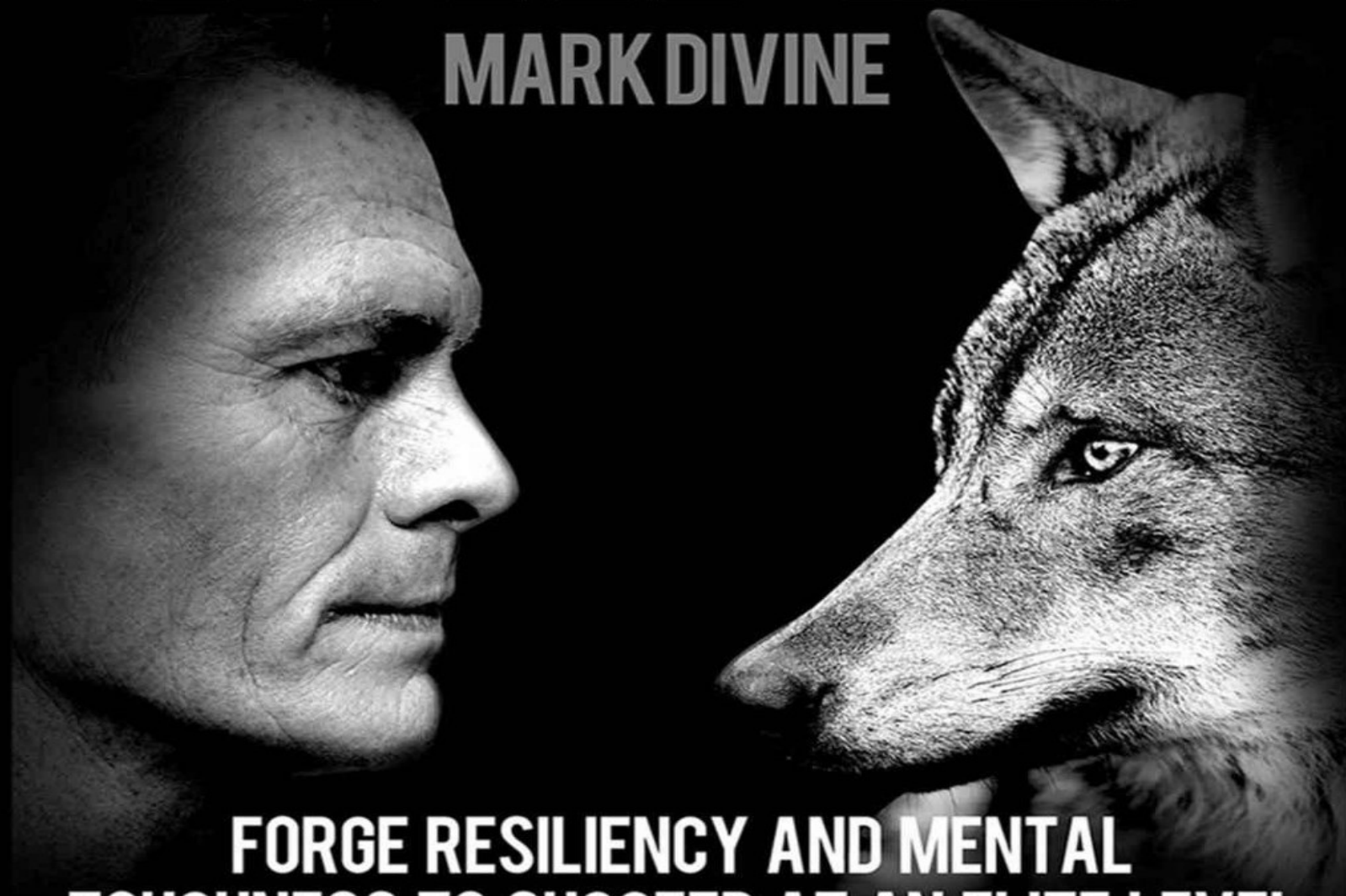


# UNBEATABLE MIND

MARK DIVINE



**FORGE RESILIENCY AND MENTAL  
TOUGHNESS TO SUCCEED AT AN ELITE LEVEL**

**3RD EDITION: UPDATED & REVISED**

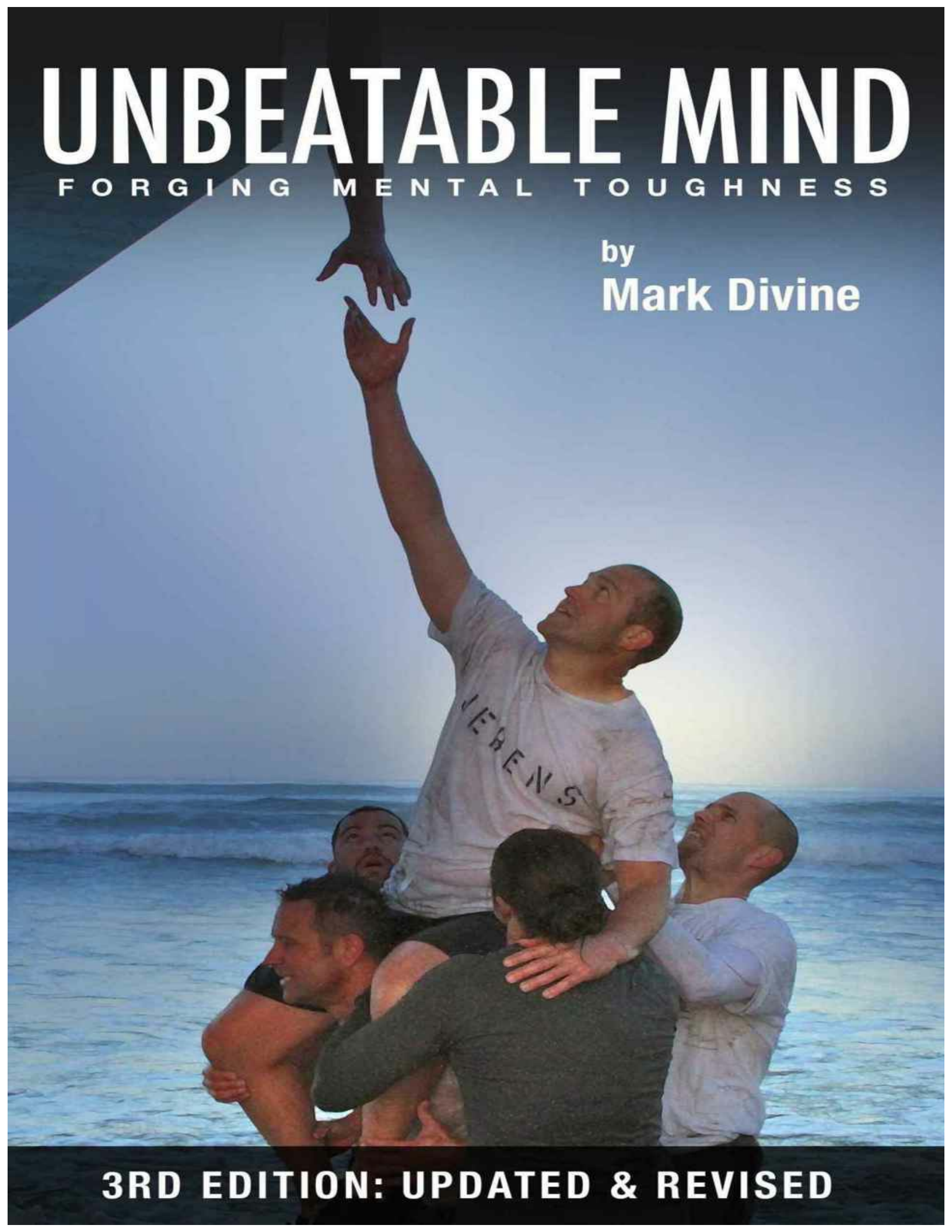
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# UNBEATABLE MIND

FORGING MENTAL TOUGHNESS

by  
**Mark Divine**



**3RD EDITION: UPDATED & REVISED**

*Forge Resiliency and Mental Toughness to Succeed at an Elite Level*  
– Mark Divine

Third Edition, 2015

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Dedicated to my son Devon

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*The Mind Is the Thinker of Thoughts*

*The Witness Is the Observer of All*

— Sensei Shane Phelps

# Introduction: This Is Unbeatable Mind

*When a man is beaten, tormented and defeated...He is ready to learn something.* —Emerson

Over the years I see the same remarkable situation and state of being, again and again, in the thousands who have who have joined my SEALFIT and Unbeatable Mind Programs. These individuals are exceptionally accomplished by society's standards, with fine careers and ample success to report in their professional and personal lives. But from my discussions with the new trainees, it's long become apparent to me that regardless of their success, they feel stuck in a low gear. They feel incomplete, half-empty, conscious that they could be giving far more, but unable to break out of an ingrained pattern of mediocrity.

For some in the world, an existential threat, like a fight with cancer, will shatter their complacency and free them from such a rut onto a higher level of thought and action. But my trainees don't wait for an accident of fate to spur their change. They seek to take charge and drill down into their full potential so that they have the power to make a difference in the world.

I bet you feel the same way. The good news is that you now have a tool in your hands that will guide you forward in solving this frustrating puzzle of the human experience.

The "big idea" of this book is that you are capable of far more than you think you are—more accomplishment, more productivity, more success—but you have been kept in the dark about this potential your entire life. I call this potential your **20X Factor**, in that you are capable of accelerating your daily achievement by twenty times what your current paradigm allows you to believe is possible. It is not as though your family, or our culture, purposely kept you in the dark about this important fact. Rather, they were ignorant about it as well and can't be held to blame. We cannot ignore this truth any longer. Not only do you deserve to unleash your full potential for your own success and happiness, society needs your optimal output to confront the grave problems that mire modern civilization. These problems are of such a complex and deep-rooted nature I believe our collective minds are needed to sync up like a global crowd-sourced network of solution finders to pull us out of the mess we have created. This book isn't an exploration of the various messes, though—there are plenty of authors reporting about the perils we face on our abused planet. This book is about how you can begin to open a channel to that vast potential lying dormant inside of you—so that you can achieve your fullest expression of yourself, help those around you, and send positive ripples throughout the world.

## A Foundation of Silence

Let me back up now and give you an idea of where I'm coming from and how I got here.

In my early childhood, I learned to find solace in the peace and silence of nature. And growing up in the mountains and valleys of the Adirondacks in Upstate New York (Upstate, as we call it, covers 95 percent of the real estate of New York—the other 5 percent is squeezed into the New York Metro area.), all I had to do was step out the back door to find it. My father's love for the trails, combined with my mother's athleticism, kept us outdoors. Twice a week during the summer I would find myself navigating the Adirondack peaks with my dad and Brad, my brother. I cherished these expeditions. They struck me with a sense of awe for the natural beauty and excitement of always finding something new around the next bend in the trail.

I became comfortable with the silence. I had no idea at the time, but this would prove to

become a bedrock theme in my life. Nature never argued with me and, as long as I respected her, made no significant demands. Often I would just sit in absorption, not thinking or striving for anything in particular, and allow the peace to settle in.

On the home front, things were loud and often confusing as my parents fought routinely. For reasons I did not understand at the time, I was shut down and unsettled, locked in a prison constructed of my own conflicting emotions. I craved the contentment and connection that I felt so keenly when alone in nature, but I had no luck finding it in relationships. So my relationship with nature was a friendship I would turn to often, through solitude and silence tuning into that awesome power, and I can tell you now that this was the mentor relationship that prepared me most for what was to be my future as a warrior.

In high school, I made lettering in sports a pastime that carried into my college years as well. Though I enjoyed the camaraderie of team sports, I was drawn to the simplicity and psychological challenge of endurance athletics. Endless laps in the pool and running track were predominantly mental endeavors. Through these sports I learned the importance of proper breathing and the basics of managing the mind. My high school swim times earned me a slot on the Colgate University team, and off I went in 1981.

I settled on a major in economics, thinking that it would help when I landed back at Divine Brothers, Inc., a legacy family business in manufacturing started in 1898. Socially, my world burst wide open as I began a love affair with beer and women (prioritized in that order, it's fair to mention). After a semester of unhinged craziness, I knew I needed to settle down and anchor myself or I would drift off even further, or altogether drown, so I recommitted to the drill I knew best: nature and sports. The rigor of my daily schedule kept me focused and less prone to participate in the nonstop party.

I'd be lying if I didn't admit those were great times, and I have some great friends from that era. However, I was clueless as to what I wanted to do when I grew up besides the family business, which was my default plan. And as to the measure of when I was grown up, I was running out of room even by the most liberal of definitions. As senior year ground to a close, though, I found myself with a unique job offer from a Big 8 CPA firm in Manhattan. The firm, Coopers & Lybrand (now PricewaterhouseCoopers), somehow figured it a sound investment to sponsor me to attend the NYU Stern School of Business as part of a work-study program. I would work as an auditor for two years, during which time I would get a master's and pass the CPA exam.

So within five weeks of graduating Colgate, I found myself back in summer school at NYU. For a few months, the newness of the challenge motivated me, but it wasn't long before I dreaded the monotony of the "real world". Was this really what I was going to do for the rest of my life? Completely on my own now, I was overwrought as the educational bills piled up and my options for escape dwindled. I started to openly question whether I had made a disastrous mistake from which there was no turning back.

Walking home from the subway one Manhattan evening, I was snapped out of these sorts of dire thoughts when I heard spirited shouts exploding from a second-floor window. Looking up, I noted a flag stating "SEIDO Karate, World Headquarters." Interesting. Sounds like they are whipping up a storm up there, I thought. I couldn't resist, so I climbed the stairs and met the man who would become my first mentor, who held the key to unlock the door to my own Unbeatable Mind.

Kaicho (Grandmaster) Tadashi Nakamura founded Seido Karate in the seventies. He was brought to the United States by Mas Oyama, the founder of Kyokushinkai karate to head up the tradition's training in this country as it was gaining in popularity and spreading quickly. After a few

years, Nakamura became disenchanted with the tournament fighting focus of that style, desiring to teach karate in combination with Zen training to a broader base of students. He believed that the inner development of the warrior must parallel the outer development or the art could be used improperly. In essence he felt that self-mastery was equally as important as fighting prowess. The fighting strategies, tactics, techniques, and physical conditioning were methods of the outer training, while meditation, contemplation, and silence were the methods of inner warrior development. Incidentally, most modern martial arts have lost this subtle art of warrior development, aiming instead at competition or MMA-style training. Kaicho Nakamura's training and mentorship caused a paradigm shift in my own consciousness—meeting him was a watershed moment in my life. My experience of life after Seido was, well, different.

I received my Shodan black belt ranking in November of 1989. I also received my CPA and my MBA certificates the same month. But the most significant thing that happened that November was that I hopped on a train to Newport, Rhode Island, to begin my second career as a naval officer. The mentorship I had received under Kaicho Nakamura's guidance had opened my vision to new avenues of possibility, and I charged ahead on one of the more adventurous ones—I had become enchanted with the Navy SEALs' siren call to "Be Someone Special." In short, I took the bait. Into the Navy I went in 1989 and never looked back.

## Teams 'n' Shit

It was late November when I disembarked in Newport, Rhode Island, leaving behind the suit, the corporate world, and sadly, Kaicho Nakamura. Officer Candidate School (OCS) was four months of marching from one class to another in formation, and I gutted through it, no problem. It's an understatement to say that things would heat up. In March, now in Coronado, California, I checked into BUD/S, the six month SEAL training course, for Class 171. It was a Friday, and I was informed my class wouldn't begin for another 10 weeks and that a different class, 170, was ramping up that coming Monday. I was determined to get started right away, so I went searching for someone who could make it happen.

My determined search had me stepping onto the deck of the Combat Training Tank (SEAL-speak for swimming pool) facing the 180 panic-stricken looking students of class 170, lorded over by Lieutenant Rick May perched high on the dive platform. The entire class went silent when this newly minted officer (me) entered their space.

*"What can we do for you, Enzyme?"* was May's response to my interruption.

*"Sir, I have orders to 171 but would like to class up with 170,"* I said with a sense of confidence.

*"OK, that's not normal. Prove to us that you are ready: swim fifty meters underwater in your boots and Utes (utility pants) right now,"* he said.

OK, I thought, this is going to be interesting, but it's right up my alley.

The sea of candidates parted, likely evaluating my sanity during this brazen stunt. I stood at the pool's edge, took a few deep breaths, and jumped in, boots and all. I pulled like hell against the water and made it to the other side, and then I turned and kicked against the wall with all my might. I glided halfway and then pulled my way to the other side. Gassed, I could barely drag myself onto the deck to await sentencing.

"See me Monday morning," May said. Then he went back to hammering the class.

On Monday I classed up with 170. May and the other SEAL instructors were a different breed of men than I had ever been exposed to. Their confidence was born not of cockiness, the view



from their skyscraper office or the size of their paycheck, but of extreme competence and a "been there, done that" air of untouchability. Legend had it that Lieutenant May fractured his leg on the third day of his Hell Week. He wasn't going to let an annoying little detail like that sideline him, so he continued to run on it until he passed out from the pain...after securing from training on day five!

People like Lieutenant May and Lieutenant Zinke were my heroes and new mentors for the next nine months. They never messed around, or wasted time, preferring to go from zero to a hundred miles per hour on day one and not throttling back at all for the duration. The training standards kept getting harder and faster while the quitting line got longer. Those of us who had spent several years preparing and cultivating our mental toughness were ready. Those who had not...were not...and didn't survive. Of the 180 who started in my SEAL training class, only 19 graduated. I was the Honor Man of the class.

The arduous BUD/S training has been exposed by many SEAL authors and Hollywood movies, so I won't review the details here. But I will sprinkle in a few anecdotal stories to back up a principle here and there. Before I go on, for you ladies reading this, I want you to know that this book is every bit as much for you as it is for the guys. Though the SEALs and martial arts are dominated by rough-and-tumble men, I have trained alongside many women in the arts and, more recently, in the discipline of Ashtanga Yoga. In Ashtanga most of my peers are women, every one of them as physically capable, or more so, than their male counterparts. The principles of Unbeatable Mind are not about being hard-core but rather about how to perform at your peak in any domain, whether you are a mom, dad, SEAL, student, or CPA.

After BUD/S training, I was ordered to join SEAL Team 3 in Coronado. There I was assigned as assistant platoon commander of Alpha Platoon under Lieutenant Washabau.

Wash was an excellent officer, and we trained the team hard for twelve months. We were slated to go to Desert Storm. We were just heading out the door when the war ended, so instead we deployed to the Philippines. In the "PI" we conducted a mission confusingly called "Foreign Internal Defense" (FID was a term used to describe US Special Operations Forces training a foreign force for their internal defense needs) and other special reconnaissance missions. FID had us train a number of naval special ops forces in the Asian rim for the purpose of bilateral relations, point of presence, cultural awareness, and intelligence.

I really enjoyed these missions, though they paled in comparison to the hard-core direct action missions seen by the SEALs since 9/11. Most of all I loved working with Alpha Platoon and SEAL Team 3, serving there for close to five years. The work was fast-paced, extremely challenging, and rewarding. Some of the stories that came out of that period are outrageously funny and mind-blowing. We chalked all those experiences up to what we called "teams 'n' shit." Most SEALs who stick around for more than a single tour have a set of crazy sea stories to tell due to the nature of the team and the missions taken on.

In 1995 my Platoon Commander Tour ST-3 was cut short, and I was assigned to SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team 1 in Hawaii. I also got married to a Coronado girl named Sandy. Learning how to drive and navigate the minisubs was almost as fun as learning how to navigate a marriage! When I checked into the team instead of going into another operating platoon, I was slotted to head up a special project that took me back to South Korea.

At this point in my active-duty SEAL career, I felt pulled in opposite directions. My wife was not thrilled about the massive amount of travel, and I did not want to be away from her for eleven months out of the year. I certainly understood the travel needs when I got married, but I wasn't prepared for the emotional challenge they presented. Many people dealt with this by treating their

marriage like a business arrangement—it didn't bother them, and they enjoyed being away. I, on the other hand, didn't like it one bit. I worried that the marriage wouldn't survive the stress of constant deployment. In retrospect, I think that because I had such a difficult time connecting when I was younger, when I finally found a heart connection with a woman, I didn't want to blow it. Therefore I made the difficult and life-changing decision to leave the active duty and transfer to the SEAL Reserves.

