MAMBA

MINDSET





THE MINDSET OF GREATNESS

GETTING THE RESULTS YOU WANT
AND GAINING MENTAL TOUGHNESS



If you think you are beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you like to win but you think you can't
it's almost a cinch you won't.
If you think you'll lose, you're lost.
For out in the world we find
success begins with a fellows will.
It's all in the state of mind.
If you think you are outclassed, you are.
You've got to think high to rise.
You've got to be sure of yourself
before you can ever win the prize.
Life's battles don't always go
to the stronger or faster man.
But sooner or later the man that wins
is the man who thinks he can.

C.W. LONGENECKER

Introduction

Mindset: an established set of attitudes and beliefs a person holds.

An individuals mindset is quickly becoming one of the most important components to leading a successful and happy life. You can have all of the money in the world, a ton of friends, and a great job, but if you're lacking a positive and forward-thinking mindset, you may be holding yourself back from reaching your true potential.

This guide was designed to help you understand what mindset really is, and how you can use it to your advantage to help reach not only your athletic and performance goals, but any goals you may have.

As an athlete, mindset plays a crucial part of your success. It can make you or it can break you depending on the choices you make. If you've ever heard of the expression "you are what you eat," what about this new way of looking at it of "you are what you think." Thoughts don't stop, and your body responds accordingly to what's in your head. So make sure your mindset is in a positive place.

In the next few sections, we're going to cover:

1. The two types of mindsets — fixed vs. growth
2. Mistakes and failures — why reframing and embracing them is important
3. Setting your goals — SMART goals and sports specific goals
4. Creating routines
5. Choosing your words carefully

Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

When it comes to mindset and problem solving, there are two categories that people generally fall into: a **fixed mindset** or a **growth mindset**. When faced with a challenge, the mindset you possess will determine how you handle it; your view determines everything. If you believe that a trait you possess — whether it's personality, intelligence, moral character, etc. — cannot be changed in any way, then you possess a fixed mindset, whereas if you see these qualities or traits as changeable, you possess a growth mindset.

Fixed mindset

An individual with a fixed mindset believes that we are born with a *fixed amount of intelligence and ability*. They are prone to avoiding challenges and failures, which means they limit their experiences and growth/learning opportunities.

Growth mindset

Individuals with a growth mindset believe that with practice, perseverance, and effort, people have unlimited potential to learn and grow. These people welcome challenges and are not concerned with making mistakes or being embarrassed. They embrace the process of growth and opportunities to learn. This leads to an athlete that is resilient and strives to constantly improve.
But it's not all about the athlete. Coaches and instructors also play a key role in

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(Brock, A., & Hundley, H. (2016). The growth mindset coach: A teachers month-by-month handbook for empowering students to achieve. Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press.)

