

**The Inner Winner:
Performance Psychology Tactics
That Give You an Unfair Advantage**

By
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MSc FinstSMM

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Dedication

To Mum and Dad with all my love.

To my wife Karen with all my love.
I admire and love you for (amongst many things)
your bravery and positive mental attitude.

To my son Thomas with all my love.
You remind me how a winner thinks
and behaves every single day.

And..

To Farrel Anthony
Going for Gold in Beijing
You Can If You Think You Can!

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It is an honour to be published by New Breed.

To Paul Clifton and Malcolm Martin
Thank you for giving my work a wider audience.

About the author

Simon Hazeldine is a professional speaker, consultant and author in the field of performance enhancement, the psychology of persuasion & influence, and the development of mental toughness.

Simon writes a monthly column on the psychology of performance in several magazines and is the author of four books:

- *"Bare Knuckle Selling"*
- *"Bare Knuckle Negotiating"*
- *"Bare Knuckle Customer Service"*
- *"The Inner Winner"*

Simon works internationally as a speaker, trainer, coach and facilitator. He has worked in numerous countries across four continents.

He has a Masters Degree in the psychology and management of performance and is Certified as a Master Practitioner and Trainer of NLP. He is also a Fellow of the Institute of Sales and Marketing Management and a member of the Professional Speakers Association.

Simon lives in the Leicestershire countryside with his wife and son. When he isn't "working" Simon enjoys running, the martial arts, and spending time with the two most important people in his life.

“The Inner Winner”

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Introduction

Congratulations on taking the decision to join a very special group of people. You have chosen to join the ever-growing group of people who understand that in order to be the very best that they can be, they **MUST** utilise the immense power of the human mind.

“The Inner Winner” contains proven performance psychology tactics that you can use to enhance your performance in sport, business and life in general! This book takes powerful psychological performance strategies and makes them easy to understand and use. There is no psychological “mumbo jumbo” – just hard hitting performance tactics that work.

All of the tactics contained within “The Inner Winner” are based upon proven scientific research. These powerful and proven psychological tactics can be easily learned and applied.

No matter what level of performance you are currently operating at, these psychological tactics can enhance it further. You can, and will, get a boost from the most powerful performance enhancer of all – **your mind**.

Today almost without exception, professional sportspeople and elite athletes train physically **AND** psychologically. More and more sports people are turning to mental training to get a competitive edge, and to ensure that they realise their full potential. However, the advantages that performance psychology tactics deliver are most certainly not confined to the world of sport.

The very same psychological strategies that elite sportspeople use; can easily be applied to business, sales, education and numerous other areas of your life.

“The Inner Winner” combines a comprehensive collection of established and proven psychological performance strategies with one of the most powerful fields of modern psychology - Neuro Linguistic Programming or as it is more commonly known “NLP”.

NLP has been described as “*the psychology of human excellence*”.

NLP provides:

1. Methods to discover the patterns of thinking and behaviour that produce excellence in any field. NLP enables the structure of these patterns of excellence to be identified and made available to other people. NLP allows us to work out exactly how someone who is excellent at some activity or skill produces this excellence and makes it possible to transfer this ability to other people.
2. Highly effective ways of thinking and communication that are used by outstanding people to produce outstanding results.

The phrase “Neuro Linguistic Programming” covers three very simple areas:

Neuro

This acknowledges the fundamental idea that all behaviour stems from our neurological processes of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and feeling. We experience our world through our five senses; we make “sense” of the information and then act upon it. Our neurology covers

not only our invisible thought processes, but also our visible physiological reactions to ideas and events. One simply reflects the other at the physical level. Your body and mind are not separate, but are an integrated system.

Linguistic

This acknowledges that we use language to order our thoughts and behaviour and to communicate with others. The language that we use, both with others and with ourselves has a powerful influence over our behaviour and therefore the results we achieve.

Programming

This refers to ways that we can choose to organize our ideas and actions to produce results. NLP provides us with an ability to organise our communication and neurological systems so that we can achieve specific results. We all have programmes or strategies that we operate on an ongoing basis, and NLP offers the opportunity (perhaps for the first time) to have a conscious awareness of what has previously been unconscious processing.