## **Part Time SEAL, Full Time Entrepreneur**

The Reserves left me with more free time than I'd had in my life since college, so I started to divert my energy to something new. In April of 1996, I paired up with my brother-in-law to launch the Coronado Brewing Company (CBC). It was only the third brewery to open in San Diego early in the trend, and the business is thriving to this day. Since that fateful decision I have launched five more successful businesses, including NavySEALs.com, Inasoft, US Tactical, US CrossFit, and SEALFIT. While busy as an entrepreneur, I also served at Reserve SEAL Teams 1, 3, and 17, as well as Naval Special Warfare Group ONE and Special Operations Command Pacific. I was mobilized for one-year active duty stints twice, one time to Bahrain and Africa and the other to Iraq. There I ran a special project with ST-1 to study whether the Marine Corps should become part of the special ops community. I was also hired as an adjunct professor of leadership at the University of San Diego and helped launch an entrepreneurial leadership institute there. I was very busy, but again I felt like something was missing, just as I had back in my pre-SEAL days.

I thought back through the years and it was plain to me I was happiest and most successful when I was actively engaged in daily comprehensive training. With such a heavy focus on business for the last several years of my life, I'd shifted away from the integral training approach that had given me so much. Sure, I'd work out 3- 4 times a week, but not as intensely or holistically as I had when training with Seido Karate or the SEALs. Also I didn't have a team to train with, which makes a big difference in accountability. My life had become all work, and more importantly, just about getting things done. There was scant attention paid to physical training or mental performance, and no focus on growth and development. For a second time I was faced with the prospect of a slide into physical and mental mediocrity, and I decided I would find a way, or make a way, to train like I had in the Teams and at Seido ten years earlier.

## **Yoga Jitsu**

In 1999 I essentially stumbled upon Saito Ninjitsu and Ashtanga Yoga and took them both up. Through my ninjitsu training, I was able to tap into the physicality and raw warrior spirit of the martial arts again. It was liberating. But it was through the eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga that I finally understood what it took to move from being a warrior athlete and leader to becoming a metaphorical warrior monk. Yoga turned me inside out, slowed me down and firmly planted a meditative practice back into my life. It was the perfect complement to the hard physical training that I was so accustomed to.

Yoga reinforced the notion that daily training and practice was more important than any specific teacher or skill. The journey of disciplining and “yoking” (the word Yoga means to yoke) the body, mind, and spirit to still itself and focus on higher-order notions of being and living is one of the great secrets to personal development. Just as the body will atrophy without constant training, the mind and spirit will not develop, and will atrophy, without a similar focus.

I began to experiment by combining CrossFit, Ninjitsu and Ashtanga techniques into my training

regimen. I found each to be rich and rewarding, but alone they did not meet my warrior development goals. CrossFit lacked the inner development, Ninjitsu lacked the functional fitness and meditation, and yoga lacked the strength, stamina, work capacity, and endurance training I desired. So I cobbled together a program with all three, but I found it difficult to handle three \$150 monthly training memberships and juggle the schedules. So in 2006 I finally decided I would figure out a way to integrate the best of each system into one training model. The result, launched in 2007, was SEALFIT.

The training worked very well. In fact it was so fun, effective, and uplifting that by 2014 SEALFIT was known worldwide for our warrior development training. Along the way I had become a recognized mental toughness expert. All of this came from my desire to share with others the powerful training program I originally designed for myself that integrated the most powerful elements of physical, mental, emotional, intuitional, and spiritual training I could find.

## **The Unbeatable Mind Road Map**

Since leaving the active duty SEALs in 1996, I have watched how business and life have become so much faster, more complex, and more aggressive. The rules that I knew then have been shattered by the Internet and the diffusion of technology—forces that have seemed to flatten the world and increased the velocity of time. Entire cultures that were once isolated are now connected via mobile devices, and values are experiencing unprecedented rates of collision with differing viewpoints and ideas. The business landscape now has the look and feel of enemy territory on a clandestine SEAL mission. You and I must develop fresh, innovative methods and beliefs to effectively deal with this stark new reality.

Einstein said that you can't solve a problem from within the same paradigm the problem originated. In Unbeatable Mind I offer a new model of personal enrichment that will enable your elevation to what I call the “Fifth Plateau” of consciousness. This is achieved by training and integrating five key lines of human development, which I call the “five mountains.” They are your physical, emotional, mental, intuitional, and spiritual intelligences. This paradigm includes learning how to avoid damaging psychological loops and traps, developing new patterns of thinking that are positive and supercharged, and working from the “we” perspective rather than your narrow “I” perspective. When we can accomplish these things together, even on a small scale, not only will we forge our individual body-mind-spirits, but we will protect and better our children's future. Ultimately Unbeatable Mind is about developing your personal power fully so you can be more successful in your job, career, and life and then use your growing power to help guide your tribes, organizations, and the human race to a better place. Self-mastery, then service. Sounds lofty, right? If you are on board with this vision, then let's get busy learning how to forge your Unbeatable Mind!

### **Section 1: Find Your Positive Focus**

The first step is to learn how to focus your mind to concentrate on an object, idea, or task of your choice. The undisciplined mind can unravel you, wreaking havoc on your plans and aspirations. The Buddhists called this chaotic state your “monkey mind.” The monkey mind is your enemy. The disciplined mind, on the other hand, is your calm, clear, steady ally, ready to lend a hand when you need it.

Once we awaken and enhance our capacity to focus, then we can examine the quality of the content in our minds. And that's when we come to the stinging realization that some of the stories we've been buying into are very negative, or at best simply may not be the right stories for us. Now we begin to understand—without the tools in place to protect ourselves—the ease with which we can

be influenced by thoughts rooted in fear, destructive feelings, and counter-productive external influences. Negativity derails performance, so it's imperative that you are able to control your focus and shift away from these influences. Rooting out negative emotions, beliefs, and behaviors that will hold you back can take considerable time and effort. This step is where many fall off the path, but the process of developing mental control is essential before you can move on to Section 2. Even slight progress in this step leads to a radical shift in awareness and growth.

But what exactly are we focusing on? SEALs don't take on twenty-five missions at a time—they have maybe five missions that they're training for and only one central to their focus. They can therefore ensure excellence at all five and success in the one critical “now” mission. I'll show you how to determine what you're focusing your efforts on and how to maintain that focus positively.

## Section 2: Develop Warrior-like Discipline

For our purposes, “Unbeatable Mind” isn't just a tool or a quality...it's also a robust training program. I run this program primarily online with videos, webinars, emails, support forums, and more. But if you're reading this book, you can also create your own training program using the principles and techniques I will teach you.

A good training program, whether you are seeking to elevate your consciousness or become physically stronger, requires commitment to daily effort. Consistency is the omnipotent force behind change. We've got to have a plan and we've got to have an objective to accomplish through a series of specific targets. Your objective in this step is to cultivate a state of self-mastery. The root of “discipline” is to be a disciple to something higher than ourselves—in this case, to elevate the importance of your human development to the same status as eating or sleeping. This is absolutely critical.

The warrior doesn't live in the past or the future. The warrior lives in the present. He fulfills his purpose every day. The predawn of each day must be embraced with the same high energy and uncompromising effort. Each decision counts. Assuming you do not stray, that you practice and master the virtue of consistency, you will find the rewards to be monumental, perhaps even shocking, and you will push through to Section 3.

## Section 3: Cultivate Excellence

There are a lot of common ways to think about a lot of common things. But a warrior doesn't do common. To the warrior, satisfaction with mediocrity is as unacceptable as it is unsettling to imagine. This step builds on the first two in that, with your positive focus and deepening state of self-mastery, you're now actively hunting for ways to uncover virtuosity in seemingly common tasks. If you're spending 60 minutes in a workout, how can you squeeze more benefit out of the cracks that can be found in that single hour? If you're giving a speech, what enhanced technique, approach, or preparation can you use to connect with and impact more people in a more powerful way? The warrior asks these questions and then chases down those skills in order to cultivate excellence. Excellence becomes both an ideal and a breath-and-blood habit, and underneath it all, it comes down to choice.

That choice is to slow down enough to pay attention to the details. This is where we find the opportunity to do things a little bit differently, and be a little bit special.

## Section 4: Earn Your Trident Daily

By the time you've reached Section 4, it's time to bring all of your new skills and virtues to

bear when traveling this path with other people. Unbeatable Mind trainees know they can't make major change happen in the world or in their lives alone—so this is where we start to look more specifically at how to step up as a leader your team can follow with faith and confidence. And you will learn from your team as well. But first, you must prove yourself worthy of leadership. In the SEALs, the Trident is a gold emblem awarded at the completion of an arduous year-long training program that only the very best of each class complete to earn their place as a legendary SEAL. It symbolizes an enormous right of passage into a special brotherhood bearing a strong sense of duty, professionalism and service. You likely have symbolic Tridents in your life and it's key to remember that the Trident is earned, but can also be taken away. A SEAL learns that his actions determine whether he gets to keep his Trident. It has to be earned anew each and every day.

How does this translate for you? It means you can no longer rely on the successes achieved yesterday. Yesterday is gone. It's over. Tomorrow is hopefully going to come, but there are no absolute guarantees there. So guess what? It's all about today. Today's where you need to target your thoughts and energy. Today's where there's respect to earn, training to accomplish, and money to make. You've got to show up and put in 110% today, go 100mph, to prove to your team that you're there for them and that you can be relied upon. Earning your Trident daily demands you move beyond self-mastery and discipline, though those practices are nonnegotiable prerequisites to this step. Earning your Trident daily means your focus stays on your role as part of the team, on how you can serve your team, on how you can lead yourself and your team to success. If they see your focus slip to what's best for you instead, their trust in you will erode, and you'll not only find yourself out of a leadership role but maybe even off the team entirely.

## Section 5: Build Your Team and Take Action

You undoubtably figured out I'm a big proponent of yoga, but though Unbeatable Mind is influenced by the warrior roots of yoga, it is oriented toward action and not just about your personal growth. How you grow as an individual is only relevant if you can build a team and, together, do great and worthy things in the world. That's the point. So discovering what you want to accomplish and how are you going to do it is key. But to operate at the highest levels, you will need to recruit, train, and motivate a kick-ass team. In this final step of the process, you will learn the importance of working with like-minded teammates to align with your vision and help you win your missions, every time.

Besides the fact that you can only achieve great things with an unbeatable team supporting you, there's a lesser known but equally important secret to success that I will explore in this step: The team is the ultimate crucible for your mastery of all five steps that enables the peak capacity of operating on the Fifth Plateau of consciousness. It is together that you will achieve this elite brand of integration and virtuosity.

There is a lot of nuance packed into this simplified five-step process. We will cover it all in this book.

Let me close this chapter by saying that you are not alone on this new journey—there are many who are following the Unbeatable Mind prescription, including athletes, executives, moms, dads, teens, martial artists, yoga practitioners, and spiritual seekers. This book will provide the basic philosophy and tools to allow you to win in your mind, forge grit, and develop an offensive attitude. It will help you to train yourself and your team to peak performance, and, more importantly, to lead with your heart and mind merged in action. I encourage you to enjoy the journey rather than focus on the

destination. For every mountain you climb and plateau you rest at, there will be another and more interesting view ahead.

Refer to image in Appendix 1: Unbeatable Mind Framework

# Section 1: Uncover Your Why

# Chapter One: The First Premise

*Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win. —Sun Tzu*

A month before I tested for my black belt in Seido Karate, I embarked on a final tune-up retreat at the Zen Mountain Monastery in Woodstock, NY, where the Seido team gathered a couple of times a year. Our schedule had us practicing the physical aspects of karate and the mental aspects of Zen in a very yin-yang fashion: Two hours of meditation followed by two hours of karate training, twice a day. The first morning, as I took my seat on the little bench (which was supposed to take the pressure off our knees and allow us to keep our backs straight), I snuck a peek around. At the monastery that was generous enough to allow us to share their space, most of their students were monks in residence. If you could imagine what a professional meditator looks like, they were in that room. I felt like an intruder and wondered if they could sense the charlatan in the room. After about ten minutes of trying to focus on my breathing, counting each inhale and exhale, I was exhausted, and my back hurt like hell. Why did this suck so much? Where was the peace and bliss I was expecting? Who would have thought that doing nothing could be so acutely painful and hard?

Try harder, I told myself: Concentrate on that spot in front of you. I got to the count of two but realized I was thinking about breakfast. Back to zero. The next determined attempt I made it to the count of three but was vaguely aware that in the back of my mind I was fantasizing about a girl I had met the previous weekend. That's not meditating, I confessed to myself. Back to zero again.

The experience was a real "eye-opener," and it wasn't my third eye that was opening. I could barely make it ten minutes before my mind, like a monkey frantically grasping for a banana, would race off in another direction. I called it "concentration camp" because we were instructed to concentrate on the counting, and it sure felt like a mental prison cell. "Just sit and count your breath," instructed Daido, the head monk. "When the mind wanders, bring it back to the breath. Don't beat yourself up; life is too short." Oddly, life never felt longer... I was used to things being easy and couldn't help beating myself up for sucking so much at a skill that I had imagined would be as easy as stretching out in a hammock.

Despite my clumsiness, I began to register a surprising change. Even though I kept feeling like a meditative failure, I noticed the more I did it, the better I felt. Maybe, I considered, this type of internal work didn't require the aggressive goal orientation of my school sports' training or the general Western mind-set that drove me through my work as a CPA. Maybe there was no "there" there. What I ultimately discovered was that even if I sucked at sitting in silence, it worked its magic anyhow. I was circling back to another part of my past: The silence of the bench was not much different than the silence of nature I had enjoyed in my youth. What a simple yet profound discovery!

The major lesson I gained from my journey into Zen, one that I wish to share with you now, was that I could gain control over my mind—if I consistently practiced, practiced holding a true, complete state of silence in the mind.. When you achieve this place of silence, only then can you witness the mind in action. In doing so you begin to separate your identity from "the thoughts" and get acquainted with that part of you watching the thoughts. That space between the thought and the watcher—your witness—is where the magic is. Absent that space, efforts to develop concentration, confidence, creativity, and spirit fall light years short.

You, too, must learn to approach mental training without goal orientation. Be patient, and expect the unexpected.



Later, as my twenty-year SEAL career unfolded, I sought to understand those seeds that Kaicho Nakamura had planted during those formative years in New York City. I noted that during long training hikes and numbingly long dives, my mind began to drop into the same meditative state I had experienced on the Zen bench. Hours would slip by as a calmness and sense of confidence penetrated my awareness. When a crisis hit, rather than try and intellectualize or instantly think up a route through the problem, I learned to feel my way through crisis moments. I'd observed how excessive thinking and analysis paralysis had been responsible for injuries and deaths. I chose instead to surrender to my intuition and seek presence in place of constant rationalization. Over time I became vividly aware of what was transpiring in and around me. This present moment mind-set centered my rational mind within even more control and allowed for creativity to flow. These experiences piqued my interest in training the inner skills even more. I wondered:

- How could I deepen my intuition?
- Could I learn to activate that precious flow state at will?
- Could I intentionally slow down time and ensure I was calm in the midst of a crisis?
- How were deep breathing, internal visualization, positivity, and effective planning practices linked?
- What impact did these tools have for long-term goal actualization versus spot performances?
- How could I develop my creativity?
- What were the limits to my performance as a human?

In 2006, I was hired by the navy to train and mentor all SEAL candidates nationwide (an invitation that launched my third business, US Tactical). This program was the driver behind my creating an integrated training program and offering it to the public. That training became the petri dish for developing the principles discussed in these pages. That is where I developed the tactics behind the First Premise.

## **Win in Your Mind**

SEALs operate at an elite level because they know how to discipline their minds and secure the win internally before they enter the fight. This is what I call The First Premise, and we must first go into the belly of this beast to tackle how to develop mental control. You don't have time or the luxury to join a monastery or spend twenty years as a SEAL as I did (unless that is your goal, of course!). For many of you, it will be the first time you have been challenged to think about the mind in the way I will present here. Stay with me, and trust that what I am offering works. After you establish a foundation for mental control, then you can move on to more "practical" concepts in the ensuing chapters.

But where do we start if our minds are like runaway freight trains? For most of us, sitting in silent meditation can seem impossible. With great intentions we give it a try but are immediately frustrated by the busyness and randomness of our mental machinations. Attempts to settle the mind by just sitting and trying not to think can lead to frustration and failure. As a teenager I did Transcendental Meditation™ (TM) with my dad for a few days. Sitting in a nice, comfortable chair, I tried like hell to focus on their mantra. My mind conspired to turn this effort into a disaster, as after several seconds my inner dialogue started chattering like a schoolgirl about anything and everything: What's for dinner? Gotta go mow the lawn. Wish I hadn't said that to Sally. Boy, I have a lot of homework to do. What the heck am I doing this for anyway? This sucks...I have too much to do...I'm

out of here!

The only consolation prize was that my dad failed miserably, too. We both gave it up. Only later with Nakamura, did I come to understand how we are bred to identify with our thoughts. This is the critical problem. We find meaning by constantly thinking of our body, beliefs, successes, failures, rules, and roles in life. We have few mechanisms to shut these lines of thought down except for sleep.

As we age and further empower the rational mind, the humble witness weakens in its shadow. We are rarely, if ever, encouraged to spend time in silence or get to know the depth of our character. All the while our souls cry out for attention. But controlling our thoughts can seem counterintuitive. After all, aren't they—our thoughts—us? Heading down this path can be terrifying. What would you become if you disassociated from your thoughts? Fear, frustration, and time demands sidetrack many of us from this penetrating brand of silence, and we quit before we experience the surrender.

If this has been your experience, please know that you aren't alone. My message to you is this: forget about the past and the failed efforts. Take this moment to formally and forever let go and give yourself a fresh start. Now is the only time that matters. Getting to the terrain of elite performers demands attaining access to the 90 percent or so of the vast mental power that lies beyond the rational, thinking part of your mind.

Let's break this down and discuss how to go about accomplishing it.

## **Embracing Sacred Silence**

Most meditation practices (as with the TM and Zen) come from a culture we are not familiar with. They are difficult for the contemporary Westerner to wrap their steel-trap heads around. To solve this challenge, I offer some simple guided visualizations that focus and clear the mind quickly. One is called, "The Fish Bowl" and the other, "Still Water Runs Deep." Both of them can be used as a jumping-off point for mental control. I will describe the Fish Bowl technique here. ("Still Water Runs Deep" is described in my book *The Way of the SEAL*, and all the practices in this book have written and video descriptions in the online Unbeatable Mind Academy).

Fish Bowl and Still Water are super-effective because you are combining concentration, awareness, and guided visualization into one powerful practice. But there are other tools you can use as well. You can just sit and observe your breath going in and out. Don't force things; just observe the breath and any thoughts that arise. Another is a concentration practice, such as the Zen meditation I described earlier, where you will count each breath cycle, trying to get to ten, while watching for any errant thoughts. If they arise, you note them, release them, and go back to zero to count the breath again. Want to go even simpler? Spending time in nature is another great way to still your mind. If you are an athlete, you can practice on long endurance runs, swims, or hikes.

## **Preparing for Meditation**

Find a comfortable place to sit in a chair, on a cushion, or on a stool. The key is to keep your spine straight and to avoid discomfort that will disrupt your mind. Begin the practice by closing your eyes and scanning your body from toes to head. This is a sensitivity awareness drill that can also be done as a stand-alone awareness deepening exercise. It will bring your mental attention to parts of your body, one at a time. As you move up your body, linger for a breath at each of the six energy centers (known as chakras in yoga), and imagine a glowing white light at each. They are, in order:

1. Root: located at the base of your spine.
2. Sacral: located about three inches above the root in your lower abdomen, below the navel, near

the spine.

3. Solar Plexus: located just below the ribcage, near the spine.
4. Heart: located behind the heart in the center of the chest, near the spine.
5. Throat: located in the throat behind the Adam's apple.
6. Brow: in the center of your brow but a couple inches behind (also called "third eye").

When you get done with that intro, expand your awareness all around you for a few moments. Try to sense the energy around you and inside of you and to feel connected to it. If your mind wanders during this phase, don't sweat it...just bring it back to feel the body and the space around you.

### The Fish Bowl

OK, now you are ready to clear your mind completely using the fish bowl technique. In your mind, imagine your skull as a fish bowl and your thoughts are the cloudy, murky water (not too far from the truth, I might add!). Your breathing is the filter. Each deep breath you take in and out is a cleansing breath that begins to clear the murky water of your mind. You begin to sense the water of your mind getting cleaner and clearer as you breathe. After ten breaths it is mostly clean; after twenty it is as pure as a natural spring on a sunny day. As you imagine the clarity of your mind, you realize that what you are witnessing is a "no mind" state. In this state your mind is unspoiled by thinking. You maintain that state as long as you can. If you start thinking again, your fish bowl gets dirty and you can recommit to cleaning it.

