

Newsletter: July 2000

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1 The Challenge of Excellence

It seems to me that much attention is paid in today's society to the 'average' person - what the 'average' person thinks about such and such; what is the 'average' wage; what is an 'average' mark to be attained by students in order to pass their studies.

I believe this focus on the 'average' person is a recipe for mediocrity, and I think this is readily observable in our society today, with its 'average' values, 'average' work standards, 'average' relationships, and 'average' concern for our environment and future generations.

This is particularly true here in Australia where we are afflicted with an appalling behavioural disability - that of attacking the tall poppies and trying to pull them down. What has happened to the values of excellence and quality in our lives?

There is a saying: "If you don't stand for something, then you'll fall for anything". If you don't vigorously stand up for your beliefs, principles and values - whatever they might be - then you will lose them.

All things of worth - whether they be a garden patch, a relationship, a business, or a set of values - must be defended against the inevitable forces of entropy and apathy.

The worst disease and the biggest challenge facing us as a society is not AIDS, or pollution, or global warming - but rather, human apathy human neglect.

Neglect is like an infection. Left unchallenged it will spread throughout our entire system of disciplines, values and beliefs and eventually lead to a complete breakdown of the positive and supportive institutions in our society.

Neglect your body and it quickly becomes overweight and disease ridden. If a farmer neglects his fields, they quickly become overgrown with weeds. If you neglect a relationship, you will find your friend or partner soon finds someone else. If a parent neglects their children they become difficult and undisciplined social misfits. If a culture neglects its values and social institutions it quickly reverts to anarchy and war.

And if a sports team neglects to instil the values of sportsmanship, and expects this in the behaviour of each member, it quickly loses its heart and chases empty victories and meaningless trophies.

We all have access to all we need to be more prosperous, happier and successful - yet many people simply neglect to take advantage of those resources. They neglect to read the books or attend the courses. They neglect to listen to the wisdom of teachers, coaches and leaders. They neglect to do the simple little things each day that lead to success in any endeavour.

Neglect - not doing what we know we could or should do causes us to feel guilty, and guilt erodes your self confidence. When our self confidence diminishes so does the level of our activity; and as we do less and less, our results inevitably decline.

This leads us to falter in our resolves our attitude weakens and becomes increasingly negative and complaining, and we begin to feel more and more a victim of circumstances rather than the designer of our life. Of course, when we feel like a victim - that what we do doesn't matter - then our self confidence diminishes even more eroding our level of performance and attitude even further and on and on it goes until we become like the thousands of other negative, complaining victims in society - blaming anything and everything but themselves for their circumstances.

So I urge you to face up to the challenge of neglect in your life - and especially in relation to your sport and sports team. Are there any values that you have neglected to encourage? Is there anything you've let slide in your life?

Rather than cutting down the tall poppies, my vision is of the tall poppies lifting everyone around them to greater heights of personal achievement. Let's be proud of the champions around us - but more than that, let's be like them.

I urge you to accept the challenge of excellence in your own life - don't settle for the average and mediocre in your relationships, in your work, in your studies, in your sport, or in your health. Expect the best of yourself, and the best from others.

Do recognise that this is a challenge - the path of excellence and quality is not the easy, well worn path. The words of Robert Frost come to mind : "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I - I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference."

2 Sportsmind News

PGA TOUR

I'm pleased to say that I will be conducting a national tour, during 2000, for the PGA in July and August to present Sportsmind workshops. Dates are as follows :

July 24 : Hobart
July 25 : Adelaide
August 2 : Brisbane
August 3 : Melbourne
August 4 : Sydney
August 7 : Perth

For more details and bookings, contact the PGA on 02 9439 8111

SPORTSMIND IN PERTH

I'm finally going to the West, and will be presenting Peak Performance workshops on 9/10 and 12/13 August 2000 in Perth. For details and bookings, contact Andrew Bryant on 9386 8588 or Angie Cassian on 9272 8929.

