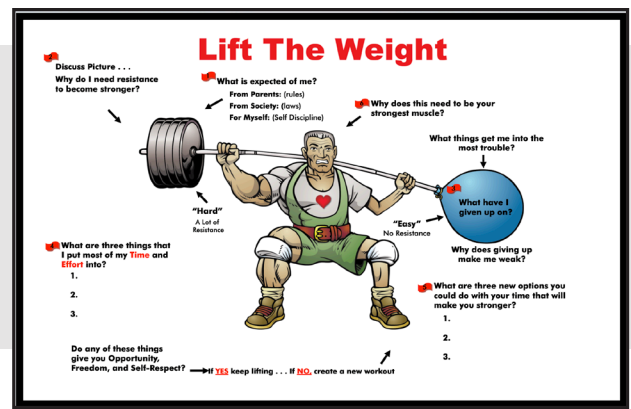


Spotlight Lesson: Responsibility & Expectations (Lfit the Weight)



Lesson Summary:

This lesson will introduce the Lift the Weight metaphor. You will use videos and activities to help teach this lesson.

Learning Objectives:

- I can explain how resistance in the form of rules and expectations, just as in weightlifting, will help me be strong.
- I can explain how making choices that break rules and expectations, negatively affects my future.
- I can explain how breaking rules and expectations is the easy thing to do.
- I can list things I enjoy doing or how I could spend my time that increases opportunities, freedom and self-respect.
- I can create my own 'workout' of activities that will positively impact my future.

Lesson Tools:

- Lesson plan PowerPoint deck (Windows)
- Lesson plan Keynote deck (Mac)
- Make sure the Skittles Commercial and Olympic Weightlifter Mishap videos in the Lesson Plan work and are cued ready to go. Practice sharing the video and stopping it at key moments.
- Read through and practice the Activity: Paper and the Book if you have never used it before.

Note: these resources can all be accessed on this lesson's webpage.

ATTENTION GETTER / Question of the Day

Ask:

“What is something in your life that feels restrictive or frustrating—but you know helps you improve or get better?”

Examples (if needed):

- Practice or training
- School expectations
- Rules at home

Instructions:

Have students turn and talk with the person next to them OR share out answers with the whole class. Encourage multiple responses

Transition to lesson:

“Most people naturally push against rules and expectations. But today we’re going to look at a different way of thinking about them—what if those things are actually what make you stronger?”

Framing the Visual Metaphor (Lift the Weight)

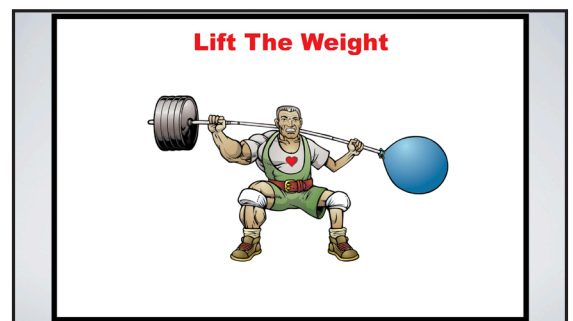
Say: “Today we’re going to talk about a visual metaphor called Lift the Weight.”

“Take a minute and look closely at this picture of the weightlifter.”

Pause. Let them look.

“Do you notice anything strange or different about it?”

Facilitator Notes (important) Do NOT explain yet
Let students describe what they see:
One side strong / one side weak
Heavy weight vs balloon
Imbalance

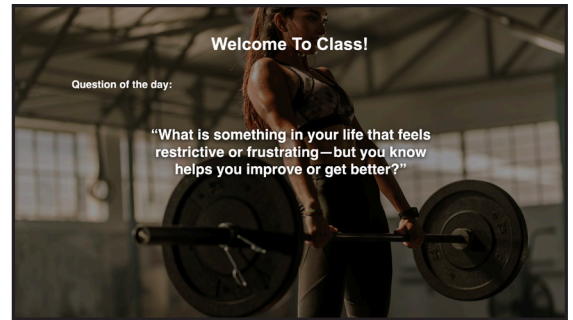


Let them do the work of noticing

After students respond say:

“Yeah... it’s like he’s split right down the middle... On one side, he’s lifting something heavy—and he’s strong... On the other side, he’s lifting something that weighs nothing—and he’s weak.”