### **The Witness**

Have you ever been knee-deep in an argument when you suddenly had the experience of separating from the dialogue and watching the absurdity of what you and the other person were doing? You may have broken out laughing as you instantaneously shifted from identifying with the thoughts and words spewing out of your mouth to what I call your witness.

This is a very liberating moment. The ability to gain distance from your own thoughts allows you to separate yourself from them. Let me say that again a different way: The more you connect with your witness, the more you understand that you are not your thoughts. This separation creates space for positivity to flow in, releasing you from the shackles of natural negativity.

Perhaps you've noticed that when we get "stuck in our heads" we tend to slide into negativity. We judge, get emotionally attached to our opinions, are impressed with our brilliance, and tend to shut others out. In these moments we make lousy teammates and tend to sabotage success. Negativity destroys performance in the short term and precludes success and happiness in the long term.

Why is it so natural for us to be so negative? It turns out that for survival's sake, our rational, thinking mind is wired with a bias for negativity. It must decide and act on life-threatening influences daily, and it is conditioned to be pessimistic and scared as a result of the barrage of negative influences (We will get more into just how the mind works in Chapter 8). This isn't some newfangled theory; Native American elders have long recognized this truth, saying that a wolf of fear resides in our minds ready to pounce at the slightest danger.

But what we're doing now is bringing to life our facility to recognize that the witness is always there, too. You have to slow down and take a step outside of the constant "doing" nature of modern life to connect with it, to open up a space between our deep, ingrained fear responses and patterns and our true, authentic self. The Zen tradition talks about "polishing the mirror" to explain this phenomenon. Imagine your ego mind to be like a mirror. Negativity, false stories, fear...these things

cloud the mirror, making it difficult to see yourself and reality with accuracy. As you practice connecting with your witness, you're polishing your mirror and actively training your skill to see clearly. You're getting in touch with the positive aspects of your ego instead of the negative. You are enacting a new phase of evolution toward your fullest human expression, away from the animalistic, reactionary nature of our hardscrabble past.

When you first begin to still your mind and acknowledge your witness, you will notice, maybe for the first time, how habitually you harbor negative, weak thoughts. Once you see this, you discover one of the powerful gifts of the witness: You now have a choice to change these thoughts immediately. You can also rely on your witness during conversation, or during an action, to detect a pattern of negative thoughts when they first start creeping in. The trick is to use awareness of negative thought as a stimulus to softly redirect the mind into the realm of positive thought and performance.

SEALs are trained to be rock-steady, but I am no stranger to the twin demons of negative thoughts and feelings. When I checked into SEAL BUD/S Class 170, my nerves were sizzling. I could feel the adrenaline pulse through my arteries. The magnitude of the instructors flared—they had a superhuman quality and the students were like freaked-out carpenter ants frantically trying not to be crushed. My class had 180 trainees, and the stream of negative chatter in their minds was expressed in the anxiety riddling their faces. I was picking up a lot of it myself. I sensed the tension in my stomach as fear and dread settled into the class. I began to talk to myself: "What's up? I have trained hard. I've made it this far. Many have gone before me and made it. If they did it, so can I. Quitting is not an option. They will have to kill me to get me to quit!"

As I said those words to myself, I felt the fear melt away and the firepower of courage replace it. I had applied the simple technique of being a witness to the flow and content of my thoughts and feelings, and then, when negative thoughts began to seep in, I took the action to redirect. I intentionally tuned my attention to a positive frequency.

## **Starving Fear, Feeding Courage**

As I said earlier, negativity erodes performance, so it is imperative to retrain the underlying pattern and maneuver from witnessing negative thoughts to starving those thoughts into oblivion. Then start in with the positive, courage-building thoughts. Or as the Native Americans might say with a vivid metaphorical punch, you need to starve the fear wolf and feed the courage wolf.

This is the specific process I use and have taught through my various training programs:

1. Witness negativity.
2. Interdict, or stop, the negative thoughts with a power statement.
3. Redirect your mind with self-talk and imagery to something positive and productive for your current goal.
4. Maintain your new mental state with a jingle or mantra.

Interdiction power statements are words that shock your monkey mind back into control. Words like "no" or "stop" work well, though I prefer using positive power statements, ones that have a little more blast to them, such as "I've got this," "piece of cake," "step it up, Mark," or my favorite, "feed the courage wolf!" You will want to develop a power statement, one with some shock force to it, that resonates with you. Then practice using it daily. Practicing power statements until they become second nature will, over time, place the interdiction process on auto-pilot. Juiced-up power

statements explode negative mental chatter and allow your mind to still itself and await its next set of instructions.

Power statements temporarily interdict negative thoughts but don't ensure they will stay away forever. Negativity will likely return unless you redirect your mind to a new, positive thought pattern. Essentially you must have a contingency plan to prevent backslide. I see this with Kokoro Camp trainees all the time. When I note a student going negative, my staff and I will do an interdiction for him or her. "What wolf are you feeding, Joe? Feed the courage wolf!" The interdiction temporarily stops the student in his or her tracks as he or she notes the negative state and the degradation of performance caused by it. The student has a moment of presence and choice for a new direction, a positive one. But if he or she lacks a solid redirect strategy, he or she will revert back to the negative rut.

The secret for a successful redirect is to inject a new positive thought pattern into your stilled mind that aligns with your immediate goal. You will infuse these new thoughts with positive imagery and feelings. You will keep your mind focused on the new internal dialogue, imagery, and feelings until you are well into positive terrain. What I'm referring to is creating and using a jingle or mantra.

The jingle is a song, rhyme, or saying that is positively charged and has a strong meaning to you. The jingle is like background music that keeps negativity at bay by engaging your conscious mind in its positive words, images, feelings, and meaning. I must reiterate that these coded messages must be charged with meaning beyond their simple words. For example, the jingle "Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better" was coined by the French doctor Émile Coué. This man was a hundred years before his time and was able to heal his patients by having them change negative thinking and emotional states. They changed to positive by saying and believing that one statement. I use it daily myself, along with a couple others.

With practice your jingle will run in the background of your mind with little or no prodding. It won't prevent you from using your mind for problem solving; rather, it is like the gatekeeper for your witness, ever present to ward off negativity. Your mind remains under control and unfettered by thoughts or beliefs that sap your energy and degrade your performance.

Typically the entire four-step process is done in an instant. As an example, sometimes during my SEALFIT daily training with my team I find it necessary to shout a verbal interdiction, followed by redirect instructions, when I witness the whole team suffering from a defeatist attitude. "Hooyah, team; we got this. Focus on the next round...see it happening...let's crush this." Instructions to this effect shock the team out of their slump and get them focused on a new, positive direction.

Combined with regular meditative work, you should experience immediate results with this powerful mental control process. However, please don't be discouraged if you feel like it is taking too much time for things to shift for you. Like the practice of silence, you are making progress just by paying attention to this vital skill. My recommendation is to settle into your silence practice (whether you use Fish Bowl or something simpler, remember the point is to create a ritualistic, regimented practice, not just to go for a nature walk every once in a while) for a few weeks and then implement the four-step process of Witness, Interdict, Redirect, and Maintain to set the stage for mental toughness.

## **Three Ps and Your One Thing**

In the next chapter we'll talk about using your new positive focus skills to develop mental toughness, which in turn provides the foundation you need for everything else it takes to forge an unbeatable mind. But first, a question: Do you know where you're headed? Put another way, what is

it, exactly, that you want out of your brief time here on Earth?

When I was younger I was a great daydreamer, but if you had asked me to describe what my future looked like, what my purpose was, what my principles were, or what I was supposed to do about it all, I would have returned to you a puzzled, blank stare. To be fair, most people are not very clear on any of that either. In retrospect, the lack of awareness in my youth caused me much hand-wringing and lost time. I often wonder how many people are in the same boat. What about those in their forties, fifties, and later in life lacking the clarity I speak of? The inability to see and articulate a future full of purpose, passion, and principles was cured by my deep insight and contemplation within the Zen training I was fortunate enough to receive with Kaicho Nakamura. Yours will be cured by doing the work in this chapter.

I believe it is crucial to be self-aware enough to be able to articulate our Three Ps and One Thing. Let's look at these by asking a few questions:

1. What am I Passionate about and how can I do more of that?
2. What do I value, and how can I develop these Principles so they define my character for the rest of my life?
3. What is my Purpose? Who am I and what am I here for? What is the One Thing I am supposed to accomplish in my life, and what does that mean for me right now? That is, what is today's One Thing connected to my big One Thing?
4. How do I take my One Thing and activate it in the world?

Mastery over the self—a key characteristic of those with an unbeatable mind—is somewhat difficult if you don't have clarity on these questions. If you don't know yourself, what are you supposed to do besides just get by? Lack of meaning and purpose is a major cause of despair and despondency in the world. Some will stumble upon a vague sense of purpose in their professional lives. Others have their purpose shown to them early in life and are well into fulfilling it in their twenties. I have found that the vast majority of my students cannot clearly articulate their purpose and are deeply moved when they uncover it.

Let's step back and take a look at your One Thing. It is highly likely that you have a sense of your own uniqueness, that aspect of you that sets you apart from others. This uniqueness is coded into your DNA and, I believe, put there as part of your soul's yoking to your physical body. Regardless of your philosophical or religious orientation, you may sense that your soul whispers to your mind your deepest yearnings and has propelled you in surprising directions in life. If you ignored the whispers in the past, my guess is that you felt out of sorts and misaligned, like I felt as a CPA in my early twenties. Listening to your inner voice will help you define your Three Ps and lead you to your One Thing. Then you can align them in your actions and march forth with confidence and peace of mind.

One of the finest ways to cultivate insight to your Three Ps and One Thing is the aforementioned insight meditation, contemplation, and journaling. You've already been introduced to some methods for stilling your monkey mind and creating space for insight and guidance to arise. Now, you will start to uncover your Three Ps and One Thing by asking deeply personal questions in layers. This is likened to cleaning layers of dust off a mirror in your mind to reveal the real image beneath.

### Defining Your Three Ps and Your One Thing

These are good layered questions to reflect upon and journal about as part of your process for defining your passion, principles, and purpose, which in turn lead you to your One Thing:

### **Your Passion:**

- What are you passionate about in a way that defines who you are?
- What make you feel as if your hair is on fire (besides a fire)?
- What unique skills or talents do you have that you love to use and that make you feel different?
- If you won the lottery today, what would you do differently?

### **Your Principles:**

- What is it that you truly value in your life?
- How can you move toward those things you truly value and away from the things you don't value as much?
- What do these values say about what you are passionate about?
- Do these values point to an overarching purpose in life?
- Can you make a habit of the big, positive values so they become part of your character and then your destiny?

### **Your One Thing and Purpose:**

- What have you been conditioned to think you are supposed to do with your life?
- What do you think you are really supposed to do with your life?
- What do you feel you are really supposed to do with your life?
- Is there a tiny voice of doubt deep within you suggesting you are on the wrong track?
- Is that same voice nudging you forward with the sensation that you are on the right track?
- What One Thing do you think you are here for? What One Thing would you focus on if you had nothing holding you back?
- What would you do differently if you knew you had one year to live?

Looking inward and writing down what comes up in a free-flowing manner gets you into an ideal state for the intuitive and creative aspects of your mind to be heard. You will train your mind to enter these intuitive states on demand, and as you do so your insights will deepen even further.

Once you can clearly articulate your Three Ps and your One Thing, write them down in a place where you can review them daily (mine are in my smartphone notepad).

### **What Will You Be Remembered For?**

When Alfred Nobel read an obituary one day, he wasn't thrilled with what he saw. It was written about him! Of course, it was a mistake made by a reporter after his twin brother passed away. The reporter berated Alfred in the obituary as the man who introduced dynamite to warfare, leading

to millions of deaths in World War I. Appalled, Alfred used this event to find a new purpose and One Thing for his life...which we now know was the founding of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Your next assignment is to write a personal obituary as you want to be remembered, not as you are now. Imagine that you are a great friend writing the obituary who "knew" the major impact you had on others and on the world, as well as all the good things about you. This may be uncomfortable at first, but focusing on your legacy can be very enlightening. It will expose the gap between where you are now and where you can be at the end of your life...if you align with your Three Ps and your One Thing.

Don't blow off the obituary exercise; it is very powerful. If writing your obituary seems overwhelming, start smaller: Write your epitaph from the perspective of having fulfilled your One Thing and lived your purpose in life.



# Chapter Two: Mental Toughness

*The first secret to mental toughness, as simple as it may sound, is to recognize and embrace the power of choice and how that power can shape our lives. — Mark Divine*

Often I see people with great minds and all the right stuff for success torpedo themselves on the one-yard line. They do this because they lack the fundamental tools for mental toughness. As mental control is the starting point, mental toughness is what sees you through to the finish. So in this chapter I will share three of my top secrets of mental toughness.

## **Making the Choice**

Prior to starting your journey to an Unbeatable Mind, things seemed to just happen to you. Life was random, and you often felt out of control, because it was, and you were. Now that you are learning how to control your mind, you are back in the driver's seat. You will be able to create exactly what you desire and avoid what you need to. You are writing the script of your own masterpiece...your life.

And that life, your entire life, is made up of thousands of small decisions made every day. We tend to focus on the few big choices when we reflect on our life experience. Some of the common biggies: Where you go to college, a marriage partner, a career choice, where you decide to live, what you do when you retire. But think about it: Isn't it true that the big choices, the life-altering ones, are available only as a result of all the small choices you made up to that point?

Let's consider the college example in finer detail. Perhaps as a kid you chose to embrace school rather than resist it. You sought to learn, did your homework, and got decent grades. The daily commitment led to a choice to go to a top university. Alternatively, maybe you chose to resist school and have a negative attitude about being forced to sit in classes you had no interest in. Then, as you approached the end of the process, you had a different set of choices—such as to drop out or finish and scratch something out from the bottom of the ladder in a minimum wage job, or go to a community college to play catch up. Very little had to do with your general intelligence or aptitude. Yet it had everything to do with the countless, indiscriminate choices made throughout an average day that narrowed opportunities. Ultimately, the collective value of the small choices define the big choices we make, impacting the rest of our lives.

Consider this: In your formative years you chose to embrace fitness and good nutrition. Every day you asked yourself whether this food or this action would make you healthier or less healthy. You made a habit of training your body and eating well. Then, in your mid-twenties, you decided that your life was calling you to be a Navy SEAL. Because your choices to that point were in alignment with the big choice of becoming a SEAL, you sailed through the program. The alternate universe is obvious, and I don't need to describe what happens to the vast majority of people who make "less good" small choices in the area of fitness and nutrition. Our health care, medical, and insurance industries are trillion-dollar industries as a result of several generations of people chronically making poor decisions in matters of nutrition, health and wellness.

OK, so where am I going with this? It's simple: success is defined by choice, and it's the small choices, not the major ones, that make the difference between good and excellent.

The first secret to mental toughness, as simple as it may sound, is to recognize and embrace the power of choice and how that power can shape our lives. And perhaps one of the biggest choices you

must learn to make is how you think of and deal with stress.

## Managing Stress

Forty-nine hours and forty-five minutes into Kokoro Camp 7, the instructors descended on the trainees, some who we sensed had held back during the arduous weekend. The SEAL coaches are looking not for superhuman effort but rather for super determination and a fire-in-the-belly attitude toward challenge. Kokoro Camp is a voluntary event, so we don't drop athletes unless they are a danger to themselves or will hold the class back. Typically even those who opt out are transformed by the totality of the experience. But it's our job to help our trainees discover that aspect of themselves that holds them back from greatness, and to give them the tools and the experience of breaking through to the next stage of their development. That requires us to push them in all kinds of ways.

That day we were on the verge of securing the class when some unspoken urge struck us to press harder. We ratcheted up the intensity level and put the class under a whole new level of mental duress and uncertainty. They had thought there were only a few minutes left and that if they could endure forty-nine hours and forty-five minutes of pressure, they could deal with a few more moments of duress. But we turned up the heat. We convinced the group we were going for another few hours until they finally got it right. To our surprise, one of the trainees up and quit. The new stress had unhinged him, and he stepped aside and said he was done, game over.

The choice was simply to keep going as he had for the last forty-nine hours and fifty-five minutes, or, alternatively, to give up on a challenge he had up to that moment fought hard to complete. We secured the class as planned a few moments later, and he watched in stunned disappointment from the sideline.

Stress is so often cited as the cause for poor health, breakdowns, and lack of success. The prevailing view in society is that stress acts on you insidiously and you are its helpless victim. How often do you think these thoughts, or say them out loud?

- "I am so stressed out."
- "I can't take this stress for one more minute."
- "This job is killing me."
- "I need a [fill in your favorite vice here, drink, smoke, etc]."

It's a myth that stress is your problem. Your real problem is believing that stress is the source of all your woes. In my early twenties, I was there, I know what this is like and how it feels, and I know how easy it is to fall into this trap. Now that you understand that your mind can be either a feisty fiend or friendly ally, you can see that how we react to stress is actually a story we tell ourselves. Change the story, and you will change how stressors affect you and your life. To change our story about stress, let's use the process we learned in the last chapter:

1. Step 1 is to witness the adverse stressor as it impacts you and begins to affect your psychology and physiology.
2. Step 2 is to interdict the response to the stress.
3. Step 3 is to redirect your psychology and physiology to counter the impact of the stress and transmute it to positive performance.
4. Step 4 is to use breathing and concentration techniques to maintain performance and eliminate the stress from your mind, body, and life.

With this process you take back control and move from stress to success!

Stress is neither good nor bad—it just is what it is—but it gets a bad rap. Most folks think that the secret to health and happiness is to eliminate or avoid stress. There are a million courses out there that propose to eliminate financial stress, work stress, relationship stress, everything stress. Good luck with that. It is like peeing into the wind. Everyone faces a massive amount of stress every day, but he who manages stress well is the one who wins. The four-step process above will work whether we are talking about a one-time acute stress, like in a crisis, or long-term chronic stress, such as the crushing load of commitments.

Incidentally, the main stress experienced in our lives is time stress, and it is entirely self-induced. After all, isn't time also a story and social construct that allows us to organize social life? Redefining your storied relationship with time will reduce a big source of stress in your life. Take on fewer commitments, focus more positive energy on the worthy commitments (that are aligned with your purpose), and watch your performance skyrocket.

## Understanding Stress

Stress is simply a term for resistance or pressure. We need these forces to grow as humans. Let's use strength training as an example. Weight introduces an external resistance stress to our bodies when we attempt to manipulate it. The challenge requires us to learn a new skill and then develop the muscular strength and stamina to lift and move the load safely. To accomplish this the body must break down old tissues that were programmed for the previous skill level and load and build new tissues programmed with the new reality (weight limits and skill).

Most people don't react to that form of stress negatively—in fact scientists even give that type of stress a title: "eustress." Eustress is good stress, but in reality it is how we mentally frame and handle the stress that is good, not the stress itself. The stress just "is." Back to the stories we tell ourselves. The story that stress is bad is not a good one. Stress is stress. How we learn to respond to stress and use it to grow is the better story.

When stress is not intentionally invited, we consider it distress. Again, the stress itself isn't bad; it is our relationship with it that causes us to label it and experience it as "distress" rather than "eustress." How we deal with the stimulus is influenced by factors such as expectation, fatigue, preparation, and resiliency. When we don't expect the stress, are fatigued, aren't prepared to handle it well, and lack resiliency (the ability to bounce back from stress quickly and stronger than before), then the stress will adversely impact performance.

Here's how this all works: Our brains are wired to process incoming information through the amygdala, located in the temporal lobes of the brain. The information is screened for threats and opportunities. Within this screening, the amygdala interprets many modern influences as threats. The pressure of a work deadline, for example, is identified as a danger, even though a modern-day contraption, such a PowerPoint presentation being due on Thursday, is a joke compared to being chased by a cave lion like our ancestors. When a threat is detected, the amygdala initiates the commonly known "fight, flight, or freeze" response (also called the hyper arousal and acute stress response), which in turn activate the hypothalamic, pituitary and adrenal glands that flood us with adrenaline and cortisol. These lead to the familiar physiological effects such as:

- Elevated heart rate
- Increased blood pressure

- Rapid breathing
- Boost of energy

Each symptom prepares both mind and body for the inevitable reaction to the imposing threat. You're charged up and ready to either launch a right hook or sprint down the street. Keeping in mind that we determine how stress is viewed through the stories we tell ourselves, consider the benefits of the stress response when viewed positively. The physiological changes give the body increased strength and speed in anticipation of fighting or running. However positive stress can be as a tool for growth, it is not a good idea to expose ourselves to it too often. The fight-or-flight response is an adaptive reaction, and extensive increases in stress can cause a variety of negative physiological and psychological effects. Prolonged stress responses may also result in chronic suppression of the immune system, leaving the body open to infections. Interestingly, there is a short boost of the immune system immediately after the fight-or-flight response has been activated. This may have filled an ancient need to fight the infections in a wound that one may have received during a confrontation with a predator.

