



MARK BELL

Powerlifting Mogul

BY ZACH EVEN-ESH
PHOTOS BY BSN

ZACH EVEN-ESH: Lots of people see you as a successful guy, but don't know much about your past. They see the Sling Shot, Super Training, Power magazine, Mark Bell's PowerCast, The Power Project, the sponsorship from bodybuilding.com and BSN, the Reebok shoe deal, etc. But you have a past, and you don't talk much about it.

I remember seeing you on the first Westside Barbell VHS tape on special strengths. I also saw you on MTV where John Cena, yourself and a few other guys were auditioning for a pro wrestling gig. Talk to us about your past, the failures, the obstacles and the things that fired you up to become the man you are today.

MARK BELL: Mr. Evil-ish, you are quite the stalker! I wish I could say I cared about your "career" as much as you care about mine. My past is my past and I can't talk about it too much due to several legal issues (the cops never did find the body of the guy that kicked my football into the woods). Anyway, I can talk a wee bit about a thing or two.

I have had the chance to rub elbows with some very high-level people. My brothers and I were a big influence on bringing John Cena into pro wrestling, and my brother Maddog actually helped coach him for awhile. It was clear John was a "somebody" when we first met him. However, this didn't mean that he didn't have to work hard. John is a workaholic and perfectionist. When I first met him he was 250 to 260 lbs. and probably 6- to 8-percent body fat. The dude looked insane, and my brothers and I knew he'd blow the doors off the wrestling industry. Well, after eating crap, getting underpaid and being hated on by many, John got his chance on TV with the WWE. He worked so hard to get to that moment, there was no way he'd fail. Every rep, of every set from the time John was a kid, every grueling wrestling workout, every bump and all the dieting and prep that went into making John who he was led to that moment against Kurt Angle. When John was put the ultimate test, he aced it. Watch the match, look it up — the pace that they go at is insane! It wouldn't have went that perfectly with anyone else in the world, and it's because John Cena is a man with no quit in him, and a work ethic that most just can't understand. Those are the kinds of things that fire me up!



The other great thing about pro wrestling is that I rubbed elbows with many low-level people, too. I knew I didn't want to follow the paths they did. Wrestling helped me grow up and become more mature. You see some "cray cray" stuff in pro wrestling. Admittedly, I struggled with figuring out what I wanted to do and who I wanted to be. But my dad's advice always rings in my ear. He said the most important thing about knowing who you are is knowing who you are not. That always made sense to me, and it can allow you to find your way without comparing yourself to people, which can sometimes be very dangerous and toxic.

I don't have many failures in my life because I am not a talker, I'm a doer. I seek out the best people who can help me achieve my goals.

When I was a kid I wanted to box, so I went to Kevin Rooney, the dude who trained Tyson! Rooney told me, "Kid, you have the power of a tank but you

need to run 2 miles in under 14 minutes or you're wasting your time." That meant I'd have to run before school because I wouldn't have time to do it after. So there I was at age 15, 240 lbs. running at 5:30 am with icicles hanging off my face!

When I wanted to wrestle, I went to the best: Jim Cornett. When I decided to leave wrestling and pursue my real passion of powerlifting, I went to the Yoda of the strength training, Jedi Master himself Louie Simmons, the owner of Westside Barbell. I always knew going to the best and surrounding myself with the best was the key to accelerated learning.

I also played a lot of sports as a kid and knew how to win, but I also knew how to handle losing. Learning how to cope with things that you have no control over is a huge part of life, business and ultimately your own happiness.

EVEN-ESH: When you left Poughkeepsie and went to Ohio for wres-

ting, you wound up training at Westside Barbell. Did you travel to Ohio alone? How did you get the guts and the money to head out and move? Did you hold down a job while wrestling and training to make ends meet?

BELL: Dude, this is like 74 questions in one. I lived in Los Angeles before making the move to Columbus, Ohio. I met my wife Andee at Sharkeez in Hermosa Beach, near the chip room. We moved to Columbus so I could train at Westside and wrestle at the WWE training grounds in Louisville, Ken. We also had our son, Jake, in Columbus. At this point I didn't work; in fact, I haven't really done much in terms of working until I was about 32. The wife was the breadwinner. I guess her current addiction to Amazon Prime is kind of payback for that time period.