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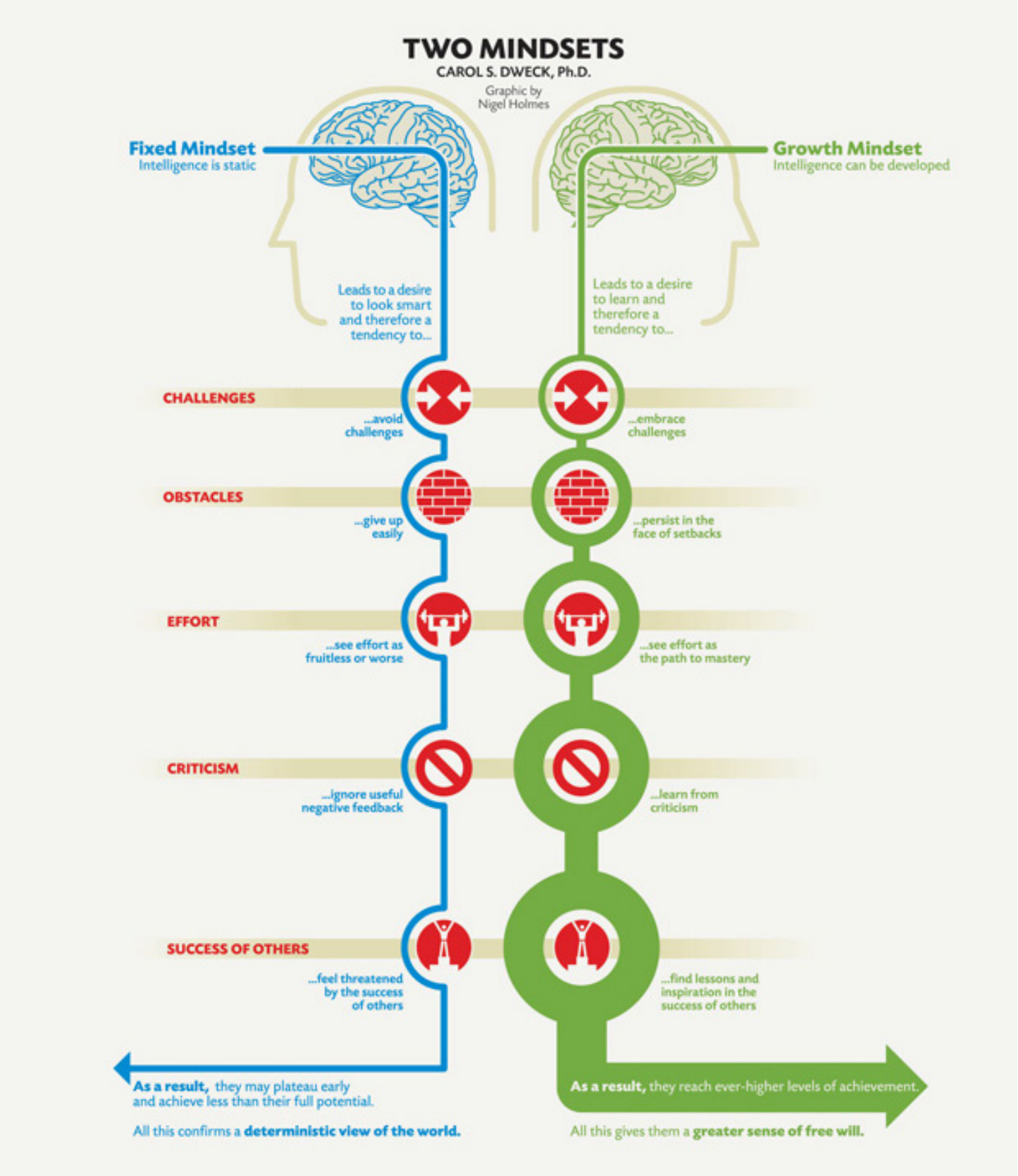
the mindset of their players. The environment in which you train can either make or break your experience. In order to thrive, coaches must create a supportive and positive environment that encourages their athletes to consistently push their limits to improve performance. This is opposed to an environment that constantly criticizes and uses negative language in an attempt to get their athletes to perform better.

Link on the image

Carol S. Dweck, author of the *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success,* shared a great infographic on the difference between a fixed and growth mindset and how we handle various situations based on which mindset you're in.



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SITUATION	FIXED MINDSET	GROWTH MINDSET
CHALLENGES	Challenges are avoided to maintain appearance of intelligence	Challenges are embraced, stemming from a desire to learn
OBSTACLES	Giving up in the face of obstacles and setbacks is a common response	Showing perseverance in the face of obstacles and setbacks is a common response
EFFORT	Having to try or put in effort is viewed as a negative; if you have to try, you're not very smart or talented	Doing hard work and putting in effort paves the path to achievement and success
CRITICISM	Negative feedback, regardless of how constructive it is, is ignored	Criticism provides important feedback that can aid in learning
SUCCESS OF OTHERS	Other people's success is viewed as a threat and evokes feelings of insecurity of vulnerability	Other people's success can be a source of inspiration and education

Answer the following questions to see if you fall into the fixed or growth mindset category. Check whichever answers apply to you. Chances are, you possess certain characteristics of both.