These same symptoms can result from post-traumatic stress and panic disorder, in which the stress response is activated by memory of an event and—or in addition to—a catastrophic misinterpretation of bodily sensations.

## **Double-Barrel Power: Breathing and Concentration**

The SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV) was cruising along at a depth of twenty-five feet below the surface of the waters off Oahu, Hawaii. I was in the navigator seat; the more experienced enlisted SEAL was piloting. We were two hours into a five-hour dive mission when it happened. Water gushed around my face and filled my wraparound breathing apparatus. I could breathe but was blind and disoriented. I fumbled through the standard operating procedures, the SOPs, to clear the mask, but to no avail. The face mask seal had ruptured and was useless. I reached for my backup mask, but it was nowhere to be found. Dang—somehow I had lost it on insertion. I immediately understood what the old-timers meant when they said, "two is one; one is none" when it came to equipment. Now I was useless as a navigator, yet there was no turning around or aborting the mission. So for the next three hours I dealt with the misery of a flooded face mask and of being a bystander in the mission as the other SEAL took over navigation as well as the piloting job.

After the initial fear and frustration wore off, I settled in for the long and uncomfortable ride. I knew that the only way to get through it was to go back to my training. So I slowed my breathing down and began to hold my breath at the inhale and exhale. I also started to concentrate my mind deeply on the breathing cycle while repeating a positive mantra, which further allowed me concentrate on maintaining a positive attitude. I was just getting good at all this when suddenly the SDV came to a halt, and I got a squeeze from the pilot. I thought we had a problem, but he signaled me to exit the SDV. To my surprise we had arrived at our destination! Three hours had passed in what felt like forty-five minutes. Rather than a stressful and miserable three hours, I actually felt a peace of mind during the deep breathing and concentration exercise. It was another powerful anchoring experience for just how valuable the skills are.

Without the breathing and concentration skills, I could have panicked and compromised the mission. At minimum, I would have been consumed with the torture of not being able to see. Through my own training and by helping thousands of special operations candidates, I have found that stress is easily managed through breathing and concentration tools. Yoga practitioners have used breathing and

concentration techniques for thousands of years to dissipate stress, develop optimal health, and drive toward spiritual advancement. Breathing is free medicine, and the daily practice of breath control leads to optimal health and a longer life. Breathing techniques have been part of my daily regimen for over fifteen years, and the impact has been extraordinary.

Don't wait for a crisis to get started. Instead learn to breathe and concentrate properly now. It's an accessible technique that leads to true mental toughness.

## **Concentration through Breath**

We all understand what it means to concentrate, but can we really concentrate with enough depth that all distractions are eliminated? Can we concentrate on our One Thing—the most important thing—for long enough periods of time to get the job done? Can we do it with a hair-on-fire intensity? Deep, long, unbroken, and inspired concentration is a hallmark skill of super-successful people. Yet the only way to improve concentration is by practicing concentration.

There are many ways to practice concentration; in fact we have discussed a few already. The guided visualization drills introduced in the first chapter are concentration practices, as is the basic Zen practice. Any endeavor where you take dedicated time to focus on a very narrow range of things, or just one thing, can be classified as concentration practice. Most of what passes for meditation in the West today is actually a concentration practice. The concentration practices that I use include Box Breathing, yoga, Qigong, and mind games.

Let me now describe a breath control practice that I have dubbed “Box Breathing.” Box breathing is named after its box-like ratio of inhale, retention, exhale and suspension (more on that later). This is my secret weapon. It is simple, safe and extremely effective at creating a balanced, energized state, and calm, focused mind. As of this writing, breath control for mental development is not taught in the West beyond a very small group of authentic Yoga professionals. One of my mentors, Gary Kraftsow, founder of the American ViniYoga Institute, is one such professional. Though I had been doing some form of breath control since my days swimming competitively, sitting on the Zen bench and on dive missions with the SEALs, it was Gary who taught me the science behind how to integrate breath work into yoga training, and by extension, into any physical training program. Some of the many benefits, when practiced consistently over a period of time, are listed below. For our purposes here, when you practice controlling your breath, you are able to calm your thoughts, slow your heart rate, and regulate your autonomous nervous system. This removes your internal response to stress as a source of further concentration-busting agitation. You can't think clearly with a mind that's going off like a slot machine. Oddly enough, it is the mind itself that compounds the problem. If we could control our mental response to stress, discomfort or pain, then our ability to stay in the game and lead our team to victory is greatly enhanced. Box breathing is our answer.

In Section 1 we looked closely at how to maintain your positive focus. A tool to enable this focus is to use breath awareness to still your mind. Developing focus and concentration are closely related, though the mechanics are slightly different. The mind stilled in meditation has different qualities than the unfettered, focused mind able to zero in on a solution and pounce. Both mental states are important for the warrior and leader. When we begin a concentration practice, our goal is to be able to sustain focus on one thing without distraction. Breathing properly slows everything down so that you can concentrate on a fixed point, and do so for a longer period of time. When you're able to concentrate on a single thing—the right thing—at a time, it significantly reduces your stress and increases your sense of internal control. You now have the power to direct what your mind is paying attention to and to sustain that attention, leaving worries, fears, and other “threats” outside the narrow

scope of your concentration.

Over time you will expand your focus so you are aware of all that is going on around you, and in you, while you concentrate on that one thing without distraction. Concentrating like a laser beam on a task, while simultaneously scanning inside and around you is an advanced skill that has great benefit for authentic leading, communications, and creative work. We'll take a closer look at the benefits of expanding your awareness in Chapter Five.

Over time additional benefits will accrue from mastering your breathing and deepening your powers of concentration. You will be able to learn new and important things very fast, and you will be able to penetrate your own inner nature to understand greater truths about our lives, human nature, and the natural world in general. The yogis say that with enough deep concentration one can know the nature of all things, all wisdom. Let's settle for the practical benefits of controlled breathing and improved concentration, such as:

- Improve your health and sense of well-being
- Increase your intelligence
- Develop emotional awareness
- Enhance your mental control
- Become a leader who is not fazed in a crisis
- Be a more persistent and positive problem solver
- Finish everything you start, assuming you deem it is worthy of your time and focus
- Be the go-to guy or girl to solve interpersonal conflicts
- Feel more confident, with higher self-esteem
- Gain more insight and self-knowledge, yielding humility and grace

This type of inner training requires daily effort. The good news is that you can do enjoyable things to deepen concentration, such as the simple technique of Box Breathing, select yoga poses and sequences, and even reading. Further, the better you get, the easier it is to "practice" concentration in other areas such as in physical training sessions or when playing a sport.

In a high-pressure crunch situation, I recommend you put your concentration on breath management as I did in the earlier SDV story, while maintaining relaxed awareness of your surroundings. Breathing deeply and equalizing the duration of the inhale and exhale will greatly reduce stress, slow your heart rate and bring your nervous system back into balance. The mind will remain focused as your body comes back into balance. Then you can concentrate on the situation at hand in order to make better decisions in the midst of the chaos, danger, or the debilitating effect of fear. This is why breath awareness and control is critical training for Unbeatable Mind students who push the envelope physically, but it is also equally effective to enhance performance in the boardroom, performing surgery, presenting a keynote, or leading an important meeting. The level of control over your physiology and psychology I am talking about must be practiced and habituated until it becomes a routine skill.

## **Breath Control Basic Training**

Lets begin our basic training. First, it's important to understand that proper breathing works on three levels in our bodies. It enhances our lung capacity and breathing musculature, strengthens our immune system and regulates our neuroendocrine system. Second, it charges and balances our energetic body into a state of invigorated health.. The energetic body is that system of energetic

pathways that includes channels on each side of the spine. These pathways transmit energy up and down the spine (nadis) and points where the energy channels intersect as they spiral back and forth around the spine (chakras). The energy body is elaborate and has been mapped in great detail, yet it is mostly out of reach of Western scientific instruments at this time. Finally, as discussed already, proper breathing clarifies and focuses the mind. There are three steps to breathing for optimal physical and energy health:

1. Relearning how to breathe deeply through your nose into the chest, diaphragm and “belly.” Of course you don’t actually breathe into your belly, but the feeling is such that you breathe air beneath your diaphragm. This is more of a body map reference.
2. Training your breathing so that you begin to breath in deep and rhythmic patterns naturally as your normal pattern when awake
3. Learning to use the breath in advanced ways to heal, build energy, clam down, balance your emotions, and to trigger razor's edge performance.

To say that learning breath control is the most important component of forging mental toughness would not be an understatement. During drown-proof training at BUD/S, many people drop because they have difficulty controlling the stress and fear caused by a seemingly dangerous event. With hands and feet tied, they panic and flail, throwing their energy down the drain. However, those who have learned to control their breathing sail through the evolution. Let’s look at the details of basic breath training.

When you were a baby, you knew how to breathe perfectly well. For some unknown reason, that knowledge is lost with age. Today it is likely that you use a small portion of your lung capacity with each breath. The average person takes fourteen to fifteen breaths per minute and uses a paltry one-third of his or her lung capacity in each breath. This leads to increased blood pressure, carbon dioxide buildup, and a free-for-all monkey mind. The trained warrior will take three to five breaths per minute, greatly reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in his system while maintaining a calm body and mind. There are three problems with rapid, shallow breathing:

1. You are taking too many breaths, unnecessarily, and wasting precious energy.
2. You are not bringing in the optimal supply of oxygen and life-force in each breath. You are leaving energy on the table and consequently shortening your life-span.
3. You are not expunging all the stale air from the depths of your lungs. This habit incurs sluggishness, toxicity, and long-term health problems.

Learning the three-part relaxation breath and doing it daily eradicates these problems, freeing you up to perform better. Here it is: Begin to inhale deeply through the nose. On each inhale, fill the belly up with your breath and expand the belly with air like a balloon. Then on the exhale, expel all the air out from the belly through your nose. Draw the navel back toward your spine to make sure that the belly is empty of air. Repeat this for three to five cycles. On the next inhale, fill the belly up with air as in step one, but when the belly is "full," draw in more breath with your diaphragm into the ribcage, causing the ribs to widen. On the exhale, let the air go first from the ribcage, letting the ribs slide closer together, and then from the belly. Stay with this for three to five cycles. Finally, fill up the belly and ribcage as described above, and then draw in even more air into the upper chest, all the

way up to the collarbone. You will note your upper chest rising and expanding. On the exhale, let the breath go first from the upper chest, then from the ribcage, and then from the belly. You will feel a relaxing, settling feeling as you release the pressure. This three-part breath focuses you on the three areas to be filled with air and then released in sequence. The goal is to train to breathe this way unconsciously and naturally in one breath motion (that is, you will not consciously break it into three parts). I call this breathing pattern the relaxation breath. Please note that the inhale and exhale are done solely through the nose in as slow and controlled manner as possible. In fact, unless you are smoked in a workout and gasping for air, the nose is the organ for breathing. Breathing through the nose stimulates the nerves that activate the parasympathetic nervous system (especially on the exhale), countering the fear response of the sympathetic nervous system. The nose also warms or cools the air and cleanses it of unwanted elements in the air, such as dust.

## **Box Breathing**

Now let's again turn to my favorite training tool, which develops the relaxation breath and skill of concentration simultaneously. I named it Box Breathing in 2007 when I introduced the technique because the pattern of the breath is a 1-1-1-1 ratio, shaped like a box. Start by exhaling all of the air from the lungs. Now inhale to a count of five, and then retain and hold your breath to a count of five. Don't clamp down and create back-pressure with this hold. Just stop the inhale but continue the upward rise of the chest. After the retention, exhale the air slowly to a count of five, and then suspend and hold the exhaled breath for a count of five. For a more profound impact with your box breathing training, add a powerful jingle/mantra on each hold, such as "getting better and better, stronger and unfettered." This practice is offered in audio format in the first lesson of the Unbeatable Mind Academy. Doing the practice at least once a day for 5 to 10 minutes is enough, though I enjoy longer sessions of 20 minutes a few times a week. The technique can be used in short 1-3 minute "spot drills" several times a day or before an important meeting or event. This approach is an omnipotent approach to check in and feed the courage wolf while managing your stress. Also — two for the price of one—this exercise strengthens your mental power. This one technique alone is so transformative that with consistent execution it will profoundly change your life, so why don't you take a five-minute break from reading and give it a try now as a preparation for what's next: emotional resiliency.

Refer to image in Appendix 1: Box Breathing

## **Big Four of Mental Toughness**

The four skills of breathing, positivity, visualization and goal setting form what I call "the Big Four of Mental Toughness." We have discussed breath control in detail already, and will cover positivity, visualization and goal setting soon. These skills are time-tested and proven in stressful and chaotic situations. I will quickly review them here:

1. Arousal Control: using deep breathing to manage stress and the arousal response (fight, flight or freeze).
2. Attention Control: learning to control your mind and maintain a positive attitude through positive self-dialogue.
3. Visualization: using mental imagery to ensure that your emotional and mental "picture" is mission focused and aimed toward victory.



4. Goal Setting: learning to set proper goals, and scaling them to micro-goals when the going gets tough.

We will continue to work with these tools and I have included a handy graphic in the appendix you can cut out and post near your desk. But now, I would like to turn to another set of four skills, those of emotional resiliency. No matter how mentally tough you are, if you are not emotionally resilient you are likely to still fail at your mission.

Refer to image in Appendix 1: Big Four of Mental Toughness

## **Emotional Resiliency**

There was a junior officer in one of my platoons at SEAL Team 3 who wore his emotions on his sleeve. At the slightest sign of criticism or honest feedback of his performance, he would fly off the handle and make absolutely sure everyone within earshot knew how screwed up the officer was who had straightened him up. It's probably not much of a shocker to tell you his career was short. During Kokoro Camps, I've also noted how the inability to recover quickly from a perceived failure can cripple a trainee emotionally. Take a moment to appraise your reactions: How many times have you let your emotions torpedo a relationship or stressful project?

Resiliency means that you can bounce back quickly from any setback, whether physical, mental or emotional. Like mental toughness, resiliency (be it physical, mental or emotional) is a skill that can be trained. But of the three, emotional resiliency that is the most challenging to take on. The process is similar to the witness process for mental control described earlier. It is simple in concept. But there's nothing easy about it. Emotional resiliency takes patience and courage to develop. Here's how to do it.

1. First, witness the negative emotional reaction. Then interdict it with a power statement that stops it in its track, then observe the root emotion beneath it.
2. Lean into that root emotion to experience it fully, ensuring that you are avoiding denial or transference.
3. Transmute the negative emotional energy to its positive correlate; for example, the emotional energy of fear can be focused into courage, anger becomes commitment, jealousy is interdicted and transformed into appreciation, and the most devastating emotion, shame, can become pride while despair becomes surrender. Imagine the possibilities when you can interdict all of these negative emotional responses and channel their energy into the positive correlate!
4. Engage the new emotion with imagery and self-talk that supports it and blocks the old emotion from re-emerging. Then get moving again by taking action. Of course, that action may require that you take your eyes off yourself and put them on a teammate. The positive momentum you develop will take you to a new, more productive and emotionally balanced level.

Let me walk through a personal example. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, I was quoted in a newspaper article about some recent losses that had a provocative title about the SEALs. I had commented on the fact that, in my opinion, the SEALs were being employed to do conventional unit jobs in broad daylight, in contradiction to our doctrine of being the silent warriors who operated at

night and were gone before the enemy knew what hit them. The author of the article, without my approval, used my reserve officer rank in the story, making it look like a semiofficial statement. I got called on the carpet quickly by a SEAL captain who read me the riot act. As I stood tall in front of this man, who seemed to lack emotional control himself, I felt anger rising. My instinctual response was to fight back by lashing out—but that would have just made things worse. In the military, if you're getting dressed down like that, you shut up and take it whether you think the superior in rank is right or not. Shouting back at him would have been a serious breach of military protocol and discipline. Thankfully, because I had trained to connect with my "witness" and not my reactionary mind and emotions, I could gain a little distance and observe myself reacting in the moment. I instantly realized that I hadn't been in a situation like this for a long time and that it could be a powerful learning opportunity. I was able to interdict my emotional response with a self-given command to "stop" and then began to observe my inner emotional state without losing control, all while I was getting railed.

Beneath the anger, I recognized, was a fear of the repercussions and damage to my reputation. What if I got kicked off the Team? What if the people I respected heard this version of events and lost respect for me? Though my body was reacting with anger, I recognized the root emotion as a fear of loss. I also saw that I had an issue with authority. This issue partly fueled my fearful reaction; I had a chip on my shoulder about people who I perceived as resting on their rank. To put it bluntly, I felt a lack of trust in this guy. I thought that he lacked honesty in his treatment of me; he was toeing the party line, and in the process doing a good job posturing, effectively I might add. I feared that my entire career would go down the drain because of this misstep.

Fortunately, because I was able to connect with my witnessing self and gain that critical distance from my thinking and feeling self, I could examine my reaction, kick its tires, and decide that though the fear of loss I felt was real, I was blowing it out of proportion and it was not a response that would serve me well. All this happened while the captain raged on about how bad a SEAL I was.

I made the conscious decision to convert the fear of this authority figure and the fear of potential loss into a forceful resolution to maintain my positive and professional attitude toward him. After all, he was just doing his job and working with the tools that had supported him well in that system. I began to envision myself as a well-respected officer, admired for not being afraid to speak his mind and for doing the right thing regardless of the consequences. As you probably predicted, I got through the incident without too much blood loss, and I was able to refine my emotional resiliency toolkit. As it turned out, many SEALs and other vets thanked me for what I said in the article because they agreed with me in principle. They were upset about the same things and felt the issues needed to be aired so a dialogue could be had. They appreciated the courage I showed to speak out honestly. Ultimately my reputation was enhanced by the incident with those who mattered to me most.

Refer to image in Appendix 1: Big 4 of Emotional Resiliency

## **The Big Four of Emotional Resiliency**

It is much easier to be resilient when the Four Attitudes of Emotional Resiliency are burned into your character. The first attitude is to have self-esteem. Self-esteem is the emotional state of feeling worthy and respected by others. Low self-esteem can come from childhood abandonment, volatile environments where your voice is not heard, or outright abuse. If these attributes exist in your consciousness, then it is imperative that you get some therapeutic help and go deep into the silence practices to taste the underlying goodness inside of you. Second, resiliency is assured if you have

the attitude of being oriented toward others versus just yourself. In other words, if you are service oriented, then you tend to be more emotionally resilient. Victor Frankl describes this effect in his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, which chronicles his experiences in a Nazi concentration camp. Victor survived by finding meaning through tending to others' needs over his own...and then teaching the power of this simple truth.

The third attitude is to retain a positive mind-set and optimistic outlook, which we have already discussed at length. It should be no surprise that a positive, optimistic attitude impacts one's emotional resiliency. When you are positive and optimistic, you're naturally inclined to look for solutions because you believe a better future is possible. Your conscious and subconscious mind are working together to spot opportunities. This enhances your resiliency and therefore your mental toughness because you understand that every rainy day is followed by sunshine. You know things will get better, so obstacles and setbacks don't bring you down the way they do someone who is negative and believes all is lost. You're able to bounce back and persevere.

Finally, resiliency is ensured when you have an attitude of self-control. This is necessarily informed by a robust certainty of your "why." Your "why" is closely related to both your purpose and your One Thing. Imagine your purpose as the force behind your life—it is your foundational reason for being on this Earth in this incarnation of your self. (My purpose is to master myself so I can serve humanity as a warrior, leader and teacher). Then your One Thing is the major driving initiative that moves the dial toward your purpose in your near future, 6 months to 2 years out. Your One Thing will clearly change over time, but it is always connected to your purpose.

At one time, my One Thing was to earn the Trident and become a Navy SEAL. I pushed myself to the brink to earn my Trident every day, becoming Honor Man of my training class and ultimately a respected officer. Why? So I could fulfill my purpose as a warrior leader, effectively serving my team so that we would be victorious in every mission, which fed into serving my country in dangerous times and places. Then in the Teams it shifted to becoming the best special operations officer I could be. Later on it became to train and inspire a new generation of warriors from the ranks of military and civilians alike. The point is that your "why" is like the inner core of the sun, a fusion reactor that keeps you going day in and day out as you pursue your "One Thing" toward your purpose.

