

The Business Leader's Fitness Gap

By Jean-Luc Boissonneault

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How Jimmy Stone changed his life

Jimmy was a hard worker; in fact he worked hard his whole life. He was an entrepreneur who was always chasing a dream. He had been through ups and downs but was quite successful in what he did. Rumor had it that his work ethic was impeccable and he was always ahead of the curve in his industry. People knew him and respected him. If people were to describe Jimmy in one word, it would be “persistent”. Jimmy was always nice to people yet everyone knew that he did have a tough business side to him.

Eight years ago, Jimmy came to see me where I was working in a fitness club. He had heard of me through one of his business contacts while at a lunch meeting. His friend Andre had just started working with me and had lost a few pounds.

The day I met Jimmy I knew I would never forget him. He was tall and bald with a round belly. He greeted me like I had known him my whole life. Dressed in nice business suit, he shook my hand with a firm handshake and a big smile. I thought to myself that Jimmy was a jolly man.

We sat down in my office and went over the questionnaire. I said “What’s your goal Jimmy? Why are you here?”

Jimmy: “I’m here because I went to lunch with Simon and I saw that he lost a few pounds and he kept telling me good things about you.”

JLB: "So, you're here to lose a few pounds?"

Jimmy: "Yep"

JLB: "So why do you want to lose a few pounds?"

Jimmy: "My suits are getting a little snug. I have a lot of money invested in my suits and I can't afford to replace them or get them altered again."

JLB: "Ok, so you want to lose weight because you don't want to pay to get your suits altered, is that right?"

Jimmy: "Well that and I feel it's unhealthy."

JLB: "Ah ha, I thought there would be a better reason than a suit."

Jimmy: "Oh yeah"

By this time I could see that Jimmy was starting to open up. He started to see that I was not interested about what was on the surface, like his suits having to be altered.

JLB: "Jimmy, if you were to keep on the path your heading, what would do you think will happen?"

Jimmy: "I'm not sure, really. I guess I would probably end up having a heart attack or something else"

JLB: "Doesn't that scare you?"

Jimmy: "It does, that's why I'm here, and I'm ready to work hard"

So Jimmy and I sat down for the next 30 minutes. He really opened up.

Jimmy had spent most of his life building his business. He had a 3 million dollar business in construction in the early nineties and he was dumping that money into properties and renting them out. When the recession hit him, trouble at home started. Jimmy's focus was on his business and he admits that he didn't pay much attention to what was going on at home at the time. He went through a divorce, his wife took half his assets and Jimmy felt depressed. From then on, Jimmy had to start climbing the mountain again. So he got back up and started over.

Imagine this. Jimmy's whole life had been to push hard and for the first time in his life, he was sitting beside me, in my office, willing to start taking care of Jimmy. I was not letting him go. Jimmy at this point had high blood pressure, borderline cholesterol and was borderline diabetic. He was very active as a teenager but had hardly done anything in over ten years. He had no injuries but I did notice he had bad posture from years of inactivity combined with looking down at people from his height.

We got to the second part of the questionnaire.

JLB: "Let's start with the most important part first. Tell me what you eat in a typical day."

Jimmy: "Well it varies."

JLB: "Ok, then tell me what you ate yesterday."

Jimmy: "Well I got up and had coffee, is coffee ok?"

JLB: "I'll let you know everything after Jimmy, just give me your day first."

Jimmy: "I only had a coffee yesterday because I didn't have time. I had a meeting at 9 am and I had to prepare, then after the meeting I stopped at Tim Horton's and got another coffee and a sandwich and a donut, oh yeah and an orange juice."

JLB: "Ok, what next?"

Jimmy: "Then I had to rush to the other end of town to deal with a problem and there was a vending machine there. I was starving so I had a bag of chips but it was small. But then I didn't eat until I got home."

JLB: "And what did you eat when you got home?"

Jimmy: "Well, we usually eat what my wife makes us. Usually it's pretty healthy like vegetables, meat and either rice or potatoes. Sometimes we have pasta, and usually once a week we will have pizza."

JLB: "And how's the ice cream before bed?"

Jimmy: "How did you know that? You're right, I do usually have ice cream later in the evenings or sometimes I will make myself a bowl of cereal and eat that while I watch TV."

JLB: "What about alcohol?"

