

Supermodels, Your Body, and Your Mind

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

I have recently moved into a condominium in Las Vegas and every single day I go down to the gym and exercise. The condo building itself is very large and the units themselves range in price from \$100,000 to upwards of \$5,000,000. One of the most exciting things about being in this condominium is that there is such a variety of people. It is unlike any other place I have ever been in the world. There are some people in the gym who seem to think they are better than everyone else; there are other people who are huge and whose bodies are covered in tattoos and faces are pierced.

Whether we are talking about my high school gym, the gym in college, or the gym in my new condominium, I have always noticed people who spend more time than everybody else in the gym working out. In fact, if you visit just about any gym, you will find people who spend time every single day perfecting their bodies and getting in the best shape possible. There are always these dedicated individuals who take fitness extremely seriously.

I think a lot of the reason that people take fitness so seriously - it is because they feel they get an immediate response from it. For example, if you work out for an hour on the treadmill, you are going to probably sweat and feel good after your run. Over time if you run enough, you will be more trim and fit. If you lift weights a few times a week, you are going to notice an improvement in your muscles and overall fitness.

I have known many men who, no matter where they go or what they do, are successful. At the same time, I have also known other people who always seem to be unsuccessful, with constant *bad luck*. In looking around any gym, I can tell you for certain that the cause of success cannot be purely attributed to being in great physical shape. Despite the work they do on their bodies, most of the fittest people you will find at the health club are not among the most successful people. All the exercise in the world is not going to make the average man successful unless his plan is to be a professional athlete. The difference between the most successful men and women out there is not physical, it is mental. It is the mind, not the body that creates the greatest difference between men. It is the mind, not the body, which overcomes obstacles and makes man rise to greatness. It is the mind, not the body, through which the greatest accomplishments come into being.

However, despite the fact that the mind is so important, it is often highly neglected. People will spend their lifetimes working out and exercising in the local gym but at the same time they will:

- continue working in jobs that they hate,
- live without the money they need to enjoy life with,
- live in parts of the world they do not want to live in,
- work for people they do not like,
- have unsatisfying relationships with people,
- be depressed, anxious, or unhappy,
- use drugs and alcohol and other substances to excess,
- find themselves in a permanent state of stress,
- commit crimes to satisfy their ego, and
- live without any sense of possibility

All of these problems have solutions, which originate from within the mind, not the body. The mind sets us up to either experience happiness or unhappiness in our lives and our careers. The mind is at the center of human experience.

As I write this, I cannot help but think of the world I see around me. I live in Los Angeles a lot of the time and in Los Angeles, appearances are a big deal. So many women get plastic surgery, and people are always trying to look their best. Fitness and appearances are emphasized much more in Los Angeles than in other areas of the country. However, despite the importance of appearances, the mind is what ultimately controls the results that we achieve.

I have been in the real estate business in one form or another since 1997 and one of the businesses I have started within the past few years, involves the rental of ultra expensive beachfront property in Malibu, California. I used to have a very successful business in the student loan industry and for various tax reasons I started putting money into this rental property at that time. I figured that beachfront property could never go down in value. Because this property is so expensive, the people who rent it are generally very famous and at the peak of their careers. I am amazed by how many celebrities and others I have had the opportunity to meet and interact with through this business. People have paid as much as \$15,000 a night to rent out some of this property.

About a year ago, I was renting one of these properties for \$7,500 a night to a very famous model. Before she arrived, she had a retinue of assistants and others come to the house for a couple of days to make sure it was just the way she liked it. While she was in the house, there were literally hundreds of paparazzi and others camped out trying to get pictures of her. Everything seemed to be working out just fine during her rental until about 12:00 a.m. on the third day. She called me and explained that she was extremely irate because there had been some food in the cupboards. Food is typically cleaned out of the cupboards between rentals but apparently these snacks had been overlooked by everyone, including the model's assistants.

My immediate reaction was that this phone call was insane. However, the more I thought about it, the more I realized that since this woman was a famous model, her entire identity had been shaped by her ability to stay thin and look a certain way. She had been very poor prior to being discovered, and when she was discovered, her entire life was changed and she became an international celebrity. Were she to gain weight or to become overweight, she feared she would lose everything. Despite the fact that the woman was carrying on about this, while she could easily have thrown it away, someone rushed

over and took the food out of the house. When the person arrived to remove the food, he also discovered a large bag of cocaine and marijuana in the house.

This famous model's entire life was about her body and appearance. Although she was exceedingly concerned about her body, she was probably not taking good care of her mind. Making a hysterical phone call like that at 12:00 midnight indicated to me that this woman was not managing her mind properly--and as it turns out, she was most likely strung out on some of the cocaine that was discovered in the house. People who are able to manage their appearances are in many cases unable to manage their minds.

For example, Gia Carangi is widely considered the first supermodel. She worked during the late 1970s and early 1980s. She was on the covers of numerous magazines and quickly became an international celebrity. However, Carangi became addicted to heroin and after a short while her career rapidly declined. Later, she became infected with AIDS and died at the age of 26:

On March 1, 1980, Carangi's agent, [Wilhelmina Cooper](#), died of [lung cancer](#). Devastated, Carangi started abusing drugs.^[10] Scavullo recalled a fashion shoot in the [Caribbean](#) when "She was crying, she couldn't find her drugs. I literally had to lay her down on her bed until she fell asleep." By 1980, Carangi began having violent temper tantrums, walking out of photo shoots, and even falling asleep in front of the camera. In the November 1980 issue of *Vogue*, Carangi's [track marks](#) from shooting [heroin](#) were visible even after [airbrushing](#).^[11] For three weeks, she was signed with [Eileen Ford](#), who soon dropped her.

