



Nov. 3rd:

Mental Game: Visualization & Confidence for Approach & Mindset

1. **What is Visualization?**

Visualization is the widely-used technique of seeing your performance in your mind. It can be done simply in passing by closing your eyes and imagining a play or can be used as a central training tool to take the place of physical activity when an athlete is injured or worn down.

Why is visualization so powerful?

Seeing the goal as already complete in your mind's eye – is a core technique used by the world's most successful people.

Visualization is effective because it harnesses the power of our subconscious mind.

Who Visualizes? How do you Visualize? How often should you Visualize?

2. **What is Confidence?**

Confidence is a belief in oneself, the conviction that one has the ability to meet life's challenges and to succeed—and the willingness to act accordingly.

Being **confident** requires a realistic sense of one's capabilities and feeling secure in that knowledge.

Why is confidence so important?

Confidence helps us feel ready for life's experiences...

Successful **performance** can be expected to positively influence team **confidence**, which in turn should lead to behaviors and actions (e.g., setting higher goals, working harder) that enhance **the** ability of **the** group to succeed in **the** future, resulting in an even stronger desire for group success.

Real Confidence vs. FAKE self-esteem:

-Real confidence is hard won. There are no short cuts.

-It's about facing a challenge and overcoming it. (Quality reps/visualization/practice/education/experience)

The kind of confidence we are talking about is called “self efficacy”... and according to clinical psychologists, here's why it matters:



“Unlike self-esteem, **self-efficacy isn’t about a sense of self-worth; it’s about believing you are capable of producing a desired result – that *you can achieve your goals.*”**

Ways it is strengthened:

- Learn from failure and channel it into success.
- Encouragement from players and coaches.
- Accomplishments
- Seeing others like you succeed. (Being genuinely happy for your teammates)

On Field Topic & Drills: Thinking middle-away/seeing the ball deep.

Why do we think middle-away?

The most common hitting strategy is to look away and adjust to a pitch inside.

Since most pitchers keep the ball away from you, it only makes sense to look to the outer portion of the plate. It is a lot easier to adjust to a pitch inside, than to look for a pitch inside and adjust to a pitch away. It is almost impossible...Another strategy is to think middle only, but this will come with technique and ability.

What does "see the ball deep" mean?

It means **let the ball get deep**. In other words, let the ball get as close to the catcher as possible before committing to your swing. TRUST YOUR HANDS! They are much faster than you think.

- Barrel is in the hitting zone longer.
- Contact rate increases
- “Launch Angle” is optimal for success when we see the ball deep. (*LA Dodgers: “Barrels are over-rated”*)

Drills:

- 1- Off the tee, Focus on Barrel...thinking middle/away - seeing ball deep
- 2- Off the tee, 2-0 count, GET SOME!
- 3- Live half cage, work a count and swing accordingly...BE AGGRESSIVE! HAVE AN APPROACH!

LINKS:

<http://www.onbaseball.com/hitting/power-hitting-get-deep-to-go-deep/#:~:text=First%2C%20it%20means%20let%20the,before%20committing%20to%20y our%20swing.>

<http://probaseballinsider.com/real-confidence-vs-fake-self-esteem-how-to-build-confidence-in-athletes/>

<http://probaseballinsider.com/baseball-instruction/fundamentals-of-hitting/hitting-strategy/>



Nov. 5th:

Mental Game: Accountability & Nonverbal Communication

1. What is Accountability?

An obligation or willingness to **accept responsibility** or to **account for one's actions**.

Why is accountability important?

Accountability essentially forces you to take ownership of everything that happens to you. (Control what you can control, and bring the best version of yourself to everything)

Examples of NOT being accountable:

- Blaming others
- Always looking for outside excuses
- Unrealistic expectations
- Not being honest with yourself

Examples being accountable:

- Taking ownership of your actions
- Being coachable
- Being honest with yourself
- Having realistic expectations
- Controlling what YOU can control

-Being accountable and holding others accountable means YOU are in control of YOURSELF and your EXAMPLE/HARD WORK will ultimately *non-verbally* hold you and your teammates accountable. (Both on and off the field)

True accountability: Cannot be faked.

"It's not what you preach, it's what you tolerate" -Leif Babin

What are some ways you can be accountable on the baseball field?

