The 12 Hidden Laws of Performance:
Applying Ancient Wisdom to Modern Sport

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The 12 Hidden Laws of Performance in Summary

Foreword

Are you a champion?
Would you like to be?

Athletic performance is perhaps the ultimate proving ground for psychological insight. Day after day, in gyms, training grounds, and stadiums around the world, people put their minds and bodies on the line in pursuit of perfection. Where an

idea comes from isn't important; the only question any athlete worth their salt asks is "Does it work?"

The book you are about to read works. It is an elegant blending of ancient wisdom, inspiring stories and cutting edge psychological practice. But more than that, it's a guidebook you can use on your journey to success in sport and in life. As Donald McNaughton, a top performance coach to real-life champions points out , you do need the physical skills to succeed in your chosen field of endeavor. But more than that, you must have 'the mental skill to allow yourself to do what you know you are physically capable of doing.'

In working with Donald over the past few years, I have been continually impressed by the way he is able to use cutting edge mind technology with a simplicity that works for everyone from an Olympic athlete to an elite footballer to a group of teenagers trying to find their way in the world. What's even more impressive is that you can absorb so much of that wisdom through the pages that follow.

This book won't give you the physical skills it takes to succeed. No book can. But what it can give you is even more important, because it is within your control – the mental skills, inspiration and understanding that fuel the physical actions that turn failure into success and winners into champions. Read this book, enjoy the stories and reflect on the laws of success. Then go out into the arena and apply what you have learned. The life you change may be your own!

Michael Neill, internationally renowned success coach and author of *You Can Have What You Want*, *Supercoach* and *Effortless Success*

Praise for Don MacNaughton

"I have got to know Don MacNaughton very well over the two years he has helped me at Inverness Caledonian Thistle FC. He has helped to transform the club during this period following its relegation and promotion in successive years. His techniques are simple but extremely effective and the players have all come

to admire and respect his intuitive and instructive manner. Donald can easily teach and improve large or small groups but is inspirational on a one to one basis; with any sporting pursuit. I have no hesitation in recommending anyone to employ Donald MacNaughton – it would be a massive step in securing a brighter and more satisfying future."

Terry Butcher, Ex England International Captain

"*Donald has impressed me with his understanding of what matters in sports performance. Mental skills are the decisive factor in what makes an athlete successful, and he knows how to present and implement this training the right way. I'm looking forward to using the 12 laws with our athletes.*"

Sacha Van Der Most, Head of Youth Development Chivas USA

"Donald MacNaughton delivers the hidden keys to internal personal commitment and mental motivation in this straightforward, hard-hitting book that reveals the workings of a successful athlete's mind."

Steve Chandler, Author of '*Time Warrior*'

"I have been working as a sports psychologist for over 35 years and have written

and published 10 books on the subject. I have had the honor and privilege of working with Donald MacNaughton many times and I must say that his genuine, authentic and knowledgeable understanding of the material in his book as well as his ability to deliver its essence in his work is remarkable. I intend to keep this wonderful book by my side as a handy quick reference to helping me to help my athletes succeed. If the mental game is what you are after, you must read this book."

Dr. Jerry Lynch, Author of '*Thinking Body, Dancing Mind*' and '*The Way of the Champion*'

"When it comes to working with athletes, no one is better than Donald MacNaughton. He has a way of cutting through all extraneous thought to get to the essence of what it takes to maximize performance. His results prove it. Not only that, the "laws" he works with apply not only to athletes but to everyone in daily life."

Jack Pransky, Ph.D, Author of '*Somebody Should Have Told Us!: Simple Truths for Living Well*'

“Donald has helped me to become mentally stronger and more balanced and consistent in my mental preparation, even in high stress situations. He has taught me to avoid negative thoughts and form positive images, taking positive lessons from all situations”

Ben Kilner, GB World Cup snowboarder

“By combining cutting edge principles of modern sports coaching together with a remarkable understanding of the Natural Laws, Donald has given us a powerful aid to take control of our progression. This book can be used as a personal guide or as a useful coaching resource. The fusion of modern and ancient principles provides a firm root while also eliciting power inspiration.”

Tony Felix , Martial Arts champion, International Martial Arts Coach, Personal Trainer, NLP Master Practitioner and Life Coach.

“Us Scottish folk don’t mince our words with one another, we say it how it is. Here’s how it is; Donald’s absolutely the real deal, straight to the point and totally authentic and his book is too... Buy it!”

Ali Campbell, Author of “Just Get On with It”

“All my players have different personality traits, and I have found Donald's book a real asset in providing my players with the tools required to continue their journey in pursuit of excellence.
Having worked with Donald before I can not only highly recommend his work, I can also vouch for him as a great person.”
Lee Johnson, Manager Oldham Athletic FC

“Donald takes sports psychology theory and transforms it into an effective skillset anybody can put to work for greater performance!”
Eric Black, Ex Scotland International Footballer and EPL Coach

“Mental Skills is a vital part of being a professional footballer and having worked with Don at ICT I would say “The 12 Hidden Laws of Performance” is a must have for any young player wanting to be the best player he can be.”
Ritchie Foran, Captain Inverness Caledonian Thistle F.C.

“I've worked with Donald at a couple of clubs and he certainly helps get the best out of the individual. For a young player to get the best out of themselves, mastering the mental game goes alongside physical preparation and this book is

a must for any young player."
John Rankin, Captain Dundee United Football Club

"As a player, I could relate to "The 12 Hidden Laws of Performance" really well and I think it has helped me when coming out of my comfort zone and approaching new challenges. I like the idea that the most powerful thing we have is the mind and this book is a must read for any footballer who wants to learn how to get the best out of himself."
Lee McCulloch, Captain Glasgow Rangers Football Club

The Story Behind the Author and the Book

So why should you read a book written by a guy from the Highlands of Scotland on sport performance? Well, this book is my gift to you and a way of sharing a little of my experiences from a lot of the world. I've loved sport all my life and

when I've been aligned with this love the magic has shone in my life. Above my desk I keep a picture of a little boy of four kicking a big football on the beach in Northumberland, England with his dad. The picture tells you more about me than any CV ever could and shows what is important in my life and what I've focused on. There have been points in my life when I've moved away from being the boy in the picture. I've been lost at times and I've taken different paths but it is when I've come back to find myself in that little footballer that I have felt most alive and I've rediscovered my true self. We are all given clues in our life of the places where we come alive and the places where we really live. Life has a way of leaving a trail and the picture above my desk is a part of mine.

My journey began in a little Scottish Highland village called Brora in Sutherland. Growing up there offered me opportunities to play, to grow and to explore and I loved sport, especially football, tennis and badminton. Those were the days when I would go out with my mates and kick a football around until we could no longer see in the dark – and even then we'd still try to keep playing! It didn't matter if we lost track of time because our mums would call us in; I now know this to be termed as being in the flow state but more on that later. My mum also loved sport and encouraged me to play. She was a really good tennis player and I learned

through her how great it is to have someone who encourages you on your team. My dad took me to my first big football game when I was nine years old; I had never seen so many people in one place and I had never experienced an atmosphere like it over 100k fans in Hampden on that day I felt sure I wanted to be a footballer and feel what that atmosphere would be like .

I loved to play football, as many young boys do, but to become a professional would require something more; I would need discipline, focus and a growth mindset, all subjects covered in detail in the following chapters. I had some great influences in my early years of sport, particularly my gym teacher Willie Mackay and science teacher Alfie Abbott who ran the school football team and who both really encouraged me. But, life has a way of throwing you a curve ball and when my dad died after a long illness when I was just 11 years old, my life was thrown into disarray. A happy-go-lucky kid turned into a surly, angry boy with a chip on his shoulder. How we deal with life's challenges is important and we should always remember that everyone does the best they can with the resources they have at the time. At the age of 11, all I thought I had was my anger. I put my poor mum through a lot but she taught me the power of love and acceptance, and that even they can't guarantee instant results.

Teenage years can be such defining times in a young person's life. I recently bumped into my old gym teacher Willie MacKay and I was able to tell him what sport has given me in my life; from my perspective, more than any other skill set and more than I learned academically in school or at university. The ability to set goals, fall down, get back up again, and work as a team – all learned through sport. Through my love of sport I have also been able to make friends and travel the world, speaking the universal language of football. I remember hitchhiking through Europe in the 80s and discovering that everyone knew of Kenny Dalglish and Scotland. Sadly, I then arrived in Turkey when the dreadful Heysel stadium disaster happened.

I never did get to be a professional footballer but through football, I've learned a lot about what it takes to become a professional in sport and how passion and talent are not enough. When you want something, you need discipline, you need focus, and you need the right people on your team to guide you. You also need a good pair of ears on your head that are open to listen to those who guide you.

On a trip to America to do some coaching, I was involved in a car crash that triggered a devastating chain of events. At the time of the accident, I was a fit mid-fielder weighing around 11 stone (154 lbs) but within a year, I barely had the energy to walk and I was on my way to becoming a near-death weight of only 6 stone (84 lbs). I had walked away from the crash relatively unscathed but the psychological effects manifested into an eating disorder and I became gripped by anorexia. I was in hospital for five months but thanks to some innovative therapy, I was able to begin rebuilding my life. My journey back to health was not an easy one but through the process I learned that it's the little things you do on an everyday basis that really count, and my personal experience has given me a unique perspective on the mental challenges that competitive athletes so often face.

It was being able to go back to that little boy on the beach that held the key to changing my life as it allowed me to reconnect with my love of sport. From there I was able to see where my skills overlapped with my passions and this allowed me to see new opportunities and, with a bit of work, those opportunities increased and kept coming. In the 10 years since starting my performance

consulting business, Zoned in Performance, I've gone from having zero clients and earning only £100 per week from working in a tennis club to travelling the world and working with international teams and some of the biggest names in sport. This is not something that happened by magic but by being aligned with who I am and working hard on my skills. I think it's fair to say that anyone who met me 20 years ago would struggle to believe that I've achieved all that I have today because, not putting too fine a point on it, I was not one of life's shining diamonds and it would have been difficult to even recognise the diamond in the rough within me. Everyone has the potential to change and I know for certain that anything is possible when you are open to embracing that change.

This book shares with you the 12 hidden laws of performance that *you* can use to achieve *your* dreams and realise *your* goals in sport and life. I have used "superstar" illustrations within the book but in my everyday life and business encounters I help people who have not yet hit the back page. Many of my clients are now good friends and they are great examples of 'ordinary' people who have taken amazing steps to achieve their goals. One such person is Joe, a young soccer player. His story highlights the fact that when we choose our attitude, amazing things can happen and life opens up. Joe was a boy with amazing talent

and, like most of us, his challenge was to allow that talent to shine. Joe had effectively shut his future opportunities down through the emotional lens he was carrying around. He was so caught up with the 'if' in life that he thought in terms of, "If I get a run in the first team *then* I will have a good attitude" instead of thinking in terms of developing a good attitude first. There are no guarantees but Joe learned that he must apply himself as if he *was* a first team player and train as if he was already a first team player in order to become that first team player. The next day he was playing in front of a crowd of 30 people and unbeknown to him the manager of the first team was one of those watching him. He was impressed by what he saw and immediately put Joe into the first team squad for the game the next day.

On the day of the game, Joe came out on to the pitch to play in front of a crowd of 58 000 people – as the song lyrics say, what a difference a day makes. When you learn to recognise and then choose your attitude, you learn to recognise the opportunities that are all around you, and you learn to choose the ones that are right for you. Opportunities are everywhere and they are yours for the taking, you just have to take steps to ensure you're not shutting yourself off from them. The following chapters will show you how.

Acknowledgments

With grateful thanks to my coaches and teachers who have made a monumental difference to my coaching and to myself.

My sports coaches Alfie Abbott and Willie Mackay who didn't just see a headstrong, argumentative child, but the potential to be something better.

Dedicated to my Mam, Jean MacNaughton, who I miss every day.

28/4/25 to 10/7/10

"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye"
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Introduction

Sports psychology only became a recognised science in the 1920s but its origins can be traced back to the 'healthy mind, healthy body' philosophy of Ancient Greek and Chinese civilisations. Many of the guiding principles known as the Laws of the Universe also have origins dating back centuries but it was not until

the early 1900s that books on the subject began to bring the principles to a wider audience. However, the more we learn about them, the more we come to realise that the Laws have always been in existence and always will be in existence, regardless of whether we are aware of them or not.

The Laws of the Universe are described as guidelines that can enhance our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual growth, allowing us to live fully and realise our true potential in whatever we choose to do. Mental skills training is recognised today as playing a key role in helping competitive athletes to achieve their full potential in sport and the techniques used to enhance sporting performance are now also used to equally great affect in other areas of life. Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) began as a study of successful language patterns in the 1970s and has since developed into a study of effective behavioural patterns alongside language. In brief, ‘neuro’ relates to how we use our bodies; ‘linguistic’ relates to how we use language and how we communicate; and ‘programming’ relates to the maps we make and the strategies we use in our brain. At its core, NLP is a study of what makes successful people successful and is used in sport as a powerful method of discovering how top athletes produce excellence in their performances.

The basic principle behind the Laws of the Universe, also known as the Laws of Nature, is that everything in the universe is energy and our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions are no exception. Everything we think, feel, say, and do is responsible for our reality so, in other words, your emotional state has a direct impact on your physical state. The key lesson that all of us can learn through an understanding of the Universal Laws is that we all have the capacity to change our circumstances in life by changing our mental attitude to them and by learning how to use the natural flow of energy that exists all around us to create the world we want.

In sport, it's now widely recognised that champions become champions from within, and the key to realising a top performance is to develop mental skill alongside physical skill. The connection between the Universal Laws and sports performance is therefore the phenomenal power of the mind and by applying ancient wisdom to modern sport, a powerful new way of thinking about improving sports performance emerges.

How to Use the Worksheets

The Universal Laws have always been in existence and will always be in existence whether you choose to acknowledge them or not. The universe is bigger than you; everything in the universe is a form of energy and the energy that forms *you* is just a tiny part of it.

Getting to the top of your sport is a journey and staying the course takes considerable energy. Top performers *have* that energy.

The energy of the entire universe is yours for the taking: all you have to do is align yourself with it. Energy is everywhere, it's all around us, and we all have equal opportunity to tap into the *same* energy source. The energy that top performers have is also available to you so all you need to do to improve your performance is learn how to tap into the energy source in the same way they do. It really is that simple.

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them" – Albert Einstein

Making improvements means making changes: getting different results means doing things differently. If you're not happy with your current performance, you have to be prepared to make changes as without change, things can only stay as they are. Successful people have successful habits; they think successfully and they take successful actions. Your current thoughts and actions are not bringing

you the success you want so it's time to change the way you think in order to change the actions you take. This can mean changing the habits of a lifetime but the good news is that habits *can* be changed and they can be changed in as little as 21 days of concentrated effort.

Make changes one step at a time.

The worksheet at the end of each chapter provides practical guidance on how to promote change along with thought-provoking hints and tips to help you succeed. Commit to making that change by dedicating a full calendar month to each exercise, giving yourself an average of 30 days to focus on changing an old habit or creating a new habit. Concentrate on one exercise at a time but you can choose to begin from any starting point. Everything moves in cycles, just like the seasons in nature, so if the hidden Law revealed in one particular chapter instantly resonates with you, begin there.

"It is through science that we prove, but through intuition that we discover"
- Henri Poincare

Discover your true potential by rediscovering your natural instincts …

…on your marks, get set, change

Law One

A Top Performance Is an Inspired Performance

Find Your Passion

"To succeed…You need to find something to hold on to, something to motivate

you, something to inspire you"

- Tony Dorsett, American football running back

A great many successful sportspeople have been described as 'inspired athletes' or 'inspired players' and their achievements described as 'inspired' performances, so what makes them inspired? What's the source of that inspiration?

It's a Universal Law that we're all connected: we live in a world where everything is connected to everything else, including us. Everything we do, say, think, and believe affects others and the universe around us. In other words, we all have the capacity to both inspire others and be inspired by others.

Champions are made, not born.

So who or what inspires the 'inspired': who or what makes the sports champions? Behind every successful athlete there's a successful support team who all play an important role in inspiring the success of the athlete they support.

They might be a physiotherapist, a nutritionist, a sports psychologist, a fitness trainer or a coach but they are all inspired to do what they do and to do it to the best of their ability in order to allow those they support to achieve *their* full potential. They are *all* inspired performers: they are all passionate about what they do.

Each and every one of us has within us our own source of inspiration as we are all inspired by the things we feel passionate about. A coach who is passionate about their sport instils that passion into everyone around them: an inspired coach can inspire every athlete they connect with at every level of their sport. They may not be the champion athlete's coach on the day that they become champion but they may well have inspired that athlete on their journey to the top of their sport. Athletes who become champions often attribute their success to the coaches who inspired them at each stage in their career, so who or what inspires the coaches?

Successful coaches are undoubtedly inspired by other successful coaches just as successful athletes are inspired by the success of other athletes. Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is, in a nutshell, a study of what makes successful

people successful and at its core it's simply a method of discovering how *anyone* produces excellence in *anything.* NLP is now widely used in sport, in business, in education, and in general by anyone interested in developing better personal effectiveness in life. NLP sport focuses specifically on the success of sportspeople but the common link across all areas is that NLP is a way of discovering how to be the best *you* can be in whatever it is *you* do.

NLP encourages curiosity. It encourages everyone to be curious about themselves, curious about other people, and curious about the world they live in. Through NLP, you become aware of the connections that already exist between you and those you study and you gain an understanding of how you see the world and how you think. Crucially, you also learn to question your views. Do the successful people you aspire to be see things and think about things the way you do? Is it possible that your current beliefs and behavioural patterns could be holding you back?

What began as a study of successful language patterns back in the 1970s developed rapidly into a study of effective behavioural patterns, encompassing not only the language used by successful people but also the routine thought

processes, emotions, and actions of high achievers. NLP sports models of excellence are inspirational role models but NLP promotes the importance and the value of maintaining your own individual uniqueness. Much can be learned from following the training schedule of a successful athlete or from eating the same diet but to really learn the secret of their success, you need to understand how they connect with the world and the people around them on a daily basis. You need an understanding of their routine 'habits' – how do they view life; how do they respond physically and emotionally to everyday challenges?

Inspired Connections

When good athletes become *great* athletes, people always want to know who inspired them. Most successful people model themselves on inspirational characters and sport is no exception. In the 2002 Salt Lake City winter Olympics, Jim Shea of the USA won gold in the skeleton. In the 1964 Innsbruck games, his father Jim Shea Sr. was a member of the US ski team and his grandfather, Jack Shea, won two speed skating gold medals in the Lake Placid games in1932. It would seem that Jim Shea Jr. only had to look to his family for inspiration.

So who or what inspired Jack Shea to become a double-gold medal winner back

in 1932? He didn't have an immediate family connection to the sport. Perhaps it was fellow American Charles Jewtraw who won the first speed skating event in the first ever winter Olympics held at Chamonix in 1924. Jewtraw's win caused an upset in a sport normally dominated by Scandinavians, so where did *his* inspiration come from? Perhaps Shea's inspiration came from Finnish speed skater Clas Thunberg who won an awe-inspiring three gold medals in 1932. Of course, he may not have been inspired by anyone or anything to do with his sport but he would no doubt still be aware of influential characters in his life who helped him to achieve his dream.

'The ripple of influence' is a term used to describe the ripple effect an inspirational coach can have on the lives of others. Just as one pebble dropped into a pond will create a great many ripples that spread out across the water, a coach may influence and inspire a great many people beyond those they coach.

Many young athletes are both influenced and inspired by their coaches. Figure skating champion Sonja Henie of Norway was only fifteen years of age when she won her first Olympic gold medal in 1928. She went on to win a further two golds, matching the record set by her coach Gillis Grafstrom of Sweden who won his

third consecutive gold medal at St. Moritz in 1928.

Using a sports hero as a role model allows us to study what they say, what they think, what they feel, and what they do. To become successful ourselves, we have to understand the 'habits' of successful people. Henie no doubt observed the habits of her coach and Shea Jr. no doubt picked up the habits of his father and grandfather. Studying the habits of successful people you admire or inspirational people in your life can open your mind to the potential for achieving more.

Connect with your passion and your true self to find your inspiration.

Everyone has the potential to change and everyone has the potential to be excellent in whatever they put their mind to. What *you* put your mind to is what inspires *you.* Inspired sportspeople put their minds' into only what's important, their sport. Sport is their passion.

It takes a clear understanding of who you are now and where you are now to be able to move forward and get to where you want to be. People change, situations

change, and the world we live in is constantly changing so it's important to continue questioning whether your own beliefs and attitudes have changed accordingly. Through NLP it becomes possible to identify the changes you need to make and to be open to the positive benefits that making those changes could bring. Effectively, NLP is a study of how to be a better you, in everything you do.

Strong Connections

A successful sports team is much more than a group of inspired players, it's a group of players who are all connected by team spirit.

(team spirit image here?)

Team Spirit = a creative energy found in teams who have greater strength and ability as a unit compared to as individuals.

A successful team coach develops a successful team by observing the principles of this 'all for one and one for all' inspired Law of performance and promoting team spirit. We only have to look back at England's performance in the 2010

FIFA World Cup to see a good example of the catastrophic effects of the ‘every man for himself’ attitude in team sports. The England squad was comprised of the cream of English soccer players but, clearly, a group of talented individuals doesn’t necessarily create a talented team.

Jim Loehr is a world-renowned performance psychologist. He says, “Full engagement is the pathway to extraordinary performance,” and in relation to team sports he adds, “Players who are fully engaged bring their best energy to the team.” So, what does it mean to be “fully engaged” and where can a player’s “best energy” be sourced?

The missing link between ‘every man for himself’ and ‘one for all’ is team spirit.

Team spirit is the source of a team’s creative energy and team spirit is also the source of a player’s ‘best energy’. Best energy is inspired energy; positive energy that creates the will to win. If a player has the will to win, they are fully focused on playing their best and on doing their bit to allow the team to achieve a best performance: they are ‘fully engaged’.

"There are plenty of teams in every sport that have great players and never win titles. Most of the time, those players aren't willing to sacrifice for the greater good of the team. The funny thing is, in the end, their unwillingness to sacrifice only makes individual goals more difficult to achieve. One thing I believe to the fullest is that if you think and achieve as a team, the individual accolades will take care of themselves. Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships"

- Michael Jordan, basketball legend

Team spirit is something that can develop naturally among players who spend a lot of time together in training as well as in competition but an inspired team coach can also inspire team spirit in his players by promoting team meetings and encouraging open, honest lines of communication. England's perceived lack of team spirit in the World Cup drew attention to the fact that providing the appropriate environment and opportunities for a team to bond is an essential element of competitive team sport preparation. And, the culture within the team may ultimately have led to a lack of connection between the players and the manager. A positive team environment is essential if team spirit is to develop and the positive vibe generated by a team of connected players becomes what is

essentially a key aspect of the 'invisible architecture of success'. As team manager Fabio Capello discovered, bringing together of a group of world class players does not guarantee you a world class team.