I am not suited for a 9-to-5 job, so I never bothered to try and hold one down. I also can't work for anyone. That's a big reason why I will not do

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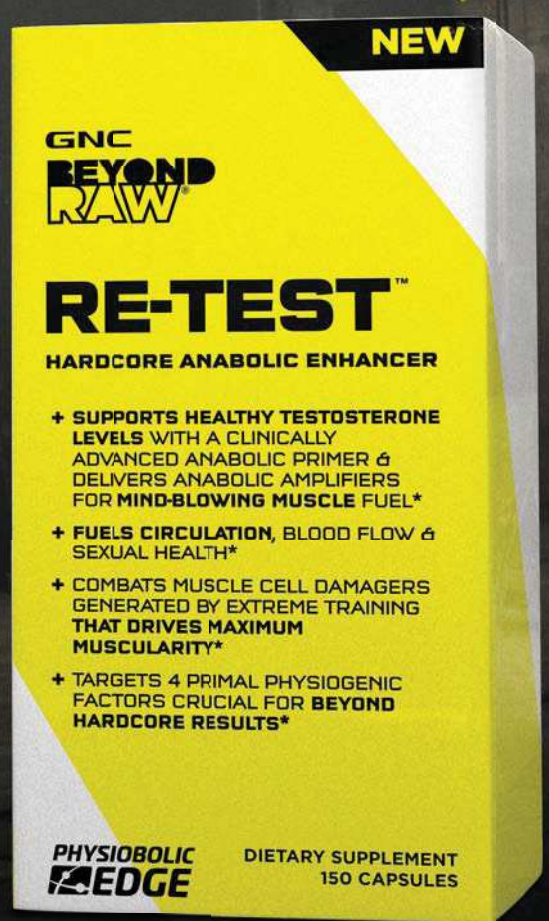
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personal training. Once that person pays you, you have to work for them. Besides, what will they pay you? In my opinion, and maybe it's a cocky one, but how much are they going to pay me? Whatever the amount, I don't feel it's really worth it. If I teach someone how to deadlift and they use that instruction the rest of their life or it helps them avoid getting back surgery, is that worth 50 bucks? Is that worth 100 bucks? In my opinion, if I take the time to explain a lift from top to bottom, then it would be worth thousands. At that rate I'd have no customers, so I just say screw it — let's just make it free.

I'm going way off topic, but this is my magazine. Super Training Gym is free now, as well. The reason I made Super Training free is that what I get in return out of Super Training is priceless, what I share with my team inside those walls is priceless. Super Training has made me a better lifter and a better person, and I have made huge strides as a coach. Super Training is also a home away from home — my team and I have a blast in there. It's like having a second family. A screwed-up second family that I never

wanted, but a family none the less.

EVEN-ESH: The first pics I saw of you were on the T Nation forums. You weighed about 210 lbs., you were shredded and built like a brick shit house. I was impressed, but a lot of people weren't. I know you had intentions of sharing your training and nutrition, and you were honest about using steroids, and they attacked you for it. I think that was one of the first times you experienced some hate from the Internet. Lots of coaches fear the haters and instead choose to remain out of the public eye. How did you deal with haters back then, and how do you do it today?

BELL: Haters are welcome. Then, now and always. I'm the real deal and I understand there are plenty of reasons to hate on me. I put myself out there a lot, I'm jacked, tan and handsome, and I love to have fun. What's there to love, really? Some get annoyed by my rapping or silly one-liners and take me the wrong way. People who want to hate on me, are jealous or try to copy me? Just grab a number and hop in line. These

fools trying to knock off my Sling Shot invention? Give me a break. None of these people have a creative bone in their body and they are simply not on my level, whether on the platform, in business or in life. Sometimes you have to spell things out for people like that. I'm a creator, a leader and an innovator who will not be held back, slowed down or stopped by anyone. The momentum of this freight train can't be derailed. You are either on board or you're tied to the tracks. Choo! Choo! Choo! I know I will be imitated but I will not be duplicated.

