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World Class Tennis Mentality
A Players Manual

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NOTE...

This manual has been in the writing for 2+ years and is a culmination of many different seminars over the years, coupled with my experience in this field I have gathered along the way. I cannot simply even begin to tell you where from or who from for that matter I gained this information. Some exercises or pieces of information I believe came from divine inspiration literally from the bath tub to journeys on the road and the many hotels I have stayed. Hence unless stated feel free to copy, pilfer and use any part of this for yourself as you see fit to enhance not only yourself but those under your guise. The Tennis Psyche System itself is protected under copyright along with the playability scale and the goalset master plan. However, a simple email may suffice to enhance utilisation in any material you wish to write personally.

This Manual should be utilized as such exercise by exercise although you can read through first to get the idea and then back up to exercises that you feel are relevant to you.

At the end of the manual take a look at the people who I believe to have been my mentors, and whose material and work you should read at some stage or other. Regardless of whether you have heard of these names before.

Introducing the Mission and Aim of The Tennis Psyche System

Welcome to a world of mental training, a comprehensive and simple to follow programme that includes everything you need to set you on your way to better performance.

Already you have proven to yourself that you want to improve your performance by buying into this programme. Understand that it is easy to do each and every exercise but also even easier not to!! Unless we have a great magnetic pull in committing to our future we will end up procrastinating (which is an absolute crime in my book), but do not fear this manual will teach you how to motivate yourself from within and that is huge.

Lets begin with this now age old question.....How much of your game is mentally related to your performance?

From my years of experience and of asking this question to potential top athletes I have heard replies ranging from 60% to 95%. I'm not sure you can put a figure on this! After all, how can you measure the mental performance of an athlete and what he is thinking and feeling?

A better question would be 'How much of your training time do you spend working on mental training skills compared to how much of your performance is mental?'

The answer.... Probably next to nothing, after all who can pay for £1000's for the services of a sports psychologist when the average Tennis player is trying to stay in the sport in order to earn world-ranking points, and even after obtaining sponsorship money this is always needed elsewhere, gee what a catch 22. On the other hand how can you gain world-ranking points quicker and easier without a sport specialist? This is what prompted me to write this manual.

I think it is fair to state that if you practice with purpose in the right way with the right intensity then you will be able to take a path to somewhere near to where you wish to be, we need to reach a stage whereby every part of your game is not about whether you hope you can hit a shot in a specific situation, even think you can hit it for that matter, it is better to believe you can do it, or know you can do it, but guess what, to reach the top this isn't enough you have to know you WILL do it!!!

This programme will give you everything you need to set you on your way to your end goal, along with the tools, exercises and confidence building projects, however in the meantime you should understand and utilise these principles to help you begin your journey:-

1. To give 110% effort 100% of the time
2. To maintain a positive state regardless of the situation or outcome during practice or matches
3. To observe a no excuse mentality throughout

You would also do well to understand the following in top class athletes

1. An utmost desire to improve and be the best they can be
2. Possession of an unconditional Love of what they are doing
3. The ability to believe they have won before they step into the athletic arena

To this end, what is it that we are trying to achieve?

Surely we wish to achieve our long-term dream or goal that we have set in our earlier life. In order to do this we will start our journey by understanding where we are in our present tennis life in relation to what needs to be accomplished. Of course in order to achieve our end goal (although there truly is no end) we need to play to the best of our abilities in all realms of technical/tactical physical and mental. By becoming more physically fit, maintaining efficient, effective and consistent strokes and by staying mentally in control of our mind and hence emotions this will all aid in our war of taking the edge from our opponents we play against on our own tennis tours.

With that take a good look at this:-

ATHLETIC TALENT IS THE ABSENCE OF MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL OBSTRUCTIONS.

A truer set of words have never been said!!

All 3 are closely interlinked and an imbalance in one naturally affects the other.

A quote from most aspiring Touring Players amidst obtaining world ranking points ... 'they give you nothing?'

At these levels it can only take one roar of negative anger, one moment of concentration loss and that could be a foot in the door for your opponent, and a foot out for you!!
Hence further aims....

LEARN TO LOSE CORRECTLY... by

1. Giving yourself the freedom to go for your shots and if you miss accept it pro-actively not Re-actively, learn to respond rather than react.
2. Recognising that with each point you have the choice to let a mistake affect you or not!
3. And also that the next point is more important than the last at this moment in time.