Pause.



“That’s what we’re going to explore today.” **Frame the Lesson** (Key Line)

“We’re going to talk about some things that help us become stronger—and how other things, even if they seem easier or more fun, can actually limit our growth.”

Set the Lens for the Lesson

“As we go through this, see if you can look beyond the picture—and start to connect it to your life and your experiences.”

Transition to Activity

“Before we break this down more, let’s try a quick experiment.”

Learning Activity: Number Grid

Introduction:

This might seem like a simple challenge—but it’s really about how you handle structure, expectations, and effort in real life. Sometimes rules, systems, or guidelines can feel limiting, but they’re often the exact thing that helps you succeed faster and more effectively. In this activity, you’ll experience the difference between working without structure and working with it. Pay attention—this connects directly to how you approach school, goals, and challenges in your everyday life.

Details:

Activity Type: Object Lesson
Grades: 3–12
Group Size: Any
Time: 10–15 minutes
Space: Any

Materials:

1 number grid per student (see printable lesson resource)

Activity Instructions:

Round 1: No Structure
Pass out the number grid to each student face down. Instruct students: Do not touch the paper until told. Work silently and independently

Say: “When I say go, turn your paper over and count as many numbers as you can (starting with 1, 2, 3, 4...) you have 60

Activity: Number Grid

This might seem like a simple challenge—but it’s really about how you handle structure, expectations, and effort in real life. Sometimes rules, systems, or guidelines can feel limiting, but they’re often the exact thing that helps you succeed faster and more effectively.

In this activity, you’ll experience the difference between working without structure and working with it. Pay attention—this connects directly to how you approach school, goals, and challenges in your everyday life.

Instructions:

I’m going to show you a slide with some numbers on it. You will have 60 seconds to count as many numbers as you can in order starting with (1, 2, 3, 4...) You must go in order—you cannot skip ahead.

Ready?

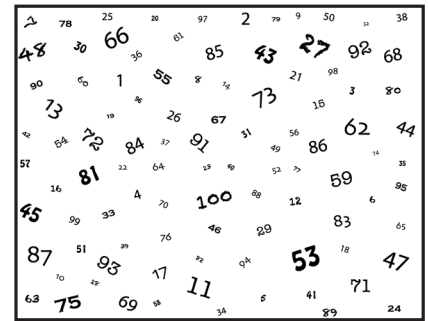
seconds You must go in order—you cannot skip ahead.”

Say: “Ready? Go!” and start a 60-second timer.

Observe as students search. Most students will struggle and only reach the 20s or so.

After time is up, have students stop and report how far they got

Say: “Even though you were working hard, nobody got all the numbers. But there is a way to make this much easier.”



Round 2: Add Structure (The “Guidelines”)

Walk students through folding their paper to create a grid:

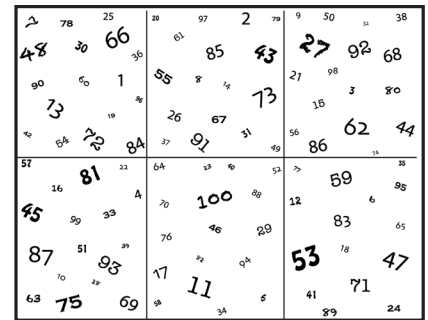
Fold your paper in half length wise (like a hot dog) → crease

Open and fold left side over about one-third → crease

Fold right side over to match → crease

Unfold to reveal a grid (you should now have 6 sections)

(Optional: trace fold lines with pencil for clarity)



Explain:

“These lines create a structure for your search. We are going to try this again and see if you can see how they can help you count faster.”

Repeat the 60-second challenge

Most students will dramatically improve. This is because they notice a pattern. Each consecutive number they count will be found in the following square and they rotate around in a clockwise direction as you count. It makes it easier to find the next number.

Processing the Experience:

- What made the first round frustrating or difficult?
- What changed in the second round that made it easier?
- How did the lines (structure) actually help you succeed faster?
- How is this similar to rules, routines, or expectations in real life?
- What is one ‘rule’ or structure in your life that actually helps you succeed—even if it feels restrictive?

Questions:

- What made the first round frustrating or difficult?
- What changed in the second round that made it easier?
- How did the lines (structure) actually help you succeed faster?
- How is this similar to rules, routines, or expectations in real life?
- What is one ‘rule’ or structure in your life that actually helps you succeed—even if it feels restrictive?