No matter what area of your life you wish to apply these performance psychology strategies to, “The Inner Winner” will assist you in achieving your full potential.

The field of psychology can seem daunting as it is often based upon complex theories. “The Inner Winner” will explain these concepts in simple language. You will not need a degree in psychology to understand them!

Although the psychological theories upon which they are based upon may appear complex, all of the hard work has been done for you! “The Inner Winner” will

make powerful psychological methods of performance enhancement easy to understand and use.

You will not only learn *what* to do, you will also learn *why* and *how* the various techniques and concepts work. This will be done in a very straightforward manner.

In this way your knowledge and skills will be built. I believe that it is very important that you understand the theories that lie behind the various critical performance psychology strategies *and* how to apply them in a practical manner.

By the time you have finished “The Inner Winner” I hope that you will have a good understanding of the power of the human mind and a brand new and powerful set of skills to transform your performance.

I wish you every success in your quest for excellence.

Simon Hazeldine BA (Hons), MSc, FInstSMM
Certified Master Practitioner and Trainer of NLP

Chapter One: **What are Performance Psychology Tactics and Why Are They Important?**

This book contains is a powerful series of psychological tactics that have been scientifically proven to enhance performance.

No matter what level of performance you are currently operating at in the various areas of your life, utilising performance psychology tactics can only enhance it further. You can, and will, get a boost from the most powerful performance enhancer of all – your mind.

Almost without exception, professional sportspeople and elite athletes train physically **AND** psychologically. More and more people are turning to psychological tactics to get a competitive edge.

As mentioned earlier, the benefits of performance psychology is not limited to the world of sport. Yes, you may wish to become a champion athlete. You can also become a champion in business achievement, a champion in educational achievement, a champion salesperson or a champion parent! Champions are people who excel. Champions focus their energy upon becoming exceptional. Don't sell yourself short – be a champion!

What does it take to be a champion?

The answer is relatively simple to describe but not so easy to achieve. It takes a lot of practise and a lot of hard work! However, there are many practical things you can do to build upon the efforts that you make.

One way of thinking about what it takes to be a success is a concept called “The Winner’s Triangle”.

The winner's triangle has three component elements:
Attitude, Skills and **Knowledge**.

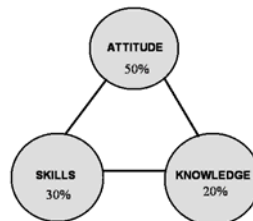
I often ask participants at my seminars to consider what makes a winner. I ask them to consider how much Attitude, Skills and Knowledge each contribute to making someone a winner. I then ask them how much, out of 100%, they would attribute to the element of attitude. The answer from my audience is nearly always the same – they believe that attitude accounts for 80% or more of winning.

Whilst I agree that attitude (or “the will to win” as it is sometimes described) is obviously important - attitude alone is just not enough.

In order to be a winner you need good knowledge of your chosen area and the skills required to succeed in it. I believe the percentages are more likely to be:

Attitude 50%
Skills 30%
Knowledge 20%

Figure 1:
The Winners Triangle



Attitude is, of course, vitally important. However, I stress, that on its own it is just not enough. As I joke with my seminar participants:

Question: "What do you get if you motivate an idiot?"
Answer: "A motivated idiot!"

In keeping with this concept, "The Inner Winner" will give you the knowledge about how and why the various performance psychology tactics work. You will also be shown how to develop the skills to apply this knowledge so that you can enhance your current performance. These elements will help you to further develop your winning attitude.

"The Inner Winner" is not a trite positive thinking book. We will be going much deeper than a shallow "rah rah" approach to motivation and performance!

Please do not misunderstand me; I am a great believer in "positive thinking". Adopting a positive mindset brings huge benefits. What I do not subscribe to is some of the rubbish that is spouted about positive attitude.