It is of the utmost importance that you create and maintain an environment that gives your opponent the greatest potential to crack under pressure by being more physically fit, obtaining efficient consistent strokes and by staying mentally in control. At which stage you can aptly play a game I call 'allowing your opponent enough rope to hang themselves'. (In other words let them beat themselves up to make your task easier).

In the next few pages we are going to learn a great deal about ourselves, our situation and environments. We are going to find out before we start our journey where exactly we are in our tennis life and then build a bridge to where it is we want to go, whilst adding motivational exercises and thoughts to help along the way.

Now I know what you are going to say, but we have heard all this before. By God so have I!! A 100 times over but guess what, I never took this on board not once. I was one of those students who thought 'yes great heard it all before' but did I utilise it?? No, not once and why? Because every book, every lecture, every teacher gave me the facts, the what to do not the HOW TO DO!! This is why I have given you a practical guide to follow from start to finish.

Start by checking the Psyche checklist and see where you rate, anyone rating World Class email tennismortality@psycheuk.com I want to know who you are!!!

As always I now would like to Welcome you to the Beginning of your World Class Journey!!

Andy Dowsett



Director and Founder Psycheuk

TENNIS PSYCHE CHECKLIST

Check out the following and see where you are deficient in your Tennis Mentality.
Tick or Cross each statement accordingly:-

- I use the tennis psyche system during my performances
- I utilise, understand and evaluate a goal setting master-plan
- I have pre-match, mid-match and post-match physical and mental routines
- I monitor my thoughts/feelings and can change these to suit my current situation
- I monitor my intensity levels and adjust these accordingly before my performance
- I understand how the brain works
- I have mastered the ability to act
- My personal practice and match play closely relate to each other with purpose
- I practice my mental game daily on and off the court
- I fill out a journal daily to enhance awareness
- I monitor my game plan at various points in my matchplay using the playability scale
- I use visualization in practice and at all times throughout a match
- I am aware of my personal breathing techniques
- I have an understanding of the zone state and understand how to enhance this state
- I use positive past experiences and future memories to enhance my performances
- I take time to review my performances regardless of the outcome and note thoughts in my journal
- I have the ability to improve on my performance daily by giving 110% 100% of the time
- I utilise Psyche Intervention tools during practice and matchplay
- I maintain a balanced synergetic lifestyle
- I am self-motivated throughout my daily life

Total up the ticks and see how you got on.....

- 18-20 World-Class Tennis Mentality
- 14-18 Top-Class but lacking in areas, need to instil Tennis Psyche into your tennis programme
- 10-14 'Learning via the 'School of Hard Knocks'. A fun journey but time consuming.
- 1-10 A long way to go, welcome to the start of your world class journey!

Goal-set made Simple - The First Steps for your Journey

It amazes me that Goal Setting should be the most simplest thing in the world but yet how many people actually commit to writing down there goals? Ask yourself this and then add yourself to the long list!

I'll never forget when a good friend and mentor of mine asked me what my future goals were, I thought I was doing a good job by explaining to learn everything and become the best coach I can be and with the experience and knowledge I have now believe that still to be true (although please understand that learning is a life long journey and it never truly ends!), however this was a great mission or aim but he actually wanted to see my goals. It was not a surprise to him that I actually had none (a common occurrence among a lot of players and generally people in life!).

Answer this, How do you know how to get to your end destination if you do not know the route?

Right now you are alike a canoe in a river without any paddles being carried by the current and I'm not saying it's not a fun journey, it can be a fun journey but who knows where your heading, destination unknown!

As a young player and now coach I had been to umpteen sessions on goal setting coming away with not much else and still being were I started, a list of goals and but now idea how to go from there. I had heard all the phrases, dreams with a deadline, you have go to set those goals, a journey of a 1000 miles begins with 1 step. Well yes, they all have there place but below is a master plan of what to do, when to do and how to do it, to which end I will let you progress onwards (please beware this can and should take a few hours)...

Stage 1 – Understanding your environment

This section is an awareness exercise (as are most of the exercises in this manual!) to find out your negative self-talk/thoughts and how others perceive you. By understanding this, you can then set yourself on the right track that will help make your performance and life more beneficial by enhancing the correct positive and fulfilling environment.