EVEN-ESH: In your older brother Chris Bell's first movie, *Bigger, Stronger, Faster*, you seemed very shy and almost insecure in front of the camera. I see a completely different person today when you make YouTube videos and speak in front of people. How and why were you able to improve your confidence?

BELL: Coach Zach, that's what makes you great, my man. You're able to see and identify things many cannot. I am shy and admittedly quite awkward in social settings. Or at least, I feel that way.



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As a kid I was so shy it was crippling at times. Speaking up about what I liked or didn't like was too nerve-racking for me, so I always chose the path of least resistance. I would just go with the flow and roll with the punches. However, I'm a dreamer who always went to the beat of his own drum. I have always known that you can't get behind the masses and follow otherwise all you know is what's directly in front of you. My path was not going to be dictated by a teacher or guidance counselor. I remember they wanted me to play an instrument or take French. I thought, Why complicate things with another language when I have so many issues reading and articulating English? They thought music would help broaden my horizons, and I knew that wasn't the answer. So I never did learn a second language, play an instrument or even read a book cover to cover. I didn't know much, but I felt I really knew what was right for me.

Just like we mention in the film *Bigger, Stronger, Faster*, the Bell brothers knew muscles were the answer. Building myself up in the gym gave me confidence in football, basketball (yes basketball), track, boxing, pro wrestling and lifting. Even though I was pretty good at lifting, it took many years of hard work before I realized I had something most didn't. For some unknown reason, lifting felt right to me. You can ask my mom; she will tell you stories of my brothers and me following the snow plow from our house to the gym on snow days. The gym is a huge part of my life, and a very large part of who I am. Powerlifting made me go from what felt like a super-zero to a superhero. It gave me the confidence to teach others and to eventually stand in front of the masses and become the "People's Coach." Powerlifting, to me, is more than just lifting to become big and strong. It's a test of intestinal fortitude and a challenge

issued to every fiber of your being right down to your bones. Powerlifting became "empowered lifting," which helped build my body and my brain.

I have become a lot more confident and I think much differently than I did back then. I invent things people didn't know they needed until I made them. Taking public speaking in school was my most feared thing, and that is why in the Power Project (my YouTube channel: [Youtube.com/Supertraining06](https://www.youtube.com/Supertraining06)), I mention that you should "embrace your fears and follow through with your dreams."

EVEN-ESH: Louie Simmons was a big influence on you, and I know you and Jesse were helping to run the CrossFit powerlifting courses. You guys were kicking ass, but like many partnerships there are bumps and obstacles at times. You were removed from this position, but you didn't let it affect you. How do you turn obstacles or setbacks into a

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EVEN-ESH: You've got two kids, run a magazine, create various Sling Shot products and are in the best shape of your life. You seem to be climbing higher in all areas of your life all at the same time. Who or what is your motivation to succeed? What does a typical day look like for Mark Bell?

BELL: Like everyone, some days are more hectic than others. The more things I have going on at once, the better. It fuels my ADD. Things get a little tough for Andee and I when we are trying to get Power to print, but in general I have a cushy lifestyle of just eating, training, pooping, sleeping and repeating. I'm privileged and blessed to have what I what I have and I do not consider it work. You will never hear me say, "Oh, I can't do it, I have to go to work." My wife takes care of all the hard stuff. I've always admired firemen, police officers, doctors and the military. I certainly would never be able to do any of those jobs, and I'm thankful we have people that do them and do them well. I'm blown away with the work my mom and dad did to raise my brothers and me. My dad went to the same job for 30 years wearing a suit and tie. Who the heck could do that? And why would anyone do that? I consider that a huge accomplishment, bigger than what I do. If I can fill my dad's size 8 shoes with my size 13s, my life would be complete. He's my hero!

To pick the hardest part of my day would end in a tie between getting my socks and shoes on and figuring out how much time I'm going to spend pooping that day. Both of those tasks consume way too much of my time!