Some speakers and writers will have you believe that if you have a positive attitude that everything in life will be wonderful. This is naive and stupid. Life will invariably have its challenges and having a positive attitude will help you to deal with these challenges far better than a negative attitude. However, in order to thrive I believe much more than a "looking at the world through rose coloured glasses" approach is needed.

An analogy that I once heard, likened this naive positive attitude as being similar to walking into your

garden, seeing the weeds infesting the flower beds and pretending they weren't there. You can imagine the "positive thinker" avoiding looking at the weeds and chanting: "There are no weeds, there are no weeds!"

If you adopt this naïve attitude the weeds will take eventually overtake your garden! A practical and realistic positive attitude would acknowledge the presence of the weeds and then do something about them, such as digging them up!

I am sure you appreciate the difference. Having a positive mental attitude is important and recommended. This does not mean you do not acknowledge the challenges and problems that may occur. On the contrary, if they do occur, you do something about them and get them sorted out. This is a **PRACTICAL** and **POSITIVE** attitude.

With this concept in mind "The Inner Winner" will teach you a comprehensive and practical approach to performance psychology. "The Inner Winner" is not, and will never be, about naive optimism or impractical positive thinking.

You will be shown proven and practical ways to build and develop, for example, your mental toughness and focus. You will discover the difference that makes the difference.

You will learn practical ways to develop a well-founded, positive and winning bank of knowledge, skills and attitude.

Why you must use performance psychology

As mentioned previously, in recent years an increasing number of sportspeople have begun to realise

that in order to achieve their full potential, ***it is no longer enough to just train physically.***

I repeat: ***No matter how hard or how long you train, physical training on its own is no longer sufficient.*** Ever increasing numbers of athletes are turning to psychological training to give them an advantage.

And the world of business is catching on fast. My business consultancy, the E3 Group, specialises in enhancing the performance of salespeople. Part of the unique E3 Group approach is to always underpin our sales training with performance psychology tactics and strategies. Wise companies the world over are starting to look at the field of performance psychology to gain a competitive advantage. And wise individuals are exploring performance psychology so that they use it to benefit in countless areas of their life.

The roots of performance psychology lie in history. Early Greek and Asian cultures acknowledged and emphasized the interdependence of body and mind. It was seen as being central to improving not only performance, but playing a vital role in personal development in a broader sense.

As early as the 1920s, books were being published on the subject of sports psychology, and some of the first sports psychology laboratories were being established.

However, it was not until the 1960s that the area began to increase its prominence. During the height of Communism, Soviet and Eastern bloc athletes were observed to be winning a disproportionate number of medals in international and Olympic events.

The suspicion was that this was due to performance-enhancing drugs. What began to emerge was evidence that the psychological training of Soviet and Eastern bloc athletes far exceeded that of their Western counterparts.

From the 1960s and through the 70s, 80s and 90s, the area of psychological training and sports psychology developed and flourished. Now in the 21st century very few, if any, professional athletes do not have psychological aspects built into their training programme.

As discussed earlier, performance psychology can be used to gain a competitive advantage, for example, over other athletes in competitions and tournaments. It can also be used to powerfully support physical training. By training the body and the mind, significant performance advancements can be achieved.

Outside of the world of sport you can combine performance psychology with almost any other field of endeavour and get an enhanced result. For example, if you need to take an important exam you need to study. However, if you add some elements of performance psychology e.g. creating high levels of motivation to do the hours of required study, keeping in a calm state and maintaining a deep level of concentration throughout the exam, you will produce a better result. Once you have experienced the benefits of performance psychology you will find yourself utilising it in many ways, many times a day.

Performance psychology can also be used to improve your understanding and development of yourself.

This can enable you to realise more of your individual potential.

Performance psychology will undoubtedly have significant benefits in other areas of your personal life too.

