

The Way to Greatness

In high school, he was the epitome of the “97-pound weakling” featured in comic-book advertisements of Charles Atlas in the early part of the 20th century.

He wore thick glasses, arch supports and a shoulder brace. His self-image was so poor and his concern about his appearance so great that he dropped out of school. His future did not look good.

Then one day he attended a health lecture. He was inspired by what he heard and became convinced that there was something he could do about his poor physical condition. He wanted his future to be better than his past, so he started to exercise for hours every day. He also dramatically changed his eating habits.

As a cumulative result of these actions, he slowly changed his appearance, his self-image and his future.

In 1936, he opened one of the first health studios in America because he wanted to share with others the benefits he was enjoying. He went door-to-door in Oakland, California, promoting his new exercise business. His reputation became international, and many thought of him as “Mr. Exercise.” He could out-perform men who were 50 years his junior. His feats of strength and endurance astonished folks.

His name? Jack LaLanne. He was a fitness, exercise and nutritional expert and motivational speaker who was called “the godfather of fitness” and the “first fitness superhero.”



LaLanne died of respiratory failure due to pneumonia at his home on Jan. 23, 2011. He was 96 years old. According to his family, he had been sick for a week, but refused to see a doctor. They added that he had been performing his daily workout routine the day before his death.

It is said that you don’t have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great. That observation applies regardless of your field of endeavor.

LaLanne said that his change of direction wasn’t easy, and it won’t be for you, either. But the future can be different from – and better than – your past. The choice is yours.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter