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The Ballgame Effect

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**This book is dedicated to all of my
pitching coaches and the pitchers I have
worked with over the years.**

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Chapter 1: The Ballgame Effect

A lot of people have asked how I get such impressive results with pitchers. “What’s your secret?” They ask. The answer is Expectancy. If you expect pitchers to get better when they work with you, then they probably will. Expectancy has more to do with your actual beliefs than what you say to pitchers. What you expect of others is largely a reflection of what you expect of yourself. Your efficacy. More on that in a bit.

I had the privilege of meeting Robert Rosenthal (RIP) a few times. He insisted on being called Bob. He was gracious enough to talk about his research with me and how I could apply it to coaching. Bob was famous for his research on expectancy theory. Basically, if experimenters expected participants to perform a certain way then they were more likely to do so. This was consistent over the period of 50 years in his experiments.

One experiment that he did in 1966 also included desirability. Bob surmised that the experimenters who got results they expected must have also desired the results. In the study, the experimenters who expected and desired results got them. If they neither expected nor desired a certain result, then they didn’t get it. A mismatch between desire and expectancy led to inconsistent results.

In 1968, Bob conducted a study at a school district in San Francisco. All of the relevant information is in his book called *Pygmalion in the Classroom*. Teachers were given

“information” on their students regarding their aptitude. The list contained “gifted” students and not so gifted students. Most of the students performed in a manner that was consistent with the teachers’ expectations (regardless of their actual aptitude). Some of them still performed well even though they weren’t expected to do so. The teachers tended to resent those students. My own personal view is that they had a strong self-efficacy and were impervious to the teachers’ expectations that were communicated nonverbally.

Bob found that high expectancy teachers had four components to their condition.

1. Input: They allowed for more input from students they expected a lot out of. They were more patient with the students’ answers and encouraged them.
2. Output: Teachers that expected more assigned more homework and demanded better work.
3. Feedback: They gave more feedback and more detailed feedback.
4. Climate: They were more welcoming and created an atmosphere that was conducive to learning.

I wrote about this in my book *the Crash Davis Effect*, but the core message Bob gave me was that it is essential to have high expectations of all of your pitchers. Dov Eden says the same thing in his great book *Pygmalion in Management*.

Another essential component of my approach to coaching is Efficacy. Albert Bandura (RIP) was a psychology professor

at Stanford. Al was famous for his research on Self-Efficacy. Self-Efficacy is the belief in your ability to accomplish a given task. Bob literally said that Self-Efficacy is Self-Expectancy. Remember, what you expect of others is a reflection of what you expect of yourself.

Al found that there are four things that lead to increasing Self-Efficacy. They are essentially an extension of the four factors of high expectancy leaders that Bob Rosenthal studied.

1. Verbal Suggestion: Telling a pitcher they have what it takes to succeed. It's who they are. Also communicating messages in the positive. What to do and how to do it.
2. Enactive Mastery: Collecting small successes and inwardly celebrating them. This is about reinforcement. Reinforce everything that is consistent with how you want them to perform.
3. Physiological State: The anchoring technique helps with this. If they feel good, they're more likely to pitch well. No, they're not "that bad of a player" for wanting to feel good.
4. Vicarious Experience: Seeing others they identify with succeeding tends to increase self-efficacy. This can be accomplished by watching video.

The real gold is the feedback. It's all about sending impeccable messages (what to do and how to do it) and moving pitchers up to the more advanced levels of performance (more on this later) as quickly as possible.

Remember, if you expect more then you are going to get more. My coach at Biola used to put me in really high leverage spots. He would just say that the 3,4 and 5 hitters are coming up and walk away. The bases would be loaded, but he knew I was going to get the job done and I did. I was 7 for 7 with Save opportunities. Sometimes, what you don't say is more effective than anything you can say. This only applies if the pitcher's efficacy (and stuff) is really strong.

Bob Rosenthal called the phenomenon of getting results by having high expectations the Pygmalion Effect. In my book for catchers, I refer to it as the Crash Davis Effect. Pitching coaches who get more out of pitchers by expecting more can be said to have the Ballgame Effect. You expect more and you get more as a result of your own coaching efficacy. What you expect of your pitchers is a reflection of what you expect of yourself.

Here are some examples of how I incorporated the Ballgame Effect to get legendary results.

-I took over a varsity pitching staff that finished dead last the year before. They ended up posting the lowest team ERA in school history and made it to CIF semi finals for the first time since 1978. Our Ace threw 4 no hitters and went to a legit D1 program.

-I worked with a very high profile softball pitcher who has competed at the Olympic and pro levels. She already had legendary stuff, but she had long struggled with the mental side even though she worked with and for a well-known mental side "guru". She posted the best numbers (lowest

WHIP and ERA) of her career. The next year she signed for an unheard of amount of money for women athletes.

-A D1 softball pitcher kept having meltdowns on the mound. After working with me, she ended up shutting out the top team in their conference two games in a row (two weeks after working with me) and went on to be voted First Team All Conference.

-A D1 baseball pitcher struggled in his first start during summer ball. He showed up on an off day and worked with me. He threw a no hitter in his next start.

-I took over another varsity baseball pitching staff who had finished dead last in league the year prior. We ended up winning league for the first time since 1991 and made it to the second round of CIF.

-I took over a D3 pitching staff that had won 4 games all season the year before. Their team ERA was 11 the previous year. We more than tripled our win total and dropped the team ERA to 8.

How did I do it? Expectancy. Whenever I talk to a pitcher, they know they are going to get better because of my own efficacy. You have got to know you are magic and you have to genuinely believe you are going to change some lives today. The high profile softball pitcher's (the one who signed for a lot of money) catcher was voted Catcher of the Year that same year. She told me, "You change lives Tim!"

Chapter 2: Self-Directed Neuroplasticity

I'll start this chapter by talking about a popular school in psychology called behaviorism. Behaviorism is the view that people only perform according to how they are shaped. In other words, they simply respond to external positive or negative reinforcement. A reinforcement schedule is set up and the individual is treated like an animal. Behaviorists deny that cognition and first person subjective experience exists. Their view is grounded in classical Newtonian Physics where scientific experiments can be conducted at a personal distance.

The irony about behaviorism is that it takes some ingenuity to set up a reinforcement schedule. Shaping requires thinking. On the other hand, there is the Cognitive approach which views most people as striving for Self-Actualization. "Not will to survive, but will to power" as Nietzsche puts it. The cognitive approach is grounded in Quantum Physics. In Quantum Physics, particles behave differently depending on the experimenter and their cognition. The experimenter's influence of particles here can affect matter out there (Non-Locality). This is what Einstein refers to as "Spooky action at a distance."

The expectancy effect that was discussed in the last chapter is grounded in what Quantum Physicists call Quantum Entanglement. Quantum entanglement is the interrelation and interaction of subatomic particles to produce a given outcome. Different minds produce different outcomes in experiments with subatomic particles and with humans. No

data is data until it is recorded data. This is why it is so important to have high expectations of pitchers.

Some of the biggest names on the mental side have based their teachings in the behavioral school. They teach pitchers to have a “release” for bad occurrences. They are taught to “flush the toilet”, “clap their hands” or “Stare at a spot”. Etc If a pitcher is in a “yellow or red light” state, how are they supposed to reframe their self-talk just by “flushing a toilet”? Also, the “red light, yellow light and green light” approach is a mindfulness campaign for pre schoolers. Daniel Goleman talks about it in his great book *Focus*.

Jeffrey Schwartz is famous for his work with OCD patients. OCD is characterized by intrusive thoughts followed by compulsive behavior. The behavioral approach is characterized by what is known as exposure therapy. Patients are forced to touch dirty surfaces, not allowed to wash and have even had their rear-view mirror removed. The success rate is around 40 percent and the relapse rate is high. Why? Because the patient is treated as an automaton with no mind. The treatment simply involves stimulus and forced response.

Jeff Schwartz uses what he calls the mindful approach. In his experience, part of the patients’ mind knows that their hands are not really dirty (etc). He calls this voice the Wise Advocate. It is at the core of mindfulness. Jeff has a 4 step system for overcoming OCD and also improving self-talk. After utilizing the 4 step system for awhile, the patient essentially rewires their brain and they no longer experience the intrusive thoughts or the compulsion to

wash. This utilizing of the mind to rewire the brain is what Jeff calls Self-Directed Neuroplasticity. His success rate is around 90 percent with very little relapse. Why? Because the patient is treated like a person with a mind. He addresses their thinking which precedes everything else.

The 4 Step System that Jeff teaches is:

1. Relabel: Awareness of the unhelpful self-talk as it occurs.
2. Reframe: Telling yourself that it's just a faulty brain signal. Come up with an alternative thought to replace it with.
3. Refocus: This is the most important part. This is where you actively choose to focus on something else. Jeff actually says a pitcher can choose to mindfully grip the baseball and feel the sensation of the seams on his fingers.
4. Revalue: After enough times of going through the first 3 steps, the self-talk will lose meaning to you.

Going through this 4 step system helps to form new neural pathways. For example, an OCD patient will have a thick neural pathway related to washing their hands or making their bed. Etc The Reframe and Refocus components help them to form a neural pathway that may resemble a pathway for a bike at first. After enough reps, the new pathway will begin to resemble a four lane highway.

In Quantum Physics, there are two primary laws that pertain to neuroscience. The first one is Hebb's Law. Hebb's Law states that neurons that fire together wire

together. This is why teaching a pitcher to associate “flushing the toilet” with bad occurrences is suboptimal. The second law is the Quantum Zeno Effect. The Quantum Zeno Effect is characterized by a sustained focus which helps neurons continue to fire and wire together. In other words, neural pathways thicken due to sustained focus. The more times the pitcher above “flushes the toilet”, the thicker the “failure neural pathway” gets. To heckle them, all you have to do is say “flush it” after each pitch (good or bad). Trust me, it works.

Let’s talk about another cognitive reframe template that I really like. It’s from Mark Divine’s book *The Way of the SEAL*. Mark Divine is an ex Navy SEAL and his work is impressive. He takes Self-Directed Neuroplasticity to a whole new level.

DIRECT

Detect – Awareness of self-talk.

Interdict – Disrupt unwanted self-talk.

Re-direct – Come up with an alternative thought.

Energize – Put some enthusiasm into the new helpful thought.

Communicate – Force yourself to hold the new thought in stressful situations.

Train – Make the new thought into a mantra. More on this later.

The most important components of Self-Directed Neuroplasticity are awareness and coming up with an alternative thought to make a new neural pathway (Hebb's Law). The more the new thought is repeated with emphasis, the thicker the new neural pathway gets (Quantum Zeno Effect). There are two more templates in my book *Pitcher Consciousness 5.0*. If you are serious about getting elite results, then *Pitcher Consciousness 5.0* should be required reading for pitchers. It is a companion guide for writing in their performance journal. Going through the exercises helps them to use their mind to rewire their brain. Going through the book strengthens neural pathways related to the 5 Mental Tools. It makes them easier to access on a neurological level.

The 5 Mental Tools are the 5 cognitive patterns that the best pitchers in the game all have in common. They are the 5 real skills for competing one pitch at a time. It is a template that will make your job coaching pitchers a lot easier.

The 5 Mental Tools of Pitching

1. PRESENCE: One pitch at a time focus. Presence of mind and carrying yourself with Presence.
2. INTENT: Me vs You mindset. Throwing each pitch with conviction.
3. TRUST: Pitchability. Throwing any pitch anytime.
4. COMMAND: Throwing the ball where you want and when.
5. HITTERS AWAY: Efficacy. Out production.

