

Three Ways to Destroy Your Ability To Compete–Quickly!

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By Dr. Leif H. Smith

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If you want to become the kind of athlete that people always talk about in terms of "potential" rather than results, following the following formula:

1. Focus on that which you are scared of

In the world outside of sports, a common principle is that we get results according to that which we decide to focus on. The same is true in the sports world. In any given moment, your emotions are directly linked to that which you are deciding to think about (or, focus on). Take two examples:

You are a wrestler, and you are about to have a match with a guy that you have never beaten before, having been pinned every time. During your warmup, you focus on the fact that you have been training hard all season long for this match. You tell yourself that you deserve to beat this guy, as you have learned from your previous mistakes. You also realize that everybody is "beatable," including your opponent. You feel ready, have a plan of attack, are in great condition, and feel ready to "get it on."

You are a wrestler, and you are about to have a match with a guy that you have never beaten before, having been pinned every time. During your warmup, you focus on the fact that this guy has pinned you, and quite easily. You remember how embarrassed you were, and how you don't want to be embarrassed again. You focus on how to avoid getting pinned—maybe you will take less shots, stay away from him more. That way he can't pin you. You feel tense, worried, and tight. You are cautious when the match begins.

Which scenario would equate to a better match for this wrestler? Obviously scenario A. This wrestler focuses on everything that will help him compete. He focuses on his long hours of training, he uses positive self–talk to stay confident, and he feels ready for the fight. The wrestler in scenario B does the opposite. He focuses on what he DOESN'T want to happen. He doesn't want to get pinned, so he comes up with a plan to avoid doing that. He recalls feelings of embarrassment, and as a result, is tight

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during his match. He will, of course, most likely get pinned. Why? Because if you focus on that which you don't want, you will get it!

2. Engage in problem–focused thinking (instead of solution–focused thinking)

Mediocre competitors spend most of their time focusing on the problem instead of the solution. They focus on everything that is going wrong, or how they can never seem to win, or how they can never seem to score points on this certain wrestler, etc...The result is that they become entangled in their problems and fears, never to escape and find a solution. They become so caught up in their issues that they never stop and solve that which caused it!

Top competitors, on the other hand, still make mistakes. However, they try to learn from their mistakes so that they will not repeat them. They still get pinned, lose big matches, miss key free throws, miss wide open shots on goal, etc. However, they bounce back quicker, and stronger, as they put their

energy into finding a solution to their problem. They focus on ways to get in better condition, how to get out from bottom quicker as a wrestler, how to concentrate better when shooting free throws, how to relax when put in big game situations, etc...

3. Hesitate

Hesitation destroys our ability to compete. This is particularly true with fast–paced sports, such as football, basketball, baseball, lacrosse, wrestling, etc, where there is less down–time. A common theme among sport psychologists is that hesitation equals "paralyzation by analyzation." If you try to stop and think about how you are going to block that 240 lb linebacker, you will soon see the world from on your back. If you stop and think about where you want to shoot on the goalie in hockey or lacrosse, the defense will soon be upon you, and you'll never get that shot off. And if you do, it will be a hesitant, unconfident shot. Get the picture? The time to think is when play is stopped, not during. Those times are different for different sports: Football–between plays, quarters, halftime, etc basketball–play stoppages, timeouts, foul shots, etc lacrosse–play stoppages, between quarters, etc tennis–between points, changeovers golf–before and after taking your shot, while walking to your next shot, etc wrestling–before your match, between periods baseball–prior to your at–bat, between pitches, between innings.

You get the picture. The time to think in sports is when play is prior to competition and during play stoppages. Come up with a game plan, then execute. If it doesn't prove effective, change your plan, and execute. Try this exercise: sign your name on a piece of paper. Now, I want you to duplicate it exactly. EXACTLY. Try it. What happens? Most people slow down and think about it when they are duplicating their signature. The result is a signature that is not close to being similar. You're better served by not thinking and just signing. And this is merely one small example of the way that your mind can interfere with performance, if you let it. Don't be one of those athletes.

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Columbus, OH. He has worked with hundreds of athletes, coaches, teams, and executives to improve performance and increase on-the-job effectiveness.

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Who should win the Oscar?

By graham and julie

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Who, do you think, should win the Oscar this year? Who has been the best male actor in film this year? Should it be Don Cheadle, in Hotel Rwanda, Johnny Depp in Finding Neverland, Leonardo DiCaprio in The Aviator, Clint Eastwood in Million Dollar Baby or Jamie Foxx in Ray.

What about Leading female Actress? Who gets your vote? Annette Bening in Being Julie, Catalina Sandino Moreno in Maria Full of Grace, Imelda Staunton in Vera Drake, Hilary Swank in Million Dollar Baby or Kate Winslet in Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind.

How about you? Have you given an outstanding performance during 2004?

Did you created a breath-taking, unforgettable performance during the past year to get a nomination for the Life Performance Oscar?

When you accept that your role in your life is to give the best performance you can. To be you. To focus on your natural talents and your relationship with others will improve. Then others will nominate you for a Life Performance Oscar.

So how has 2004 been for you? Did you really touch your potential? Or did you accept second best? When faced with all the other actors on the world stage, did you fall into the trap of:

·trying to compete with them? Or did you stick with your unique part and deliver to the best of your ability?

·spending your time wondering what others thought about you? Or did you aim to reach your potential and allow others to re think their roles as a result of interacting with you.

When you accept your role as an actor on the world stage then you have no one to compete with but yourself. When you accept that you are an unique individual, with your own skills and abilities, there is no need to compete with anyone. You just need to evolve your uniqueness. You, after all, have something important and great to give the world so why try and be like someone else. Why try to mimic their role?

In a film or a play each actor concentrates on delivering their role to be the best of their ability. Life is no different. To ensure you have a successful life all you need to do is concentrate on your role and deliver, to the best of your ability. To be a great person you just need to produce a great performance. You have the skills and knowledge all you need is the courage to deliver.

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When you go for it, you will be successful and, who knows, maybe next year, you will be nominated for the Oscar in Life performance.

Good Luck.

Graham and Julie

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