Her attempt to quit drugs was shattered when she learned that her good friend and fashion photographer Chris von Wangenheim died in a car accident. According to the Stephen Fried book *Thing of Beauty*, Carangi locked herself in a bathroom for hours, shooting heroin.^[12] In the fall of 1981, she looked far different from the top model she once had been. However, she was still determined to make a comeback in the fashion industry. She contacted Monique Pillard (who was largely responsible for [Janice Dickinson's](#) career), who was hesitant to sign her.

In rehab, she told staff that she had done sexual favors for drug money and had been raped by a dealer. And she went home to her girlfriends crying.^[2]

Once heavily pursuing modeling again, Carangi received the harsh treatment she had been able to avoid last time. Nobody would book her. Desperate, she turned to Scavullo. She landed a [Cosmopolitan](#) cover, a gift from Scavullo.^[2] Shot in the winter of 1982, it would be her last cover.^[2]

Carangi was diagnosed with AIDS, which was a newly recognized disease at the time. As her condition worsened, she was transferred to Philadelphia's [Hahnemann University Hospital](#). Her mother stayed with her day and night, allowing virtually no visitors.^[13]

On November 18, 1986 at 10 a.m., Carangi died of AIDS-related complications. She was 26 years old.^[14] Her closed-casket funeral (recommended by the funeral director due to the ravages of AIDS) was held on November 21 at a small funeral home in Philadelphia. Nobody from the fashion world attended.^[2] However, weeks later, Scavullo sent a [Mass](#) card when he heard the news.

Cindy Crawford is widely thought of as the one who replaced Gia Carangi after her death. Crawford was known as "Baby Gia" for her resemblance to Carangi. What was so appealing about Crawford is that she had the look of Carangi but without the drama or drugs. Crawford had been the valedictorian of her high school, and won an academic scholarship to Northwestern University to pursue the study of chemical engineering. A large part of Crawford's appeal was her ability to control her mind and to be predictable. People liked Crawford and enjoyed working with her because she was not out of control like Carangi was.

Even in a career that is all about physical appearances, like modeling, the ability to control one's mind is still incredibly important. The success of Crawford, according to most accounts, had to do with her ability to control her own mind, and to act with mental stability. The failure of Carangi, in contrast, had to do with her inability to control her own mind. Carangi's unstable mental state led to a series of bad choices, which eventually destroyed her once hopeful career.

You need to pay attention to your mind and how you operate it. Just as people pay attention to their bodies, image, and so forth to get the results that they want, so you too should pay attention to your mind in order to obtain the desired results. Your mind in a very real sense controls everything that is happening around you.

When you look at conflicts and wars, they generally arise as a result of how different people are running their minds. When you see people who get to great positions of power, they are generally there due to how they are running their minds. When you see people who are peaceful and happy, this is also generally related to how they are running their minds.

My point is not to tell you how to run your mind. What I do know, however, is that successfully running your mind is going to lead to your success. If you were to spend 30 minutes a day working on your mind (as many people do exercising), you would find yourself becoming more and more successful. Every experience you have in your life is a result of the attitudes you hold in your mind. Look around you. Where you are right now and the conditions you find yourself in, are all a result of what you are doing with your mind. The mind needs to be run and organized with priority.

For me personally, nothing is more important than managing my mind. I meditate at least once a day. I do my best to avoid and to not socialize with unhappy people. I try to avoid reading negative information or watching programming that is likely to upset me. I am constantly setting goals to improve my life and what I am doing. I always try to be positive and to move forward--not backward.

For example, I used to enjoy watching the television show *Intervention*, about drug addicts and so forth, undergoing surprise family interventions. However, I realized that this show was making me depressed when people would relapse or die during some of the various episodes. Watching this stuff did not do my mind any good.

Your mind is where the real results happen. Nothing is more important than taking care of your mind.

In the entertainment and modeling industry, appearances are everything but the mind ultimately still plays a huge role in the pursuit of success. Lawyers are judged by the quality of their arguments. Doctors are judged by what they do with their mind. Authors are judged by what they do with their mind. A monk may meditate for five hours a day. A nun or a priest may pray. Mormons do not drink coffee or use alcohol because the Founder of the religion, Joseph Smith, believed that these substances made people less spiritual and polluted the mind.

There are two components to how we succeed in the world: Physical and mental/spiritual. Both of these attributes are extremely important, and to a large extent they control our existence. Nevertheless, how we manage these two aspects of our lives will ultimately determine our ultimate success or failure in any undertaking.

In considering my life and the people I have worked with, one of the things that stands out most for me about people is how they use their minds.

THE LESSON

Successful people manage their minds well; your mindset is the prime determining factor in anything and everything that happens to you. Just as you strive to become and stay physically fit, you must ensure that your mind is stable and moving in the direction of your goals in order to achieve happiness.

Read More About Why It is Important to Look and Act Healthy and Take Care of Yourself:

- [Weight Loss, Security Guards, Hard Work and Your Career](#)
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