1 ____ There are some things that I will never be good at no matter how hard I try
2 ____ When I make a mistake, I try to learn from it
3 ____ When others do better than me, I feel threatened or jealous
4 ____ I enjoy getting out of my comfort zone
5 ____ When I show others my intelligence or talent, I feel successful
6 ____ I feel inspired by others' success
7 ____ I feel good when I can do something other's can't
8 ____ It's possible to change your intelligence
9 ____ You shouldn't try to be smart — you either are or you aren't
10 ____ I enjoy new challenges or tasks to which I am not familiar with.

The odd numbered questions (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) indicate a fixed mindset, while the even numbered questions (2, 4, 6, 8, 10) indicate a growth mindset. If you've checked off more of the fixed mindset questions, don't be hard on yourself. Recognition is the first step to making changes, and as the growth mindset instills, *change is possible*

Brock, A., & Hundley, H. (2016). The growth mindset coach: A teachers month-by-month handbook for empowering students to achieve. Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press.

Now, take a few minutes to reflect on yourself. What qualities of a fixed mindset do you possess? What qualities of a growth mindset do you possess?
Be as honest as you can.

Fixed Mindset

Growth Mindset

Reframe Mistakes and Failures

We all make mistakes, it's a fact of life. But for most people, making a mistake or failing at something is catastrophic. It can feel embarrassing, frustrating, and even downright intimidating, especially if you're worried about hearing it from someone else (parents, teacher, coach, etc.).

But how we look at and handle our mistakes is what differentiates us. As it turns out, making them could be one of the most effective ways for our brains to learn!

Improvement doesn't happen by avoiding mistakes or failure. When we make a mistake, it provides us with an opportunity to step back and assess the situation as to where we went wrong.

It's important to keep a couple points in mind:

- **Mistakes are bound to happen at some point or another**. If you're trying to avoid mistakes or failing at something, stop. Everyone does it and it's inevitable. Making a mistake, failing or simply not doing as well as you hoped on something doesn't mean you're unintelligent or inherently bad.
- **Mistakes and failures indicate that something isn't quite right — they provide clues for where you need to drive your focus**. Study your mistakes. Step back and look at failures to see where you went wrong. Mistakes and failures offer the gift of feedback.

So how do you embrace them?

Keep a positive attitude

Being hard on yourself is good at points, but when you make mistakes or fail at something, it's not the time to be overly critical. Use the experience as a chance to learn, keep your head up, know that you're perfectly capable of succeeding next time, and stay positive.

Reframe your goals

If something isn't working for you, change it. Shift your goals to include something that is new. If you stick to what you know or what you're good at, you're never going to be given an opportunity to learn. If you provide yourself with these opportunities, failing will never be an option because you will always receive something valuable.

Visualize any obstacles

You can't be prepared for everything. Challenges and obstacles that you won't expect may happen, so don't stress if they do. However, you may find it helpful to think about some of the obstacles you may encounter during your journey to prevent unwanted stress. If you have some ideas of where you may hit obstacles or roadblocks, you're

better able to prepare yourself to handle them. Further, visualize yourself succeeding through this situation despite facing the obstacles or challenges.

So next time you make a mistake or don't succeed as you would like at something, ask yourself these questions:

1. What did I learn from this situation?
2. How can I use this situation or experience to grow in the future?
3. What positives can I take away from this situation or experience?

Reframing how you think about mistakes and failures will be challenging. You may be resistant to it at first, but if you stick with these exercises, you're able to shift your mindset to see them as opportunities for learning and growth in order to improve and succeed in the future.

Think about a time you weren't successful at something, or something didn't go quite as you planned — this may be in your training regimen, performance or competition, or simply your nutrition. How did you feel? While you may have been upset, angry, or frustrated, try changing your viewpoint on the situation. Think about that moment or situation and answer the above three questions.

What did I learn from this situation?

How can I use this situation or experience to grow in the future?

What positives can I take away from this situation or experience?

