



Log Your Ideas

Become a mental athlete.



by Kay Porter

JUST AS YOU KEEP TRACK OF your physical training and conditioning, so should you keep track of your mental training. You have thought processes that benefit and support you in many ways, and you also have beliefs and habits that limit you. You are likely unaware of what these are or of how they help or hinder.

Keep a written log to monitor your thoughts and responses to competition. As you progress, you will gain more control over your patterns of thought and your beliefs, and therefore more control over your performance.

A mental training log is a diary that you write in after each significant workout, event, or competition. It is an account of your emotional and intellectual process as you warm up, perform, and conclude your physical activity. It contains your inner thoughts and pictures, your fears and emotional strengths. Your mental training log tells the story of how you think, react, process, and support your physical performance and competence.

Your log is also a place to record all the anger, frustration, and negativity you might feel after a poor performance. You can use the log as a starting point for a new attitude, a way of letting go of your frustration, self-doubt, and blame so that you can start building a more positive mental attitude. Your training log will help you use your performance as a learning experience—your first step toward excellence.

For example, suppose you enter a competition. What is happening in your mind? Is your coach talking to you, giving you last-minute instructions? Do you hear the words? How do they make you feel? Are you relaxed and smooth, or are you tense and stiff? What is your reaction to your physical state of being? What is your inner voice saying? While you are competing, focus on your performance. When you finish, become aware of the inner words, concepts, and feelings that guide you to do well or poorly.

Within 24 hours, write down this awareness in a mental training log. Write it down fully, from beginning to end, good and bad. Be as clear and honest as you can, noting as many internal words

and beliefs as you remember.

You may remember that you were thinking, "Well, here we go . . . let's have fun . . . you know you're ready." Or, you may recall a little voice saying, "I don't think I'll ever be good enough."

Next, read what you have written down, noticing the positive and negative things. Remember what you were doing when you were being positive, and let go of the negative things.

Keep a log during training for a competition. Afterward, read through your log and look for patterns. Ask yourself three questions: What were the positive thoughts and feelings I had and what did they do for me? What were the negative thoughts, beliefs, and feelings I had and how did they hinder me? Did I overcome these negative thoughts? If so, how?



MENTAL/MEASURES

Half a Mind

Failure is assured.



by John Clements

READING A NOVEL, I found one character saying: "Call me a liar in public, would you? Why, I've *half a mind* to sue you for slander!" I thought: If he's *that* upset, his *whole* mind should be engaged.

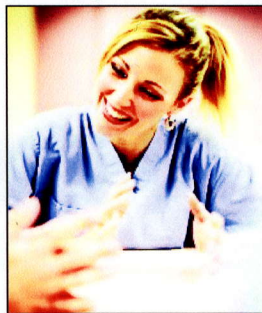
When I hear people say: "I'm in *two minds* whether to take a vacation this month," I think to myself: Then you probably don't want to go at all, do you?

Why are folks so happy to remain in a half-hearted, split-brained, undecided, uncommitted state about so many things?

Why don't they put 100 percent mental effort into each task?

When you claim to have *half a mind* to do something, is it the half that will wrestle with the work; or the half that fantasizes about a mythical future in which work is a fringe notion? And when you claim to be in *two minds* whether to launch a new enterprise, is one of those minds capable of addressing the high-risk elements; or are both your minds tethered to the perceived safety of tiny risks for tiny gains?

Whenever I hear a person claiming to be "in two minds" about a course of action, I know that neither of his half-minds will motivate him to action. The charming scatterbrain Christopher Robin, used to sit half-way up the stairs;



Begin analyzing each performance for similarities, differences, strengths, and weaknesses. Find out what you do in your mind that helps you perform at your peak. Become aware of the mental and emotional beliefs, reactions, and words that limit your performance. Become aware of the times you feel the most powerful and the times you feel powerless, frustrated, and out of control.

From the entries in your log, you will find the places you most need affirmations and visualizations to assist you in performing at your peak. The patterns you see also help you set your goals. **PE**

Kay Porter is the owner of Porter Performance Systems and a sport psychology consultant. This article is adapted from her book The Mental Athlete (Human Kinetics 1-800-747-4457), www.theMentalAthlete.com

ACTION: Log and assess your thoughts.

and since he was neither at the bottom nor at the top, he didn't consider himself to be anywhere at all.

What has half a mind ever achieved for *anybody*?

- Did Sir Edmund Hillary wake up one morning in 1959 and say to Tenzing, his Sherpa guide, "I've half a mind to reach the summit of Everest today"?

- Did Christopher Columbus seek patronage from the King of Spain in 1492 with the words "I am in two minds, Sir, whether the world be round or flat; but I have half a mind to set sail anyway?"

- Did Roger Bannister sit at the starting blocks in 1954 and whisper to his trainer, "I'll try to run a mile in less than four minutes; but I'm only half-convinced it's humanly possible"?

Attitude in Action

Half measures are really no measures at all. They're doomed to failure.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes: "Do you not know that in a race all runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it."

Concentration (or consecration) is a prerequisite for success in any field. The Hebrew prayer *Shema* commands: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." No half-measures! No two minds, or half minds, or half hearts.

Imagine what battles the you could win with a whole-hearted attitude. **PE**

John L. Clements is an author, international life and business coach, and speaker in England. John@lifewisecoaching.org

ACTION: Work with all your mind.