Learning the 5 Mental Tools alone will give your career a quantum leap, but my Hierarchy in the next chapter will help you unleash the Ballgame Effect. You will learn how to think and coach like a legendary pitching coach.

Chapter 3: The Ballgame Pitching Hierarchy

As we have covered earlier, the two most important factors to elite level coaching are expectancy and efficacy. If you expect more, you are likely to get more. The assumption is that the pitchers already have some physical ability to begin. The key ingredient that will set them apart from others are the 5 Mental Tools. The 5 Mental Tools are discussed at length in my book *Pitcher Consciousness 5.0*. It also contains a ton of exercises on how to strengthen the neural pathways related to the 5 Mental Tools. The Ballgame Pitching Hierarchy is a guide on how to quickly and effortlessly incorporate the 5 Mental Tools into your coaching.

The entire purpose of the Ballgame Pitching Hierarchy is to produce Self-Actualized Pitchers (SAPs). You are no longer just an instructor, you are a specialist. You are a pitcher whisperer. Everyone offers lessons that cover mechanics. If a pitcher wants mechanical work, they can go into a lab at Driveline. Mechanics are basic. You are not basic, you are a legend. I tell catchers, “You must believe you are magic and conduct yourself accordingly.” As you think and believe, so you will coach. As your pitchers think and believe, so they will pitch. Expect results and you are way more likely to get them.

The hierarchy starts with the physical/mechanical and it progresses to the psychological, but it is essential to always

lead with the psychological. The psychological always takes precedence over the physical. It will make more sense in a bit. There are 6 levels to the hierarchy. The first level is strictly physical and mechanical. The other 5 levels are psychological (5 Mental Tools). The goal is to progress through the levels as quickly as possible. My martial arts instructor is Woo Hwang (from the TV show Survivor). He was teaching me advanced kicks and other strikes as a yellow belt. The quicker you can get the pitcher to the more advanced levels, the more of a lasting impact it will make on a neurological level. The higher levels always take precedence over the lower levels.

Another way to explain the hierarchy comes from Vygotsky. Vygotsky had a theory of development called the Zone of Proximal Development. The ZPD is basically a conglomeration of your successes and failures at each developmental stage. It represents your current reality based on experiences. In *Pitcher Consciousness 5.0*, I coin the term Zone of Proximal Efficacy and give the reader an assessment that gives them an idea where they currently are related to the 5 Mental Tools. Their current reality as a pitcher. Some pitchers may be proficient in some of the more advanced levels but deficient in the lower levels. Other pitchers will have the basic levels down but need some scaffolding to get them to the higher levels.

Regardless of where the pitcher is currently, you are going to want to cover as much of the hierarchy as possible each session. It is essential that you have the elements of the hierarchy memorized. One minute you may need to emphasize a basic point and a few pitches later you might

touch on something more advanced. The pinnacle of the hierarchy is efficacy. Even though it is at the top, you must always strive to help the pitcher build and maintain a resolute efficacy along the way (regardless of where they are). The progression from the basic levels to the advanced levels can take anywhere from one session to weeks or months. No matter how advanced a pitcher is when they arrive, learning all of the elements will help them take conscious control over their career. They will progress faster than other pitchers who do not have this knowledge. You will probably get a lot of referrals too.

Level 1 – Mechanics

Whether you work with baseball or softball pitchers, it really doesn't matter. If you have a decent understanding of mechanics, it's just a matter of setting a solid foundation. There are a lot of books and resources out there that teach mechanics. Everyone teaches mechanics. Most of the time, the issue with pitchers is not mechanical even if it is. The issue is almost always psychological. If the pitcher is relatively new to the craft, then it's just a matter of getting them to do dry work on their own and make sure they consistently go through the proper check points. The ultimate goal of this level is mechanical soundness and consistency. You also want the pitcher to have awareness of their mechanics without being fixated on them.

1. Routines: Arm Care (Marv Bands), Strength and Conditioning, Long Toss and Recovery.

2. Mechanical Soundness: Delivery, Towel Drill/Dry Work, King/Queen of the Hill Training Device.
3. Pitch Design: Movement/Action. See Driveline.
4. Consistency/Grit: Consistency with their routines, mechanics and pitch action.

Level 2 – Presence

Presence refers to the pitcher's ability to focus one pitch at a time regardless of what happens on the previous pitch. It also has to do with carrying themselves with Presence and having Presence of mind by focusing in the present (Derek Johnson). The most important pitch in baseball or softball is the next pitch. That is where they have the most control. The more effective the pitcher is at focusing one pitch at a time, the more likely they will be to get in the Zone. The Zone isn't something special that "only happens so often". It can be summoned. How do you focus one pitch at a time? By having a consistent Pre Pitch Routine.

1. Pre Pitch Routine: It is a concise set of steps that the pitcher goes through before throwing each pitch. Instead of waiting for a bad pitch to "flush the toilet" (what are they doing before all the other pitches?), all they have to do is go through their Pre Pitch Routine. You are teaching them to associate going through their Pre Pitch Routine with feeling like a cocky prick. "Are you that bad of a player that you gotta feel good?" No. They are that elite that they are systematic without being OCD. The Pre Pitch Routine is the foundation for everything.

You will want to teach it as soon as possible depending on skill acquisition related to mechanics and pitch design.

The Pre Pitch Routine Template

-Mantra: Short phrase that they say over and over in their head to guide their intention. It should be a forceful inner voice and the mantra should make them feel cocky. The more they recite it, the stronger the neural pathways get correlating with feeling like a cocky prick.

-Breathe: Breathe fully in the nose and out the mouth. Shoulders should rise and fall.

-Visualize: Quickly visualize the pitch going the way they intend. Visualize the hitter looking bad.

-Intent: Throw the pitch with the expectation that it will go as they visualized. Trust it.

2. Posture: Make sure they carry themselves like a cocky prick in the bullpen, in the game and everywhere else.
3. Tempo: Teach them to be aware of their tempo. They need to be able to recognize if they are rushing or if the game is speeding up on them.
4. Composure: Harvey Dorfman talks about Partial vs Total Composure. Partial is where the pitcher may have an emotional outburst, but they are able to quickly focus on the next pitch. Total composure is where they show nothing throughout the outing. The key is to be able to focus one pitch at a time

regardless of what happens on a previous pitch. It takes awareness.

Level 3 – Intent

Intent is an extension of Presence. The 5 Mental Tools and the mechanical section of the hierarchy are all interrelated. Intent has to do with the way the pitcher gets after it. Are they throwing every pitch with conviction? Are they attacking hitters or are they Prayer pitching? This mindset is all about having a distinct fearlessness.

1. Leg Drive: Are they pushing off the mound properly with their lower half? A great training device is the King/Queen of the Hill. Tell Rich Dunno I sent you. Aggressive leg drive is essential for peak velocity and reducing the likelihood of injury.
2. Power Line: Are they finishing through the target or are they falling off or stepping across?
3. Velocity: www.Armcare.com They have a device that assesses the pitcher's strengths and deficiencies in their arm. They give custom exercises that are guaranteed to boost velocity by 4+ mph or your money back. My coupon code is: ballgame10
4. Competitiveness: How much of a prick are they when they pitch? Do they go after hitters fearlessly?

Level 4 – Command

When teaching the 5 Mental tools, I always teach it in order (PITCH). However, when I'm actually working with a

pitcher I emphasize Command before the more advanced levels. I teach intent (velocity) and movement first, then I teach control and command. It's much easier to teach control and command to someone who already throws hard.

1. Control: Control is their ability to throw the ball in the strike zone. This is connected to level 1 with mechanical soundness and pitch design. The goal is to get the pitcher throwing all their pitches in the strike zone on a consistent basis with sound (not perfect) mechanics.
2. Command: Command is where they are able to throw the ball where they want and when. It's more precise than control. Control and command are both connected to the eyes and the head. It's essential to make sure the pitcher keeps their head still and looks at their target with both eyes.
3. PFP/Running Game Management: This one is obvious.
4. Impact: Part of coaching is teaching pitchers to want to be a good person off the field.

Level 5 – Trust

Scouts have the term pitchability. It refers to a pitcher's ability to have quality feel for what pitch to throw and when. The legendary softball pitcher who signed for a lot of money used to tell me her mindset was to "throw anything anytime". This level is all about intuition and instinct. You shouldn't teach pitchability or the other elements on this level until the pitcher has sound

mechanics, velocity, movement and command. Once they progress beyond control and can command their pitches, then you can emphasize the tenets of this component.

1. Deception: A lot of deception has to do with hiding the ball. When mechanics are at a stable point, you can begin to teach the pitcher to hide the ball so the hitter can't pick it up until the last possible moment. In baseball, it is usually accomplished by hiding the ball behind their head post separation.
2. Tunneling: This is the highest level related to command. It is where they throw different pitches out of the same window. Let's say a baseball pitcher throws a fastball 9 inches off the plate and then follows up with a back door slider on the same level. To the hitter, both will appear to be the same pitch. There are many applications to this component.
3. Instinct: Orel Hershisier talks about "Following the swing". This is where you teach pitchers to be keyed in to the information in front of them on a pitch by pitch basis. What does the swing suggest? How do they want to follow up based on what they see?
4. Pitchability: If they have adequate command and can tunnel their pitches consistently, then pitchability will come naturally (especially if they can read swings). This can be practiced in the bullpen by throwing to imaginary hitters. You can even have a stand in batter wearing a helmet and a mitt with a wet newspaper in their other hand.

When you feel they are ready, they can progress to throwing live to hitters.

Level 6 – Hitters Away

Contrary to what one big name guy says about the key to peak performance, the real secret is neuro-muscular integration. Mark Divine talks about the Japanese term Kokoro which means integration. The hierarchy and the 5 Mental Tools combine the physical, strategic and psychological components of pitching. This level is all about efficacy. The pitcher has put in the work and their neural pathways are like four lane highways related to the 5 Mental Tools. It's just a matter of going out and competing. They may be peripherally aware of their mechanics, but the primary emphasis is on sending hitters back to the dugout where they came from.

1. Pitch Metrics: Yes, it is possible to have good pitch metrics and bad efficacy. However, good pitch metrics USUALLY stem from high efficacy. Regardless, the pitcher must believe their stuff is superior. As they think and believe, so they will pitch.
2. First Pitch Strike (FPS): Teach them to work ahead in counts to set a precedence. Every pitch must send a message to the hitter that they're going back to the dugout.
3. Out Production (OP): As Paul Abbott used to tell me, *“Work ahead, stay ahead and send the hitter back to the dugout where they came from!”*

4. Efficacy: Efficacy should be the emphasis along the way regardless of where on the hierarchy you start. It's all about being a cocky prick. Barry Bonds used to tell himself, "I'm the best hitter in the world right now". So too, your pitcher must think and believe they are the best pitcher in the world right now.

I'll make a chart for you on the next page so you can memorize the hierarchy.

The Ballgame Pitching Hierarchy

Level 6 - Hitters Away

Pitch Metrics, First Pitch Strike, Out Production and Efficacy.

Level 5 - Trust

Deception, Tunneling, Instinct and Pitchability.

Level 4 – Command

Control, Command, PFP/RGM and Impact.

Level 3 – Intent

Leg Drive, Powerline, Velocity and Competitiveness.

Level 2 – Presence

Pre Pitch Routine, Posture, Tempo and Composure.

Level 1 – Mechanics

Routines, Mechanical Soundness, Pitch Design and Consistency/Grit.