- In the table beneath (also see Appendix I) list the people that drag you down or hold you back with the statements they make, how much time you spend with these people per week and all the negative remarks that these people may make.

WHY? - In order to achieve what you want I need you to create the right environment. Go to the best Academies in the world that produce players and you will see, hear and feel the atmosphere, you can almost touch it and will get carried away with it all, you will want to work out on the court because everyone is working for themselves but yet working as a team.

You can create this environment by getting rid of those that are harmful to your future goals (however, ruthless this may seem!), or if not possible at least cut down the amount of time you spend with these particular people, if that is impossible then at least you can mentally prepare yourself and understand that at anytime these people are negative about your good self then it can rebound of from you and not have any affect.

Name/Environment	Time Spent (Average)	Negative Remarks
Brother	3 Hours Daily	Why do you persist in something that is taking you nowhere?
Squad Mate	8 Hours Daily	I Love playing you its an easy win for me

Like most of these exercises go back over them later in the week or whenever you come across a negative situation. Awareness is a powerful and important key aspect in your growth process. Like many of these exercise they are more for you to become aware of these situations and to act accordingly.

Sometimes you cannot let go those you love but you can spend less time with them, or confront them with what they say or better still use what they say as ammunition for further motivation!

Stage 2 – Dreams List

Write down from as many of your dreams, aspirations, accomplishments you want and need in your life using the following questions on the Listing your Dreams worksheet at the back of this programme. (Appendix III).

What do I need to improve my Tennis? (Technical, Tactical, Physical, Mental) Fill out the ‘Tennis Tech List – Appendix II’ at the back of the manual to help.

Personal

Family

Spiritual

Financial

Things I wish to do (Include things you want to buy, see and do)

Now do something completely different...write down anything that is stopping you from reaching your end goal or goals.

Leave no stone-unturned write down absolutely everything no matter how silly you think this is, write as many things down as you can preferably in the next 15-30 minutes.

Remember this:-

‘Vision without action can be a daydream although action without vision is almost a nightmare’

As with all these pearls of wisdom, they were picked up from seminars, lectures and real life and what’s more, they have been tried and tested, welcome to the shortcut for your future tennis career.

Having finished this comply with the following steps (Appendix III):-

1. Review your list and mark out each statement as 1, 2, 5, or 10 Year Goals
 2. Place the week or month that you will complete your 1 year goals
- Further divide 3-5 of these goals into action steps via the Goalset Masterplan (Appendix IV). These are inserted at the back of this programme, obviously print off as many as needed. FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS BELOW FOR HELP...

Understanding the Goalset Masterplan

Lets set a simple goal of improving consistency of a backhand drive due to lack of confidence in this area during matchplay. (Stated Goal). Follow this by writing down anything that may stand in your way.

The next step would be to set action steps in order to reach this goal, for instance:-

1. Take a 30 minute technical lesson with coach each week for 1 month
2. Spend 15 minutes per day hitting crosscourt to target in back 1/3 of court
3. Spend 15 minutes per day hitting down the line to target in back 1/3 of court
4. Hit backhands only to back court until 100 backhands have landed in this zone
5. Play a set and play out crosscourt on backhand side point is live when you change direction

Now set a reward for completing your mission, a punishment for not completing within the due date, I.E. extra 30 minutes on cross trainer in the gym.

And finally, whom you would use as a role model, to help. For me I used Thomas Muster for my Backhand, Boris Becker for my Serve, Stefan Edberg as a Second Serve and Pete Sampras as a Forehand. Volleys were my own and funnily enough my worst element of my game for a long time!

Place a potential completion date to this and a date that you would review this and finish it off with a mission statement of perhaps to possess the biggest most consistent backhand in my academy.

Now to end all this describe how this new found backhand would look and feel or even sound, close your eyes and visualise hitting the best backhands you can, use your role model if you want and follow some of the visualisation exercises later in the programme to aid this. You may even wish to pick up your racket and in slow motion swing your racket through the motions (top tip...if indoors ensure you move any objects in range!) This then leaves the one and only step to take and that is to take action, perhaps ring up to book the lesson today! It is of utmost importance to get the ball rolling today (action TNT - Today not Tomorrow). Have you ever imagined a heavy roller starting its journey, slow to start with until it gathers momentum then you have it

made. The hardest part is to start, to take action, with everything else in place the rest is up to you. But would I leave you at that, of course not. Lets talk motivation and inspiration

Stage 3 – Self-Motivation

How do you keep motivated to achieve your goals with that inner burning desire to be the best you can be, to keep up the work rate on court and in the gym?

