



COACHING MENTAL PERFORMANCE SKILLS IN ATHLETES

THE MENTAL SKILLS NEEDED TO PUT IT IN

are not the same as the ones needed to get it out



PARALLEL PATHS TO EXCELLENCE

A COMPETITIVE MINDSET
is not a personality trait





PERFECTIONIST



ARTIST



UNDER-ACHIEVER



PERFORMER

PERFORMANCE MINDSET

Courage

Trust

Acceptance

PRACTICE MINDSET

Self-instruction

Self-monitoring

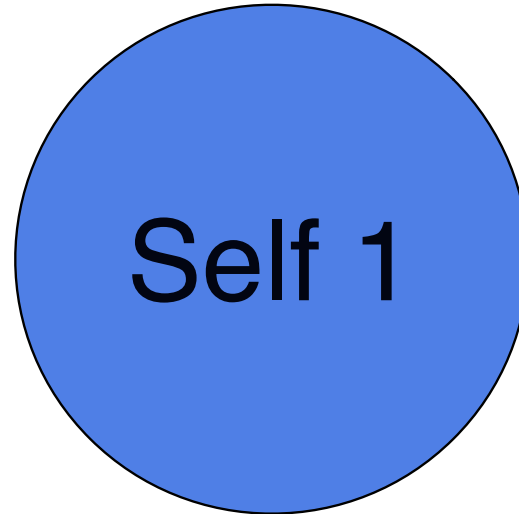
Analyzing cause & effect

TRUST

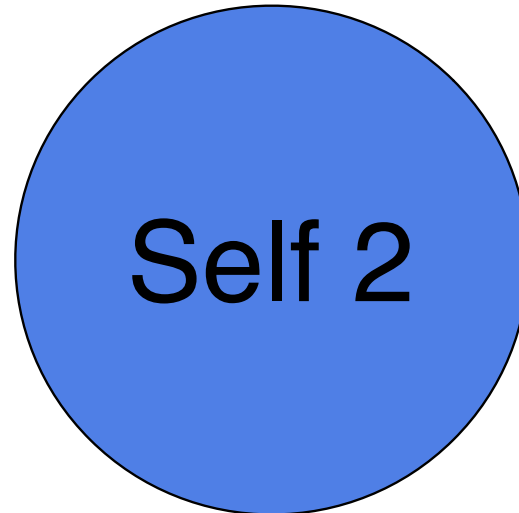
→ a specific performance skill

Letting go of conscious controlling tendencies learned during skill acquisition and allowing the automatic processes, developed through training, to run without interference.

THE INNER BATTLE



The Thinker



The Doer

“Man is a thinking reed, but his great works are done when he is not calculating and thinking. Childlikeness has to be restored with long years of training in the art of self-forgetfulness. When this is attained, man thinks yet he does not think.”

D.T. Suzuki

TRUST



is different from confidence

WHEN GREAT ATHLETES STOP TRUSTING
they stop becoming great athletes



TRUST

AS THE PERFORMANCE GOAL

BREAKDOWNS IN TRUST

JAMMING
OVER-AIMING
PRESSING
OVER-CONTROLLING



JAMMING

→ Over instructing, analyzing or thinking too much

— Does not always lead to bad shot

— Broad internal focus

— Increased mistakes

OVER-AIMING

→ Excessively concerned with accuracy

— Doubt ability to hit target

— Too narrow of a focus

— Excessive muscle tension

PRESSING

→ Trying too hard to generate more speed or power

Breakdown in swing sequencing

Increased muscle tension

Tempo changes

OVER-CONTROLLING

→ Guiding the correctness of a movement pattern

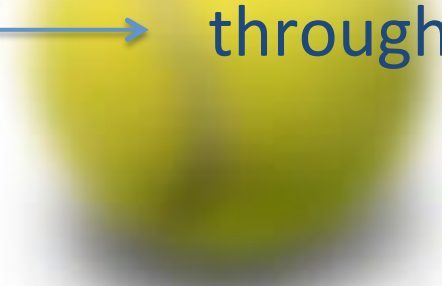
- Trying to be technically correct
- Loss of “feel” in movement
- Deceleration of swing

“Ultimately, the musician must relinquish the illusion of moment-by-moment control, trusting the program to remember exactly how each finger must move. The musician becomes aware of only the feeling, the emotion in the music.”