EVEN-ESH: Your oldest brother passed away a few years ago and I recall a video where you stated how you harness your anger and emotions to drive you to create new products like the Sling Shot. How has your brother's passing changed you as a person?

BELL: Death is a part of life. My brother passing was a real kick in the nuts. I think part of me was always worried about my brother. When he passed, my mind seemed to kick into

positive opportunity, from a personal and business perspective?

BELL: "The hardest part of owning your own business is minding your own." I must keep the blinders on and my eye on the prize. I have a very full picture of where all this leads, and anything that doesn't appear in that picture has become insignificant to me. That isn't easy to do, but that's what needed to happen. All I can do is be good to those who are good to me, nothing more and nothing less. Re-read that line: Be good to those who are good to you and don't waste your time and energy on anything

else. Nearly impossible to do, but great words to stand by and it's advice that would probably help you to live to be 150 years old.

To get to your question more directly, what came from those seminars is the Reebok CrossFit Lite TR, a.k.a. the Reebok powerlifting shoe, and a relationship with a multi-billion dollar company. The shoe has some strong legs behind it and it will have a long life, but the things I learn on a daily basis with Reebok will live with me forever. Knowledge is power, and I just keep getting stronger. I feel like Obi-Wan when he told Vader, "Strike me down

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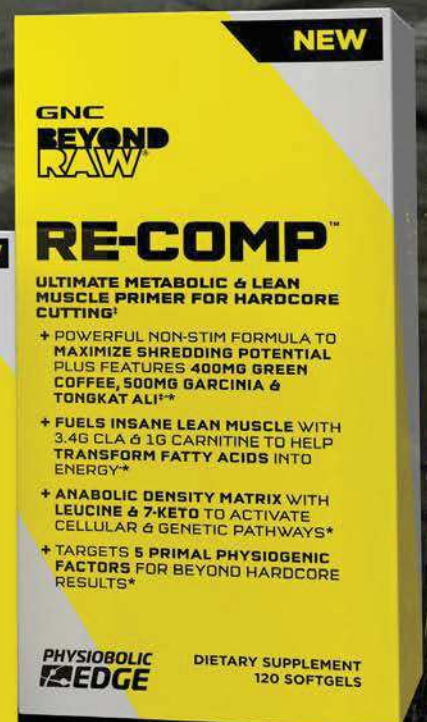
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overdrive and I started thinking more clearly, with more focus and purpose. I'm not really sure how or why it worked out that way, but that's what happened. I would like to share with everyone that my brother was bi-polar and he suffered to find self-worth. This was impossible for me to understand because my brother was one of my heroes. I remember seeing him smash home runs, run people over on the football field and do many other great things, which normally included kicking someone's ass in spectacular fashion. My brother was extremely popular and loved by many, and he had a lot of love in his heart for everyone except himself. I will always openly talk about my brother in hopes that it can help others understand the complicated struggle of someone who is addicted to drugs. It's easy to sit back and criticize people who have problems with drugs and alcohol. God knows addiction and mental illness isn't pretty. But you must realize it can happen to just about anyone. I grew up in the same house as my brother, with the same amazing parents that he had. Do not

look down on these people — they feel bad enough about themselves already. As hard as it may be, I encourage all of you who have friends or family struggling with drug addiction or mental illness to reach out to them. Maybe there is something you can do to help. They may be mad and refuse the help, but they also might be dying for someone to stick their hand out. Just remember, you cannot apply logic to people who are not logical, and it's likely that you may get hurt. Do your best with them and try to be as positive as possible. Your time with them may be cut short, or you may be able to save a life!

After my bro passed, it really drove the point home to me to be a doer and not a talker and a dreamer. I'm going to live my dreams while I'm awake, but most will take their dreams to their wake. Forget that. I'm going to do the things I want to do, buy what I want to buy, drive what I want to drive, live where I want to live and accept nothing but the best from myself and those around me.

EVEN-ESH: You get lots of questions and answer them via video on

YouTube. Is there a question you wish someone would ask but never have? What question is one that must be asked and answered by you?

