

**Self-
Confidence...**



**for Sporting
Excellence**

Sporting Excellence for a Complete Career.

There are few better experiences than being successful at sport. It nourishes the most powerful of all the external providers of self-confidence – achievements. Access to sporting excellence encompasses all persons, not only the able bodied. Paralympians are amongst the most amazing athletes I have had the pleasure of observing. I am certain that their successes often require more dedication and talent than many of their more able bodied colleagues.

However, the one thing all athletes have in common is a desire for the remarkable physical and mental abilities, used to reach the pinnacle in their field of endeavour. The intent here will be to deliver sporting excellence that is not just about being physically and mentally good at sport. It will include further personal development, for peak performance and dealing with celebrity status.

That development will be relevant to establish and maintain sponsorship for any ongoing financial security. Financial security from sport is delivered by fame, rather than from infamy. That is evidenced by any sporting champion, revered over time for their extraordinary talents, followed by a monumental fall from public grace, due to perceived poor character displays.

Therefore sporting excellence must include mental, physical and positive public profile elements, to be completely beneficial.

Access to sports excellence will be offered by explaining how self-confidence works, and how it is connected to internal development. It will include a process that creates more resilient self-confidence than any sportsperson could have normally expected.

Self-confidence is the mental attitude of having *trust* in, *respect* for, and *reliance* on, your own judgement and/or abilities. It embodies the confidence you have in yourself, and it can develop through two different streams. The first stream is via achievements and the many other external providers. Those providers, associated with sporting excellence, could in part include recognition by others and yourself of an exceptional talent. It could include family and team support, a promising career and financial security.

Naturally if all of those providers are in place you're already doing quite well for yourself. However, even if all those supporting providers of external self-confidence are available, that doesn't necessarily mean they can be maintained. Further to any acknowledged external conditions that could provide self-confidence, it is possible that some favourable conditions exist that have not yet been recognised. That may include skill levels sought, and believed unattainable.

That brings us to how self-confidence is connected to getting your sporting excellence to a place where, for ongoing happiness and success, you are enjoying all the benefits. Self-confidence gives you the ability to satisfy yourself that you have correctly identified, and reached, all of the areas available for your immediate sporting prospects.

It can include provision for an ongoing career that may, or may not, be related to your sporting background. That fulfilment will be completed by exposure to the second stream of self-confidence. That stream is the internal development process, which will assist you to learn more about yourself.

The difference between the two streams of self-confidence is that one is delivered by achievements, balanced with all the other external providers against any perceived failures. The other stream delivers a *mental attitude* of belief in your self-worth and abilities, which will remain unshakeable irrespective of any self-imposed limits for success.

Both streams are important; however to establish complete sporting excellence we need them to work in unison. The reason for that lies in the strength of our natural abilities to overcome all of the enemies of self-confidence.

Our achievements, sporting successes and support from others for our abilities, can build some defences against self-doubt, uncertainty and fear. On the other hand those supporting comments, successes and achievements, often need to be repeated constantly to maintain that defence. Consider how those enemies attempt to control us, and you can see the difficulties we can have in maintaining a defence against their destruction of our self-confidence.

Self-doubt is usually imposed by the comments of others. As an example, suppose you had prepared diligently for an upcoming contest in your discipline.

A few days before the contest one of your most respected coaches or peers asks, "Are you sure you're ready for this?" It may just be a throwaway line reflecting their nervousness. On the other hand, if one or more people ask the same question over the next couple of days, self-doubt may begin to creep in.



"I thought I was...but am I really ready for this?"

However, let's assume there have not been any comments from anyone, and the time for the contest is approaching. This is where uncertainty can begin its work.

Uncertainty, closely related to self-doubt, is often a figment of our own thoughts and does not require any comments from others. The contest may, on this occasion, be a career defining challenge.

Your training, niggling injuries, expectations of yourself and your supporters, can easily contribute to an onset of uncertainty and fear. Reinforcement from others, along with positive reminders from our own thoughts of previous success in any chosen field, can build some barriers against uncertainty and ensuing fear.

However, even if we can constantly achieve, and have that reinforced by our own thoughts and by positive comments from others, there can be further difficulties. The self-confidence enemies, uncertainty, self-doubt and fear, may not be working alone in attempting to disrupt our desire for sporting success.

The enemies of self-confidence represented by conflict of conscience, guilt and arrogance will not be affected by our achievements, or the comments of others. As examples, those three enemies can work by creating conflict of conscience over any training preparation mistake of ours, not mentioned to coaches.

Further, they can create guilt about whether we should confess any alleged mistakes. Finally, they can encourage us to arrogantly accept accolades for our preparation or successes, when we are aware that many essential others should have been given that recognition.

It is only the internal development processes that can effectively overcome all self-confidence enemies as one. They develop, and deliver, self-confidence at the same time. Therefore to get the balance between the streams of self-confidence correct – and we will – it is important to explain how the internal development process works...

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