Give some examples. (Good and Bad)



1. **What is Nonverbal Communication?**

Nonverbal communication is the transmission of messages or signals through a nonverbal platform such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and the distance between two individuals.

What are examples of GOOD nonverbal communication?

What are examples of BAD nonverbal communication?

What are some ways that nonverbal communication is important on the baseball field?

- Communication between players and coaches
- Stealing signs
- Shifting momentum (*both positive and negative*)
- Self-confidence
- Giving the impression of confidence (or lack of confidence)
- Pitcher & catcher
- Fielders
- etc.

Why is nonverbal communication important for a team to succeed?

If controlled in a positive way, nonverbal communication can exude confidence, control, success, and inspiration.

What are some ways YOU can positively exude nonverbal communication?

Drills: *No Wasted Movement*

- 1- Cross-over step ... "Knee to knee" ... let your hip do the movement... Don't cast leg!
- 2- "Drop Step" -Point your toe where you want to go... open your toe to the correct angle... 1st step is CRITICAL
- 3- Feel Momentum in Ball of Foot... Come through ball into power position.

Links:

https://www.amazon.com/Mental-Game-Baseball-Guide-Performance/dp/1630761826/ref=pd_lpo_14_t_0/132-2669386-8815933?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=1630761826&pd_rd_r=c4573c0f-beda-4971-ae24-24934ac6d004&pd_rd_w=49ci8&pd_rd_wg=rG2Lx&pf_rd_p=7b36d496-f366-4631-94d3-61b87b52511b&pf_rd_r=THFQ6AE3GZWNNKEQZ7Q6&psc=1&refRID=THFQ6AE3GZWNNKEQZ7Q6

https://www.amazon.com/Extreme-Ownership-U-S-Navy-SEALs/dp/1250183863/ref=sr_1_1?crid=30TTKQJ7BKKNB&dchild=1&keywords=extreme+ownership&qid=1604521764&s=books&sprefix=extreme+%2Cstripbooks%2C217&sr=1-1

<https://thewinningmindinbaseball.com/2009/10/30/visualization-tips/>

<https://www.business2community.com/leadership/how-the-best-leaders-master-nonverbal-communication-02133271>



Nov. 10th:

Mental Game: Desire and Drive

1. **What is the definition of Desire?**

A **strong feeling of wanting** to have something or **wishing for something to happen.**

2. **What is the definition of Drive?**

An innate, biologically **determined urge to attain a goal** or satisfy a need.

The difference between Desire and Drive:

When used as **nouns**, **desire** means *someone or something wished for*, whereas **drive** means *motivation to do or achieve something*.

When used as **verbs**, **desire** means to want, whereas **drive** means to impel or urge onward by force.

How can you apply “Desire” to baseball?

- Within your goals (individual and team)
- Within your visualization
- Within your mindset
- Within your approach (offense/defense/team role)
- etc.

*Desire directly correlates with confidence...When you're confident, you know what you excel at and that you have value...Greater self-confidence allows you to experience freedom from self-doubt and negative thoughts about yourself...

How can you apply “Drive” to baseball?

- Within your goals
- Within your dedication towards those goals (am I selling myself short?)
- Within your commitments
- A burning desire to improve yourself
- etc.

GOALS SET WITHOUT COMMITMENTS ARE WASTED!



-The more committed you are (the more driven you are), the easier your efforts become...generally leading to relaxed performance and successful execution on the field.

-In order to know your potential and limitations, you must make the effort (have the drive) to go beyond what you wish to achieve...Exceptional achiever are willing to push themselves further and higher...they have made a commitment with themselves.

-The Mental Game of Baseball (Chapter 4)

What are some ways YOU can harness the power of your desire and drive in a baseball setting?

Drills:

- Balance and arm slot for all positions
- Throwing mechanics breakdown

Links:

<https://diffsense.com/diff/desire/drive>
<https://www.tcnorth.com/building-confidence/12-benefits-increasing-self-confidence/>
https://www.amazon.com/Mental-Game-Baseball-Guide-Performance/dp/1630761826/ref=pd_lpo_14_t_0/132-2669386-8815933?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=1630761826&pd_rd_r=c4573c0f-beda-4971-ae24-24934ac6d004&pd_rd_w=49ci8&pd_rd_wg=rG2Lx&pf_rd_p=7b36d496-f366-4631-94d3-61b87b52511b&pf_rd_r=THFQ6AE3GZWNNKEQZ7Q6&psc=1&refRID=THFQ6AE3GZWNNKEQZ7Q6



Nov. 12th:

Mental Game: Types of Goals (*taken from The Mental Game of Baseball, Chapter 2*)

- Goals make your purpose clear, and give you direction...A successful player sets goals in order to focus his attention and energies.
- The more aware of what you want, the more likely you are to do what is necessary to get it.
- Setting personal goals is essential for gaining control of potential, of success - of self.
- Your goals should encourage you to work hard and be rewarded for your efforts.

