

Starting Strength

The “Corporate Culture” of The Aasgaard Company

by
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All organizations develop a personality. Corporations, companies, non-profit organizations, restaurants, families, bands, card games – groups of people who associate with each other for any length of time eventually organize a framework for their interactions, and that framework derives from the values and ethics of the majority of the people in the group. And the personalities of the people in the group depend on the nature of the activities engaged in by the group that attracted them.

We have a “Corporate Culture” at The Aasgaard Company, the publishers of *Starting Strength*. We are not a corporation; there are no shareholders, no diffuse and nebulous ownership in which no direct responsibility lies. Myself and Dr. Stef Bradford own this company, and it’s not for sale. We both work very long hours every single day to ensure the integrity of our educational products. A handful of people work here in The Falls with us, and we all approach our work as “artisans”: we do it for the satisfaction of the task, and absolutely nothing here is done merely for the money. At TAC, our *values* take the place of the *rules* that most other people follow at work.

We have Starting Strength Coaches all over the world, affiliate gyms all over the country, and advocates of the method everywhere. They are a bridge between the educational material we create and the tens of thousands of people who elect to get their help with its application. Our “Corporate Culture” is shared by many of them.

Here at the gym, our political philosophy is that of the Classical Liberal, outlined quite well on Wikipedia: [Classical Liberalism](#).

In a practical sense, we are conservative libertarians. We believe that the functions of government should be restricted to the protection of individual rights, the provision of services that cannot be provided by the free market, national defense, the enforcement of contracts and common law, and the provision of absolutely necessary public institutions and public works. And that’s about it.



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We have learned that *we* can and should provide for ourselves and those we choose to provide for by our own efforts, and that we should not be interfered with while doing so. Individual liberty and personal responsibility form the basis of this philosophy. Free people accomplish more than subjects, accomplishment being the basis for a healthy relationship with oneself and others.

There are many things accomplished while accumulating strength through the process of training, detailed in our books, videos, and articles on this website – not all of them are physical. Finishing a heavy set of 5 when you’d rather not is a complex task, requiring analysis and decisions at multiple levels. The 1st rep and the 4th rep are quite different events, and the process of going from 1st to 4th informs the lifter about the 5th. It will be harder. It may be unpleasant, and it *may* not come back up. It has the potential for injury if you are unable to hold your position together, and missing it has consequences for your next workout, so there is pressure to complete the last rep – as there should be. It involves your ability to accurately assess what you have just done (a skill that also develops with training), and your willingness to try something you aren’t sure you can do.

More than just finishing an individual set, our model of training involves planning a long series of workouts to yield a specific result in a definite time frame. This means developing an understanding of the cumulative effects of different workouts in the context of your own level of training advancement, for the purpose of achieving a specific performance goal. Goal-setting, understanding the nature of the stress/recovery/adaptation phenomenon, schedule adherence, courage under the bar, and a thorough appreciation for the process of planning and execution are the foundations of successful strength training.

They are also the foundations of success outside the weight room. **It is impossible to overstate the importance of the lessons learned when starting and then completing a physical task you are not sure you can actually do.** Those lessons bleed over into all aspects of life, as a few seconds of reflection will reveal. These are the Lessons of the Barbell, our common bond.

With this in mind, our company has a few characteristics shared by all of us here in Wichita Falls, and by lots of the people who find our methods interesting. We don’t like big government, government regulation of the workplace and personal space, and government safety nets for those who *decide* not to finish life’s heavy sets of 5. We don’t appreciate people who are constantly offended *for* other people at no cost to themselves, and who feel the need to force us to agree with their opinions, which we cannot be made to do. We like people who take personal responsibility, who do not ask for charity, and who give freely when they feel compelled to do so. We appreciate an honest effort toward a worthwhile goal, and we will help if we can.

We like nice guns, good food, strong drink, talented musicianship, thoughtful art, and the effort it takes to create them. We appreciate beautiful women and handsome men, masculinity and femininity, and we know the difference. We also understand that some people have different opinions about these things, and we respect their opinions at precisely the same level of enthusiasm with which they respect ours.

We understand and follow the scientific method as the best way to understand Nature and physical existence, and we loathe “scientism” as a pale mockery thereof. We value reason and logic over feeling and emotion, since quantification and verification are preferable to subjective assertion and whim. We believe in doing the right thing, in integrity, in the virtue of truth, and that the ends do not justify the means. We believe in the Western European ideal of heroism, in the examples of Beowulf, Tyr, and Sigurd. We abhor cowardice and revere honorable conduct.

And finally, we value accomplishment, because every human being on the planet can accomplish things in proportion to the abilities they possess, if they will just *do* what is necessary. Outcomes will

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thus be different, but opportunities must be equal, and *entropy* – the gradual and inevitable decline into disorder, built into the very fabric of the universe – is the real enemy of accomplishment. None of this is particularly fashionable, but maybe you’re not fashionable either.

Our fight against entropy continues to expand. *Starting Strength* has now been translated into six languages, *Practical Programming for Strength Training* into three, with more in process. The [Starting Strength Gyms](#) franchise company is in the process of opening the first three locations, in Texas, and the plan is to have ten more open by the end of next year, with 100 more in 5 years. A Starting Strength-branded line of barbell equipment manufactured by Texas Strength Systems and Capps Welding is in the final stages of rollout. Our audio/video library continues to expand, informative website articles by intelligent contributors continue to accumulate, the website since 2014 has had 12.6 million individual visitors, with 4 million projected for this year alone, and Starting Strength Online Coaching has far exceeded our expectations in building good momentum for the brand. Book sales continue to grow, more coaches are being certified every month, and we are entering into a national marketing campaign soon that should expose many people to the exciting idea that they are the actual masters of their physical destiny.

If you agree with our approach, I hope we can contribute to your own fight against the forces of entropy.

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