

TRANSCRIPT FOR EPISODE 32 “HOW TO MAKE INFINITE PROGRESS”

Hello, podcast universe! Welcome to Episode 32 of the 100% Awesome Podcast. I'm April Price and I'm so happy that you are out there listening.

[00:46]

I hope that you are having a very joyful holiday season, but I suspect that like mine there are equal parts horrible and delightful in your holiday season. So I know there's a whole lot of merry fun and there's a whole lot of heavy lifting. All together, right? Which only goes to prove what I have told you. It's always 50/50. Even the holidays. So wherever you find yourself in the joy or in the pain just know that nothing has gone wrong you are doing it exactly right. Just keep going.

Okay, so after last week's episode I got some feedback from some of my loved ones and my brother texted me and told me that I had undersold Jo Jo Rabbit and I totally agree. He is right. And then my son told me that I had oversold our Christmas albums and I totally disagree. The one thing in my life that I have total confidence in is our Christmas albums. So if you want to get on Spotify and search for the 100% Awesome Christmas Playlist, you can listen to a compilation of like almost hundred of our very favorite Christmas songs. And hopefully that will make at least one aspect of your holiday pretty awesome.

And then I also wanted to remind you that I am giving away two mini-coaching packages that include four, one-on-one, forty-five-minute sessions with me. The only thing you have to do to win one of them is sign up for my weekly email and you can just do that on my website at aprilpricecoaching.com or you can just text the word "awesome" to: 6 6 8 6 6 and then like, Magic! Presto! it will sign you up for my email and it will put you in the drawing to win a mini-coaching packet. So imagine starting the new year with your very own coach! And we can work on any area of your life and really get you some traction. So sign up at aprilpricecoaching.com or text the word "awesome" to: 6 6 8 6 6.

[02:49]

Okay, so to be honest this episode is probably going to look a little bit different from the one that I had planned. Yesterday as I was working on my outline and making notes, I was also simultaneously trying to prepare and cook to host a party for all the women in my church congregation. And somehow when I went back to find my outline there was nothing to be found on my computer. And so, as you can imagine, I have had more than a few thoughts since then—lots of them which have been very frustrated and painful.

But it has kind of shifted my perspective a bit and change kind of the trajectory of the podcast. And so in fact maybe this was the one I was supposed to share in the first place.

So I want to start with the story. A number of years ago, when we were first married, we were going on this family vacation with my family. So all my brothers and sisters were going, David and I and our little kids were going. Anyway, two of my brothers were working at the time and they couldn't get off work when we wanted to leave. And so we all decided that these two brothers, Jared and Jacob, we're gonna drive separately and they were going to leave about 12 hours after we did after they got off their shift.

So they get off work, they get in the car, and they decide that they're going to take shifts because it's night now and so they decide that Jacob will take the first shift.

[04:23]

So they set off—Jacob's driving, Jared sleeping. A couple of hours later, Jared wakes up and he kind of sees a streetlight and he's like, "Oh are we there already??" And then he looks out the window and he notices that the signs on the highway are indicating exits for streets in Phoenix. He's like, "Wait, where are we?"

So it turns out, they were still in Phoenix. Two hours had gone by and my brother Jacob had been driving the car for two hours, but they were still in Phoenix. They had not left the Valley. And even though they had been in the car for two hours, they were not in Flagstaff. They had driven for two hours but they were still in the same place.

My brother assumed that if he got on the road and he just started driving eventually the road would dump him out in Flagstaff. And then after a while he realized like, "I don't know where I'm going," but then he was too scared to wake Jared up and tell him and ask him how to get out of the city and get to Flagstaff. So he just kept driving. Hoping that someday he would end up in Flagstaff.

[05:35]

So I know that for a lot of you as the year starts to wind down and a new year appears on our horizon, we start to think about what we have done and what we want to do and what we've accomplished this year and what we can accomplish in the next year. And I think there's kind of a temptation for each of us to kind of look around us and think like "Wait a minute. Where am I? Have I just been going in circles? I think I might be in the exact same place I was last year. I mean I've been driving, I've been working, I've been trying, and I've been doing all the work," right? But a lot of things we don't notice the progress we're making, and it feels like we're working really really hard to stay in the same place. And around and around and around we go, around the Phoenix Valley without getting any closer to our destination.