The environment will help, those around you, your coaches, fellow peers, but at the end of the day its got to come from you, from within. Goalsetting and measuring your success will help, on the back of the goalset master plan is a graph for you to do this and measure each day how much of a certain factor you achieve. Remember all top athletes have an unconditional love and desire to achieve and become the best they can be. Without this how can you even think of breaking the top 200 in the world or the top of what you can achieve?

In my guise as counsellor and hypnotherapist, it is possible to revisit past events in your life or even performances that can bring back all the thoughts and feelings from that time to the current future, you will learn more about the brain in the next part of this course, but imagine before playing a match you utilise this as part of a pre-match routine to bring back the thoughts and feelings of the best performance of your life, and whats more this is totally possible! Of course we will also learn to clear your thoughts ready for the battle ahead and it is a battle. You can not lay down or relax for one moment, you literally have to write a 'DO NOT DISTURB' sign for all to see whilst you go about your game plan.

When you feel a little low and lack confidence this is a great exercise to visit and even revisit.

EXERCISE.....

Envision 2 scenarios...

Scenario 1 – How your life would look if you do not complete your goal, how would this affect your overall dream??

Scenario 2 – How your life would look after you have completed your goal!!

AND this is the secret, always envision the negative and then the positive when you are feeling low. Eventually you will only need the second scenario to motivate yourself.

BUT Understand this, as humans we can grow to whatever we wish, you have to want to grow to your full potential, that is a profound statement so I will re-iterate this, **YOU HAVE TO WANT TO GROW TO YOUR FULL POTENTIAL!!!** Learn to become two things, infact you can learn by two of life's greatest workers:-

Trees - a tree will grow as big as it can given all that it has got. Can you imagine a tree suddenly turning around and thinking that's it I am growing no more, time to relax. NO! for the remainder of its life it will strive to become the best it can be.

Ants - How hard working are these little creatures. Have you ever placed an object in its way, what will it do! Find a way around, find another path, it will continue on its mission until it has been fulfilled then it will continue again. But for who? Why? For what? For the rest of the ant population.

Imagine that, setting a goal not just for yourself but for someone else! Remember Rocky 4? Rocky defeated Ivan Drago, for what, because he was fighting in his comrades name Apollo Creed! Was it for the money, NO! Something a lot more powerful, he was fighting for someone else.

How powerful to set your goals not only for yourself but to include someone else!

IS THIS MOTIVATION ENOUGH? If not, then I guess what you want is not what you really desire and I suggest you go do something else instead. Period. REMEMBER, if you wish to be in the top 200 you had better train and become better than everyone else in the world bar 199 players and that's just for starters.

How do you spend your day?

There is so much in the world that can take our focus away from what we truly want, not all contributing towards our career as a tennis player. Should we allow this? Shed the dead wood, lighten the load, and take your career more seriously. Spend your time studying the game of others, working on your own visualisation, understanding the game more instead of visualising the latest T.V. or computer programme

Complete the exercise below, this should be done for an average week, Monday to Sunday, this will show you how you spend your time. This for some of you will be an eye opener.

Write down how you spend your time including sleep, eating, (I.E. recovery exercises). Again Remember awareness is a powerful aspect and is key in development process! Use Annex V to fill this out.

Time	Activity	Comments
06.30	Wake up	10 Minute Breathing & Meditation Work
06.45	Breakfast & Shower	ETC.....

SO...is there anything here that you need to get rid off, are you getting enough recovery from the court and gym work you are doing? Are you eating enough at regular intervals? What are you doing to recover from a hard days work? When are you doing your daily visualisation work (more on this later)?

So hopefully, you are well on your way to creating the perfect environment for your career, setting the right performance goals and working at them, don't forget to review these often and move onto finishing more on your dream list. You should have a lot to get through!

