EPISODE 16 // SHOW NOTES

There Are No Shortcuts

A fifteen-minute pause in a noisy world — with Paul Cleworth

The Steady Path
Green Farm, Bendish
SG4 8JD
~15 minutes per episode

THE BIG IDEA

The shortcut is never offered as a shortcut — it's offered as being clever. The tip, the three-week diet, the executive invented in a lift. But the things that matter grow like a fig: they flower first, then fruit, then ripen, and they cannot be hurried. The work isn't what stands between you and the result. The work is the result.

"If he dies, he dies."
— Rocky IV, Sylvester Stallone, 1985
Drago, over Apollo Creed. One man trains in a laboratory; the other drags a sledge through the snow. You already know how it ends.

A man gets into a lift in a mailroom overall. By the top floor, he's an executive.
— The Secret of My Success, Herbert Ross, 1987
Brantley Foster's shortcut turns out to be two jobs and the fire stairs. The lift was never the secret.

EPISODE OVERVIEW

The Hook	Michael J. Fox, getting changed in a lift.
The Fig	Epictetus: I want a fig. It needs time.
Siberia	Two montages, cut together. Logs v laboratory.
The Trainer	Refrain from dainties. Give yourself up to him.
Gehrig	2,130 games. Seventeen healed fractures. No secret.
Demosthenes	Underground, half-shaved, pebbles in his mouth.
The Cost	The shortcut moves the work to later — with interest.
The Stairs	Brantley was doing two jobs all along.
The Practice	Name the shortcut. Find the fig. Go to Siberia.

WHY 'SHORTCUTS'?

In investing — compounding is a fig tree — nothing for years, then nearly everything. The people who do well let it flower first.

In family life — the three-week version doesn't exist. Put the trainers by the door, make the call, write the first of the hundred letters.

In business — Brantley's shortcut was a man doing two jobs. Look at what the overnight success actually does between the lifts.

In life — once you accept there was never going to be a secret, you can stop looking for the lift and start on the stairs.

"Where am I looking for the lift?"

— and what would the stairs look like? Then take the first flight. Just the first.

STOIC & OTHER WISDOM

"No great thing comes suddenly into being, any more than a cluster of grapes or a fig. If you say to me now, 'I want a fig', I shall answer that it needs time. Let it flower first, then put forth its fruit and then ripen."
EPICTETUS · DISCOURSES, BOOK 1, CHAPTER 15

"Refrain from dainties… in a word, you must give yourself up to your trainer as to a physician."
EPICTETUS · ENCHIRIDION, 29

"Virtue is not simply theoretical knowledge, but it is practical application as well, just like the arts of medicine and music."
MUSONIUS RUFUS · LECTURE 6, ON TRAINING

"The impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way."
MARCUS AURELIUS · MEDITATIONS, BOOK 5

REFERENCES THIS EPISODE

FILM

Rocky IV (1985) · The Secret of My Success (1987)

MUSIC

Donna Summer — She Works Hard for the Money (1983) · Phil Collins — You Can't Hurry Love (1982)

BOOKS & THINKERS

Discipline Is Destiny — Ryan Holiday · The Obstacle Is the Way — Ryan Holiday · Discourses, 1.15 — Epictetus · Enchiridion — Epictetus · Lecture 6 — Musonius Rufus

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YouTube
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Apple Podcasts
Amazon Music
Audible

THE STEADY PATH PRINCIPLE

Name the shortcut. Find the fig tree. Go to Siberia.

THIS EPISODE'S REFLECTION QUESTION

"Where am I looking for the lift — and what would the stairs look like?"

Nobody wrote a hit called She Found a Clever Way Round It. Take the first flight — just the first.

COMING UP — EPISODE 17

The Serious Business of Laughing

Something lighter — and more serious than it sounds.

Why laughing might be the most useful thing you do all week.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU **The shortcut doesn't save you the work. It moves it to later — and adds interest.**

Slow down. Think clearly. Keep walking your steady path.

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