Setting Your Goals

As an athlete, and even otherwise, goal setting is important. It provides you with something to work towards — whether that is losing body fat, gaining muscle, improving your speed and agility, or improving your cardiorespiratory function — and keeps you grounded and focused at the same time.

No matter what the goal in mind is, writing them down, tracking progress, and assessing is an excellent strategy to maintain consistency and achieve your goals. But goal setting isn't as simple as just picking an end-point and going forward. Thinking and planning helps to improve the process, as well as the outcome.

A good starting point for goal setting is to use the SMART principle:

S - Specific

The more specific you are with your goal, the more likely you are to achieve it. For example, if your goal is to lose weight, you will want to choose an appropriate weight loss goal that fits with your lifestyle and timeline. Or if you're training for baseball and you would like to improve your throw mechanics, hone in on which aspect you would like to work on. As an example, focus on bending at the knees during each trial.

M - Measurable

How will you determine if you've achieved your goal? If there isn't some sort of objective measurement associated with your goal, it may be difficult to know if you've achieved it or not. For example, if your goal is to increase your 1 rep max. on a bench press, it is wise to determine your current 1RM and then increase by a certain percentage to determine the new 1RM.

A - Attainable

Pick a goal that's attainable for you. Don't choose a goal because your competitor or friend chose it. Everyone has different skillsets, strengths, and areas for improvement, so pick a goal that you can achieve for you as an individual.

R - Realistic

Being unrealistic about goals is probably the number one reason why people don't achieve them. Your current goal doesn't have to be the end-game. Set a goal that is realistic for your current situation (stress levels, work, family, etc.) and adjust as needed. Nothing says you can only have *one* goal. As you achieve each one you set, gradually increase the next one so maybe it's a little bit more challenging to achieve.

T - Timely

You'll want to set a timeline to achieve your goal that isn't too soon or too far away. If the time period to which you want to achieve this goal is either of the aforementioned options, sticking to your plan becomes difficult.

With sports psychology and goals catered towards athletes, we also talk about three specific *types* of goals:

Link for below information

1. Process goals
2. Performance goals
3. Outcome goals

Process Goals

These are execution goals that are actually part of the training process, and are necessary in order to improve your athletic performance. They should focus on training, eating, and recovery to fuel maximum performance.

Performance Goals

Performance goals are those that track improvement in your training. They serve as benchmarks to see where you're doing well and where there is room for growth.

Outcome Goals

Outcome goals look more at the big picture. They are the result of both process and performance goals and indicate success. This is the 'eye on the prize' area.

As an athlete, it's incredibly important that when setting goals for yourself and your performance, you include all three. However, they aren't all equal.

We tend to favour process goals a little more due to their ability to drive improvement. You can make all of the goals you want, but if you don't *show up and put in the work,* you're never going to improve. That's the basis of process goals. So in order to excel in whatever area you desire, process goals are crucial to implement. That's not to say that performance and outcome goals aren't important, however.

Performance goals keep you on track. It's great to set a process goal, but how do you know if you're getting closer to achieving it? Performance goals. They allow you to step back and assess your situation. If something isn't going as planned, this is where you can tweak your process goals to ensure they are well-constructed. They almost work hand-in-hand with process goals in that when you are achieving your process goals, you should be able to flow into performance goals relatively smoothly. Remember, however, that performance goals should be realistic, challenging, and attainable for *you*.

Outcome goals are important, but lesser so than process and performance goals. If your performance goals aren't where you want and where they should be, the outcome isn't going to be there either. In order to achieve your outcome goals, you have to talk the talk and walk the walk. If you are excelling in both process and performance goals, your outcome goals should come naturally. But why are outcome goals important? First, they put into perspective your final goal; they align your

training and serve as a structure for your process and performance goals. Second, they serve as a good source of motivation for your training. When you have a vision of what you want, getting yourself there (via process and performance goals) becomes that much easier.

It's time for you to take a look at your current training situation and set some goals for yourself.

What is working positively for you now? What areas are you excelling in? What areas do you need growth in?

