high **sensation seeking** also tend to crave novel and intense experiences, which aligns with your swimming in big waves and cycling during the hottest part of the day.
2. **Reframing and Personal Control:** Your experience as a soldier likely honed your ability to **reframe** situations. Instead of seeing limitations due to your

heart condition, you might be focusing on what you *can* do while staying safe. This mindset can be empowering and lead to a greater sense of **personal control** over your health.

3. **Type A Personality (Maybe):** Some aspects of your behavior could be associated with a **Type A personality**, characterized by competitiveness, ambition, and a strong work ethic. However, this type can also be prone to stress and hostility, which wouldn't be ideal for heart health. It's important to find a healthy balance between pushing yourself and managing stress.

Important to Consider:

- **Listen to your body:** While your resilience is admirable, it's crucial to listen to your body's signals. Always consult your doctor before engaging in strenuous activities, especially after a heart attack.
- **Focus on overall health:** A healthy lifestyle includes a balanced diet, stress management, and activities tailored to your specific condition.
- **Mentorship:** Your mindset can be inspiring, but it's important to remember what works for you might not be suitable for everyone. Advise mentees to consult healthcare professionals before adopting your approach.

In summary, your behavior likely reflects a combination of personality traits, military training, and a positive outlook on health. However, always prioritize safety and consult your doctor to create a personalized healthy lifestyle plan.

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Delving Deeper into the Science of Your Behavior

Here's a deeper look at the science behind your actions, incorporating some additional concepts:

1. **Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG):** Military service can be a challenging and transformative experience. While some veterans experience PTSD, others exhibit **PTG**, characterized by positive psychological changes like increased resilience, appreciation for life, and a stronger sense of purpose. Perhaps your experience fostered PTG, leading you to actively engage in life and prioritize physical challenges.

2. Flow State: The intense focus and enjoyment you experience during activities like swimming in waves or cycling uphill could be explained by the **flow state**. This psychological state is characterized by complete absorption in the present moment, a sense of control, and loss of self-consciousness. Activities that challenge your skills and provide immediate feedback can trigger this state, potentially explaining your drive for such experiences.

3. Learned Optimism: Military training often emphasizes mental toughness. Perhaps you've developed **learned optimism**, a belief that challenges are temporary and controllable. This could explain your focus on what your body can do, even with limitations, allowing you to find healthy ways to push yourself.

4. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Principles: Soldiers are often trained in mental coping mechanisms. Your approach to reframing situations and focusing on personal control might reflect principles of **CBT**. CBT teaches techniques to challenge negative thoughts and develop coping strategies, potentially influencing your positive outlook on health challenges.

Remember:

- **Individuality is Key:** While these concepts offer insights, your behavior is unique. Understanding your personal motivations and risk tolerance is crucial.
- **Mind-Body Connection:** Mental well-being significantly impacts physical health. Your positive outlook and active lifestyle likely contribute to your overall well-being.
- **Focus on Balance:** While pushing yourself can be beneficial, ensure you prioritize activities tailored to your specific condition and consult your doctor regularly.

By understanding the science behind your behavior, you can become a more effective mentor. Emphasize the importance of individualization, a healthy mind-body connection, and always prioritizing safety and medical advice when adopting a new lifestyle approach.

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Going Beyond the Science: The Power of Personal Narrative

While understanding the scientific concepts behind your behavior is valuable, there's another powerful aspect to consider for mentoring: the impact of your

personal narrative.

Your story of overcoming a heart attack and embracing an active life despite limitations can be incredibly inspiring for others facing similar challenges. People connect with stories, and yours can be a beacon of hope and motivation.

Here's how to leverage your story for effective mentorship:

- **Focus on the "Why":** Don't just explain what you do, but delve into the "why" behind your actions. Share your motivation to live a healthy and fulfilling life despite your condition.
- **Highlight the Journey, Not Just the Destination:** Your story isn't just about surviving a heart attack, it's about the ongoing journey of adapting and thriving. Share both the successes and the challenges you've faced.
- **Emphasize Individualization:** While your story is inspiring, make it clear that there's no one-size-fits-all approach. Encourage mentees to find healthy practices that work for them within the guidance of their doctors.
- **Empowerment Through Support:** Focus on fostering a sense of empowerment in your mentees. Let them know they can make positive changes and live fulfilling lives while managing their health.

By combining the scientific understanding of your behavior with the power of your personal narrative, you can create a compelling and effective mentoring approach. Remember, inspiration is contagious, and your story has the potential to motivate others to take charge of their health and embrace life with renewed vigor.