Performance Goals:

- Are based on your ability and degree of confidence. (Which is why we set reachable & attainable goals) - Non-realistic and unreachable goals lead to discouragement and loss of motivation)
- Are usually your personal standard of acceptance.
- They should challenge you.
- They shouldn't be too easily attained.
- They should be evaluated daily. (Are you making progress towards that goal?)
- They can be adjusted if necessary, with honesty, based on your effort.

Daily Goals

- The goals you set "within your goals" to accomplish your long-range goals. For example: "I will spend 30 minutes every day focusing on _____ aspect of my game."
- Also the "game-by-game" goals. Example: "My goal is to go 3 for 3 at the plate" or "My goal is to minimize my pitch count and force contact."

Long Range Goals

- The goals you set for the "season". Example: "My goal is to hit .350" or "My goal is to have an ERA under 2.00" ...(These goals can be adjusted throughout the season to make them attainable, but not to the point where they are discouraging work, drive, and effort)

Result Goals

Example: "Win 15 games" or "Strike out less than ____times." Or "____ RBI's/Hits/Strikeouts/etc."

- Are measurable goals, so they can and should be adjusted.
- They aid in honest self-evaluation.

Do you **wish** for something, or do you **actively want it**?



Process Goals:

- The “means to” and “how to get it”
- The specific methods of how to get the job done. Example: Pete Rose wanted to pass Ty Cobb’s hitting record. His process goal was “See the ball, hit the ball.” ...He made it **simple** he made it **functional** ...He passed Ty Cobb.
- “One pitch at a time”
- Don’t rush it, and don’t be “greedy”.

“You possess the goal; the goal should not possess you.”

Action Goals:

The specific moments on the field that hold the immediate goals of every outstanding player. The goals of execution: **Action Goals**

- They confine your thoughts.
- They direct your focus.
- They leave no room for distraction.
- They help you assert as much control over the situation as possible.

Etc. - Focus and Control:

Proper focusing is a result of properly set goals.

- Focus should be on specific **performance** and **behavior**.
- This includes action of **body** and **mind**.

Example:

My goal is to:

- “Hit the breaking ball better”
- “Get a better jump on balls hit over my head”
- “Relax more while at bat”
- “Not take this pitch off”

Final Thoughts:

- *Practice is the right time to build the foundation for success with your goals!*
- *Positivism! -How you talk to yourself determines how you think...How you think determines how you play!*
- *The body does what it hears most clearly...Example: Thinking about what you “don’t want to happen greatly increases the chances that it will happen.*
- *The player predicting failure, fails.*
- *“Hoping” you will means you don’t believe you can.*
- *Don’t fear failure.*
- *To aspire to great achievement is to risk failure.*

Drills for the day: Importance of prep step and first step.



Nov. 17th:

Mental Game: Attitudes (*Mental Game of Baseball, Chapter 6*)

Attitude: Our *state of mind* as we approach and experience our lives. -Primarily built by our *thoughts*.

What affects our “state of mind”?

- Experience (*quality reps/results/confidence*)
- What we allow ourselves to be influenced by (*thoughts/positivity/encouragement*)

You are more likely to have a positive attitude and responsibility/control of a situation if you understand the extent to which attitudes influence you!

Attitudes can:

- Influence our appearance to others
- Influence the words we speak
- Influence the actions we take
- Influence the way we feel (physically and mentally)
- Influence the degree to which we are successful in achieving our purpose.

What are some poor attitudes?

- Lazy
- Selfish
- Disruptive
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of focus

What are some great attitudes?

- Hard-working
- Team player
- Coachable
- Confident
- Aggressive

Note: Identifiers of said attitudes are not free from judgement! They could be distorted by your own bad attitude. (i.e. jealousy, resentment, intimidation)

“Everyone has an attitude: Those who evaluate, and those who are evaluated.”