Set out your day and change it accordingly so you can accomplish the most instead of wasting time, you will then be able to reach your goals quicker. More importantly review your goals as often as possible, 1 a month at the least. (Not enough really but lets start a little realistically).

Like all of these exercises if you wish for me to review them and help you out you can email tennimentality@psycheuk.com and I will help you out, give you pointers and guide you on your way.

Now it's time to move on, email me if you have any problems. We will spend some time on looking at how the brain works and how you can use your thoughts more efficiently for performance

Completing Goals

Everytime you complete a goal first and foremost congratulate yourself, treat yourself and then look along your dream list to the next most important/pending and move onto complete that one also. This is why you must evaluate your goals regularly, certainly after you have completed one. The minute you complete a goal a whole new batch of pathways open up for you and you may feel the need to add more or take some away.

Principles of the Brain

Every thought you have sends electrical and chemical signals throughout your brain! Thoughts therefore have physical properties; they are real and have a significant influence on every cell in your body. For instance lets cut to the chase, think of the most erotic encounter you have had, remember this is either a past experience, something you have seen on film or something made up, either way you are using imagery to create the experience, how is your body reacting?

What just happened? Well, what you will learn in this part will affect your performance directly, by controlling your thoughts and hence your emotions you can only but improve everything about your game.

Scientific research shows that your brain can learn new things, it is just a matter of believing that you can! Even if for now you have to literally lie to yourself!

PROFOUND STATEMENTS...

Give enough focused intention to any project fully and the spirit of that project will grow and give itself back to you ten fold.

This is right up there with...

As within, so without.

The Kyballion

It took me a long time to understand either of these, I wonder how long it will take you?

But believe me science has shown that your brain if used regularly will grow, after all you never truly grow old...if you become a lifelong student of learning. We generally either allow it to grow until we literally die or let it wither. This is the 'use it or lose it' type scenario. This was shown when Roger Bannister broke the 4-minute mile for the first time ever closely followed by over 200 more in the following years. If you have someone in your training or match play you can spar with then this will help take you to new heights.

The trouble is, we naturally, as humans, (well for 95% of the population at least) place self-limiting chains on ourselves by allowing negative self-talk that influences what we achieve, or even worst prevent us from trying something new because we are fearful that it just will not work or it is impossible to do.

The following was learnt from a very knowledgeable Doug Bench and his Science for Success Systems (www.ScienceforSuccess.com). The reason I feel the need to tell you this is two fold. Firstly I wish for you to know the source of this geniality and Secondly if its wrong then Doug should have known better!!

So first we must understand an important experiment that took place, volunteers were asked to do simple maths problems whilst being observed under a PET scanner (computerised technology that literally scans the brain). Ideally when calculating maths problems only one certain part of the brain should light up, however whilst in the scan a fascinating and unexpected event happened.....another 5 areas lit up, so each subject was thinking in 6 different areas of the brain at once!

Further studies proved that by admitting sedatives to willing volunteers, neuroscientist found that the one area calculating the problems faded out leaving the other 5 working away. Hence the conclusion being that these 5 parts were on a non-conscious level and hence only 1 part on a conscious level. More importantly since you are unaware of your non-conscious thoughts, your non-conscious brain can't tell the difference between what is real or imagined, truth or a lie. Hence why the phrase 'Fake it until you Make it' is all too real and should be utilised at every opportunity.

Now do the maths yourself, 1/6th or 5/6th, where should the majority of our tennis play be??? Cut out the conscious thinking and you are on to a winner, better still cut out the conscious thinking and do enough to get inside your opponents head and you will take the upper hand which could be enough to take the match. But lets not end on that note! Take this in, the 5/6th Non-Conscious actually thinks 10 million times quicker than the 1/6th Conscious. Enough Said Period.

How is this for a figure.....

Around 90% of our normal behaviour is based on habits, we are literally creatures of habit, your serve, return of serve and between point routines need to become a habit, this is why you need to practice purposefully and whole heartedly!

A VERY COMMON PROBLEM.....

It is very easy to gain confidence in practice due to the routines and eventual mind-set this produces.

However, unless your practice mirrors the intensity or preciseness of your own personal match play you will lack in confidence in your match play which for most potential athletes is a different mind-set entirely!!! You must train and practice as if it is your actual performance day.

Habits are literally rituals and rituals should bring confidence in your ability, focus and emotional control. Without rituals you are hoping for divine intervention. And to that end Good luck!

