

The Art of Mental Training

Chapter 21

Getting There

<http://www.DefenseOnDemand.com>

Copyright © 2006 by Daniel Gonzalez. All rights reserved.

Many times, after working with a professional fighter or an advanced grappler, they thank me for having shown them something they claim never to have been taught before. That makes me feel great, and one reason for my gratification is because they trust me enough to admit that (even as great competitors) they don't know it all. That's a true champion, in a nutshell. A true champion always recognizes that, if you're open to learning something today, it can make you an even greater champion tomorrow.

There's never a stage in our careers when we've learned so much that there's nothing left to learn. And this is even truer once you realize that, in almost every case, champions are made, not born.

A true champion accepts that (as great as he or she may currently be) it's not what they know that's important, it's what they can still learn that makes the biggest difference. They know that in order to reach their highest possible level they have to strive for constant and daily improvement. And they know that the fastest way to improve is to work, not on their strengths, but on their weaknesses.

Therefore, in order to improve, the mental athlete must be resolutely clear on exactly what his strengths and weaknesses are. Then (and this is the important part) he or she must determine to change weaknesses into strengths.

Take the true example of a young and gifted tennis player with a devastating serve and a wonderful forehand, but a rather weak backhand, always slicing it back to her opponent. Once while she was working with her coach, belting back excellent forehand after forehand, she overheard someone say that her forehand was so reliable already that she was crazy not to concentrate on her backhand! For the next couple of weeks she told her coach she wanted to concentrate entirely upon upgrading her backhand. Shortly thereafter she achieved one of her biggest career wins ever, toppling the world's top-ranked player in the second round of an international tournament! She had changed a weakness into one of her strengths.

Your game plan ought to be the same: pinpoint your weaknesses and set out to work extra hard on them. While it's true that it's important to work on all aspects of your game, a champion knows that a good opponent will find and exploit any weaknesses; therefore he develops an action plan to target and improve on all the things that he knows are not his strongest points.

So . . . what don't you do quite so well? And do you have an action plan to change it? Look at your game like a champion. Set out to make yourself better than ever by pinpointing what to improve! And don't put it off because some parts of your game are already working. Adapting to good advice that comes your way, and working hard to change your weaknesses into strengths will help take your entire game to another level.

So commit yourself, get an action plan in place and make it a point of honor to set out to transform your weaknesses into strengths.

Remember: Successful people have the self-discipline to do the things that have to be done, whether they enjoy them or not.