Key Takeaway (Optional Wrap-Up)

Structure, rules, and expectations aren’t there to hold you back—they’re there to guide you forward. Just like the lines in the grid helped you find success faster, the “weights” in your life—rules, routines, and responsibilities—help you build discipline, stay focused, and reach your goals more effectively.

Video Clips (Metaphor Examples)

Framing the Clips:

Say: “You’re about to watch two short clips. They’re kind of funny—but they actually show something really important about how we grow (or don’t grow) in life.”

“As you watch, I want you to pay attention to this question: What happens when you only train one side—and ignore the other?”

“Think about how this might connect to your life—your habits, your choices, and what you put effort into.”

Video Clips



You’re about to watch two short clips. They’re funny—but they actually show something really important about how we grow (or don’t grow) in life.

As you watch, I want you to pay attention to this question: What happens when you only train one side—and ignore the other?

Think about how this might connect to your life—your habits, your choices, and what you put effort into.

Video 1: (clip from the movie “The Lady in the Water”)

Play the video



Bridge Between the Two Videos

After the first clip (Lady in the Water), **say:**

“Alright... that’s a little weird, right? It’s like a real life example of our visual metaphor we just talked about “Lift the Weight.” Now let’s see another version of the same idea.”

Video 2: (clip from a funny Super Bowl commercial for Skittles)

Say: “That’s pretty funny! So let’s talk about both of these video clips for a minute.”



Processing Questions:

- What did you notice about the people in both videos?
- Why did they end up strong on only one side?
- What problems or limitations might that create for them?
- Both of these videos would be extreme examples but what are things people might focus on too much in life that get them out of balance?
- What are some things people avoid because they’re challenging—but might actually matter?
- What is one “weight” (rule, responsibility, or expectation) that would make you stronger if you committed to it?

Questions:

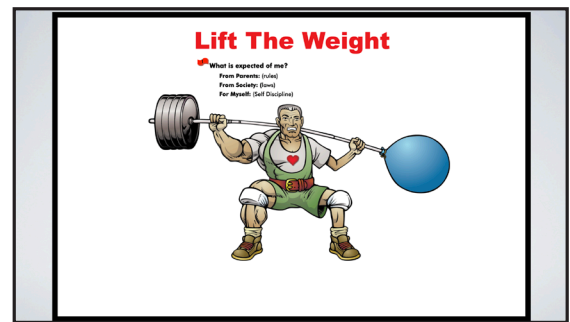
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- What is one “weight” (rule, responsibility, or expectation) that would make you stronger if you committed to it?

Processing the Metaphor: Lift the Weight

Discussion Point #1:

Ask: Why does lifting weights make us stronger?

Discuss the students' answers to the first question—why lifting weights makes us stronger. Explain that the weight pushes down on the muscle and the muscle grows stronger as it works to push the weight up.



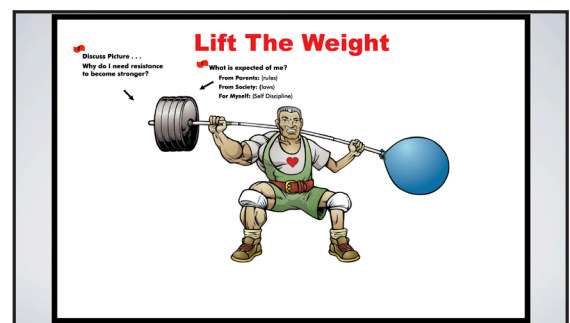
Then ask: Why do we need resistance to become stronger?

It takes effort and energy to work muscles and make them stronger. If muscles don't have resistance pushing on them, they become weaker. For example, when astronauts go into space, their muscles can become weaker because there is no gravity or resistance for the muscles to push against. Some people look at resistance (rules and laws) as being bad or difficult. Help the youth see that resistance only seems repressive; in reality, resistance is one of the best tools to becoming stronger. If needed,

Discussion Point #2:

Say: We have resistance in our lives as well, but not the same kind of physical resistance a weightlifter uses. We have resistance in the form of laws, rules, expectations we put on ourselves, etc. Let's name some of those.