We do the work and then we assume that this work is going to dump us out somewhere where we're going to feel accomplished and confident and happy. And that we will finally arrive somewhere different—where we are different, where our lives are different, where we feel completely differently.

And yet if we look around, it seems like we're just in the exact same place—the same person, doing the same things, and feeling the exact same way. So I think that this story has so many applications for us, right? But what I want to focus on today is the idea that we are making more progress than we think. Or another way to say it is we are making more progress than our brains think.

Our brains are convinced that we aren't getting anywhere that we're doing it wrong and we're failing and we have so far to go and we cannot seem to get past "go," but what I want you to know is that this is just a lie your brain sells you because it is only interested, as you know, in your survival. And it's convinced you're going to die. No matter what you do, it's never going to be enough. You are going to die.

[07:38]

And so when I first thought about doing this podcast, my idea was that I would just show you how to look back at your year with intention, right? Look at the past year and kind of do an intentional assessment and get your bearings: What did I accomplish? What am I proud of? of? What is "present me" so grateful that "past me" did this year? year? And I just want to say that I think this is a very valuable exercise for each of us to do. But since I first started working on the podcast and thinking about this, like I said, I've had a

shift in perspective. And so now I want to look at this evaluation of our year and our accomplishments of where you are and where you want to go in a different way. So bear with me this might be a little bit vulnerable, but I hope that it will help each of you.

So first of all, I think many of us can use kind of this evaluation process of where we are as a way to beat ourselves up, right? We look at the sum total of all we have done this year with our very human brains and we add it all up and we come up with "zero. "Add this add this at this it's still zero, right? right? Our brains, like I said, only notice the lack, what we're missing. And so no matter how much you've done and how much you've accomplished your brain is always subtracting. It's like advanced math, right?

And so this can often leave us discouraged and frustrated. It leaves us feeling like we aren't actually getting anywhere. So let me show you what I mean by giving you a little example that happened to me just yesterday.

[09:17]

So I was in charge of a Christmas dinner and program for all the women in my congregation at church. And I have spent lots of time preparing for it, right? Weeks, in fact. And I even recruited my family and they have spent a lot of time for it as well.

There has been shopping and planning and delegating. And we've set up the tent and the tables and the chairs. And we've arranged transportation and organized musical numbers and I asked speakers and cooked food and created centerpieces and on and on and on. It was like a lot of effort, a lot of work. And so yesterday I spent even more time preparing for the event, stringing lights and cooking potatoes and sending my husband on errands to pick up food and ice and heaters, and all this stuff, right? Not to mention all the prayers and the thought and the mental energy that I've put into it over all these weeks.

And last night, after it was all over, I was sitting in my closet and I thought, "Well that was a waste." After all of that, after everything I did, this is the thought my brain offered me. "That was a waste." And for a moment, and for lots of moments after that, I'll admit, I believed my brain. I agreed with the thought that was a waste and I just allowed it to stay in my brain and just keep thinking it. And the longer I thought it the more frustrated and angry and discouraged I got. By the time I got into bed I was sobbing, right? I was right? I was sure that my life and my effort and my work mean nothing and that it's all a waste.

So do you see what happened?

[11:07]

My brain told me that what I had done and what I had asked my family to do had all been for nothing. that it was all a waste, and that it wasn't good enough, and that not even with all my effort, no one had gotten anything out of it and no one's life had been made better, and no one's burdens had been lifted, and I was clearly just wasting my time. Effectively what my brain was saying is like, "You've been driving for hours and you haven't gone anywhere.

I tell you this story because what I want you to know is that this is what brains do. This is what my brain does, and this is what your brain does. It tells you that it's all a waste. It tells you that the work you do, that the goals you set, that the things you've tried to accomplish with your kids, and your family, and your church, and your community, and your health, and in your career—that it's all a waste. And as hard as you try, it's not good enough, and you are failing epically

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So that's awesome right? I love being human right? So, okay, now what I want you to know is that in that moment it can be so easy to believe your brain. You think you have evidence. You think you can see the street signs that prove you haven't gotten anywhere. But it's so important to understand that this is only the way your brain is presenting the information. And this is the way that it will always present the information. Your brain looks for the ways you don't measure up and the ways you waste your time and energy—it pays attention to those, it focuses on those, because this is what it thinks will keep you alive.