Inspirational Speeches - Inspire and be Inspired

Dedicate Your Game

(American football locker-room speech)

Most of you have been playing football for a good number of years now. I want you to take a moment, take a quiet moment to yourself now, and think about all the people who have helped you in your football journey through the years. Think of all those people who have influenced you…your parents, siblings, and family; your different coaches, your teachers, your friends, neighbours, and relatives; the people in the community, the fans, and the supporters. Take this time to remember all of them.

Remember the coach who taught you how to tackle for the first time. Remember the others who played with you and against you to make you who you are today.

Remember the fans and supporters who raised monies to fund your equipment through the years. Remember the adult who played catch with you after you learned to walk. Remember the family member who encouraged you to go on when you wanted to quit. Remember your parents who bought your shoes, your Under Armour®, and dropped everything to take you to practices and attend your games. Take this time to remember all of them.

Now, I want you to pick one person, one special person who in your mind sticks out above the rest. Someone who has helped you more than the others. That person who is most responsible for you being here in this locker-room today. You are going to dedicate your performance today to them. This is your day to honour them, to repay them for all that they sacrificed for you.
Keep that person in your thoughts as you go all out in each and every play, so that when the final whistle blows, you will be satisfied that you honoured them with a total sacrifice of yourself…from your mind and from your body.
Let's get it done!
- Mike Sellers, PreGameSpeeches.com

Ancient Way to Modern Day

In 1897, Norman Triplett, a psychologist from Indiana University was the first researcher to confirm that cyclists, in the majority of cases, rode faster when they cycled in groups or in pairs compared to when they cycled alone. In 1898, he became the first doctor recognised for publishing an article on social facilitation: how the presence of coaches or other athletes enhances arousal in sport.
In 1920, Dr Carl Diem, creator of the traditional torch relay in today's modern Olympics, opened the first dedicated sports psychology laboratory in Berlin and in 1923, Dr Coleman Griffith offered the first course in sports psychology at the University of Illinois in the USA. Griffith led extensive research into the psychological factors that affect sports performance and published two books, *The Psychology of Coaching* in 1926 and *The Psychology of Athletes* in 1928.

Triplett's early research led to further studies and the results of each new era of research continued to lead to a greater understanding of what had gone before. We can all learn from the experiences of others and it's a message that has been

passed down through centuries of sayings and proverbs. An ancient Chinese saying is:

A bridge is not built from one piece of wood.

The way to the top in sport is to seek out those who can help you, and to accept all offers of help that will support you on your journey to success.

The First Law of Olympic Performance

"This was the most splendid team performance"

Lord Sebastian Coe, after winning the Olympic bid

No one gets to the top of their game on their own – not even competitors in solo sports. Behind every Olympic athlete, there's a whole team of significant others; coaches, physios, trainers, nutritionists…the list goes on. Lord Sebastian Coe, Chair of the London 2012 Olympic Committee, knows a thing or two about team work and the inspiration that each and every one of us can find in other people. We are all connected, and in all areas of life, Olympic sport included, it's an undeniable fact that top performances are inspired performances.

Seb Coe was inspired to become an athlete by watching athletes from his local area competing in the 1968 Mexico Olympics. John and Sheila Sherwood won bronze and silver medals that year, and all of the pupils in Coe's school crowded round an old black and white television to watch them perform. Coe said, "By the time I got back to my classroom, I knew what I wanted to do and what I wanted to be." Of course, it was not only Coe's dream to become an athlete, he made it his goal to become a *champion* athlete; a goal he passionately pursued and achieved by winning two gold and two silver medals in 1980 and 1984. In fact, he is the only man to have won 1500 metre gold twice.

Having been inspired by Olympic champions, Coe himself then became the Olympian who inspired another champion, Dame Kelly Holmes, who became a double gold medal winner in the 2004 Athens Olympics. That's quite a ripple of influence, 1968 all the way through to 2004, but it's a ripple that continues as Holmes continues to inspire today's young athletes.

We can all be inspired *and* inspire. During his athletics career, Coe was coached by his father, Peter, his "greatest inspiration" and then in his political career he became determined to inspire a nation, and the world, by achieving his dream of making the 2012 London Olympics, "the Games for everyone." He wanted the Games to inspire people to challenge themselves to do things they might not have considered doing before, volunteering for example. "People inspired me in my sport when I was running cross-country; the people who were prepared to stand out on a course for six hours in sub-zero temperatures marshalling kids. Looking back, I would never have been able to do anything I have done without the volunteers."

As part of the preparations for the 2012 London Olympics, an entire building was

dedicated to kitting out the Team GB athletes, and a special ceremony was held to recognise the athletes becoming Olympians. It was all part of director of sport Sir Clive Woodward's master plan to inspire a "One Team GB" culture and team spirit across all 1300 members of the team – not just the 550 athletes but also all of the behind-the-scenes staff and volunteers. Behind every champion athlete, there's a champion support team, and each individual in the team feels passionate about doing their best in their role to allow the team as a whole to achieve a best performance. When you find your passion, you find your inspiration, and you find your motivation to be a champion performer in whatever it is you do. Who or what inspires you?

Worksheet 1

Be Inspired – Stay Inspired – Inspire

What or Who Inspires You?

Find some quiet time to create an 'inspiration list' – a list of everything in your life that inspires you. You may find that you can write out a lengthy list without thinking too hard; you may find that only one or two things spring to your mind, or you may find that *nothing* comes to mind at all, you may be feeling totally *un*inspired. If this is the case, you need to find your inspiration.

Be Inspired

Try answering the following:

What do you love about your sport?

What got you involved in your sport?

What keeps you involved in your sport?

What would you miss most if you left your sport?

Who do you admire in your sport?

Who influenced your decision to get into your sport?

You don’t have to find all the answers at once and you don’t need to have an

answer for every question, they are simply suggestions to help you think about potential sources of inspiration. Keep your workbook somewhere visible and accessible and add to it when you rediscover a forgotten source of inspiration.

Inspiration List

Use the following pages to build and add to your 'inspiration list'

I think self-awareness is probably the most important thing
towards being a champion
Billie Jean King

I learned that if you want to make it bad enough,
no matter how bad it is,
you can make it
Gale Sayers

The most powerful weapon on earth
is the human soul on fire
Ferdinand Foch

You can't put a limit on anything.
The more you dream, the farther you go
Michael Phelps

Inspiration Board

Turn your list into an 'inspiration board' by adding inspirational images, photographs, quotes, or objects that inspire you and, over time, build a visible representation of everything you feel passionate about. Paste items into the

following pages or create a bigger ‘board’ on a household notice-board or on your fridge door. Don’t leave anything out, even things that seem obvious. For example, if you’re a cyclist, obviously you love cycling but *why* do you love cycling? Is it the feel of being on the bike, is it the sound of the chain turning that you love, or is it the way the world looks as you reach top speed?

Add pictures, clippings, inspirational images…

You can become a winner
only if you are willing to walk over the edge
Damon Runyon

Stay Inspired

When you feel your performances in training or in competition are lacking inspiration, return to your sources. Don't get stuck in a rut waiting for inspiration to strike, actively seek it. Use your inspiration board as a reminder of everything you love about your sport; use it to reconnect with your passion. For example, a

photograph of an inspirational place, person, or moment in time can spark a renewed connection but sometimes it takes a physical visit to an inspirational location or actually spending time in the company of inspirational people. This is where your inspiration board becomes invaluable. The clues to where you'll find your inspiration will all be there. Look for the common threads – is water a common feature; are mountains a common feature; are certain people a common feature, or is there a sporting moment in history that provokes a powerful emotional response in you every time you see it on DVD? Remind yourself of all the great things your sport brings into your life and relight your fire.

Quiet Reflection

Use this space to make notes…

Where have you felt most inspired in the past; what location?
Who has inspired you in the past; what company were you in when you felt most inspired recently?

What have you read, heard, or seen on TV recently that inspired you?

Reflection Notes

Live daringly, boldly, fearlessly.
Taste the relish to be found in competition
- in having put forth the best within you
Henry J Kaiser

I've always made a total effort,
Even when the odds seemed entirely against me.
I never quit trying;
I never felt that I didn't have a chance to win
Arnold Palmer

Inspire

Pass on everything that's great about your sport by being a source of inspiration for others. When you're doing something you love, your passion shines through in everything you do and you become someone who inspires others. Always be your best self and you'll always generate your best energy – you'll also find your name will appear on the 'inspiration lists' created by others.

Worksheet checklist

be inspired
stay inspired
inspire

Find your source of inspiration, find your source of energy

Law Two

Positive Thoughts Generate Positive Outcomes

Create Your Own Positive Vibe

"The mind is the limit. As long as the mind can envision the fact that you can do something, you can do it, as long as you really believe 100 percent"

- Arnold Schwarzenegger

Have you ever had a ‘good feeling’ about something? A feeling that lets you know that whatever it is you’re doing is the right thing for you and it’s the right time for you to be doing it. What is that feeling: how do you define a ‘good feeling’?

Let’s say you’re a three-day-event rider. You’re out on the course on the cross-country element and you’re approaching a difficult combination fence that has two options. One option is technically more challenging than the other with the most challenging option representing the quickest but ‘riskiest’ route through and the less challenging option representing a ‘safer’ but slower route. You’re riding against the clock and will incur time penalties if you fail to complete the course within the time limit but the more technically challenging an obstacle is, the greater the potential to accumulate penalties through a refusal or even a fall – which option do you choose? The answer is, you choose the option that ‘feels’ right. So what creates that feeling?

It’s a Universal Law that *everything* creates a vibration. Everything in the

universe is simply energy and is therefore in constant motion, including us. We're all familiar with the concept of generating physical vibrations but it takes a deeper understanding of the Law of Vibration to realise that we also generate mental vibrations. Every thought, every emotion and every feeling we have creates its own unique vibration in the universe. You can't always *see* things moving or vibrating but you can still recognise that they are. For example, when you're standing still, you're not physically moving but you're able to understand that there are a huge number of muscles contracting and relaxing to keep you standing still. Your body is in a constant state of motion.

Everything is energy, everything vibrates.

This is a concept that can be better understood through scientific research and a study of how an EEG (electroencephalograph) can read the electrical activity of the brain or how an ECG (electrocardiograph) can read the electrical charges of heart contractions but for the purposes of this book, it's going to be left as one of those things that 'just is'! It's not a difficult concept to accept when you think of it in terms of being able to 'feel' an atmosphere. Ever walked into a sports arena and felt an 'electric' atmosphere? Ever walked into a room and felt a 'bad'

atmosphere, even though no-one was actually saying or doing anything to openly suggest hostility? That good or bad vibe that you've experienced is all down to vibrating energy.

So, getting back to choosing the option that 'feels' right out on the cross-country course. The 'feeling' you pick up on is the vibrating energy that's present all around you. Good vibrations are simply positive energy, but here's the thing, it's energy that is being generated by *you.* The option that 'feels' right is the option you choose to think most positively about. Your positive thoughts create positive energy and when you put positive energy out into the universe you attract positive outcomes in return. Think of it a bit like a battery; positive thoughts charge up the energy supply and negative thoughts deplete it. The Universal Law of Vibration is inextricably linked to the Law of Attraction, a concept explained later in ***Law Seven***, but for now, the fact that positive thoughts lead to positive actions which, in turn, leads to positive outcomes is the key message.

A good vibe is the return of positive energy generated by you.

When you *think* positively, you *act* positively. In this case, your positive thoughts

are fuelled by the positive energy being generated by *everything* positive in your immediate environment. This will be a combination of how your ride has gone so far; how confident, secure, and in control you are feeling as the rider in the saddle; how successfully you've negotiated the previous fences and, of course, how confidently your horse is performing. You 'sense' the energy. All of your senses are guiding you – what you're thinking, what you're feeling, what you're seeing, and what you're hearing at that precise moment in time.

In **Law One**, you learned that everything is connected to everything else and everything you do, say, think, and believe affects other people and other things. Out on the cross-country course, your thoughts and actions directly affect the thoughts and actions of your horse, and vice-versa. If you send out positive energy, your horse senses that energy and responds positively. When your horse is sending out positive energy, you sense that energy and respond positively. The end result is an atmosphere 'charged' with positive energy or 'best energy' and it's best energy that creates the will to win – the will to give whatever it is you're doing your best shot.

Positive energy → focused actions → positive results

When you feel an electric atmosphere at a sporting event, you're feeling the positive energy being sent out by everyone present. When you feel a bad atmosphere in a room, you're feeling the negative energy being sent out by everyone present. So here's a thought; what if you're the only one present? Where does that good or bad vibe come from? The answer is, it comes from you. All of your senses generate their own unique vibrations so your own thoughts, words, actions, and beliefs are responsible for the vibe you feel when you're alone. If you're sending out positive energy by thinking positively, you attract positive energy in return. Positive energy brings positive things into your life; it manifests itself as the things you're focusing on achieving. But, if you're sending out negative energy by thinking negatively, you can only attract negative energy in return. If you're focusing only on the negative, only negative things can come into your life.

Let's go back out onto the cross-country course. You're approaching the combination fence feeling positive that the quickest route is the best option. You have a 'good feeling' about it, you believe in your own ability and the ability of your horse, you commit to your choice and you go for it. Result – you're through

safely and on your way to the next obstacle, feeling positively charged and on a roll. However, if you're approaching the same fence feeling unsure of which option to take, doubting your ability to tackle the quickest route and stressing over time penalties if you opt for the 'safer' route, you're thinking negatively and you're not committed to either option. Result – your horse feels the negative energy of your uncertainty and slams on the brakes in front of the fence.

"To achieve great things, you have first to believe it"
- Arsene Wenger, football manager

The Power of the Mind

All vibrations have their own frequency and the vibrations generated by your thoughts are no exception. When you learn to harness the power of your mind, you learn that the higher frequency of positive thoughts can effectively cancel out the lower frequency of negative thoughts.

Austrian downhill skier Franz Klammer not only understood the power of his mind, he understood the phenomenal power of positive thinking. In the 1976 Innsbruck winter Olympics, Klammer was odds-on favourite to win gold. Having

already won numerous races on the World Cup circuit, three of them in that year, he was a huge star and enormously popular with the home crowd in Innsbruck. On the day of the race, 60 000 screaming spectators lined the course to cheer on their hero – that's a lot of positive energy. It then transpired that Klammer would ski 15th out of a 15-man seeding: the crowd was audibly disappointed. They believed that his chance of gold was all but lost because snow conditions were such that the course would be a vertical skating rink by then. The positive vibe the crowd had been generating became a 60 000 person strong negative vibe in an instant.

Klammer *must* have felt the change of energy in the atmosphere but if he had chosen to adopt the attitude of the crowd that day, there would have been little point in competing at all. If negative thoughts had entered his head then yes, he *would* already have lost his chance of winning gold. Negative thoughts create negative actions. In competition, that can only result in a poor performance. So, if 60 000 people already believe you have no chance, surely it becomes impossible to remain positive?

Defending Olympic downhill champion Bernhard Russi of Switzerland was the

third skier on the course and he went into an early lead with a time of 1:46:06. Another 11 skiers followed Russi, polishing the snow off the course as they went, unable to beat his time. Then it was Klammer. The crowd watched him crouch in the starting gate. He stared straight ahead, focusing on the icy course in front of him. The crowd held their breath, collectively thinking, “It’s too dangerous; he’ll break his neck.” What thoughts were in his head?

Klammer, known as ‘The Klammer Express’, shot out of the gate and threw himself down the mountain. His split time at 1000 metres was slower than Russi but he gamely carried on, seemingly fearless, and 60 000 gasps could be heard with every risk he took. But, as he neared the finish-line, the energy of the crowd was audibly changing once again and the deafening noise of 60 000 cheering spectators was sending an almighty surge of positive energy into the universe. He crossed the line in 1:45:73, beating Russi by .33 to take the gold medal.

“I thought I was going to crash all the way. I gave myself terrible frights”
- Franz Klammer

So he wasn’t fearless after all. What then gave him the inner strength to give it his all; what allowed him to remain positive in a situation full of potential

negatives? The answer lies in his understanding of the power of his mind. He *knew* he had the physical skill to win gold but crucially, he also had the mental skill to allow himself to do what he knew he was physically capable of doing. The energy of the crowd changed from positive to negative but from Klammer's point of view, nothing had actually changed. All of the potential negatives were out with his control; 15th skier to go – no point fretting about it, it just is; treacherously icy conditions – no point fretting about it, it just is. None of these things had actually changed who he was or changed his ability. He wasted no energy focusing on negative external factors, instead he concentrated totally on the internal factors he *could* control – his attitude. He maintained his own internal positive vibe: that's why he's an Olympic champion.

A positive internal vibe is the 'invisible architecture of success'.

The Power of *Your* Mind

Visualisation, also known as mental rehearsal, is a sports psychology technique that has been used to great effect for many years by top professionals in sport. Essentially, it's a learned mental skill that, when mastered, allows an athlete to 'see' their success as an action replay in their mind's-eye. However, applying this

Law to the technique takes the concept of visualisation beyond simply ‘seeing’ success to actually experiencing it through the use of every sense – sight, smell, sound, touch, and perhaps even taste. It’s widely accepted that to be most effective, visualisation sessions must focus on positive experiences that can be recounted through memory in the athlete’s mind. This means that being able to re-live an actual winning moment by being able to re-create the processes that led to that winning moment will be of much greater benefit than trying to visualise a set of circumstances that have yet to be realised. However, an inspired coach can help athletes to develop visualisation skills that allow *every* positive sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste experienced in training or in competition to be utilised and built into a ‘winning’ experience.

Young athletes or less experienced athletes may not have an actual winning experience to replay in their mind during a visualisation session so, as their coach, it becomes important to encourage these athletes to focus on *every* positive experience they have. Just because they haven’t yet won a javelin throwing competition doesn’t mean they haven’t experienced the *feel* of a winning javelin throw. A visualisation session can focus on any number of small positive moments that can be built into a bigger picture of success.

A bigger picture can be built on tiny details, for example:

- How did the javelin feel in your hand when you achieved a successful throw?
- What was in your line of vision as you prepared to throw?
- What could you hear on your run up?

It will often take a great number of throws to capture enough ‘winning’ moments to form a picture of success but focusing on being able to re-live each and every one of those moments through the use of visualisation can potentially bring even greater rewards than an actual winning experience. Research has shown that an athlete skilled in the use of visualisation techniques can continue to enhance the neural pathways that effectively train their body to perform a precise series of movements, without actually moving.

Visualise your success and create your own internal positive vibe.

Successful athletes don’t just dream of success, they see it, hear it, smell, touch, and taste it too.

Champion golfer Jack Nicklaus has often said that he never takes a shot, in training or in competition, without first of all seeing that shot through his mind's-eye and there are many other top players in a variety of sports who all agree that their winning performances are 'seen' many times before they become realities.

The vibrations created by thinking about an activity stimulate the brain to send electrical signals to the muscles involved in that activity, just as they would if the action was really taking place but without any actual movement occurring. This means that an added benefit of using visualisation is that the pattern of movements needed to create a successful action can be practiced without the muscles suffering physical fatigue in the process.

Competitive athletes use visualisation to prepare themselves for every eventuality at an event so that nothing on the day can throw a wet blanket over their internal positive vibe. They can prepare for noisy crowds, poor weather, and even for their performance not being up to scratch by creating a positive outcome for every situation. British javelin thrower Steve Backley is reported to have prepared by imagining himself to be in the last round of a major competition, in a

losing position and with only one throw left. This could be viewed as a fairly negative situation but visualisation allowed him to 'see' his final throw being technically perfect and winning him the medal.

"Champions aren't made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them – a desire, a dream, a vision"

- Muhammad Ali, heavyweight boxing legend

Ancient Way to Modern Day

In the 1960s, Dr Blaslotto conducted a visualisation study at the University of Chicago. He split a group of basketball players into three groups and then tested how many free-throws each group could make.

The first group was then instructed to practice free-throws every day for one hour. The second group was instructed to visualise themselves taking free-throws every day. The third group was instructed to do nothing.

After 30 days the groups were tested again. The first group had improved by 24

per cent, the second group by 23 per cent, and the third group showed no improvement.
Although this study has a number of flaws that make the evidence far from conclusive, what it does demonstrate is the remarkable power of the mind. The improvement in the second group was virtually the same as in the first group, yet the players in the second group had not physically practiced for 30 days.

Visualisation remains a key technique in modern sports psychology but the power of the mind has been at the heart of ancient words of wisdom throughout the ages. Over 100 years ago, James Allen wrote a book titled *As A Man Thinketh,* now regarded as the grandfather of all self-help books, and said:

Work joyfully and peacefully, knowing that right thoughts and right efforts will inevitably bring about right results.

The Second Law of Olympic Performance

"I concentrate on preparing to swim my race and let the other swimmers think about me, not me about them"

- Amanda Beard, Olympic swimmer

Olympic athletes recognise that what they think about, they bring about. Mental skills training and visualisation techniques allow an athlete to think positively and to *see* their success at every stage of training; and prepare for every eventuality when the pressure is on in competition. In fact, positive thoughts form the

invisible architecture of success.

Worksheet 2

Positive Immersion

Develop a Positive Thinking Habit

This worksheet is designed to help you develop a habit of thinking positively, and involves immersing yourself in all things positive and avoiding contact with all things negative.

Look on the bright side of life in *every* situation, *every* day for the next 30 days.

Stay away from people or places that you already know will make this exercise difficult. Certain people are habitual moaners and being around them can drag you down, and certain places can be dismal and depressing, lowering your mood whenever you go there. If possible, avoid these situations completely but if they are unavoidable, make a conscious effort to avoid being negatively affected by the experience. Even watching the television news can generate a negative mood. Become aware of how everyday things in your life are affecting you emotionally; are you in the habit of 'looking' for things to be down about or are you already in the habit of 'seeing' the best and looking on the bright side?

Who drags you down?

Be honest; who do you know who has a habit of lowering your mood?

What environment gets you down?

What locations, situations, or environments depress you or leave you feeling drained?

Looking on the bright side doesn't mean looking at the world through rose-tinted glasses or pretending that there aren't any negative happenings going on in the world, it means learning to avoid letting negative happenings take over your thoughts. Negative thoughts will generate negative energy and a negative vibe will surround you everywhere you go and in everything you do. Practice generating a positive vibe by looking for the positives in every situation and focusing your thoughts only on those positives.

Always look on the bright side…

Commit to 30 days of positive thinking by:

- using only positive language; talking only about what you *can* do, never making any reference to what you *can't* do
- staying away from known negative influences
- actively looking for positives in every situation or removing yourself from situations that have the potential to become negative; for example, tactfully removing yourself from conversations that are becoming moaning sessions!
- surrounding yourself with positive influences; for example, listening only to positive music, reading only positive books, and watching only positive TV shows
- being aware of your surroundings and recognising where the positive and negative influences are in your everyday life: put yourself in positive places

After 30 days of focused positive thinking and actively correcting yourself the instant a negative thought enters your mind, you will have developed the habit of thinking positively. You'll find that you no longer have to avoid negative situations to be able to stay positive because you will now be able to generate your own positive vibe wherever you go.