BELL: With 1,300 videos on my YouTube.com/SuperTraining06 page, which I call the Power Project, there aren't too many questions I haven't covered. The ones I enjoy the most transcend the weight room because I always felt that lifting was the answer for me. Like I mentioned earlier, there was just something so right about it that made me feel good. Sometimes it's as simple as that. Do you feel better than you did the day before? Are you doing things to improve yourself? To me, lifting is very black-and-white in terms of results: are you getting stronger; are you getting more jacked; are you leaner?

I love accepting the role as the "People's Coach." That isn't a self-proclaimed nickname (neither is Smelly, by the way). The name was given to me by my friends at Bodybuilding.com. When it comes to the Power Project, that is more difficult — thinking up raps to slap and answering stuff with

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“advices” (as Arnold would say) on what you coined “The YouTubes” to people with questions on life, lifting, business, etc. What “advices” would you give to your children with regards to life and lifting?

BELL: That’s one hell of a closing question. Things with kids can be complex. Here is my take, though. I cannot teach my kids math, how to read, sing or dance, but I will teach them how to lift weights and the importance of health and fitness. They can do as they please with that information, but I will expose them to the trade I know and love.

My advice to them is the same advice my dad gave me: Part of knowing who you are is knowing who you are not. This is something that has really stuck with me over the years. It simplified things for me and made me understand that it’s okay to be me. I do not have to be a copycat; I can be creative and innovative. I do not need to repetitive to be competitive. This really opened up my head and helped me think of a million possibilities for myself and my family.

I realize that my kids, Jake and Quinn, are not me, and it’s likely they will have other interests. It’s my job to make sure they have the best opportunity to pursue those interests. I’m here to support, make sure they have fun and to make sure they are safe. I already share with them on a daily basis that life is a lot less complicated when you do what’s right and make good choices. Lastly I’ll tell them life is “more funnerest” when you don’t waste your time hating others. Do things that make you happy and have fun!

In closing, I would like to thank my brother, Christopher “Boar” Bell, for being a great mentor and positive influence on my life. He taught me as a teen that drinking and doing drugs isn’t for the cool kids, it’s actually for the losers with no goals, direction or discipline in their life. Lifting has and always has been my answer for everything and Boar, I can’t thank you enough for letting your little bro Smelly tag along with you to the gym and meets. Now that I’m 14 times stronger than you I’m sure you regret it, but thank you for showing me the ropes and exposing me to powerlifting. **PM**

energy and enthusiasm while being informative and entertaining isn’t as easy as it looks. I refer to it as “infotainment.” My goal is to get more than 100,000 subscribers by the end of the year, so if you’re not part of the Power Project Army now, then go subscribe to my [YouTube.com/supertraining06](https://www.youtube.com/supertraining06) page. Join the masses and enjoy the free content! I also like questions by people who wasted a lot of time and money going to school for marketing or business and now they’re asking me business questions! I always knew school was useless and now I have proof. Anyway, I love the Power Project Army and I feel we are just picking up steam. It’s my vision and goal to reach more and more people and to make the world a better place to lift.

EVEN-ESH: What are the big mistakes people make that hold back their ability to break through barriers and truly get strong? Is it a programming mistake or a mental mistake?

BELL: Brute Strength, form and mobility are all crucial aspects of becoming stronger. You can’t get stronger if you have shitty form, so to make progress, 50 percent of your time needs to be focused on form and the other 50 percent on getting stronger. I do this myself using the methods used by team Lilliebridge (heavy every other week and working on form in between). Many want to point to mobility being a huge problem and on some levels, I’d agree. Pain management and longevity are giant pieces of the pie, so if you want to be around for a long time you better be taking care of yourself and mobilizing via the info from my supple leopard friend, Kelly Starrett. Basically it comes down to form, strength and mobility. You can’t spend all your time focused on one aspect; you need to work on all three to get stronger. When it comes to common mistakes people make, it’s usually going too heavy too often.

EVEN-ESH: You’re always giving