Ask: What rules do you have at home or at school that don't like or can be frustrating to you? What laws and expectations in society do you feel are hard to obey or frustrating at times?"



They can write their answers down, write them as groups, or just discuss them as a class/group.

Ask: How do some of these rules and expectations that are hard make us stronger? Can you think of any examples in your own life of doing something hard and how it helped you to grow stronger or smarter or more capable?

(Note: As this discussion unfolds there may be some opposing opinions, follow the next section to direct that conversation.)

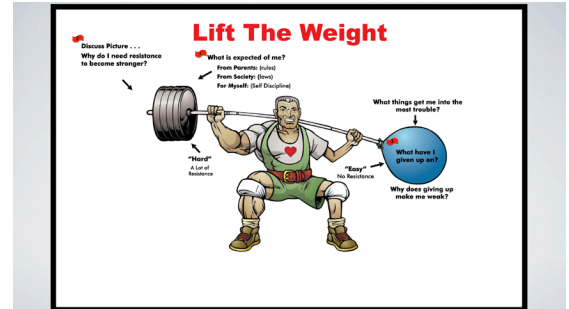
Discuss: It's common and pretty normal to feel anger and frustration when we fail to follow rules or meet expectations. These situations often lead to consequences we don't like. Sometimes we may feel that laws and rules take away some of our control and freedom to do what we want, and we could do fine without the restrictions. However, when we try to look at things with an open mind, we often see that responsibility and expectations are important for us to work well with others and doing hard things helps us to grow stronger. To help us have this perspective it's important to ask ourselves why following the rule or law will help, and then apply self-discipline and follow it. Once we decide that we are going to follow a rule, we use our self-discipline to do it.

Often as we put effort into doing the things that are expected of us, we realize that an "I can do it"

attitude is the key ingredient to lifting the weight. Emphasize that the way the youth look at rules and laws will determine whether they use them to help or as a reason to rebel. It is normal to rebel some, but when rebelling begins to hurt themselves or others, they will have to deal with the consequences (Note: this is a good spot to connect back to the easy fast track discussed in “The Reality Ride,” visual metaphor)

Discussion Point #3:

Say: The balloon represents the things we have given up on or the things we do that get us into trouble. It’s easy to skip school, not do our home work, be disrespectful in class, get in a fight with others etc. (list things that the balloon might represent)... Anybody can do those things!”



“It’s harder to do the opposite of those things, Being to class on time, doing your homework and turning it in when it’s due, being respectful to your teacher, getting along with others... Those like lifting that weight. it’s the tougher, harder thing to do but that is what makes us stronger and helps us grow. (like the weightlifter)

When we avoid laws and rules by breaking them or not follow or own prescribed workout or routine, we are avoiding lifting the weight.

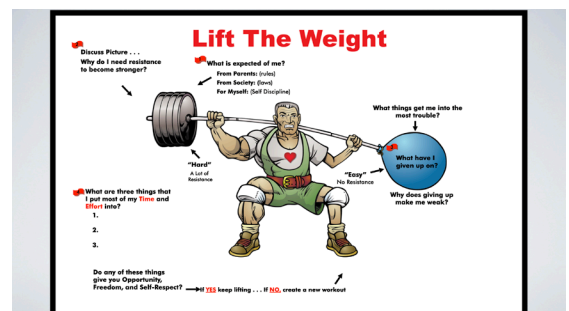
Discuss some of the consequences the students have experienced or seen others experience because of giving up and not following a rule or law. Warn the youth that giving up and lifting the balloon may seem appealing because they don’t have to endure the the sweat and work that comes from “lifting the weight,” They may be able to can get by for a while with breaking rules, but they are missing out on the opportunity to grow stronger like the weightlifter and they won’t have the strength to lift the weight when they need it the most.

If you have not done so already, point out how it is the “easy” thing to do, while lifting the weight is the “hard” thing to do. (again this is a good time to connect back to the “Easy Fast Track” and the “Harder But Worth It Track” on The Reality Ride visual metaphor)

Discussion Point #4:

Invite the students to list three things they tend to spend most of their time doing, outside of going to school and sleeping. After they have had some time to think about and write down those three items.

Ask them to evaluate if those three things are preparing them for the future by providing opportunity, freedom and self-respect! Have them share with partners or small groups their findings.



