



Welcome to Coach Traub's Newsletter Mental Skills Tips #11!!!!

Mental Skills Training = Performance Enhancement and Personal Growth

Thank you in advance for a couple of your minutes... minutes that can help you
"WIN" the Mental Side of the Game.

My mission is to over-deliver value on goods and services designed to help you "win" the mental game. I always welcome your comments, questions, stories, or MVP nominations.

This issue's theme: SELF-CONTROL

I get nervous with every shot.
-Tiger Woods

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Self Control is a Must for Optimal Performance

Today's Mental Skills Tip – Self control is a big deal for a performer. An athlete's arousal level affects physiology, including posture, breathing, adrenaline, heart rate, muscle tension, perspiration, and vision. It also affects focus, perception of time, confidence, attitude, rhythm, mechanical efficiency, and coordination. Imagine that arousal level can be measured on a scale of 0-10 with zero being asleep and ten being a wild, raging maniac (**think Tasmanian Devil**). Everyone has an ideal level for each performance task. Get too high and balance is lost, rushing is inevitable, and aggressiveness is excessive. Be too low and there is not enough intensity or energy to produce a 'best effort' performance. **Arousal usually fluctuates with the environment, but it doesn't have to.** An athlete can control it by controlling the effects listed above,

starting with attitude and the level of importance given to this performance. Arousal control is a skill that can be learned... with awareness and practice.

Arousal is typically too low at practice and too high in games or "clutch" situations. "Dial it up" when it is low by remembering that the only controllable thing you can do to approach your potential is whatever you are doing right now. "Dial it down" by caring less about the outcomes and more about the joy in the effort. Take deep breaths. Remember what's important now (W.I.N., not winning) and use your routine to be comfortable in the process of performing. **Great athletes know how to be comfortable being uncomfortable.** Whether dialing it up or down, **act as if** you already are what you want to be and **focus on controllable variables like rhythm and breathing** to help you get there quickly. Or use an **anchor** (like the bell for Pavlov's dogs) to change your state in an instant.

COACHING POINT - Be sensitive to times when the environment is likely to get most of your athletes over- or under-aroused. Then, coach accordingly by using your brain rather than allowing your own emotions to affect your communications and make the problem worse.

"Overheard" from the Minds of some Great Athletes:

Poor Self-Talk can be transformed into
Fantastic Self-Talk

Counter: I gotta get a hit into
I'd like to get a hit.

Reframe: Oh my god, _____ is watching into
The most important person to please is myself.

Counter: We have to win this game. into
This season will be successful for many reasons even if we don't win this game.

Counter: This is the most important game of the year. into
Every game is a step towards my biggest goal: approaching my potential.

Counter: I can't let my teammates down. into
I need to give my best effort by doing what's important now.



Quote-of-the-Day: "If you can meet triumph and disaster and treat those imposters just the same" -Rudyard Kipling. John Wooden adds, "then you'll have poise."

Wooden says poise is just being yourself, not getting rattled, thrown off, or unbalanced due to circumstances. If your goal is simply to do the best you can, than the circumstance will not cause you to lose your poise.

Inspirational True Story: Bill Walton went to Helix HS in California, where he won his final 49 games and two state titles. At UCLA, he won 88 straight games and two national championships in three years. Since freshmen were not eligible, Walton won only 3 NCAA Player-of-the-Year Awards. He was the first player drafted in 1974 and won an NBA championship in 1977 with the Portland Trailblazers. Yet, at that point in his life, he could not say a simple "Thank you." It wasn't that he wasn't grateful for his many blessings. He couldn't communicate effectively at all. Despite all his achievements, Bill was a severe stutterer. He used his dedication to basketball to avoid "my responsibilities of developing my human relation skills."

Recently Walton wrote, "When I was 28, a chance encounter at a social event with Hall of Fame broadcaster Marty Glickman completely changed my life in so many ways that things have never been the same since, nor have they ever been better. That day, in a very brief, private conversation (one way, mind you, since I literally could not speak at the time) Marty explained, patiently and concisely, that talking, communicating was a skill not a gift or a birthright and that like any skill, whether it be sports, music, business or whatever, needed to be developed over a lifetime of hard work, discipline, organization and practice." Bill changed his belief about talking from a limiting one into an empowering one, then he worked at it so effectively that we know him today as a national broadcaster and public speaker. You can read more about him and the details of how he systematically beat stuttering at www.billwalton.com.

Coaches: You can bring Coach Traub straight to your team(s) and it won't cost you anything.

EXTRAordinary Self-Control Quotes (mostly from my book *Finding Your Peak Performance with Mental Skills Training*)

Carl Hubbell (Hall of Fame Pitcher), "I had no chance of controlling a ball game until I first controlled myself."

Joe DiMaggio, "You ought to run the hardest when you feel the worst. Never let the other guy know you're down."

Dr. Rob Gilbert, "Just because you are worried doesn't mean you have to act worried. Always behave confidently."

Tony LaRussa, "I am careful not to give in to theatrics when times are tough."

Coach Wooden Quote-of-the-Month: "Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do."

Coaches Reminder: "They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Baseball/Softball Rules Tip-of-the-Day: The fake tag.

NCAA 2008 Softball Rulebook: "When a fielder, who neither possesses the ball nor is about to receive the ball, obstructs a runner by pretending to have the ball and simulating a tag, which causes the runner to slow down or stop." It's illegal and a delayed dead ball should be called, with the umpire awarding the bases the runner would have achieved had she not slowed or stopped due to the fake.

There is nothing in the 2008 NCAA baseball rulebook or MLB rulebook about a fake tag.

For getting this far, I have warm wishes for you...

May your hunt for excellence be fruitful and never-ending.

*May you not only hold on to the dreams you've had,
but also dream greater dreams than before.
May you not only enjoy this land and its wealth,
but also enjoy the wind at your back as you make it a better place to live
by giving and loving generously.
God bless.*

Coach Traub

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