Conscious Correction

Make a conscious effort to correct yourself whenever you think negatively, talk negatively, or act negatively.
Become aware of your negative habits; what do you say or do habitually? If you listened to an audio recording of yourself, how many negative speech patterns would you become aware of?
Write down every negative habit you become aware of and write down the positive alternatives that you are going to use e.g.
"I'm hopeless at doing this" becomes *"I need more practice at this"* or *"I'm going to learn how to do this better."*

Correction Notes

Old habit

New habit

Every day, in every way,
I am getting better and better
Emile Coue

It is a rough road that leads to the heights of greatness
Seneca

It's a little like wrestling a gorilla.
You don't quit when you're tired,
you quit when the gorilla is tired
Robert Strauss

Worksheet checklist

recognise negative influences
replace negative habits with positive alternatives

Stay positive, surround yourself with positive influences.

Law Three

Top Performers Put Action Plans *Into Action*

Take action

"The most important key to achieving great success is to decide upon your goal and launch, get started, take action, move"

- John Wooden, basketball coach

To achieve success in anything, you have to know what that success is going to look like when you achieve it. Otherwise, how will you know you've achieved it? You must create images in your mind of your dreams and your ambitions; your

ultimate goals in life, and your vision of success must be a clear picture of what realising those dreams will bring into your life. However, turning a dream into a reality requires action, and that action must be inspired.

Look at it this way: if it's your goal to be a successful athlete, first of all you need to develop a clear picture of what being a successful athlete actually means to you. For example, does it mean winning an Olympic gold medal; holding a world record, or securing a lucrative contract as a professional? Next, you need to create a plan of action to get you from where you are now to where you want to be.

You have to know where you're going in order to get there – and to know when you've arrived.

The more inspired your goals are, the more passionate you are about achieving them. That passion generates the positive vibe and the positive energy that attracts positive things into your life. It's a Universal Law that when you focus your thoughts on positive things, you begin the process of bringing those things towards you and when you focus your actions on taking positive steps, you begin

the process of moving forwards to meet the positive things that are already on their way to you. Clearly, without action, you're going nowhere – you're staying where you are. Not taking action equates to dreaming of winning a gold medal then taking up residence on your couch and waiting for it to materialise! Without action, your goals are destined to remain distant dreams but to bring them within your reach, the action you take must be focused action that takes you in the right direction. Action without focus equates to training for a marathon by following a 100 metre sprint training programme.

Sports success = intention + focused action

Everyone has the potential to become great. As an athlete, you have the potential to become a great athlete but potential can become 'permanent' unless you take action to realise it. Athletes who display world class potential embark on training programmes designed to help them realise their full potential. A training programme can span several years so it's important that it's designed in a way that will help to maintain motivation throughout. Creating an action plan that incorporates stepping-stone goals to lead towards the ultimate goal is an effective way of developing an athlete's skills, building their confidence, and

keeping motivation high. Stepping-stone goals must be both challenging and achievable to inspire progress but *all* goals must represent another step towards achieving *your* dream.

Track athlete turned Ironman triathlete Dave Scott once said something along the lines of, “No one ever achieved anything by poking around aimlessly,” in relation to fitness training. This is a statement that can be applied to all sports and to every level of participation. Whether your ultimate aim is to win an Olympic gold or to be able to run around your local park without stopping, the same need to set appropriate training targets along the way exists. Goal setting is a powerful method of maintaining motivation but it can only be truly effective if the goals set in place are inspirational to *you.* To avoid poking around aimlessly, you have to know what motivates you.

Successful people are motivated people and the most powerful form of motivation is self-motivation. A coach can prepare a ‘motivational’ action plan for an athlete but unless the athlete feels inspired by the plan, it may not have the desired effect.

It's always easier to do what you want to do, rather than what you have to do.

When you find your source of inspiration, you will also find your source of motivation. You are inspired by the things you feel most passionate about and you will find you are motivated to take action on the things you feel most passionate about. Successful people are passionate about what they do: successful people love what they do and they do what they love. Find what *you* love and you will find what motivates you.

Types of Motivation

So what *really* motivates you as a sportsperson? You can probably give lots of reasons for being involved in sport but you might need to delve a little deeper to discover what the *real* reasons are.

Are you an in-y or an out-y?

Motivation is sometimes described as being intrinsic or extrinsic.

Intrinsic motivation:

Intrinsic motivation comes from within, so you could say from the inside out. If

you're intrinsically motivated, you're someone who's involved in sport for the love of it. Taking part gives you a "buzz" and it's the sheer enjoyment, thrill, or even challenge of your sport that motivates you to stay involved. As a competitor, you may feel "driven" to perform and "hungry" for success. It's all about your emotions. You *love* your sport.

Extrinsic motivation:

Extrinsic motivation comes from external sources, so you could say from the outside in. If you're extrinsically motivated, you're someone who's involved in sport for what it can bring you *beyond* simple enjoyment. You're motivated by prize money, trophies, awards and recognition. As a competitor, a lack of big prize money might also create a lack of motivation. It's all about external rewards. You *love* the trappings of your sport.

Ask yourself a couple of questions –

1. If your skill level was such that you were unlikely to ever make the Olympic squad, would you stay involved in your sport?

2. The results of your qualifying rounds in a competition now mean you have no chance of achieving the top prize, would you continue to give your 'all' in the remaining rounds?

If you answered ‘yes’ to both of the above questions then your motivation is intrinsic. But, did you answer ‘yes’ to the second question because you’re secretly hoping there might be a talent scout in the crowd? If so, the source of your motivation becomes extrinsic.

Of course, it’s quite possible to be an in-y *and* an out-y. Understanding what motivates you is rarely as simple as being either one or the other. Neither intrinsic nor extrinsic motivation can explain what keeps an ultra-distance runner going when they’re close to exhaustion, their feet are bleeding, and the race winner already crossed the finish-line 24 hours ago. Clearly, big prize money is no longer motivating them to continue and it’s unlikely they’re actually experiencing much enjoyment by that stage, so what drives them? To find an answer, further delving is required.

Are you in it to win it?

Another way to look at motivation is to consider whether it comes from primary or secondary sources.

Primary motivation:

Whatever your sport, primary motivation is derived from the activity itself. It's the challenge of the sport that motivates rather than the need to win or beat others. It's primary motivation that keeps golfers of all ages and abilities out on the course for hours every weekend. The satisfaction of perfecting a swing or playing a great shot is enough to maintain motivation without the need to be in direct competition with anyone else.

Secondary motivation:

Secondary motivation comes from everything that may be influencing your involvement in sport other than the activity itself. Sources can be your coach, your peers, team-mates, the audience, trophies, medals, and prize money.

The ultra-distance runner with the bleeding feet is motivated to continue by primary sources. The challenge of the event provides the motivation to keep going, even when conditions are pretty grim and winning is no longer an option. The same can be said of the Ironman triathlete, the solo yachtsman, or the mountain climber. For the golfer, however, the source of motivation might not be so clear. The motivation to spend hours out on the course honing skills could be derived simply from the satisfaction of mastering the game (primary) but it could also be coming from a desire to win a big tournament (secondary).

As you can see, motivation is a complex subject. There isn't always going to be a cut and dry answer to the question of what motivates you as a sportsperson, but it's a question that's worth deliberating over none-the-less. In terms of becoming a winner in sport, knowing what *really* motivates you will give you a clearer indication of your level of commitment to your sport.

Understand your passion to understand your inspiration and your motivation.

Are you a sticker or a quitter?

Both primary and secondary sources of motivation can be either positive or negative and this in itself can have a big influence on your ability to *stay* motivated.

Positive primary motivation

If you're motivated by the satisfaction of performing well in your sport, then a good performance is all it takes to keep your motivation high.

Negative primary motivation

Now imagine you haven't been performing too well for a while, what happens to

your motivation? If you are motivated by the satisfaction of improving your skills or perfecting your technique, a long spell of not achieving that level of performance or of not experiencing the “buzz” will have a negative effect. In fact, if you’re no longer feeling satisfied by your performance, will you stick with the sport?

Positive secondary motivation

A noisy, supportive crowd is a great example of positive secondary motivation. Knowing a huge number of spectators are there rooting for you can have a powerfully motivating effect. If your coach is supporting you, or your team-mates are behind you, motivation is much easier to maintain.

Negative secondary motivation

On the flip side, a noisy non-supportive crowd can be just as powerfully de-motivating. How else can you explain the advantages of playing in front of a home crowd in sports such as football, or the disadvantages of playing away matches? By the same token, if you feel your coach isn’t supporting your decisions or your team-mates aren’t behind you as a player, you may struggle to remain motivated.

The journey to the top of your game is not guaranteed to be a straight or a

smooth one. Motivation is naturally going to be boosted by your successes along the way but your ability to stay motivated through the tough times and the inevitable lows depends largely on how you choose to deal with setbacks – in other words, your attitude. This is covered in more detail later in **Law Eleven.**

"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how you will do it"

- Lou Holte, American football coach

Successful sportspeople often use the words 'driven' and 'compelled' to describe their involvement in sport. Their love of their sport and their passion for what they do is what 'drives' them to take action and to achieve their dreams. Their motivation to succeed and their will to win are such that on occasion sports fans and spectators witness truly inspirational performances that have a motivational effect on many others – and for a long time after the event.

Down But Not Out

In the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, British athlete Derek Redmond was a real

medal contender in the 400 metres event. He'd been through eight operations for a variety of injuries over a four year period but he felt he was in the shape of his life. He ran the fastest time in the first round and won his quarter-final, so hopes were high as he lined up to compete in the semi-final. He started the race well but in the final 250 metres, his hamstring snapped. In obvious pain, he hobbled to a halt and fell to the ground. Stretcher-bearers made their way to him on the track but he astonished spectators by getting to his feet and making a determined effort to finish the race. He was joined on the track by his father, who had barged passed all security measures, and together they made their way around the track to receive a standing ovation from 65 000 cheering spectators as they crossed the finish-line. Although the record books state he 'did not finish' due to having been assisted by his father, the viewing public know differently. Derek Redmond finished his race.

"Everything I had worked for was finished. I hated everybody. I hated the world. I hated hamstrings. I hated it all. I felt so bitter that I was injured again. I told myself I had to finish. I kept hopping round. Then, with 100 metres to go, I felt a hand on my shoulder. It was my old man" – Derek Redmond

Ancient Way to Modern Day

In 1995, the Sport Motivation Scale (SMS) was developed to assess an athlete's level of intrinsic motivation. The results can help a coach to understand how an athlete's level of motivation may be affecting their performance. The SMS was revised in 2007 and remains a popular tool to help measure motivation in sport.

The greatest motivation has always been self-motivation and it's a sentiment that echoes through history in a great many wise old sayings. An ancient Burmese saying is:

Who aims at excellence will be above mediocrity; who aims at mediocrity will be far short of it.

The Third Law of Olympic Performance

"If you're not in it, you can't win it"
- Daley Thompson CBE

It takes years of planning and preparation to make it into the Olympic arena, and success does not come without sacrifice. An athlete's training programme can span many years, include many peaks and troughs, and there's never any guarantee of Olympic selection at the end of it all. Sticking with it takes dedication and that dedication takes motivation. Champion athletes understand what motivates them to get involved in a training programme and, crucially, *stay* involved when the going gets tough. A training programme can be the most

skilfully crafted action plan, building an athlete to peak fitness when it matters most, but it can only lead to success when the motivation to stick with it and to keep taking the next step is maintained.

Former Olympic decathlete Daley Thompson is renowned for his dedication to taking action on his action plan – every day in fact, including Christmas day. He has often said in interviews that he felt driven to train every day because he could cope with not being the best athlete on competition day, but not with the thought of not having put in his best performance on the day. To him, training every day equated to being at his best on every competition day. This is a training approach that may not seem beneficial by today's standards but the psychological "edge" it gave Thompson is undeniable.

Success = Intention + Focused Action. This is a formula that has stood the test of time and is as relevant to sport as it is to all other areas of life. To succeed, you have to know what success means to you; you have to know where you're going in order to get there. This becomes your intention. With an intention clearly defined, you must then clarify *how* you're going to achieve it, or how you're going to get to where you want to go. This becomes your action plan. Getting from

where you are now to where you want to be then becomes a step-by-step journey, one focused action step at a time.

For Thompson, his intention was to be the best he could be and be the best of the best – an Olympic champion. His action plan included training 365 days a year and he became that champion in the 1980 Moscow Olympics, and then again four years later in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. He's an inspirational example of the power of *knowing* what you want, planning how you're going to get it, and then *doing* whatever it takes to get it. In recent years he has said, "I think the biggest thing I've learnt is all about being able to take on the responsibility…whatever you want to excel at, it has to be important enough for you to make all the contributions, do all the homework, do everything that's necessary to get to where you want to go." Are you prepared to ***do*** whatever it takes?

Worksheet 3

Take Action

Don't Just Think, Act

Think about what it is you want to achieve, plan how you're going to achieve it, and then take action on that plan. Simple!

There's a common pitfall associated with writing lists and making plans and that is the danger of focusing all of your attention on attempting to create the 'perfect' plan before taking any action at all. Making plans becomes what you do, but if you don't *do* what you plan, nothing changes.

Think smart, act smart.

SMART Goals

Set yourself a SMART goal and commit to taking action and *achieving* that goal in the next 30 days.

SMART = Specific Measurable Achievable Recorded Time-phased

Specific

What exactly do you want to achieve in the next 30 days?

For example:

Non-specific = run further

Specific = increase my current monthly mileage by 10 per cent

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Measurable

Can you measure your success?

For example:

Immeasurable = be a great swimmer

Measurable = swim a set distance within a set time limit

Achievable

Is your goal realistic?

For example:

Unrealistic = learn to ride a horse and win the Grand National

Realistic = sign up for one month of beginner's riding lessons

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Recorded

Write it down. A recorded goal can be tracked and progress checked.

Time-phased

The timeframe for achieving your goal is 30 days.

Break it down into weekly / daily targets.

Just Do It!

Take action on your plan and *achieve* your goal. Things happen and you may not achieve everything you planned for the 30 day timeframe, there are no guarantees, but get started and put your plan into action ***now***, if you *do* nothing – what will you achieve?

30 Day Plan

Day

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

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Worksheet checklist

set a SMART goal
create an action plan
take action

Plan, prepare, put it into action!

Law Four

As You Think, You Become

Think like a winner

"Before you can win a game, you have to not lose it"

- Chuck Noll, American football player and coach

It's a Universal Law that our outer world is a reflection of our inner world. This means if your outer world is one of chaos and calamity, it's a direct reflection of the chaos and calamity that's going on in your inner world – your mind.

In sport, if you have low self-esteem or feel badly about yourself in any way or find that your daily life is filled with anger, loathing or hatred, then your outer world is a place of matching turmoil. It becomes self-perpetuating: you feel bad so your outer world becomes bad so you feel worse… The happenings of your inner world – your mind – correspond directly with the happenings of your outer world – your reality.

You are as you think you are and your circumstances are as you think they are.

Picture the scene: you're an athlete and you're on target to achieving your goal of being selected for the Olympic training squad. Training has been going well and you've been producing consistently good results. You've achieved a personal best performance this season *and,* crucially, you've remained injury free. The recurring injury that prevented you from making the team last time around appears finally to be behind you. You're feeling in the form of your life.

Then you have a bad training day. In fact, your bad day begins before you even get to your training session. You wake up that morning feeling more tired than

when you went to bed after a restless night of bad dreams revolving around not making the team. Even though you know it was just a dream, you're unable to shake the enormously heavy feeling of bitter disappointment you experienced. You then get held up, through no fault of your own, on your way to the training ground and arrive late. Your coach lets you and everyone within earshot know just how disappointing your late arrival is and questions your commitment to the selection process. Your mood is now at an all-time low and you proceed to put in some of your all-time worst performances ever in training. You feel in the worst form of your life and, just to add injury to insult, that old injury begins to niggle.

So what happened? In the space of a few hours you've gone from feeling in top form and on track to achieving your Olympic dream to feeling you're at the bottom of a pit of despair and a million miles from realising your dream. Is it physically possible to lose all condition in such a short period of time? Of course not, but it *is* mentally possible. Your emotional state has had a dramatic effect on your physical state. You've effectively gone through your day physically and mentally *living* your dream – you've been dwelling on the disappointment and re-living it over and over again in your mind. The weight of that disappointment has not only exhausted you mentally, it has also affected your whole demeanour and

your physical ability to function normally, let alone to the best of your ability.

Your ‘poor’ emotional state led to your ‘poor’ physical performance. Because of your low mood, the wrath of your coach served as confirmation that you’ve been right to dwell on thoughts of disappointment all day. You’re feeling disappointed, your coach is disappointed, therefore your ‘logical’ conclusion is that you are indeed a disappointment. Your thoughts are totally irrational and doubly so because you boarded that train of thought in a dream – nothing is based on reality. Your inner world is now reflected in your outer world; your reality is a reflection of your thinking. This serves to highlight the extraordinary power of the mind.

Think of it this way: if you had dreamed of winning Olympic gold, how would this have affected your mood? If you had gone through your day feeling positively inspired by your dream, how would your coach’s comments have affected you? Chances are you’d have been riled by having your commitment questioned, especially when the circumstances that delayed you were out with your control, but you’d have felt even *more* motivated to demonstrate your commitment and your readiness for selection.

Your physical state is unquestionably governed by your emotional state, but what about that niggling injury? The real question is, did that niggle physically reappear in isolation or did it come as part of a ‘disappointment package’? If you’ve suffered the disappointment of failing to make squad selection before because of a recurring injury problem, the train of thought you boarded in your dream will take you right back to that point in your life and recreate everything you felt at that time, both emotionally *and* physically.

Clearly, positive thoughts are the driving force behind positive performances but in the high pressure environment of competitive sport, it’s not *always* going to be possible to prevent negative thoughts from entering your mind. The key is to accept each thought for what it is, a thought. A thought can enter your mind but a thought can also *leave* your mind. Thoughts might hang around in your mind for a while but with practice, you can learn to identify the good, the bad, and the ugly and learn to evict the unhelpful variety *before* they start to get comfortable in there.

Ever heard the expression, ‘Hell on a handcart’? It’s used to describe a situation that’s going from bad to worse, and out of control. Well, think about that for a

moment. If your train of thought has got you on a handcart to somewhere you don't want to go, who's controlling your handcart? The clue is in your mode of transport – it's a handcart. **Stop powering it.** The more time you spend dwelling on a thought, the more power you're giving it. You might not be able to halt it instantly but the moment you stop powering it, you begin to slow down. You can't always control the thoughts that enter your head but you *can* control where those thoughts take you. If you're not enjoying the ride, you *can* choose to get off at the next station.

By changing your thinking, you can change your reality.

By taking control of your mind, you can take control of all aspects of your life. Negative thinking corresponds with a negative reality, therefore positive thinking corresponds with a positive reality. Whatever you choose to focus on, you give energy to. The more energy you give a thought, the more life you give it and the more 'real' it begins to feel. Shift your focus: focus on what you want in life, not what you don't want. Focus on what you have, not what you don't have. Focus on what you can do, not what you can't do.

"Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do"

- John Wooden, basketball coach

The Success Cycle

Research into the psychology of sport has shown that an athlete's potential performance can be traced through something known as the success cycle. The cycle basically highlights the relationship between how an athlete feels about themselves and how they are likely to perform. So, in sport psychology terms, the cycle would revolve around the following:

…positive self-image →

positive attitude →

positive expectations →

improved behaviour →

enhanced performance…

In real terms, for an athlete in training, this translates into:

…feeling good about yourself →

feeling confident about your ability →
believing you can produce an improved performance →
focusing on giving yourself every opportunity by eating well; sleeping well;
remaining motivated through training →
producing a personal best…

Now take a moment to consider the corresponding effects of beginning the cycle with a negative self-image. The power of the mind remains. By changing the quality of your thoughts, you can change the quality of your life.

To fully understand the principle behind 'As You Think, You Become', it's important to understand the significance of the word 'you'. Only *you* can control *your* inner world so only *you* can control *your* outer world. You must take responsibility for your circumstances and not look for other people or other things to blame for anything that's not the way you want it to be. You're the only one who can control your thoughts so you're the only one responsible for your circumstances. To change *your* reality, you must change *your* thoughts.

How anyone interprets success and failure is very much a personal choice but

studies have shown that in sport, winners tend to attribute their success to their own actions whereas losers have a greater tendency to attribute their lack of success to the actions of others as well as themselves. For example, a winner might say, “I won because I played well,” but a loser might say, “I lost because I played badly… and the ref’ was blind!”

The attributions given by an athlete can also help a coach better understand the athlete’s emotions. Has the result affected motivation? Is this result likely to have an effect on future performance? One of the cornerstones of good coaching is the development of confidence and the all-important positive self-image in athletes, so how the coach analyses a below expectation result needs careful consideration. Allowing an athlete the opportunity to analyse their own performance and voice their own thoughts on a poorer than expected result will be of far greater benefit than wading in with, “You played like an idiot and deserved to lose!”

Attributions can be described as either stable or unstable. Below are two examples of attributions a player may give after a winning result:

"I was a bit lucky to win that last game."

This would be described as an unstable attribution as the use of the word 'luck' suggests little confidence in being able to produce the same winning result in a future performance.

"That game has confirmed my technique is sound."

This would be described as a stable attribution as the confirmation of the player's ability suggests greater confidence in producing a future winning performance.

The same logic can be applied to attributions given after a losing result. If failure is attributed to poor technique or low skill it clearly suggests the athlete feels failure will be the most likely result in future performances – confidence has been knocked. Their inner 'low' will be reflected in their outer reality.

When unstable, negative attributions are being voiced by an athlete, it becomes the job of the coach to help turn them into more stable, positive versions. An athlete's lack of confidence can quickly lead to a lack of motivation and could even cause some individuals to give up on their sport completely. Goal setting can be helpful but, as you know from the **Law Three**, goals can only be truly effective if they are goals that inspire the athlete. Ultimately, if you are that

athlete, only you can change your reality and changing *your* reality means changing *your* thinking.

To begin making changes, try the following –

- take a hard, objective look at your current reality then ask yourself, 'how are my inner thoughts and attitudes being reflected in my outer life?'
- take responsibility for your reality and commit to making changes in that reality by choosing to change your thinking
- begin to visualise the world you want; focus your mind on the positive things you want in order to bring those positive things into your reality
- ask yourself, 'what changes will I need to make internally to achieve the changes I want externally?'
- take steps to make those changes; take action

By thinking and talking only about what you want and refusing to think or talk about what you don't want, you become the architect of your own destiny.