“It’s strictly attitude that lets you learn - and learning leads to change.” - Pat Riley

What does it take to change a poor attitude?

- 1) Becoming aware of your existing attitudes via honest self-evaluation.
- 2) Trying to understand why those attitudes were developed via self awareness.
- 3) Recognizing the importance of learning.
- 4) Dedicating yourself to your work.
- 5) Being enthusiastic about your work.
- 6) Welcoming change and being open to new ideas/constructive criticism.
- 7) Not taking yourself too seriously, which helps you relax.
- 8) Having an interest in others (in their needs and difficulties)
- 9) Understanding the point of view of others (thoughts, feelings, reasons)
- 10) Being a good listener (trying to learn from others)
- 11) Working/Playing effectively as a part of a group/team (to attain a common goal)
- 12) Keeping yourself from criticizing others (first judge yourself: when perfect, move on to others)

Just to desire to improve an attitude is a sign that positive results will follow!

You are in control of changing a situation. It is your obligation to bring your best attitude. This mindset will give you the best chance to be more effective as a person/ player/coach.

All winning attitudes lead to the the most important one: **SELF CONFIDENCE**
It is not inherited, it’s acquired.

On-Field Focus and Drills: Rhythm in your Swing

Drill 1) **“Throw-Back Drill”** (Use YOUR swing, not the swing in the video) This drill is to emphasize finding “rhythm” in your swing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G86LwoQDCE>

Drill 2) **“Happy Gilmore”** (Use YOUR swing, not the swing in the video) This drill is also to emphasize finding “rhythm” in your swing, but also incorporates load, footwork, intent, and timing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFWZf5TRuXs>

More info & Drills: <http://probabesballinsider.com/baseball-instruction/fundamentals-of-hitting/the-baseball-swing-1-rhythm/>

Video to Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvD00Oeokg> (2:42 start)



Nov. 19th:

Mental Game: Relationship Between Expectations and Goals

What are “Expectations”:

- 1) A strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future.
- 2) A belief that someone will or should achieve something.

Question..

Who is best to judge how performance measures up against goals?

A: YOU!

*“Perform without fail what **YOU** resolve! -Benjamin Franklin*

How does that quote tie into expectations?

- 1) We know that goals are set by YOU, the player.
- 2) You must be able to distinguish between your resolutions and the expectations of others* (Coaches, Parents, Managers, Teammates, Fans, etc.)
- 3) Bad expectations can damage a player’s game and his view of himself (as a performer and a person)

**The expectations of others may or may not be in-line with your goals and/or damaging. This is why we have to have honest self-evaluation and be open to constructive criticism/coaching.*

Discussion: *Why do you play baseball?*

Answer (Hopefully): *Because it is FUN! Because it is worthwhile! Because it makes you feel able and successful! Because it makes you feel accomplished and give you a sense of achievement!*

The player who can retain his joy for baseball is most likely to perform best... which will keep the fun in the game!

Essentially, to meet expectations we need to keep “intruders” out of our game...**What are “Intruders”?**

A: *Anyone who tries to turn the joy of recreation into a burden of anxiety. (Example: Verbal abuse and punishment for not achieving what they/intruders expect.)*

PRESSURE AFFECTS PERFORMANCE!



An "equation" from *The Mental Game of Baseball*, chapter on Expectations:

Unreasonable expectations + unnatural attention = anxiety

...This can explain the lack of execution in various in-game situations, as well as the lack of confidence found present in many ballplayers... Unnecessary **pressure** is put on the player.

Where does the PRESSURE of EXPECTATIONS come from?

- Others (Peers, Teammates, Media, Management)
- Assumed (being "counted on" to pull the team)
- Can be initiated by others, or by our own imagination

Whether the expectation is real or imagined, the pressure becomes real.

Remember:

- *A player not performing up to a goal can change the goal.*
- *A player not performing up to an expectation must change his attitude.*

A Player's list of goals should not include pleasing others.

Goals serve YOU. Expectations serve OTHERS.