If you know where you are lacking, if you know where you're wasting energy, then maybe you'll fix it and have a chance at survival, right? Remember the brain loves to save energy. And then as it points out all the ways you're lacking it helpfully ignores all the evidence of progress and accomplishment that might be there. It thinks those things are irrelevant. Those have nothing to do with your survival. And so it completely ignores and discounts the things that you have done. And in most cases, it does not ever acknowledge any of the good or any of the progress you are actually making.

[13:26]

So what do we do? How do we continue to move forward in our lives and set goals and evaluate our progress without buying into this lie our brain is selling, that we're not getting anywhere? My coach recently introduced me to a book by Simon Sinek called *The Infinite Game*. And in the book, Simon Sinek, shares a concept that I think is helpful for all of us as we go to make personal progress and do work in the areas of our life that our brain is certain that we are failing in.

So Sinek explains that there are two types of games: there are finite games and there are infinite games. And finite games are the ones that we are most familiar with, right? They have fixed rules. They have a definitive beginning, middle, and end. They have a set time limit. They have like a fixed amount of players. They have a scoreboard, or a way of tracking your progress, or your lack of progress in the game. These are like all the games you have ever played like soccer or basketball or Settlers of Catan, right?

At any point in a finite game you can look at the scoreboard or the time clock or the game board and know exactly where you stand. You can figure out if you are winning or if you're losing and you can know if you are enough or not. And here's the thing: our brains love finite games. They were programmed for the finite game. They like to know all the threats; they like to know where they stand. They like to know where they rank, and where they compare with all the other competitors or the people in our lives, and they like to view our entire lives through the lens of a finite game.

[15:06]

But the finite game isn't the only kind of game there is. Sinek proposes that there are also infinite games, games that have no set beginning or end. Games that don't have universally accepted rules or a way of scoring. They are the games where the players can change and the rules, can change the players, and there aren't any time limits. And what I want to suggest is that most of our lives are examples of the infinite games.

Our health and fitness for example is an infinite game it doesn't end. You never get to the finish line, right? You never win "in shape forever!" It's infinite. Our personal development is an infinite game. You don't ever get finished. Our spiritual journey is an infinite game. Our discipleship and our quest to become more like Christ is an infinite game. Our parenting our mothering or fathering is an infinite game. There are not set rules and there are no scores. There is in fact, no way to tell if you're winning or losing. In fact there probably isn't even winning or losing.

And I'm sure this is probably obvious by now, but your brain does not like infinite games. It doesn't know what to do with the information of an infinite game. Right? Brains like to measure and assess. They like to know where they stand and where the dangers are. In infinite games there is no way to know any of this.

Now I want you to think about what happens when our brains, which operate with a finite mindset, then go and look at all these areas of our life that are an infinite progression. And then our brains try to make finite sense out of this infinite areas of our life. And then we feel like we're not enough; it's not adding up. We think we're falling behind, or we're stuck in the same place, or we aren't making any progress, or we're wasting our time. And this is exactly what happened to me last night.

[17:03]

My brain using its finite mindset looked at my work in the church and my work as a disciple of Christ and it added everything up and it found me lacking it told me that I was wasting my time. That in some way I was losing. It told me that I wasn't getting anywhere. My brain was trying to keep score about something that it can actually measure. And when my finite brain looked at the infinite game of my becoming, it told me, "You are wasting your time and everybody else's time too."

Now this is what our brains do. Your brain looks at your life, at your work with your children, at your work on your body, at your work on your mind, and your spirit, at your work on how you love, and it then goes to apply the rules of a finite game to those areas of your life. And then tells you you're wasting your time and you're going in circles. And what I want you to know is that this is just not true.

As you evaluate your life and look back whether you're looking back at a whole year or you're looking back on your week or even yesterday you need to be on to your brain. You need to understand its bias for the finite game and finite measurements, so that you can refocus and remind yourself that you are playing an infinite game and that the measurement your brain uses are not relevant at all in terms of your progress in the infinite game.

