

# The Art of Mental Training

## Chapter 22

### Changing Your State

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Changing your state. What's that mean, exactly?

Remember my *unbeliever* from Chapter One? What kind of state was he in before he turned it around? If you recall, he was in a very disempowered state when he sought me out. He was nervous, fearful, anxious, tense, and entirely lacking self-confidence. In short, there was no way that he could do well in competition unless he changed his state.

So what did he do in those few minutes that made all the difference?

Recall that, with little coaching, he changed his state from being totally fearful and disempowered, to being totally confident and prepared for competition. He literally became an unchained force of dominance. And he did it so quickly!

I promised that I would teach you how to do what he did, so here we go. With everything you've learned so far, I know you are ready. Here's what you need to understand; and here's exactly how to go about doing it for yourself.

Thoughts create the emotions and feelings that are the cause of your state. Whatever state that may be, your own thoughts put you there. So, whenever you find yourself in a disempowered state remember this: you can alter your thoughts and your state by focusing on three different critical elements.

**The First Critical Element:** Self-Talk. Ask yourself: What would the self-talk of a champion sound like as he prepared for competition?

I took my *unbeliever* aside and I asked him a simple question. "If you were a great champion with tons of experience at this level, and if you had an incredible record, and if you were at the top of your game where no one could touch you, what would your self-talk sound like as you prepared to go into this match?"

My *unbeliever* looked at me. "I don't know, coach."

"Well how about things like: I'm strong, I'm fast, and I dominate. I control the match, I never give in, and I never give up. I'm powerful, I'm a force of fury, I'm a force of dominance, and I am a champion. I conquer . . . Or how about these? I can have it, I can do it, I take charge, I win, I keep going, I'm tougher, I stop my opponent, I'm ready. Get the idea?" I asked.

"Yep," he said.

"Good. Then that's what I want. Pretend you're an actor. Start being that champion. Start hearing the self-talk of that champion." I told him. "I want you to pretend and feel that you are this champion I just described. I want you to start firing off, inside your head, the same self-talk that this champion would have going through his head as he gets ready for a match. Start now," I told him looking at my watch. "We don't have much time."

I shut up and watched him as he immersed himself in his task. At this point Jeremy began firing off the self-talk of a champion in his head. He stayed nearby as he walked around, pacing, putting all his focus and his entire being into the exercise.

After about a minute I got his attention again. "Good, very good," I said, "Now we are going to add something to it."

**The Second Critical Element:** The way that you carry your body. Ask yourself: How would this champion's body be moving as he prepared for battle?

"Jeremy," I said, "Start moving your body around as this champion that is preparing for competition."

He was listening hard. I continued, "Keep on seeing yourself as this champion, keep the self-talk going, and at the same time I want you to now start moving your body around as if you were this champion getting ready to beat your opponent down. How would you be moving your body? How would you, as this champion, carry yourself as you prepared for the match? Show me. Starting right now," I added, "You get another minute."

Jeremy sprang into action. Before my eyes he started moving his body around like a champion warming up, getting ready to do battle, pacing, and practicing on an imaginary opponent, full of energy, like a caged gladiator waiting to be released. And, as I watched, I began to have hope. Jeremy's body motions became like those of a champion annihilator.

At the same time, as he moved his body around like this champion annihilator, Jeremy kept firing off the self-talk of this champion in his head.

Now we had the self-talk of a champion going, and the body movements of a champion preparing for battle going on. I let him do his work. I didn't disturb him for another minute or so.

**The Third Critical Element:** Breathing. Watching Jeremy's imagination, self-talk, and body motions begin to turn things around for him, I threw in the third element. Jeremy I asked, "How would this champion be breathing right now as he prepared for battle? Keep the self-talk going, keep moving your body around as this champion, and now, I want you to add the breathing of a champion getting ready to do battle."

Without missing a beat, Jeremy adjusted his breathing. Now he had all three critical elements going. Breathing, movement, and self-talk. Jeremy was in a different world.

At the end of those few minutes, Jeremy had changed his state completely. When he walked on to that mat: he was ready mentally and physically, and he was therefore able to deliver one of his best performances ever. By bringing all three critical elements together in this way, Jeremy, my *unbeliever*, got out of his own way, he let his training take over, and he competed like a true champion.

That's how he did it; and that's how you can do it too.

As part of your pre-competition routine . . .

Ask yourself: What would the self-talk of a champion be like as he prepared for competition?

How would that champion be moving his body around as he prepared?

And how would that champion be breathing as he prepared to enter the competition and face his opponent?

Then do it. Bring it all together for several minutes prior to your time, and allow yourself to enter into this totally prepared and empowered state before you compete. Get out of your own way. Let your training take over.

**Remember: Use all three critical elements and bring them together in order to change your state completely:**

**The Self-talk of a Champion preparing to do battle, the Body Movements of a Champion preparing to do battle, and the Breathing of a Champion preparing to do battle. Then allow yourself to become that Champion as you enter your competition.**