Explain that time and effort are usually used in one of two ways: towards breaking rules, or towards gaining self-discipline by following rules.

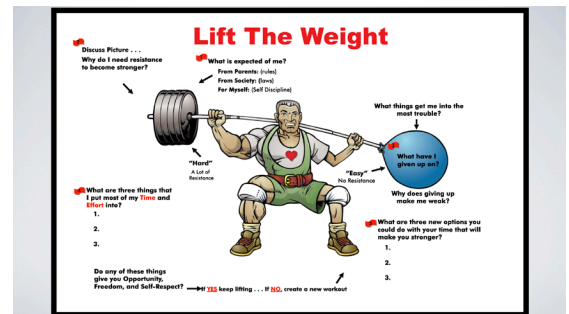
In reality, their energy, time, and effort are going somewhere, so they may as well put them into things that help them and others. The fastest way to get out of the loop (see Reality Ride) is to do something new or different.

Say: “Regardless of what your workout is right now, I’d like to brainstorm some other ideas you may want to try to improve your workout and help you become stronger in the future.”

Discussion Point #5:

Ask: What are three new things you could do with your time that will make you stronger?

Discuss with the students ways that they can improve the time they spend in their three main environments: home, school, and peers. This can look very different depending on how long the lesson has taken you up until now. If you have more time, divide the class into partners and have them help each other develop a list of things they could possibly do. If you have less time, have students individually reflect on what that could look like on their own in the class journal or on the metaphor itself.



If students are having a hard time brainstorming ideas, invite them to remember previous lessons when you have discussed passions and interests. Invite them to think about their strengths and talents. Ask them things they’ve done in the past that make them feel good or happy (but are also positive and don’t hurt themselves or others).

Discussion Point #6:

While students are brainstorming, point to Discussion Point #6 and **say:**

“We’ve talked a lot about working out our muscles, but it is important we remember which muscle is the most important. Why does this need to be your strongest muscle?”

Discuss the brain is where we decide to lift the weight or not to lift it. The brain is also extremely important because this is where our self-talk is processed.

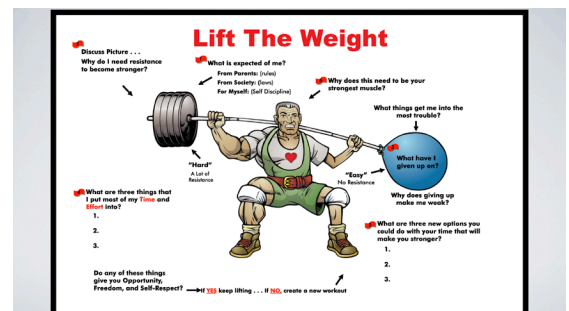
Here are some examples of self-talk:

“These rules and laws are stupid; I’m not going to follow them,”

or

“I am going to use these rules and laws to help me accomplish my goals.”

Self-talk can provide the needed motivation to lift the weight. Review with the youth what self-talk is and the importance of selecting positive self-talk.



Learning Activity: Follow Directions

Introduction:

This might look like a simple activity—but it’s actually about how you handle real-life situations every day. In life, rules, directions, and expectations can feel annoying or easy to ignore—but those moments are exactly where your choices matter most. The way you approach this activity will say a lot about how you deal with challenges, responsibility, and pressure in real life. Pay attention—you might learn something about yourself.

✚ Activity: Follow Directions

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Details:

Activity Type: Movement / Group
Grades: 3–12
Group Size: 1 or more
Time: 10–15 minutes
Space: Any

Materials:

- 1 “Follow Directions” worksheet for each student (printable resource in lesson)
- 1 pencil or pen for each student

Activity Instructions:

Say:

“I’m going to give you a short assignment. Your job is to follow the directions exactly as they are written.”

Pass out the worksheet and a pencil to each student
Emphasize: Work independently, Do not talk or ask for help during the activity, Follow the directions exactly as written

Allow students time to begin and observe what happens.
(Do not offer hints or clarification.)

After most students have finished (or are clearly off track), stop the activity.

Activity: Follow Directions

Instructions:

“I’m going to give you a short assignment. Your job is to follow the directions exactly as they are written.”

