

*For this month's interview we sit down with one of Charles' long time friends and peers, Nick Mitchell. Nick has become one of the most successful personal trainers turned gym owner in the world, with multiple locations of his Ultimate Performance (UP) training facilities around the world. We wanted to have a chat with Nick to see how Charles' information helped (or not) impact and grow Nick into what he has become today, and what lessons we could pull to help current and future coaches. We are grateful to Nick for being very candid with us in the hopes that the truth helps.*

**Strength Sensei (SS)** – Nick how did you even first hear of Charles and what made you seek out to learn from him?

**Nick Mitchell (NM)** – Before T-nation and all these other social media gurus, we had Muscle Media. Muscle Media was a publication way ahead of its time, and brought together the greatest minds from all over. Most of them all sounded the same with regards to programming, sets, reps, 3 sets of 10.....but



Charles stood out from the crowd in that he spoke 2 languages I could relate to. The first one was the science aspect of training. He was able to take studies and research and turn it into practical applications people could use in the gym. Tempo, rest periods, training splits, eccentrics...these were all things he was able to seamlessly incorporate into his training methodologies while not making it over complicated. The second language he spoke was meathead. He could take all the science and dumb it down in an article so that I or anyone else could easily relate to it and understand how to apply it to our training.

So, I first learned about Charles in Muscle Media, and then I kind of went off and was doing my own thing with bodybuilding and becoming a personal trainer. Then a friend of mine, Joe Dowdell, kept on and on about Poliquin's courses and how I had to take them, so I booked my first courses with Charles in Dublin. It was the best course I've ever taken, then or since. I was lucky to catch Charles in that moment where I believe he was most passionate about teaching. He's always been a great teacher, but during that time of his life he was very passionate about teaching.

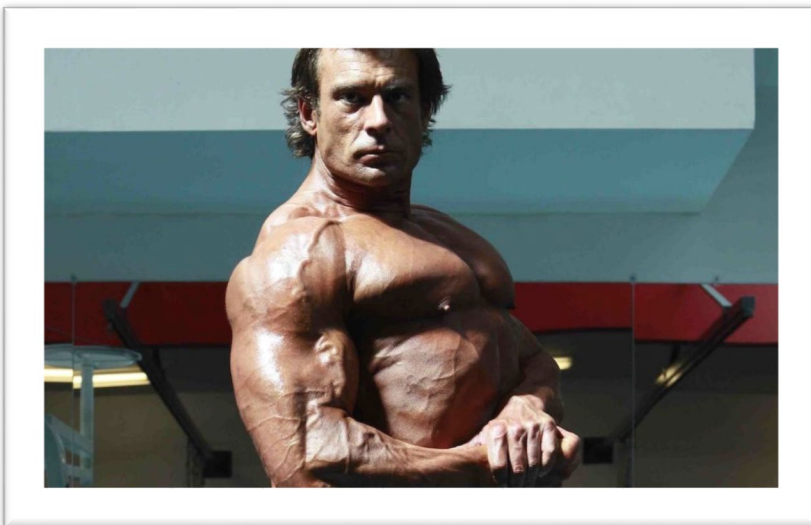
**SS** – What do you remember about that first course, what kind of impact did it have on you?

**NM** – I remember filling an entire notebook with information. I think I took the lion's share of the course with questions and conversation. There were many other trainers there, but me with over 20 years of experience at that point, I was non-stop and just took the class as my own. He was connecting 2 decades of dots together in my brain. Tempo, weight selection, reps, the

“why’s” “when’s” etc. It undeniably influenced me and set the tone for how I conducted training for myself and clients for the rest of my life.

**SS** – Where were you in your personal training career at the point when you had taken that course with Charles? Did you already have the UP brand going by then?

**NM** – No, absolutely not, in fact I was just beginning. I think I had maybe 1 client at that point. I cannot imagine where I or UP would be right now if not for having started off with that information as the foundation. He was leap years ahead of everyone else. I know a lot of people



want to make him out to have been a genius in absolutely everything, and I strongly disagree with that, but when it came to training he absolutely was a genius. No argument.

**SS** – So on that note, do you mind me asking what information, if any at all, did you take from Charles on business that may have set you up on the right foot when starting out?

**NM** – None. Absolutely nothing. I want to say this, and I want your readers to know that Charles and I respected each other on a level higher than any other people, and I would say this to him right now if I could, but Charles was shit at business. I know people will be shocked to hear me say that, but it’s true. People would see the gyms he was behind, and the supplements, and the books, and everything else and use that to support their belief that he was good at business. I would argue against that by saying all those things, the gyms, supplements, books, etc all describe the foot print he left behind on the industry. It was huge, massive. No one will be able to match it for years, if at all. So, if someone like Charles could make such a massive foot print on the industry, why was he still working most of the year all the way up to the time of his passing? He should’ve been retired years ago. I have created nowhere near the size of foot print on the industry as he did yet I am about to surpass anything he ever did financially by a magnitude of maybe 50. Charles had horrible business practices. Again, he was unmatched in his knowledge on training. What he did for supplements and performance was huge. The books he wrote are timeless and will sell for ages. Yet, what he did financially was lacking, and he would constantly surround himself with the wrong people that would ultimately enable a self destructive habit that plagued his life. Had things been different, he might still be here with us

today. I really want people to know this about Charles because there were many people who thought he could do no wrong in any aspect of life. I believe it is important for the people like myself who knew him the best to help dispel these myths because it could be harmful to the next generation of trainers, but also that it come from people like me instead of shady sources or rumors from the internet so his legacy is not tarnished.



