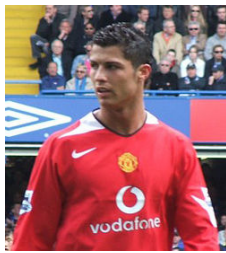


Psychological warfare against yourself

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Who is your biggest opponent in any sport you play (or at work or in daily life)? Think about it for a while. Is it the adversary that hits beautiful passing shots along the net? Or the goalkeeper who seems to have his lucky day? Or is it the referee that makes the wrong decisions at crucial moments in the game? Or ... is it YOU ?



As you are able to produce beautiful aces in the beginning of the match. But you make a double fault when you badly need the point. Or your technique should make the difference but your opponent seems to be able to compensate that. Or somehow you just do not seem have your day... You probably recognize this in your own play if you take an honest look at yourself. Sports matches are not won by technique but by mind power. Still we spend almost 100 % of our time on developing technique instead of mind power. Time to change that and see what that could mean to you. For your satisfaction, development and last but not least your results ...

Abstract: this first article in a series about the impact of mind power in top sports and business deals with the meta model that describes potential power, mental noise, stopping mental noise and preventing mental noise. In order to help you to develop and play your best game.

Introduction

In this monthly series of articles we will spend some time with you on the mental aspects of any sport or game you play. Whether it is football, golf, running, high jumping, boxing, speed skating, squash, volleyball, and even poker or chess. The player that can keep her or his mind together when it is really needed will have the best chances of winning the match. But even further, that player will develop faster and enjoy their games much more. They even have a significant chance of living longer, healthier and happier, by the way. In this first article we will take you through the concept of Mind Power from the meta model we use to train people in top sports and business in developing their mental power and their ability to learn and grow. We will discuss **mental noise** and how it limits your performance, we will talk about your **potential power**, stopping mental noise and preventing mental noise by **focus**, how to get into your zone and by doing so play the best game you can possibly play. In this first

article we will give an overview of the concept. Then every aspect of the model will subsequently be worked out in the following articles. Also you as the reader are invited to take action by practicing some exercises that we propose. We will not only talk about sports but also other fields of life: work, relationships, personal development. So please try this at home! And then you will be invited to give feedback. We will discuss your feedback, remarks and questions in order to make this series of articles as effective (!) as possible. Because in the end we aim at the development of your mental game when and wherever you want it. So please do not hesitate and join us in this process of improving ourselves in that crucial mental game.

Manchester United almost lost the Champions League Finale against Chelsea by the penalty shot of Ronaldo. Ronaldo being a player deciding at the very last moment to pick the corner for his shot gets a nasty surprise by Chelsea's goalkeeper Cech. Cech knows his opponent and decides deliberately to stand still like a statue and make no movement. Thereby confusing Ronaldo so much that he even stopped his movement and almost shot the penalty out of a frozen position. We all saw the result. Cech caused Ronaldo a large amount of what we call mental noise or mind clutter. Ronaldo was not able to handle that mental noise well and as a result his performance was negatively influenced. Now who says that penalties are just a lottery? This situation shows that you can influence the outcome of the penalty by professional preparation. And by doing so your chances will be more than lottery like. Edwin van der Sar, Manchester's goalkeeper stopped Anelka's penalty

thereby saving the Champions League Trophy for Man United. Can you explain what happened there? Was it the attempt of Van der Sar to disturb Anelka by pointing out the left angle to aim at? Or was it Anelka's body (face!) language walking towards the penalty zone? Or was Van der Sar just really lucky this time? As they say only top goal keepers have luck on their side..?

The mental model

In our approach to training business- and sportspeople we use a very simple model to describe the factors that influence the outcome of the performance.

Performance = Potential power - Mental noise

The Potential power is already available in the individual that performs the task. Nothing has to be added. Everything is already there. The mental noise is described as every thought, feeling, idea, emotion, tension that disturbs during the performance of a certain task.

The simple equation makes it clear that whenever the mental noise is limited towards zero, the performance will be optimal. So first we have to make sure mental noise is eliminated as much as we can as is shown below.



Performance = Potential power - Mental noise



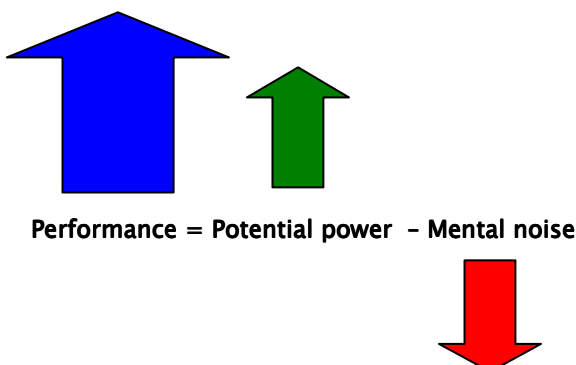
The method to limit or handle mental noise is called focus. Focus is the process of putting all your attention deliberately in

or onto a specific part of the task you perform. Focus is the activity of measuring what is going on. Focus has to take exactly the amount of brain capacity so that your brain is not able to occupy itself with producing mental noise. It is really observing, listening, feeling what is going on during the task.

For instance in golf a focus could be the rhythm of your swing. Is it more like a 1-2-3 smooth movement as in a waltz. Or is it more like a hooked movement. Our youth would describe it as "house-music like". You could describe that on a continuum from 1 being totally "waltz-like" and 10 being totally "house like". The focus then would be trying to feel in every stroke you hit what score from 1 - 10 that shot was. If you do this exercise and hit let's say 100 balls and after every individual ball you try to scale the rhythm of your stroke that will take so much brain capacity that your mental noise will not be able to pop up anymore.

And then, as a bonus, a leverage effect will happen. As you focus like this, you will learn in a natural way and quickly develop your own authentic way of stroking. Without any technical instructions. So there is the bonus. We call this [focus learning](#). We will go deeper into that in a later article.

Now that we have a leverage effect of focus our performance can be even higher than just by limiting mental noise as is shown in the picture below.



So you will perform at your best when there is no mental noise limiting your performance. Then you play your best game possible. That has nothing to do with technique. The first 100 players in the tennis rankings do not differ significantly in their technical skills. That is not the factor that in the end will decide whether they will be able to become number one of the world. Their ability to keeping their mind together in tough situations and to learn on the other hand is much more important. Roger Federer used to be a player in his younger days who in an instant could lose his mind and even become a hostage of his own emotions. Nowadays that has completely changed. We all know the result ...

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But even on a more recreational level this aspect plays a crucial role in performing, enjoying and learning the game in sports and business. Every amateur golf player knows what "fear of water" can do to your performance and your state of mind ...

In the next article we will go deeper into mental noise. We will also ask you to think about that and do some self-reflection.

For feedback, comments and questions please email to info@effeqt.nl For further background information please visit www.effeqt.com. Do you want individual or team coaching for sports or business? Call us at +31 365 327 036. We wish you the best, enjoyable and happy game you can play.