Dr. Frank Wilson, neurologist

TRAINING TRUST

→ through variable practice



A black and white photograph of a person jumping off a cliff edge. The person's legs and feet are visible in the upper center of the frame. The background shows a vast, deep mountain valley with snow-capped peaks and a winding road. On the right side of the cliff, a person wearing sunglasses and a backpack stands looking out over the valley. The left side of the image shows the jagged, rocky edge of the cliff.

COURAGE

Managing Fear & Self-Doubt

REFRAMING YOUR PERSPECTIVE

- What am I afraid of?
- What's worst that can happen?
- How can I make this an adventure?
- How is this situation an opportunity?



WRITING A PERFORMANCE SCRIPT

A SENSORY RICH
DESCRIPTION OF
PLAYING GREAT



GREAT BEGINNING

I begin the match **relaxed, bouncing freely** from one foot to the next every chance I get. I have a **focused energy** and I know nothing will divert my concentration today. I win the toss and elect to receive. I **feel the weight** on the balls of my feet, as the toss goes up, I **split step** inside the baseline, **keep my swing compact**, and make **clean impact out front**. I **step around his second serve** and get control of the point straight away. I start with a break and jog to the changeover.

My **serve is clicking** today. I am hitting my spots, and even my misses feel great. I **bounce the ball 3 times**, picture my spot with my eyes open, and **let my service motion** take care of the rest. My body starts to **unscrew** and I **extend high** up into the air, reaching up to my highest point hitting the ball square on my strings. It is nice to have such a reliable 2nd serve that allows me to go all out on my first. I am **sliding around the court** and **getting set perfectly** for each shot, I **feel like I could go all day**, there is **no end to my energy**. I love the way my body feels, I am so LOOSE.

STRONG FINISH

I **visualize a big kick serve** getting up high on his backhand to the ad side, he hits a solid return, but just a little too high, **I jump on it** and stick it behind him for a winner and the match. I go through my service routine one last time, get a ton of action on the serve, and I am on the service line before he makes contact, I **get the exact ball I wanted**, and I hit it **crisply deep into the backhand corner** for a winner – **THAT FELT GREAT**. I **love the way that match felt**, everything clicking and **my mind quiet**, my body felt great. A match like this reminds me why I put so much work in on a daily basis. It reminds me of **why I love this sport so much**. Each day is a brand new challenge, and I am so lucky that I get this opportunity, I can't wait to get on the practice courts to keep improving.

USING SCRIPTS

READ
REVISE
RECORD



PREPARING TO BE COURAGEOUS



Revisit Performance script



Pre-match game plan



Reframe Perspective



Get physiology under control



ACCEPTANCE

Focusing and refocusing without judgment

ACCEPTANCE STRATEGIES

- Coach acceptance in practice
- “Accept and Adjust” mentality
- Use breathe and focus technique
- Train focus plan