Sometimes in a crisis we have to narrow our focus, momentarily set aside our commitment to that broader purpose, and find a new why to survive...a new "One Thing" to motivate us to get to the other side. When climber Aron Ralston (profiled in the movie "127 Hours") found himself alone in the desert, literally stuck between a rock and a hard place, to survive, he figured out a way to break his arm and then use a dull blade of a multi-tool to complete the amputation. His One Thing during that intense period was to see his unborn daughter. This was a powerful enough 'why' that it propelled him to do something most of us could not imagine doing. His action was successful and he did survive, get to know his daughter, and has since gone on to fulfill a higher purpose as an inspirational speaker. The lesson is that to be emotionally resilient, and a survivor, it is crucial to know your motivation: What is your why? What are you willing to do to make sure it comes to fruition? Then back that emotion up with self-esteem, a positive attitude, optimism that you will succeed, and a focus on the others in your team— even if you haven't met them yet!

## **Section 2: Develop Warrior Discipline**

# Chapter Three: Self-Mastery

*The outer conditions of a person's life will always be found to reflect their inner beliefs.* —James Allen

Prior to the SEALs, my career as a fledgling accountant at Coopers & Lybrand was driven in the short term by my goals of earning an MBA and CPA (showing a need for significance) and by my long-term goals of financial independence (displaying a need for certainty). I was cruising along toward these common goals but didn't find the work very interesting or rewarding. Those six letters, "MBA-CPA," became my focus, and I wasn't going to quit, no matter what. My family and friends would say that my future looked bright: I was making great money in a prestigious job and had a career path shimmering out in front of me. Shimmering for others; not me. As my Zen training began to reveal my true self to me, a feeling of misery, born from being in a place I was not meant to be, grew in intensity.

The Zen and warrior training ground my outer shell down enough that it allowed my inner voice to be heard, which was telling me, "Mark, you are out of alignment with your purpose. Your passion is to be a leader, a warrior, and to find a grand adventure. Your principles are being compromised by chasing money, and your purpose is bigger than just being in business for the sake of a career."

The greater the depth of my perceptions, the more disdain I began to feel for the greed and backstabbing behavior I was observing in the office. And I was a full participant in the charade. A collision of my worlds disoriented me—on one hand, the message from the home front was that I was kicking ass in this professional business career (the Divines were a business family, period). Yet on the other hand, I felt that something was disturbingly wrong. All the external indicators were green; I was getting all the right social feedback that I was on track and doing well. But I just had this brooding sensation that I was steaming away in the wrong direction.

After one of our Zen trainings, Kaicho Nakamura gave a lecture titled "One Day, One Life." He explained that a warrior experiences a lifetime in a single day. You see, the warrior doesn't take anything for granted. He or she lives on the razor's edge of experience as if each day were potentially the last. Each moment is lived as if one's hair is on fire—with a fullness and purpose. He or she avoids getting caught up in the dramas of life, preferring to avoid regrets and desires by keeping things simple and practical. In order to experience one life in one day, the warrior trains his body, mind, and spirit to be at the ready.

I was moved by the lecture. For weeks I thought intently about the lecture and why this message resonated with me. It drove me to ask vital questions. What would I be like if life had an all-encompassing purpose beyond just making a bunch of money and ascending the steps of a conventional career? How motivating it would be to wake up every day with that hair-on-fire passion to fulfill a deeply-charged purpose! This awakening allowed me to finally let go of the culturally-sustained archetype about work, the corporate ladder and what defines success, and to accept a whole new philosophy of life. To this day I continue to train daily to uphold the standard set by Kaicho Nakamura's "One Day, One Life" speech. The discipline this concept represents is called Self-Mastery. It is developed by traveling The Five Mountains.

## The Five Mountains

Depending on your level of development and awareness, you will have different definitions of success. To me, success isn't about gaining control over your environment or dominating externals like making a lot of money or moving up the ranks in your career. I believe that success in life is internal and comes from developing mastery over yourself, and using this mastery so you can serve others in the fulfillment of your purpose. When this path is pursued, an abundant peace of mind is cultivated due to non-attachment to the material things of life. Because you're in alignment with your purpose and your One Thing, you can always answer the question "why?" Your sense of being settled and balanced is very strong. All your actions and decisions, the quality of your relationships, all flow from this more evolved state of clarity and calm. Attaining certain career milestones of business revenue drivers are more of a by-product of true success. They will happen, but we don't focus on these as goals.

When I finally found the courage to step out of the corporate game to join the SEALs, I learned that the SEALs embodied a similar approach to life as what I'd learned through practicing karate, albeit it was expressed through their unique cultural lens. Both the Seido and the SEAL culture say that to actualize potential, we must train ourselves in a whole-person, balanced manner. I learned that if you don't train to grow, or are stuck in a singular dimension in your training—like pursuing improvements strictly within the plane of the physical, or strictly in the realm of the intellectual—then it is likely that important aspects of your intelligence will be undeveloped from an integrated "whole person" perspective. That means you won't be operating at your full potential. You won't be living the "one day, one lifetime" maxim, and will miss invaluable opportunities to serve others, meet your mission or fulfill your purpose. The discipline of the warrior is to train for full-spectrum integration, ready to respond to any challenge with a virtuosity born of a clear heart and mind. In my experience there are five primary domains of intelligence that must be developed for warrior-like focus and genuine success in life (in the way that I have defined success above). As you now know, I call these The Five Mountains:

1. The Physical Mountain: methodically developing the ability to control and use your body with all-around functionality. This builds confidence and self-esteem and makes you more useful in life and to your team. This includes the physical skills of strength, stamina, work capacity, endurance, and durability, properly fueling the body, sleep, recovery and learning to regulate the sympathetic and parasympathetic aspects of your autonomous nervous system.
2. The Mental Mountain: cultivating mental control and concentration, and upgrading the content of your mind to ensure a positive contribution to the world. In addition, we will sharpen the mental toughness to stay in the fight, and the creativity for more potent work. This includes learning to tap into and rewire subconscious programming and to master the skills, knowledge, and expertise necessary to your personal or professional calling.
3. The Emotional Mountain: understanding, harnessing, and controlling your vast emotional power, developing self-esteem, confidence and forging a positive resiliency in the face of great challenges.
4. The Intuition Mountain: becoming an aware and intuitive leader by learning to look within and develop your sixth sense, to listen with your belly, and get Sheepdog Strong (we'll talk more about what it means to be "Sheepdog Strong" in Chapter 7).
5. The Kokoro Mountain: the word Kokoro has Japanese origins and means to merge one's heart and mind into action. This mountain is about developing a connection with your spirit, learning to lead and act with your heart, authentically connecting with others, and striving for an

integrated consciousness that benefits all mankind. Kokoro can also be described as positive willpower, a non-quitting spirit, and is associated with your spiritual development.

Refer to image in Appendix 1: 5 Mountains of Self Mastery

The physical mountain is covered in detail in my book *8 Weeks to SEALFIT* so it is beyond the scope of this work, which focuses on the other four mountains. The key concept I want to leave you with is to look at training your "whole person" in an integrated manner from now on. This will set you on the path to mastering yourself at all levels and accelerate you toward higher plateaus of consciousness...where you will experience life at its fullest.

## **The Disciplines of the Warrior**

No maritime journey of importance is ever achieved without disciplined shipbuilding and a disciplined captain, crew, and navigation system. As you set out to tackle your Five Mountains, you will need disciplines with this magnitude of value to guide your journey. To use a different metaphor, disciplines are like railroad tracks for your life: they keep you on track while directing the way forward.

The word discipline should be defined before we go further. Common definitions include:

1. Training to ensure proper behavior: the practice or methods of teaching and learning behavior patterns
2. Order and control: a controlled, orderly state as in a classroom setting or a military unit
3. Calm, controlled behavior: the ability to behave in a controlled and calm way even during a difficult or stressful situation
4. Conscious control over lifestyle: mental self-control used in directing or changing behavior, learning how to execute a new task or idea, or training for an event

The first definition, "training to ensure proper behavior," is closest to my meaning here. To be disciplined is literally to be a "disciple" to something larger than you. In this context you must be a disciple to mastering yourself and your Five Mountains. The first discipline of self-mastery is simplicity.

## **Simplicity**

When I was in the corporate world navigating the political and social scene, life seemed complicated, a cacophony of discordant and emotionally-charged egos and ambitions colliding with one another. I note that many people gravitate toward the complex because it makes them feel important and distracts them from more genuine pursuits and responsibilities. In this zone of distraction there's no time or need to focus on the more difficult work of improving themselves or serving others. When I jettisoned that world and landed in the SEAL Teams, life suddenly got very simple. My mission was clear: hunt and kill the bad guys, and protect the life we had back home. Personal possessions often got in the way. In this new light of simplicity, they were discarded. Communications between teammates were kept Spartan and authentic. Lives were on the line; the BS of social politics was eradicated. My life collapsed into training and conducting missions around the

world. The straightforward life of the warrior was liberating. I try to live by the same standard to this day.

Let's break this down to the practical level. In the context of everyday life choices, simplicity can mean being content with your present situation. I'm suggesting that you conduct an overhaul of your definition of contentment. You can have a peace of mind that everything's good the way it is—that you are who you are and where you're at for a reason—and still have the desire for a better future. It's when we become weighed down with dissatisfaction, a negative emotion, that we tend to complicate things. It doesn't help to beat yourself up if you aren't happy with the current state of affairs. Obsessing about what you don't have accomplishes nothing. Besides, it's distracting. Where you are now is a necessary step in your evolution, so remain content with where you are while executing a strategy for getting to where you want to go. This will immediately simplify your life.

An embrace of simplicity offers another potent and liberating opportunity. It allows you to reduce the number of commitments, material possessions, and unsupportive relationships we burden ourselves with. These tend to clutter the mind and weigh you down. Lightening the load lightens the spirit as well. This principle extends to moderation in speech, food, drink, and other habits. Too much of a good thing turns it into a bad thing. The Greeks understood this discipline - one of two statements inscribed on the Temple of Appolo in Delphi is: "Everything in moderation."

Sometimes I allow things to clutter up in some areas of my life. My closet, office, and car trunk, to be specific. Maybe you do the same in other areas. I have found that a periodic decluttering of these spaces is an excellent way to experience simplicity and contentment. Begin with your most cluttered space. Clean it and then keep it clean quarterly. Decluttering will help you avoid accumulating unnecessary possessions and commitments. You keep things simple. Always be asking yourself these two questions:

1. Do I really need this now? Can't I do without it?
2. What can I get rid of or let go of now?

This simplicity practice leads to less attachment to material things. Detachment is a powerful attitude closely related to contentment. It is extremely liberating to know that though you can't take your possessions with you...but you can die trying!

## **Dedication**

The next discipline is dedication. If you are committed to self-mastery, then you must be dedicated to your training. After I endured two years of continuous training to become a Navy SEAL, I was somewhat surprised to learn that my number one focus as a "Team guy" was to train more and harder. It never ended, and it has transformed my life in several ways. First, training was not optional; rather, it was as essential as eating and sleeping. Second, training was too critical for it to be random or haphazard. Most people have a random approach to physical training and wonder why they don't get very far. Random training would be a disaster for any elite team, as it is for individuals. Training must be planned and purposeful and approached with a "crawl, walk, run" methodology. Dedication is required to show up and put out every day.

One of many unreal experiences from my SEAL days stands out to me when I think about the dedication it takes to master any skill. It was my first predawn free-fall jump, in the thick blackness of a moonless night, and the roar of the chopper's rotor blades seared the sky's stillness. As I flew off



the ramp into the darkness, the wind buffeted me like a rag doll for a few moments, and then I felt my body accelerating away from the bird. I arched my back and leveled out, shooting to 120 miles per hour. I took a look at the horizon and saw a streak of sunlight penetrating the night. I also saw my SEAL instructor, Mike Loo, watching me closely as he swooped in nearly parallel to my position. I did a 360-degree turn and then looked over at Loo for his next set of instructions. If I hadn't been hurtling through the air at 120 miles per hour, you could have seen my jaw drop. Loo was standing feet to earth, dropping like a bullet, smiling calmly at me. Then he flicked his fingers and did a 360-degree flip, landing feet to earth again. Loo tapped his altimeter, causing me to look at mine. Four thousand feet above ground level...time to pull. Looking at my rip cord, I reached and pulled forcefully, deploying my parachute. It waffled up and caught air with a pop. I drifted to a safe landing. The moment was indelibly burned in my brain as a display of total control of body and mind. I had witnessed mastery, and of course Mike was just doing his job. His control over the air was astounding, but it hadn't come naturally. Mike had mastered his emotions and physical reactions, as well as skills specific to high altitude jumps—during his training through more than 2,000 free-falls.

A note of caution: dedication must be offset with humor and reality checks. Be serious and dedicated to your training, but counterbalance it with humor and let "real life" flow. I often see those who embark on a path of dedication immerse themselves in seriousness, as if being serious would move them along faster. It won't, trust me. Having a sense of humor and balance is more effective for the long haul, and more fun. Based on what you have seen in pop culture and the movies, you may expect that Kaicho Nakamura and my SEAL brothers were a stern lot. Nothing is further from the truth. Though they are all dedicated and intensely serious about mastery, they are also hilarious and lighthearted. I have no doubt that Mike Loo was laughing inside as he stood on air while plummeting like a meteorite, nodding to me like as if we were hanging on a street corner.

Try not to take yourself too seriously, and keep in mind that the journey is more important than the destination—so you should relax and enjoy the walk.

## **Authenticity**

The third discipline to explore is authenticity. Your authenticity as a leader will evolve naturally as you focus on self-mastery, but it is also important to discipline it into your being. As discussed already, living authentically begins with connecting at a heart level and discovering what drives you—your 3 Ps and your One Thing—so you can serve others in alignment with your internal compass. And developing mental control allows you to direct your thoughts toward positive, powerful intentions for integrating your higher values into every aspect of your life. It is in this mind, body, and spirit alignment—this total integration of the self—that heart-mind connection is cultivated and your character radiates greater authenticity.

I probably don't need to stress how challenging this is in our busy lives, which are built on an economic model that separates and pits us against each other in subtle ways. However, the quality of your relationships going forward will largely be defined by the level of authenticity you bring to them. A lack of authenticity leads to diminished trust, creating a less-evolved transactional relationship between individuals not connected in any real understanding. These agreements are built on legal details and often break down into conflict – whether between individuals, corporations or nations. An abundance of authenticity will lead to enhanced trust, thereby fostering a transformational relationship between interconnected individuals seeking common ground and a win for all. These agreements are built on an integrated worldview and are upheld with a handshake. No doubt we are a ways from that ideal, but what would you prefer? I prefer dealing at an authentic, trust level, whereby

we each write our own script from a place of abundance and honor.

## **Writing Your Own Script**

Do you write your own scripts or are you, like I was in my "pre-Seido" youth, reacting to a script written by someone else?

A reporter was writing a story about the achievements of one twin who clawed his way out of the poverty and depression to achieve great success. The reporter asked the man, "To what do you attribute your accomplishments?" He responded, "I had no choice, you see. I had to find a way up and out because my father was a horrible alcoholic and abused me and my brother—I knew that if I didn't work hard and seek a better life, I'd become just like him." Curious about the fate of the other twin, the reporter tracked him down. He found him destitute, living on the streets. The reporter asked the same question. The response was, "I had no choice, you see; I was doomed because my father was a horrible alcoholic who abused me and my brother. I didn't stand a chance."

You have a choice to be in control of your life and to be authentic. How you use your mind, body, emotions, and intuition and connect with your spirit is a choice. Do you leave it to chance, letting the preconditioning of life write your script, or do you take control and write your own bestseller? The answer is clear.

# Chapter Four: The Power Of Service

*The discipline of true service flows from a selfless and genuine desire to render aid and support when your teammates and others are in need. —Mark Divine*

Medal of Honor recipient Lieutenant Michael Murphy was killed during a SEAL mission in the mountains of Afghanistan. The riveting story was told by his teammate Marcus Luttrell in the book *Lone Survivor*. Heroics aside, the behavior of the late Lieutenant Murphy is interesting to look at in the context of our discussion of disciplines. First, "Murph," as he was known to his teammates, demonstrated incredible compassion for his team during the failed operation. When the team was discovered by a shepherd and his son, Murph had to quickly weigh the military rules of engagement and the local threat of a Taliban response with a decision to kill or release the unarmed locals to protect his team and mission. He ultimately let them go, leading to the disastrous consequences for him and his team, as locals indeed informed the Taliban. It is easy to second-guess the decision in the comfort of our living rooms (many special operators believe he made the wrong decision); however, the fact that his world-centric level of consciousness led him to act out of compassion, not violence, is what I find intriguing. What's certain is that he died a hero and with a clear heart.

Another big lesson we can learn from Lieutenant Murphy, though, is how he served his teammates. After being overrun by hundreds of Taliban, Murph and the team fought like lions. But the situation was grim, so he tried to call in help. Unfortunately the radio did not work in the mountainous terrain, so he resorted to a satellite phone. To get an uplink to the satellite, he exposed himself to the enemy fire, knowing full well he would not survive. According to Luttrell, there was no hesitation in Murphy's decision to make this sacrifice, no second thoughts about self-preservation. Murph just stepped into the open to call for backup, and that was the end. He lost his life, but if he hadn't radioed for backup, Marcus Luttrell would not be around today to share the story.

There is much ado about service in the philanthropic and religious communities. The doing of good works in the name of service is a nice gesture. However, this is not "Murph-level" service. Too many companies and individuals do it because they think it will make them look good or because their competitors are doing it. Often someone will provide some service through his or her church but then be a self-serving jerk at home. Service has taken on the role of an obligation to check the "do good, feel good" box. The type of service that Murph modeled involved serving your team (family) before yourself at all times. This is a discipline that requires three supporting attitudes: compassion, generosity, and abundance.

## Compassion

Compassion evolves from self-respect and being able to assume the perspective of others. In them, you see yourself, with all the glory and suffering of the human race present in some manner. Self-respect is cultivated then by forgiving oneself and letting go of judgment and regrets. When you have cleared judgment and regret, you can then turn your eyes toward others with respect and compassion. In our society compassion has often been viewed as a weakness in men, though this tendency is slowly changing. Warrior traditions have treated compassion as a strength that extends even to the enemy, as LT Murphy displayed through his actions on the mountaintop in Afghanistan. Authentic warriors are the last to choose the fight, but are first to pick up the weapon to fight when duty demands it.

# Abundance

Abundance is a positive expression of a highly evolved consciousness that recognizes there is plenty to go around in this world. It is the exact opposite of the mentality of scarcity. Often it is the bite-sized things that betrays a scarcity mentality—I almost lost a finger at a barbecue by a scarcity guy who had his mind transfixed on a juicy T-bone steak that I was about to fork from the grill. His knife came down hard between my middle and ring finger as he exclaimed, "Mine!" Ouch. That tidbit of behavior was a snapshot demonstration of the scarcity mentality, an obsessive mentality saturating this individual's every action and relationship.

You can also consider the somewhat recent trend of “doomsday preppers” who view the world's rapid rate of change as a signal that things are about to collapse and get ugly. Now, you already know that I believe being prepared in mind, body, and spirit is a good thing, as is learning to be aware of warning signs so we can proactively attack a challenge instead of waiting for a crisis to come to the doorstep. But what I'm advocating here is that you accomplish these objectives and continue to practice an abundance attitude. Someone with an Unbeatable Mind looks at how quickly things are changing and makes a radical shift from “The world's coming to end!” to “Wow, it's going to be an incredibly exciting future...how can I upgrade my personal and team systems to keep pace with the opportunities on the horizon?”

When you have an abundance mindset, you see that there is more out there for everyone, including yourself. Seeing the world in this light makes a service orientation a no-brainer, because you are no longer cornered by the perception that you must grab what's yours or seizing resources at the expense of others. This mentality is hard to find today but is a powerful change agent for your growth. If you are concerned about the future of the planet and its dwindling resources and have trouble being optimistic about it, I recommend Peter Diamandis's book, aptly titled *Abundance*. In it he paints a picture of our future based on paradigm-shifting breakthroughs in technology and thinking that, with a global shift in consciousness, will transform the earth and solve intractable environmental and social challenges created by technology and human arrogance to begin with.

# Generosity

If an abundance attitude reflects your view of how the world is, and how it works, then generosity is an abundance mindset funneled into your behavior with others; a transaction related to your time, talents, energy and resources. The universal law of generosity states that the more you share, the more plenty you have in life. When you truly believe that there's enough to go around for everyone, regardless of the situation, then the world stops being a zero-sum game. Generosity of time, unique talent, support, and love allows positive energy to flow from you like a river forever being replenished by the wellspring of universal energy.