Okay, so how do we apply this in our lives? I want to offer you today two questions you can ask yourself to help you evaluate your progress in your life. So as you look at any area of your life your brain is going to have an assessment about it.

[18:45]

It's going to have a judgment about it. It's going to attach a finite score to your infinite game. And when you look at that score what your brain offers you like when it says to you, "Well that was a waste" (that's the score my brain offered me) when you look at any area of your life, and you look at the score your brain offers you, I want you to ask yourself, "How does that make me feel? How does thinking that make me feel?" This question is important because we know that our feelings fuel all of our actions.

When I think, "Well that was a waste," I feel discouraged. And discouraged doesn't produce a lot of powerful action. Discouraged in my life produces a lot of tears and a lot of giving up. Notice that when

you apply a finite mindset to any infinite progression in your life, it produces feelings that are painful and don't create the action that we want ultimately in our lives.

So let me give you a little example of this. When I was in college, I had to take a couple of P.E. credits in order to get my degree, and so I wanted to learn some sports that I had never played before, right? Maybe I had some secret talent I didn't know about. So I signed up for soccer and tennis, and I wasn't great at soccer, but I was pretty good at tennis. And at the end of the semester we had this little tournament in our class, and I won the tournament. I beat all the people in my class in tennis and it was a coed class, right?

[20:12]

So I was feeling so proud of myself. Now tennis is a finite game and I was the winner, right? So that made my brain feel amazing and it made me feel good. Now at the time I was dating David and I told him, “Hey like I'm pretty good at tennis. I won my tournament. We should go and play tennis sometime.” Because David had played tennis in high school. So anyway, one night we went to the tennis court and we had a game and David stood there and he served ball after ball that whizzed right past me and I think maybe I return one serve the entire game. I did not score one point. (By the way, P.S., This is not the way to win in the infinite game of love. You should let your date return a serve or two.)

Anyway, that was the very last time I ever played tennis. Going into the game, my brain with its finite mindset thought I was awesome at tennis. After the game, my brain with its finite mindset knew the truth. I was terrible at tennis and this thought “I am terrible at tennis” created the feeling of embarrassment and humiliation and that feeling never fueled me to pick up a racket again.

As you evaluate your life and the areas that you want to make progress in, if you use a finite mindset to judge an infinite area of progress and you may feel feelings that won't encourage you to keep working either. And when this happens you can evaluate the thought and decide “Do I really want to keep that thought? Is it serving me and my progress?” For example if I didn't care about the finite score of that particular tennis game and I only cared about my infinite ability to progress as a tennis player then I would need to find a thought that would create feelings that would fuel me to go out and practice and keep playing, right?

[22:10]

Like if I chose a thought like, “I can get so much better” or “There's so much more to learn,” then that might have fueled more practice than I'm terrible at tennis—I could have continued to progress in my tennis game and my infinite abilities to get better if I hadn't been concerned about the finite score of that game.

Another way to look at this is that I have a client who is a coach and she's talking to me about how she feels so behind around other coaches and she said, “I'm never going to be like this coach or I'm never gonna be like that coach.” Her coaching ability and my coaching ability is an infinite game, right? There's an infinite progression that is available to her and to me in our abilities to coach. When we look at her abilities in any area with a finite mindset, we only see we are behind and how much other people are better than us and how much we lack. And this only fuels feelings of discouragement, which can lead some people to quit or give up, knowing that they didn't even return one serve.

But instead, if I'm excited that there is no end to my ability to grow as a coach and gain skills in coaching, that excitement will fuel entirely different results than thinking I'm behind. So when you're looking at any area of your life—your spirituality, your parenting, your personal relationships, your personal growth,

whatever it is—ask yourself, “How do you feel when you think about it that way?” Do you feel discouraged? Do you feel behind? Do you feel like you're wasting your time? If you do it's because you're looking at your infinite progress with a finite mindset and you need to choose another thought that will produce the feelings that will create the action you want in your life to continue to progress.

So I want to give you one last example of this. Recently I have really struggled to stay on my eating protocol. And I have been eating a certain way for two years, but the last couple of months for me have been challenging in so many ways—health wise and then like emotionally, as I've been trying to build my business. And when I thought about looking back on my year in this area of my life, I just like shrink from it, right, like, “Oh I don't even want to look at it,” because I felt like in many ways I was in a better place last year at the same time—at least in terms of my body weight.