PERFORMANCE PHASES



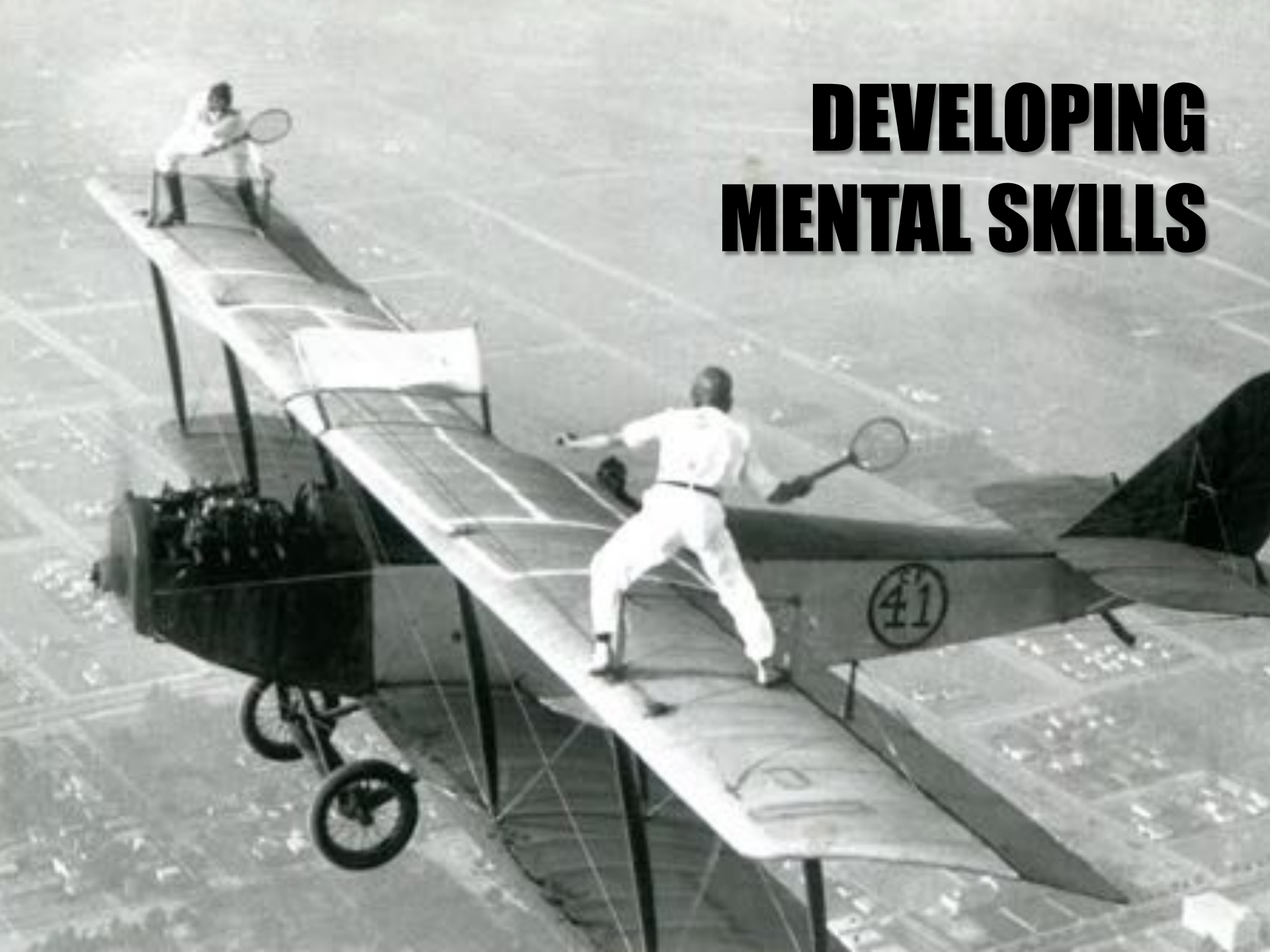
The diagram illustrates the three phases of performance: Approach, Execute, and Respond. It features two vertical blue lines that divide the space into three columns. The word 'APPROACH' is positioned in the first column on the left, 'EXECUTE' is in the middle column, and 'RESPOND' is in the third column on the right. All text is in a bold, blue, sans-serif font and has a subtle drop shadow.

APPROACH

EXECUTE

RESPOND

DEVELOPING MENTAL SKILLS





COACHING COMPETITIVENESS

PERFORMANCE WHEEL