Important:

- Work independently (no helping each other)
- Do not talk or ask questions during the assignment
- Follow the directions as closely as possible

Activity: Follow Directions

Directions: Read the entire section before doing anything else. Do exactly as instructed. Under no circumstances are you to talk or ask questions. Do not to help your peers or your own peers. When you have finished, sit quietly and wait for the bell to ring.

- Name _____
1. Read every instruction before you do anything.
 2. Present an ID#, and your name.
 3. Write your name in the designated space provided, below the paragraph that starts with "Name _____".
 4. Circle the word "blue" in sentence three.
 5. Draw the word "blue" in the space left-hand corner of this page.
 6. Draw an "X" over the word "blue".
 7. Put a circle around each square.
 8. Draw a square in the top right-hand corner of this page.
 9. Write your name, write "Yes, yes, yes!"
 10. Put a circle around each word in sentence four.
 11. Draw a triangle around the word "blue" in sentence five.
 12. Put a circle around the word "blue" in sentence six.
 13. Draw a triangle around the word "blue" in sentence seven.
 14. Draw a square around the word "blue" in sentence eight.
 15. Draw the height of your left hand. "Yes!" in sentence number 9.
 16. Put a circle around the word "blue" in the space provided below.

17. Sit in the bottom-left corner of this page. Sit at the top-left.
18. Put a circle around your name. Put a square around the circle.
19. Write your name in the space provided.
20. Follow every instruction, no matter how small, and follow the instructions in sentence number nine to complete this task.

Processing the Experience:

- What was the most important direction—and how many people actually followed it?
- Why did so many people start without reading all the directions?
- In this activity, what was the “weight” (the hard thing), and what was the “balloon” (the easy choice)?
- How is this similar to rules and expectations in real life—at school, home, or with behavior?
- What is one “weight” in your life right now that you know would make you stronger if you followed through?

Questions:

- What was the most important direction—and how many people actually followed it?
- Why did so many people start without reading all the directions?
- In this activity, what was the “weight” (the hard thing), and what was the “balloon” (the easy choice)?
- How is this similar to rules and expectations in real life—at school, home, or with behavior?
- What is one “weight” in your life right now that you know would make you stronger if you followed through?

Key Takeaway (Optional Wrap-Up)

Rules and expectations aren’t there to make life harder—they’re there to make you stronger. When you slow down, follow directions, and do what’s expected—even when it’s not easy—you’re building discipline, trust, and real opportunities for your future.

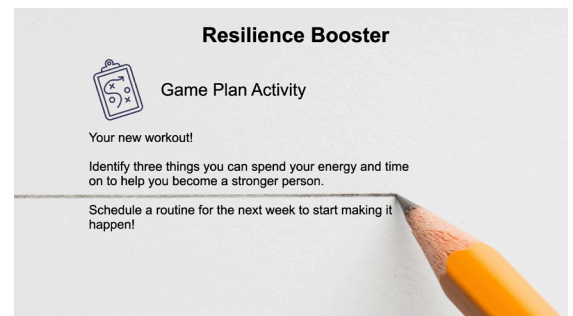
Resilience Booster:

Game Plan Activity - (Your New Workout)

Have students complete the game plan resilience booster on their own at the end of the lesson or as a homework assignment.

Your New Workout:

Identify 3 things you will focus on
Create a simple plan for the week
Commit to one “weight” they will practice lifting this week.

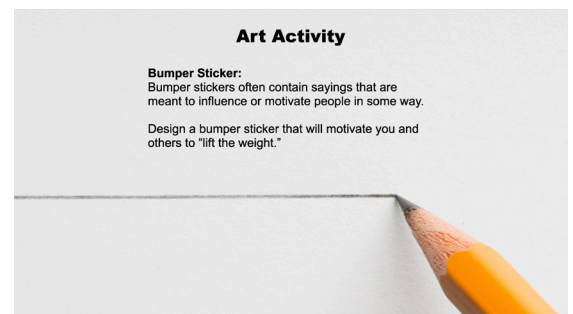


Resilience Booster:

Art Activity - (Bumper Sticker)

Bumper stickers often contain sayings that are meant to influence or motivate people in some way.

Design a bumper sticker that motivates you (and others) to “lift the weight.”



Closing Reflection

Ask:

What is one thing you learned today?

What is one “weight” you will commit to this week?

Final message:

“The things that feel heavy right now are often the exact things that will make you stronger later.”