



JIM HARSHAW, JR.

Clarity of Action. Peace of Mind.

Success for the Athletic-Minded Man Podcast

Action Plan Episode #526

James Laughlin

Most guys think high performance comes from pushing harder. James Laughlin makes the case that it starts somewhere else.

In this episode of "Success for the Athletic-Minded Man," I sit down with James Laughlin, author of "Habits of High Performers" and a coach who has worked with the All Blacks, world champions, top CEOs, and even national leaders.

James brings a refreshing perspective on what it actually takes to perform at a high level without burning yourself out.

He shares why going alcohol-free changed everything for him, from his energy and focus to the way he shows up as a husband, father, and coach.

We talk about the connection between hormones and performance, why sleep and meditation matter more than most men realize, and how clarity drives better decisions.

He also explains why top performers still rely on coaches, and how failure can become one of your greatest tools for growth if you know how to process it the right way.

If you've been working hard but still feel stuck or stretched thin, this episode will challenge your assumptions and give you practical tools you can use right away. No fluff. No vague pep talk. Just action you can take today to stop spinning and start producing. Listen now.

Top Quotes From This Episode

"I believe high performance is achieved through habits."

"Sleep is everything."

"If you won't invest in yourself, why would anybody else invest in you?"

Show Notes

This episode touches on the following key topics and ideas:

- **[Share this episode! \(1:25\)](#)**: Share the podcast on social media by tagging me and using the hashtag #SAMpod:
 - **YouTube:** [@jimharshaw1](#)
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 - **LinkedIn:** [Jim Harshaw, Jr.](#)
- **Why James went alcohol free (1:43)**: James stopped drinking to test whether he could navigate big life moments and perform consistently without alcohol.
- **Common myths about high performance (5:59)**: People think it is either genetic or about constant hustle, neither is true in my experience. Focus on durable habits and sustainable rhythms, not heroics, and ask which single habit you can keep for years rather than weeks.
- **Radical clarity, not vague ambition (07:01)**: High performers know exactly what they want, why they want it, and what they will accept in terms of sacrifice. If you are vague, stop spending money or time on coaching until you can answer those three questions in writing.
- **Productive Pause (9:00)**: Build a non-negotiable 30-minute daily block with phone off, no podcasts, and a notebook with 4 to 5 power questions like, "What went well?" and "What needs my attention?" Schedule it as a meeting with yourself and protect it the way you would a client pitch.
- **Radical obsession and hunger (12:45)**: The best performers are ruthlessly focused on one outcome and driven from the inside, not by status. Pick one narrow outcome to pursue, write your reason for it in one sentence, then list three small daily behaviors that feed that hunger.

- **Passion versus purpose (16:37):** Passion is what lights you up, purpose is who benefits from it. If you want more staying power, map your project to someone else's gain and write that beneficiary into your plan.
- **Hormones and neurotransmitters matter (18:25):** Motivation fails if your dopamine, serotonin, noradrenaline, and endorphins are off. Start with three low-cost tests: improve sleep, add two short daily meditations, and fix one dietary habit for 30 days, then track mood and energy.
- **Meditation as engine cooling (20:58):** Short, twice daily meditations for five to ten minutes can rebalance stress hormones and improve testosterone and focus. Try a 10-minute session before dinner for a week and compare your next-day sleep and energy scores.
- **Sleep as the performance multiplier (21:49):** If you sleep well, everything else improves, from decision-making to relationships. Use consistent pillows and routines, prioritize a minimum of deep sleep, and measure it for two weeks to identify one fix.
- **"Take Your Meds" monthly check (22:40):** Rate meditation, exercise, diet, and sleep one to five once a month and then focus only on the lowest score for the next 30 days. Narrowed focus produces faster change than trying to improve everything at once.
- **Why the best still get coaches (24:47):** World-class performers have coaches because success leaves clues and outside perspective shortens the path. If you want a faster, straighter path, get one coach who can hold you accountable on the thing that matters most now.
- **Failure is data, not identity (29:30):** Failure only helps when you extract lessons and change behavior, otherwise it becomes self-beating. After a setback, write answers to these four questions: What happened? What was my role? What did I learn? What will I do differently next time.

List of Resources Mentioned in the Episode

["Habits of High Performers"](#) by James Laughlin

FREE copy of the Personal Leadership Planner: <https://www.jilaughlin.com/planner>

["The Shortcut: The Fastest Way to Achieve Your Goals"](#) by Ruben Gonzalez

Other Episodes Referenced

[#505 Alcohol Is Killing Your ROI: The Science Behind How One Drink Costs You \\$684 with James Swanwick](#)

Guest Website and Social

James Laughlin

[Website](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

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Want to consider executive life coaching? Claim a spot on Jim's calendar for your free one-time clarity call: JimHarshawJr.com/APPLY

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