SPORTSMIND ON THE GOLD COAST

Due to building delays at the Sports Super Centre the opening date for my office there is now September 1st, 2000. I've recently visited the centre and it's truly magnificent, and I feel very privileged to be part of the sport science unit. If you have a chance to visit when you're on the coast - please do so!

SPORTSMIND SCHOLARSHIPS

Due to the building delays I cancelled the courses which were to be held in June at the Sports Super Centre, and of course the scholarships at those programs. The next courses are in November on the Gold Coast or January in Brisbane as per the enclosed blue brochure - which includes information on scholarships and enrolment. Scholarship applications for these programs must be received by 10th November.

SPECIAL NOTE

Cost for the full five days of Mental Mastery is \$ 995.00 - save \$245.00.

STOP THE TAX ON SPORT

As a small business person, and involved with a number of sports clubs, I find the GST a nightmare, turning everyone into unpaid tax collectors, having to spend hours of their time doing reams of paper work. The only people who benefit from the GST are the government and big business. It isn't too late to STOP THE GST, and I urge everyone to remember this at the next election and vote to rescind it. Remember, if we do nothing, nothing changes!

3 Getting Uncomfortable by John Bermingham, Level 2 Licensee

I believe the concept of the comfort zone is a powerful metaphor for those interested in personal growth. All athletes can relate to those feelings of 'discomfort' whenever they are challenged to reach for a new level of achievement and can inherently identify with this concept. However I believe that the traditional way of representing the comfort zone as a temperature thermostat (as per Sportsmind book Chap 6 - ed.) is limited because it is a static model being used to illustrate a dynamic system. Perhaps a more useful model is as follows :

In this model, the comfort zone is a range in which an individual will 'achieve' at any time. The extent of this range will ultimately be a reflection of our self image and what we see ourselves as capable of achieving. Whenever we operate within this zone, we will feel within control. The upper limits of this zone will depend largely upon our beliefs of what is possible, while the lower limits reflect the minimum standards that we are comfortable with. It is impossible for an individual to operate outside their comfort zone for any extended period. By definition, operating outside the comfort zone will induce anxiety and either of two outcomes is possible. Either the anxiety will provide a stimulus to kick back into the zone, or the individual may be prepared to alter their zone so that their current status fits inside their comfort zone. For example, an individual who steps on the scales and finds their weight has increased above a level that was compatible with their current self image has two choices. Either take action to reduce their weight, or change their image of what is acceptable and be resigned to their increased weight.

For consistent success and increasing achievement over time, it's essential to have a comfort zone that slopes upwards - yet many people operate within a comfort zone that remains static, or even decreases. How can we encourage people to extend their comfort zone?

In goal setting it's important to set goals that truly challenge and stretch our capabilities. If someone sets a goal of a level of achievement that already exists within their comfort zone, then no significant progress will have been made. These people will be avoiding the anxiety and fear that accompanies any attempt to achieve above their comfort zone. It is my experience that all sports people will be presented at some stage in their careers with the opportunity to make a giant leap forward in their level of achievement. This is the nature of how progress is made in sport. Often this opportunity will come at an unexpected moment. The big issue is whether the sports person will be ready to seize the opportunity - or will subconscious forces kick into play to maintain the status quo.

Unfortunately, most will not be ready because the current range of their comfort zone doesn't encompass this higher level of achievement. We have all heard of the golfer who describes himself as a 'mid 80's' player, who goes out and scores 37 on the first nine, but then proceeds to hit 48 for the second nine to fulfil his current self image. The real disaster is that this opportunity may not present itself again.

So how do we prepare effectively to take advantage of these opportunities? How do we purposely set our comfort zone on an upward path so that it will eventually encompass all of the goals that we have set for ourselves? There are a number of active steps we can introduce to our mental preparation to assist in this.