"The minute you start thinking about what you'll do if you lose, you've lost"

Champion track cyclist Sir Chris Hoy is a great example of an athlete who takes total responsibility for his reality by taking control of his thinking. In his competitive cycling career he was renowned for his meticulous race preparation, both physically and mentally, and he knew it set him apart from his opponents. However, he also knew he was being studied. He was the one to beat so he knew his opponents were looking for ways to beat him. His strength was his ability to remain focused only on what he could control; his focus was on riding and controlling his own race. Hoy's calm, controlled outer world was a reflection of his calm, controlled inner world. In effect, by the time Hoy lined up on the race start-line, his preparation was so complete, he'd already won.

After winning his 10th track cycling gold medal at the World Championships in Copenhagen, the very place he won his first cycling gold, he was asked in an interview how it felt to achieve such a landmark victory:

"I'm delighted. I was aware of the magnitude of a 10th world title…because it's been in the press and people have been asking me about it…but it was only when someone asked me 'What does it feel like to have 10?' when I'd finished that it registered because I was so focused on the race itself. That's the key

really, to be focused on the process and not worrying about the outcome"

His 10th gold medal was perhaps his hardest earned at that point in his career. His event at the time, the Keirin, is not for the feint-hearted and competitors expect a bit of rough and tumble as they jostle for position on the track. However, Hoy was dumped on his backside during qualifying rounds by an opponent trying to prevent him from reaching his favourite position as the race started.

"That was out of order," said Hoy. "It did make me angry, but that's another emotion you try and keep in check – you don't want to let the red mist descend and lose the plot, you've got to stay controlled and focused"

Learning how to stay controlled and focused – in every imaginable circumstance – was all part of Hoy's race preparation plan and it was also a huge contributing factor to his sporting success.

"The episode did frustrate the usually placid, gentlemanly Hoy, but – after years under the tutelage of Dr Steve Peters, the British Cycling psychiatrist – he controlled his inner chimp" – Brendan Gallagher, The Telegraph

His opponents' ploy to rob him of his favourite racing position was just one of many deliberate attempts made to unsettle Hoy in all of his Copenhagen races. He was the man of the moment, the one to beat, so all eyes were on him. Many of his opponents studied video recordings of him in action as part of their own race preparation. They made a study of how he rode, researched his race tactics, and planned their own races around trying to 'block' Hoy. Of course, if they really wanted to get over the finish-line ahead of him; if they wanted a gold medal to be *their* reality, they really needed to study what it took to *think* like Hoy.

Positive Mental Attitude

We've already established that positive thoughts lead to positive actions and positive actions lead to positive outcomes but learning how to see things positively doesn't mean wearing rose-tinted glasses. In fact, it means being able to see things exactly as they are. With a positive mental attitude, you are able to see the potential to change your reality. With a positive mental attitude, you are able to see the correlation between your outer world and your inner world and you are open to making the internal changes needed to bring you the external changes you want.

Thinking positively allows positive changes to be made.

When you are able to think positively, even analysing a less than perfect result remains a positive, motivational experience. With a positive mental attitude, you focus on your strengths and you are able to see any areas of weakness you identify as opportunities to learn and improve. With a negative mental attitude, analysing a disappointing result becomes a negative, de-motivating experience with all of your focus on your failures. If your inner world is in turmoil, your outer world can only reflect that turmoil.

Think Happy, Be Happy!

In the 1994 Lillehammer winter Olympics, the Japanese 120 metre ski jump team had a convincing lead in the final event with only one jump remaining. That jump belonged to Masahiko Harada, affectionately known as ‘Happy Harada’ due to his infectious grin. In his previous jump, Harada had cleared 122 metres and needed a jump of only 110 metres to secure the gold medal for Japan. He cleared 97.5 metres – the worst jump of the entire event – and Germany won gold.

"In the past, a well-raised Japanese would have to commit hari-kari after such a mistake. Today nobody expects that of us" - Masahiko Harada

So what happened? Did the wind change at a crucial moment; was it just a bad jump, or did the pressure get to him?

Many top class athletes with proven ability and countless winning performances behind them have choked when it really mattered – at the Olympics. Perhaps it's the sheer scale of the event that creates unbearable pressure; the weight of expectation; the knowledge that an entire nation of supporters are counting on them to bring home a medal. Whatever the catalyst, choking describes the moment that self-doubt kicks in. Negative thoughts creep into your head and take over. The voice in your head says, "You can't do this, you're not ready" – and you believe it. Everything positive that should be brought to the forefront of your mind vanishes into thin air. The fact that you *are* ready and you *can* do it gets railroaded into oblivion by the power of negative thinking and the negative thoughts manifest themselves into negative actions, resulting in a poor performance. Your negative thinking becomes your negative reality.

Four years later, Harada was back on the Olympic stage in the 1998 winter games in Nagano. Since his disappointing performance in 1994, he'd gone on to win numerous world cup events and a world championship so there was no doubt he was a class act. The Japanese team was already in the lead as Harada prepared to take his first jump. He managed a pitiful 79.5 metres and the team dropped from first to fifth place. Was it just a cruel coincidence? Did the wind turn against him at the wrong moment yet again? Or did he just buckle under pressure?

Now take a moment to consider how Harada must have felt as he prepared to take his second jump. Was history about to repeat itself? The team's chances of winning a medal depended on his next jump – could he do it?

He sped down the ramp and landed a massive 137 metre jump putting the team into a virtually unbeatable lead. Team mate Kazuyoshi Funaki took the final jump and cleared 125 metres to secure the gold medal for the Japanese team. What was it that allowed Funaki to hold his nerve when the pressure was on? What was it that prevented Harada from choking once more under increasing

pressure? The answers lie in understanding and applying this Law and adopting a positive mental attitude.

Ancient Way to Modern Day

A recent study undertaken by researchers at Bishop's University in Canada, and published in Athletic Insight, looked at the relationship between self-esteem and exercise activity. Their findings were that there was a positive relationship between exercise activity and self-esteem and that a higher level of exercise activity is associated with a higher level of self-esteem.

The effects of self-image on sports performance continue to be studied and the results continue to support the theory that how an athlete 'sees' themselves has the potential to impact their performance in competition. What an athlete *believes* becomes their reality and this is a message that appears in the teachings of a great many ancient philosophers.

In more recent history, inspirational spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi expressed the same principle when he said;

A man is but the product of his thoughts. What he thinks, he becomes.

The Fourth Law of Olympic Performance

"When anyone tells me I can't do anything, I'm just not listening anymore"
- Florence Griffith Joyner, Olympic track athlete

Your emotional state has a dramatic effect on your physical state. Whatever you choose to focus on, you give energy to, and what you give energy to becomes your reality. Olympic athletes focus on the internal elements of training and performance, the elements that are within their control, and not the external elements that they can't control. You are who *you* believe you are.

Worksheet 4

Clear Your Mental Blocks

Be the Change You Want to See

Be the athlete you want to be in your thoughts and you will become that athlete in your reality.

Dedicate 30 days to creating a positive environment in your inner world. This means creating a detailed mind's-eye image of who you are, how you feel, where you are, and what you're doing when you achieve the improvements in your performance that you want.

Become that person. You need to *be* the success you aspire to be. In your mind, your inner world, you need to experience every detail of life as the person you have become. The purpose of this exercise is to focus your vision on the end result; to see and experience the positive environment that making changes will bring. No ifs, no buts, no obstacles, no blocks in your path – ***you're already there!***

How's the view?

You're there – describe every detail
How's your average day?
What do you have for breakfast? *What do you wear to train in?* *Who are you with?* *What do you do routinely?*

Competing in sport has taught me that if I'm not willing to give 120 per cent, someone else will

Ron Blomberg

If you train hard,
you'll not only be hard,
you'll be hard to beat
Herschel Walker

Hold That Thought

Once you've created a positive environment in your inner world, you've already begun the process of creating the same positive environment in your outer world; your reality. You can see where you're going, hold that thought. Whenever you come up against what you believe to be a roadblock, hold the image of where you're going in your mind and then look again at your roadblock – ***is it real?*** Is the obstacle in your path *really* enough to stop you in your tracks? Is the block a

physical reality or is it a mental block?

An example of a **real** block could be:
I'm too old to enter this race category.
An example of a **perceived** block – a mental block – could be:
I'm too old to see any improvement in my performance now.

Do your roadblocks exist only in your head?

Put your blocks to the test

You know where you are now and you know where you want to be. Write down what you believe is blocking your path between the two points.
Now challenge your beliefs. Are they real or are they only in your head?

Belief

Reality or perception?

What evidence do you have to support your belief?

When you identify a *real* block, take steps to find an alternative route. When you identify a perceived block, you've cleared your path – keep going.

Use the following pages to challenge your beliefs

The day you take complete responsibility for yourself,
the day you stop making excuses,
that's the day you start to the top
O J Simpson

You have no control over what the other guy does.
You only have control over what you do
A J Kitt

Worksheet checklist

recognise blocks
challenge beliefs

Get yourself out of your starting blocks by clearing your mental blocks.

Law Five

You Get Out What You Put In

Give it your best effort

"You find that you have peace of mind and can enjoy yourself, get more sleep, rest when you know that it was a one hundred percent effort that you gave – win or lose"

- Gordie Howe, ice hockey player

Nobody gets to the top of their game without effort. Olympic athletes don't get to

step up onto the medal podium without years of dedicated training and professional sportspeople don't get to sign lucrative long-term contracts without first earning their keep. Becoming a champion athlete is not something that 'just happens' and there's no such thing as an overnight success. Getting to the top is a process and it's a process governed by the principle that you get out of life what you put in to life.

It's a Universal Law that *nothing* happens by chance. In all areas of life, there's a reason for everything that happens and in effect, you reap what you sow. In sport, this means that winners don't just win by chance and losers don't just lose by chance; there are *reasons* for a winning or a losing result. Winners become winners because of what they routinely do. They become winners because of their habitual positive thought processes and positive actions: they become winners because they work hard at practicing and developing 'winning ways' in everything they do.

If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail.

There's a common expression, 'fail to prepare, prepare to fail', so it's a well-

known fact that preparation is the key to success. A Texan oil billionaire once said:

"There are three secrets to success. First, individuals have to decide exactly what it is they want from a certain situation – not roughly or vaguely, but specifically. Then they have to work out what costs or sacrifices would be needed to get these things. Finally, they have to be prepared to pay those costs and make those sacrifices."

I think it's fair to say that most athletes are prepared to take steps one and two but perhaps the difference between success and failure comes down to how willing each individual is to take step three.

Effective preparation in competitive sport is all about establishing effective success habits. Considerable research has been done in this area and results show that keeping a daily training diary can be enormously helpful. A diary allows goals to be set on a daily basis and makes recording results a form of daily analysis. The goals can be related to any area of life – work, home, personal – as well as sport or training but ultimately they should serve the purpose of maintaining commitment to the 'big goal' being prepared for. This sort of daily

focus helps to keep *everything* on track and makes sure that every day counts as a day of preparation. In the words of soccer superstar Pele, “Everything is practice for the game.” Becoming a winner takes more than winning a race, you must be a winner every day and in every way.

In most sports, far more time will be spent in training than will ever be spent in actual competition so getting the most out of each training session is of vital importance if a drift into just going through the motions is to be avoided. This can also be termed ‘intelligent effort’, meaning that knowing exactly what action to take allows you to leverage your energy in training to generate the greatest impact on your performance. It’s a concept known as the Pareto principle or the ‘80-20 rule’ and it was proposed by Joseph Juran, a business management thinker, who developed an observation made in 1906 by an Italian economist, named Pareto, that 80 per cent of the land in Italy was owned by 20 per cent of the population. Juran discovered that 20 per cent of the pea-pods in his garden produced 80 per cent of the peas. The 80-20 rule is now a common rule-of-thumb in business with 80 per cent of a company’s sales acknowledged to come from 20 per cent of the company’s clients and it’s a principle that can be applied equally well to sports training. With intelligent effort, 20 per cent of your training

efforts will yield an 80 per cent improvement in your performance. At least one goal should be set for each session and preparation for that session must include getting the athlete's 'head into gear' so they can focus on the session's key elements. Keeping the focus on goals specific to each individual session makes it easier for an athlete to gauge their progress. This regular, positive experience can also help to improve self-image which will, in turn, begin a positive success cycle.

Some athletes prefer to simply set themselves a target for each training session as they begin their warm-up but whatever method is used, the idea is to provide focus and then maintain that focus throughout every stage of training and preparation. Preparation for competition begins a *long* time before the date of the big event itself so as the Texan oil billionaire pointed out, success can only come to those who are prepared to make a long-term commitment. Basketball coach Pat Riley once said, *"There are only two options regarding commitment. You're either IN or you're OUT, there's no such thing as life IN-BETWEEN,"* but Big Wave surfer Laird Hamilton perhaps said it best…

…You are either on the wave or off the wave, you can't be kinda on it.

How committed you are to your sport and to becoming the best you can be will also be reflected in how you interpret success and failure. In the last chapter, the importance of maintaining a positive mental attitude under all circumstances was highlighted but ultimately, developing your ability to think positively comes down to developing an understanding of your mindset.

Research into the definitions of sporting success has concluded that athletes tend to strive for three main goals:

Mastery

Mastery or task goals are those associated with self-improvement so success can be measured by a good performance – irrespective of whether it's a winning one or not. Athletes with a mastery-oriented goal strive to *improve* their ability or performance.

Ego

Ego or ability goals are associated with demonstrating high ability and performing better than rivals – winning! Athletes with an ego-oriented goal strive to *prove* their ability.

Social approval

A social approval goal is that of an athlete who strives to please others with their performance. This could be a coach or parents, and young children in sport are thought to be strongly motivated in this way.

Many athletes find themselves motivated by both mastery and ego-oriented goals. A good example is Linford Christie when he won silver in the 1988 Olympics. In an interview afterwards he said he'd certainly run to win, and obviously believed he could win, which suggests an ego-oriented goal. However, his delight at having beaten his own personal best and becoming the first European to run 100 metres in under ten seconds clearly demonstrates a mastery-oriented goal.

Carol Dweck is a world-renowned psychologist and in her book, 'Mindset: The New Psychology of Success', she tells of her findings after decades of research into achievement and success, and the discovery of how an individual's mindset holds the key to realising both.

Mindset can be split into two categories:

Fixed Mindset

A person in a fixed mindset believes that they're stuck with their lot. Any mediocre skills, talent or ability they may have are just what they were born with and nothing will change that. The same can be said of an extremely skilled, talented or able individual with a fixed mindset. They too believe their abilities are just a given and not something they need to work at.

"Think about your intelligence, talents, and personality. Are they just fixed or can you develop them?" - Carol Dweck

Growth Mindset

A person with a growth mindset believes that who they are and where they are now can potentially be changed with dedication and effort. Even if they are already particularly talented in some way, they still believe that further learning and practice can lead to greater things.

In the early stages of her research into 'Mindset', Carol Dweck gave a classroom of children a challenging task to complete. When the mastery-oriented goal was

emphasised, so self-improvement, the children displayed high effort and great perseverance to complete the task. When a similar task was given but an ego-oriented goal emphasised, the reaction to the challenge became entirely dependent on the children's own perceptions of how good they were – known as perceived ability. Children with high perceived ability did well but rejected the opportunity to improve their skills if it meant they might make a mistake in public. Children with low perceived ability did badly and tended to give up completely.

This early experiment, equally relevant to a sports environment, demonstrated that mastery-oriented goals were preferable to ego-oriented goals in terms of maintaining motivation. Further research confirmed Dweck's discovery that individuals have either a fixed or a growth mindset and that without a growth mindset, further learning and improvement of skills is unlikely. Clearly, a fixed mindset is not conducive to developing an athlete's true potential. To realise a top performance, athletes must be encouraged to understand and embrace the benefits of a growth mindset.

Picture the scene: you're a talented young athlete, you've already won your school championship, your club championship, and your county championship.

You've become a big fish in a small pond so it's time to compete nationally
– *how are you feeling?*

Chances are you feel pretty confident. After all, you've got a proven track record, a tried and tested winning formula. You enter a national event and cross the finishing line in the middle third of the pack
- now how are you feeling?

The answer to the last question depends entirely on your mindset. Clearly, you've become a small fish in a big pond. Your current mindset will determine how that makes you feel.

If you have a fixed mindset, you'll judge yourself harshly after the disappointing race result. Your best wasn't good enough so maybe you should just give up?

If you have a growth mindset, you'll view the disappointing race result as an opportunity to learn; an opportunity to make changes and to improve. Your *current* best wasn't good enough so it's time to up your game.

Your mindset can hold you back. It can mean the difference between staying where you are now or moving on to realise your full potential. Making the move from being a middle of the pack finisher to a frontrunner is a three step process.

Step One – Take Action

If you want things to change, you have to make changes. If you carry on doing things the same way, things will stay the same. Take action. You can analyse your performance until the cows come home but nothing is going to change until you *do* something.

Step Two – Learn From the Best

Make a study of successful sportspeople using neuro-linguistic programming methodologies and NLP sports models of excellence. What is it that makes race winners, winners?

Step Three – Adapt

Armed with a clear action plan and an understanding of what it takes to get to the front of the pack, it's time to adapt. Apply what you know to your training and make the necessary changes.

"I found out that if you are going to win games, you had better be ready to adapt"
- Scotty Bowman, ice hockey coach

How willing you are to make changes equates to how committed you are to your sport and how willing you are to do whatever it takes to succeed: it indicates how much you're prepared to put in.

If you want more, put more in…
…be prepared to make changes in order to get what you want.

Herschel Walker is a former NFL running back and a Collegiate Football Hall of Fame player. When he was in junior high school, he already knew he wanted to play football but the coach told him he was too small and advised him to try out for track instead. But, instead of giving up, Herschel dedicated himself to an intensive training programme – reported to include push ups, sit ups, and sprint running – in a committed effort to build himself up. Only a few years later, he won the Heisman trophy, the most prestigious award in college football awarded annually to the most outstanding player in the US.

Ancient Way to Modern Day

The science behind this Law is known by the term ‘cause and effect’. It’s a term used to describe the philosophical concept of causality which, in a nutshell, states that for every action there is an equal and opposite effect. If you hit your hand with a hammer (cause), your hand hurts (effect)!

It’s also a spiritual concept at the heart of Buddhism with the law of karmic cause and effect which essentially teaches that you’re responsible for your own life and the circumstances you are in. The basic idea is that positive causes lead to positive effects and negative causes lead to negative effects and that only *you* are responsible for the creation of those causes, whether positive or negative – exactly as in modern sports psychology.

A huge number of ancient sayings and proverbs revolve around this principle, not least, ‘You reap what you sow’, but you may also be familiar with, ‘What goes

around, comes around'. The Dalai Lama once said:

Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions.

The Fifth Law of Olympic Performance

"I have really earned my stripes, this has been such a long time coming and I feel I'm the man"

- Dean Macey, after winning gold in the 2006 Commonwealth Games

Former Olympic decathlete Dean Macey, known as the "Dean Machine" to his many fans, is perhaps as well known for his on-going struggle with injuries as for his eventual success despite them. He's a true never-say-die champion, and testament to the fact that if you want more out of life, you have to be prepared to put more in. Macey certainly gave his athletics career his all. He says, "There

weren't many athletes who were able to push themselves to the point of destruction like I used to."

Nothing happens by chance in life, and certainly not in the world of sport. If you want more out of your performance, you have to put more in. In the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Macey was a strong contender in the decathlon event despite having battled with injury after injury in the previous year, to the extent that he hadn't actually been able to complete a decathlon in his preparation for the Games. On the first day of competition, he smashed two of his lifetime bests in the long jump and 400 metres events. He was in the form of his life but finished fourth at the end of the second day, just missing out on a medal.

Macey wanted more, so he put more in. He spent the next three years in "injury hell" yet still managed to qualify for the 2004 Athens Olympics. Once more, despite an impressive performance, he finished fourth, just missing out on a medal – again. He *still* wanted more. And, once more, he spent most of the following year dealing with an assortment of injuries, but, in the 2006 Commonwealth Games, through his unstoppable grit and determination, he was once again a strong contender after the first day of events. In fact, he was in the

lead by a considerable margin after a new personal best in the shot putt, but over the course of the second day, the points margin narrowed and Macey's Australian rival took over the lead. It all came down to the last event, the 1500 metres. Macey needed to beat the Australian by a time difference representing at least 38 points to win gold in the decathlon. He did, winning by a margin of 69 points. Macey wanted more, so he put more in.

In a track-side interview at the end of the first day, Macey let the viewing public know just how much he was prepared to put in when he said, "I'd cut an arm off to win that gold medal. The pole vault would be difficult but that's a rubbish event for me anyway!" What are you prepared to put in to get out what you want?

Worksheet 5

Mind Your Mindset

Understand Your Mindset

Dedicate 30 days to gaining an understanding of your current mindset. Do you

see your lot in life as something you're stuck with or do you see constant potential for change?

Change Your Mindset

You need a growth mindset to be able to realise your full potential. Changing from a fixed to a growth mindset is a four step process.

1 Learn to hear your fixed mindset "voice"

Your fixed mindset voice might be saying, "You're going to mess this up if you even try it; stick with what you know, it's just how it is."

When you're under pressure, what does your inner voice say?

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2 Recognise that you have a choice

How you interpret a challenging situation is entirely your choice. Understand that your fixed mindset voice doesn't have to be heeded; your inner voice doesn't have all the answers.

3 Talk back to it with a growth mindset voice

Practice talking back. Give growth mindset answers to your fixed mindset voice. For example, answer, "what if you fail?" with, "most successful people had failures along the way. It's okay to give it a try."

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4 Take the growth mindset action

Take action on your growth mindset voice.

What positive action can you take to support your answers in Step 3?

Mindset Notes

The will to win is important,
but the will to prepare is vital
Joe Paterno

Luck is what happens
when preparation meets opportunity
Coach Darrel Royal

Worksheet checklist

understand mindset
take steps to develop a growth mindset

You can choose to change your mind and you can choose to change your mindset.

Law Six

Winning Efforts Receive Winning Rewards

Earn Your Reward

"Gold medals aren't really made of gold. They're made of sweat, determination, and a hard-to-find alloy called guts"

- Dan Gable, amateur wrestler

Just as it's a Universal Law that you get out what you put in, it's also a Law that you will be compensated for what you put in. The principle of this Law is that you

will always be rewarded commensurately with your efforts so in sport, this means that high quality effort will be rewarded with high quality results but low quality effort will only ever achieve low quality results.

Some good examples of this Law in action can be found in a study of regular "gym rats". If you visit your local gym on any given day, you will find at least one member who appears to have become part of the furniture. They're the ones who seem to be there every day and seem to be there for hours every time – yet they never seem to progress in terms of improving their fitness or changing their body shape. They struggle to understand why one of their gym acquaintances has made enormous progress with their training plan yet they only go to the gym three times a week and spend no more than one hour there each time; surely going more often should be getting bigger and better results than going less often?