Below, we have provided a few prompt questions to get you thinking about your goals. Once you've decided on a goal (or two, or three), then go ahead and break that *one goal* into a process goal, performance goal, and outcome goal.



GOAL #1

Why do I want to achieve this goal? How will it impact my life (athletic performance)?

What is my timeline for this goal?

How will I stay on track to achieve this goal?

What tools do I need to achieve this goal?

What actionable steps will I take to achieve this goal?

What steps will I take daily to achieve this goal?

Weekly?

How will I reward myself when I achieve this goal?

GOAL #1

Process goal(s):

Performance goal(s):

Outcome goal(s):

GOAL #2

Why do I want to achieve this goal? How will it impact my life (athletic performance)?

What is my timeline for this goal?

How will I stay on track to achieve this goal?

What tools do I need to achieve this goal?

What actionable steps will I take to achieve this goal?

What steps will I take daily to achieve this goal?

Weekly?

How will I reward myself when I achieve this goal?

GOAL #2

Process goal(s):

Performance goal(s):

Outcome goal(s):

GOAL #3

Why do I want to achieve this goal? How will it impact my life (athletic performance)?

What is my timeline for this goal?

How will I stay on track to achieve this goal?

What tools do I need to achieve this goal?

What actionable steps will I take to achieve this goal?

What steps will I take daily to achieve this goal?

Weekly?

How will I reward myself when I achieve this goal?

GOAL #3

Process goal(s):

Performance goal(s):

Outcome goal(s):

Create a Routine

Creating a routine is one of the most important parts of athletic training to allow for improvement in training and performance. Doing so ensures the athlete is completely prepared in their efforts and enables them to be physically, technically, mentally, and tactically ready in their performance.

By creating a routine for your training, you prepare yourself to control and prepare yourself in every aspect of your sport; the equipment, your body, and the mind are all ready to perform at their highest. After all, the only thing an athlete can actually control is themselves.

Routines help to make things more predictable by covering virtually all aspects that influence performance. It doesn't take out the risk of chance or unexpected events, but routines help to minimize these by being prepared, both mentally and physically, and taking away the 'surprise factor' that isn't always pleasant. In doing so, you stay more focused and relaxed.

Here are a few more reasons why routines are important to athletic performance:

1. **Helps to calm the mind and body**
   Performance is stressful. Competitions are stressful. Pressure is never ending when you're an athlete. But establishing a routine, whether pre-competition or everyday, helps us to centre ourselves and bring us back to a positive place when things seem chaotic. It brings us back to something we 'know' and takes the focus away from the negative feelings that may be overwhelming in times of pressure, and allows us to calm the body and mind and prepare for what's ahead.

2. **Increases focus**
   Focus is key for athletes. Regardless of what's going on outside of the sport, athletes have to be able to focus on the task at hand and put all external distractions aside. Having a routine that you perform regularly helps both mentally and physically to get you in the zone and be prepared.

3. **Allows for control in uncontrollable situations**
   In sports, there are many variables that an athlete can't control. Besides being able to control yourself (attitude, communication, effort, etc.), you can also control your routine.

You may not know where you're playing or competing, how the weather is, how the day is going to go, but if you can control the routine to which you practice, you've got one thing under your belt. That is, planning out your day from wake up to warm up to post-performance will help to ease the mind and make situations easier.

4 **Trains the body for what to expect**
The body learns quickly. If you are consistent with specific training designed to perform at your best, your body will recognize that. The same applies to your routine. If you consistently perform the same routine before workouts or competitions, your body will recognize that it's go-time and may help your performance.

To give you an idea of routines, here are a few that you may find helpful. Remember, however, that routines are very individual — what works for one person may not work for another, so find what works for you.

Training Routines

If you're looking to get the most out of your training, developing a training routine should be a priority. A brief training routine helps to ensure that you are totally ready for every drill. Prepare your mind and body for what's to come through checking and adjusting your intensity as necessary to reach peak performance. A training routine may also be calming the body down through breath work or hyping it up in preparation for the drills.

