The Mental Game for Performance Excellence

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Fundamentals of the Mental Game

1. Take responsibility for your thoughts and actions.

2. Be on a mission: know why you play your sport, what character traits do you want to posses and what you want to accomplish in it.

3. Make your daily actions consistent with your mission.

4. Perform one moment at a time; confident and focused on each moment as it is played with disregard for past or future moments.

5. Focus on the process of playing the game rather than the outcomes of your performance.

6. Realize that you can't control what happens around you but you can control your response to it, and that you be in control of yourself before you can control your performance.

7. Develop your mental skills so you constantly perform near the best of your ability and have "something to go to" when adversity strikes.

8. Practice what you are going to do in your performance.

9. Learn each day.

10. Keep it simple, smart
THE MENTAL GAME
Ken Ravizza, Ph.D.

♦ GET BIG.
Be confident. Make your presence felt. Do not go out onto the court until you are ready to get big.

♦ BE WHERE YOU NEED TO BE WHEN YOU NEED TO BE THERE.
The time is now, the place is here. Focus on the task at hand. When in practice, concentrate on practice. When in a game, focus on the game. When in class, concentrate on class. When relaxing, concentrate on relaxing. Etc.

♦ COMPENSATING AND ADJUSTING.
You need to be comfortable being uncomfortable. There are no easy answers and no quick fixes. If you are having a shitty day...have the best shitty day you can have.

♦ PREPARE TO PREPARE.
Practice to win. Every day the goal is to get better at one thing both as individuals and as a team. You have to do things on a day to day basis before you can expect to perform in a game.

♦ ATTITUDE IS A DECISION.
Every day you must decide what your attitude will be. There are many things we CANNOT control but the two things we can control are our attitude and effort. Your attitude affects more than just yourself...choose wisely.

♦ CONFIDENCE IS A CHOICE.
You cannot depend on other people to build your confidence. You have to believe in yourself before others can.

♦ YOU HAVE TO BE PRESENT TO BE COACHABLE.
If you are thinking about the last play or the next play you cannot focus on the instruction you are receiving.

♦ FLUSH IT.
If you make a mistake, you have to let it go. Regain your focus and get it back in the play.
ELEMENTS OF EXCELLENCE FOR OLYMPIC ATHLETES

**Commitment:** Excellence in sport was the top priority in their life and everything revolved around their training and competing.

**Quality Practice:** Top Olympic athletes train with the highest degree of quality and prepare themselves on a daily basis for high quality practice.

**Goal Setting:** Goals were very clearly defined and applied on a consistent basis, e.g., daily goals for training, for competition and long-term goals.

**Imagery:** Mental imagery was used on a daily basis for a variety of purposes. For example, preparation for training, skill improvement, corrections, imagining success, competition preparation, etc.

**Practice Plan:** They mentally prepared themselves for training, had preset individualized training goals and committed themselves to follow their plans.

**Pre-Tournament Plan (Pre-Competition):** They had very detailed and refined pre-competition plans or procedures which they executed on a consistent basis for example, for early preparation, warm-up, game preparation, reminders etc.

**Tournament Focus Plan (Competitive Plan):** They had discovered what focus works best for them, had a focus plan for implementing it in competition and practice and holding that focus in training. The best focus was viewed as one which allows an absolute connection to the task.

**Distraction Control:** Most of them had developed effective ways of dealing with distractions to get back on track quickly. The most consistent performers had the best refocusing skills. In most cases reminders were needed to stay on track or to refocus effectively. This was the element of excellence where the most work was needed.

**Tournament Evaluation:** They had all developed effective procedures for competition evaluation and for drawing out important lessons especially those associated to the mental approach required for doing well. Failure is positive feedback... what were the lessons learned in this performance?
COMPARING PERFORMANCES. BEST VS WORST

Write you response to each question as it relates to you BEST performance in baseball and your response as it relates to your WORST performance.

1. Who were you playing against?
   Best: 
   Worst: 

2. What were your thoughts before the game?
   Best: 
   Worst: 

3. What were you thinking or saying to yourself at the time of your performance?
   Best: 
   Worst: 

4. How would you describe your emotional state at the time?
   Best: 
   Worst: 
5. What was your focus during your performance?

Best:

Worst:

6. What if anything was different about the way you experienced your performance? (i.e., Was the ball bigger? Did the action seem faster or slower than usual? etc.)

Best:

Worst:

*Compare your two sets of responses. What are the differences in your mental approach to your best and worst performances?
THE MENTAL GAME

TWO RULES:

1. You have to be in control of yourself before you can have control of your performance.

2. You have very little control over those things around you, but you do have control over how you choose to respond to them.

THE R'S

RESPONSIBILITY
Take responsibility for your own actions.

RESPOND
(JUST DO IT!)

READY
It's time to stop thinking and trust your training. Stay positive.

RECOGNIZE
Become aware of when you are stressed out or are using negative self-talk.

RELEASE
Get rid of the stress or negative thought(s) using a physical cue.

REFOCUS
What do you have to do right now?

REGROUP
Pull your chest and head up. Play with positive body language.

RELAX
Take a deep breath...