It's not the hours you put in, it's what you put into the hours.

This all too common scenario illustrates this Law perfectly and demonstrates that a winning effort has little to do with quantity of effort but everything to do with

quality of effort. Let's call our gym rat Bob. Bob has always considered himself to be a bit on the scrawny side and joined the gym in an effort to build a bit of muscle to bulk his body up a bit. He wants to be more muscular because he lacks confidence in himself and he feels he suffered at the hands of bullies in his schooldays because of his size. So, Bob knows he wants to bulk up but does he know what his goal is *specifically*? He knows that he doesn't want to be bullied and that he doesn't have much self-confidence but does he know what he *wants:* does he know what a confident version of himself looks like?

You have to know exactly what you want – not roughly or vaguely, but specifically.

It takes an inspired vision of success to be able to take inspired action to achieve that success. To succeed, Bob needs a clear vision of what that success looks like. To be able to take effective action, he needs to know exactly what it is he's aiming to achieve. Currently, Bob holds a negative image of being bullied at school in his mind. He's creating a negative vibe in everything he does; he's generating negative energy through his thoughts by focusing on what he *doesn't* want. His lack of positive results is the outcome. To be able to realise his dream,

Bob has to know what that dream is. Dreaming of not being bullied at school is completely useless in terms of inspiring success because he's now 30 years old and those days are gone, they can't be changed. To be able to make the changes to his body shape that he wants, Bob needs a positive vision of what making those changes will bring him *now*. He needs a clear mental image of what his success looks like, feels like, sounds like, smells and tastes like. It's only after he learns to think positively that he can then take positive action to turn his dream into a reality.

Bob has to know where he's going to be able to get there and he has to know what it is he wants, exactly, to be able to create an effective plan of action that will get him, step-by-step, from where he is now to where he wants to be. He believes he's giving it his all by going to the gym for endless hours every day but what is he actually *giving*; what is he actually *doing* while he's in the gym? Without a vision and without positive focus, he's 'poking around aimlessly' and receiving very little return for his efforts. By simply upping the quality of his efforts, he would up the quality of his return. In Bob's case, less really could be more.

The same principle still applies even when a clear vision of success *has* been formed. Once you know what you want and you know what you have to do to achieve it, you have to commit to *doing* it. For example, if someone joins a gym with the goal of losing weight and they have a clear vision of what their success will look like, they are well on their way to achieving that success. They follow their exercise regime faithfully and put a total positive effort into each session but they're not receiving the expected results in terms of weight loss. They're putting in a quality effort but not receiving a quality return, why not? The answer lies in their *total* commitment to achieving their goal. Clearly they're committed to following an exercise programme but what about the other elements of their weight loss action plan? Are they committed to following a healthy eating plan? Are they thinking positively about what substituting their favourite foods with healthier alternatives will bring them or are they focusing on what they *can't* have; what they're 'missing out' on? Of course, it could also be that they feel so good about themselves after each exercise session that they celebrate their achievement each time with a cream cake – or two! In this case, total commitment to one aspect of their action plan but not *all* aspects does not constitute a quality effort so quality results cannot be received in return.

It takes total dedication to achieve total payback.

Holding Back

So what about a committed, dedicated athlete who gives their all in training and receives quality results in return for their quality efforts but then fails to achieve the expected results in competition? In fact, they under-achieve, and when this is the case, it suggests that the quality of effort given when under competitive pressure is not the same as the quality of effort given in practice. What causes an athlete to 'hold back' when it matters most?

The answer lies in the athlete's brain and in one area of the brain in particular, an area referred to as the lizard brain. This is a term used to describe the part of your brain concerned with basic survival. Your lizard brain doesn't want you to take any chances in life or do anything risky, it wants you to play it safe and just stay alive – no matter how dull that life may be – and it's the voice in the back of your head telling you to be careful, to go slow, or to back off. In sporting terms, it's the part of your brain that can cause resistance to making changes, even when change is clearly needed to allow you to achieve your full potential.

Here's an example of the lizard brain effect. At a soccer team training session, the coach suggests to a player that he should play in a different position. The player has the physical ability and skill to play in the new position but he resists the change. His resistance is not based on any 'real' concerns over his abilities, it's based on a past experience. He knows he's physically capable but he also knows that the last time he played in that position, it all went horribly wrong for the team and they were booed off the pitch by supporters at the end of the match. On one level, his rational, conscious thoughts tell him there's nothing to fear in the change of position, but on another subconscious level, there's an irrational nagging voice saying, "You can't play in that position. It'll all go wrong if you change positions." That's the lizard brain response. The lizard brain doesn't like change. It ***fears*** change, and fear sabotages success.

Scientists believe our brains evolved in three stages. Our lizard brains are the ancient part, coping only with instinctive behavioural response patterns. The next stage, the mammalian brain, gave us an ability to file new experiences as they happened, effectively creating a store of experience-based memories. These memories could now influence current and future behaviour as the non-instinctive emotional responses of fear and anger emerged. In the third stage, the neocortex

evolved, creating the human brain as we know it. Now we're able to draw on past experiences, sift through information, rationalise, and make conscious decisions on how to respond to situations using our intellect or our best judgement.

Well, that's the theory. But, in times of high stress and when the pressure is on, all of the theory is thrown out of the proverbial window and the lizard brain takes over. The ability to rationalise becomes lost and irrational thoughts creep to the forefront of your mind. Imagine for a moment that you're a racing car driver. You're having the race of your life; your car is performing brilliantly, and you too are firing on all cylinders, everything is going your way. Then, an opportunity to overtake presents itself; an opportunity for you to get into the lead. On a conscious level, the rational voice in your head says, "Go for it! You're all set up, make the move," but on a subconscious level, there's an irrational nagging voice saying, "Hold on! Make that move and you're doomed." That's your lizard brain response. Your 'new' brain, the neocortex, knows that you have been presented with a golden opportunity to succeed, but your 'old' brain, the lizard brain, knows that the last time you were in this position in a race, within a lap of taking the lead, your engine blew and you were out of the race. The pressure of once again being at the sharp-end of a race creates a 'fear factor' that effectively paralyzes

you. Your lizard brain voice gets the Dolby-surround-sound treatment and any voice of reason is completely drowned out. You resort to survival mode – you don't take that 'chance'.

The tricky thing is, without our lizard brains we'd be reckless in everything we did. A reckless soccer player probably wouldn't have made the team in the first place so a change of playing position wouldn't be on the cards, and a reckless racing driver probably wouldn't have a very long racing career, or a very long life. But, the fear factor being generated by your lizard brain can be all that's holding you back and by holding back, you are unable to realise your full potential. The fear must be faced, no matter how imaginary or real it actually is, as it's a fear that's real to you. By confronting your fears, you are able to see each one through to its logical conclusion. You learn to approach stressful situations with the question: what's the worst thing that can happen? And, by seeing it through, you're able to realise that very often the reality is nowhere near as bad as the fear would have you believe. Once a fear is faced, and accepted for what it is, steps can be taken to mitigate it.

Without a fear of change holding you back, you are free to give everything you do

your very best effort and when you do, you will be compensated accordingly. You already know that you 'get out what you put in' and this Law is naturally connected to that principle. To receive the results you see in your vision of success, make sure that *all* of your efforts are focused on achieving that success.

"Good, better, best. Never let it rest, until your good is better and your better is best"

- Tim Duncan, basketball player

Ancient Way to Modern Day

Modern science and extensive research have led to a much greater understanding of human physiology and the effects of high intensity training on the body of a competitive athlete. In the 1970s, decathlete Daley Thompson was renowned for his strict training regime that saw him physically training every day, including Christmas Day; attitudes have since changed. World records continue to be broken and personal bests continue to be achieved because science allows

us to continue pushing the limits of what may once have been believed impossible.

We recognise that less is sometimes more and it's not necessarily the quantity but the quality of effort that counts. In terms of total commitment to achieving more in sport, Greek philosopher Epictetus summed it up very succinctly when he said:

All philosophy in two words – sustain and abstain.

The Sixth Law of Olympic Performance

"I worked out that a good age to be an Olympic champion would be about 25, so I always felt that 2000 would be my year"
- Katharine Merry, after watching the 1984 Olympics

You know already that if you want more out of your performance, you have to be prepared to put more in, but putting more in is not a simple case of just doing more, it‘s doing what you do to the best of your ability. A winning effort has little to do with the quantity of effort, but everything to do with the quality of effort.

It’s only by making *every* effort count, in training as well as in competition, that Olympic athletes achieve winning rewards when it matters most. Without a winning effort in every training session and in every competition, big or small, an athlete will not be rewarded with the winning outcome they want, when they want it most.

Olympic athletes persevere, and former 400 metre runner Katharine Merry is a great example of the power of perseverance and making every effort count. Merry started running at the age of 10, and then inspired by watching the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics on television, it became her childhood ambition to become an Olympic athlete. At the age of 14, Merry was the fastest schoolgirl in the world, and her commitment to becoming an Olympian was so strong that she set her sights on achieving her ambition by the age of 25 – she set her sights on the

2000 Games.

Now retired, she says, “By my mid-twenties, I had done 17 years of hard work and it had taken its toll. I had had a good career running the 100 and 200 metres and yet there was still a feeling I hadn’t fulfilled my potential.” Merry switched to running the 400 metres in 1999 and finished fifth in the World Athletics Championships. Going into the Olympic year, she was a strong medal contender. However, a virus caught in the build up to the Games threatened to prevent her from achieving her dream of becoming an Olympian. “It felt like everything was falling apart…but I knew that this was the year of the Olympics and I only had one chance to get it right.” Merry persevered, and she made sure that every effort she was able to put in counted.

Champions become champions because they keep putting in their best effort and they keep pushing the limits of what it’s possible for them to achieve. They *believe* their efforts are worthy of the rewards they want. Merry’s efforts were rewarded with a bronze medal. Despite her dip in form through illness, and despite being on antibiotics throughout the Games, she “pulled it out of the bag” and put in a medal winning performance. Are *all* of your efforts worthy of the

rewards you want?

Worksheet 6

Total Commitment

Commit to Success

Dedicate 30 days to being *totally* honest about your commitment to your goal and your commitment to change. Are you 100 per cent committed or are you holding back; are you committed to some aspects of your action plan but not others?

Are you reaching your planned targets?

If you're failing to reach targets, it's time to question why.

Write down any targets you've missed. Be honest.

Are you getting the results you planned or expected?

If you're not getting the results you planned, it's time to question why.

Write down any results you've been disappointed by. Be honest.

***Now the big question is* WHY?**

Write down your reasons why

Don’t think too hard; what reasons have you given yourself up until now?

Now devote some time to going back over your reasons list. Question your commitment in each case. Are some of your 'reasons' in fact excuses? Did the effort you put in merit the reward you received?

Honesty Notes

Are you fully committed?
What could you do better?

The difference between the impossible and the possible
lies in a man's determination
Tommy Lasorda

Worksheet checklist

question failures
recognise total commitment versus partial commitment

There's no such thing as a free lunch.

Law Seven

Like Attracts Like

Be a Magnet to Success

"Confidence is contagious. So is lack of confidence"

- Vince Lombardi, American football coach

Thinking positively leads to positive actions being taken and taking positive action leads to a positive outcome. This is an underlying message in all aspects of sports psychology and it's a concept that has been around for centuries, not least in ancient Greek and Chinese cultures where the 'healthy mind, healthy body' philosophy originated.

In **Law Two**, you learned that the positive energy you generate by thinking and acting positively is returned to you in the form of a positive vibe in a positive environment. The same basic principle is behind this Law. If you're sending out positive energy, you attract positive energy in return so by Law, if you're sending out negative energy, you attract only negative energy in return.

Franz Klammer used the extraordinary power of his own positive thinking to generate a positive vibe that overruled the negative thinking vibe of 60 000 spectators and turned their fearful gasps into a positive cheer of support that was no doubt ringing in his ears as he crossed the finish-line to win gold. The positive energy that he put out through thinking positively not only allowed him to ski positively, it was returned to him as a surge of positive energy from the spectators lining the course. His positive energy attracted positive energy in return.

All Universal Laws link to the Universal Law of Attraction and all of the Laws covered in the chapters of this book link to this Law – Like Attracts Like. For example, Franz Klammer succeeded through his ability to maintain a positive mental attitude even when the odds seemed stacked against him but his ability to

think positively didn't develop in isolation. His skills, both physical and mental, developed through his passion for his sport; his ability to visualise his success; his ability to create an action plan to achieve that success; his willingness to take action on that plan; his ability to create a positive outer world through maintaining a positive inner world; his dedication to putting in to his sport the necessary effort to get out the end result he wanted, and his commitment to always giving *everything* connected to his sport his best effort. That adds up to *a lot* of positive thinking and a lot of positive action but in return for every positive effort, he attracted the positive things he needed to help him turn his vision of success into his reality. It's also important to recognise that winners like Klammer become winners because they're willing to lose. You have to be willing to lose in order to win because a fear of failure can only hold you back from giving your all and achieving a top performance.

Every positive effort attracts a positive return.

You know already that it takes *total* commitment to your sport to realise your full potential. To attract positive outcomes, *all* of your thoughts and actions must be focused on achieving your ultimate goal, *all* of the time. All Laws of Performance

link into this Law – Like Attracts Like – as achieving a top performance depends on your ability to attract the positive things into your life that will help you to be your best.

Of course, to continue performing at your best you must continue to attract positive outcomes by continuing to think positively and continuing to take positive action: you must continue to give your all and maintain your total commitment to your sport. A great example of the effects of failing to maintain *total* commitment can be found in the story of Scotland's football team in the 1978 World Cup. In that year, every football fan in Scotland believed the Scottish team would win the World Cup in Argentina. If you're unfamiliar with Scotland's history in World Cup tournaments you'll find nothing unusual about a nation promoting themselves as winners in the build up to a big event, however, in previous campaigns, Scotland had made it almost a tradition to go out in the first round – if they even qualified to take part at all. So why was 1978 different?

In Scotland that year, it was impossible to escape the media frenzy that surrounded the Scottish team. They were touted as the greatest team in the history of British national teams – better than England's winning team of 1966

according to the Scottish press – and in sports psychology terms, the Scottish national team were being bombarded with positive external feedback from every source possible. The reason for the excitement was newly appointed manager Ally McLeod. It's reported that on introducing himself to the Scottish squad, he said, "My name is Ally McLeod and I'm a born winner." Soon after his appointment, he led Scotland to a British Home Championship win. He very quickly developed a team of players who believed themselves to be winners and in so doing, created an entire nation of believers. Thousands of supporters gathered to cheer on their team as they boarded the plane on their way to Argentina. The positive energy being generated by the team attracted positive energy in return from their enthusiastic supporters. One reporter asked McLeod what he planned to do after the World Cup. "Retain it," was his reply.

In 1978, sports psychology was not as widely recognised as it is today but what McLeod and the Scotland squad demonstrated was the phenomenal power of positive thinking: the power of a positive mental attitude. McLeod believed they would win, the players believed they would win, so an entire nation believed their team would win. As Scotland entered the World Cup, they were a perfect representation of the concept of positive thoughts leading to positive actions and

positive actions leading to positive outcomes. However, Scotland lost their first match, drew their second, and they were out of the World Cup by the end of the first round – again. What happened? Could it be that the team got so caught up in the positive thought part of the process that they forgot about the need to act? Did the media hype lead to them believing that all they had to do was show up and the trophy would be theirs? In McLeod's autobiography written the following year, he questions whether he, "generated just too much excitement" and wonders if he, "raised the level of national optimism just too high." McLeod and the 1978 Scotland squad may have failed to deliver the World Cup dream but what we can all learn from the enthusiasm generated by their campaign is that positive thinking holds real power. If the team had continued to take action and remained committed to *acting* positively as well as *thinking* positively, who knows what outcome they may have attracted in return?

Positive Attraction

Your outer world is a reflection of your inner world and tennis player Andy Murray is an interesting example of this principle in action. The happenings of your inner world attract corresponding happenings in your outer world.

Murray is commitment to sport personified. He has made a great many sacrifices to get to where he is now. At the age of only 15, he left his home in Scotland to train at a tennis academy in Barcelona. He knew then he wanted to pursue a professional career in tennis but it meant he and his family had to make a number of personal and financial sacrifices to get the best training possible. But, for many years, his dream of winning a Grand Slam title failed to materialise. His commitment to his sport was total and he was, without question, a talented player. His positive efforts had attracted a great many positive outcomes so why did it take so long for him to realise his ultimate vision of success?

Murray understood the strength of connection between his inner game and his outer game and he understood the power of self-belief and a positive mental attitude. After his defeat in Australia in 2009, he said in an interview, “If you don’t expect to win, then when you get into a position to do so, you get scared. In Australia, I was the most disappointed I’ve ever felt. It was difficult to lose because I thought I was going to win. Some might be happy with a quarter-final or a semi but that’s not my mentality.” Clearly, he had the will to win and he believed in himself and his abilities but comments made by former Davis Cup captain John Lloyd indicated that the happenings in Murray’s outer world – win or

lose – were indeed a reflection of the happenings in his inner world, his mind. Lloyd's comment was:
"The problem has been the mental side of his game. He won't win unless he changes his attitude. He goes out there and looks like he does not want to be on the court…throwing away points and making lots of gestures to his support group. The top players on the Tour are predators. If they sense blood, they are going to go for it. When they see someone throwing out negative body language, it's like giving them a Christmas present!"

Murray's dream of a Grand Slam title became his reality when he developed the ability to maintain a positive inner world when he needed it most. In a post-victory interview, Murray said he'd looked in the mirror during a mid-match comfort break and, "had a word with himself."

Like attracts like. Negativity attracts negativity.

Like attracts like but it's not just what you say that matters, it's what you *believe* and what you *do* that attracts positive outcomes.

In the 1998 Calgary Winter Olympics, an inspirational story of positive thinking and total commitment unfolded. The story of the first Jamaican bobsled team has since been given the Disney treatment in the film titled *Cool Runnings* but the true happenings of the event are testament to Walt Disney's belief that, "If you can dream it, you can do it." The four-man Jamaican team was undoubtedly the Olympic underdog and had very little practical experience in terms of negotiating an actual bobsled track. The characters in the Disney version are seen getting to grips with the practicalities of the sport in everything from go-carts to bathtubs, but in reality their training had revolved around pushcart racing in Jamaica. On arrival in Alberta, they had to borrow spare sleds and equipment from other competing nations in order to be able to take part at all and it's fair to say that the arrival of a team from a tropical climate attracted a fair amount of not-so-positive media attention. However, in the true spirit of the Olympics and according to the Law of Like Attracts Like, the positive energy generated by the Jamaican team members attracted a positive return in the form of not only the equipment they needed but also the support and guidance of the other bobsledders.

The odds were stacked against them but their commitment was total. The sled

driver committed himself totally to memorising every centimetre of the course. He knew every lump, bump and bend; he knew the exact speed they needed to negotiate every stage; and, most importantly, he knew how it needed to 'feel' to get it right. It made great Disney entertainment to view him sitting in the bathtub pretending to be going down the course but in fact, we were watching skilled visualisation in practice. Through their dedicated, positive efforts, they attracted a great many positive outcomes in the form of major improvements in practice sessions but, much to the disappointment of the massive crowd of supporters they had attracted into their lives, they failed to officially finish the course in competition after losing control of the sled and crashing. After the crash, the team members famously got out of the sled and walked it over the finish-line demonstrating total commitment to the end. The total support of the stunned spectators was made clear by the strength of the cheers and applause as the first Jamaican bobsled team crossed the finish. Not even Walt Disney could have dreamed of a more inspirational ending to the story. *Before you can win a game, you have to not lose it.* The Jamaican team didn't win their race but they certainly didn't lose it.

We are all connected. No one makes it to the top of their game on their own. To

connect with the people and the things you need to help you achieve your dream, you need to attract them into your life by generating the positive energy that will bring them to you: like attracts like.

Be your best, do your best, give your best and you will attract the best.

Ancient Way to Modern Day

Recent research into the effects of optimism has strongly supported the principles behind the Universal Law of Attraction. Studies have concluded that optimists enjoy greater health in life, with one study of Harvard University students revealing that those with optimistic character traits at the age of 25 were significantly healthier at the ages of 45 and 60 compared to those who displayed pessimistic character traits.

Dr Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania has studied sports teams for many years and has concluded that optimistic teams create greater positive

synergy and perform better as a team compared to pessimistic teams. In a different study, athletes were led to believe that the result of a single performance was worse than it actually was. The following performances of the pessimistic athletes were negatively affected but those of the optimistic athletes were not. And in a retrospective study of healthy Hall of Fame baseball players who played between 1900 and 1950, it was found that the optimists had lived significantly longer.

Optimism is a common thread through proverbs and sayings from all around the world. One old Chinese proverb says:

Do not let those who say it cannot be done get in the way of those who are doing it.

The Seventh Law of Olympic Performance

"It was a cat-and-mouse affair…I beat him by little more than the thickness of a vest"

- Steve Cram MBE, describing an epic mile race against Steve Ovett

Positive thoughts generate positive outcomes but champion performers know that it's not just what they think about that matters, it's also what they *believe* and what they *do*. Every positive effort attracts a positive return, so when you put out positive energy through your thoughts, beliefs, and actions, you attract the positive things you need in return.

Thinking about improving your performance and thinking positively about your potential to make those improvements is only the beginning. To actually make those improvements, you must *believe* that you have what it takes to make them, and you must *do* whatever it takes to make those improvements your reality.

Former Olympic middle-distance runner Steve Cram has often been referred to as an athlete with a "textbook career" – a junior champion, and then a continuing glittering trail up through the ranks to become a world record holder. But, did Cram's career just fall into place through his "natural" abilities, or is there more to

it than meets the eye?

Cram was inspired by Brendan Foster, an Olympic athlete from his local area who won a bronze medal in the 1976 Montreal Olympics. At the age of 12, Cram joined his local athletics club and only two years later he was fourth in the English Schools Championship. His international career started at the age of just 17 years when he competed in the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton. By the age of 19, he was the world's fastest teenager over 1500 metres and he qualified for the Moscow Olympics. That's only seven years from joining his local running club to becoming an Olympian – was it all down to "natural" talent?

No one gets to the top of their game on their own. Cram's inspiration came in the form of a local champion; his passion to emulate his inspirational hero led to him joining his local athletics club where his enthusiasm, dedication, and athletic ability led to being around other dedicated and passionate individuals who coached and supported him, leading to continual improvements in performance and setting him on his path to achieving his full potential.

In Moscow, Cram lined up next to two of the biggest icons in athletics at the time,

fellow Brits Steve Ovett and Seb Coe, in an Olympic final that's considered to be one of the greatest races in Olympic history. He finished last. However, the experience of competing against the world's greatest athletes did not go to waste and only two years later, Cram won gold in the Commonwealth Games. He was now part of a formidable trio of British athletes who were dominating middle-distance racing. Coincidence? Or was it because of Ovett's and Coe's dominance, that Cram raised his game and joined ranks?