Because a training routine is the foundation for your training and competition, it's important to remember that routines must be done every time you perform, whether that's simply training at the gym or before a big competition. Doing so increases its effectiveness.

Pre-Competition Routines

Pre-competition routines, like any routine, are very individualistic. Every athlete will have a different routine that works for them. These routines will outline everything you need to do to prepare you mind and body for the upcoming performance. This includes things like nutrition, competition tactics, warm-ups, equipment, and mental preparation. Also determine how much time you will need to do your pre-comp routine — some athletes like it short and sweet, while others take more time to prepare.

With a pre-competition routine, you'll want to continually adjust as necessary depending on the situation. Find a general guideline that works for you and your sport,

then tweak it where needed.

Focus Routine

There are two main types of focus styles that an individual can have: internal or external. With athletic performance, it's important that we aim for the former — internal focus. But what's actually the difference?

Having an internal focus means that you have a narrow vision. You are focused on your goal (training, competition, performance, etc.) and you are limiting any external distractions. To limit distractions, it's best to go through your routine away from people and activities. On the other hand, having an external focus means that you keep your focus field broad to avoid focusing too much on your upcoming competition or performance and over-thinking. Being externally focused means that pre-competition or pre-performance, you put yourself in a place where you are unable to focus internally and therefore cannot think about the upcoming event. To keep this focus, you want to go through your routine where there are people around or activities ongoing that will maintain an outward focus.

Routines aren't for everyone, but as an athlete, you may find it helpful to develop one. Not only will it help to put you in the right mindset for performing and achieving your best, but it will also help to create regularity within your training.

The Importance of Words

Your mind hears your thoughts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week — it doesn't get a chance to rest. How we think has a huge impact on how our bodies respond. If you are constantly coming from a place of negativity, what do you think your mindset will be? The same goes for if you come from a place of positivity.

Have you ever heard of experiments conducted on plants to see how they grow in a positive environment versus a negative one? With all other conditions being the same (water, light, temperature, etc.), word choice was the only differing factor. Many times, the results show that plants spoken to with positive comments grow significantly better than those spoken to with negative comments. This goes to show that word choice goes a long way in determining the outcome.

The same applies to humans. If we are surrounded by negativity, criticism, the 'can't' attitude, and any other similar words, our mindset becomes very different than if we are surrounded by positivity and an uplifting attitude. If you've ever heard of the statement 'like attracts like,' it's actually very accurate.

The Law of Attraction

The law of attraction is a philosophy that believes negative or positive thoughts bring negative or positive experiences into a person's life. This law operates to bring each individual the conditions and experiences they constantly think about and desire. But the problem comes in when what we desire and what we expect are different, so we come to a crossroads and often a point of desolation. The human brain has a predisposition to negativity. We put more focus on negative emotions like fear, anger, hurt, sadness, pain, and disappointment, than we do on things like positivity, gratitude, joy, and love. Negativity is addictive and it's a difficult cycle to break. But there is some science behind how you can do that.

Shifting your intention to a place of positivity requires a conscious effort in order to build and maintain a positive mental muscle. Because there are layers upon layers of negative emotions, thought patterns, and the like stored in our subconscious, we must undo the old to make room for the new.

The brain has the ability to change shape and form, depending on the circumstances we are in — it's what is called neuroplasticity. The way our memories work is based off the brains ability to develop synapses (connections) to associate specific thoughts with specific behaviours, which are later formed into habits. So when you are stuck in a cycle of negative thinking, your actions are going to be formed around those thoughts.

So what does the law of attraction have to do with your athletic performance?

Hard work, dedication, and persistence are all incredibly important qualities to possess as an athlete. But there may be something more to excelling in your sport — your belief patterns.

If you're stuck in a mindset of negativity, never being good enough, fearing failure, worrying, and whatever other emotions you experience during your training and/or performance, guess what is likely to come your way? Your mind wants to focus on the negative things that can prevent you from performing at your best and achieving your best. It takes a concerted effort to re-program your mind and reframe your thoughts to shift away from this space of negativity.

