



REVEAL YOUR PATH

Success for the Athletic-Minded Man Podcast

Action Plan Episode #534

Bruce Babashan

Your kid asks you a hard question at dinner, and you don't know what to say. Your boss puts you on the spot in a meeting. You're mid-negotiation, and you can feel the deal slipping.

In all of these familiar moments, you've got seconds, not minutes, to get it right.

Bruce Babashan has spent almost 30 years training fighters at every level, including professional world and international champions, Olympians, and Golden Gloves champions. He's also the founder and CEO of The Good Fight, a nonprofit that teaches courage, character, and accountability through boxing.

And between every one of those rounds, Bruce has sixty seconds to say the one thing that actually helps his fighter, and that's exactly the skill he unpacks in this "Success for the Athletic-Minded Man" episode.

Bruce and I talk about what happens in those short, high-pressure windows: your kid's question, the boardroom moment, the fight that's slipping away. He breaks it down into four steps: staying aware of what's actually happening around you, keeping your emotions in check, thinking clearly under pressure, and saying what needs to be said without overexplaining.

He also tells the story of standing in front of a room full of scientists, admitting he had no idea what half their industry jargon meant, and getting the deal anyway because he trusted his instincts over the data. And he talks about a coach who froze mid-fight and couldn't get a word out to his own athlete.

Most guys assume they'd handle pressure just fine. Bruce has watched plenty of sharp, capable people prove themselves wrong the moment it actually mattered.

If you've got a tough conversation coming up, a decision you keep putting off, or you just want to stop freezing when things get intense, this episode gives you a way to think about it differently. Listen now.

Top Quotes From This Episode

"What you do before crunch time will determine what you do in crunch time."

"You have to have a set of principles to fall back on. Otherwise you're just going to cross your fingers and hope, and that's not a way to make a decision."

"If you don't spend the time becoming aware of yourself, and then aware of your environment, you're a slave to your emotions."

Show Notes

This episode touches on the following key topics and ideas:

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- **What "crunch time" looks like (3:00)**: Crunch time is those short windows where a single decision changes outcomes, like a timeout in a game or the 60 seconds between boxing rounds. When you treat these moments as predictable situations, not chaos, you can build simple habits that let you think straight under pressure.
- **Why this framework matters to leaders, fathers, entrepreneurs (8:58)**: Leaders rarely get perfect data or time, they get moments that affect many people, so a simple decision process beats improvisation. Use short decision rules so you do not make high-stakes calls based on stress or ego.
- **Common mistakes in crunch moments (14:21)**: People either dump too much information or hide behind analytics, neither helps. Reduce clutter by deciding beforehand which two inputs matter most and refuse to be dragged into the noise.

Order of Operations to Manage High-pressure Moments

- **Awareness (22:00):** Awareness is more than noticing your heart rate, it is reading the room, the other person, and your own patterns without getting hijacked. Build that muscle by doing short debriefs after every difficult conversation: what did I feel, what did the other person show, what would I change?
- **Control (24:12):** Regulate your state with rehearsed micro-routines, like a two-breath reset, a posture anchor, or a prepared opening line. Practice those routines until they are reflexive so your voice and presence stay steady even when your pulse spikes.
- **Clarity (29:16):** Create a short playbook of decision principles you can default to, for example “players not plays” or “safety first, upside second.” Write 3 to 5 rules, rehearse them in low-stakes settings, then apply them in crunch moments so you eliminate guesswork.
- **Communication (30:04):** Deliver one idea, one emotion, and one ask. Trim verbal clutter by scripting 10-second, 30-second, and 60-second versions of the messages you use most, then practice them out loud.
- **Use decision principles like elite coaches (30:47):** Coaches use play sheets and principle-based calls so they can adapt when the plan fails. Create your own play sheet for common business and family scenarios, then map 2 or 3 fallback choices tied to your values.
- **What to practice daily so crunch time works (37:51):** Track how stress affects your day, practice calming routines, sharpen your critical thinking, and pare down how you communicate. Small daily habits create the muscle memory you need to stay present when it counts.

Guest Website and Social

Bruce Babashan

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