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*You Can't Get Pinned When You're on Top*

## **Wrestling with Greatness Podcast**

Action Plan Episode #35

Mike Novogratz

**Mike Novogratz is the recently retired principal and director of Fortress Investment Group and was ranked by as a billionaire by Forbes in 2007 and 2008. Prior to Fortress, he was a partner at Goldman Sachs for 11 years. He's a graduate of Princeton University where he was captain of the wrestling team and a 2x NCAA qualifier. He's the chair of Beat the Streets Wrestling, one of the best things going for the sport of wrestling, in my opinion. He's a supporter of USA Wrestling and was named the 2010 USA Wrestling Man of the Year and he's been inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.**

**On losing:** "It's those losses that set you back. It doesn't mean you're a worse person. It doesn't mean you're stupider. It means you lost and you should figure out why."

**On winning:** "The guys who win at my business on Wall Street have an unbelievable discipline. They're at their desk at 6 o'clock every morning doing the same thing the same way. You look at the great athletes they don't miss the workouts. They don't eat the crap food."

**About habits:** "Everyone on this planet is in a wrestling match with their habits. Good habits are tough to form and bad habits are tough to break."

**What Mike learned after two weeks at a Wisdom School in India after "having been retired" from Fortress:** "I kept wanting to blame other people but they forced me to look at it like, 'dude, you made these decisions yourself.'"

**More from the Wisdom School:**

"First you have to realize that suffering is not useful. You got what you earned. And when you understand that it's liberating. When you understand 'yep, those were my decisions and yep, I was boss."

The second thing they were wonderful at was helping me realize that all of this suffering, it's all about you. It's not helping your children. It's not helping your ex employees or future employees. It's not helping the kids at Beat the Streets. All of your whining is about you and your ego and dude, get over it. Get over the suffering because it doesn't serve you."

**On having a clear vision for your life:** "You have to have a mission statement. What these guys in India (the Wisdom School) taught me is that your first one has to be internal. The second one is external. What am I going to accomplish?"

**About meditation:** "Everybody should meditate for 15 min a day. Every bit of science tells you that it's good for you in so many ways. It will improve your health. It will improve your sex life. It will improve your longevity. It will improve your memory. You have less chance of getting Alzheimer's."

**How to mediate:** "Give yourself 15-20 min. You sit down and breath deeply and let your thoughts come and go. [...] You try to follow your breath in and follow your breath out. [...] On the in breath you say "I AM" and on the out breath you say 'joy' or 'bliss' and you start to feel better. You start to feel high and you say 'that is weird!' You start to feel better. You really do. But there's no wrong way to mediate."

*More on meditation at 28:45 in the podcast.*

**What would you tell your 20 yr old self?** "Try to understand yourself at a younger age. To try to understand what makes you tick."

### **Books:**

On how to be a Wall Streeter:

*Reminiscence of a Stock Operator* by Edward Lefevre

On personal growth:

*The Road Less Traveled* by M. Scott Peck

*Further Along the Road Less Traveled* by M. Scott Peck

*The Road Less Traveled and Beyond* by M. Scott Peck

Note: Mike also discussed how he wished he'd have gotten into personal development books earlier in his life so the personal development genre, in general, appeals to him.

**Websites:**

Beat the Streets Wrestling (NY): <http://btsny.org/>

Nate Parker's movie Nat Turner Rebellion: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt4196450/>

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