When you focus on positive thoughts and intentions within your training, you attract exactly that. If your mindset has always been *I can't*, it's time to retrain your brain to think *I can and I will*.

As Cristiano Ronaldo put it:

"In my head, I am the best. If you don't think like this, you don't have ambition. I might not be, but in my head, I am the best."

It's that attitude and belief that get's athletes where they want to be. And It's exactly how the quote at the front of this book goes — "If you think you are beaten, you are; if you think you'll lose, you're lost."

Arnold Schwarzenegger also said that, "The body is very important, but the mind is more important than the body. You have to visualize how the body will look like in order to win because that's what creates the will. It is the mind that really creates the body."

In order to do so, there are three steps you must follow:

1. **Ask** for what you want
2. **Believe** that you are going to get it
3. **Receive** it with open arms

It seems pretty simple, right? It is, but there is a lot of work that goes into attracting what you want in your life and it does take a conscious effort. Recognize when you're thinking negatively, and flip the thoughts around to form more positive ones. Things aren't going to change overnight, but if you're willing to put in the work, you'll get the results you want.

Identifying Areas of Resistance

Often times, when we set out to achieve a goal, we focus on getting there without considering the consequences associated with it. Consequences don't necessarily have to be good or bad, but rather encompass any changes that come along with achieving that goal. While our conscious mind doesn't think about this, our subconscious does. Because we keep an awareness of these side effects at a subconscious level, they are never brought up at the conscious level, so we remain largely unaware of them.

But what is resistance? When we desire something but we don't truly believe we can have it, it shows up as resistance. Whether you don't think it's possible, you don't think your worthy of it, or you don't think you can do it, all of these attitudes will stand in the way of reaching your goals.

It is important, however, that we recognize these issues raised by our subconscious mind and deal with them so we can fully achieve our intentions and goals. This is what we call overcoming resistance.

Becoming aware of the areas of resistance is the first step to getting where you want. This can be the root cause of your frustration, the anxiety that develops before a competition or performance, why you're unhappy with your progress, or anything along those lines. To move past this, you must look for a way to satisfy the needs of your resistance without letting it hinder achieving your goals.

It's crucial to get a point where your resistance to achievement or success has no effect. You must neutralize it to a point where it is no longer resistance, but rather works as an advantage to you.

Here are a few ways to help you do that:

1. **Be honest with yourself.** Figure out what is limiting you or preventing your from fully achieving your goal. Is it a behaviour? A thought pattern? Becoming aware of this means taking responsibility in order to allow for change.
2. **Avoid judgement.** Use the areas of resistance as an arrow to point out areas that need work, rather than judging yourself or being critical.
3. **Shift your focus.** When you place your focus heavily on the thing you want, resistance, whether that's frustration, thoughts, feelings, or beliefs, can easily get in the way without our awareness. Taking away the focus from what you want and providing yourself a distraction will help to relax the mind and allow it to be open to receive.

4 **Change your thoughts and words**. Have you ever had a mantra you followed? If not, it might be time to develop one. If you're constantly in a place of *I can't*, shift that to *I can*, or if you look at others and think *why is that working for them*, come from a place of *it's working for them and it can work for me too.*

Can you think of any areas which can be classified as areas of resistance? If you can, note them down so you can become more aware of them.

Now take a few minutes and think about how you can turn those areas into a point of advantage.

Wrapping It Up

As you've seen, mindset plays a crucial part in an athletes life — both personally and professionally. Whether you're in a positive or negative mindset, a fixed or a growth, wherever you reside will determine your outcome.

We're not saying that you have to be positive all the time, but try to recognize when negativity starts to creep in and try to stop it. Changing your mindset and creating goals for yourself will help you not only to become a better athlete, but to become a more well-rounded person as a whole. What you want is within your reach, so don't let your mind convince you that it's not.

Have a goal to always grow, aspire and achieve — no matter the circumstances.