Mechanics ↔ Efficacy

Chapter 4: The Symptoms

Everything in the hierarchy is geared toward getting a pitcher to compete one pitch at a time. The 5 Mental Tools are the 5 real skills for competing one pitch at a time. I recently did a podcast and the host asked, “What about when things go wrong for a pitcher on the mound?” Anytime a pitcher is not focused one pitch at a time, it is because they are experiencing one or more of the 5 opposite symptoms. As a pitching coach, you must be aware of what the symptoms are and have a basic idea of what to say during a mound visit. Knowing this stuff will make your job a lot easier.

Symptom 1: Attention-Fixation

Detracts from Presence. Level 2 is shaky.

They have gotten away from their Pre Pitch Routine, their tempo is rushed or they have bad body language. More severe cases involve sustained emotional outbursts. The underlying symptom is anxiety. They are literally fixated with their thoughts, state and emotions.

What to do

Distract them momentarily. Tell them a joke. Talk about anything but pitching. Say something that gets them to relax. Get them back in the present.

Symptom 2: Need for Social Approval

Detracts from Intent. Level 3 is shaky.

They may be avoiding the zone, holding back or generally not attacking. Their velocity may be decent, but there's no FU-Factor to it.

What to do

Challenge them. Light a fire under them. Elicit their dark side. Remind them that the hitter wants to take something from them and they need to keep it personal.

Symptom 3: Social Pressure

Detracts from Trust. Level 5 is shaky.

Overthrowing. Ken Ravizza called it Primal Pitching. They are throwing instead of pitching. Most common version of this symptom. Other components may be tipping pitches, having predictable pitch sequences or missing up in the zone. Probably preoccupied with the scouts and radars in the stands.

What to do

Similar to Attention-Fixation strategy. You are dealing more with anger than anxiety. Say something that will calm them down. Remind them about pitchability and focusing one pitch at a time instead of lighting up the radar.

Symptom 4: Intention-Violation

Detracts from Command. Level 4 is shaky.

Command issues usually stem from one of the other symptoms. It could be overthrowing, avoidance, anxiety or a lack of efficacy. Being truly weak in this area is characterized by sloppiness and coasting. There's a distinct lack of effort. They don't care or don't seem to care.

What to do

Be stern. Ask them what their goals are as a pitcher. What is their mission? If they say they don't have a mission or any goals, then you've uncovered the real issue. Hold them accountable for putting forth their best effort. You ultimately want to emphasize intrinsic motivation more than anything.

Symptom 5: Mechanical-Fixation

Detracts from Hitters Away. Level 6 is shaky.

They may seem preoccupied with mechanics and physical movements. Other cases involve guiding the ball (usually one a certain pitch). The ball generally lacks life and they just seem to lack efficacy. You watch them and think they need to be more of a cocky prick. It's almost as if they are afraid of success.

What to do

Similar to the Need for Social Approval strategy. You want to elicit cockiness. Al Bandura used to say that the best way

to determine someone's efficacy is to ask them. The more efficacious memories they can quickly access (neurologically), the more efficacious they are likely to be. Whatever you ask them or bring up is going to light up the relevant neural pathways in their brain. Help them access their efficacy.

The last thing you want to talk about is mechanics during a mound visit. My assumption is that you are coaching more advanced pitchers. If you are working with pitchers that are just learning the craft, then of course they are going to be mechanically fixated. The newer the pitcher is, the more feedback you are going to have to give them and more often. The more advanced the pitcher is, the less feedback you will need to give (usually). With advanced (and beyond) pitchers, it's a matter of giving subtle reminders or cues. They are the most important pitching coach they will ever have. You are not an instructor, you are a specialist. You are a pitcher whisperer.

Chapter 5: Cognitive Exercises

I am going to copy/paste the cognitive exercises from *Pitcher Consciousness 5.0*. They may be useful to you, but they are meant to serve as a guide for your pitchers to utilize Self-Directed Neuroplasticity. Encourage them to keep a performance journal.

Resources for Strengthening PRESENCE

Imagery

Al Bandura (1997) literally says visualizers consistently outperform non-visualizers on a significant level. He has a whole volume of research that confirms this. Most elite athletes practice visualization in some form. The best among them are systematic in the way they approach visualization (Afrechow, 2015). Bandura also says that visualization can be used to enhance your Efficacy.

The great thing about visualization is that you can practice it nearly anytime you want. Your muscles don't know the difference between what you actively visualize and when you actually perform. There is conclusive evidence (Dorfman, 2016; Maltz, 2015) which suggests that purposeful visualization can have a profound impact on your central nervous system, kinetic memory and Self-Efficacy (Bandura, 1997). If you visualize yourself

performing a given skill, you can actually improve the skill almost to the same level as if you physically practiced it. You can strengthen relevant synaptic connections by consistently using visualization (Quantum Zeno Effect).

The most common issue pitchers face when attempting to practice visualization is “controllability”. Controllability (Vealey, 2005) has to do with how skilled you are at controlling and directing the mental movie you are creating. Tony Robbins (1992 & 1997) advises that it’s best to incorporate a lot of movement to overcome this obstacle. *You also want to make sure to combine as many senses as possible.* See what you would see, hear what you would hear and feel what you would feel (physiologically and kinetically). This section is about applying visualization AWAY from the field. It will enhance your ability to quickly visualize each time you go through your Pre Pitch Routine.

Exercise - Go To Your Happy Place (Dugan, 1996)

1. In the classic movie *Happy Gilmore*, a golf coach instructs the main character to go to his “Happy Place”. I recommend watching the movie if you have not already seen it.
2. In your Performance Journal, describe your Happy Place as it pertains to your sport. Write for 10 to 15 minutes nonstop describing what you would see, hear, feel and smell. Etc Write down examples of your best performances and conjure up the physiological state you get when you win.
3. Go To Your Happy Place - After you have written about your Happy Place, the next step is to sit in a chair or lie down on a bed. The training table is fine. Close your eyes and go to your Happy Place in

your head. Vividly picture what you described in your Performance Journal. Use a mantra to direct your intention and focus.

Breath Control

A key part of regulating your physiological state is having quality breath control. Regardless of the sport you play, it is imperative to breathe effectively. The Pre Pitch Routine helps address this crucial factor for stop and start sports. If your breathing is rapid and up in your chest, you are not likely to optimize your performance. You may simply need to condition more so you can acclimate more effectively. *As a general rule, your breathing should be full and down into your diaphragm. Breathe in your nose and out your mouth.*

Exercise - Breath Control

1. Sit somewhere comfortable and try the following activity. Put one hand over your chest and the other on your stomach (Bailey, 2014). Note which hand rises the most. If the hand on your chest is the one that moves the most, it means your breathing tends to be up in your chest. If the hand over your stomach rises the most, then it means you are effective at breathing.
2. In your Performance Journal, write out a plan on how you can more effectively regulate your breathing during games.
3. Patterned Breathing (Vealey, 2005): For 5 to 10 minutes, try a variation of this format. Inhale in your nose for a 5 count and hold the breath for a 2

count. Exhale for a 5 count. Imagine tension leaving your body as you exhale.

Progressive Relaxation

Progressive Relaxation is where you tense a certain muscle group and then relax it completely (Vealey, 2005). A basic template that Robin (Vealey) talks about is where you start by sitting in a chair or lying on a bed (or training table). Start by tensing your calves as much as possible for a 5 count then relax them completely for a 5 count. Progress to your quads and do the same thing. Work your way through each major muscle group. *You can enhance the regimen by inhaling while you tense for a 5 count and then exhaling for a 5 count when you relax the muscle group.*

Exercise - Progressive Relaxation

1. Advanced - “Scan and Release”: While sitting in a chair (etc), notice any muscle groups that have tension. Tense them for a 5 count and then relax for a 5 count. Combine with the patterned breathing for greater levels of relaxation.
2. What variation of the Patterned Breathing and Progressive Relaxation routine can you develop that makes sense to you?
3. How can you relax more (when applicable) during games?

Meditation

Woo Hwang from the TV show *Survivor* is my martial arts instructor. He always has his students meditate before each training session. A key tenet of Tae Kwon Do is “Harmony between mind and body.” The Japanese refer to this as “Kokoro” (Divine, 2018) which stands for “integration”. Miyamoto Musashi (1994) talks about integrating the elements of “Warrior Consciousness” to fully manifest the “Spirit of the Thing Itself.” He concludes his masterpiece with the statement, “YOU are the Spirit of the Thing Itself.” (INTENT)

The key to peak performance is neuro(muscular) integration (Siegel, 2007) and not “right brain domination” contrary to what some wannabe Zen guru in sports teaches (Jaeger, 1989). You would think a Masters degree in Eastern philosophy would cover things like “Kokoro”. People who are primarily dominated by the right pre-frontal cortex tend to consistently experience negative emotion and generally lack the skills in this chapter (Golman, 2005). The left pre-frontal cortex is largely responsible for developing and integrating these skills. Not surprising, many pitchers who have worked with the above mentioned guru have had poor emotional regulation and have made poor decisions that have adversely affected their careers.

There are all sorts of applications for meditation. The most basic way to start is to sit Indian style or in a chair and focus on your breathing. Focusing on your breathing directs your attention (intention) to the present. Remember, PRESENCE of mind. The easiest way to start is to use the template that I mentioned in the Breath Control (and Progressive Relaxation) sections in this chapter. Simply

inhale in your nose for a 5 count and hold the breath for a 2 count. Exhale for a 5 count.

If unwanted self-talk, physiological sensations (Damasio, 1999) or images occur, simply note them and go back to counting breaths. In a way, your performance in your sport (stop and start sports) is much like meditation. If a distraction occurs, simply go back to focusing on the next pitch. What's Important Now? The next pitch. When it comes to meditation, the most important thing is your breathing (or sitting when you get really advanced). The more proficient (less unwanted chatter.etc) you get, the less you will actually count breaths. You will simply breathe and be aware of your breathing.

One of my favorite variations of meditation comes from the excellent book *Psycho Cybernetics* by Maxwell Maltz (2015). The exercise combines Progressive Relaxation with Visualization and Breath Control. Remember the Happy Place exercise? Maltz suggests to start out by sitting in a chair or lying on a bed (or training table). Start by first imagining your body literally sinking through the bed or chair as you breathe in your nose and out your mouth. Get yourself into a state of deep relaxation. Once you are relaxed, then do the Happy Place Visualization for 20 minutes. Use a mantra to direct your intention and focus.

Exercise - Your Own Meditation

1. What kind of a meditation/visualization regimen can you put together based on the skills you have learned so far?
2. How can you set aside 30 minutes in the morning and evening before bed to go through your meditation regimen?

3. In your Performance Journal, write for 10 to 15 minutes on how you can improve your self-awareness (mindfulness) during games.

Resources for Strengthening INTENT

Task Focus

What's Important Now? The task at hand. If you are focused on anything besides the next pitch, then your focus is in the wrong place. That is the basis of the 5 symptoms that were discussed in a previous chapter. They are distractions from the task at hand. *Focus in terms of what you want to do and how you want to accomplish it.* Remember Positivism? You've got to be fully committed to what you decide on during a game.

Exercise – Task Focus

1. What tends to distract you from the task at hand (The 5 distractions)?
2. How can you direct your focus completely to the task at hand?
3. How can you be more intentional in merging representation with action?

Desire

Like in Bob Rosenthal's (1966) study, it is essential that you DESIRE the result and EXPECT it. You not only need to have an internal Locus of Control (expectation that your

actions DO produce outcomes), but you also need Self-Efficacy (belief in your ability that you CAN produce the outcome). This is why the new definition of Efficacy (merging representation with action) is so important. Desire stems from your goals (that we covered in the Goal Mapping section) and it comes to shape your Reticular Activating System which influences your expectations. As Tony Robbins (1997) says in *Unlimited Power*; “You’ve got to be clear with what you want. What do you truly want? And why?”

