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## **Psy. Session**

### **Introduction.**

#### **Goals & Motivation.**

Why do I play tennis?

- Because I like the fight, the battle.
- I like to beat someone and be a winner
- To prove to myself I can play well.
- Enjoy the physical feeling of hitting a ball.
- For fun and the team environment
- For health and fitness
- To release frustration and anger
- To impress Mum, Dad etc

In reality these are neutral events, we give them meaning, we make the stories around, if we can identify what individually makes us want to compete it can assist us in setting goals.

There is no point if we don't have a goal. What would the point if there was no goal. Motivation is closely linked to goal setting. Goal setting is individual and it's those goals that motivate us to do our best.

Goals can include a certain win/lose record, it maybe increasing consistency, increasing power, becoming fitter and stronger, hitting the ball deeper, playing grade 2 pennant. It would be beneficial before the next season to identify your own personal goals. After goals have been identified we need to put steps in place to achieve the goal. I wanted to become fitter, because I believe if you were the fittest in the world you would be world number 1. I didn't simply join a gym or go for run. I went to a fitness trainer, got my body composition accessed, had a specific program written for me, completed the program and was accessed again, my assessment showed my fitness had increased. I then re set goals and went through the same procedure of testing, measuring, training and re testing to achieve my goals. Same for coaching, private lesson's can be tailored to suit your individual goals.

## **Short list of self defeating thought process & Postive Mental Thinking:**

Self-Defeating Thought Process':

- Fear (of losing, not improving, looking bad in front of others...)
- lack of self confidence and belief.
- self-condemnation.
- poor concentration
- Trying to hard.
- perfectionism.
- self-consciousness.
- frustration.
- anger.
- boredom.
- expectations (parents as well as self)
- a busy mind

### **Positive Mental Thinking:**

an athlete that wants to perform at his peak needs to learn:

#### **1. How to control his thinking**

Negative thinking affects players much more than they are aware of. It affects body abilities in two ways - being aware of them (feeling tension) and being unaware (the pendulum experiment); moreover it evokes negative feelings - emotions that cloud the player's judgment and affect his body abilities - again.

By being more and more aware of what he is thinking a player can then change his thoughts to a more positive and solution based thinking. The awareness of our thoughts is quite a challenge in the tennis psychology approach.

#### **2. How to control his arousal - to manage his intensity and body energy**

A player's arousal can be too high or too low and in both cases he is not able to play his best tennis. Arousal affects his body and mind abilities - a player may have too much muscle tension and his decisions are usually not tactically intelligent.

Learning to find the "ideal state" is the key in controlling one's arousal and one of the most important aspects of tennis psychology.

#### **3. What elements of the tennis game can a player control**

A player may get upset (and it happens often) about an event that he cannot control or even influence. For example - the noise of the planes flying over the court, windy conditions, court conditions, his opponent's luck and so on.

By being focused on these events he wastes his energy which could be used on elements that he can control - his attitude and effort, how he intends to play, ...

#### **4. How to improve concentration**

Many players start the match with good concentration but they drop their level of concentration because of disturbing outside events, pressure situations, emotional reactions to various events and so on. A player needs to learn how to quickly and effectively refocus to be able to play his best tennis.

## **5. How to use visualization**

Imagery or visualization is extremely useful in almost all aspects of the tennis game. A player can improve technique, strategy, physical abilities and his mental preparation of certain events. Another use of imagery is when a player misses a shot and then quickly sees in his mind how he hit the ball correctly.

Using imagery is an incredibly efficient technique, not only in tennis sports psychology but in everyday life too.

## **6. How to build confidence**

Confidence is one of those elements where tennis psychology can help really quickly and with very simple tools. A player who is not confident will hesitate in his decisions, will be afraid to take risks and his shots will usually miss by just a little. Doubt can be seen in reality as small misses that happen regularly.

When a player builds his confidence he is able to play at his best and doesn't lose his hope when a big challenge appears.

## **7. How to find and get rid of limiting beliefs**

Limiting beliefs are one of the most limiting and troublesome aspects of human's psyche. They are mostly deep in the subconsciousness and are sometimes hard to find. A limiting belief for example is when a player believes that he is not good in tie-breaks and he will then self-sabotage himself in those crucial moments to prove himself right.

Having no limiting beliefs means that the player is in total acceptance of everything that happens. Outside events are just events with no meaning. Tennis psychology helps the player to accept and deal with them.

## **8. How to empty the mind - Inner Game of tennis principles to enter the zone**

There are three main principles of the Inner Game - quieting the mind, non-judgment and trusting the body. The player must first learn to apply them in training. And when he experiences these effects in training he knows what to look for in the match. He then plays the inner game - how to perform at his peak.

These are the fundamentals of tennis psychology and by understanding these principles and applying them daily a player develops mental toughness. He knows how to apply the tools and as a very positive side effect gains a lot of self confidence.

He now knows that he has ways of dealing with his own mind and that most of his competitors do not. He is aware that he has the edge in the most stressful situations in the match and that gives him self confidence.

By constant application of these tools a player becomes more and more proficient with them and finds his ideal mental state very quickly if he happens to lose it. These losses of ideal state happen less and less often.

### **Scenarios:**

Lost the first doubles 7-5, and now 2-0 down in my singles:

<b>Negative self defeating response</b>	<b>Positive response to an adverse situation</b>
- Give up, stop trying	- if I win 2 games we are equal again
- What's Mum or Dad going to say?	- Use cue words such as 'cmon.' ' attack'
- I'm letting the team down?	- Physically show I want to win, pump fists etc
- my serve, forehand, backhand sucks.	- Think through tactics and a game plan
- I'm not good enough.	- Recall on past success or times played well.
- I miss the easiest shots.	- Hold head up high walk like a winner
- What do I do?	- visualize hitting winners and winning

### **Conclusion.**

There is only one thing you can control on in tennis, at school, at work it is your attitude. You choose the attitude you wish to walk this world with, to play a tennis match with. Will it be positive? Will it be negative. If you set your personal goals honestly you will be motivated to achieve them, and you will have a positive attitude to achieve. You are all you have got, no one will believe in you if you don't believe in yourself. Be proud of you, believe in you, and go and have fun!