

# Valuable News

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**Valufacture Solutions** are Business Architects; professionals dedicated to the Art and Science of *execution excellence* that achieves results.

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*"Self-confidence is blind to failures and setbacks."*

## Driving Peak Performance: Developing Mental Toughness in Employees & Teams (Part 3)

In the last two editions of **Valuable News** we covered 7 of the 10 Steps to Mental Toughness and Peak Performance as outlined by Alan S. Goldberg in his book, "Sports Slump Busting."<sup>1</sup> In this edition, we will review the final 3 Steps and conclude with a comment on the importance of the 10 Steps in a business context.

The Steps so far:

- Step 1: Rule out non-mental causes
- Step 2: Establish self-control
- Step 3: Develop a championship focus

Step 4: Deal with fears

Step 5: Expect Success

Step 6: Develop Positive Images

Step 7: Set Performance Busting Goals

For a more detailed overview of each of these steps click on the March 2007 & July 2007 links of Valuable News.

### Step 8: Building Self-Confidence

Having a strong self-confidence will provide you with a solid basis for mental toughness. Goldberg suggests that this kind of

confidence is "*blind to failures and setbacks.*"<sup>2</sup> It ignores negativity and the so-called testimony of "experts" who say that all efforts will lead to failure.

Self-confidence can grow out of physical hardship, frustration and failure. All that a person needs to do is to recognize these situations for what they are, namely "*confidence-developing opportunities.*"<sup>3</sup> and seize them.

Goldberg argues that if you want to build self-confidence, you must start first with your physical preparation.

## 10 Steps to Mental Toughness & Peak Performance

"You can't develop the mind-set of a champion by cutting corners in training."<sup>4</sup> The only way that you can be fully prepared is to practice something over and over again until you **execute** it without thinking. There are no shortcuts to developing self-confidence. It requires hard work and part of that hard work requires that you:

- » Take responsibility for your training
- » Strengthen your weakness
- » Be consistent and stay focused
- » Work with a mentor or a coach who believes in you

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*"You can't develop the mind-set of a champion by cutting corners in training."*

### Step 9: Becoming Mentally Tough

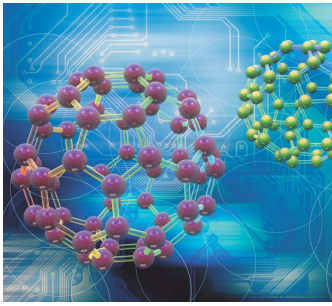
Mental toughness will help you to keep bouncing back up from your setbacks. Goldberg points out that to "*really enjoy the sweet taste of victory, you have to eat your share of bitterness.*"<sup>5</sup> The key is to learn how to handle failure and to put it to work for you. How you handle failure is determined by:

1. How you view failure
2. How you explain the failure to yourself

As Goldberg points out champions use failure as a valuable source of feedback.

Their failures become a reason to recommit to their goals and fuel their determination to succeed.

When things go badly, do not attempt to explain the situations away with generalizations. Rather, be specific and get to the heart of the reason for the setback. The more specific you can be in addressing that failure, the quicker you will rebound from it.



*“You need to recognize the early warning signs of performance-disrupting stress before it negatively affects your performance.”*

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## The Relationship between Stress and Performance

### Step 10: Insuring Against Future Slumps

The final step in developing mental toughness provides you with the base to:

- » Recognize the early-warning signs of performance-disrupting stress before it negatively affects your performance; and
- » Help you effectively and consistently control your level of physiological arousal

Goldberg repeatedly argues that performance-disrupting stress arises from continuously concentrating

on the uncontrollables. People who are mentally tough focus only on the things that they can control namely, themselves and their reactions to the uncontrollables. People who struggle tend to be preoccupied with what they can not control which in turn raises their anxiety levels and negatively impacts their performance.

There is a relationship between stress and performance. Performance improves with increasing levels of physiological arousal until it reaches a peak. At which point, any further increase in stress will

negatively impact performance. In order to maintain peak performance, there are two skills you will need to develop:

1. The ability to consciously or unconsciously *read* the kind of pre-performance nervousness you are experiencing
2. The ability to *change* your level of physiological arousal as needed.

You can read performance nervousness either through your feelings, your thoughts or your actions and you change your anxiety through changing your breathing, self-talk or goals.

## The Implications for Business

### Conclusion

So what are the implications for business? In the current business climate of 'doing more with less', it is becoming crucial that 'corporate athletes' operate at peak performance for longer and longer periods at a time. Today's employee moves from one project to another without coming up for air for months on end. For that to happen, they need to be mentally tough. The 10 Steps to Mental Toughness will help 'corporate athletes' achieve peak performance for longer periods of time.

In addition, it is crucial that managers are aware of the 10 Steps not only to enhance their own performance but because they need to know those factors that may be preventing their employees from achieving the results that their managers or leaders have promised.

1. 'Sports Slump Busting; 10 Steps to Mental Toughness and Peak Performance' Alan S. Goldberg; Llumina Press (2005); 2. Page 200; 3. Page 200; 4. Page 202; 5. Page 221

\* Author's Note: Of all the books that I have read on mental toughness, Alan S. Goldberg's book must rate as one of the best. Unfortunately, one can never do justice to a work by summarizing its contents. I would highly recommend that you purchase the book



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