Exercise – Desire

1. A professor of the life skills class I took in Junior College presented us with the following acronym: WIWTHH. It stands for “What I Want to Happen Here”. How can you apply this to games and business meetings so you can be Productive AF?
2. What do you truly want and why?
3. How can you magnify your desire to accomplish your goals?
4. How can you bring your objectives to fruition?

Execution

Great performances are characterized by consistent execution. Consistent execution requires taking action. You’ve got to approach each pitch or play with INTENT. Keep it simple. Your Pre Pitch Routine will help you accomplish this as it is the ultimate way to merge representation with action.

Exercise – Execution

1. How can you take action with your goals?
2. How can you be more consistent with execution?
3. How can you simplify your approach?

Elicitation

In NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming), there is a method called the “Transderivational Search” (Robbins, 1997). The Transderivational Search is essentially taking inventory of someone’s cognitive representation as it pertains to a specific goal. The key purpose of all of the questions for each chapter and exercise in this book is to elicit your representational strategy in sports. Good questions direct your focus (intention) and they also activate key synaptic regions in your brain. This is why you want to politely decline asinine or irrelevant questions from reporters (and others). The key to effectively directing your focus and intention is to ask good questions to yourself. When it comes to this chapter, we are going to focus on eliciting your aggression in the context of your sport.

Exercise – Elicitation

1. How do you know when you are aggressive with your approach?
2. What is it like when you are aggressive with your approach?

3. What steps can you take to be more aggressive (if you need to)?

Plyometrics

Want to have a more dynamic approach? It helps to train explosively. I would even argue that endurance athletes should mix in plyometrics to their regimens. *If you train aggressively, you will be more likely to compete aggressively.* As a college pitcher, I used to work out with a trainer who was also a scout for the Mets. The training sessions were always intense and max effort on each rep was emphasized. There was a distinct correlation between the way I trained and how I pitched (with INTENT). Plyometrics are all about “Rate of Force Production” (Clark, 2018). Rate of Force Production is where you strive to move yourself or a weight from one point to another in as little time as possible. Training for explosiveness is a great way to maximize your ability to compete with INTENT.

Exercise – Plyometrics

1. How can you implement plyometrics into your workouts and dynamic warm up?
2. Write out a workout plan and draw out a dynamic warm up that mixes in plyometrics (especially multiplanar plyometrics).

Relentlessness

One of my key influences is Tim Grover. If you don't know about Tim, I recommend watching *The Last Dance* documentary about Michael Jordan. Tim was MJ's personal trainer from 1989 until he retired. He also worked with Dwayne Wade, Kobe Bryant (RIP), Charles Barkley and various other basketball legends. His book *Relentless* is phenomenal. He describes the ultimate competitor as being a "Cleaner". The Cleaner merges representation with action. They get results and then they quickly move on to the next objective. *Done. Next.* Being relentless is about executing one pitch or play at a time until the game is over. Every game and every season. It also involves staying dialed in with your routines. You can celebrate each success, but there's always another championship to prepare for.

Exercise – Being Relentless

1. How can you be a truly relentless competitor?
2. What would have to happen for you to be truly relentless?
3. How can you maintain an intense one pitch or play at a time focus for the whole game?

Warrior

My favorite chapter in *The Mental ABC's of Pitching* is titled “Warrior”. Harvey Dorfman (2016) tells a story about Curt Schilling when he was with the Phillies. Regardless of what you think of his political views, the story adds a lot of value. Schilling was in a bases loaded jam late in the game (with a tight score). He went 3-0 twice on hitters and came back to strike them out. No one scored and he won the game. After the game, a reporter asked if he would have been happy giving up only one run. Here’s his response:

“I concede nothing. I wasn’t looking to give up any runs. Nothing happens until I throw the ball and I won’t give in on any pitch.”

Exercise – Concede Nothing

1. How can you adopt and maximize the “Concede Nothing” mindset as it relates to your craft?
2. What would have to happen for you to Concede Nothing?

Resources for Strengthening TRUST

Complete the Wheel

Chuck Norris (1996) talks a lot about how he and Bruce Lee used to train together. Bruce Lee (1997) invented his own system of martial arts called “Jeet Kune Do”. Jeet Kune Do is about Completing the Wheel as a martial artist. He emphasizes the importance of learning the essential

moves from a variety of disciplines so you can approach each situation in a unique way. This is what made Georges St. Pierre (2013) such a great fighter. The more options you have at your immediate disposal (accessibility), the better able you will be to optimize your results. Regardless of the sport you play, this approach can help you get the most out of your ability. When working with beach volleyball players, I (2019) talk about striving to master all of the relevant components of the game (Blocking, Setting, Hitting, Serving and Digging. etc). Hitters can learn to block and Blockers can learn to dig. Etc

Exercise - Completing Your Wheel

1. What are all of the necessary skills related to your position?
2. What are your strong and weak points?
3. What steps do you need to take to Complete Your Wheel so you can be confident using any approach anytime?
4. Map out a plan on the steps you can take to master all of the given skills and take action.

Video Analysis

Bandura (1997) talks a lot about the strong impact video analysis can have on Efficacy. His term is “Vicarious Experience”. It is where you are learning from elite models (or yourself) on how to improve your skills. If you’re Efficacious, you will view footage of other elite pitchers succeeding at a given task as an inspiration. The root of it is identification. Do you want to identify with the player being modeled? LeBron James probably won’t say it out

loud but he likely wants to be like Michael Jordan. What basketball player doesn't?

Another key aspect of video analysis is having an elite modeler (coach) break down the film with you. Tim Grover recently posted a video on Instagram about Kobe Bryant. He was very emotional (understandably) and shared a story about Kobe that he hadn't shared before. Kobe would sit with Tim in his car outside of a restaurant for hours watching game footage on his portable DVD player. Kobe was always trying to look for ways to be even better than he already was. He had a strong enough level of Efficacy where he was unaffected by seeing video footage of himself making mistakes. He also had someone as perceptive as Tim who could help him develop strategies on how to correct mistakes.

Bandura (1997) talks about how intentionally editing video footage until it shows nothing but successful executions can have a strong impact on Efficacy. It's also great for promoting yourself to college coaches, pro scouts and player development directors. Etc A useful way to approach it is to first watch the video that may have some mistakes in it. Collaborate with your coach on how you can fix the mistakes. Then edit the video until it shows nothing but successful executions (Video pruning – Like the Happy Place Exercise). Watch the edited video whenever you want to remind yourself of how things are to be done.

Besides increasing your Efficacy and promoting yourself, video analysis is also great for building instincts. You will improve your instincts and feel for the game by watching video with a purpose. In *The Million Dollar Head*, I teach scouts (and coaches) the unique scouting system (QPI) I invented while working with the Long Beach State baseball team as a grad student. My pitch charts focus on the interrelation between cognition, mechanics, execution,

hitter response and results. It's all about charting the interplay between the pitcher and each hitter on a pitch by pitch basis. Inning by inning and pitch by pitch, a story will unfold. Regardless of the sport you play, you want to be aware of how thoughts influence mechanics, execution, the response of the opponent and how they shape results (also how you respond or don't to results). This approach will give your video analysis skills a quantum leap.

Let's break down the Quintic Psycho-Mechanical (QPI) Interrelation model.



Cognition: This aspect refers to the 5 Mental Tools (5MT) model. If a pitcher is strong in the 5 Mental Tools, then it usually leads to having quality mechanics and pitch executions (but not always). Any deficiencies in the 5

Mental Tools will typically result in various mechanical flaws that detract from a quality execution. This is why the 5MT model is so essential for pitchers to internalize.

Mechanics: This is where the PC-5 scouting system in this book (and *Pitcher Consciousness*) comes into play. What made my scouting reports at Long Beach State so good was the fact that I charted how cognition influences mechanics and execution pitch by pitch. If you learn all of the PC-5 codes and can spot them, you will be way ahead of other scouts (and coaches). Always think, what does the pitcher's mechanics suggest about their cognition from one pitch to the next?

Execution: Quality cognition and mechanics typically lead to good execution. Many pitchers still manage to execute quality pitches with faulty mechanics and cognition. They would be even better if they could learn the skills in *Pitcher Consciousness*. They can go in the pitching lab and analyze their Trackman/Rapsodo data all they want, but it is a waste of time if they do not improve in the cognitive aspect.

Response: This has to do with analyzing a hitter's swing on each pitch. The 5 swing defects in the TRUST chapter are most relevant here. It is important to be able to spot them and quickly label them just like the PC-5 codes. If a hitter takes a quality swing, then I usually just mark a + sign. If they take a pitch, I write nothing. The various swing defects are labeled with a number 1 thru 5 along with an abbreviation of the symptom (2,sdl – The hitter looked bad on a great slider and took a weak swing. Etc).

Result: This is documented with a traditional score sheet and analyzed by the analytics people. Each pitch is a potentiality and only when it is recorded does it become “fossilized” (Stapp, 2011; Vygotsky, 2012). Sabermetrics are important just like the pitching lab and Trackman. Problems arise when decisions are made only based on data. Data refers to what has already happened. It is suggestive and not conclusive. The best pitchers make adjustments from one pitch to the next based on what they read.

Exercise - Video Analysis

1. Find a recent video of yourself competing and watch it as is. Where is your focus (5 Mental Tools) pitch by pitch/play by play? How does it influence your mechanics and execution? How does the opponent respond? What are the results? Write your insights in your Performance Journal.
2. Edit the video until it shows nothing but successful executions. Post it on social media and tag influential people who can help your career.
3. Watch video footage of teams you are going to play against. Observe the patterns of the relevant players. What approaches do they use and when? How do their thoughts influence their mechanics and execution? What are the responses and results? Write your insights in your Performance Journal.
4. Pick an elite model in your sport that you admire. Watch video footage of them performing a skill (or skills) you want to improve. Write down a game plan in your Performance Journal on how you can develop the given skills (Complete the Wheel).

Creativity

This is an essential skill that they don't teach you in school. Daydreaming with a purpose (visualization) can help you improve your skills and it can help you manifest your goals. Seb Bailey (2014) has an entire section in *Mind Gym* that is dedicated to enhancing creativity. Creativity will help you integrate the skills in this book in more efficient ways and it will help you be Productive AF. One creativity tool that Seb Bailey (2014) talks about is the "Morphological Matrix". It is where you "break down a goal into its component parts, consider the parts separately, and then recombine them to find new solutions" (p. 234). Make a list with three categories: Attributes (component part of the problem), Location (where it will take place) and Item. List as many different variables that relate to each of the three categories then piece them together in a variety of ways.

This touches on the next skill that Seb talks about called "Free Association". Free Association is where you make connections between words or phrases. Try making a list of five random words. Start by looking for how the words are interrelated. The next step is to instantly come up with a word or phrase that you associate with each word you wrote down. Try to quickly write down as many words as you can think of. The next step is to teach yourself to find inspiration from random words, images, sounds, smells, flavors and sensations. How can you find ways to improve your craft in some way? How can you achieve your goals and be Productive AF? Map it out and then refine it like with video footage.