But generosity transcends mindset. It flows from your heart, with a genuine desire for others to have what you have, to experience the same abundance in the world that you experience. You don't seek to gain at the expense of others. Generosity can be developed through awareness of your daily impulses toward scarcity, and then actively redirecting those thoughts with everyday basics:

- Do you tip 20 percent?
- Do you smile at people you walk by?
- Do you grab the biggest steak off the grill (or insert anything you desire that someone else may lay claim to) or allow someone else to have it?

- Do you help someone without being asked?
- What would you do for your family or teammates in a time of need?

The Golden Rule describes an attitude of generosity, a version of which exists in every spiritual tradition. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is the Christian version. The interesting aspect of this rule is that the return is greater than the giving. Although it may come back at a later time, or from another source, or in a different manner than that in which it was given, it will come back to you in greater measure. On the other hand, if you're a stingy hoarder with your money, time, or energy, you will dry up like Ebenezer Scrooge. Your energy will burn out as you become more brittle and inflexible in thought and body.

Unbeatable Mind training requires personal discipline for training and practice, as well as cultivating the interpersonal disciplines of character described above. Together they form the basis for the meta-disciplines of self-mastery and service. These disciplines also develop the foundation for an ethical stand, which will pave the way for growth toward higher stages of consciousness and a more fulfilling life. Let's now move on to the next chapter and look at how we can go beyond practice, and strive for excellence.

## **Section 3: Cultivate Excellence**

# Chapter Five: Deep Awareness

*If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle. —Sun Tzu*

So far, everything we've been talking about has been focused on your evolution as a human being and a leader. This circles back to the concept of self-examination. In Section 1 we learned how to start creating mental and emotional distance from our negative thoughts and reactions by connecting with our witness. In Section 2, we learned how to start eradicating the negative junk we see in that space and upgrading our thoughts, patterns, and responses with a disciplined approach to self-mastery. We also learned how a service orientation is a natural human urge, and how it supports our personal evolution, naturally emerging at higher stages of development.

Now I would like to explore how an advanced awareness is essential to your cycle of growth. The most happy and successful people in the world are also the most aware of their internal and external environments. They are constantly scanning both for threats and opportunities to grow and lead. To make a change or institute an upgrade, awareness is the starting point. After you then do the work and make the change, you become aware of further opportunities for growth. This plane of awareness will now expand from your deepest self through to all three spheres of experience in your life.

## Three-Sphere Awareness

The day after I left the active duty Navy, I was surprised by the change in my mental state and sense of self. One day earlier I had been part of an elite team and a self-contained system within the SEALs, both of which had a profound influence on my thinking and behaviors. My team influenced my mental toughness, my sense of purpose, and my confidence. My teammates had gone to hell and back with me, and I trusted them with my life. I had forgotten that I would be hard-pressed to find that level of trust in the civilian world. The system of the Navy was rigid and clear: I knew how much I was to be paid, what to wear, where to go, and how to act every day. Then just like that—boom—it all changed. On the first day my obligations and interactions were outside and independent of the United States Navy, I was without my team, and was free of any definitive instructions as to what to wear, where to go and when, how to act, or what to do with my day. It was blank as a slate can be. I felt both liberated and, as odd as it may sound, strangely intimidated. Most of us have had to transition out of some form of rigid organizational structure because these structures, military, corporate, academic and so on, have dominated the 20th century, and continue to dominate today. Keenly developing the awareness and perspective of how we integrate with—and are changed by—the various teams and structures is what I mean by three sphere awareness.

As you reflect back upon your own life, you can identify those moments where you went through a major change of job, careers, or even transitioning from school into the work force and suffered a similar experience. The big "aha" for me came when I studied the "Integral Theory" of American philosopher Ken Wilber. I began to understand how we live in three distinct spheres, each arising simultaneously and each impacting one another. They are the "I," "We," and "It" spheres, which I also refer to as the Self, Team, and Organization, in the context of the professional realm.

These three are interdependent and have causal effects on each other. Change one, and all spheres are impacted. Let's take a closer look...

Refer to image in Appendix 1: 3 Spheres

The I sphere is the realm of your individual, subjective self. It is your consciousness, worldview, beliefs, and desires. It includes your sense of what is right, wrong, beautiful, and ugly, and every one of us is utterly unique in our I spheres. Indeed, we are intimately concerned with this sphere. It is the realm of internal awareness; when we say we are working toward mastery, it is primarily in the I sphere that we do our internal work and register the results. This is especially important because it is here that we develop trustworthiness and authenticity in relationships. These qualities become increasingly impactful as we engage in the We or It spheres.

The We sphere is your inter-subjective space between two or more people sharing experiences and trying to uncover common meaning. This sphere can also be thought of as the culture of a team, community or society. 'We' is experienced within a family, a work team, or a tribe of like-minded people. It is in the We sphere that ethical codes of conduct, your stand, communications strategies, and leadership authenticity are expressed, and further developed. It is within this sphere that separation, racial bias and judgment arise based upon the disparate developmental plateaus found amongst others. (more on this in chapter ten). If you have wondered why there is so much conflict in the world, then you can look at the intersection of I and We at vastly different stages of human development to find the answer.

Because we engage the We sphere interacting with other people, this level involves both our internal and external awareness. It is with awareness of this sphere that the warrior scans the team or tribe, seeking to understand their perspective, as well as searching for threats and opportunities, spotting the mines on the minefield long before others do. Whether it's an unruly drunk at a restaurant that might accidentally injure you or your family, or an investor who seems interested in your new business venture, awareness in the We sphere helps you respond quickly, effectively, and successfully.

But the I and We spheres don't exist in a structureless vacuum of anarchy. Both are influenced and restricted by systems, rules, roles, and behavioral aspects of an organization and its members. These are referred to as the It, or organization sphere. This sphere includes the bureaucratic organization as well as the family system and its behaviors, or the team's org chart and the techno-economic system it's embedded in. As with the other spheres, the It sphere overlays the I and We. For instance, your job as a team leader is to remain aware of your team's actions and needs in the "we" sphere. Even as you remain aware of what you're bringing to the moment in your "I" sphere and how you are all working within the "it" sphere-structure of your mission and organization. It's about how you flow through these different aspects with heightened awareness throughout the day. You want to be aware of how you are interacting with the spheres in terms of your roles and expectations, your accountability and responsibilities, and even whether the roles of the organization and standard operating procedures of the system at hand are structured properly to serve you and the team.

As a leader, you are always poking around and thinking, "You know, we could use a system for that" or "That system is broken and we need to rebuild it." The internal awareness of the I sphere, the sense of responsibilities to the team in the We sphere, and the external awareness of the systems and structures in place in your business, military unit, academic or non-profit It sphere, allow you to take rapid and effective action, resolving problems and reflexively responding to opportunities as a



leader.

This distinction of I, It, and We may seem obvious when we read about it. Right? But it is not readily apparent. This is because we are inside the bottle and cannot read the label. It can be a powerful mental model to understand what is going on with ourselves and others at any given point in time. To use these distinctions as a model, you will insert yourself in a central intersection of the three spheres and ask yourself what is right or wrong, working or out-of-order, in your own I, We, and It spheres. Another approach is to place a teammate into this cross-section and see how they fare with the same question. The model gives us insight into the nature of the individual and collective human experience, which helps us be better people and make better decisions. I believe that for Unbeatable Mind performance we need to win all three spheres. We do this by aligning for maximum results in all three spheres, simultaneously. Let me use an example of a physical altercation I almost experienced to make this point.

I was walking down a dark alley in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia during my life in the SEALs. I suddenly found myself walking past three rugged locals who stopped what they were doing to size me up. Crap, I thought. What am I doing on this route? It was late, and the area had a reputation for crime, and I had just become a We. I knew that I needed to maintain my cool and project strength, not weakness. I committed to winning my I sphere by breathing deeply, feeding my courage dog, and envisioning myself as powerful and in control.

Then they approached, and one made a move toward me. I sidestepped him, turned, and confronted the others. "Big mistake—I have no money and am not afraid to fight you all—and I will win." I said those words while maintaining a calm state of mind and visualizing myself handily defeating them. They simply gave each other a look, turned, and walked in the opposite direction. They had decided that the We moment of an altercation was not worth injury to their individual I selves. Their rough and tough facade dissolved into the background.

A moment later a police officer drove down the alley and gave me a glance that said, "bad idea, American." Had I engaged in a fight—the We moment of conflict—then the It sphere of the local legal system, as well as the cultural norms and rules of the US Navy—would have collided into my I sphere reality, making my life miserable even though I had not instigated the altercation. The key was that in this episode I won in all three spheres. These victories resulted from comprehension. I won in my mind (the I), I won against the criminal cultural possibility of violence and theft (the We) by avoiding being a victim of their capricious act, and I won the system (the It) by not breaking any rules or laws (perceived or real) which would have landed me in the black hole of a Malaysian jail cell. When you can align and win in all three spheres simultaneously, you will come out on top all the time.

Let me try another story. You meet a girl through an online dating site and agree to meet her at a bar. Both of you are nervous, and your I spheres are excited about the prospects and the newness of the situation. Your We sphere interaction is going fine, until suddenly a beefy man comes up to the girl and starts giving her a ration of shit. Critical information is deduced in this situation with rapidly shifting opportunities and threats. Turns out he's a boyfriend she hasn't broken up with yet. Suddenly, your We sphere collides with this new character and the rules and norms shared between him and soon-to-be ex-girlfriend, causing your I sphere to ratchet up to awareness level orange (we will discuss that in Chapter Seven). The guy slaps your date, so you jump on him, and a barroom brawl ensues. The cops show up, and the next thing you know you are in the back of a patrol car as the It sphere now has its way with you. You reflect that your I sphere is now neither excited about the prospects of the new female relationship nor fearful of the fight with her thug boyfriend, but

wondering how the heck you are going to get out of this mess!

How quickly things can change. But what if you had progressed into this whole evening ensuring that you would win in all three spheres? For example, what if your internal awareness had led you to come right out and ask your date if she was seeing anyone else? She may or may not have been honest about her not-quite-ex boyfriend, but perhaps her answer would have prompted you both to meet somewhere new (where she'd be unlikely to run into another wooer). And let's say you were in the restaurant and your radar was up and running. It's likely your awareness would pick up that a guy, physically betraying early signs of agitation, was checking you and your date out a little too closely. You might even catch him before he headed in your direction.

With your external awareness fully operational, a number of options would have been available that would have resulted in going home safely rather than to the police station: You could have pointed him out to her and asked her to go talk to him, avoiding the confrontation (or at least getting you out of the middle of it!); you could have suggested leaving immediately for another dinner spot; or you could have chosen to end the date right then.

There's another way to think about the three spheres with regard to a situation like this, which we will call "winning the three fights." My friend Tony Blauer teaches an entire self-defense system based on this principle. The first fight is in your own mind, which is questioning whether you have the skills, the power, or otherwise the ability to enter into this fight and win. Second-guessing yourself and negative self-talk erode performance. So we need to learn to win in the mind first. The second fight is the actual altercation itself. Developing fighting skills are important to win the fight, which typically also means that you will avoid it altogether or deflect the energy to defuse it. This is hard to do if you don't have the technical skills, and haven't already won in your mind. The third fight is against the system as described in the scenario above. So, despite possessing the mental and physical skills to defend yourself and the girl against this thug, it is plausible that someone calls 911 and the cops haul you in after finding you standing over the guy with bloody fists. Even if you handily took the first and second fight, that third fight is in the loss column. With Unbeatable Mind awareness you will be able to diffuse a situation like this. Also, if it's necessary, you'll handle the escalation of force gracefully so that you come out of it as an innocent bystander who tried to help, not another perpetrator getting charged with assault and battery.

## **Your Background of Obviousness**

While with SEAL Team 3, I deployed to the Middle Eastern nation of Bahrain for an extended mission. One day I was walking on the naval base with a Bahraini officer when he reached over and grabbed my hand to hold it. It was an awkward moment made even more so because he made no move to release it. In fact he kept holding it while we strolled the base for about forty-five minutes.

As a twenty-eight-year-old straight guy, a Navy SEAL with a strong dosage of testosterone streaming through me, every cell in my body was screaming in discomfort. To say this act required emotional control for me at that stage of my life is an understatement. I understood, though, that this was normal to him, part of his culture, and it was simply my own background belief that made it awkward.

Who deemed that holding hands with a man was wrong? In Bahrain, holding hands with another male is a show of friendship and loyalty. Do we expect our norms to be the norms of other cultures? No. They will have their own norms and beliefs that we may not understand. What is obvious to others we may be completely blind to, and vice versa. We are quick to judge, and for that reason Jesus admonished us to "first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to

remove the speck from your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:5)

Here's the point: Though we may easily see the shortcomings of the beliefs and behaviors of others, we often remain ignorant of our own limitations, which are equal or worse. I call this blindness to the patterns and hidden beliefs that drive behavior our background of obviousness, or BOO. This BOO is largely a memory-induced phenomenon of your past-oriented self and deep-rooted belief systems. It includes things such as:

1. Hidden assumptions about your life based upon the family and place you were raised, which show up as relative rules and beliefs; such as thinking people should look or act a certain way in order to be what's considered normal or accepted.
2. A mind primed to think a certain way by the dominant myths, stories, and language of your society. For example, people who believe that their government or way of life is right, the best, and full of value for others, while other groups are wrong, immoral, ignorant, or otherwise have less value. Even the entire functioning of all societies is built upon a story, to include the economic, political and business memes. Change the story, and the society will change along with it. An example of this is occurring before our eyes as the story of the industrial world's use of "unlimited natural resources" is clashing with a new story of environmental disasters and global warming. The old story is not holding up to reality for most people who are seeking new story lines to define the future.
3. An emotional body corrupted by negative emotions denied or transferred at an early age, such as people who suffer from insecurities and fears of abandonment brought on by absentee parents or caregivers who withheld affection.
4. An individual stuffed with overheated media noise and incessant TV and internet usage may believe that famous or wealthy people are smarter or better than them; or by concluding the world is imploding based on the histrionic babble of bad news (note that although bad news seems to break hour upon hour, made all the more grim by turbulent headlines and graphics as sensational as Times Square, statistically, per capita, we live in the safest and most abundant period in the known history of mankind).

I mentioned that these attributes lie deep in your subconscious mind and emotional body. But they surface in your conscious mind where they show up as beliefs and patterned responses to the stimuli in your life. Your BOO can trip you up in so many ways that it is a major relief when you finally begin to root out flawed BOO, that shadowy part of ourselves that we drag around like a kettle bell. Understanding BOO will lead to more clarity and better decisions, helping to avoid future regret. But doing shadow work takes guts. Many well-intentioned people back off when confronted with their BOO. Why? Because it is scary, and often painful, to acknowledge weaknesses and flaws and then take them on. The bigger the shadow, the more overwhelming the obstacle to doing the work. These obstacles can come in four flavors:

1. Not having the tools or perhaps financial means to hire a therapist or attend training
2. An inability to muster the requisite motivation and energy for the task
3. Fear of failure from diminished reputation, loss of job, etc. (after all, you would have to admit you aren't perfect!); the sister obstacle to this is fear of success, which inevitably would disrupt one's comfortable status quo

4. Not having the courage to open up the hood and do the deep work, or simply blaming someone else for your flaws

## **Aligning with Universal Laws**

You can't hide from your own beliefs. What you believe in colors every thought you have and action you take, and has a profound effect on who you become. Likes and dislikes, opinions of other people, career choices, and even the food you eat are all by-products of your beliefs. If your beliefs are working for you, then you should be hugely successful, peaceful, and content. It will all come naturally. If that sounds like a pipe dream, then perhaps your beliefs need to be challenged. In fact, when is the last time you examined and earnestly challenged the core beliefs you hold dear in your life? Typically this only happens when we hit a wall and everything clatters to a halt. You push the same cherished buttons on the control panel but the machine continues to sputter and break down. It's within these moments you are most open to examining new beliefs.

Socrates made this comment long ago: "The unexamined life is not worth living." But what does it mean to examine a life? In particular, your life? I think it is clear that he meant to examine your core beliefs before a train wreck forces you to. Really, does it make sense to go through life with an air-tight assumption that all the ideas we have ingested are unassailable? This is a dead-end road to an unexamined life. Examining beliefs will lead to new levels of resolve because you find deeper meaning and clarity about the nature of existence itself.

Beliefs come in two primary forms, relative and universal. Relative beliefs, such as I believe America is the greatest nation on Earth or I believe I will be met by a bunch of virgins in heaven, are formed through human interaction and are relative (meaning they change) based upon the values, expectations, and center of gravity of the individual and society he or she is from. They include norms such as religious beliefs and ideas about things such as success, health, and morality. Relative beliefs, which are taken as law by the believers, are heavily influenced by families of origin and pop culture. The disparate, murky, and elastic nature of these beliefs, though, is what leads to such diversity of lived experience on our planet, for better or worse.

Universal laws form the basis for a set of beliefs that won't alter within or across cultures. Beliefs such as, 'I believe in the importance of treating others as I'd like to be treated,' or 'I believe there is plenty for everyone in this world,' are universally understood and exist outside of the realm of human selfishness. These beliefs are beyond discrimination or judgment of race, class, or creed. What is universally true for me is also for universally true for you, regardless of the context in which we are raised. For example, no matter where you go in this world, if you treat people the way you'd like to be treated, you will get more positive results than if you treat them like dirt. It doesn't matter which deity told you this was a good idea—it's universally true. Most people are raised in a culture biased toward scarcity because it's been hardwired into modern economic systems, but the moment you choose to check outside of that, everything changes. It is universally true that if you see the world as abundant, that abundance becomes your reality.

Philosophers of all ages have noted that goodness comes from aligning with universal laws and internalizing these universal laws into beliefs, while the potential for weakness, even evil, comes from moral relativism. Moral relativists have endless arguments about whether good and evil are part of the human condition, leaving it a choice to move toward one or the other, or whether these aspects of reality exist independent of the human.

Our approach at Unbeatable Mind is assume the role of being you own scientists and test a

theory out on ourselves. We observe the results then implement what works and then discard what doesn't. My personal experience has led me to believe that the world itself doesn't care much about me, but when I aligned my beliefs and actions with Universal Laws then my life experience improved dramatically. To actualize this kind of a result, an examination of original underlying beliefs is necessary to see which are relative and which universal. If a belief is relative, then I recommend you put it under the microscope and be prepared to upgrade or discard it. If it is universal, then ask whether you fully understand and appreciate its power. Also ask whether it is possible you hold a competing relative belief that cancels it out.

Here is an example of a canceling belief: You subscribe to a universal belief in abundance, that there is enough to go around and there is no reason to hoard or see scarcity—no need to butt into a line or steal someone's steak off the grill. However, you could simultaneously believe that you are not worthy of the abundance you dream of because you were born poor, lack the right opportunities, didn't go to the right college, or are stuck in a dead-end job. In this basic example, it is apparent that though you could believe in the concept of abundance, the relative belief and corresponding emotional state around your self-worth contradicts and cancels it out. Not a healthy situation.

The confluence of your beliefs, values, expectations, and level of consciousness forms a foundation for your overall belief in yourself as a person. This impacts your willpower and self-esteem. In other words, if you hang your hat on relative beliefs, then you are at risk of relying on weak or outdated perspectives, empty values, and perhaps even ego-driven expectations to prop up your willpower and your drive to get the job done, whatever it is. Television executives and their ad-buying sponsors will eagerly be at your service to help out. If your beliefs are grounded in universal laws, however, then your resolve and esteem will be strong because your universe now has your back! It all has to do with certainty—how certain are you that you're doing the right thing? How confident are you in your decisions? Use building blocks that are relative and your entire belief system is like a house of cards, ready to be toppled by a meager wisp of unexpected revelation. Build on a foundation of universal beliefs, and you're on sturdy ground that is unlikely to waver.

Let me give you another example: a lot of guys in the military are in the service because they believe that American methods of government, economic management, and social structures are the best in the world and it's our responsibility to spread these ideals and practices to others who need our support. This is a relative belief. What happens to these sorts is they get sent overseas to war and are exposed to other cultures that see things differently. Suddenly these guys are thinking, "You know what? These people don't really want to live the way we do. They don't want us here at all. We're not heroes to them." Their entire belief system is shattered, and suddenly they're uncertain about why they are out there risking their life.

Now in some cases, this isn't entirely a bad thing. When your worldview shifts and you realize you've been living on a belief system that's not ringing true any longer, and you can positively integrate that into a new belief system, guess what we can call that? Growth. The problem is that during these shifts, you're uncertain, and all of a sudden everything gets cloudy. Your commitment to a task might start to slide because you can't connect to that "why" anymore. At best, this can be a serious setback. At worst, such as in a moment of crisis, this uncertainty may get you killed. The space between the old and new presents us a choice: to press boldly forward into the unknown, or to slink back into familiar territory.