To put it another way, Imagine being in an emotionally tight situation/environment whilst battling on the court. The score is even tighter but you can find refuge in the rituals and routines that you have completed thousands of times over your playing and training career. The player with these who can bring about that extra bit of confidence in his abilities will win every time.

Back to thoughts...

Thoughts can become habits, each time you repeat a thought it is more likely to become a habit, we generally make 40,000+ thoughts a day and 60% of these are repeated daily! So if you spend most of your day thinking negatively or about what you don't want...you will only endure with the following...

Dwell on a negative thought and you are almost guaranteed a negative outcome!

IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT... You step up to the baseline at an important point on your serve you tell yourself now's the time not to double fault! Oh Dear, understand the mind is like a VCR and has stored every detail of what you see in your life, and the more you see something the more accessible it becomes. What you have done here is instruct your mind to retrieve a past memory or picture and then instruct the brain to carry out the instructions to the muscles that were encoded within this image. So hence 9 times out of 10 you will double fault...**IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT.**

Get the picture? If not you had better learn quickly! To that end I leave you with one of the best quotations I have ever come across...

Changes do not happen in a day, they happen Daily! (This is evidently a profound statement) so I best state this again...Changes do not happen in a day they happen Daily!

So, now that you are beginning to understand how the brain works, what do you do about it to help yourself perform to the best of your ability?

Most importantly is the ability to CATCH your negative thoughts, CHANGE them and COACH them to a better way. When this is completed often enough as with everything you will become very adept at this and it will become an automatic situation. Utilise these 3 C's and your game and life will improve dramatically.

So to move on and in no particular order... **THE RULES...**

1. Learn to Act

Ever heard this... 'whether you think you are or think you aren't, can or can't, will or will not you are right!?' Jim Leohr a top Sport Psychologist in America states that you need to fake it till you make it, what does this really mean?

I believe this is working in the 5/6th part of your brain! Remember the non-conscious cannot tell the difference between what is real or imagined. Like goal setting you need to live the belief 'as if' it was, this means spend your time thinking what you do want rather than what you do not want.

EXERCISE...if you are struggling with your performance or an aspect of your game one day, act 'Like you are...'. I spent many days acting like I was Ivan Lendl throughout countless matches, this worked for me and may do the same for you!

You must act on the court at all times as if you are confident and that your opponent is not getting to you. You need a umpire type mentality, (whilst of course learning throughout), understanding that an umpire only calls what he sees and then lets it go, if the ball is out its out and he lets it go and vice versa.

Tour Players are instructed on this I am sure after all it is good to know when your opponent is handing you the match on a platter! Alternately you do not wish to show that you are handing the match to your opponent! It is of utmost important that you are in control of your thoughts in order to keep your emotions in check.

Your mindset here should be - 'I am in Control and Nothing can stop me' and for this you need a military type look in between points, give nothing away, save your energy for your match play don't literally give it away by meaningless tantrums (although a burst every now and then can at the same time be quite cleansing!). To act confidently your body language must be confident, I spent 9 years in the armed forces, chest out, shoulders back, make yourself look tall...try it, it works, and the energy exuding from this is that of pure confidence, this means you literally grow the energy from within.

Positive and Negative Actions.....

Whilst on the subject of acting remember also that all negative actions are not necessarily resulting in negative outcomes and all positive actions do not always result in positive outcomes, it's what you do after these actions that make the following scenarios positive or negative. You must learn from each and every outcome and refrain from making the same mistake twice!

2. Listen to your Self-Talk

Cut out the negative in your self-talk, our everyday thoughts negatively outweigh what we think positively each day. Never finish a negative statement, never say never and never say cannot or impossible. Remember Think a negative thought and you will generally get a negative result.

BUT...How hard is it not to think Negatively? In actual fact it is very difficult for most of us, and this has been ingrained into the human Psyche since the beginning of time, in the days of dinosaural survival every noise sent out alarm bells for either food to be hunted for or to run in order not to be served as lunch. It worked then otherwise we may not be here now. The fight or flight response then was very useful but in today's age generally this becomes stored stress hormones in which we have no outlet to fight to release the influx of hormones or even to give flight in which the hormones distributed throughout the body can be used. This is then stored and over time can become unhealthily dangerous. (Best to exercise somewhat when stressed to subdue and cleanse these hormones!)