I was a philosophy major as an undergrad and a key philosopher we studied was Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein (2009) specialized in logic and philosophy of language. His early work called *The Tractatus Logicus* focused on “atomic facts”. In a nutshell, one word corresponded with one concept or object. It was much like how the Behaviorists view things in terms of “input/output”. The story I heard was where Wittgenstein was on a train with Bertand Russell. Russell casually flipped Wittgenstein the bird to illustrate the point of the necessity of context in relation to language. This inspired him to develop his theory of “Language Games” that he describes in his later work called *The Philosophical Investigations*. He teaches the point by asking the reader to define what a game is. There are countless ways you can define what a game is and the criteria is different for each (yet they all refer to a game). He encourages us instead to look for “family resemblances” in terms of how we are acquainted with a given concept. You want to think in terms of interrelatedness as it will likely expand relevant synaptic connections.

Wittgenstein’s work on Language Games played a pivotal role in influencing what is known as Solution Focused Brief Therapy (DeShazer, 2021). A key part of Solution Focused Therapy is in coming up with alternative explanations. This is why Mark Divine’s (2018) DIRECT model for cognitive reappraisal is so important. How many alternative explanations can you think of? How many alternative approaches can you use in the moment based on what your instinct tells you during a game?

Exercise - Creativity

1. Start with a list of 5 random words. How are they interrelated? What are the “family resemblances”?
2. How can you develop your own Language Game as it relates to your sport?
3. Think of a key goal that you have. Using the Morphological Matrix, come up with three relevant categories for your goal. An example is: Time Frame, Achievement and Method. List as many things as you can think of in 15 minutes.
4. With the DIRECT model in mind, try coming up with as many alternative explanations as possible to unwanted self-talk. Evidence to support your new and improved cognition (Seligman, 2006).

Focus on Means and Performance

When it comes to competing, it is best to focus on the means rather than the outcome. You do want to have outcome goals to be sure, but during the game you want to be focused on your performance on a pitch by pitch basis. If you focus on your performance, the results are way more likely to follow. If you focus on your performance, you will enjoy the game a lot more. Coaches who encourage this approach tend to be way more successful than the ones who lead by only emphasizing outcome. Coaches who focus on outcome tend to produce athletes who play “not to lose” instead of being “in it to win it”. The coaches who only

care about means may say things like “I love losing”. Let’s be clear, only a loser says they love losing.

There’s an ongoing debate in baseball that definitely applies to other sports as well. Front office executives and scouts talk about the difference between Winning and Development. In my experience, there really isn’t a difference between the two. At least, there shouldn’t be. You develop players the quickest by teaching them to always compete with a winning mindset (The 5 Mental Tools). This extends to college coaches who tend to focus only on means and the others who only emphasize winning. You need both components just like internal Locus of Control is a crucial part of Self-Efficacy. Coaches are evaluated based on how well they perform just like athletes. The more you win, the more recognition you get and you keep your job.

Exercise - Enjoying the Game

1. How can you make the game fun?
2. How can you focus on performance during games?

Possibility Thinking

Robin Vealey (2005) talks about a model which she calls “P3 Thinking”. P3 Thinking is characterized by thinking: Purposely, Productively and in terms of Possibility. If you think in terms of the 5 Mental Tools, you will be said to be engaging in Purposeful and Productive Thinking. The purpose of the model is to teach you how to think and what to think (and when). This section will explicate Possibility

Thinking. Possibility Thinking is about thinking in terms of what you can do in a given situation. Always ask yourself, “What’s possible?” This mindset will help you with your creativity, your goal mapping and all of the other essential skills in this book.

Exercise - What’s Possible?

1. With your Performance Wheel in mind, what is truly possible as it relates to your goals?
2. How can you think in terms of what’s possible on a consistent basis?
3. Looking at your goals from the Goal Mapping section, what is truly possible?

Just Keep LIVIN

In the (1993) movie *Dazed and Confused*, Matthew McConaughey’s character (Wooderson) talks to the Quarterback (Randy “Pink” Floyd) about his life philosophy. Wooderson says, “*The older you do get, the more rules they gonna try to get you to follow. You just got keep LIVIN man. L.I.V.I.N.*” You’ve got to play for the love of the game and find joy competing one pitch at a time.

Exercise – Just Keep LIVIN

1. How can you just keep LIVIN?
2. How can you find and keep joy competing one pitch or play at a time?

Command resources

CD2: Consistency – Sound mechanics that you can repeat are good mechanics. It leads to consistent pitch efficacy which is what made guys like Greg Maddux as good as they were. Mechanical-Efficacy is about maintaining mechanical soundness (and pitch efficacy) despite fatigue later into outings. This requires grit. It is essential to make your mind make your body work.

It's important for you to be as well conditioned (and fit) as possible. The worst mistake that coaches from my era made/make is they issue conditioning as a form of punishment too much. This causes players to associate strength and conditioning with punishment/aversion. I condition my pitchers a lot, but I make sure to emphasize that it's for their benefit instead of just operating with a power trip. If you want to be the best, you've got to train like the best. They have to WANT to be the best. They have to be relentlessly driven to constantly master themselves and their craft. I want to work with players who love to play the game for its own sake. You have to want to be the best.

Here is my approach as a pitching coach in a nutshell:

Dynamic Warm Up – Coaches at the higher levels know that dynamic warm ups are the way to go before practice and competition and that static stretching is optimal for after training and competing. This is as it should be. Going through the dynamic warm up is the best way to prime your body to compete. Going through the routine is a reminder that you are going to make hitters look ridiculous.

Long Toss – Long Toss should start out with Mindful Catch (Garrido, 2012) because you are priming yourself to compete. Always have a purpose when you are playing catch. My view on Long Toss is that you should progress to as far as you can as long as you can reach your partner with the ball staying 30 feet or lower. You release the ball OUT FRONT when you throw off the mound so it makes sense that you should always release OUT FRONT when you play catch for the sake of consistency. Long Toss should start out where you throw the ball at around 70-75 percent effort or so while you progress to as far as you [can. Throw 15 to 20 throws from the furthest distance](#). Once you get to the furthest point and start to progress back in, that is the time to throw at 85+ percent effort. On the way out, you are building tension and on the way back in you are releasing tension. Some other helpful tips on Long Toss are a reminder to vary the work load just like with pitching. The intensity of your Long Toss session on each particular day should fit well with when you are scheduled to pitch and/or throw a bullpen. As always, pay attention to how you feel and maintain quality throwing mechanics (and arm angle) during Long Toss. After you get back in to 60 (or 45) feet, that is when you can work on developing all of your pitches with the 21 spot game/working a flat pen etc

Conditioning- I'll usually have starters run for an hour the day after a start (sprint work immediately after the outing). It's good for blood flow and activation. They can go on the run on the same day if they want. Relievers often do sprint work the next day like the classic jog-sprint-jog poles (8 to 14 depending). Starters and relievers do a blend of the two (and some plyometrics/core work) depending on when their next outing is supposed to be. I'm big on running and plyometrics for its own sake so pitchers learn to see the value (and purpose) in it. I actually have a systematic

schedule and routine for pitchers that is similar to what they use in pro ball. It can (as always) be customized.

Resistance Bands With Handles (Only) – To be done before going through your dynamic warm up and playing long toss. Also to be done after bullpens and live outings. Great for activation, flexibility and durability. I recommend MARV Bands and they can be purchased at Dick’s Sporting Goods. More info at www.marvtraining.com

I’s, T’s and Y’s- These exercises are a rotator cuff strengthening regimen that can be found online. I prefer to give pitchers options and flexibility while maintaining the efficacy of what we are trying to accomplish. Pitchers can go through two (or 3) more sets of the resistance band routine after an outing if they prefer. Look up “Jobe Exercises” online and you will find plenty of resources.

ArmCare.com – Do yourself a favor and invest in the scanner along with the exercise equipment. It will help you develop more velocity and significantly reduce the likelihood of injury. How much money would you invest if you knew you were going to gain velocity and improve your longevity? That can lead to more money in your pocket in the future. Be sure to use my coupon code: **ballgame10**

Strength Training – Strength training during season is about maintenance. The sets (2 to 3) should consist of at least 12 to 15 repetitions (neuro-recruitment of fibers) typically. There should also be an emphasis on flexibility, activation and range of motion. It’s also great to mix in plyometrics and med ball work (Clark, 2018). In the off season, pitchers wishing to add muscle mass (hypertrophy) should do 3 to 5 sets of 6 reps with 80-90 percent of one rep max. I recommend heavy lifting (sets of 5 reps) with

the lower half and light to moderate weight (sets of 12 to 15 reps). As always, use a spotter and avoid overhead presses of any kind. It's useful to mix in med ball and plyometric work to maintain an emphasis on power. Do yourself a favor and go see Nick Kern at Futures Training Center.

Daily Routine

The most important component to consistent peak performance comes from having a systematic routine. It's all about having a consistent and systematic routine before and after you pitch (and before each pitch as was discussed in the PRESENCE chapter). If you look at the best pitching coaches in college baseball, you will notice that they are all very systematic in the way they go about each day at the field.

I will offer up a template that will take you to the next level.

Pre Outing/Bullpen Routine

Whether you are preparing for a game or getting warmed up at practice, it does not make a difference. Your approach and level of INTENT should be the same. Remember, it's always important.

1. Resistance Band Routine – 1 set of 20 reps (And/or Body Blade exercises)
2. Dynamic Warm Up.
3. Mindful Catch/Quality Long Toss/Flat Ground.

Bullpen or Outing. Etc

Post Outing/Bullpen Routine

This is arguably the most important aspect that is missing from a lot of pitchers' daily routines. This is a key to

increasing longevity and durability while minimizing the likelihood of injury.

1. Resistance Band Exercises – 2/3 sets of 20 reps.
2. Jobses – 2/3 sets of 20 (I's, T's and Y's).
3. 10 – 60 yard dashes.
4. 2 sets of 20 lunge or squat jumps.
5. Planks – 3 sets of 1 minute or 1 set of 5 + minutes.
6. Stim (if available) for 20 minutes. Marc Pro is an excellent choice and you don't have to ice. You can keep it on for as long as you want and it won't overstimulate your muscles like a traditional stim device. It's used by most of the MLB organizations and major D1 programs. Be sure to use my coupon code: **BALLGAME10**
7. Performance Journal (Kopp, 2021) – Every time you throw off a mound, journal for at least 10 minutes about your experience and insights. You will gain new levels of awareness on the mental side and proprioception (awareness of your movement).

A lot of volleyball players really like Cryo Therapy for recovery from working out and competing.

The reason why all of those steps are so crucial is because they increase blood flow which gets the lactic acid out of your arm. The Jobe exercises also break down the tissue so it comes back stronger. It's also a full body work out.

As I write this, Tom House (He's a legendary pitching coach) posted a great tweet on routines as they apply to professional pitchers. Tom states that it is important to have routines throughout the day beyond just before and after outings (and pitches). We are going to cover everything he listed so you can build your own set of routines to set

yourself up for success. I will start by sharing the pre and post outing routine for pitchers to give you an idea.

Here are Tom House's (2021) suggestions:

Sleep: What is your routine prior to going to bed? The meditation and imagery routine in the PRESENCE chapter are a great place to start. You don't have to wake up at 5am or go to bed at 8pm. I recommend going to bed and waking up at times that help you maximize your productivity. Find times that make sense for you.

Nutrition: If you're eating off the dollar menu at McDonald's, you are not taking your craft seriously. It's ok to go out for beer (or tequila shots) and chicken wings with your teammates periodically, but try to make choices that are going to give you the fuel you need. Try to eat smaller portions 5 to 6 times a day. Lean meats (unless you're a Vegan), fruit and vegetables and Quinoa are always good choices. Try to plan out when you are going to eat each day of the week ahead of time. Be sure to give yourself windows for cheat meals.

