

GOLDMIND Excellence

Positively Emotional

Controlling your feelings



Descriptors of IPS

- "Treed"
- "Zoned"
- "Maxed out"
- "Flow"
- "Psyched"
- "Jazzed"
- "Tranced"
- "Pumped"
- "Potion & Motion"

Some words that athletes use to describe their finest hours.

You can control your feelings. You can create an optimal emotional state that will help you perform your best.

THE IDEAL PERFORMANCE STATE

The words athletes choose when they describe their finest hours—the ideal performance state—often sound strange. (See words in box.)

In this state, athletes also talk about time standing still, extraordinary personal awareness, profound inner stillness, exceptional energy, and puzzling feelings of slow motion, joy, power, and control.

"I had tremendous intensity but was completely relaxed." "I was exceptionally calm inside but totally pumped with energy." "The situation was full of pressure, but I

didn't feel any at all."

Despite the contradictory nature of these reports, obvious patterns emerge. After a time, it becomes evident that the mental state accompanying an outstanding performance is dramatically different from the mental state tied to poor performance (Re-visit the Reflections exercise.)

The single most important thing you can do to perform at your peak is to trigger this IPS. Rest assured this special state is not the result of playing well; it is precisely what makes playing well possible. When you



feel right, you can perform right, and controlling how you feel is a learned skill.

Getting into the zone or flow state is really a question of emotional balance. It's an established fact that emotional changes produce measurable bodily and biochemical changes, some of which can lead to a variety of different altered states of consciousness. Only when your chemistry is right, when the mixture is rich and powerful, can you achieve maximum performance.

ACHIEVING AN IPS

To achieve an IPS, keep two important things in mind. First, when you're playing in "the zone," you are not in some far-out trance state. On the contrary, you're actually fine-tuned mentally. Second, understand that your IPS is controllable. Sport's greatest competitors are the best examples, as they consistently turn in outstanding performances. Their greatness is due in part to their exceptional ability to control their ideal mental and emotional climate. Athletes caught in the riptide of their own negative mood shifts during play can never achieve their potential. For them, "zoning" is only something that sporadically happens by chance. If you want to start controlling your ideal mental climate, here are three suggestions.

The IPS is not the result of playing well. The IPS is what allows you to perform at your peak.

Controlling Your Mental Climate

Increase Awareness.

Start tuning in to what mental and emotional climate is associated with your best performances. How do you feel when you're playing well? What is the best combination of winning feelings for you? Once your ideal climate is familiar, you are ready to begin mental and emotional fine-tuning.

Use Your Positive Emotions as Fuel

Fueling your performances with positive emotions is the best way to get the right chemistry going. When challenge, enthusiasm, and determination are replaced by anger, frustration, or fear, emotional fine-tuning is impossible.

Model Yourself After Outstanding Athletes

Emulate great athletes. Great competitors always outwardly project the same feelings that we know are connected to high-level performance. They project relaxation, calmness, high positive intensity, and confidence. They always appear to be IN CONTROL!

Words of Caution

Two words of caution. First, controlling your IPS is a never-ending process. You improve by millimetres, not metres. It is truly the greatest challenge in sport.

Second, zoning mentally does not guarantee that you will zone physically. There are a host of physical factors that can block the path, like fatigue, sickness, and diet. Zoning mentally simply allows you to play to the limits of your physical skill and talent.

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