- ***Set your own goals.***
- ***Set your own expectations.***

*The player who can distinguish between **where he is reasonably trying to go (GOALS)**, as opposed to **where others want him to end up (EXPECTATIONS)**, approaches his game from the right direction. He **takes responsibility**, and **knows where he wants to be, knowing how to get there**. He'll be **more relaxed, more confident, effective as a player** as a result.*

- - - - -

On-Field Focus and Drills: Proper balance and barrel control

Drill 1: [Stride to Balance Drill w/Evan Longoria](#)

Drill 2: [Pete Alonso Demonstrates Drills for Balance/Seperation/Barrel Control](#)

Video to Watch: [Stance and Balance w/Tony Gwynn](#)



Nov. 24th:

Mental Game: Dedication (*Chapter 4, Mental Game of Baseball*)

1. What is the definition of Dedication?

The state of being bound emotionally or intellectually (or both) to some course of action. - *Translating your desire into action.*

2. Define the aspects of "Course of Action"

- Goals
- Desire
- Dedication
- Success

You get out of it, what you put into it!

We know that in order to experience success in baseball:

- You need to play **loose**
- That playing "loose" only comes with **confidence**
- That **confidence** comes mostly from our mindset/past success
- That success comes from ***"When our technique has become habit."***

SO...Creating that good habit (dedication) is our first success

Distinction between Dedication and Success:

- The amount of time and dedication you put towards a goal do not always lead to success. (Success is never guaranteed)
- Maximizing one's concern and effort are always possible, because that *success* is always in the control of the individual.

In order to really know your full potential, you have to push yourself beyond what you are, to where you want to be!

How is this done?

- Setting goal
- Making commitments with themselves
- By wanting to work hard, and actually working hard
- A **desire** to work hard.



Charles Garfield, a clinical psychologist at the University of California School of Medicine performed a study and interview 1,500 high achievers. He drew the conclusion that “The single most powerful predictor of success in the long run is **COMMITMENT.**”

*(Not just a “willingness”, but a **desire** to work hard toward achieving well defined goals.)*

“How a man dedicates himself speaks for the man. What he achieves speaks for itself.”

What types of things are YOU doing right now to dedicate yourself to your goals?

- Are you practicing self-discipline?
- Do you have the right mindset?
- Do you have the right attitude?
- Are you dedicated enough?
- Are you motivated?

“PRACTICE ALONE DOES NOT MAKE PERFECT. THE RIGHT KIND OF PRACTICE MUST ACCOMPANY THE RIGHT KIND OF DEDICATION.”

Final Thought:

Dedicate yourself to a *daily routine* of focusing on the perfect mechanics within your short-term goals. **Visualize** constantly. Work hard on your weakness as well as your strengths. Dedicate yourself to your **approach** and your **technique**.

- - - - -

On-Field Focus and Drills: Pitch Recognition

Read this Article and Watch the Videos:

<https://www.mlb.com/news/identifying-pitch-types-a-fan-s-guide>

Watch these Videos and Try the Drills.

[Click Here](#)

[Click Here](#)



Dec. 1st:

Mental Game: Confidence

What is Confidence:

- 1) Full trust; belief in the powers, trustworthiness, or reliability of a person or thing.
- 2) Belief in oneself and one's powers or abilities; self-confidence; self-reliance; assurance.

CONFIDENCE IS THE ATTITUDE THAT WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOUR SUCCESS.

...The lack of confidence (in many cases) influences your failures.

Discussion:

- Failure is a statistical *probability* in the game of baseball. (Even when we set proper goals.
- A good baseball player needs to have the **confidence** (fear of failure) that he will succeed.
- Confidence isn't gained by the timid and fearful.
- Building confidence requires taking risks, reaching our goals, and crediting ourselves when a goal is met.

Confidence is found inside each of us!

"The start of confidence-building has nothing to do with whether we are right or wrong; whether we win or lose; whether we get a hit or strike out."

MOST IMPORTANT IS WHAT WE THINK ABOUT OURSELVES.

...The Greatest obstacle on the road to confidence is fear.

What kinds of fears do we have in baseball?

- O-fers
- Errors
- Losing games
- Coaches getting angry
- Parents getting angry
- Not making the team

Basically, the FEAR of FAILURE.

No-one can make us feel like failures without our own consent. Confident people never consent. They...

Use fear as a MOTIVATOR!

Example: Go into a situation with confidence, but also knowing that you might fail, and fail. Tell yourself that you've succeeded in the past, and will again in the future. If you don't succeed "I'll succeed next time".