In the summer of 1985, he became one of the first two athletes to break 3:30 for 1500 metres, then within days he broke the mile record, his record time of 3:46.32 stood for eight years, and then only days after that he set a new 2000 metre record. Cram *attracted* success by *being* successful. His success came from *believing* in himself as the success he would become, and putting himself in a successful environment, surrounded by other successful people who also believed in him. Like attracts like: he made every effort a positive effort and attracted positive outcomes in return. What are your thoughts, beliefs, and actions attracting into your life?

Worksheet 7

Powerful Attraction

Powerful Connections

All of the Laws of Performance are connected and all of the corresponding exercises are connected, with all of them revolving around this Law and this exercise.

To be able to improve your performance and go on to achieve a top performance, you need *everything* in your world to come together at the right time. In effect, you need your physical and your mental fitness to peak at exactly the same moment in your sports career. You have to *be* physically prepared to perform at top level but you also have to *believe* that you are prepared to perform at top level.

Law Seven is the ultimate demonstration of the phenomenal power of the mind. How many times have physically superior athletes been out-performed by physically inferior athletes? How many times have a physically inferior sports

team – the underdogs – outplayed a physically superior team?

Who or what are you a magnet to?

Devote 30 days to identifying who or what your current thought and behaviour patterns are attracting into your life. Pay attention to what you're thinking or what you're doing when things are going your way and, of course, pay equal attention when things are *not* going your way.

This is an on-going exercise that will require some dedicated practice but your efforts will be well rewarded. When you learn to recognise the connections between your thoughts, your actions, and your outcomes, you gain the power to change your outcomes.

Become a magnet to the outcomes you want.

Magnetic Forces - What Are You Attracting?

Use these pages to make notes and to identify patterns.

For example:

You have a chance meeting with an inspirational coach who boosts your motivation.

Was it really a 'chance' meeting? What were you thinking; what actions were you taking? What led you to be where that inspirational coach was?

I really lack the words to compliment myself today
Alberto Tomba

You are never a loser
until you quit trying
Mike Ditka

If you aren't going all the way,
why go at all?
Joe Namath

Worksheet checklist

recognise patterns of behaviour
recognise connections between thoughts and outcomes

You reap what you sow. Sow positive seeds.

Law Eight

Without Change, Nothing Changes

Champions Embrace Change

"Face each day with the expectation of achieving good, rather than the dread of falling short"

- Shannon Miller, gymnast

Everything is energy and energy is constantly in motion. Your thoughts are energy and you know already that 'what you think, you become'. The Universal Law of Energy states that all energy in motion will eventually appear in a physical form so in other words, what you think about, you bring about. The principle behind this Law is that everyone has the capacity to change their circumstances by changing their thoughts.

You can change what you bring about by changing what you think about.

If you don't like the way things are for you; if you don't like your 'lot' in life, you have the power to change your circumstances by changing how you think about things and changing how you do things. To make positive changes, you must change your focus away from the things you *don't* want and onto the things you *do* want. Your thoughts and actions must generate positive energy to receive positive outcomes in return.

In **Law Five**, you learned of the importance of developing a growth mindset and of accepting that change is always possible. Clearly, if you're not happy with your current level of performance, *not* changing will keep you right where you are. If you want to see a change in your performance, you have to *make* those changes by doing things differently. However, it's not always easy to make changes because even though you recognise that you *want* change, making changes means taking steps to move away from all that you're familiar with; it means stepping out of your safe, familiar, predictable comfort zone and into a world of unknowns. Your comfort zone can be a positive place if you learn to use it as a performance plateau – a place where you can pause for a moment and catch your breath; a place where you can take stock of your achievements so far and

consider your options for the next leg of your journey towards your ultimate goal. But, if you use your comfort zone as a place to stop rather than pause, it becomes a negative place. When you stop in your comfort zone, it becomes a place to hide rather than a place to reflect and you effectively shut yourself off from all opportunities to discover your true potential. To be able to improve your performance and achieve more, you must be prepared to step out of your current comfort zone: you must be prepared to make changes.

Change your focus from negative to positive to effect positive change.

If you fear change, you fear the unknown but in sport the real fear is very often not just a fear of the unknown but an accompanying fear of failure. Fear can paralyze you and prevent you from making the changes you need to make progress. The negative energy generated through fear can also begin a self-perpetuating downward spiral of negative happenings. Remember the ‘success cycle’ when it began with a negative self-image? The positive cycle of success can also be viewed as a positive upward spiral, a spiral of success. The Zoned In

Performance Spiral of Success™ programme[1] has been developed to promote awareness of the negative effects of fear in all areas of life and to promote positive ways to instigate change by changing the way you think to generate positive changes in your outcomes. If you think of the spiral of success as a spiral staircase, your comfort zone is at the very bottom of the stairs. If you fear change, facing the climb up those stairs feels like facing an experimental jet-pack flight wearing equipment supplied by Bodge-It-and-Scarper Inc. But, 'all great journeys begin with one small step' so all it takes to begin your upward journey is the confidence to take that first step.

The key to building confidence is to understand that you don't need to leap up the spiral of success in one enormous jump. You don't have to change *everything* all at once. Changes can be made one small, manageable step at a time, just like climbing the steps of a spiral staircase. When you fear taking that first step, your lack of confidence has allowed negative 'what if?' questions to fill your mind – 'what if I'm not good enough; what if I fail?' Your negative thoughts

1 Details of the Spiral of Success™ programme can be found on the Zoned In Performance website

generate negative energy and that negative energy can only generate a negative outcome which in this case means you'll be stuck at the bottom of the stairs, unable to make any progress. The confidence to take that first step comes from changing your energy. The negative energy that's keeping you at the bottom of the stairs can be changed to positive energy by changing your thinking. Negative becomes positive simply by exchanging 'what if I fail?' for 'what if I succeed?' When you learn to think positively, 'what if I succeed?' becomes 'I *can* succeed' and then 'I *will* succeed.'

Getting from the bottom of the spiral staircase to the top represents getting from 'what if?' to 'I will.' You're not going to jet-pack to the top, you're going to take one step at a time. Think of each step as a stepping-stone towards reaching your ultimate vision of success. Look at where you are now then change your focus to look ahead at where you want to be. Break the journey between the two points into small steps. Look at the skills you already have then consider the additional skills you will need to help you achieve your goal. The confidence you need to continue climbing up the stairs will come from developing those new skills. Success depends on having confidence in yourself and in your abilities. The building blocks of self-confidence are:

- Knowledge

Knowledge is power. Fear that is based on the unknown can be eliminated through learning. With knowledge and preparation, confidence can be built.

- Skill

Identifying your own unique skills can be very empowering. Knowing your strengths gives you the confidence to tackle life's challenges.

- Experience

With experience comes knowledge. 'Learn from your mistakes' is a common saying but just as much can be learned from successes. Accomplishing goals builds confidence.

- Attitude

Your attitude is essential to your success. Believing that change is always possible allows you to remain optimistic through turbulent times.

- Self-belief

Your knowledge, skill, experience, and attitude create the foundation for self-confidence and belief in yourself. Believe, and have confidence in your ability to take the next step.

Most of us, no matter how confident, experience moments of self-doubt. Each time you step out of your comfort zone, doubt can creep into your thoughts – 'Am I ready for this; can I do this?' Doubt stems from a lack of self-belief and could easily lead to a hasty retreat back into your comfort zone. Rather than stepping backwards, take a side-step. Take a moment to reflect on your achievements so far. Focus on your strengths while improving your weaknesses and give yourself credit where credit is due. Those nagging voices in your head are simply a sign that you're preparing to take the next step, you're getting ready to step out of your comfort zone. Nagging doubts are often accompanied by a feeling of butterflies in your stomach, another sign that you're getting ready to go. Silence the voices by telling yourself that you *are* ready, you *can* do it and then get those butterflies flying in formation – fly with them! You've worked hard and earned your right to make your way up the spiral of success; you *deserve* to be there.

Positive self-talk is an effective way of changing negative energy into positive energy. However, what you *say* must also be what you *believe.* For example, you might say, 'I'm going to improve my 10k running time' but what you *really* believe is, 'I'll never run 10k any faster than I do now.' Positive energy can only be generated by positive thoughts and they must be thoughts that your mind

believes to be true. Only consistent thoughts can take physical form so if you've spent many years *believing* you'll never run any faster, deciding to *say* you'll run faster is not enough on its own to effect any sort of change. You must *believe* what you say and you must be consistent in what you think and what you say. Random thoughts or thoughts that are not congruent with long-held beliefs have no power.

In **Law Two**, you learned that the higher frequencies of positive energy can cancel out the lower frequencies of negative energy. The thoughts that you really believe in have far more power than the thoughts you're simply paying lip-service to. If you're thinking of a change you'd like to make but your real belief is 'it'll never happen,' your long-held belief is your dominant thought and negative thoughts can only manifest into negative outcomes. If you're not happy with what you're manifesting, you have to change your dominant thoughts; you have to focus on the things you want, not the things you don't want.

Making Changes

You know already that successful people have successful habits. Success is routine. It's a popular belief that it takes 30 days to form a new habit and the

same applies to changing old habits. Habitual negative thinking will not transform into habitual positive thinking overnight.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit"
- Aristotle

Commit to *thinking* positively and *believing* in your thoughts for a period of at least 30 days. Remember, it takes consistent positive thinking to achieve positive results and it takes *total* commitment to the task in hand to receive total payback in terms of success. Try the following:

- repeat positive affirmations and positive self-talk daily; believe what you say
- use visualisation to create a mental image of your success; believe what you see
- create a vision board; create a visible reminder of what your success looks like
- read inspirational quotes
- read positive books
- listen to positive music
- act as if you already have what you dream of; believe in yourself and your

ability to *be* your vision of success and *be* the change you want to achieve
- be grateful for the good things you already have; reflect on your achievements so far and celebrate your successes.

Goals are set with thinking and received with action but you have to really believe to really receive.

The first Jamaican bobsled team turned a potentially negative happening into a positive happening by pushing their crashed sled over the finish-line. Derek Redmond turned the negative energy of his hatred of everything, especially hamstrings, into the positive energy of his determination to finish the race he had started. They are inspirational examples of the power of positive thinking and of the principle behind this Law. Positive energy can and does cancel out negative energy. By changing your energy, you can change your outcomes.

Ancient Way to Modern Day

The Universal Law of Vibration states that everything in the universe creates its own unique vibration; its own frequency. Theoretical physicists openly discuss the ‘string theory’ which suggests that electrons and protons are all forms of vibration on tiny loops of string throughout the universe but ‘mainstream’ scientists are yet to back up any such theories, not because they are flawed but because they have no absolute proof – the theories behind the Law can’t be tested.

Proven scientific theories have concluded that energy moves in circles – a pendulum returns in its swing, the moon returns in its orbit – but one man back in the early 1900s stated that because everything is energy and everything vibrates, even the vibrations of shares on the stock market could be predicted by applying the Natural Law of Vibration. His name was William D Gann and he *did* predict the exact points at which stocks and shares would sell with remarkable accuracy. He attributed his success solely to aligning himself with the Law of Vibration and he taught others how to do the same but his method has never been scientifically proven. His belief was that the Law of Vibration was fundamental to the invention of wireless telegraphy and the telephone.

Things only become possible once you believe they are possible. In 1954, scientists did not believe it was possible to run a sub-four-minute mile. Roger Bannister did it anyway. Before the invention of the telephone, how many people believed it was even a possibility?

Back in the 1600s, French poet Jean de la Fontaine said:

Man is so made that when anything fires his soul, impossibilities vanish.

The Eighth Law of Olympic Performance

"Never surrender your dreams; pursue them, they are yours for the taking"
- Tessa Sanderson, CBE

If you want things to be different, you have to *make* changes: if you want to see changes in your performance, it's up to you to *make* those changes. Of course,

making changes isn't always going to be easy, many of us fear change, so getting from where you are now to where you want to be will undoubtedly mean stepping out of your comfort zone.

Your comfort zone is safe, it's familiar, and you feel comfortably in control, but here's the thing, it's *not* where you want to be. Look at it this way, when you're in your comfort zone, your safe, familiar way of thinking and doing things, and your long-held beliefs are bringing you safe, familiar outcomes – but are they the outcomes you want? No! If you want things to be different, you must step out of that comfort zone; you must embrace change.

What is it that's holding you back? A fear of change is essentially a fear of the unknown, so you must ask yourself, are you allowing your fears of what *might* or *might not* happen to prevent you from taking action to find out what *actually* happens? Back in 1954, it was a popular belief that running the distance of one mile in under four minutes was a physical impossibility. Roger Bannister chose to challenge that belief and did it anyway. He *changed* a long-held popular belief and as history now shows, it's change that allows new records to be set, with Bannister's phenomenal sub-four-minute time beaten within only a matter of

months. Coincidence?

Tessa Sanderson won gold in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. To this day, she remains the only British female athlete to have won gold in an Olympic throwing event. Could it now be a “belief” that British women are not medal contenders in Olympic throwing events? What if it’s your dream as a British female to win gold in an Olympic throwing event – are you going to surrender your dream to that “belief”?

In the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Team GB bagged Britain’s biggest medal haul since 1908. The cycling team was given the target of achieving six medals; they achieved 14, winning seven of the ten gold medals that were there for the taking. Prior to the Games, who would have believed it? Think on. Are you prepared to step out of your comfort zone to pursue your dreams?

Worksheet 8

Believe In Yourself

Don't Just Say It, Believe It

Affirmations are a great way to build self-confidence and to boost your confidence in moments of doubt. Create a short list of affirmations that you can use on a daily or regular basis to support what you know to be true but sometimes doubt.

For example:

Today is my day to achieve – I can do it.

I am prepared and I am ready – I can do this.

I am unstoppable; I will keep moving forwards.

Affirmations

Say what you mean…

Find the words or phrases that hold the most meaning for you and create affirmations that fit the circumstances you find yourself in when you experience self-doubt or could use a confidence boost.

…mean what you say

Say the words frequently, three times every morning when you're looking in the bathroom mirror for example, and say them out loud whenever possible. Put your mind, body, and soul into the words you say – *believe* in what you say.

Build your belief by building your skills.

Devote 30 days to building your self-belief and confidence by actively taking steps to build and develop the skills you need to succeed.

Knowledge

What do you need to study, research, or know more about?

Skill

What skills do you need to succeed? Where are your current strengths and weaknesses? What skills do you need to grow your weaknesses to match your strengths?

Experience

*Learn from your successes. Write down your achievements and recognise that you **are** capable.*

Attitude

Develop a positive mental attitude. Understand your mindset. Are you taking steps to practice thinking positively? Do you need mental skills training?

Remove your unknowns to remove your fears.

Self-belief Notes

You have to expect things of yourself
before you can achieve them
Michael Jordan

It's lack of faith that makes people afraid of meeting challenges,
and I believed in myself
Muhammad Ali

Worksheet checklist

create affirmations
take action to build confidence

Say it, believe it, do it!

Law Nine

Getting to the Top Means Getting Things in Perspective

Keep Your Performance in Perspective

"Treat a person as he is, and he will remain as he is. Treat him as he could be, and he will become what he should be"

- Jimmy Johnson, American football coach

How you define success and failure is a personal choice. In **Law Four**, you learned that the people and the things you attribute your success or failure to, in any given situation, give an insight into your emotional state. If you're in a competitive event where an official is keeping score, success and failure can easily be defined as the winner and the loser. But, how *you* define success or failure may not be so clear-cut. If your goal is to win the competition, you might view anything other than a win as outright failure but what if it's your goal to

achieve a personal best and even though you lose the competition, you achieve a personal best? Is the end result now one of success or one of failure? Look at it another way, how do you define success or failure in a non-competitive situation? What constitutes success or failure in training?

It's a Universal Law that all things are relative. Everything is relative to something else. Something is only big in relation to something that's small; something is only fast in relation to something that's slow, so success and failure can only be relative to *your* perspective. The principle behind this Law is that nothing in life has any meaning except for the meaning we give it.

Nothing is big, small, fast or slow until you compare it to something else. If you're comparing yourself to others, you might feel that as the competition loser, you're a failure compared to the competition winner but consider this, the winner might also consider themselves to be a failure because they're comparing their winning score to someone-else's more impressive winning score. In any situation, how you define yourself or your circumstances is purely down to your perspective. From your perspective, the winner is successful but from the winner's perspective, they're unsuccessful. Success and failure don't exist: there really is

no such thing as success or failure, only our *perceptions* of success and failure and our perceptions are all relative to our own beliefs.

Let's say you're a javelin thrower. You're in an Olympic qualifying round and you fail to make the required distance. You've failed, therefore you're a failure – or so *you* believe. You define yourself as a failure because you gave it your best shot but your best wasn't good enough. The other competitors' bests were better. Your comparison of yourself to others is negative. Your thinking is negative and your mental attitude is negative so you're generating negative energy. Negative energy will block your potential to progress from where you are now; you're stuck. However, all it would take to change your energy would be a change of perspective. Your best wasn't good enough today but tomorrow's best might be better. You failed to qualify but you succeeded in producing a season's best throw. In fact, the distance you threw today is the exact distance that one of the spectators looking on in the crowd dreams of achieving in their vision of success. From their perspective, you are a total success. To progress and to move on from the disappointment of today's result, you have to maintain a positive mental attitude and shift your focus away from what you *didn't* achieve, placing it on what you *did* achieve and what you still *can* achieve instead.

Focus on the positive things you have, relative to what others have. Focus on where you succeed by comparison, not on where you fail by comparison.

Learning how to keep things in perspective is essential in terms of improving your performance and achieving your full potential. If it is your belief that your best throw today really was your absolute best and you're never going to be able to better it, you won't better it. If it is your belief that your best throw today was just that, your best throw *today,* but your absolute best throw is yet to come, it will come. Your ability to realise your full potential depends on your ability to keep things in perspective. When you're able to keep things in perspective, you're able to see that your best wasn't as good as someone else's best *today* but it was your best compared to your best throw last month, and last month's throw was your best throw compared to the previous month's best throw – your best just keeps on getting better.

British javelin thrower Steve Backley is a great example of keeping things in perspective. In the 2000 Sydney Olympics, he beat the qualifying mark with his

first throw of 83.74 metres but rival Jan Zelezny threw an even bigger 89.39 metres to qualify convincingly. Unperturbed, Backley went on to throw a new Olympic record of 89.95 metres in the second round of the final, putting him in strong contention for the gold medal. However, in the third round, Zelezny threw a massive 90.17 metres which not only instantly broke Backley's record, it secured him the gold. Had Backley been unable to keep things in perspective, he may well have gone home that evening and cried into his Gatorade before hanging up his javelin and calling it a day. Instead, he began to prepare for the 2001 Athletics World Championships. As the event progressed, Backley was trailing behind the Latvian thrower's personal best of 86.47 metres and the American thrower's personal best of 85.91 metres. That's *two* rivals in the form of their lives, from anyone's perspective that's tough opposition. But, Backley responded by throwing 90.81 metres to take the gold medal.

"Success is a decision. Not a gift"

- Steve Backley OBE

Steve Backley won gold in four consecutive Commonwealth Games and medalled in three consecutive Olympic Games but never secured Olympic gold.

From *your* perspective, is he a success or a failure?

Only you can decide how you view your circumstances.
Your perspective is your choice.

Jim Abbott is a retired Major League baseball player who forged a successful career in sport despite having been born without a right hand. His ability to keep things in perspective is truly inspirational:

"There are millions of people out there ignoring disabilities and accomplishing incredible feats. I learned you can learn to do things differently, but do them just as well. I've learned that it's not the disability that defines you, it's how you deal with the challenges the disability presents you with. And I've learned that we have an obligation to the abilities we DO have, not the disability."
- Jim Abbott

When you are able to keep things in perspective, you are able to see the bigger picture. Your circumstances at any one moment in time are just that, one moment in time. You have the power to change your circumstances and to *keep*

changing your circumstances; one moment in time does not define your entire career. Roger Federer, for example, did not just wake up one morning to find himself at the top of his game. He has been ranked in the top 10 of the ATP men's tennis world rankings since 2002 and he's currently the winner of 17 grand slam singles titles, but his rise to the top was not meteoric and he experienced a great many defeats on his journey up through the ranks. In 1998, aged 17, Federer entered four ATP tournaments and lost three. Things weren't much better the following year, winning only one challenger event. Then in 2000, he lost five times in a row and totted up a total of 14 losses in first-round matches. I think it's fair to say that at this point many lesser mortals may have been considering a different career path, but he kept going: he saw the bigger picture and he kept things in perspective. In 2002, Andre Agassi beat Federer in a final. After the match, Agassi said, "When Roger Federer learns how to play tennis at this top level, we're all in trouble." And learn is exactly what Federer did. Improving his performance meant learning from his mistakes but *not* focusing on the failures; it meant learning from mistakes and *moving forward.* We all know that we can learn from mistakes but it's important to remember that we can also learn from successes. Federer's focus is never on the point or the game he's just lost, that moment is gone and can't be changed, it's always firmly on the points

and the games he's still to win. He *knows* that he can change his circumstances in the very next moment, or the moment after that.

Things happen. With the best will in the world, things are not always going to go the way you planned. Seeing the bigger picture and keeping setbacks in perspective is the only way to keep moving forwards. Dwelling on negatives generates negative energy and negative energy can only hold you back.

Positive Perspectives

In the 1928 Olympics, Australian sculler Bobby Pearce appeared unstoppable on his way to winning gold. His rowing prowess had been clearly demonstrated by his outstanding qualifying round times but an unusual event in his quarter-final literally *did* stop him:

"I had beaten a German and a Dane in earlier heats and I was racing a Frenchman when I heard wild roars from the crowd along the bank of the canal. I could see some spectators vigorously pointing to something behind me, in my path. I peeked over one shoulder and saw something I didn't like, for a family of ducks in single file was swimming slowly from shore to shore. It's funny now, but it wasn't at the time for I had to lean on my oars and wait for a clear course, and

all the while my opponent was pulling away to a five length lead."
Without the ability to keep things in perspective, the circumstances Pearce found himself in could have ended his medal chances. The negative energy created by his frustration at being stopped and his anger at seeing his opponent stretch his lead could have generated such a negative environment that the race would effectively have been over. Dwelling on the negative experience of the race would then have led to Pearce beginning his next race with a negative attitude and still generating negative energy…and so the downward spiral would have continued. As it was, not only did he catch up, he crossed the finish line almost 30 seconds ahead of the Frenchman. He very definitely kept things in perspective. He knew that he was the faster rower; he knew that his qualifying times set him apart from his opponents, so he knew that he could still win the race and he channelled that positive energy into an all-out effort to do just that.