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR THOUGHTS TELL YOU THAT YOU ARE TIRED.....

EXERCISE...Run on the spot for 1 minute and see how you feel. When you sit down and relax your body temperature drops and this sends signals to your brain that you are getting ready to relax and hence become tired, lethargic and sleepy. Scientifically, you are tired because your body has cooled down, so exercise and the body warms up and hence you feel more alert!! No excuse for not training on those tired days.

Although on that note beware of burnout. Lethargy and burnout are two different things.

As mentioned before it's okay to think negatively but the aim is not to finish it, literally stop it in its tracks. With enough practice of doing this you can literally change the way you think, bearing in mind that our brain changes daily and can grow and create neural pathways continuously. The more we complete the same exercise the

stronger these pathways become and the better we think. The better we think the more emotionally controlled we become and the more mentally stronger we become and hence the stronger the neural pathway becomes... I think you get the picture.

For all negative thinking or thoughts you find difficult to rid from your mind then you will find the next exercise very useful.

Changing Thoughts

First and Foremost I want you to think how you would like this situation or thought to be, write it down if it helps. This is your set-up for later in the exercise.

Next, find a place to relax and become aware of your breathing. Become aware of the rhythm of your breathing and perhaps the beating of your heart. Close your eyes and just R-E-L-A-X.

Now, take the situation or thought in mind and put this into a still picture, almost as if you have taken a photo of the scene yourself.

Take a look at the picture and then complete the following steps...

- Imagine where the photo is if you projected it out in front of you and change the position of where the photo is in your mind, if on the left move it to the right, if in the below move it up.
- Change the colour of the picture maybe to black and white, or all red
- Shoot the image into the distance as far as you can until it becomes a speck
- Send a missile speeding towards this speck and watch it disintegrate whilst....
- Almost at the same time another image moves towards you with the set-up situation you imagined at the beginning.

Repeat as often as possible until you feel a change in your own feelings and reactions to what it was that is no longer troubling you.

Prior to and during matches we can cut down the amount of thinking if we are having (generally known in the trade as having a 'complete mare!'), by choosing to repeat a Mantra something like 'solid and controlled' over and over again. (Please ensure you make your own mantra though, something that will become personal for you). This works purely because it quietsens the Conscious Mind or the 1/6th of your brain.

Thoughts, The Brain and a 7-Day Thought Plan.....

Let's learn more about the brain. As you now understand, your brain thinks in images or pictures. You also know that your brain can in no way tell the difference between what is real and what is imagined, whether this is negative or positive. In fact a negative phrase only brings heightened interest and awareness to the situation or thought.

Let me explain why and how. Your conscious or even the 1/6th of your brain uses filters to stop the 40,000+ thoughts you take in every day and these are often questioned at some of the most awkward times if they conflict with your beliefs or life values, the non-conscious (the part that you utilise to play in the zone) or 5/6th of the brain however, has no such filter and hence thoughts can be and will be utilised quicker whether negative or positive. This is why it is important to live in the non-conscious when you play matches thinking only of the shots and plays that you are to commit to.

To enhance this and become automatic at anything you do (hence creating habits) you need to create the 3 following situations:-

- 1. Repetition, Repeat, Replicate, Duplicate, or do it again and again and again**
- 2. An Emotional Atmosphere (Better to enjoy/love the work otherwise forget it)**

Evidently this is not to say that a negative environment has not created great players!

- 3. And a Motivational link to make it personal (the job in hand needs to have a motivational cause or goal behind it to make the process complete).**

Let me ask you a question...why is it that Argentina and Russia (at least on going to press), producing the most successful players to date? Check out the economy of these countries and you will understand why!! Believe me there is plenty of motivation to succeed in this respect and they will go all out to do it. Produce one role model and let the flood gates open.

However, without digressing too much...The more you send a message or thought down the same brain pathway the easier it becomes for the thought to be retrieved in the future. This without fail will take between 21-30 days for the pathway to open and fire automatically after that. Miss a day and you can expect to start all over again, for the average unmotivated person this can take 6-8 Months.

Don't think we are stopping there though...read on...