Learn to CONTROL fear by:

- Coping with failure properly
- Use the energy fear creates in a positive way.

MIND OVER MATTER!

"Fear is your best friend or your worst enemy. It's like fire. If you can control it, it can cook for you; it can heat your house. If you can't control it, it will burn everything around you and destroy you. If you can control fear, it makes you more alert." -Cus D'Amato

Fear breaks down confidence and is actually created by our own imagination.

- Fearing to make mistakes leads to mistake-making.
- The mind tells the body what to do.

THE "BUILDING BLOCKS" FOR CONFIDENCE:

- **Self Evaluation** (What fundamentals do I have to learn, develop, or improve?)
- **Goals** (Fundamentals converted to functional goals)
- **Preparation** (Conscientious, positive, effective work at the task/activity)
- **Persistence** (The continued commitment to achieving – until confidence results)

BE THE HUNTER. NOT THE PREY.

- - - - -

On-Field Focus and Drills: Hips and Hands.

1) Jim Thome - MLB Network

Focus on:

- Knowing where your hands are
- Knob to the ball
- Don't lunge
- Rhythm
- Heel to Hands
- Barrel Control
- Explosive Hips
- Quality over Quantity



Dec. 3rd:

Mental Game: Preparation

What is Preparation:

- 1) The action or process of making ready or being made ready for use or consideration.
- 2) The action and reinforcement of learning. (From The Mental Game of Baseball - ch. 9)

Putting your AWARENESS (your goals) into action:

*...Consistent, **routine**, regimented, repetitious.*

- **The force of preparation is MENTAL!** (You must have the *DESIRE* and be *DISCIPLINED!*)
- **Perfect practice makes perfect** (What you do in *DRILL* you will do for *REAL*)

DO YOU WANT IT BAD ENOUGH?

Process of preparation:

Learning >> Practice Application >> Further Learning (Necessary Adjustments >>
Game Application >> Further Learning

Ways to learn/prepare in baseball:

- Note-taking
- Review your game/practice
- Preview your next at-bat/pitch/defensive situation
- "Self-Coach"
- Visualize
- Doing your homework (watching pitches, tendencies, evaluating playing surfaces, etc.)

Obstacles to the process of preparation:

- The process is **difficult**
- The process is **demanding**
- The process is **time-consuming**
- The process is sometimes **boring** (both physically and mentally)
- You might not **want it bad enough**

EVERYONE MAKES A CHOICE!

Effective preparation brings forward and incorporates:

- Dedication
- Goals
- Responsibility
- Confidence
- Attitude



“If you don’t put anything into something, you won’t get anything out.” -Ozzie Smith’s Mom

What kinds of things can YOU do to prepare yourself for being ready to compete in baseball?

- Develop your mental stamina
- Develop your physical strength
- Knowing the difference between in-season and off-season preparation
- Develop an effective game attitude
- Quality reps
- Develop an effective routine
- Want to win

The athlete most likely to succeed is the one willing to “stand out” and “act differently”

The exceptional athlete **CAN’T train like everyone else.**
He has to **TRAIN MORE** and **TRAIN BETTER!**

Relationship between “Superstitions” and Preparation:

Superstitions help you have a “feeling” ...We believe in the “*feeling*” not the superstitious “powers”.

These feelings are developed through experiencing success (or lack of success” throughout our routine/ preparation...

An immature athlete will use the “superstition” as a crutch for when he fails/does not reach his goal.

Thought: Was anyone that has ever been elected into the Hall of Fame, elected because he was “lucky”?
No, they all had goals, determination, drive, desire, purpose, CONFIDENCE, and they PREPARED themselves to know that they are ready!

PREPARATION IS ALWAYS IN SEASON!

On-Field Focus and Drills: Being prepared to make plays & reading hops.

Six F’s of fielding: Feet. Field. Funnel. Footwork. Fire. Follow.

1) Carlos Correa Fielding Demo. Talks about prep step, ready position, reading hops, setting your feet, off-season dedication and preparation.

[LINK](#)

2) Billy Ripken and Joe Girardi talking about and demonstrate drills and tips for fielding, including range, reading hops, glove placement, fungo drills.

[LINK](#)



Dec. 8th:

Mental Game: Concentration & Discipline

What is Concentration:

1) The control of attention (Mental Game of Baseball, Chapter 11)

“Outstanding performance requires outstanding concentration!”