Supplements: Regardless of how many fruits and vegetables you eat a day, the best supplement available is Juice Plus. Juice Plus contains over 30 raw fruits and vegetables in a capsule (or gummy). It is NSF certified (guaranteed to be free of banned substances) and it is backed by close to 40 studies published in peer reviewed medical journals. The research consistently shows that Juice Plus boosts the immune system, reduces systemic inflammation (from training and competing) and that it improves cardiovascular functioning (among other great things). www.timnolan.juiceplus.com Team USA Volleyball takes Juice Plus and so do a number of MLB organizations.

Other supplements that can help you recover and increase performance are:

Juice Plus Luminat – Juice Plus just released a cognitive booster called Luminat. It contains nootropics and adaptogens. It is engineered to give you a cognitive boost so you can increase your focus and productivity. Stack it with your favorite energy drink before an outing and you'll notice the difference.

Kre Alkalyn EFX – It is the best form of creatine monohydrate available. No loading or cycling and the results are impressive. This is a great product for building muscle mass, endurance and for recovery. It's also very affordable and free of banned substances. Olympians can take it. Make sure you hydrate adequately (A gallon of water a day). Best to be taken before and after training sessions. Make sure you have a routine to help you maintain range of motion and flexibility to go with your strength training regimen.

Pre Workout - There are a lot of brands out there, you ultimately want to make sure the one you choose is NSF certified. NSF certification means it is tested to be free of banned substances. A lot of pitchers like to take Pre Workout before they pitch. As with Kre Alkalyn, make sure to hydrate. The Rock has an outstanding Pre Work Out called Zoa. It is on the NSF list so it is guaranteed not to have any banned substances. It tastes great and gets you dialed in to crush your work outs. Use discount code:
TARA20

Vitamin B12 - The sublingual form of B12 is the best. Make sure the active ingredient is "methylcobalamin". It's great for energy production.

Protein - Like with the Pre Workout, you want to make sure your protein powder is NSF certified. It's also important that it tastes good. It's also great if the protein powder contains essential amino acids like glutamine which is great for recovery. Protein drinks are best consumed after training (and games). A trick I learned in college is to add a scoop of protein powder to Gatorade during a workout. The carbohydrates transport the nutrients into your muscles.

The Catabolic Period: There's a 45 minute window after your workout where your muscles are most receptive to absorbing nutrients to aid in recovery. It is best to mix protein powder with a carbohydrate source like Gatorade to optimize absorption.

Energy Drinks - A lot of athletes like energy drinks. If you are going to drink them, try to opt for the ones that have a lower sugar content. Bang, Monster Lo Carb and Zoa Energy are all great.

Hydration: A gallon of water a day is a good way to go. If you are in hot and/or humid weather, then you may need to drink even more water. Drinking enough water helps flush out toxins and it regulates your body temperature. When can you designate time to adequately hydrate throughout the day?

Workouts: In season, your primary emphasis in the weight room should be on maintenance. 2 to 3 sets of 15 to 20 reps (light to moderate weight) is good. Regardless of the training phase you are in, plyometrics (especially multiplanar plyometrics) are always great to add to a training session. During the off season (depending on your unique goals), hypertrophy and/or maximal strength (Clark, 2018) can help. Hypertrophy is where you are actively trying to

build muscle mass. If hypertrophy is your goal, then 4 to 7 sets of 6 to 8 reps (heavy weights) will do the trick. As always, be sure to include a regimen that emphasizes flexibility and range of motion during the cool down phase of each training session.

Here's a sample of a training session format to keep in mind:

1. Resistance Bands (Marv Bands)
2. Dynamic Warm Up
3. Weights - According to which training phase you are in.
4. Plyometrics
5. Speed and Agility
6. Cool Down - Range of motion regimen and flexibility (Static stretching).

Drills: For pitchers, this involves dry work/towel drill along with using the King (or Queen) of the Hill training device to optimize INTENT with the lower half. It also refers to PFP's (pitcher's fielding practice), pick off drills and working on feel for various pitches during flat or regular bullpens. As Chuck Norris (1996) says, you want to do what you can to "Complete the Wheel". Completing the Wheel is where you do what you can to master all of the various strategic, kinetic and psychological components of your craft. How can you work towards Completing the Wheel in your given sport and position? When can you devote time to working on your skills?

Reading: Tony Robbins (1992) says, "Leaders are readers". Reading helps you expand your awareness and it can help you be more well-rounded. The sources in the

References chapter of this book is a great place to start. Ultimately, you want to read books and articles that are going to somehow add value to your craft.

Meditation: I talk about this in the PRESENCE chapter, but it is an essential part of your daily routine. How can you set aside a half hour in the morning and before you go to bed to get your meditation/visualization in?

Performance Journal: I teach pitchers to write in their Performance Journal after every time they throw off a mound. This is great for increasing awareness of the mental side and proprioception. So too, I recommend that you write in your Performance Journal after each game with the 5 Mental Tools in mind. You can also write in the journal after a meditation/visualization session if you have any flashes of insight that can make you better.

Social Media: Building a social media presence will help you build your unique brand and it can help you get to the next level if you post quality video footage of yourself getting after it in games. Be smart about what you post and when. Try to only post something that is going to add value and help you accomplish your goals.

With these components in mind, simply put together a daily routine that incorporates all of them. Make sure to give yourself some flexibility. Time Management is important, but if you over-schedule yourself, you won't leave yourself any room to be spontaneous and enjoy life. Make sure you give yourself room to enjoy life.

Resources for Strengthening COMMAND

Goal Mapping

My uncle Darrell (2013) is very successful and he rides his bike 60+ miles a day in his 70s. My aunt Debbie is pretty awesome as well. At a family party, I was drinking beer and my uncle Darrell sat down at the table to share one of his key secrets to his success. *He said you need to begin with the primary goal in mind and then work backwards to the present.* This is called Backwards Goal Mapping. He said you want to determine the relevant steps you need to take in order to bring the goal to fruition. How many calls a day and to whom do you need to make? What concrete actionable steps do you need to take to reach your goal? *Map it out and get after it.* His advice is a key reason why I have been able to write quality books on the mental side of sports. I start with the primary blueprint (5 Mental Tools) and then list out the sub-skills (codes). Once I have the blueprint drawn out, I just start writing until it comes to fruition.

Goal Mapping is crucial for elite performance. You want to have Distal (long term) goals, Proximal (short term) and pitch by pitch/play by play goals (Bandura, 1997; Vealey, 2005). Ken Ravizza (2016) writes about how a **season** is made up of: **Game + Game + Game + Game.... A game is made up of: Pitch + Pitch + Pitch + Pitch....** Having a goal for each season (Win the Cy Young Award. etc) is important, but how optimize your chances of reaching the goal? By having game by game and pitch by pitch/play by play goals. This is why the Pre Pitch/Play Routine is so important. Begin with the goal in mind and map it out. Only then can you merge representation with action.

Robin Vealey (2005) talks about SMART Goals and it's a useful template to keep in mind when setting goals.

SMART Goals

Specific - Cy Young Award.

Measurable - You are able to get concrete feedback as to whether or not you are in line to achieve it.

Attainable - It should challenge you but also be attainable.

Realistic - Reflective of what you are capable of (slightly beyond your current ability).

Time Bound - Give yourself a time frame to accomplish the goal.

Exercise: Backwards Goal Mapping

1. With the end goal in mind, what concrete actionable steps can you take to bring it to fruition?
2. What are your career, season, game and pitch by pitch?
3. How can you make them SMART Goals?

Time Management and Organization

The routine and goal mapping sections are intended to help you increase your Time Management and Organization skills. Effective time management and organization will help you tremendously. Remember, you don't want to schedule and plan everything, but you do want to include the components mentioned in the routine section. As I write this, a realtor friend of mine posted a sheet on Facebook with the caption "Productive AF" at the top. The man who is now her husband brought the sheet to their first date because he thought it was going to be a business meeting.

The sheet is awesome and I am going to share the template with you so you can be “Productive AF”.

The sheet has three primary columns: Things to Do, People to Contact and Things to Buy. Remember Backwards Goal Mapping? This will help you optimize that component. The “Things to Do” section includes all of the components we covered in the routines section. People to Contact also pertains to the social media component. Who can you reach out to that will help you accomplish your goals? You can easily buy a daily planner that gives you a lot of room to write out your daily objectives. You can also use your Performance Journal if that’s easier.

Having a daily planner is one of the best ways to become more organized and productive. Being organized applies to your laundry, room, car, bag and routines. (etc) The purpose is not to become OCD where everything has to be immaculate. It just helps with productivity and it says good things about you. An extension of this is dressing well and presenting yourself well. You don’t necessarily have to wear a suit or a dress, but it definitely puts you in a better state when you dress well. Joe Maddon’s (Verducci, 2017) general rule for his team’s dress code is, “*Wear whatever you think makes you look hot.*”

Exercise: Be Productive AF

1. How can you become Productive AF?
2. With the Goal Mapping and Routines in mind, how can you increase your productivity?
3. How can you become more organized and present yourself (even) better?
4. How can you make room for enjoying life?

Concentration

The Quantum Zeno Effect is where the relevant neurons (synaptic connections) are able to consistently fire and wire together as a result of sustained focus. Your sustained focus helps lock in the neural pathway(s) so “cobwebs can become cables”. This is why concentration is paramount to elite performance. You have got to maintain an intense one pitch or play at a time focus for the duration of each game. If you get distracted momentarily, simply go back to What’s Important Now just like during meditation. Harvey Dorfman (2016) has some great exercises on how you can increase your concentration skills. I will also mention other resources as well.

Exercise: Enhancing Concentration

1. Harvey Dorfman (2016) has a classic exercise called the “Concentration Grid”. The Concentration Grid is where you take a sheet of paper (graph paper is great) and make 100 squares (10 by 10 rows and columns) within a square. The next step is to randomly place numbers from 00 to 99 throughout the grid. You definitely want to make copies before going through the exercise. Your objective is to cross off each number from 00 to 99 nonstop. The better you get at it, the more you can challenge yourself by putting on music or a movie. After awhile, you can make a new grid and put the numbers elsewhere to further challenge yourself.
2. Harvey Dorfman (2016) also suggests to hang a key from a string. Hold the string between your fingers

- and dangle it with your arm resting at a 45 degree angle. Stare at the key and observe its movements.
3. You can also pick a sign or scoreboard at the field. Simply choose a letter or number to begin focusing on (the spot). Once you are locked in on the letter or number, then narrow your focus to a smaller spot within the spot.
 4. Neurofeedback - It is where they hook up electrodes to your head that measure brain waves. You basically play a video game by staring at the screen. If you are concentrating properly, the video game will progress. If you are not concentrating, the game will stop. It helps you rewire your brain so you can stay in the Zone. Simply do a Google search for facilities near you that offer the service. Some Universities may have it.
 5. Meditation/Visualization - Meditation and visualization will help you improve this skill tremendously as they both require sustained concentration. Relevant neural pathways will fire and wire together in rapid succession (Quantum Zeno Effect).

Mission

One thing I do really like about Ken Ravizza's (1995 & 2016) work is his emphasis on playing with a Mission. Playing on a mission is all about being in touch with your underlying purpose for playing the game in the first place. Mark Divine (2018) talks about BUDS training in *The Way of the SEAL*. He talks about the major attrition rate of SEAL candidates who don't make it through BUDS training and how the ones who do make it are characterized by having Intrinsic Motivation (A strong "Why"). They

also focus in terms of making it to breakfast each day and take things one rep at a time. In short, the SEAL candidates who make it are “On a Mission”. So too, you need to have your own mission as to why you play the game. This will add purpose to your training, practice and daily routines. It will also help you be Productive AF. Another excellent book on Self-Discipline efficacy is *Can't Hurt Me* by David Goggins. He teaches you how to challenge yourself and to “take souls”.