Therefore, from my opinion the brain is one of the most if not the most important tool that you should utilise in your athletic body. You should know that it too requires food to function (ideally glucose), oxygen (fact - the brain uses 25% of your oxygen intake) and water. Your brain must be hydrated to function at its highest level; in fact if your brain is slightly dehydrated this may cause a loss of up to 1/3rd of the efficiency of your brain to access thoughts. If you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated and on your way to losing half the brains efficiency to function. After all another important fact is your brain is 90% water so for electrical impulses to flow and thoughts to be accessed or even evaluated you must stay hydrated to function at high levels. (believe me this is just the very basics but take note and heed either way!). For more information visit www.foodforperformance.com

Work out who you are and change your thinking by.....

Spending the next 7-Days writing down all your negative thoughts and feelings. (Use Appendix VI for this). If you can stop yourself in your tracks so not to finish a negative sentence (or in other words change the thinking of what you don't want and converting it to what you do want) then all the better.

It is not so much of the positive thoughts that are needed but the interception of the negative. This is called cognitive therapy and has been proven that this type of therapy truly does change the brain. However, know this, all meaningful change within your brain always first starts as a falsehood, an imagination, or a visualization. This is always true before it works its way into your reality or conscious levels of your brain. How you use this extremely powerful Brain tool is very, very important!

Important Notice...Garbage in Garbage out is true!!! But so is Good in Good out!!!

3. Stay in the Present

Why worry about the past, can you physically change it? Can you physically change mistakes on the court or situations not within your control? I say physically because mentally you learn from this and change the pictures to what you do want before letting go and moving on.

Has the future happened yet? Are you sure you are going to lose? Is it definite that your game is going down hill? You can learn from the past but not the future, do not F-E-A-R the future ([Future Experiences Appearing Real](#)), here you are merely working with the 5/6th that will believe this is real and at the same time will go all out to make sure this becomes the norm!

So the Key? **Stay in the Present, the Moment, the Now.** By thinking about the past or future how can you possibly be concentrating on the task at hand, become mindful of what you are thinking literally.

You may have already achieved this at sometime in your playing career but guaranteed to have had this feeling elsewhere in life. By staying in the now you are already on your way to **Working or playing in the zone!** This has been achieved when you ask the following question at a stage in your life works..... **“How the hell did I do that?”**, in which case from my experienced you truly have become masterful at your trade and when you can do this once you can achieve this again, as long as you understand the actions that got you there in the first place!

After all.....What do you think about when you play well, average, or even trash?

The next time you are involved in the 'Zonal Moment' write down as much as you can about what you did prior to this, what were you thinking, what mood were you in? How relaxed were you? What was the environmental circumstances that enhanced this process? This truly is the Holy Grail for Athletes, and can be truly achievable by the many and not just the few!

4. Learn the Art of Concentration

This is literally a continuation of the prior step understanding where your focus should be at any one time in the early stages of your career will give you a greater understanding of when you are having a mare later in your performances. Remember its all down to you and only you, unless you have an opponent whom has the ability to play havoc with your thoughts! How great is that to be able to get inside your opponents head to ruin their concentration? How many sports do you know this literally happens and can result in a red card!!

Most matches when you have a weak mental ability end up with you having to beat two players, firstly YOUR SELF!!! Most players are so good at this that they needn't worry about trying to beat there opponent (the second player).

Try these simple exercises...When your game goes 'AWOL' spend a little time focusing on the writing on the ball and nothing else, or the seams, even the hairs. You have probably heard it a thousand times but spend a few times saying bounce, hit. Bounce when the ball bounces and hit when either yourself or your opponent hit's the ball. Finally, one that works well for me pick a part of your body to concentrate on, the best one - your feet! When you are not playing too well then you almost certainly are not moving to well either.

These are great exercises to do in practice as you truly become the master of your own body and actions, move from your footwork to your weight transfer your hip rotation pre-stroke set up and hip and shoulder rotation, take backs, contact points and follow through. That's not to omit your breathing process, and relaxation/intensity levels.

TOP TIP...you do not always need a court to practice and become aware of your body!! Shadow tennis at different speeds is good enough to understand all you need.

NOW LETS LEAVE THIS BEHIND AND MOVE ONTO ANOTHER AREA

Understanding Self-Defeat - Whose fault is it anyway?

Here's a clue...

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