Like many military guys, in my mid-twenties I believed that serving my country was important to our way of life by projecting force for global security while spreading democratic ideals in the world. Twenty years later, my experiences had caused me to find flaws in that relative belief. Not that

I stopped being a fan of the United States or military service, but I realized that other cultures have values and ways of life that suit them, and that they may be better off if they did not adopt a western consumer economic model and our form of democracy. I saw that my earlier motivations were fueled by a relative belief in American exceptionalism. This served me well at the time, until I began to align more with the universal law of “do no harm unless in self-preservation” and a belief that individuals and cultures have a right to self-determination within certain internationally accepted human rights boundaries. I had to realign my “why” as a world-centric warrior committed to promoting the ideals outlined in this book. Ultimately, this new world-centric warrior consciousness nudged me to retire from the military and use my skills to serve through teaching and inspiring a new generation of warriors and leaders.

Bottom line: An entrenched belief in yourself and your mission will come from acting in alignment with universal truths. With this approach to living an examined life, you may accelerate your growth toward a multidimensional and integrated perspective, leaving absolutism and rigidity behind. Only then will you find uncommon resolve by your side to back you up on worthy pursuits.

Here are some universal laws to reflect upon. You will recognize many of these and you may be able to add others to the list:

1. The law of cause and effect: this law states that for every cause there is an effect. It is also known in the East as karma. Study the Baghavagita.
2. The law of abundance: this law states that the world has enough for everyone who chooses to see the world as abundant. Study Peter Diamandes' Abundance.
3. The law of winning in your mind first before taking the first action: this law says that you will achieve victory each and every time if you first see it, say it, and believe it in your mind. Study Sun Tzu's The Art of War.
4. The law of attraction: This law operates somewhat passively on your environment. It says that what you fix your mind on, you will attract into your life. Like attracts like. Study James Allen's As A Man Thinketh.
5. The law of receiving: that you receive in proportion to the value you deliver in life.
6. The Golden Rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Study the New Testament.
7. The law of surrender: this law states that instead of pushing against the tide, surrender to it, and you will find enlightenment and peace. Study Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching.
8. The law of forgiveness: this law says that if you forgive yourself and others, you will release negativity and find happiness. Study the life of Nelson Mandela.
9. The law of non-attachment: this law directs us to detach from material things, ideas, and ultimately to life itself for lasting contentment. Study the writings of the Dalai Lama.
10. The law of nonresistance: this law is similar to non-attachment, but it specifically applies to nonviolence. It states that you should never meet force with more force. This response never solves anything and in most cases it just makes things worse. Fighting violence with violence should be a last resort and only done in self-defense. Study the lives of Gandhi and Martin Luther King.
11. The law of focus: Similar to the law of attraction, this complementary law is very active, stating that whatever you focus on with intensity and duration will come to pass. Study Napoleon Hill's book Think and Grow Rich.

Now let's turn our attention to the practical matter of how one goes about examining their

beliefs to clear them up to align more closely with universal laws. I propose three self-awareness practices, which I provide a brief description of below. I leave it to you to investigate each and integrate what works for you into your training.

## **Insight Meditation**

Insight meditation has you select an internal story to meditate upon. The awareness of the story can come from comparison to how others view a situation, such as a political viewpoint or your relationship with money. Often these and other relative beliefs are greatly influenced by our family of origin and root local culture, and as such have deep psychological and emotional attachment. Rather than just assuming you are right and everyone else is off on the issue, meditate deeply on it from multiple perspectives. Allow your awareness to rest on what comes up, trying to penetrate into the object of your attention. As you sink deeper into the process, let go of actively thinking about it. Rather, just observe it and quietly take note what comes up. What comes up will be insights about your point of view and attachment to the belief systems of your past that may not serve you well any longer. This process can be transformative. It can lead you toward the transformation of core rutted, underlying thoughts and behaviors for the better.

Allow me to share a personal example with you. After getting mired in several bad business partnerships, I used this practice to gain insight on why I kept repeating the pattern. After a few weeks of insight meditating on what beliefs and behaviors were leading me into these relationships, I had the distinct revelation that I was overly trusting of those who came into my business organizational sphere. I had learned to trust my teammates with my life in the SEALs, which led to the mistaken judgment of giving business partners the same level of pure trust. I realized that in the private sector there were folks from all plateaus of consciousness with differing degrees of trustworthiness. So though I was discouraged by this uncomfortable fact, I had to learn to verify business partners before trusting they had my back.

## **Contemplation**

Contemplation is similar to insight meditation, but with one big difference. Instead of reflecting internally on a belief or behavior, you will find something external that inspires you to contemplate. With this practice you will choose a source such as one of the study materials mentioned above to invest reading and thinking time into, opening yourself to new ideas and meanings. Then you will contrast your personal actions, integrity and standards with the object of your contemplation. You will reflect upon how you can move in the direction suggested or the direction that your witness knows to be best. This can be very motivating and lead to a strong desire to grow toward the ideal presented in the external source.

## **Recapitulation**

Finally, the visualization process of recapitulation is an incredibly useful tool to unroot negativity and abolish BOO beliefs and behaviors that are holding you back. The formal process of recapitulation is to use visualization to revisit and review your life at those times where you think and feel you got stuck. Ancient Toltec warrior tradition required young warrior aspirants to recapitulate their entire lives before being granted warrior status. Needless to say this took some time, patience, and courage—likely impractical for our purposes.

Let me offer a personal example of how powerful recapitulation can be. In my early to mid-

twenties I had a kind of generalized anxiety in relationships, both romantic and even at work. It made some professional meetings uncomfortable for me as anxiety caused me to project some of my fears onto others. And for a long time, it affected my ability to connect with women so much that I pretty much screwed up every relationship that held any promise. I would be head over heels for some amazing woman, but after a few weeks I'd find myself pulling away, or she would get fed up with my utter silence and bail. I had one particularly painful experience where I had a girlfriend that I knew I wanted to break up with, but I was so incapable of communicating authentically and being vulnerable that I stayed with her for two additional years. I knew that I didn't want to be with her, and I think she knew it, too, so you can imagine it wasn't a terrific two years for either of us. Seems like a simple thing, but I don't think situations like that are uncommon. Especially for men of my generation who were raised by fathers that weren't adept at modeling intimacy and good communication.

And ultimately that's what I realized: I was emotionally stunted because of episodes in my youth where the relationship I had with my father caused me anxiety. Even pain. It wasn't that he was a bad guy, but for his generation, certain things just weren't considered "manly." Guys didn't talk about their feelings, and they weren't taught anything about intimacy. The one emotion they felt comfortable expressing was usually—you guessed it—anger. There just wasn't a lot of nurturing going on, and though discipline can be useful when done sensitively, when applied in anger it can cause further disconnect. In retrospect, I saw that I started shutting down pretty early. This made it difficult for me to connect with others later in life and was still haunting me in my young adulthood.

I didn't want this aspect of my BOO to continue to influence me negatively, so I committed to going back in my mind to relive these episodes visually and emotionally. I spent time using a process called EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) where, with a qualified therapist guiding me using the combination of eye movements and visualization, which effectively rewires the memories. I mentally revisited some of those childhood moments where I was disciplined harshly or where I was made to feel far less than nurtured. As I did so, I forgave my father, understanding that he was who he was at the time and that he was using the best information and tools that he had. I also had to reconnect with my past self, my child self, and let him know that it wasn't his fault—there's a technique to this where you essentially talk to yourself and replace the wounded self image with an emotionally mature, whole you.

It may sound airy-fairy to some of you, but trust me, this process has a seismic effect on your nervous system. In just a few of these sessions, the anxiety I experienced completely vaporized.

To put it in a nutshell, this recapitulation allowed me to see what caused the problem to begin with, to forgive, and to unblock emotions or reconstitute those that had been transferred into survival-mode feelings. Recapitulation is distinct from obsessing about the past, a trap I vigorously caution you against falling into. Obsessing about the past can only negatively affect your focus, concentration, self-esteem, confidence, and more. It's distracting. Recapitulation, on the other hand, allows you to revisit the past with a purpose so that you can learn something about yourself and grow from it, putting painful memories to rest once and for all and, from their shackles, freeing your future. The evening ritual of the Unbeatable Mind Academy is a short form recapitulation of your day, which prevents you from carrying any negativity forward.

## **Journaling**

One last method before we move on: I recommend you take up journaling to record and write your reflections during any of these awareness and mental training sessions. Journaling is an excellent way to sew your insights into the thoughts, ideas, fears, desires, and other things that come up in



insight meditation, contemplation, and recapitulation. When you journal you will observe patterns in your thinking. Further, the work of writing itself is exercise for the brain. In fact, research is telling us that the use of the opposable thumb is directly related to a big chunk of our neo-cortex's development. So developing the habit of journaling is a great way to both reflect while sharpening the saw of your mental powers!

# Chapter Six: Trust And Humility

*The ultimate value of life depends upon awareness and the power of contemplation rather than upon mere survival. — Aristotle*

"Q" was a talented and respected enlisted SEAL. He gave the appearance of being fit, skilled and possessing strong character. To be a SEAL, one has to exhibit unusual character to begin with. However, Q's actions during a single operation proved to me how much character must be ingrained daily and constantly refined. If you let your guard down, you could expose yourself to lapses of judgment and character erosion, as Q did.

On one particularly dangerous ship-boarding mission, Q held a key position within the team. Halfway through the op, while under the hull of the ship, in the blackness of the underwater night, things began to spin out of control. In a few critical moments when we were transitioning from dive status to the surface, Q lost focus and struggled to complete his mission-critical task. This triggered a cascading failure to ripple down the diver line as our rigs plunged to the bottom of the bay. My platoon's senior enlisted diver was dragged to the bottom of the ocean, where he was trapped without oxygen. It could have ended in disaster, but fortunately he was as an exceptional diver who could hold his breath for over six minutes. He was also very cool in a crisis. The chief dissected the problem and was able to cut himself free and ascend after several nerve-racking moments for those of us on the surface. This underwater drama played out beyond our view because the dark rendered the situation imperceptible, but later on during the mission debrief and in some private conversations with Q, I put together a complete and disturbing picture.

What actually led to the breakdown with Q was not the obvious technical screw-up, but a less obvious failure of character. He had begun to use a recreational drug while off duty, rationalizing that what he did on his own time was his own business and what we didn't know couldn't hurt us. But for elite operators, the job and commitment to the team requires untarnished, 100-percent focus and mental clarity. Anything short of that puts everyone at risk in the intense and confusing places we operate, as it did in this situation. Lucky for Q and us all that things did not go worse.

In the high-risk environments SEALs operate in, character flaws are exposed fast. But in business or other domains in life, it may take longer for a flaw to have its inevitable negative blowback. I don't use the word "inevitable" lightly; you may get by for a period of time, long enough to see some success, before the results of a weak character begin to dismantle your efforts, but it will happen. To succeed at the highest levels as a leader, you must habituate the virtues of a warrior into your character for true character excellence. Then these virtues will ensure your destiny.

Virtues are the heart of one's value system, which can be somewhat subjective as we each must decide what we value and what value that thing or quality has relative to other things and qualities. Terms like "family values," for example, only have meaning in the context of the person talking about them—what they are referring to is what they find valuable with regard to families. Virtues, on the other hand, represent something more hard-cut and observable. We can all pretty much agree on what bravery or honesty looks like, even though our particular culture may place a unique form of currency on these virtues as compared to, say, faith or charity.

Virtues, like values, are nothing more than words—unless we choose to practice them and integrate them into our character in private and public. Portraying a virtue in public but betraying that same virtue in your private life means you might as well be acting in a movie. It's not real, and it's not

the same as truly embodying the virtue. Unfortunately public figures are often clueless about this principle. Greek philosophers were so adamant about character virtues that they believed they defined one's value as a citizen. Heraclitus said that "character is destiny," and Aristotle told us that "to enjoy the things we ought to enjoy...has the greatest bearing on excellence of character," and "no one who desires to become good will become good unless he does good things." As far as more recent history, Ralph Waldo Emerson advised that "character is higher than intellect," and Albert Schweitzer said that "example is not the main thing in life...it is the only thing!" These philosophers are in agreement that your actions define your character. It isn't what you think or say that is most important; it is the actions you take, especially when no one is looking. So the question is: Do you act with virtues of excellence? If so then you don't need to finish this chapter. My feeling is that we can all work on the character aspect of ourselves as long as we live, so I hope you read on!

With our analysis it should be clear that these excellence virtues are skills that must be carefully selected and then trained into bedrock patterns. So what virtues have the most power for us? I will offer you my top six excellence virtues, which will provide fodder for a lifetime of work on your path to character mastery.

## **Trustworthiness**

The first virtue that Q compromised that grim night under the hull of the ship, was trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is the glue that holds relationships and teams together. It is evidenced when an individual displays qualities in action deemed dependable by others, such as:

1. They are aligned in thought, word, and deed and thus display a predictable integrity in their actions.
2. They follow through on all commitments.
3. They are courageous and don't shirk from responsibilities or challenging assignments.
4. They don't run or hide during a crisis but rather step up to lead and help out.
5. They are competent enough to get the job done well and are unafraid to ask the right questions!
6. They are supportive of the team and delegate and trust them.

Stephen M.R. Covey, in his 2009 book, *The Speed of Trust*, offers a simple formula for how trust speeds transactions between individuals and organizations:

**Increased Trust = Increased Speed and Decreased Cost**  
**Decreased Trust = Decreased Speed and Increased Cost**

Consider life pre-9/11 and the creation of the TSA bureaucracy. Before 9/11 we had a high level of trust in air travel as a society. Due to the severe and shocking breach of trust on 9/11 by the terrorists, the speed of air travel as a whole decreased by roughly an hour domestically and often more than two hours internationally. Your time and out-of-pocket costs have also gone up significantly to cover the expense of new procedures and equipment for enhanced security. You can apply this formula to any interaction between individuals, teams, organizations and markets and find that it holds true.

So trustworthiness is a character trait that has real-world transactional implications beyond one's personal or business reputation. In Q's case the trust he breached due to his untrustworthy behavior almost killed a teammate and jeopardized a mission. In a business dealing, a breach of trust can cause a transaction to fail, can degrade one's reputation, and increase costs to all parties. Personal and team trustworthiness must be placed on the highest priority list, measured, and practiced. But how?

First let's look at a few common myths about trust and then dispel them.

1. Trustworthiness is a soft skill only. Wrong. Trust is a combination of soft and hard skills.
2. Trustworthiness is developed slowly, over time. Wrong. It can be created and destroyed quickly. The key is to develop the habit of maintaining trustworthiness at all times, which takes discipline.
3. Trustworthiness is just solely about integrity. Wrong. Though integrity is critical for trust to develop between parties, it goes beyond integrity and speaks to one's entire character.
4. Once lost, trustworthiness is gone forever. Wrong. You can make amends, say you are sorry, and then rebuild trust.
5. In business, it is simply too risky to trust. Wrong. It is essential to have trust for optimal performance in business, as in all areas of life. If you are trustworthy and must deal with a party you know to be untrustworthy or that you simply don't know well (a pretty common scenario in business situations), then trust cannot exist. However, this doesn't mean you can't do business period. Simply transact business and verify results, let trust build, and remain aware. As I said, though, real progress is only made when both parties have a high level of trustworthiness.
6. Trustworthiness is only relevant to individuals and teams. Wrong. Organizations have a reputation based upon the collective trustworthiness of each person in it. Their trustworthiness is displayed in how their customers, peers, and society treat them.

When it comes to developing trustworthiness, what behaviors can you work on to turn trustworthiness into a virtue? Here are some ideas:

1. Talk straight—avoid spins, lies, double talk, and flattery.
2. Demonstrate respect—you want and deserve respect, so begin by showing respect for others.
3. Create transparency—avoid withholding information and keeping secrets unless absolutely necessary to protect intellectual property or to prevent someone getting hurt.
4. Right wrongs quickly—we all screw up, so admit it, and repair things as fast as possible.
5. Show loyalty—don't take all the credit or sell others out. Don't gossip!
6. Deliver the results that you promise. Better yet, exceed them.
7. Earn your Trident every day—meaning strive to improve your trustworthiness every day.
8. Clarify expectations—ensure that the explicit and implicit tasks of your mission and those that

you delegate are crystal clear.

9. Practice accountability—start with yourself, and then demand it of your team and organization. But the buck always stops with you.
10. Practice authentic listening.
11. Communicate with brutal honesty—use the brief (pre-action review of the plan) and debrief process (post-action review of what happened) to keep communicating at all levels so you can always be learning and helping others learn.
12. Learn to trust others by delegating and giving more responsibility and then providing support when inevitable failures occur.

The key is to open up the dialogue about trustworthiness with your team, and be willing to expose yourself to vulnerability and direct, honest feedback from them. You may be surprised at what you learn about yourself and your teammates, and the discussion alone will increase trust between you. Building trust by forging our own trustworthiness will allow loyalty to also rise with the tide.

## **Leadership**

The words leadership and integrity often show up on the value lists of most individuals and organizations. But the list is where things often end. Leadership and integrity are relative until measured and framed with a positive ethos. In essence, “integrity” really just means that what you think, say, and do are in alignment, so it could be either positive or negative. In addition, leadership without positive integrity is manipulation. You would be hard-pressed to argue that Hitler didn't exhibit integrity in thought, word, and deed. However, his was a negative ego, ethnocentric-based integrity that caused his leadership to be mass manipulation and control of the German psyche. Leadership integrity was completely missing from this equation. The horrific result with Hitler was xenophobia, deep suspicion, war, and ethnic cleansing. My point is that integrity in leadership must be framed within a positive service attitude in order to build trust and loyalty and lead to honorable results.

Leadership expert Warren Bennis says that "leadership is doing the right thing, while management is doing things right." This is a clever saying and gets you thinking about the distinctions between leading and managing. Leading has typically been associated with creating a vision, crafting a mission and motivating a team to follow you to the end and back to accomplish it. Management, on the other hand, has been associated with the technical side of organizing the efforts of the individuals and teams within the structure of the organization. This is a pretty old-fashioned idea, I believe, as the bureaucratic model of organizing falls away into self-managing companies and integrally informed organizations. Ultimately what we are coming to is a need for leaders to be excellent self-managers and inspired leaders with integrity. We can simply look at this as leadership integrity, where the leader's thoughts, words and deeds are aligned in I, We and It.

Aligning thoughts, words, and deeds in a truthful and honorable manner takes serious work, especially after learning how messed up our thinking can be in the next chapter. It requires courage and discipline to do the work, but this is super-critical. The decisions we are required to make are going to be even tougher in the future. Mistakes can lead to grave consequences: recall President

Clinton's behavior in office. Mr. Clinton was a smart, pleasant, and remarkably effective politician. However, he was a horrible self-manager and lacked leadership integrity, as evidenced by his breaching the trust of his office and then lying about it. Here he was the President of the United States, an office that ideally, if not implicitly, requires a high degree of trustworthiness, honor and integrity, and he was sleeping with the interns and lying about it under oath. There was no integrity to be found between his thoughts, deeds, and actions. Moreover, there was no honor. He still couldn't take the "hard right action" even though he knew what the consequences could be. These gaping character defects are a sure sign that leadership integrity was absent. Though one may aspire to, and even attain, positions with tremendous power and influence, character excellence will remain beyond one's grasp without the virtue of leadership integrity.

A SEAL mentor of mine, Captain Jim O'Connell, used to say that a way to "gut check" for leadership integrity was to ask if you'd be thrilled to read about you're pending action in the next edition of the New York Times. I find this to be a great guideline, one I am sure President Clinton wishes he had applied when contemplating his next action with Ms. Lewinski!

One time during a SEALFIT training one of the students displayed a lack of personal leadership integrity when he did an about-face 10 feet before the turnaround point on a run. It was dark and he thought he was alone, but he was held accountable by a coach observing from the shadows. Cheating, especially on the small, seemingly inconsequential things, degrades integrity and chips away at trust. The short-term gain is soon demolished by the regret, shame and degradation of respect that accompanies the inevitable exposure of the lie, not to mention the anxiety that envelops you while living in fear of exposure! Good decision-making simply cannot occur under these conditions.

However, aligning thoughts, words, and actions in leadership integrity doesn't mean you have to always tell the truth or turn in a friend who slips up. There are situations where wisdom dictates a more sensitive response over a blanket policy of blurting out the truth to anyone who is within earshot. I was once contacted by a young lady looking for information about her SEAL dad's heroic exploits in Vietnam. The problem was that her dad was never a SEAL, rather he was posing as one. The news put me in a dilemma: Was it my job to expose this guy's fraud and protect the integrity of the SEAL name? My initial reaction was to do just that. But how would the girl's life change when she found out her father had been lying for her entire life? I wondered if it was my duty to be the judge, jury and executioner in this case? I decided the answer was no; I would not expose the man's fraud to her and dash their relationship; rather I would leave it to him to live with his dishonor. When I responded to her email, I simply said that the information she was seeking was not available to me.