Exercise - On a Mission (Ravizza, 1995 & 2016)

1. Why do you play the game?
2. What do you love most about the game?
3. What kind of a player do you want to be remembered as?
4. What is the unique brand that you want to build as an athlete? Your agent and/or pr person can help you with this.

Decisions

In *Awaken the Giant Within*, Tony Robbins (1992) talks about how our consistent decisions ultimately shape our destiny. Remember, cobwebs turn into cables. This is why it is so important that you consistently make decisions that are going to help you achieve your goals. You always have a choice. Choose wisely. As Tim Grover (2014) succinctly puts it, *DECIDE, ACT, SUCCEED and REPEAT!* A “Cleaner” (the most driven competitor around) is never

satisfied with a victory. Sure, they may celebrate momentarily but they will quickly say, “*Done, Next.*”

Exercise - Good Decisions

1. What good decisions can you make that will help you be more likely to achieve your goals?
2. How can you get better at making good decisions?
3. How can you be more intentional where you *DECIDE, ACT, SUCCEED and REPEAT!*

Control Locality

I had a club baseball coach as a kid who was also the Head Coach at Fullerton College for a long time. Nick Fuscardo challenged me to make three lists: 1. Things that are within my control. 2. Things I can influence. 3. Things that are outside of my control. He probably learned this from Ken Ravizza (1995) as he was a faculty member at Cal State Fullerton which is right down the street from Fullerton College. A lot of issues athletes face often stem from focusing on things that are outside of their control. The efficacious athletes that Bandura (1997) talks about not only expect to perform well, but they also focus on controlling what is within their control. It is a crucial part of merging representation with action (Efficacy). Something else to consider is that sometimes what or who we choose not to control says a lot about us.

Exercise - What is Within Your Control

1. Like Nick Fuscardi, I am going to ask you to make three lists in your Performance Journal. What is within your control? What can you influence? What is outside of your control?
2. How can you be more proactive about controlling the factors that are within your control (attitude, routines, mental side, effort)?

Leadership

If you internalize the skills in this book, you will likely be referred to as an Impact Leader. An Impact Leader is respected and admired (also feared by the incompetent). Your teammates will wonder why you are so efficacious and productive AF. They will want to know your “secret”. It’s not a secret, they just need to read this book (and take my class). Impact Leadership is about the example that you set and what you model. If you present yourself well and you have consistent routines (along with a quality mindset), people are going to want to emulate you. The skills in this book are ultimately teaching you to lead by example. *You need to establish a standard of intolerance for anything that gets in the way of winning.* If you respect yourself, people are more likely to give you the respect you deserve. There may be some people in your life who don’t add a whole lot of value to you or your goals. This is why you want to audit your circle. Tim Grover (2014) talks a lot about this in *Relentless*.

Exercise - Impact Leadership

1. What steps can you take to lead by example and bring others up to your level? Michael Jordan (Grover, 2014) didn't dial his performance down so his teammates could look good, he inspired them to perform at their best at all times.
2. Audit Your Circle - Who adds value to your life and your goals? Who doesn't? Who are the "PHD's"?
3. How can you establish a standard of intolerance for anything that gets in the way of winning?

Character

One of my favorite quotes in *The Mental ABC's of Pitching* is where Harvey Dorfman (2016) states the following:

Put simply, people may be shaped; "character" must be formed. To the extent that each individual makes selections of what he defines as "right" and appropriate, and to the extent that he acts upon these selections, he develops his own "character". He is his own man, free of "impressions" that do not last, free of perceptions that do not matter (p. 49)

A major part of character is to "select" your core values that you abide by. My favorite band Pennywise (1991) states, "*Although the masses play host for all the rules, the only rules you should live by, they're made up by you.*" As a grad student at Concordia Irvine, we were taught the importance of having a Mission, Vision and set of Core Values. Brian Cain (2018) uses the acronym MVP which stands for Mission, Vision and Principles. It is essential that you have unique values that you live by. The mission section in this chapter is a great place to start. Your

vision (Goal Mapping) is characterized by the goals you want to accomplish and the type of athlete you want to be. If someone in your circle (leadership) detracts from your MVP, then you definitely want to re-evaluate things.

Exercise - Your MVP

1. What is your mission as a player? Your method of operation.
2. What is your vision as a player? The type of player you want to be and your unique brand.
3. What are your core principles that you abide by (like the 5 Mental Tools)?

The Mirror Technique

In *The Magic of Believing*, the author talks about two key techniques to manifesting your goals. The first one he talks about is taking 3 cars and writing your ultimate goal on each of them. Put one on your mirror, one in your car and carry one in your pocket. What is your ultimate goal as a pitcher? Do you want to win a Cy Young? Roloids award? MVP? Hall of Fame? A gold medal? Write it down.

The next thing you want to do is (twice a day), stand in front of a mirror and tell yourself you're the best pitcher in the world. Look yourself dead in the eye and say it over and over. It will make a lasting impression on your subconscious and you will perform accordingly. If you believe it works then it does. That is the secret.

Hitters Away Resources

Here's an Elicitation Question: *HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'RE A COCKY PRICK?*

The answer is indicated by how many quality performances you can quickly recall. That is the definition of Self-Efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

A Bonus Exercise to Help You Access and Strengthen the Relevant Neural Pathways:

On a separate sheet of paper, first write down the statement “All of the reasons why I am a cocky prick”. For 15 minutes straight, list all of the reasons why you are a cocky prick and you deserve to succeed.

Resources for Strengthening HITTERS AWAY

Optimism

A lot of D1 and professional athletes seem to exude positive energy. They smile and are generally happy to be playing the game they love. They emphasize Positivism (Dorfman, 2016) and do what they can to focus on what can help them accomplish their goals. They expect the best and focus on the good things in a situation. The wholesome attitude you see from these athletes is something that can be developed. People with positive and dynamic personalities are fun to be around. They also add a lot of value to their organization. Remember, your attitude is within your control and it is your responsibility to add value.

Seb Bailey (2014) and Marty Seligman (2006) talk about how this tendency towards Optimism increases productivity. Sales people at Metlife filled out a

questionnaire that measured their level of Optimism. They were then evaluated on how many sales they converted from their leads. The Optimists significantly outperformed the pessimists in converted sales. The pessimists were more realistic about their abilities and the low conversion rate. What they found is that the pessimists gave up sooner. The Optimists kept on making the calls to the people in their pipeline and thus converted more sales. Optimism pays if you want to “Always Be Closing” (Foley, 1992). I’m not sure Alec Baldwin’s character would be too happy with that news.

In Marty Seligman’s (2006) excellent book *Learned Optimism*, he discusses the contrast between Optimism and pessimism. Optimists view positive results and traits as being Permanent, Pervasive and Personal. Setbacks are viewed as Temporary, Specific and External. Moreover, positive attributes are viewed as Traits (Rosenthal, 2017) instead of states. I treat the 5 Mental Tools as Traits and the 5 Barriers as states. If you want to maximize your Optimism, the skills in this book will help you accomplish this.

Dan Pink (2013) has a useful suggestion on maintaining Optimism in his great book *To Sell is Human*. He talks about a concept called “Buoyancy”. Buoyancy has to do with the ratio of positive to negative thoughts and emotions you experience. Dan suggests the optimal ratio as being 5 to 1. You want to strive to have five positive thoughts/emotions for every one negative one. If you maintain a positive mood (Optimism), it will help you increase your performance in your sport. I saw a video of

Usain Bolt on LinkedIn at the Olympics. Before his race, he was smiling and giving fist bumps to the volunteers. He was happy to be there. It also says a lot about him that he was being nice to the volunteers.

Exercise – Optimism

1. How can you maintain a sense of Buoyancy?
2. How can you increase your Optimism?
3. What all are you grateful for?
4. What are the positive things in your life that you can focus on?

Passion

Elite pitchers are passionate about their sport. They dominate their sport and grow it as a result of their increased notoriety. If you want to compete at the highest level, it is essential that you have passion. Some people may detest this (pessimists), but that's only because you probably make them feel inadequate. Marcus Stroman posted a Tweet that reads, "*Confident people make unconfident people uncomfortable*". Michael Jordan never dialed back his ability so his teammates could look good. He brought them up to his level. The same was true with Kobe Bryant. The Mamba was concerned with scoring. That's what he was paid to do. MJ and Kobe were both very passionate about constantly improving so they could continue to dominate the NBA.

Exercise – Passion

1. What about your sport are you passionate about?
2. How can you maintain passion for your sport?
3. In what ways can you grow the game by dominating it?

Enactive Mastery

Nothing breeds success like success. A key part of developing and maintaining Efficacy is what Al Bandura (1997) calls Enactive Mastery. It is the accumulation of proximal successes. Every time you accomplish a goal, it is important to reinforce it to yourself. Celebrate inwardly and then move on to the next goal. This also applies to skill acquisition and performance. Every time you execute a quality play (etc), celebrate inwardly. You will give yourself momentum to succeed in the future. This is why Synaptic Pruning and Self-Directed Neuroplasticity work. The more successes you accumulate, the more you will turn cobwebs into cables.

Exercise – Celebrate Your Successes

1. What victories can you celebrate?
2. How can you be more intentional about inwardly reinforcing all positive executions in your sport?
3. How can you reward yourself after you achieve each goal?

Self-Image

An excellent book on this subject is *Psycho Cybernetics* by Maxwell Maltz (2015). The basic premise of the book is that you can't outperform your self-image. Maxwell Maltz was a premier plastic surgeon. He found that people would get various procedures done and they would still come back to him claiming to be "ugly". It was their self-image that was "ugly". This also applies to sports performance and he talks a lot about golf in the book. He started "prescribing" visualization exercises to clients and often talked himself out of surgery.

A key part of having a quality self-image that is consistent with elite performance is believing you deserve to succeed. There is a concept in psychology called "Imposter syndrome". It is the notion of many talented people that they might be revealed as not being as great as people think. It's part of having a fixed mindset. It is essential that you not only expect to succeed but that you also deserve to succeed. You deserve to date someone awesome. You deserve to be respected and to dominate the game. It is also important that you accept and approve of yourself. If you accept yourself, you won't care as much about the approval of others.

Exercise – Self-Image of Success

1. In your Performance Journal, write down 50 reasons why you deserve to succeed. These can be Traits as well as positive feedback from others that are line

with being successful. List them all in a row nonstop.

2. Write up a blue print (cognitive representation) of your ideal self-image. Who is the sort of person you want to be?
3. Use the Happy Place exercise and visualize yourself being the sort of person that you mapped out in step 2. The more you do this exercise, the more likely you will be to shape your self-image.

Expectancy

If you expect to perform well then you are more likely to do so. It also important that you desire the results along with expecting them. Why are baseball players so cocky? Because they expect to succeed. They have learned to celebrate their successes and use it as momentum to achieve future success. Elite performers trust the training they have put in and they expect to get the job done. This is a mindset that you can develop as well. My high school pitching coach was an ex pitcher from the Detroit Tigers organization. He used to always say, “You’ve got to be a cocky prick.” It’s absolutely essential if you want to thrive at the highest level.

