

Chapter 8

THE POWER OF THE PRESENT

Three of the most powerful words for athletic success are: **Do it now!**

Right now is the only time you have to *make things happen*. You can think about yesterday but you cannot do anything that changes what happened yesterday. You can plan for tomorrow but you cannot do anything *until* tomorrow. You can only make something happen right now in the present moment.

In this chapter, you will learn one of the most powerful techniques from the field of Sport Psychology. This technique can dramatically improve your level of performance.

The power of the present comes from paying full attention to what you are doing. This ability to fully concentrate is one of the master skills of peak performers.

Rule #1: While you are practicing, or competing, you will get superior results if your mind is on what you are doing while you are doing it.

THE TECHNIQUE

Is this technique difficult? No. You keep your mind in the present much of the time. It is very easy to keep your mind in the present when you enjoy what you are doing. You are totally in the present when you are watching a movie you really like. You are "into it." The same thing happens when you are very interested in a book, a conversation, a class, or a television show.

However, it is also very easy for your mind to slip out of the present. This usually happens when you are in situations that you perceive as stressful or boring. When your mind leaves the present it goes to one of two places—the past or the future.

Rule #2: Fantasizing about the future or reminiscing about the past will not help you to perform better in the present. **Keep your mind on what you are doing while you are doing it.**

Example #1: It is a few minutes before you compete. You start worrying about losing, getting hurt, the score, etc.

Analysis: Your mind is **not** in the present. Your thoughts are in the future about what **might** happen as the result of a poor performance on your part. This situation produces a tug-of-war between your mind and body. Your body is about to perform in the present while your mind is in the future. In such a situation you are not likely to do your best.

Solution: The thing not to do is to try to figure out **why** you are thinking like this. The thing to do is to get your mind back into the present.

Example #2: Your competition is about to begin. You remember how poorly you performed the last time you faced this opponent.

Analysis: Your mind is in the past. You cannot change what happened the last time you faced this opponent but you can do your best this time. Keep your mind in the present.

In both of these examples, the chances of the athlete "choking" are increased by worrying about what might happen in the future or regretting what has already happened in the past. Keep your mind in the present.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Become **aware** of whether your mind is in the present, past or future.

2. If you find your thoughts are in the past or the future, **control** them and bring them back to the present.
3. Practice this skill in other situations. Classes and meetings are excellent opportunities.

WARNING

Use of this technique **does not** mean that you should not plan for the future or set goals for the future. It **does not** mean that you should not review the past and learn from the past. Both of these activities are desirable but not while you are performing.

SUMMARY

While you are practicing—**practice**. While you are competing—**compete**. Do it, body and mind together. **Do it now!!!**

**"DO WHAT YOU ARE DOING
WHILE YOU ARE DOING IT."**

Chapter 9

THE POWER OF POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude. Thomas Jefferson

The one biggest difference between winners and losers is their attitude. The following story best conveys the difference between a winning and a losing attitude.

Once upon a time, there were twin boys who at the age of eight were driving their parents crazy because they were so different. One boy had a very negative attitude while his twin brother was the exact opposite and had an extremely positive attitude.

Their parents thought this to be very strange and decided to take them to a psychologist.

After the psychologist met with the twins, he suggested that they come back the next week for a special session.

The family returned the following week. The psychologist took the negative son down the hall and opened the door to a big room filled with all kinds of toys—rocking horses, video games, even ice cream, candy and cake. He said to the boy, “Why don’t you stay here and play for a half-hour while I meet with your brother.”

Then he took the positive boy down to the cellar of the building. The psychologist opened the door to a large gymnasium-sized room where there was a terrible smell. The boy walked in and saw a huge mountain of horse manure that almost filled up the entire room. The psychologist said: “Why don’t you stay here for a half-hour while I meet with your brother.”

Then the psychologist went back upstairs to check on the negative boy. He was sitting in the corner looking upset.

The psychologist said, “What in the world are you doing?”

“I’m bored,” the boy replied.

“Bored? Why don’t you play with the rocking horse?”

"I might fall off and hurt myself," said the boy.

"Why don't you play with the video games?"

"I don't know how."

"Why don't you have some ice cream, candy or cake?"

"I might get sick," the boy said, looking away.

"Well, follow me," said the psychologist, shaking his head in disbelief. They went down to the basement to see what the positive boy was up to.

When he opened the door to the room with all the horse manure, they saw the boy excitedly running all around the room having a great time.

"What in the world are you doing?" asked the psychologist.

The boy stopped, looked up and said: "With all this horse manure around, I figured that there must be a pony here somewhere!"

Moral: Negative people can be given the best of circumstances and make the worst of them and positive people can be given the worst of circumstances and make the best out of them.

HOW TO DEVELOP A WINNING ATTITUDE

Attitudes develop by choice, not chance. You can choose to develop a winning attitude. You select the thoughts you put into your mind. Your attitude is developed and shaped by the types of thoughts that you think most often.

Your mind is like a garden. In a garden, what the soil produces depends upon what is planted. If you plant corn—you will get corn. If you plant peas—you will get peas. In your mind, if you "plant" positive thoughts, you will "grow" a positive winning attitude. Negative thinking will lead to the development of a destructive, negative attitude.

It is your choice. Positive or negative thoughts. Positive or negative attitude. **Remember:** A positive attitude is the key to success.

**"NOTHING POSITIVE WILL COME FROM
BEING NEGATIVE
AND NOTHING NEGATIVE WILL COME
FROM BEING POSITIVE."**