

Mental Perception Training:

Think Right, Do Right - Positive Thinking for Success

by [Stan Tzogas](#)

We are constantly in dialogue with ourselves. What we say to ourselves can have a direct impact on how we choose to perceive things. Internal dialogue can have a profound effect upon how we act or more specifically on how we react. The dialogue can be either positive or negative. The mind programs thoughts into feelings and these feelings can through association predetermine the quality of an individual's effort. Thus, the mind programs success by developing confidence through positive thinking. The mind can also program failure through self-doubt and negative statements. Take the following case for example; you have a tough draw at a tournament and your first match is against the national champion. You can look at this as being a bad draw, feel bad and in the process wrestle badly. On the other hand, you can look at this as an ideal opportunity. Being the first match you will be fresh and when you win, the momentum will be on your side for the rest of the tournament. In essence, what you are developing is a positive attitude. Internal dialogue or self-talk as it is sometimes called can help in learning and correcting skills, concentrating on tasks, building confidence, and in precompetition and competition preparation.

Learning and Correcting Skills

Through internal dialogue an athlete can acquire new skills or be reminded to correct bad habits. Talking through instructions and using cue words accomplish this. By using cue words an athlete can trigger automatic responses. Through constant association and repetition a word can be conditioned to trigger a response. Words such as relax, explode and crush can trigger responses, as well as, feelings and emotions. The emotional quality of these words is used to trigger conditioned responses. When trying to correct behaviors or habits it is important to focus on what you want to happen and not on what you do not want to happen.

Concentration

Cue words or sometimes called trigger words can also help the athlete to remain in the here and now. Engaging in dialogue that directs specific behavior and remaining in the here and now, can help the athlete to focus more at the task at hand and less on distractions. The athlete should direct all thought upon focusing on the performance and not on the outcome. The emphasis should be placed upon effort, considering that it is what the athlete has the greatest control over. To unwanted thoughts use a cue word to interrupt or stop the undesirable thought. The cue word could be "stop", "park it", "trash it" etc., or anything else that reminds you to stop it and focus on the task at hand.

Building Confidence

Affirmation statements can help athletes to develop confidence and boost self esteem. These statements reflect positive thoughts about oneself. Constantly conversing

statements to yourself reaffirming how good you are will help to develop your confidence. Telling yourself how great and competent you are is an important aspect of the battle. Beware of being over confident as that it could prove to be detrimental. Confidence is thinking you are going to win and knowing you could lose. Over-confidence is knowing you will win regardless of your effort. You should always compete to your potential regardless of the caliber of your opponents. An example of a pre-competition affirmation statement;

"I am ready! I am in superior condition. When I attack, I am relentless; no one can stop me. I can turn anyone with my gutwrench; no one can stop it. I am an awesome devastating, unstoppable wrestling machine. Come bring it on and get some!"

Precompetition and Competition Preparation

Your choice of cue words will help to trigger emotions and the effort needed to perform to potential. Emphasis on effort will also help to focus on your performance. What you say to yourself will have a direct result upon your performance. Think of positive constructive confident thoughts. Focus on your strengths, consider all the reasons why you should win and concentrate on what you are going to do. Any doubt and you will lose. Develop rituals for the day before and the day the competitions. Have a warm-up ritual.

Developing a positive attitude is not easy. It takes sometime to program your mind to think positively. Though consciously monitoring your thinking and immediately restructuring your thought one can begin to program their thinking patterns. Positive thinking is also contagious. By surrounding yourself with positive thinkers athletes can start to think in the same way.

"There is little difference between people, but it is that little difference that is a big difference. The little difference is attitude and the big difference is whether it is positive or negative." (Author unknown)