Jimmy: "Well that's a big one for me, you see. Because of the business I'm in, there are often functions that I need to attend and there is always wine and I can't imagine not drinking, because they are boring enough as it is." Jimmy laughed

JLB: "One more section and it's an important one. On a scale of one to ten, how would you perceive your stress level compared to the average person?"

Jimmy: "Well the average person is pretty lazy but I would say I have a pretty stressful life between business and family. I would give myself a seven."

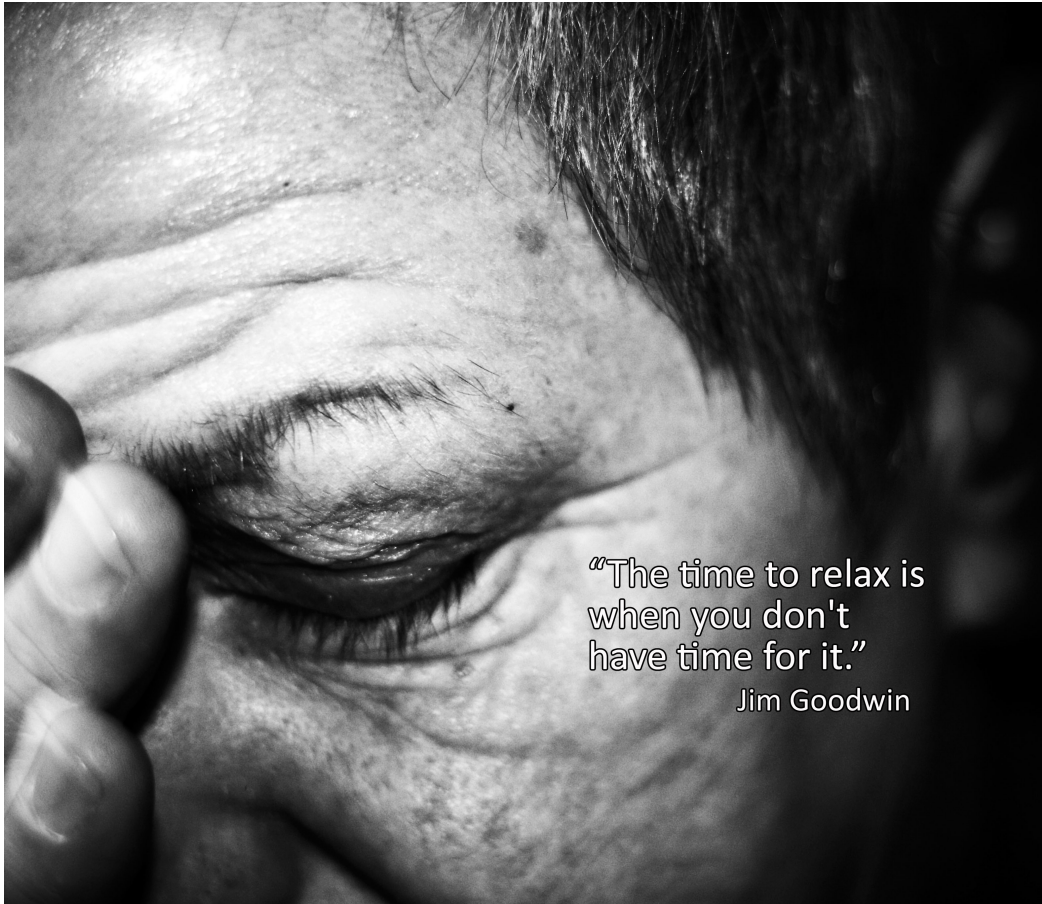
JLB: "And how many hours sleep do you get before midnight?"

Jimmy: "I go to bed around 12 or sometimes 11 and I get up at 6 am."

JLB: "Ok Jimmy that's all for today. I'll book you in for tomorrow and we can see what the next step to take is."

Jimmy: "Ok, perfect"

Jimmy said goodbye with a look of relief on his face, like he had said things he had wanted to say for a while. He just needed someone to listen to him. Not to talk about his business or the economy or the stock market, but about Jimmy and his life and how even though on the outside he seemed like the happiest guy alive, the reality was that he wasn't happy and his life was taking a toll on his health.



“The time to relax is
when you don't
have time for it.”

Jim Goodwin

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