**SS** – Agreed, and I appreciate the honesty in your responses. I think that is a good seagway into my next question too. What, if anything, did you think he was absolutely wrong about when you first heard him mention it but then later found out he was dead on about?

**NM** – Twice a day training. I thought it was complete bollocks. I said there was no way this would work. Now, if you said there was a million dollars on the line to get someone in shape as quickly as possible, I'd use 2 a days. It just works. When you do it right, use all the guidelines he suggests, you cannot beat it. I've since come around to put my own spin on it, but it is still very much what I learned from him in those first courses. Heavy in the first session, and light / fast in the second session. The twist I put on it has to do with the training split, so I would do 2 on, 1 off, 1 on, 1 off. You can't do it all the time, and it's extremely demanding, but you cannot beat the results.

**SS** – Twice a day is brutal. What other training methods stuck out to you from Charles?

**NM** – I remember watching him put people through something he called Death Circuits. I believe it was a pattern of a squat, a pull, a press, and then a deadlift or something like that. It was glorious and it completely wrecked people. In fact the more trained someone was, the more they got smashed. I use that as a template for many of the training programs we use at UP. They get great results.

**SS** – UP is known for getting crazy results with their clients, some of those transformations are insane. I know for awhile there too you were working very closely with Charles and his line of supplements, using his body composition modulation methods as well. Can you tell me how much of that impacted your business model and the results we see?

**NM** – You know, yes, when he was promoting that method we were using it heavily and seeing great results. We used it for about 3 years, and then we stopped. When we stopped we still kept seeing the results. The basis for his methods, or the idea behind them that fat is distributed based on hormones, is a great one and some of those are very much correlated.

Some are not though, and I'm sorry, but the connection between the knee and your sleep? It's just not there. I think it's very important to know and understand the context from which Charles came from. He came from working with the most elite athletes in the world. When he started off he never thought he would be teaching personal trainers how to train general populations. I believe he was the best at getting results with the elite because he would split hairs on the smallest details. Turning the wi fi off at night? Ok, yeah, I see where he is coming from but most people are not going to be bothered by that. Don't walk on treadmills because the electrical field can hurt your insulin sensitivity? If that was the most critical thing blocking progress for someone then yes, ok, but for most of us 20 minutes on a treadmill is not going to do anything harmful. What I found is that tracking the big things that matter and making sure the client is consistent in them has the biggest effects with general population just wanting to look better and feel better. He did not believe in counting calories, and we do at UP. However, again, the idea that the hormones are behind fat storage around the body was brilliant and UP is in fact working with a university right now running studies to test the validity behind these sites. Some of them are coming up spot on, but some of them are off the mark, but these studies would not be getting done if it weren't for Charles and the mind he had. He was always trying to connect dots that no one else had connected before and that is truthfully the definition of genius. In fact, UP is even running studies on the ideas Charles had on grip strength and training. I have been using Charles' advise for years and know its right, but there were no studies to back it up, so I am very excited to be working towards validating a lot of things Charles was a firm believer in and cannot wait to release that information.

Before we move on I want to touch on one thing. A lot of people would make Charles out to be a snake oil salesman. He loved to push supplements, and these products or methods, and people would say he was just a good salesman, but that is not the truth. If Charles supported it, it's because he truly believed in it. I know he had a persona as being rigid, but when it came to health and performance, Charles was kind of left field a lot of times, coming out from somewhere no one else had been before, but that was what made him so brilliant. So I know I just got done saying we use some things of his, we don't use others he said he swore by, but I do not want those statements to be used to help support the idea of Charles being a salesman. He truly truly believed in everything he used and stood by. He was constantly evolving his methods too. Now that he is not here he cannot refine his methods, and some may be refuted in the future but that does not mean he was knowingly pushing something false. More than anything he wanted to help people.

**SS** – I think that will be very helpful to the readers. Context is always key. Ok You've shared a great deal with us on your relation with the information Charles shared, but now I want to ask you about Charles himself. He definitely had a unique personality that left its mark on a lot of people. What are some key things you remember about Charles you want to share with the readers?

**NM** - \*laughs\* We have a saying in the UK. I don't think you have it here in the states, but we have something called Marmite. Its a disgusting spread you put on bread and things alike. People either hate it or love it, there is no in between. They're absolutely in love with it and put it on everything, or they never want to taste it again. Charles was marmite. You either loved him or you hated him, and it worked both ways. He would not hide it if he didn't like you, but you also knew if you were liked by him. You always knew where you stood with him. This poor fellow, I remember at a muscle testing course he was teaching, he asked this guy to come up to demo and he had to take his shirt off. This guy, he flew thousands of miles, spent a good bit of money to come learn from this coach he probably looked up to greatly. First thing Charles says when he took his shirt off was "Nice tits." That poor guy, he's never coming back you know? But, that was Charles. Marmite.

**SS** – Yes, I can recall several similar instances. It was a defining trait of his personality for sure. Not to leave the reader with a bad taste in their mouth, and also for Krystal, these interviews are done to try and connect the dots on how Charles' information helped to create so many successful people, but also to try and paint a picture for Krystal about the person her father was. Can you leave us with anything you wish Krystal to know about her dad?

**NM** – Charles was a man's man and lived by a code of honor. His code may not have included everyone he was in contact with, but to his comrades at least there is nothing he would not do for them. If in the middle of the night I had to have someone step up to the plate for me to bat the next morning, he would've done it no questions asked, and I would've done the same for him. We would often ask each other where are all the real men this age? With all the two facedness and back stabbing, it was hard to find honest people who would stand by their words. I also want to say that things would definitely be different for me if not for him. How much, I don't know, but I don't think I would be where I am today if I were not standing on the shoulders of a giant like Charles. - end