* Use visualisation to change our self image. Our self image is the determinant of the range of our comfort zone. A powerful illustration of this is presented by Mark Tewksbury, a Canadian swimmer who won the 100m back stroke in the 1992 Olympics. For several years

he had been ranked 2nd or 3rd in the world, but still couldn't "see himself as number 1." He recognised the need to change his self image of what was possible for himself, so he practised visualisation regularly. The result was that on the morning of the Olympic final, despite the nerves and the anticipation, he felt in control because "he had been there before."

* Identify and challenge our limiting beliefs for it is these beliefs that define the upper limit of our comfort zone.

* Learn to interpret our performances in an empowering and optimistic manner. Each time we achieve at the upper level of or above our comfort zone, take credit for the outcome; use it as evidence to adjust your beliefs and self image upwards; and expect this level for yourself in the future.

An aspect of this representation of the comfort zone is that it doesn't necessarily get wider over time. As the upper limit rises, so does our intolerance of low achievements - our minimum acceptable standards are also adjusted upwards.

4 Coaching Resources

To assist teachers and coaches, I have made available the next in my series of coaching handouts, which can be freely photocopied and passed on to your athletes. This handout follows the theme of the newsletter on building [positive sportsmanship](#). The exercise is best undertaken as a team, and would ideally be preceded by some discussion on what it means to be a champion and to 'win'.

5 Positive Intent

This article was written by my Aikido instructor David Dangerfield, 3rd Dan Black Belt of the Aikido Institute: "A while ago we were playing a game of 'Stuck in the Mud' with the juniors at the Dojo. I noticed that if the children were left to play the game they quickly organised around the principle of trying to stay free themselves. Following this principle they were all quite quickly tagged by the chasers. I asked them to change their method and focus only on freeing others who had been tagged. Using this principle the majority stayed free permanently. Since that time I have repeated this experiment always with the same result.

I believe there is a very important lesson in this principle and that it relates to the manner in which outcomes can change under no greater influence than a difference in INTENTION. This warrants considerable thought."

I define positive intention in sport as a combination of Passion, Skill, Fun and Respect. To teach your athletes technical skills and tactics is relatively easy - teaching them to play with enthusiasm and passion, to enjoy the game, and have respect for themselves, their opponents and officials requires more thought, and a commitment to higher ideals than just winning.

6 Mental Mastery

If you're serious about improving your sporting or coaching abilities, consider the Mental Mastery and Coaching Excellence courses. For the first time these will be offered at the Sports Super Centre on the Gold Coast - providing an unequalled opportunity to learn, train and relax at Australia's best and newest sports training facility, and Australia's best beaches.

Accommodation and meals at the Sports Super Centre for the courses is only \$50.00 per day! (plus GST). For more details see my website, or give me a call. An enrolment form is enclosed - note that there are generous early bird discounts.

OTHER FORTHCOMING COURSES

SPORTS HYPNOSIS [Byron Bay]
September 24th - October 8th, 2000

SPORTS NLP PRACTITIONER [Bris.]
January 2nd - 21st, 2001

Sports HYPNOSIS

Using Sports Hypnosis techniques, not only can an athlete successfully change an unwanted behaviour or habit, but limiting perceptions and beliefs can be released; pain controlled and injuries healed more rapidly; self confidence increased; and sports performances significantly improved.

If you're interested in exploring sports hypnosis, and learning how to tap into your unconscious resources, get in quick because numbers are limited to twelve places! The course goes from September 24 - October 8. More Sportsmind Successes!

"My sessions with Jeffrey have taught me how to ask myself the right questions. I now know how to use my self talk and mind to get exactly what I want in my life. I believe his work can make a great difference in any area of your life!" Shelley Oates-Wilding, Olympic Kayaker.

"This book is the most vital, necessary reading for any sportsperson regardless of level in competition. Informative, relevant, practical and cleverly expressed. Overall Jeffrey Hodges' books offer everything to achieve success, providing a defined edge over the competition." Michael Orec, Middleweight Kickboxing & Muay-Thai Champion ISKA, Qld.