For example, by the time you have read “The Inner Winner” and applied what you have learned:

- You will be a lot clearer and focussed on what you want to achieve in your life.
- You will understand the factors that motivate you to succeed.
- Your confidence in yourself and your abilities will have been enhanced
- You will know how to alter your beliefs about yourself and your abilities
- You will have more commitment and self discipline
- You will know how to put yourself into any state of mind you desire – within seconds
- Your concentration will have improved dramatically
- You will know how to cope with stress and tension
- You will be able to relax easily and quickly
- You will be able to use self-hypnosis to programme your mind for success

As mentioned earlier, this book goes far beyond what is commonly known as “positive thinking”. You will be shown how to develop a complete portfolio of performance psychology strategies that will support you in many areas of your life.

There are a number of core elements that make up performance psychology. This programme will enable you to identify and understand the specific psychological factors that can enable you to tap into more of your unique potential as a human being.

This collection of psychological strategies can empower you to enhance your personal performance.

By combining these together it is possible for you to achieve the ideal and sometimes elusive “**peak performance**” state.

What is Peak Performance?

Peak performance has been described as “behaviour that exceeds one’s average performance” or “an episode of superior functioning”.

Peak performance is about going beyond what you think is currently possible. It may not necessarily be about being better than other people. It is about being the ***very best that you can be***.

In the sporting world an experience of peak performance will often result in a “personal best” performance from an athlete. These experiences are the ultimate high, the thrilling moment that athletes work for in their pursuit of excellence.

According to research, peak performance is more likely to occur when an individual's skill level matches the demand or challenge of the situation. This is interesting as it suggests that peak performance can be attained at whatever level an individual is working at.

A study of athletes' "greatest moments" in sport reported that over 80% of the athletes surveyed had the following perceptions:

- A loss of fear – there was no fear of failure
- They were not thinking about their performance
- They were totally immersed in what they were doing
- They had a narrow focus of attention
- Their performance was effortless
- They felt in complete control
- There was some time and/or space distortion with time usually seeming to slow down
- The Universe appeared to be integrated and unified

Other athletes have described it as "being possessed yet in total control". They described participating in their sport with "profound intensity, total concentration and an enthusiasm that bordered on joy".

The following quotation summarises the unique peak performance state:

“I felt like I could do almost anything, as if I were in complete control. I really felt confident and positive. I felt physically very relaxed, but really energized and pumped up. I experienced virtually no anxiety or fear, and the whole experience was enjoyable. I experienced a very real sense of calmness and quiet inside, and everything just seemed to flow automatically. Even though I was hustling, it was all very effortless.”

The psychological tactics that you will learn in “The Inner Winner” will assist you in achieving this peak performance state – it can be experienced in many areas of life.

In order to do this, there are several core elements of performance psychology that we will be looking at in considerable detail.

These elements have been specifically selected as they have been identified by scientific research as being the traits that mean the difference between winners and losers.

Whilst most areas of life are not divided into such clearly defined divisions of ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ most people when asked would prefer to think of themselves as a winner! In addition the performance psychology strategies employed by winning athletes provide a rich vein of evidence to be explored.

If we study winners and work out what they do, we can then replicate what they do by copying their strategies.

The Core Elements of Performance Psychology

The research conducted into the psychological difference between winning and losing athletes, describes some very specific areas.

These areas are the “Core Elements of Performance Psychology” that we need to focus upon.

The core areas are:

1. Goal setting
2. Motivation
3. State Management
4. Concentration & Mental Focus
5. Confidence
6. Coping Strategies



You will be introduced to these areas in this chapter, and each of these areas will be covered in considerable detail in forthcoming chapters.

Goal Setting

Countless psychological studies have proved that properly set goals improve performance. A comprehensive review of over 100 psychological studies on goal setting concluded that “the beneficial effect of goal setting on task performance is one of the most robust and replicable findings in the psychological literature”. In other words ***goal setting works!***

Goals set specific targets that motivate people to take action by focussing attention, increasing effort and intensity and encouraging persistence in the face of failure.

A goal is something you want to accomplish. It is the object or aim of an action. Goals can also be set to achieve a specific standard of proficiency on a task, usually within a specified time limit.

Having specific goals will lead you to higher levels of performance than having no goals or “easy” goals or “do your best” goals.

Motivation

To state that elite athletes, for example, are highly motivated individuals could be considered a statement of the obvious! However, the subject of motivation is more complex than many people realise.