Thought: *Concentration is easiest when **confidence** is greatest...It is also greatest when **preparation** is most complete.*

Anything less than complete concentration is a sign that there is a **disturbance** or **distraction**.

What could disturbances or distractions be in baseball?

- Too many thoughts running through your head (complicated process)
- Lack of confidence (from lack of preparation)
- Trying to force things to happen
- Waiting for things to happen
- Hoping things will happen

In all these instances, you lose your self-control and your concentration.

Note: The harder you try to force yourself to concentrate, the poorer you will play. This preoccupation will intensify your distraction.

How do you *best* concentrate in baseball?

- You must **FOCUS** not **FORCE** your attention on your **IMMEDIATE FUNCTION** *exclusively, to the very moment.* (i.e. AB/Pitch/Play/Situation/Throw/etc.)
- Have a **clear mind**
- Have a **loose body**
- Have a **positive anticipation of performance**
- Don't force things to happen
- Don't let the **ego** *get in the body's way* (Stress the task/performance, not the person)

SELF-DOUBT IS THE MAIN INTERFERENCE IN PERFORMANCE!

Concentration is best when you **Control what YOU can control:**

Cues to help direct your focus/concentration:

- Focus on the positive, not the negative
- Focus on the present, not the past
- Focus on the process/execution, not the result (or winning the approval of others)
- **FOCUS ON THE TARGET!** (Ball, Glove, Goal)



What is Mental Discipline:

1) The control of thoughts and feelings (Mental Game of Baseball, Chapter 12)

“The ability to pay attention to the task, is the ability to control the self.”

What does the word “discipline” mean?

“Training to act in accordance to rules; instruction designed to train to proper conduct or action; ...a branch or instruction or learning. **To bring to order and obedience by TRAINING AND CONTROL.**

Mental discipline then, is essentially:

The ability to sustain effective and consistent concentration on task - specific performance tasks - according to what is required within the given situation.

(Think of the given situations as: see ball-hit ball, see ball-catch ball, see the target-throw the pitch, etc.)

CONTROL THE SITUATION, CONTROL YOURSELF!

How can we practice mental discipline in baseball?

- Positive thoughts
- Focus on specific performance function *(i.e. did I put a good swing on the ball? Was that pitch a good pitch? Did I execute the play to the best of my abilities)*
- Don't focus on “results” goals *(i.e. I'm going to get 4 hits today..or..I'm going to strike out 7 batters today)*
- Control your thinking (Are you helping or hindering your confidence)
- Control your thoughts (Are you allowing yourself to dwell in fear of the unknown?)

Final thoughts to help with mental discipline...

- Don't give more effort than the task requires. *(This will lead to tension, leaving behind “fast is smooth, smooth is fast” and resulting in “pressing”...“stiff movements” ...or, even “freezing in the moment”)*
- Maintain your control when it matters the most. *(Step out of the box...step off the rubber...deep breaths...control the situation...realize the performance function within the situation)*
- **RELAX**
- **HAVE FUN**

On-Field Focus and Drills: VR Pitch Tracking!

<https://winreality.com>



December 10th

Mental Game: Relaxation/Relaxation Techniques

Relax: *To make or become less tense or anxious.*

Relaxation Technique:

A relaxation technique is any method, process, procedure, or activity that helps a person to relax; to attain a state of increased calmness; or otherwise reduce levels of pain, anxiety, stress or anger.

“Athletes can better control their muscles when they don’t try to.”

In stress and anxiety, one tension leads to another. (Fear, worry, excitement, too much energy, etc.) ...These can be compounded by the command “RELAX”, which will only cause more tension, and interfere with performance.

How can we identify when we are not relaxed?

- Tightened muscles (Gripping the bat/ball too tight)
- Irregular breathing
- Clenching jaw
- Butterflies in stomach
- Twitching
- Grinding teeth
- Etc.

A relaxed player is a confident player. Confidence and a positive attitude result in the lowering of anxiety. This results in less interference due to muscle tension, or the ability to direct and control our attention (focus).

How do we control “pressure”? (i.e. TRY HARDER!)

