

Sport Psychology Training Camp: More Details

Douglas P. Jowdy, PhD

Based on the book –

The Gold Medal Mind: Becoming a Psychologically Skilled Athlete

By Doug Jowdy, PhD

(see: www.goldmedalmind.com)

(see: www.drdougjowdy.com)

How developing a gold medal mind will result in performing at a higher level more consistently. *And to respect the dedication required to develop a gold medal mind.*

Learn the 30 characteristics of a psychologically skilled athlete. Just as we are physically skilled, we want to become psychologically skilled to enhance performance, and perform consistently at a high level. Call it “mental toughness,” but that term falls miserably short describing psychological skillfulness.

Understand the factors that interfere with developing a gold medal mind. In simple terms, being your own worst enemy that results in playing not to lose versus playing to win.

What does it mean to develop “psychological muscle memory?” What does it take?

Embracing that becoming *psychologically skilled* requires executing mental repetitions on a consistent basis. For example, developing the ability to get into the zone on command versus hoping it will happen takes consistent practice. Just as developing your physical muscle memory has required thousands of hours.

Appreciate lifting “mental weights” can require more dedication, determination, discipline, commitment and persistence than “moving steel” (aka dumb bells) to develop physical strength.

Celebrate that with consistent practice, you can learn to turn your mind into an ally, friend, weapon. This allows you to maintain composure. Composure being foundational to achieving and maintaining a zone like state.

Learn to navigate the challenge of playing for a coach who only has a hammer. Because a coach (or anyone) who only has a "hammer will treat everything as a nail." They take a "one size fits all approach." And coaches, like athletes, can suffer from "five ring fever," and fall victim to believing "the silver medal is the trophy for the first-place loser." Playing for a coach who has this type of "operating system" can have deleterious impact not only on your athletic performance, but emotional health, i.e., confidence, self-worth, developing independence).

Consider one of the greatest challenges of sport, that can make it most enjoyable, is learning how to transcend self-limiting beliefs. We all have them and limiting beliefs can be the root cause of inconsistent performance, performance plateaus, fear of failure, fear of success, playing great in practice and poorly in games. They limit your ability to enjoy life because you settle for less.

For once, you will receive full disclosure about being an athlete. And that is, that sport has a *shadow, dark side*, and what we call *disowned parts* in psychology. Sport is made up of people. You have a relationship with sport. Because sport is made up of people (coaches, administrators, judges, family, sponsors, sports writers, media, owners) who have a dark side, sport can be disrespectful, inconsiderate, impatient, intolerant and mean (aka abusive). Being psychologically skilled and developing a gold medal mind is the antidote to becoming traumatized by sport.

Learn the importance of being crystal clear why you play. Why given all of the possibilities of how you can spend your time, you have chosen to play soccer, for example. This is foundational to how "psychologically skilled" you become.

Becoming psychologically skilled starts with getting mentally prepared for every practice, every day and improving your ability to get mentally

prepared for practice. And monitoring your psychological performance in practice every day.

The importance of curiosity, wonder and amusement in your growth as an athlete and how having these characteristics are fundamental to performing at a high level on a consistent basis.

Accept that you may not be training intense enough to get angry at yourself. In a weird way, you have to be working your ass off to earn the right to get angry at yourself. **And I mean working your ass off on the mental game - on becoming psychologically skilled - on developing a gold medal mind. The toughest sport you ever played.**

Understand that recovery is part of a training program. There is a work-rest ratio you must find and execute to perform at your highest level. Sport can have a drug like effect. It is addicting. You can “overdose” causing injury, burnout, overtraining and result in performance decrements.

Know that you’re taking the path of a gold medal mind approach involves having 24/7 people – “brother and sisters” that you can call for support. Just as you know life is not without challenges, when you embrace the path of the gold medal mind, you begin to make conscious choices and no longer just operate under the spell of what you are told. You no longer are “marching to the beat of someone else’s drum.” And with choice comes responsibility and accountability. With choice you realize you have free will. This can create anxiety – lead you to worry, have doubts and concerns and question whether you have what it takes. Thus, the reason you don’t do this alone and accept you can’t.

Related to the fact above, the gold medal mind approach requires us to question conventional wisdom. One example being, when challenged, instead of fighting in the typical manner. This approach requires you to take your “armor off, put your shield down, sword in the ground and surrender to win.” If you learn this simple concept, you’ve won. Why? Because you’ll become more of a force regardless of what you want to achieve. This takes embracing the “control myth.”

Learn to turn your mind into an ally, friend and weapon by lifting “mental weights,” “doing mental repetitions” and train as hard mentally as you do physically. The best way to accomplish this is gather a group of athletes and go through the workbook, *The Gold Medal Mind Workbook: Training as Hard Psychologically as You Do Physically*, as I describe in the introduction of the workbook. There is no substitute.

The conventional definition of winning and losing, success and failure will not only put you on an emotional rollercoaster as an athlete. Off the court, the conventional definitions can result in the pursuit of being happy elusive.

Embrace experiencing limiting beliefs (aka mental barriers) as an opportunity to grow personally.

Time will be spent “lifting the mental weights” described in detail in the book.

Just as you would for a physical training session: Show up awake and ready to use your brain, mind, heart, body and spirit (if this applies to you). Be well rested, well hydrated, well nourished (blood sugar stable) and prepared to leave your phone in your car. Bring nutrient dense snacks and water. Your phone will distract you from being in the moment and absorb every moment of the experience. Questioning conventional thinking starts by acting in a way that challenges conventional thinking. If it is absolutely necessary to have your phone with you, turn it off during the camp and check it only during breaks.

To obtain more details about the camp go to the website – www.drdougjowdy.com click on the **Events** tab and see “Sport Psychology Training Camp.”

Dates: **July 22 and 23**

Time: 1:00-5:00pm

Location: Regis Jesuit High School Z Theater

Cost: \$425

Contact Alexa Hindmarch @ alexahindmarch@gmail.com with questions. It's highly encouraged that you read, *The Gold Medal Mind: Becoming a Psychologically Skilled Athlete* prior to the camp. All participants will be provided with a complimentary copy of the workbook: *The Gold Medal Mind Workbook: Training as Hard Psychologically as You Do Physically*, and the short story: *The Horse and The Man: A Short Story*, that is a companion to the book. All participants will have access to TWO virtual discussion sessions at no charge – one will take place around the end of September, the other the end of October. The discussion sessions are a follow up to the camp to reinforce training principles and support taking the path of the gold medal mind. These sessions will be primarily question and answer oriented. You will be asked to submit your questions prior to the virtual discussion session.