



CONFIDENCE

"I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. On 26 occasions, I have been entrusted to take the game-winning shot...and missed. I have failed over and over again in my life, and that is why...I succeed!" – Michael Jordan

Confidence is the degree of certainty you have in your ability to succeed...an expectation you develop in your mind of how well you think you'll perform given the circumstances. Confidence is the most widely sought after substance in the world on and off the field. When you have it, you feel invincible, in control of your performance, and it seems things tend to go as you expect them to go. When you feel confident, you do not associate with fear, worry or doubt. When you lack confidence, you often become close acquaintances with all three. Without confidence, you often feel out of control, everything is a struggle, nothing's going your way, and you begin doubting your abilities. As you reflect on your best performances and your worst performances usually the key ingredients are confidence and fear...you'll constantly be inviting one in and shutting the door on the other...but they can't live in the same house at the same time.

Good news... there are ways to cultivate and build confidence without necessarily *feeling* it first. The mature athlete first *chooses* to be confident in order to play well while the immature athlete waits until he feels confident to start playing that way.

What Affects Confidence:

- *Fear and your expectations:* of how well you think you'll perform given the situation. For example, a batter facing someone who throws a lot of strikes and at a comfortable speed will have much more confidence than if facing a wildly effective pitcher who throws gas.
- *Your attitude:* How you view things through either an optimistic (hopeful) attitude or pessimistic (hopeless) attitude.
- *Your mindset:* Whether you have a fixed or growth mindset (Carol Dweck, Mindset). A fixed mindset says you are given the talent you were given and if you aren't successful then it was never in the cards for you and excuses and justifications for poor performance occur. They do not push themselves and view failure as inevitable because they aren't talented enough. The growth mindset enjoys the challenge and takes ownership of learning from failure and finds a way to get better.

Ways to Increase Self-Confidence:

- *Reflect on Past experiences* – "I've done it before I can do it again." Have a personal highlight reel of your best performances in your memory bank for ready use. These experiences can be from long ago or from just recently depending on how you've been playing.
- *View Confidence as a Choice* – Regardless of whether you are on top of your game or struggling, remember that consistent confidence is crucial to consistent performance AND you get to choose if you are going to be confidence or not. You have a better chance of getting back to performing well when you maintain confidence rather than lose it.
- *Be Confident about the Right Things:* When you focus on the things in your control rather than on things outside your control you become more confident in your ability to perform well.
- *Confident Preparation:* Using imagery is a fundamental way of gaining confidence especially when you are about to enter something new or foreign. By visualizing yourself succeed over and over again in your mind under all circumstances, by the time you experience it in an actual

game it will feel like you've been there before. Confident preparation leads to confident performance.

- *Control Your Performance with your Words:* Tell your body what to do rather than *what to avoid*.

Truths about confident players:

- They rely on belief in self rather than allow circumstances to dictate how they should feel.
- Confident players back themselves
- Confident players persevere longer, work harder, remain more positive and consistently perform at a higher level than those who doubt their abilities
- Confident players talk to themselves (positive direction) rather than listen to themselves (negative thoughts)
- Confident players show HUGE body language and do not allow opponents to know when they are angry, frustrated, or feeling out of control. They look poised and under control.
- They *want to* be in the big moment
- They make competition personal.
- They love to win AND hate to lose.
- They maintain a *sustained obsession* for what they want and do not allow anything or anyone to talk them out of it.

Take Responsibility for Your Career:

Currently, how much real estate are you allowing fear to take up in your mind? _____%

Currently, how much real estate are you allowing confidence to take up in your mind? _____%

When does fear tend to run you?

In order to increase confidence...what are some ways you can kick fear out on a moment by moment basis?

What will you say to fear when it comes knocking on your mental door?

Describe what your performance looks like when confidence is allowed free reign in your mind?