Thought: If we make a tight fist and squeeze a bat or a ball, we’ll find that every muscle in our forearm tenses. Trying to swing a bat or throw a ball with that kind of grip is like trying to drive a car with one foot on the gas and the other foot on the brakes. -The car will move, but not very efficiently, and it will wear out quickly.

You must know how to set your idle, and know what percentage of tension is just right for you!



How do we identify our own level of tolerance for tension?

We find our “**relaxed start**” for our baseball actions, through experimentation.

How do we do this?

Work down from 100% tension, and then all the way back up (10% increase or decrease per “experiment”) swinging, feeling, gripping, comparing, until you arrive at the tension level that is just right. Works for hitting, fielding, pitching, throwing, etc.

After we know our relaxed start, we are able to:

- Have a better awareness before relaxation.
- Implement various relaxation techniques.

Once a player feels what is happening to him - through his awareness - he has a chance to effectively treat the symptom.

How? Through *relaxation techniques*.

What are some relaxation techniques?

- Get away from the source of pressure. (step off the mound/step away from the box/ smooth some dirt/adjust your glove/et.)
- Talk out loud to yourself. (in a positive, encouraging, and effective way)
- Use movement. (don't be caught flat-footed/be loose/be smooth/have a rhythm)
- Stretch. (Think about how it feels when you're stretching/yawning, it will help clear your mind.)
- Visualize. (A relaxing place/activity to help ease tension)
- Tense your muscles for a few seconds, and then let go, completely relaxing.
- Focus your eyes on something for 5 to 6 seconds. (barrel of the bat/blade of grass)
- Relax the muscles around your eyes, mouth, and jaw. (Tightening is normally found in these areas)
- Control your breathing. (Our minds are at peak efficiency when we breath in a relaxed manner. Exhaling after you complete your preparation.) -Think about when/ why you sigh...after a tense movie scene? *It is the exhale that relaxes you.*
- Have fun! Laugh! (at appropriate times)...and don't take yourself too seriously!

“Leadership is a matter of having people look at you and gain confidence. If you're in control, they're in control.”

— Tom Landry

DRILL: WIN Reality VR Hitting - 2-Strike pitch recognition.



December 15th

Mental Game: The Winning Way (*The Mental Game of Baseball, Chapter 14*)

“The right result comes from the right approach.”

What is “The Winning Way?”:

*A state and statement of mind that is put into action; To strive for excellence in ALL you do. To enact the idea of winning by way of **making winning a state of being.***

“Winning isn’t a sometime thing” said Vince Lombardi. **“It is an all-the-time thing.”**
Continued...

“You don’t win once in a while...you don’t do things right once in a while...you do them right all the time.”

When you know the right way, and you know you want to go that way, there is no acceptable reason to make any other choice. **DO NOT ACCEPT EXUSES!**

If you want success:

- Prepare for success
- Expect success

If you do those two things, in your pursuit, you are winning!

THE WINNER IS THE ONE WHO MAKES EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT ALL THE TIME!

Failure for *losers* is: Wanting without working...Goals without commitment...the desire for success without the desire for what it takes to attain it.

The losing way:

- No accountability
- No risks
- No focus
- Too busy to get better
- Making “promises” not commitments
- Staying “comfortable”
- Would rather be liked than respected
- Sensitive to only your own feelings



Failure for *winners* is: Constantly **learning** and **improving** when we do fail. Learning how to be more effective and put forth a better effort the next time. **Choosing to know what to do, and to DO IT - ALL THE TIME!**

Winners:

- Set **Goals**
- Have **Expectations**
- Are **Dedicated**
- Have a sense of **Responsibility**
- Have a commitment to a sensible, optimistic, energetic **Attitude**
- Are **Confident**
- Are constantly **Learning**
- Are **Prepared**
- Have **Mental Discipline**
- Utilize the **Power of Positive Thinking**

Winners think:

- I can
- We can
- I want to
- I will
- We will
- We'll find a way
- I'll adjust

Losers think:

- I can't
- I have to
- I hope
- I want to avoid: embarrassment, failure, etc.

WINNERS ARE EXCEPTIONAL BECAUSE THEY MEET THE CHALLENGE - THEY DO!

Remember: Just saying the right things isn't enough. **BELIEVE WHAT YOU SAY!**
THEN DO IT! -If you do, you'll not only enjoy the performance - you'll enjoy the feeling!

DRILL: WIN Reality VR Hitting - Soft Focus.