[24:39]

But remember, I only feel bad and think that I'm going backwards or losing ground or failing in some way, when I put a finite mindset on the infinite game of my health and fitness. My health and fitness are an infinite game, in that I will be in charge of my health and fitness as long as I am in my mortal body. It isn't a game with a finish line. It is never done. It isn't ever complete. And so I have to honestly evaluate if the thought “I'm worse off than where I was last year at this time” is going to create the feelings to fuel positive action. When I think “I'm worse off” or “I'm failing”, believe it or not, that doesn't make me want to try harder or stick to my protocol. It makes me feel like giving up. It makes me feel like eating whatever I want and saying, “Forget it.”

So as you look at where you've been this year do so honestly but look at it with an infinite mindset. No, I am not at the same weight I was last year, but that is the evaluation of a finite mindset, right? I am in this for so much more than that. What am I learning even now? What has all this extra fuel done for my muscle building? And more importantly, what do I need to think to keep playing the infinite game and not give up?

That's what you have to ask yourself: What do I need to think in order to keep playing and keep trying and keep entering the infinite game? Because thinking “I'm worse off than I was last year” doesn't keep me in the game. The truth is, when I really evaluate it, I'm stronger than I have ever been. And when I think that “I'm the boss” and that every choice I make makes a difference, then I can use those thoughts to create the action I want and stay in the game rather than give up.

So I know you think that by re-evaluating your thoughts, it kind of feels like you're denying the truth and that maybe you're being delusional. But the delusion is that you can fall behind or fail. The delusion is that you aren't making progress and that you're going in circles. The delusion is the one created by your lower brain that says you're not getting anywhere. And the feelings that those thoughts produce will never fuel the action you want. Do you want to take action? Then you've got to choose the thoughts that motivate you and excite you and feel that action.

[27:01]

Okay, the second question I think is really valuable as you look back and you evaluate your year is this: What if the accomplishment isn't the reason we're playing at all? So what I mean by this is that we think that by setting goals and working to achieve things in our lives, we will reach an accomplishment and that will be amazing, and we will feel so good. But what if the whole point of setting the goals and doing the things isn't ever to arrive at the accomplishment at all, but is actually about what happens to us along the way?

So Dan Sullivan calls this the “strategic byproduct.” He says that what happens to us as we stretch ourselves and go after our goals is so much more important than whether or not we ever achieve the goal. So I was thinking about this this morning I was still in the depths of despair as I thought about the party last night. And it was at the gym and I was kind of like crying through my lifts about wasting my time last night, and I started thinking about this about how my goal of doing all this work was to help the women in my congregation feel closer to the Savior, and to ease their burdens, and help them feel the spirit of God during the holiday season—which are all worthy goals, right? Except that one problem is I can't control their results but also, I can't measure any of those goals. I cannot measure if those things happen for other people and when my brain tried to measure it, it just saw that I had failed and told me that I had wasted my time. Thanks, brain. You're awesome!

But so I just couldn't shake this feeling this morning and so what I thought about is this: What if accomplishing the thing of helping the women in my congregation wasn't the point of it at all? What if the whole point of doing all about work was for who I became in the process? What if it was who I became as I sacrificed my time, and my effort, and my brainpower, and my energy? What if it was what I learned about love, real love, by watching my family rally around me and by being the recipient of my husband's tender and constant service and help the last few days. What if it's what I learned about love by giving what I could to help others? Like all of those things are just the strategic byproduct of putting on the event, but actually in the infinite game, that may be the point of it all.

The whole point may not be what I do for others but what happens to me, who I become as I do those things for others. Do you see? Like what if it's not the accomplishment, the score, the win, the finish line, that matters at all? What if it's who we are becoming in the process instead? And notice that who we become is an infinite game. It cannot be measured by our human brains and it most often goes completely unnoticed or discounted by that brain.