COACHING HANDOUT #3 : POSITIVE SPORTSMANSHIP

By Jeffrey Hodges M.Sc.(Hons), Sportsmind Institute

1. CHAMPIONS IN YOUR LIFE

Identify someone who was / is a good sportsperson and who you respect. It may be a team mate, a coach, a friend—but pick someone who you personally know and are familiar with.

Describe their personal qualities and character. What was it about the behaviour and performance of this person that inspired, motivated and influenced you?

What personal changes and achievements did you accomplish under the influence of this person?

2. THE POWER OF INTENTION & THE MEANING OF WINNING

"A while ago we were playing a game of 'Stuck in the Mud' with the juniors at the Dojo. I noticed that if the children were left to play the game they quickly organised around the principle of trying to stay free themselves. Following this principle they were all quite quickly tagged by the chasers. I asked them to change their method and focus only on freeing others who had been tagged. Using this principle the majority stayed free permanently. Since that time I have repeated this experiment always with the same result. I believe there is a very important lesson in this principle and that it relates to the manner in which outcomes can change under no greater influence than a difference in INTENTION. This warrants considerable thought." *David Dangerfield, 3rd Dan Black Belt of the Aikido Institute.*

"Success is the peace of mind that is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming. Furthermore only one person can ultimately judge the level of your success—you." *John Wooden, famous basketball coach.*

"It's great to win, but its also great fun just to be in the thick of any truly well and hard-fought contest against opponents you respect, whatever the outcome." *Jack Nicklaus, winner 4 US Opens, 3 British Opens and a record 6 Masters titles.*

"Even when I went to the playground, I never picked the best players. I picked guys with less talent, but who were willing to work hard, who had the desire to be great." *Earvin "Magic" Johnson, NBA player*

"If you can react the same way to winning and losing, that's a big accomplishment. That quality is important because it stays with you the rest of your life, and there's going to be a life after tennis that's a lot longer than your tennis life." *Chris Evert, champion tennis player.*

It's interesting to note that Chris Evert's winning percentage .8996, (ie she won nearly 9 out of every 10 matches she played against the best in the world), is the highest in the history of professional tennis. Yet she says that it's important to see winning and losing in the same way. It's interesting to recognise that probably the greatest golfer ever, and the greatest woman tennis player of all time - both have a broader intent when they play. That winning for them is not just about winning the game. Read the biographies or some of the quotes from any of the greatest sports champions of any generation, and you will find that they actually see their sport in a much broader way than just 'winning'. I believe when you hold a broader intent—then you win more anyway—and because of that attitude, you also win even if you lose the match! Many of the problems we see in sport today—performance enhancing drugs, gambling corruption, excessive violence, eating disorders, and so on are a result of a having just a narrow, winning intention, rather than a broader appreciation that sees sport as personal development.

Having read the previous quotes, what do you think? What does 'winning' mean to you? How do you define success? Relate your answers to the first question on champions in your life.

MY VISION OF SPORTSMANSHIP

This exercise is designed to give you a chance to imagine a personal, positive vision of sportsmanship for your team—whether you are a player, coach or parent—and to identify specific behaviours that you can do to encourage positive sportsmanship in the team.

A vision is an ideal, an inspiration towards which we want to strive because it matches our values and beliefs. Without a vision, individuals, teams, and even nations begin the slide into mediocrity and apathy. However a vision that is too general, and that is not grounded in clearly achievable behaviours remains an unreachable dream. Ensure you think of specific behaviours that characterise and support your vision.

1. Describe your vision of the relationship between coach and players, and between members of the team.
2. Describe how you would like individuals and the team as a whole to respond to defeats.
3. Describe how you would like individuals and the team as a whole to respond to victories.
4. Describe your vision of the relationship between players, coaches and officials.
5. Describe your vision of the role of parents and supporters.

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For more coaching handouts and resources call 07 5445 7994

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