Exercise – Being a Cocky Prick

1. How can you be more of a cocky prick?
2. Write down 50 reasons why you expect to succeed.

3. How can you help your teammates be cocky pricks?

Team Culture

Successful teams have what Al Bandura (1997) calls a strong “collective efficacy”. This simply means that the team culture consists of a group of cocky pricks that desire and expect to win. In *The Million Dollar Head*, I talk about the importance of drafting and trading for players who can contribute to a winning culture. Organizations that win on a consistent basis have a philosophy that emphasizes winning and development. As we discussed earlier, winning and development are not mutually exclusive (nor should they be).

Teams that win on a consistent basis have a standard of intolerance for anything that gets in the way of winning. The best coaches are able to get the players to hold each other accountable. This does not necessarily mean that star players need to “subjugate their personal interests for the sake of the team”. It is in the interest of the team for star players to pursue their interests. Phil Jackson wouldn’t have told Kobe or MJ to dial back their interests for the sake of the team. They were THE team. It was in the interest of the team for them to score as much as they possibly could.

In his great book *They Bled Blue*, Jason Turbow (2019) talks about the culture of the 1981 Dodgers that Tommy Lasorda (RIP) built. If one guy hit a home run, the next guy

would want to hit an upper decker. If a guy threw a shut out, the next guy wanted to throw a no hitter or perfect game. Jason sent me a Tweet that read, “*On great teams, intramural motivation is real.*” The players from the Bulls during the 1990’s put up phenomenal numbers as a result of Michael Jordan’s leadership. They couldn’t replicate their performance after leaving the Bulls because they no longer had MJ to lift them up. MJ shaped and defined the culture of winning. The documentary *The Last Dance* is instructive in this regard.

In college, I had a buddy who was on a D1 baseball team. I attended a party that was put on by the team. Their team culture was evident by the way the guys approached beer pong and flip cup. The emphasis was on constantly challenging each other to focus one toss or flip at a time. They were very proficient at modeling “Positivism”. They expressed things in terms of *what they wanted to do and how to do it*. At the time, I actually developed what would turn into the Pre Pitch Routine. I would actually visualize the ping pong ball going into the cup or the cup landing right side up on the first attempt. We constantly challenged players from other sports at the school and kept winning. It was a brilliant form of team building to emphasize collective efficacy.

Exercise – Team Culture

1. How can you shape and define a culture of winning?
2. How can you establish a standard of intolerance for anything that gets in the way of winning?

3. How can you hold yourself and your teammates accountable to stay dialed in with the winning culture?

Mastery Potential

In an unpublished manuscript (2014) titled *Mastery Potential*, I talk about being relentlessly driven to master (Pink, 2011) the craft of pitching. Greg Maddux (Dorfman, 2016) defined the success of each outing by the ratio of quality pitches he executed to the ones that weren't. If he had a good ratio, he was happy with the outing regardless of the actual outcome. I also discuss this theme in *The 5 Mental Tools of Volleyball*. The best players are driven to constantly master the game.

So too, I suggest that you constantly strive to master the mental side (skills in this book) as well as the physical/tactical (Complete the Wheel) components of your craft. True mastery is something that will constantly elude you. This is what will keep you engaged so you return to the field ready to get after it anew each day. Is it easy for you to dominate the game? You can become more engaged by setting more challenging goals for yourself. Always look for ways to be more efficient merging representation with action.

Exercise – Mastery

1. How can you set more challenging goals for yourself?

2. What components (mental and physical) of the game do you still have yet to master?
3. How can you maintain a constant pursuit of mastery?
4. How can you increase your efficiency?

“Pressure is a Privilege.”

The opening chapter of my book *The Way of the Closer* is the quote from Tim Grover (2015). During an interview with Tai Lopez about his book *Relentless*, Tim said, “Pressure is a privilege.” As a former Closer, I can attest to this mindset. The coach used to put me in games to face the 4, 5 and 6 hitters with runners on base in tight games. People used to ask if I was bothered that coach would put me in those situations. I would reply that I loved being in those game situations. I converted all 7 Saves in the 7 opportunities I had.

Your coach wouldn’t throw you to the wolves if they didn’t think YOU are a wolf. The skills in this book will help you be the Big Bad Wolf. Howl inwardly while reciting your mantra if you want. A lot if it has to do with your appraisal and perception. The only real pressure you should feel is the pressure you put on yourself. It is all about being relentlessly driven to win. This is accomplished by focusing on your performance one pitch or play at a time.

Exercise – “Pressure is a Privilege.”

1. How can you put pressure on yourself to succeed on an even greater level?
2. What are some goals that can really stretch your ability?
3. How can you stay dialed in one pitch or play at a time regardless of the game situation?

In the Zone

Why does Ken Ravizza (1995 & 2016) talk about how the Zone is something that “only happens so often”? That’s because he doesn’t teach a consistent strategy on how to get and stay in the Zone. The 5 Mental Tools represent the very fabric of the Zone. The sub-skills within each of the 5 Mental Tools will help you consistently think and focus in ways that will help you stay dialed in one pitch or play at a time.

As was promised, I am going to teach you a technique that will help you access the Zone nearly anytime you want. Remember State Dependent Learning, Hebb’s Law and the Quantum Zeno Effect? We are going to get you to access the Zone State and cause it to wire with a given gesture or focal point. It’s a technique I learned from Tony Robbins (1997) called “Anchoring”. It is where you intentionally teach yourself to associate a given state with a relevant cue.

Exercise – The Zone Anchor

1. First determine if you are a visual, auditory or kinesthetic learner.
2. If you are a visual or auditory learner, then you will want to pick a physical cue/gesture (like making a fist or pressing your thumb and middle finger together). If you are a kinesthetic learner, you will want to pick a focal cue (something to stare at that you will have during games).
3. Remember the Happy Place exercise? You are going to go to your Happy Place, except you are going to magnify the physiological state of being in the Zone. Feel what you would feel, see what you would see and hear what you would hear. Etc Make sure the feeling is a 10 out of 10. A mantra can be used to magnify this aspect and direct your intention.
4. While going to your Happy Place and magnifying the state, either use your gesture (make a fist. Etc) or stare at your chosen focal point depending on your learning style.
5. Go to your Happy Place while holding the gesture or focal cue for 5 to 20 minutes.
6. After the time has elapsed, let go of the gesture or stop staring and wait for 30 seconds.
7. After 30 seconds has elapsed, use your gesture or focal cue and see what happens.

You can now access your Zone state nearly anytime you want during games just by using the gesture or focal cue. The more you do steps 3 through 7, the stronger the synaptic connections will be in your brain. It will become

easier and easier to access your Zone state as a result (the Quantum Zeno Effect).

Chapter 6: Uncommon Sense

“Uncommon sense...because winning is definitely uncommon.” Tim Grover wrote those words in his recent book *Winning*. My assumption throughout this whole book is that you are relentlessly driven to win and that you want to teach pitchers how to win. If winning isn't the most important thing to you, you are not going to get far with my material. You are cheating the spirit of the thing itself and it will expose you. Miyamoto Musashi detested anyone who wasn't committed to the cultivation of warrior consciousness. That is why my work for pitchers is called *Pitcher Consciousness 5.0*.

Pitcher Consciousness is the true manifestation of the spirit of the thing itself (Intent). Pitcher Consciousness is the resolute belief that the pitcher can send hitters back to the dugout where they came from. As they think and believe, so they will pitch. As you think and believe, so you will coach. The pitchers are ultimately a reflection of you and your coaching. Remember, what you expect of your pitchers is a reflection of what you expect of yourself. If you expect pitchers to send hitters back to the dugout then they will. If you expect to win, then you are more likely to do so.

Pitcher Consciousness really is a state of mind. Also, notice that it contains the word Consciousness. The presupposition is that pitchers have consciousness. [It all starts with the way they think and believe. That is why I have equipped you with cognitive reframing exercises and cognitive](#)

[exercises to do in their journal. It's all geared toward unlocking higher levels of efficacy. You are now equipped with the most comprehensive guide to coaching pitchers available.](#)

Now go out there and change as many lives as you can. Give yourself permission to be uncommon and teach your pitchers to be uncommon. Let the other “gurus” out there be basic. You’re not basic and neither are your pitchers. If you want to work with me, feel free to send me an email. Coachtimnolan@gmail.com

Chapter 7: Assessment

This is the same assessment from *Pitcher Consciousness 5.0*. Your pitchers can take the assessment and it will give you a general idea of where they are.

Here is an assessment that you can go through periodically to get a general idea of where you are on the mental side. All of the items are stated in the positive. Be honest with yourself when going through it and reviewing your results. Reading this book and going through the exercises will help you strengthen your future scores. Your current strengths and weaknesses in the 5 Mental Tools are your **Zone of Proximal Efficacy (ZPE – Vygotsky, 1978; Gunderson, 2014)**. Your Zone of Proximal Efficacy reflects your current development as it pertains to the mental side. With the application of Self-Directed Neuroplasticity (the mind's ability to rewire the brain), you can scaffold yourself to an elite level if you believe you can.

The PC-5 Questionnaire

For each of the following statements, please mark one of the following in your Performance Journal. Answer each statement as it applies to you currently during games/competitions: **NA (Never Applies)**, **SA (Sometimes Applies)** and **AP (Always Applies)**. **Simply mark the answer next to each number for the sake of efficiency.**

Please be as honest as possible. The purpose is to simply establish a baseline.

Section 1

1. I have a consistent Pre Pitch Routine:
2. I am able to effectively regulate my Self-Talk:
3. I regularly exude body language that says I'm a cocky prick:
4. I am able to slow the game down and focus one pitch at a time:
5. Regardless of what happens on the previous pitch, I am able to focus completely on the next one:
6. I have quality Self-Awareness of my Self-Talk, emotional and physiological state:
7. I breathe fully before each pitch:

Section 2

8. I consistently work ahead in counts:
9. I am a relentless competitor:
10. I throw every pitch with Intent:
11. I am motivated to do what it takes to win:
12. I maintain an intense task focus:
13. I am more focused on performance than on how others perceive me:
14. I strongly believe that my actions shape results:

Section 3

15. I am strong in the pitchability (what pitch to throw and when):
16. I am able to read hitters effectively on a pitch by pitch basis:
17. I am confident throwing any pitch anytime:

18. I am able to make necessary adjustments on a pitch by pitch basis:
19. I am a student of the game:
20. I have quality deception built into my delivery:
21. I am always looking for new ways to attack hitters:

Section 4

22. I have a Growth Mindset (belief you can improve with enough effort):
23. I can throw the ball where I intend on a consistent basis:
24. I am intrinsically motivated and play for love of the game:
25. I have effective time management and organization skills:
26. I am able to maintain intense one pitch at a time focus for the duration of each outing:
27. I have Impact character and am driven to add value to my organization/community:
28. I have a strong "Why" and pitch "On a Mission":

Section 5

29. I have fluid mechanics:
30. I expect to succeed at the highest level:
31. I deserve to succeed at the highest level:
32. I am a confident pitcher:
33. I am able to efficiently put HITTERS AWAY:
34. I compete with passion:
35. Every pitch and outing MEANS THE MOST:

ZPE Score:

Your Results

For every NA, give yourself 1 point.

For every SA, give yourself 2 points.

For every AP, give yourself 3 points.

Add up your points for each section and put the final number next to where it says “Section”.

You will have a score that ranges from 7 to 21 for each section.

17 to 21 is Elite.

12 to 16 is Adequate.

Anything below 12 needs significant work.

Once you have all of your scores for each of the five sections, simply add up all the scores. You will have a score out of 105. This is your Zone of Proximal Efficacy (ZPE).

99 to 105 is Elite.

90 to 98 is Great.

79 to 89 is Good.

70 to 78 is Adequate.

Anything below 70 needs significant work.

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