[30:17]

So there's an old story that Henry B. Eyring tells about his father. When he was 80 years old, he was suffering from bone cancer and at that time he got invited to go work at the church farm. And so his job was to pull these weeds out of the onion field. But he was in so much pain from this bone cancer and it was so intense that he couldn't even kneel down on the ground to pull the weeds. And so he would just pull himself along the ground on his elbows. And after he spent the whole day pulling the weeds from this one row someone noticed that his father had pulled weeds on the wrong row. The weeds that he had pulled all day long had been sprayed and they were going to die anyway.

And when told his story you know he was just kind of laughing and chuckling at his mistake and Henry Eyring said, “Well how can you laugh at this, Dad? Like how can you laugh at this mix up?”

And he said, “Son, I wasn't there for the weeds.” Right? Like he didn't go to pull the weeds. He wasn't there for that goal. He was there for who he would become as he pulled them. And so what if we're not here for the weeds at all?

[31:34]

What if all these goals and things that we want to accomplish in our lives like they aren't the thing. What if it's like who we become—the strategic byproduct of who we become—as we learn and grow in these ways? What if it is who we are becoming on an infinite perspective that matters.

So I just want to underline a couple of things before I finish. It is so important to have goals. It is so important to visit “future us” and decide who we want to be and what we want to do and what we want our lives to look like.

Progression is why we came to earth and development, I think, is a really vital ingredient of a well-lived life. It feels so good, right? Becoming is what we were meant to do, and it can be one of the sources of our greatest joy. But we need to view all of that—our goals and our progress and our accomplishments and our development—in terms of an infinite mindset. And not judge ourselves and bully ourselves all the time using a finite measurement on those infinite things that will only limit our progress.

[32:40]

So before you move to go set your goals in the coming year, I think it can be so powerful to look back on what you've done and accomplished this year. But don't do it with a finite mindset. Don't add and subtract. Don't try to measure yourself and figure out if you've got a passing grade. Instead, look at your life with an infinite mindset. See the things that you know now that you didn't know then. Even and especially because of the mistakes you made. I know more about love now than I did at the beginning of the year mainly because of all the times I did it love like I wanted to I didn't show up like I wanted to. I learned exactly where my work is and where I need to change and grow in the way that I think about others.

Try and look with an infinite mindset and see the things that you became rather than the things that you checked off the list. I know I've told you this before one of my goals was the pull-up, right? And I can honestly say like that was a finite goal for five pull ups. I wanted to be able to do five in a row and I accomplished it. But what was even so much more valuable was the strategic byproduct of being able to manage my brain and to know that I could be the boss, and do things that were hard and do things that I didn't want to do, and that I could just ignore my lower brain. That thing that becoming was so much more important than the finite goal of the five pull ups.

So notice all those things that you're becoming along the way. Even if you didn't get to the finish line even if you didn't accomplish the thing that you wanted to. There was some learning and becoming in it. If you look back and see that, for example, that you have the exact same goals that you had at the end of the year that you did at the beginning of the year, understand it's an infinite game. You are only discouraged when you look at it with a finite mindset.

[34:32]

Instead, if you see your weight loss, or your desire to get in shape, or your desire to have a consistent spiritual practice, or your desire to improve your relationships, as an infinite game that you always get to pursue ,where there's an endless opportunity for growth and learning, then you can reframe your mindset and choose the thoughts that will fuel continued action and progress instead of stopping and blocking you

Okay, that's what I have for you today. It didn't turn out like I thought it was going through either. I hope you got something out of it. I want you to remember that you are playing an infinite game in so many areas of your life and when you are discouraged or frustrated it is because you are viewing your progress in terms of a finite mindset. You only have to change the way you are thinking about your work in life to feel better and get the traction you want.

When you think about your progress, ask yourself, “How does thinking this way make me feel? Will that fuel me to act in the way I want?” And then when you evaluate your life and all your efforts, ask

yourself, “What if the accomplishment isn't why I'm playing at all? What if becoming is what counts and not the arriving?” Who are you becoming because you're staying in the game, because you keep playing?

When you can redirect your brain from a finite mindset, that keeps score and says that you're never enough, and redirect it to an infinite mindset that notices growth and becoming, then you can truly see all the ways you are making incredible progress in your life...and that, my friends, is 100% awesome. I love you for listening and I'll see you next week!