Keeping things in perspective means taking responsibility for yourself and for your circumstances. In **Law Five**, you learned that nothing happens by chance and that nothing happens out with the Universal Laws. That's not to say that a family of ducks crossing your path in a scull race isn't a chance happening but it does mean that the outcome of that happening is not a chance outcome. Your

perspective, *your* attitude and *your* response to that happening, is directly responsible for the outcome *you* generate. Win or lose, succeed or fail, it's all down to perspective.

Inspirational Perspectives

At the Nagano winter Olympics in 1998, Hermann 'Herminator' Maier was considered to be the best downhill skier in the world and touted as favourite to win every event he competed in. On his downhill run, travelling in excess of 70 mph, he attempted to turn left on an icy bend. His skis didn't catch the snow and he flew, literally, off the course. High winds had already forced an alteration to the course and they now picked him up and hurled him through the air before dropping him onto the course to begin a 50 yard tumble into some safety netting. The crowd held their breath – he must be dead. In fact, he stood up and walked off the course.

The Herminator suffered injuries to his shoulder and knee but over the next few days he demonstrated his own brand of inner strength and showed his remarkable perspective on life by not only returning to the slopes, but dominating them by winning gold in both the super G and giant slalom. From his perspective, he wasn't dead and he was still able to ski, therefore he could still compete. He

took responsibility for what had happened, he focused on the positives, and he moved on.

Ancient Way to Modern Day

The principle behind this Universal Law correlates with Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Einstein's theories are not always easy to grasp but this theory, proposed in the early part of the 20th century, has stood the test of time and been confirmed accurate under the scrutiny of a great many other scientists over the years. Einstein said:

Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.

The need to keep things in perspective is a lesson that has been passed down through countless generations with pearls of wisdom such as, "There's always someone worse off than yourself," and the importance of focusing on the positives that you *have* in life are perhaps best expressed by the wise words of

Buddha who said:

Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful.

The Ninth Law of Olympic Performance

"I was the best in the world at what I did and suddenly that was not true anymore"
- Jonathan Edwards, CBE, on retiring from competitive sport

In 1995, triple jumper Jonathan Edwards became the first man to jump beyond 18 metres, clearing 18.16 metres. With his very next jump, he beat his own record by clearing an astonishing 18.29 metres. This meant he went into the Atlanta Olympics the following year as the favourite to win gold. However, Edwards' best jump of 17.88 metres was only enough to secure silver, with

American athlete Kenny Harrison jumping 18.09 metres to take gold. Ironically, Edwards' jump was the longest ever jump *not* to win Olympic gold.

Harrison's gold medal winning jump was significantly shorter, in triple jump terms, than Edwards' record breaking jump the previous year. In fact, being beaten into silver medal position marked the end of a run of 22 consecutive victories, including three world records and seven British records. How would this turn of events have affected you? When you're "unbeatable", how does being beaten affect you?

Well, champion athletes know that success and failure are nothing more than a matter of perspective. They know that where there is the potential to succeed, there is also the potential to fail, and they choose to "go for it" anyway. Edwards understood that his entire competitive career could not be judged on any one single performance, win or lose, and he kept his Olympic performance in perspective. He was still the world record holder: he did not allow his focus to shift onto what *had not* been achieved in that one event, he kept it firmly fixed on what *had* been achieved and what could still be achieved in the next event.

In the next Olympics, Edwards won the gold medal – that's the power of keeping things in perspective. By 2002, he held gold medals from the Olympic Games, the World Championships, the Commonwealth Games, and the European Championships, and on his retirement in 2003 he had won more medals than any other British athlete. With such an impressive career, it's surprising to learn that it was only after he retired that Edwards realised just how big a role competitive sport actually played in his life – he found there was a huge gap to fill.

Reaching your true potential in sport means keeping your performances, both good and not so good, in perspective. You are only ever as good as your last performance – *success is never final and failure is never fatal* – and as Olympic champion Seb Coe once said, "World records are only borrowed." Are you keeping things in perspective?

Worksheet 9

Check Your Perspective

See the Bigger Picture

Disappointing results in training or in competition can leave you feeling flat but if you allow them to create a negative environment in your inner world, it can only lead to more disappointing results in your outer world.

This following exercise requires honest reflection. Dedicate the next 30 days to checking your perspective on your past performances. Take some time-out to think back to sports performances that left you flat. They might be particularly disappointing training day experiences or competition days that didn't go to plan, it only matters that they are experiences you remember as disappointments.

Write down everything you remember about the experience. How did you feel; what were your thoughts? Then, write down how you responded to the disappointment. Did you call it a day and give up; did you feel angry and lash out; did you hide away to lick your wounds? What were your physical and emotional responses to a disappointing result?

Mountain or molehill?

Disappointing Days

Describe every detail. How did you view your disappointing day; what was your perspective?

Use this exercise as a way of recognising the responses that allowed you to pick up the pieces and move on, and the responses that kept you stuck in that place

of disappointment.

Worksheet checklist

recognise physical and emotional responses
understand the connection between emotional state and moving on

Learn to keep things in perspective and you learn to keep going.

Law Ten

You Win Some, You Lose Some

You Have to Know Failure to Know Success

"No matter how good you are, you're going to lose one-third of your games. No matter how bad you are, you're going to win one-third of your games. It's the other third that makes the difference"

- Tommy Lasorda, Major League baseball player and manager

You already know there's no such thing as success or failure, only your perception of success or failure and only in comparison to other things. It's a Universal Law that everything has an opposite and without those opposites, neither one would exist. So, for example, if there was no good, there would be no bad; if there was no fast, there would be no slow, and if there was no success, there would be no failure.

The principle behind this Law is that success is only possible because of failure. If it was impossible to fail, it would be impossible to succeed. This doesn't mean that you *have* to fail in order to succeed, it means that you have to accept the possibility of failure in order to realise success or that to be willing to win also means being willing to lose. It means understanding that failure is only one end of a spectrum with success at the opposite end. And, crucially, it means accepting that you are responsible for your positioning in the spectrum and that you have the power to change that positioning by applying **Law Nine** and **Law Eight** at any time.

Think of it this way: if you currently see yourself as a failure, all you are experiencing is your perception of failure, but failure can only exist because success also exists. This means that your perception of failure is based purely on your perception of success. Wherever you see yourself, your current position is your current perspective. By changing your perspective, you can change your position. Remember, your perspective is your choice.

You can only experience a bad day if you have also experienced a good day.

If there were no bad days, there would be no good days.

If you can see yourself as a success; if you have a clear vision of your success, you can apply the contents of this book to your current positioning on the spectrum to progress from where you are now to where you want to be.

Let's say you view your current level of performance as fairly average. You don't see yourself as a failure but you don't see yourself as the success you want to be either. You know that you must make changes because you know that *not* making changes will keep you where you are, in the average category. But, you fear change because you fear failure. So, here's a thought; if you fear failure you must also fear success.

Your success or your failure is controlled by you.

Fear paralyzes you; you're stuck where you are. To be able to move towards success, you must *move.* To move, you must overcome your fear and this means building your confidence.

Dictionary definition of confidence:

The belief that one can have faith in or rely on someone or something.

Alternative definition of confidence:

A state of mind; a reflection of your thinking

In sport, confidence is self-belief; an unshakeable belief in yourself and in your capabilities. Building that confidence can begin by building your skill set with an understanding of the ‘Four Pillars of Performance’.

Pillars of Performance

There are four recognised pillars on which all great sporting performances rest. Those pillars, just like structural pillars supporting a building, must share the weight of their load evenly if the whole structure is to stay standing. Whether you are a coach or a player, think of the pillars of performance as columns of ability; if your ability in one area has grown more than in another, you will have an uneven load and your overall performance may begin to show signs of structural stress and start to crumble. The four pillars of performance are:

Technical

What technical skills are needed in your sport? As an athlete or player, an understanding of the technical requirements of your sport is essential if you are to achieve a top class performance. The same level of understanding is a must for any coach aiming to guide an athlete towards a winning performance, making it important to ensure your technical ability always matches the requirements of your athletes or players. As their skills and abilities increase, so must yours.

Tactical

Some sports are considered more tactical than others. Team sports such as soccer and rugby are good examples but all sports, even solo events, have tactical elements that can make the difference between a mediocre performance and a winning one. As a player, you need game tactics in place long before the start of the match and as an athlete, you need race tactics in place long before you hear the starter's gun, so, as a coach, an ability to discuss and plan the 'best' tactics for each new situation is vital. Changing conditions, different competitors, and changing abilities may all require a change of tactics.

Physical

It's fair to say that a professional soccer player is generally fitter than a

professional darts player and it's also fair to say that a professional soccer coach doesn't need to be as fit as his players to be a good coach but, whatever your sport and whatever role you play, you must be 'fit for purpose'. Being fit enough to run a marathon doesn't mean you're physically prepared to compete in the triple-jump. Without an understanding of how the human body adapts to physical training and how to apply a progressive programme of fitness training, optimum fitness for each sport is unlikely to be achieved.

Psychological

When all other elements are equal – technical, tactical, and physical abilities – what is it that makes one player win over another? The answer is often mental skill; the ability to remain focused when it really counts or, as many successful players refer to it, the winning 'edge'. Top performers, both athletes and coaches, recognise the importance of the mind-body connection and place equal emphasis on mental skills training and physical skills training.

As an athlete or player, identifying where your weaknesses are is the first step towards allowing yourself to grow as a performer. To be able to play to your strengths, you must know what they are. The key to greater success is then to

develop your weaker skills, rather than hiding from them, so they match your existing strengths. This will not only correct the imbalance in your supporting pillars but will allow you to build onwards and upwards. Building your skills builds your confidence and with growing confidence you learn to overcome your fears, and realise that there are no limits to what you're capable of, other than the limits you place on yourself.

"Everyone needs something to believe in, and I believed in myself"
- Muhammad Ali, heavyweight boxing champion

The more skilled you become at visualising your success, the more familiar you become with what success looks like for you. Familiarity with success is a good thing as familiarity removes the fear of the unknown. Removing that fear allows you to move. Visualisation is key to success in the game of golf. If you watch professional golfers in action, preparing to take a shot involves not only physical preparation in terms of achieving the correct stance and grip on the club, it involves mental preparation in terms of achieving the correct degree of focus and then visualising where they want the ball to go *before* they swing their club. If you can see yourself playing a successful golf shot in your mind's-eye, you know

what you have to do to play that successful shot in reality. It's exactly the same in any sport. If you have a vision of your success, you can take steps to achieve that success.

Not every shot you play on the golf course is going to go exactly where you aimed it. In any sport, things aren't always going to go your way but with a positive mental attitude, setbacks can be kept in perspective. Playing a shot straight into the middle of the water hazard wasn't part of your game plan but it's not the end of your game either. You just have to play your next shot from where your ball landed and get yourself back on course. By keeping a positive attitude, you can learn from the experience and move forwards. By Law, bad shots only exist because of good shots so to get that good shot, you have to keep taking another shot.

"You miss 100 per cent of the shots you never take"

- Wayne Gretzky, ice hockey player

Golf is not about getting a hole in one, it's about playing 18 holes and keeping

score with ‘old man par’. In golf, you don’t need to have a perfect score at each hole you play, it’s your score at the end of all 18 holes of play that counts. Experienced golfers think of a golf course as 18 separate sections. Each section, or hole played, represents a step towards successful completion of the whole course. The ultimate goal is to complete the course; each hole played is a stepping-stone goal towards achieving that goal, and specific goals are set to boost the chances of successfully completing each stepping-stone goal. So, for example, a golfer preparing to play the first hole on the course might set himself the target of completing the task in five shots. He must now visualise where each one of those shots will take his ball in order to make sure that the fifth shot sees his ball sinking into the hole on the green. With a clear vision of where he wants the ball to land after his first swing, he’s now mentally prepared to play that shot. Let’s say he has visualised his first shot taking the ball 50 yards in a straight line to land in the centre of the fairway, avoiding rough grass and trees on the right and a bunker on the left. After taking his shot, he profiles it. In others words, he watches the ball in flight and studies its path. Profiling a shot allows a golfer to analyse whether the actual shot matches the visualised shot. If not, he’s in a good position to figure out *why* not and adjustments can then be made.

If you perceive a shot to be sliding you towards the failure end of the spectrum then you have the power to make the next shot slide you the other way – both ends of the spectrum exist.

If the golfer's shot landed his ball in the trees instead of on the fairway, it's not 'game over'. He must now carry on making his way around the course from where he is now: he must visualise where he wants the ball to land after his *next* shot. It might not be the route he originally planned to reach the first green but it doesn't mean he can't get there. This principle can be applied to all sports. There's no guarantee that every step you map out for yourself on your action plan is going to bring you exactly the result you were aiming for but it doesn't mean you have to stop. You keep going, you keep moving forward. You might need to take a detour but you *can* still get to where you want to go. If you stop moving, you're going nowhere.

In **Law Eight**, you learned about the spiral of success and how a fear of stepping out of your comfort zone can keep you stuck at the bottom. To a golfer, each hole of play represents another step on the spiral staircase. They have to keep playing to get to the 18th green so they have to keep taking those steps one-by-

one. Before they take a step, they visualise what that step represents in terms of their positioning on the golf course and their score. After each step they take, they profile it. If their reality doesn't match their vision, it doesn't mean they have to go back down to the bottom of the stairs, they carry on from where they are. They might take a side-step to analyse their current position but they will then plan their next step by looking at where they want to go from where they are *now.*

Getting from where you are now to where you want to be in your sport can only happen if you're prepared to take steps to get there. To get anywhere, you have to move. Until you move, you're going nowhere. Making that move towards success means accepting that not every step you take is going to take you in exactly the direction you planned. To accept success, you must also accept failure. You can always take another step so you can always get back on track.

"My motto was always to keep swinging. Whether I was in a slump or feeling badly or having trouble off the field, the only thing to do was keep swinging"

- Hank Aaron, baseball player

Ancient Way to Modern Day

The principle behind this Law links to the science behind the theory of polarity. Everything has an opposite and one end of a spectrum can't exist without the other. It's a concept that is used in hypnosis as negative or undesirable thoughts can be suppressed by concentrating on the opposite; negative beliefs can be replaced by positive beliefs.

The Chinese Yin-Yang symbol is an ancient example of the Natural Law of Polarity. In Chinese culture it's believed that everything has masculine (yang) and feminine (yin) principles and that they are the basis of all creation.

When you apply this Law to your life, you accept that in *every* situation, no matter how bad, there will also be good – you just have to look for it. This is a sentiment shared by an ancient Maori proverb that says:

Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you.

The Tenth Law of Olympic Performance

"Every time I go out and race, it's a goal to go out and run faster than I've done before…I am not going to let Athens affect the rest of my life"
- Paula Radcliffe, MBE

It's a well-known saying, "You can't win 'em all," but it's one that's of particular importance in competitive sport. Olympic athletes do not become Olympic athletes by winning *every* competition they take part in. You already know that where there is the potential to win there is also the potential to lose, but that does not mean that losing is an option, confused? Well, if you're an athlete considering your options, and you're already considering what you'll do if you lose, you've already lost. Champion athletes become champion athletes because they ***accept*** that failure is a possibility but choose to focus their energy only on the possibility of success. Choosing to accept the possibility of failure is a world apart from choosing to consider failure as an option.

Paula Radcliffe “failed” spectacularly to achieve her goal of Olympic gold in the marathon in the 2004 Athens Olympics. In fact, she failed to finish the race. She was devastated by her failure; not winning was not part of the plan – let alone not finishing. She *expected* to win. However, with nothing physically wrong, seemingly, she chose to line up on the start line of the 10 000 metres event just five days later, saying she wanted to redeem something for herself and all of her supporters. With eight laps still remaining, Radcliffe pulled up and stepped out of the race, failing to finish once more. Now what?

Champion athletes *accept* failure. They analyse their performances, win or lose, and they take what they learn forwards with them to help improve their next performance. We all know that you can “learn from your mistakes” but that doesn’t mean focusing on your mistakes. You can also learn from your successes. Radcliffe did just that, and according to ex-Olympian Steve Cram, she also “learned that she is only human” through her experience.

A year later, Radcliffe won the London marathon, setting a new world’s best time for a women-only race. The win in London was followed by a gold medal win in

the 2005 World Championships, clearly indicating that she had recovered physically *and* mentally from her disappointment in Athens. However, a string of injury problems led to a race against time to be fit for the 2008 Beijing Olympics and resulted in finishing in 23rd position. Radcliffe was a champion athlete, she accepted that she couldn't "win 'em all" but she certainly *didn't accept* failure as an option, she always went out there to win. Do you?

Worksheet 10

Keep Swinging

One Step at a Time

Dedicate 30 days to putting practice stepping-stones in place to lead you to your ultimate destination. Stepping-stone goals provide motivation when your ultimate goal is a long way off but they can only remain motivational if they remain challenging *and* achievable.

Goals provide direction but it's okay to change direction and to take detours.

To get to where you're going, you have to keep moving.

Giant Leap

Set yourself a BIG goal.

What's your ultimate destination?

Your ultimate goal is going to take longer than 30 days to achieve but use this exercise to set mini, stepping-stones goals for each single day. Every day must represent another step, no matter how small, towards your ultimate destination.

Small Steps

The key to getting to where you want to go is to keep moving. Each daily goal represents movement. Set a daily goal, take action, and accept that *any* action is

better than *no* action. For example, if your goal for the day is to achieve three small tasks and you only achieve two of them, you've still achieved; you've still moved. Keep going. Adjust your goal for the following day accordingly. Keep your daily goals challenging enough to keep them interesting but keep them within the realms of possibility to ensure you remain motivated to achieve them.

30 Small Steps

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Worksheet checklist

set daily goals
take action daily

Every step you take is one step closer to your goal, keep stepping.

Law Eleven

The Only Way Is Up…Down…Up…

Accept the Rough With the Smooth

"Success is never permanent and failure is never final"

- Mike Ditka, American football player and coach

You now know that everything in the world is energy and everything, in both your inner and outer world, is constantly moving and vibrating. Your thoughts as well as your actions create their own unique vibrations and attract similar vibrations in return. When you're thinking positively, you attract positive energy so by Law, when you're thinking negatively, you attract negative energy. The principle behind this Law is that the energy you generate is not only constantly moving, it constantly moves in natural cycles.

It's a Universal Law that everything has a natural rhythm and that there is a time and a season for *everything.* When you're able to understand and accept that everything moves in cycles, you're able to remain positive during the negative phase of a cycle, knowing that what goes around, comes around. You learned in the last chapter that everything has an opposite so where there's a negative, there must also be a positive. By understanding the natural cycle, you're able to ride out bad days, *knowing* that good days are on their way.

Everything has a natural cycle and sport is no exception. In nature, the natural cycle revolves around the seasons and a number of sports also revolve around their own seasons. As an athlete or player, it's your goal to reach peak fitness at the peak of your sport's season but it's simply not possible to remain at your peak all year round. Whatever your sport, your fitness training programme is effectively a training cycle. Reaching your peak physically is only possible through following a progressive training plan that includes not only periods of intense exercise but also appropriate periods of rest and recovery. Ignoring the natural cycle increases the risk of suffering an injury but even when following the most meticulous of training plans, accidents and injuries can still occur.

When your life revolves around your sport, an injury at any point in your training cycle can be a source of extreme frustration. However, *everything* works in natural cycles, including injury recovery. If you allow your frustration to dominate your thoughts and your actions, the negative energy you generate will only prolong the recovery process.

The emotional effects of long-term sports injury rehabilitation have been likened to the recognised 'Five Stages of Grief'.

ONE – Denial

Especially at elite level, a sportsperson considers themselves to be 'superior' in terms of physical strength – it's just not possible that they could be injured.

TWO – Anger

The realisation that they are injured leads to anger; a period of being angry at themselves for having allowed the injury to occur.

THREE – Bargaining

At this stage, an injured athlete will try desperately to speed up their return to play by attempting to bargain with absolutely everyone. They'll plead with the physio, the coach, and passers-by in the street to be able to return to training – "if I do this exercise for a whole week, can I try playing next week?"

FOUR – Depression

As the weeks of enforced rest continue, a player begins to feel sorry for themselves and can become increasingly withdrawn as they feel out of sorts with life. It's at this stage a player might lose hope of ever fully recovering and give up on their sport completely.

FIVE – Acceptance

At this final stage of acceptance, a player realises that focusing on the physical rehabilitation process is the way forward.

Progressing from 'depression' to 'acceptance' is a natural cycle but reaching the stage of being able to accept that the road to recovery is to focus on the physical rehabilitation plan is a process that can be shortened by also accepting this Law. Your injury is your reality and no matter how much you try to deny it or how angry

you feel about it, the fact that you are injured remains unchanged. You can't change what has already happened but you *can* change what happens next. Anger, frustration, and negative thinking can only ever hold you back. To move forwards, and in this case to recover, you must generate positive energy by focusing on what you have yet to achieve and still *can* achieve. The injury was not part of your action plan but it does not represent the end of the road. Everything has an opposite and everything moves in cycles so where there is injury there will also be recovery.

Without bad days there would be no good days, without lows there would be no highs. Your injury represents a low but it's a low that's part of a cycle and the cycle will return you to a high. To limit the time you spend at the low end of the cycle, you must maintain a positive mental attitude and continue to generate the positive energy that will speed your recovery.

The fastest route between two points is the path of least resistance.

The fastest route from injury to recovery is to accept the natural cycle of energy that exists between the two points and to go with the flow. The more you resist

the natural cycle of recovery, the more you prolong the process. Resistance becomes like swimming against the tide. When you swim against the tide, you run the risk of using a great deal of energy to find you've made very little, if any, progress. The fastest way to move in or out from the shore is to let the tide carry you. The tide will always turn.

Attempting to maintain peak physical fitness without allowing your body adequate rest and recovery time is also an attempt to resist the natural Law. Prolonged periods of physical stress can lead to injury but when combined with prolonged periods of psychological stress, the end result is often burnout. In a sports environment it's easy to see where the sources of physical stress are but sources of psychological stress can be more difficult to recognise. Psychological stress occurs when perceived demands, threats or fears outweigh the perceived capabilities or benefits. What this actually means, in terms of competitive sport, is that you begin to feel threatened rather than challenged by your environment and other competitors. At best, burnout will have a de-motivating effect on your performance but at worst it can lead to giving up on your sport completely.

Of course, not all stress is 'bad' and a degree of stress is essential in sport to

motivate you to perform well. Competitive stress experienced on a competition day can usually be considered as ‘good’ stress and a normal part of the preparation process. The more experienced you become as a competitor, the more you learn to monitor and control the amount of stress you are feeling, making it possible to get into your zone – your zone of optimal functioning. However, just as repeated physical stress can result in injury, repeated psychological stress can lead to good stress becoming bad stress. Remember, if there was no bad there would be no good, and *all* things move in cycles, the good and bad energies of competitive stress included. The good stress that once motivated you and elevated you into your zone can become de-motivating bad stress, indicating you’re close to or already experiencing burnout.

