

The Art of Mental Training

Chapter 24

Prepare to Win

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I had been training with Leo-tai for many years. Now I had been accepted into the Navy flight program, and we both knew that it might be a long time before I'd be back.

“You must prepare to win.” Leo-tai told me as we finished my knife-fighting lesson that night. “A champion always prepares to win.”

He knew that I was listening.

“Always use mental rehearsal as you've been taught,” he told me. “It builds confidence. Confidence comes from knowing you are prepared both physically *and* mentally. Confidence helps you know what to do automatically even when you're not sure. It helps immensely. Be sure to visualize.”

Leo-tai began putting away the training knives that we had been using.

“You must trust yourself, Danielsan. There must be no lack of commitment in your mind. Eliminate doubt. There's no room for it. Have confidence and trust yourself as you prepare to win . . . Always take your training sessions seriously. Always concentrate. Remember: you're creating neuro-muscular connections that are going to take over when you learn how to get out of your own way. The better you concentrate during training, the more you'll be able to trust yourself when you must fully perform.”

Leo-tai continued: “Remember that mental training helps the warrior develop the ability to set the analytical mind aside long enough so that his training can take over and he can fight by instinct. When this happens you're confident, relaxed, determined. Everything flows. You experience peak performance. It's a reward for having prepared well. Remember, and never forget, - you can't actually *force* peak performance. You must prepare correctly in an effort to allow it to occur. You now understand how to go about creating the *Ideal Mental Climate* from which it springs forth.”

I followed him towards the door of the studio as I finished putting on my watch cap and coat. Everything he was telling me made perfect sense.

“It’s a matter of learning how to leave your conscious mind out of it,” he reminded me, “and letting your training take over. And don’t forget that sometimes improvement means letting go of old ways, Danielsan. So remain open to learning, and rest assured that it will take courage to achieve your goals and reach your full potential. Get ready to work hard.”

As I stepped outside, I got the feeling that he wasn’t quite ready to let me go—I wondered later if perhaps he was remembering my brother at that moment.

He looked at me. “The most important thing is how a champion prepares for battle. You must find the warrior within. You must do battle with all your heart in order to have no regrets as you leave the contest behind. A champion always prepares to win. Remember to act like a champion in order to become a champion.”

“I will.” I assured him as we shook hands. He knew how grateful I was for everything.

He smiled, “You did well today.”

And with that, Leo-tai brought my lesson to an end.

It would be a long time before I would see Leo-tai again. First would come Grenada, then Panama, and finally the Middle East.

Remember: A champion always prepares to win.