Maintaining motivation over the long period that is necessary for mastery in any field is an area worthy of further study, as is maintaining motivation in the face of setback, failure and defeat.

A variety of factors influence motivation and these can be both external (known as extrinsic by psychologists) and internal (known as intrinsic).

Some psychologists believe that motivation to improve performance develops out of dissatisfaction with your current performance levels. There is no doubt that dissatisfaction (sometimes referred to as “inspirational dissatisfaction”) can be a powerful motivator.

However, what is believed to be more effective motivation is evidence of your success. This is also described as positive reinforcement. If you become aware of your progress and how your training is paying off, your motivation should increase.

State Management

In order to perform certain tasks successfully, we need to be in the right “state of mind”. This concept of “state” can be a new one for some people. However, a brief explanation will demonstrate what this very important concept is.

By way of illustration, when people are emotionally or physically at a low ebb we say they are in “a bit of a state”.

State can be defined as the combination of all of the thoughts, emotions and physiology that we are experiencing and expressing at any one moment.

Elite athletes will be trained by sports psychologists to get themselves into an appropriate state of activation (readiness to perform) for the specific events in which they are participating.

Whilst activation may generally be thought of as “psyching up” or “psyching down”, this is an oversimplification. In order to achieve peak performance it is necessary to achieve an appropriate level of activation (known as optimum activation) for the specific task at hand.

There are a number of specific strategies and techniques that can be employed to achieve the desired

optimum activation states. These strategies will be discussed in greater depth in a later chapter.

Concentration & Mental Focus

Loss of concentration can impair performance, and maintaining concentration can be a problem for some individuals. It is very rare to find people who are not interested in increasing their powers of concentration and focus.

Concentration is about focusing the mind upon one thing, often to the exclusion of others. More importantly, the **focus of attention** is crucial in determining whether the concentration is appropriate or not.

Allowing all of your attention to be focussed on a recent failure in performance is unlikely to contribute to your performance improving. You get more of what you focus on. What is important is having the ability to focus attention on whatever is important. This ability can make significant improvements to your performance.

Coping Strategies

Let us not pull any punches – if you want to be a champion in any field then you need to learn to cope with adversity. The attainment of any significant and challenging goal will invariably expose you to hurdles, obstacles, set backs and stress. Indeed by committing yourself to any form of significant achievement in any field of endeavour then you are **choosing** to expose yourself to adversity and stress.

Stress can be defined as a state in which some demand is placed upon the individual, who is then required to react in some way to that demand. In its

simplest form, coping is the way individuals deal with these types of demands.

Elite performers generally seem able to control their anxiety, and generate an appropriate state that enables them to perform at their very best more of the time.

We will explore this area in detail and empower you with effective ways to cope with and thrive upon the demanding nature of achieving exceptional levels of performance.

Confidence

Confidence (or more specifically self-confidence) is a somewhat nebulous term. It is necessary to examine this concept in greater detail.

Confidence can be thought of as having belief and optimism in your own ability to perform well. Elite performers have higher levels of self-confidence.

Further research indicated that when in stressful situations, individuals low in self-confidence will tend to give up more readily and experience greater anxiety.

It is therefore vitally important to commit to improving in this area. Performance psychology can deliver very rapid improvements in self-confidence.

By the time you have finished reading “The Inner Winner” you will possess a good understanding of these six performance psychology factors – and much more besides.

It is said that “knowledge is power”. I disagree. It isn’t that knowledge isn’t important. It is important. It is one of the three component elements of “The Winner’s Triangle” discussed earlier. However, knowledge is only power *when* it is applied. If you want to benefit from the power of psychological training then you need to practise the techniques, tactics and strategies of performance psychology.

You cannot learn anything by reading a book – you have to practise! In the same way, you cannot learn how to harness the power of performance psychology simply by reading this book – you need to put what you learn into practise.

So please don’t just read this book, use it as a training guide and put what you learn into practise. Then you will be able to fully utilise the most powerful performance device in the known universe – your mind.