To avoid, or recover, from burnout –

- understand the nature of stress and burnout
- take a look at the demands being placed upon you
- take the time to evaluate your capabilities in terms of meeting those demands
- learn a relaxation technique such as visualisation, centering or deep breathing
- develop mental training skills alongside physical skills to increase your ability to deal with the demands

- use goal setting to help keep motivation high in all areas of your life
- adopt or maintain a healthy lifestyle
- understand and accept the cyclical nature of all energy and that you *can* change the happenings of your outer world, your reality, by changing the happenings of your inner world, your mind.

Positive energy generates positive outcomes. Going with the flow and accepting that lows can and will return to highs is a powerful way to maintain a positive mental attitude and to continue generating positive energy. Remember, the tide always turns: *you* have the power to change *your* energy and a number of sporting greats are testament to the principle behind this Law. If what goes up must come down, then what goes down must also go up.

Inspirational Comebacks

Golf

Hall of Fame golfer Ben Hogan is considered to be one of the all-time greatest golf players in the history of the game. In 1949, at the age of 36 and at the height of his career, he was in a car accident that left him with a double-fracture of the

pelvis, a fractured collar bone, a left ankle fracture, and near-fatal blood clots. At the time, his doctors said that he may never walk again, let alone play competitive golf. He left hospital 59 days after the accident. In 1953, he won five of the six tournaments he entered and the first three major championships of the year – a feat now known as the 'Hogan Slam'.

Ancient Way to Modern Day

Known science has proved that everything in the universe is energy and energy moves in cycles, and this adds weight to the principle behind the Universal Law of Rhythm. We know that the tide goes in and out, that planets are in orbit, and that for something to sink something else must rise. The same applies to the Law of Rhythm; the sun rises and sets, the seasons change, and so does our emotional state. No one is happy *all* the time and, according to Einstein's Theory of Relativity, it's only possible to know happiness if you also know sadness.

The importance of accepting the natural cycle of everything in life and going with the flow is a key message in a great many old sayings, including the French

proverb which states:

Every flow has its ebb.

The Eleventh Law of Olympic Performance

"I've had it. If anyone sees me near a boat they can shoot me"
- Steve Redgrave, four years before winning his fifth gold medal

Sir Steve Redgrave won five gold medals in consecutive Olympic Games during his phenomenal rowing career. That's 20 years of being the best of the best but he did not reach peak fitness when it mattered most by attempting to maintain peak fitness for 20 years. At every level of competition, and in any sport, it's only possible to reach your peak by following a progressive programme. Everything moves in cycles, training programmes included, and *staying* at peak fitness is simply not physically or mentally possible. Olympic athletes reach peak fitness by adhering to the natural flow of balancing maximum effort with rest and recovery.

Where there are ups there must also be downs. Attempting to stay on an “up” is a recipe for disaster. To grow and improve, the human body needs to be challenged but it also needs adequate rest and recovery time. To be able to physically run faster, jump higher, throw further, or whatever it is your body must do to perform at top level in your sport, your bones, muscles, joints etc. must be progressively challenged to meet the ever increasing demands required of it. But, here’s the thing, so must your mind. Reaching your peak means reaching peak physical *and* mental fitness.

Without adequate physical rest, injury is a much more likely outcome than improvement, and without adequate mental rest, burnout is inevitable.

Burnout = the result of prolonged periods of physical stress along with psychological stress.

In competitive sport, psychological stress can lead to an athlete feeling threatened by their environment and other competitors, rather than challenged. In some cases, it can lead to an athlete becoming totally de-motivated and turning

their back on their sport completely. Reaching peak fitness and avoiding burnout is only possible when your body is allowed to flow with the natural ups and downs of fitness training – champions don't waste energy swimming against the tide.

Your muscles *and* your mind need a careful balance of work, rest, and play. When Redgrave said, "I've had it," he didn't just mean physically, he meant mentally too. Preparing for Olympic success is not just a physical game, it's a mental game. After winning his fourth gold medal, he said he'd "had it" but he has also since said that even as he heard himself saying the words, he knew he just needed a break and he'd be back. And back he came, winning another Olympic gold four years later. Are you allowing your muscles and your mind to go with the natural flow?

Worksheet 11

Bouncing Back

Go With the Flow

Understanding the natural cycle of energy makes it possible to *believe* that recovery *will* follow injury.

Devote 30 days to practicing and developing the mental skills that will help you to go with the flow and to ride out the rough, *knowing* that the smooth will return in a natural cycle. Mental skills are the skills that allow you to 'bounce' back from injury or setback.

Positive mental attitude
Mindset
Visualisation

All skills require dedicated practice to master and mental skills are no exception. Dedicate a 30 day period to *physically* practicing mental skills, every day.

Star in Your Own Movie

Produce, direct, and star in your own blockbusting movie.

- Give it a title that inspires *you.*
- Make it a movie that shows *your* transition from where you are now (or where you might be if injured) to where you want to go.
- Add extra characters, special effects, surround-sound features, make it 3D.
- Make it a real feel-good movie full of positive images.

Watch it on your inner, personal cinema screen – your mind – every day. Commit it to memory. Learn the script. Observe every detail. It's *your* movie and it's your means of maintaining a positive inner world when happenings in your outer world are not so positive.

Positive happenings in your inner world will generate positive happenings in your outer world, your reality.

Visualisation Notes

Set your goals high,
and don't stop till you get there
Bo Jackson

Worksheet checklist

create your own movie of your success
watch it daily – create and maintain a positive inner environment

Going with the flow will always be more productive than fighting against it.

Law Twelve

Champions Recognise the Champion Within

Believe in Yourself as a Champion

"Mind is everything: muscle – pieces of rubber. All that I am,
I am because of my mind"
- Paavo Numi, Olympic athlete

If you're familiar with the saying, "As sure as eggs is eggs," you'll know that it's used to describe something that's certain; something that is beyond any shadow of doubt. So, in the world of sport, is it possible to be certain of anything? If it's your ambition to become a sports champion, is it possible to be certain that you will become that champion?

The ancient Universal Laws *and* modern sports psychology tell us that something we can all be absolutely certain of is that we all have the power within us to be masters of our own destiny. As sure as eggs is eggs, we are all who we believe ourselves to be and our circumstances are simply a reflection of who we believe we are. To become a sports champion, you must *believe* that there is a sports champion within you. Without that inner belief, the only thing you can be absolutely certain of is that you will *not* become that champion.

Champions become champions from within: champions know who they are and they know who they want to be. They recognise that getting to the top of their sport will take dedicated effort but they focus all of their energy into practicing the physical and mental skills they need to become the best they can be.

If you ask any youngster keenly involved in sport about their sporting aspirations, they'll invariably tell you that they want to become a champion. In fact, they'll confidently tell you that they **are going to be** a champion. We already know that achieving an ambition is only possible once you believe it's possible, so will the

youthful self-confidence and 'I'm invincible' attitude of aspiring young champions be enough to take them to the top of their sport, or is there something more? Young athletes love to emulate the champions of their sport and they may aspire to become just like them, but the ones who will go on to become champions themselves are the ones who, first and foremost, just love to take part in their sport. The 'something more' is nothing more than an undying *want* to be involved.

"If you're a champion, you have to have it in your heart"
- Chris Evert, tennis champion

Getting to the top of your game is going to take dedicated training. It's always going to be easier to do what you *want* to do, rather than something you *should* do or *have* to do. The heart of a champion is in their sport. Champions do what they love and they love what they do. Many of today's champion athletes tell stories of their childhood and of how they *knew* they wanted to become a champion from a young age. They might use the words "driven" or "compelled" to describe their feelings and their attitude towards succeeding in sport and they almost always refer to the fact that the "buzz" they first felt through taking part in

their sport has never left them. That's the key to success right there: win or lose, the motivation to keep playing remains the same.

Success is a journey, not a destination.

Rafer Johnson is a former decathlete and Olympic champion. He advises young athletes with words of wisdom from personal experience. "What I can tell them is the way you become an Olympic champion is to start working now. I tell them why it's always worth it to put the time and effort into something you want to be good at." To "start working now" means realising that setting the goal of becoming an Olympic champion is only the beginning. Successful people have successful habits so *you* must develop the habits of thinking and acting successfully – starting now. What *you* **think** on a daily basis and what *you* **do** on a daily basis will ultimately decide *your* level of success. Every thought and every action you take on a daily basis must represent another step towards achieving your goal.

Champions are made, not born: the power to make a champion is inside you.

Make sure that what you think you want to achieve is really what you want to achieve and that what you're doing is really what you want to do. Commit to *your* goals and make every thought and every action, in training and in competition, count.

Champion's Choice

There may be times that you face making choices before you can fully commit to a goal. Let's say you are a multi-talented sports player. You are a world class performer in two or more sports and you must now decide which one sport to focus on in order to move forwards into a professional sports career. How do you make that decision?

It's often said that decisions are made by 'head' or by 'heart' which suggests that the process of making a decision must be either one or the other; a clinical, calculated process of choosing the option you 'think' is right or a more instinctive, emotional process of choosing the option that 'feels' right. So, using head or heart, what makes a decision the *right* decision?

The bottom line is you can't know the outcome of any decision you make until after you make it, so, in effect, there's no such thing as a 'right' or 'wrong' decision. Of course, if things don't then turn out the way you planned, you believe the decision you made to have been the wrong one, but what's to say that swinging your decision the other way at the time of making it would have created the outcome you planned? You can't 'know' if you've made the 'right' decision until after the event, or can you?

Put yourself back in the shoes of that multi-talented sports player for a moment. The decision you must make is monumental; your decision is going to affect the whole of the rest of your life and you can't decide what to do for the 'best'. But here's the thing, if you know what it is you *really* want to achieve, chances are you *already know* which decision will give you the greatest potential to achieve it.

The more you really want to do something, the more likely it is that you will.

Look at it this way; if you *really* can't decide between two sports, then a simple coin toss is going to be as good a way as any to have the decision made for you, right? Heads for one, tails for the other. Go ahead and flip a coin – how does the

call make you feel? Your thoughts and emotions as you watch the coin spin will provide you with the answer to the question of what you *really* want.

In the majority of cases, we already know which decision represents what we *really* want to do so why do we then continue to agonise over which decision is the 'right' decision? Well, if you're the multi-talented sports player, the answer to that question is that you've allowed that one decision to become much more monumental than it actually is. Decisions become much easier to make when you remember that any one decision you make does not in itself decide the outcome of the rest of your life.
Which sport should I focus on: which training schedule should I follow: which dietary advice should I follow: which lucky socks should I wear on competition day: should I wash my lucky socks or not…?

With the benefit of hindsight, you may come to realise that the option you chose did not lead to the outcome you wanted but that doesn't mean you're out of options. The outcome of the rest of your life is the result of countless decisions; is any one decision really that important?

As a multi-talented player, every one of your coaches will provide you with a list of reasons why you should focus on their particular sport but remember this, *should do* is never as powerful or as motivational as *want to do.* A sports player without motivation will never realise their true potential so the decisions you make must be *yours.* Agonising over decisions only serves to sap your energy so learn to go with what you already *know.* Know what you want to achieve, know what motivates you to achieve it, and you already know which decision represents the 'right' decision for you.

Try substituting the word 'decision' with the word 'choice'.

We make hundreds of choices in an average day and we don't waste time and energy agonising over every single one. Which underwear will I wear today; jam or marmalade on my toast; coffee or tea – you get the idea? You make choices instinctively and you have the same power within you to make decisions. Don't get stuck under 'weighty' decisions, make a choice. Think of it this way; if you choose coffee, it doesn't mean you can't choose tea next time.

The ancient wisdom of the Universal Laws is an inner wisdom that's within us all, it just might be hidden under the clutter of modern living and the pressures of modern competitive sport. To improve your performance and to step up your game to the next level, take time out to reconnect with who you are and why you chose to be involved in your sport. Remember, successful people do what they love and love what they do. Do you love what you do?

Choose Choice

When you find your passion, you find your inspiration, and when your performance is inspired, you find your success. Take a look at Martin's story:

Martin is an amateur triathlete. He's an exceptional cyclist, a competent runner, and a fairly average swimmer. He's a consistent performer in competitive events, rarely finishing out of the top five but he's yet to secure a win. His goal for the coming season is to be a winner.

Training for triathlon events is time consuming but Martin has found the perfect way to build his base fitness by alternating between cycling and running to and

from work. Swimming, however, is proving more difficult. The best time of day for lane swimming at his local pool is early in the morning but Martin's attempts to establish a regular training pattern of swimming on the way to work have so far failed to become a routine habit. The 'routine' of cycling or running to and from work has become such an established pattern of behaviour that it's now a habit. When things become habit, you're doing them without thinking about them – like brushing your teeth. Martin doesn't wake up in the morning and think about whether he can be bothered to cycle his favourite two hour route into work or not, he just does it. He doesn't have to wake up and decide whether or not to run his favourite hour route into work, there's no decision to be made, it's just what he does. So why is it proving difficult to *just* swim? The answer is that things don't become habit overnight; habits are formed over time.

Martin has formed the habit of cycling and running to work so why can't he simply form the habit of swimming? The answer – motivation. Martin was motivated to cycle to work because he wanted to boost his cycling fitness for triathlon and commuting to work represented a time-efficient way to do it. It was a choice; Martin *chose* to commute by bike. What's key about his choice is that he knew it was just that, *a choice.* His decision to cycle into work didn't represent his one

and only opportunity to make a choice, he knew he always had the option to choose again and perhaps choose *not* to cycle into work. His choice provided a positive outcome – early morning air, less traffic, positive 'buzz' for the day ahead – which led to choosing to do it again, and then again, until it became a routine habit. The more he cycled, the fitter he became and the more he enjoyed it: he became an exceptional cyclist because he routinely cycled.

His motivation to swim is the same. Martin knows he needs to put in more practice time in the pool to improve his swimming fitness for triathlon but the habit of swimming on the way to work has yet to be formed, why? The outcome of his swimming experiences has not provided the same degree of motivation to continue. He chose to go swimming on the way to work but on subsequent occasions he has chosen *not* to swim on the way to work. So is it simply that he doesn't enjoy swimming? Well, here's the thing; Martin *did* enjoy swimming until he made the decision to *improve* his swimming. He enjoyed the weekly triathlon club training night at the local pool but his standard of swimming did not match that of his cycling and running so he made the decision to do more. He downloaded the 'Swim-like-an-Olympian' training schedule created by the BustAGut Training Corp. and plotted the suggested training targets in his training

diary. Motivation was high. However, the training targets were completely unrealistic for a non-professional athlete. Martin's failure to reach even the first one was totally de-motivating. So much so that he sometimes chose not to go to the weekly triathlon club swimming session. His efforts to swim more resulted in swimming less.

Doing things you *want* to do is always going to be easier than doing things you feel you *have* to do or *should* do. For Martin, cycling and running are clearly things he *wants* to do. Improving his swimming is also something he *wants* to do because, ultimately, he wants to win a triathlon. He *wants* to win, but does he *have* to? He wants to improve his swimming but does he have to 'Swim-like-an-Olympian' to succeed? Putting unrealistic pressure on yourself or having someone else put that pressure on you, a coach for example, can actually defeat the object. Attempting to achieve too much can lead to achieving very little, or nothing at all.

Not *having* to win a triathlon does not mean that Martin should give up on his goal of *wanting* to win one. It means recognising that wanting to win a triathlon is a choice. Cycling and running to work are choices, whether or not to go to the

swimming pool is a choice, so the key to success is to make successful choices. In Martin's case, the BustAGut Corp. training schedule did not represent a successful choice but it must be recognised as just *a choice* and not the end of the road. Martin's next choice is to swim at the weekly club session and then to commit to swimming with club members on two other arranged swims each week. Swimming with others is something he *wants* to do. He has made a choice that will allow him to enjoy his journey to success.

As sure as eggs is eggs, you *can* become whatever *you* put *your* mind to, and as sure as eggs is eggs, getting to the top of your game is going to take dedicated effort. Find your passion, believe in yourself as a champion, and then give it your all by applying your mind, your body, and your soul. Enjoy your journey.

"Greatness is earned, never awarded"

- Nike

Ancient Way to Modern Day

Studies related to modern sports science and sports psychology have produced convincing evidence to support this Law. The 'winning edge' in competitive sport is effectively a psychological edge or, in other words, an unshakeable self-belief. Winners in sport believe in themselves as winners and it's a belief that may be held long before the physical ability to become a winner has been developed. Heavyweight boxing legend Muhammad Ali is a powerful example of this principle in action. He is famed for his, "I am the greatest" statement but he also said, "I am the greatest. I said that even before I knew I was."

Indian philosopher Mahatma Ghandi perhaps explained it best when he said:

If I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning.

The Twelfth Law of Olympic Performance

"Everyone has within them their own Olympic gold medal"
- David Hemery, from his autobiography, *Another Hurdle*

It's a popular belief that Olympic athletes are "naturals" in their sport, but it's my belief that champions are made, not born; there's no such thing as a "natural" in sport. You could also be forgiven for believing that it's having a wealthy sponsor that makes a sports champion, but it's not money that makes a champion either – champions become champions from within.

Athletes who become Olympic champions are passionate about their sport and they are dedicated to becoming the best they can be. This is a message that former Olympic athlete David Hemery went on a mission to share with the young people of Britain as part of the London 2012 Legacy. He says, "I wanted to find a way of inspiring our youngsters to be the best they can be in anything, using the Olympian virtues of excellence, respect and friendship, and the qualities all champions I have met possess – self-awareness and responsibility."

That's the key right there: champions possess "self-awareness and responsibility" – champions recognise the champion within. In sport, and in all

other areas of life, champions know who they are and they know who they want to be. They believe in themselves and their abilities and, crucially, they believe in themselves as the champion they will become, no matter how far removed that may seem from their circumstances at any time.

Hemery became an Olympic champion in the 1968 Mexico Olympics. In the build-up to the London 2012 Olympics he went on a tour around British schools to encourage youngsters to recognise their own champion within. He says, "Young people need to be inspired and have mentors. How many of you out there were ever told you were great at something when you were young? We are poor at that. There is greatness in everybody and we need to turbo charge those early years."

Well, I couldn't agree more. But here's the great thing, it's never too late to develop self-belief and to recognise your own champion within. Hemery went on a mission to get children to discover their dreams and to discover what they're passionate about in life, but it's never too late for you to do the same. Champions become champions because they're passionate about what they do; they love what they do and they do what they love. You have to have a dream in order to

make your dream come true and it has to be *your* dream in order to be able to commit to doing whatever it takes to achieve it.

When you have a dream and you're passionately committed to achieving that dream, you attract the people and the things you need into your life to help you turn that dream into your reality. So what is *your* dream? Who is *your* champion within? Believe in your dream and believe in yourself as that champion – you have within you your own gold medal.

Worksheet 12

Recognise Your Inner Champion

Full Circle

To recognise your inner champion, your journey takes you full circle back to **Law One.**

Champions know who they really are, not who someone else wants them to be. Champions recognise their passion; they know what they love and what truly

inspires them.
Champions remain true to themselves and their passion, even when outside influences attempt to change their course.

Learn to recognise your true self and you will learn to recognise your inner champion.

To be able to improve your performance, you must understand *why* you want to improve your performance. What's driving you?

Top performers are skilled in using the technique of visualisation, they know exactly where they're going, but dedicate 30 days to reflecting on where you've been and where you're coming from. Reconnect with *why* your sport matters to you: reconnect with the passion that drew you into your sport and continues to keep you in your sport.

Your passion will generate your best you…
your best you will release your inner champion.

Reflection Notes

Champions aren't made in gyms.
Champions are made from something they have deep inside them
- a desire, a dream, a vision
Muhammad Ali

Worksheet checklist

reflect on why sport matters
reconnect with your passion

Listen to your inner champion, believe in your inner champion, be a champion.

The 12 Hidden Laws of Performance
In Summary

A Top Performance is an Inspired Performance

No one makes it to the top in sport on their own. We are all connected and we all have the capacity to both inspire and be inspired. Find your inspiration and you find your success.

"The best and fastest way to learn a sport is to watch and imitate a champion"
- Jean-Claude Killy, Alpine ski racer

Positive Thoughts Generate Positive Outcomes

Everything is energy and energy vibrates. Your thoughts, your actions, and your beliefs all generate their own energy so you have within you the power to create

your own positive or a negative environment and you have the power to change that environment.

"Sports do not build character, they reveal it"

- John Wooden, basketball coach

Top Performers Put Action Plans *Into* Action

Positive thoughts inspire positive actions but you must take action to create positive outcomes.

"If you set a goal for yourself and you are able to achieve it, you have won your race"

- Dave Scott, triathlete

As You Think, You Become

Your emotional state has a direct impact on your physical state. To generate a success cycle, you must begin by developing an unshakeable self-belief.

"I am the greatest"

- Muhammad Ali, champion boxer

You Get Out What You Put In

Nothing happens by chance or out with the Laws of the Universe. You get out of life what you put in or you reap what you sow. Winners don't become winners by chance and losers don't become losers by chance.

"The more I practice, the luckier I get"

- Jerry Barber, pro golfer

Winning Efforts Receive Winning Rewards

Rewards are always commensurate with effort so if you want to receive a high quality result, you must give a high quality effort.

"Show me a guy who's afraid to look bad, and I'll show you a guy you can beat every time"

- Lou Brock, Major League baseball player

Like Attracts Like

Positive thoughts lead to positive actions and positive actions lead to positive outcomes. If you generate positive energy, that energy will be returned to you in the form of positive outcomes but generating negative energy can only lead to negative outcomes.

"If you can believe it, the mind can achieve it"
- Ronnie Lott, American football player

Without Change, Nothing Changes

What you think about, you bring about. We all have the capacity to change our circumstances by changing our thinking.

"The key is not the 'will to win' – everybody has that. It is the will to prepare to win that is important"
- Bobby Knight, basketball coach

Getting to the Top Means Getting Things in Perspective

Nothing in life has any meaning except for the meaning we give it. Everything is relative to something else so success and failure can only ever be relative to your

perspective.

"I know I'm never as good or as bad as any single performance"
- Charles Barkley, basketball player

You Win Some, You Lose Some

Everything in life has an opposite. If there was no failure there would be no success and if there were no bad days, there would be no good days.

"There's more to boxing than hitting, there's not getting hit, for instance"
- George Foreman, heavyweight boxer

The Only Way is Up…Down…Up…

Energy is constantly moving and it moves in continual circles. Where there is setback or injury, there will also be recovery. Your mental attitude has a direct effect on the physical recovery process.

"The only way to overcome is to hang in"
- Dan O'Brien, decathlete

Champions Recognise the Champion Within

You are what you believe you are and your circumstances are an outer reflection of your inner self. Believe in yourself as your best self and you will become your best self.

"Success is about having, excellence is about being. Success is about having money and fame, but excellence is about being the best you can be"

- Mike Ditka, American football player and coach