If you followed along in Section 1 of the book and in Chapter Five, then you're well on your way to developing leadership integrity and acting with honor. In the Unbeatable Mind training we have a practice I call "authentic communication." This is a great tool to develop leadership integrity as it pertains to aligning your thoughts and words. The practice is to first pause with a breath before speaking, and then speak only if:

- What you have to say is true, as best as you can determine.
- And what you have to say is helpful or wise.
- And if what you have to say comes from a place of love and respect—meaning it's positive.

Then you will follow up your words with action to fulfill your commitments. When routinely habituated, this authentic communication tool will leave words of negativity and low value unspoken,

and what is spoken will have increased power. Then the actions that follow will be anchored in truth, wisdom, and love as well. My guess is the world would also be better for the silence that would result if we all practiced this!

## **Humility**

Following and leading are two sides of the same coin; you can't have one without the other. Those who seek to lead without being willing to follow may gain some ego blast in the short run, but they typically fail in the long game. This attitude of serving through being a great follower is not a trick or tactic of leadership but rather another character trait that developed through the twin forces of experience and intent.

Taking your eyes off yourself and serving your teammates requires the humility to follow and support them most of the time. When the time or circumstances are appropriate for you to lead, you bolt out front and lead by example, with integrity and inspiration.

Thus, I feel the best way to cultivate character excellence and authentic leadership is not to leap in immediately to "earn your leadership stripes" (unless you have no choice) but to act with humility by watching carefully and being helpful as a follower. In the SEALs, officers are the leaders responsible for the mission, but at every phase there is usually someone else leading the charge—for instance one SEAL will lead the dive, another will lead the jump, a third will lead the direct action raid, and so on. It is expected that the officers get out of the way and let these guys do what they do best. The officers who don't learn to trust their teammates, and to follow, usually don't fare well. In allowing subordinates to lead key parts of the mission, I'm giving them the opportunity to grow, to learn, to fail. And in reality, most of those SEALs, in those situations, had more skills and experience than I in that arena. So yeah, I often found myself serving and supporting others to lead in my stead. I had to develop the humility to check my ego and say, "This is their turn. They're smarter at this or they're better at this, or they've got the better idea, or they're stronger." I had to recognize that there may be instances where I would be fatigued or injured, or for whatever reason just wouldn't be as equipped to make the right call. I had to learn to say, "You've got this, buddy, because you're going to do a better job than I am." You can't be good at everything, all the time. Knowing that is the kind of humility that earns trust and loyalty.

When I was a newly minted ensign in the SEALs, I knew I was supposed to lead, but it would have been my ego up on stage if I had tried to take control before I had any experience of what it really meant to operate in the field. So when I was recruited into my first platoon, I didn't set out to actively lead the men but rather to follow and learn from them, seeking to earn their trust. They knew I outranked them and that I would be held accountable if anything went wrong. But because of the way leadership is shared in the Teams, I also knew they would protect me in that event. This experience was a powerful lesson on humility: To lead you must first learn to follow. Again humility reveals your true character excellence and earns you the trust you need to lead effectively.

If you're not in a leadership role, this virtue still comes into play. A good rule of thumb is to try to make the leader's job easier through your actions. You will gain the trust and respect of the team, and when needed, you will be called upon to lead. With this attitude, your time will soon come. If you force the issue, you can put yourself and the team at risk. Like with the SEALs, remember that within the fabric of a strong team every teammate has the capacity and character to lead. Everyone is simply awaiting the opportunity to serve in a leading role. You can also practice humility by sharing the credit for the team's successes, whether you were the one who had the big idea or were the one in charge.

## **Responsibility**

Responsibility has many levels and presents itself in many different forms. Warriors and spiritual leaders accept the highest form of responsibility: for the lives of others and the well being of the human race. Corporate leaders are meant to accept responsibility for their organizations and teams, and we are all individually responsible for our thoughts and actions. An organization's transaction with a customer conveys with it the responsibility to fulfill their end of the bargain. You can see how being responsible has a big impact for the development of trustworthiness and loyalty. When you commit to your responsibilities as a virtue, then those who rely on you or whose success depends on you executing your part can rest a bit easier. They trust that you're going to carry your load, so they can commit fully to their part. In a strong team, responsibility means there's a sense that we've all got this together. Everyone has each other's back, and trust goes through the roof. As do the results. On the other hand, ignoring or abdicating responsibility breaches trust and erases loyalty lightning quick.

Accountability is the flip side of responsibility. When responsible for something or someone, you are held accountable for the consequences if things go wrong. Notice that there is no need for accountability when things go right. When things go wrong, however, is when your character goes on display. We observe a failure of courage in leaders when they don't accept full accountability when things go south. Images of political and business leaders denying involvement in scandals (such as Bill Clinton, and later his wife Hillary, with Benghazi) and pointing the finger far exceed reports of leaders accepting accountability. I am reminded of the CEO of British Petroleum, Tony Hayward, and his handling of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010. Hayward was cavalier and downplayed the risk to the environment and wildlife, even denying full accountability of his firm. He was like the teammate who, when the proverbial shit hit the fan, immediately shifted focus to cover his own ass. But in this case, Hayward was the CEO, so he was trying to cover not only his own ass, but the company's ass as well. The responsible thing to do would have been to step up and take ownership of the situation, to become a face for accountability and a positive force for solutions. Hayward could have gotten in front of the clean-up effort, taking care of the environment and the people who were adversely affected by the spill. Most people respond very positively to people who accept accountability with grace, even in a major disaster such as this one. Instead, Hayward's words and actions ultimately diminished trust among shareholders and the board, and his job came to a disgraced end.

Accountability extends to your teammates as well. One of the SEAL ethos statements is to "take responsibility for your own actions...and the actions of your teammates." This is a burden gladly accepted when you work with those you must trust with your life. However, when the risk is lower, as in most professions, that level of accountability is rare. Part of this is the fault of the systems that evolve with large organizations, as there is too often an emphasis on micromanaging and identifying who is responsible for failures in the sense of blame, rather than a focus on accountability and moving quickly to identify holes that need to be patched for next time, as in the SEAL debrief process. If each member of the team could make the mission and the team his responsibility without the restraint of excessive rules and regulations, and fear of being reprimanded (or worse) if things go wrong, and if each member could be held accountable to that standard of totally shared responsibility for the success of the team, you would have a powerful multiplier effect.

## **Determination**



When I first set foot onto the fabled BUD/S training "grinder," I read the saying "The Only Easy Day Was Yesterday" (TOEDWY) written in gold on blue above the asphalt. It is a simple, yet profound statement that became my daily companion as my character was ground down and rebuilt over nine long months. Did the saying mean that yesterday was easy, or that today was going to be harder than yesterday? Nope; none of that really mattered. What it meant was that I had to deliver results with all I had—right here and right now. It meant I had to show up and put out 100 percent and then do it all again tomorrow. The memory of yesterday is easy because it is over, and tomorrow hasn't happened yet, so don't worry about it. Just focus on performing right now.

That saying was speaking to the need to develop determination, which goes hand in hand with the warrior-like discipline we've been talking about. TOEDWY encouraged us to remain determined to stay focused 100 percent, every individual moment, to keep driving forward. It encouraged us to learn new skills, gain new knowledge and to perform under duress and in all sorts of crazy situations. Those who accomplished this every day for the nine months (and beyond) had the privilege of serving alongside America's finest warriors.

## **Perseverance**

If determination is the will to keep showing up and putting out 100% every day, then perseverance is the discipline to follow through and keep on going no matter what obstacles stand in your way.

During Operation Desert Storm a SEAL buddy of mine, Lieutenant Dietz, ran a highly successful diversion mission that tricked Saddam Hussein's forces into believing the US Marines were storming their beach. It was a classic "frogman" operation, but during the planning they struggled with how to move huge amounts of explosive to shore. Bringing the C-4 in by boat would increase the risk of detection. Swimming it in would make the loads smaller, but it was still problematic because it would require multiple trips back and forth and in the interim would expose the team to sharks and, if spotted from shore, vulnerable to attack.

Finally, a younger SEAL suggested floating in the C-4 haversacks on boogie boards. After a few moments of disbelief, Tom decided he liked the idea and sent a request for blacked-out boogie boards to the headquarters in Coronado, California. The desk-bound combat vet who received the request said out loud: "What the hell? I thought we were fighting a war over there!" Once the operational nature of the request was understood, however, the boards were sent, the trick worked, and the mission was a success.

There are a couple points to this story: First, SEALs will always persevere to "find a way or make one." Second, they will never give up. SEALs persevere against all odds because they believe that failure is not an option. This doesn't mean that they can't fail or that things never go wrong; rather it means that they don't accept the concept of failure. You don't fail; you find a way, make a way, or learn again how not to do something. Learning what doesn't work and creating a new way is a success. With this approach to learning and mission execution, you can't fail in the traditional sense of the word. You simply keep trying until you succeed, learning through trial and error along the way. That's the virtue of perseverance at work.

To become as innovative and persistent as a SEAL requires a higher degree of risk tolerance and commitment to the task. It must start with your self-dialogue. As Yoda implores, "do or do not; there is no try." Never suggest something can't be done, and if you decide to do something, then commit to seeing it through. Learn to adapt, improvise, and overcome any obstacles as you find a way or make one.

Now all of this sounds simple, right? But for SEAL-style perseverance to be realistic, you must ensure from the beginning that your goals are SMART-FITS targets. We'll dive more deeply into setting up your win from the start with proper target selection and goal setting in Chapter 8, but for now, learn to apply these selection criteria and you will find that perseverance naturally becomes a part of your character:

1. Be optimistic, and expect to win.
2. Make sure that the goal is very motivating to you and your team.
3. Burn with desire to win or achieve the goal. Ask yourself how badly you want the victory before you decide to act.
4. Understand the delta (difference) between your skills and knowledge now and what will be required to succeed at a high level. If the delta is too much to overcome in the time frame you have, then you should wave off and choose another mission.
5. Ensure that you have the mental and physical capital to pull it off in a way that does not impact other mission-critical goals.
6. Once you commit, then burn your boats, press forward, and never, ever quit!

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As you embark on cultivating your own personal virtues for excellence, it will be inspiring to read the Navy SEAL ethos. The ethos (and shorter code) is a great set of values to model in your own life. The SEALs take great pains to habituate these values through rigorous daily training as well as the example of the warriors through each successive generation. Here it is:

## **The Navy SEAL Ethos**

In times of war or uncertainty there is a special breed of warrior ready to answer our Nation's call. A common man with an uncommon desire to succeed. Forged by adversity, he stands alongside America's finest special operations forces to serve his country, the American people, and protect their way of life. I am that man.

My Trident is a symbol of honor and heritage. Bestowed upon me by the heroes that have gone before, it embodies the trust of those I have sworn to protect. By wearing the Trident I accept the responsibility of my chosen profession and way of life. It is a privilege that I must earn every day.

My loyalty to Country and Team is beyond reproach. I humbly serve as a guardian to my fellow Americans, always ready to defend those who are unable to defend themselves. I do not advertise the nature of my work nor seek recognition for my actions. I voluntarily accept the inherent hazards of my profession, placing the welfare and security of others before my own.

I serve with honor on and off the battlefield. The ability to control my emotions and my actions, regardless of circumstance, sets me apart from other men. Uncompromising integrity is my standard. My character and honor are steadfast. My word is my bond.

We expect to lead and be led. In the absence of orders, I will take charge, lead my teammates, and accomplish the mission. I lead by example in all situations.

I will never quit. I persevere and thrive on adversity. My Nation expects me to be physically harder and mentally stronger than my enemies. If knocked down, I will get back up, every time. I will draw on every remaining ounce of strength to protect my teammates and to accomplish our mission. I am never out of the fight.

We demand discipline. We expect innovation. The lives of my teammates and the success of our mission depend on me—my technical skill, tactical proficiency, and attention to detail. My training is never complete.

We train for war and fight to win. I stand ready to bring the full spectrum of combat power to bear in order to achieve my mission and the goals established by my country. The execution of my duties will be swift and violent when required, yet guided by the very principles that I serve to defend.

Brave men have fought and died building the proud tradition and feared reputation that I am bound to uphold. In the worst of conditions, the legacy of my teammates steadies my resolve and silently guides my every deed. I will not fail!

### **The SEAL Code (Short Version of the Ethos)**

- Loyalty to country, team, and teammate
  - Serve with honor and integrity on and off the battlefield
  - Be ready to lead, ready to follow, and never quit!
  - Take responsibility for your actions and the actions of your teammates
  - Excel as warriors through discipline and innovation
  - Train for war, fight to win, and defeat our nation's enemies
  - Earn your Trident every day
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## **Section 4: Earn Your Trident Every Day**

# Chapter Seven: Sheepdog Strong

The last of the SEAL ethos statements is "Earn your Trident every day." Earning your Trident every day is a reminder that the destination is never the goal. Once you become a SEAL, it is then incumbent upon you to seek and sustain the skills of the warrior and leader. The training is endless and relentless. You are never "there" and can never rest on the glow of past accomplishments. This is another powerful guiding principle for your life. The world changes so fast now you can't afford to throttle back or take things for granted. If you do, you will soon find yourself scrambling from behind, or watching from the sidelines, wondering what the hell hit you. Many companies and individuals in the past decade have made this mistake and faced irrelevance, an enterprise vanishing or career gone bust because of it. Many believe that close to half of today's fortune 500 companies will be gone in five years due to technological disruption. Change or be marginalized is the new normal.

I learned in the SEALs how to embrace change while avoiding threats and remaining alert for opportunities using an offensive mindset. I call this being "Sheepdog Strong." Today's world can seem dangerous and chaotic. Becoming Sheepdog Strong will allow you to protect yourself and your loved ones in the event of a crisis, and it is essential to your ability to embrace change and earn your Trident of respect every day.

## The Sheep and the Wolves

Dr. David Grossman, author of *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and Peace*, is a former Army officer who has studied the psychology of the warrior in combat. He metaphorically describes the vast majority of the world's population as sheep grazing in ignorant bliss of any threat, oblivious to any situational condition of what surrounds them. A much smaller percentage of the population, though, is comprised of wolves that make it their business to prey upon the sheep. The wolves are prone to violence and are comfortable taking what is not theirs, without conscience intervention. The wolves tear into the weaker sheep while the others, and society at large, pay scant attention. Fortunately, there are folks like you and me: A fractional percentage of the population who straddle the line between the sheep and wolves. This is the group Grossman passionately studies. He identifies us as sheepdogs. We keep our eyes on the wolves to protect the sheep. The sheepdog is the soldier, sailor, marine, coast guardswoman, police officer, ethical leader and Good Samaritan. It also needs to be you, if you are not there already.

During quiet times the sheep want little to do with the sheepdogs, feeling they are best if out of sight, out of mind. Sheepdogs can make people nervous because they sense that the sheepdog is comfortable with violence. My neighbor, when he didn't see me for a few days, assumed that I'd been gallivanting through foreign lands rolling up the bad guys. He loves that a SEAL is his neighbor, but I can tell that my knowledge, skill, and confidence make him nervous. Perhaps he fears that in mid-conversation I will lose it and rip his head off. Sheepdogs carry a heavy burden: though trained for violence, they are often the most disciplined and well-adjusted members of society. The sheepdog knows his Three Ps and One Thing and is committed to making a difference in the world through service. His violence differs greatly from the violence of the wolf—it is only used in defense and if absolutely necessary. Bound by a strict code of ethics and sense of duty, the sheepdog is trained to control the application of violence like a faucet meters water.

Recently I read the following headline: "Lost in Smartphones, San Francisco Train Passengers Didn't Notice the Gunman until He Pulled the Trigger." Scary, right? The smartphone is just the latest

in a long line of external stimuli that have allowed many to act like sheep by taking the eyes off the important things in an endless distraction of info- and entertainment. TV started the trend, web surfing and social media saturated us with it, and now texting, tweeting and playing games on smartphones is putting the final nail in the coffin of awareness. The sheepdog has noticed this trend, and learns to control use of the smartphone when his awareness is needed in public.

## **Here are some rules of engagement**

1. Stop being passive. Commit to being a Sheepdog and making a difference. Pull your head out of the sand and pay attention to what is going on around you. Remember, you are earning your Trident of respect every day.
2. Activate your internal radar. We all have internal radars that can sense danger, but most people have them switched off. Marine Colonel Jeff Cooper's color system is helpful to learn here:
  - a. Complete ignorance is white. Your internal radar is off; you are in the flock of sheep.
  - b. Passive alertness is yellow. This is where your internal radar is switched on and passively scanning for threats.
  - c. Super-heightened awareness is orange. This is when your radar pings a threat and goes on high alert, searching for information as to the threat level, potential action plans, resources, escape routes, weapons, etc. You are escalating your energy systems, getting ready for a fight.
  - d. Action to counter is red. Your radar is redlining. This is when you tackle the jerk waving the gun before he pulls the trigger.
3. Initiate Sheepdog tactics. As a Sheepdog you can keep your smartphone to conduct business and text for help. However, learn to use it in a sheepdog manner. Here are the guidelines:
  - a. Always operate in yellow when in public.
  - b. Never be on the smartphone while walking, driving (duh), or in conversation with another human being.
  - c. When on public transit, scan the environment and sit near the back with a good view of the entire scene. Keep your smartphone off until you are certain there is no threat. Each time the bus/train/whatever comes to a stop, you turn it off and repeat the process.
  - d. In a restaurant or other open public space, enter by scanning the surrounding area outside and inside for any potential threats. If you detect a potential threat, then tune your radar to actively—but discreetly—scan in that direction. Sit with a good view of the establishment, and enjoy your meal or experience and only check your smartphone in the bathroom.
  - e. Don't become paranoid. My purpose is to prod you to step it up and be part of the solution, but I am not recruiting a vigilante force. Forging an Unbeatable Mind and walking the warrior path means you are becoming uncommon, and the recommendations I offer are for you to put that uncommon excellence to good use. As we work on becoming better people every day, let's also step up to become Sheepdogs. That way we can protect the less aware, weaker elements of our wonderful society from the wolves. But don't mistake these recommendations for encouragement to go out looking for trouble, or to make some of your own.

## **Switch on, Switch Off**

The sheepdog will develop a mental "binary switch" that turns controlled violence on and off at will. It's important to know at a visceral, almost unconscious level that you are capable of shifting into a primordial survival mode instantly if you need to.

The "bamboo party" of my martial arts training is a good example of how I trained this binary switch. Four black belts place large bamboo poles over the ankles, hips, chest, and finally the throat of the brown belt candidate. Within seconds the flow of blood in your body is restricted such that instinctual fight-or-flight alarm bells go off. In that moment, you have to make a choice, and though it's a simulation, as far as your body and mind are concerned your choice in that split second is the difference between life and death. A nanosecond later, the student breaks free, shattering the bamboo poles and sending the black belts rolling in an explosion of energy and will that is practically reflexive. This experience gives you a powerful benchmark that anchors in the "knowing" that you can switch from orange to red in a heartbeat if you are ever pushed to the wall in a true "Sheepdog" situation. The "offensive mind training" I received taught me to control this binary switch, and also to throttle back down as the threat recedes.

My Ninjitsu Sensei, Shane Phelps, used to tell me that I had to always be the "subject" and never the "object" of the situations I enter in life, especially violent encounters. This means that we control the frame of the experience, create the lens that the other person looks through, and then write the script of what is unfolding before our very eyes. In this way we control the outcome and remain the victors. Consider my story about walking alone in Kuala Lumpur in Chapter Five, when I was confronted with several men who probably wanted to mug me. Instead, because I was Sheepdog Strong (and showed them my strength in mind, body, and spirit), they thought better of it and moved on, probably to some other poor unsuspecting guy who lacked the training and awareness that I had.

So what if you don't classify yourself as a Sheepdog now but want to step up to be Sheepdog Strong? To start you will need to elevate your awareness to the "yellow zone" of passive alertness at all times in public. Begin to train yourself to see the threats before they escalate. I offered some practical rules of engagement earlier; now let's step up it up.

## **Dog Training**

Sheepdog-strong training starts with training your awareness, but it quickly moves from that "I-Self" sphere of personal mastery to the "We-Team" sphere of team mastery. No sheepdog operates alone, you see; a team is required to tip the balance against the violent elements. Contrary to our cultural story of staunch, Dirty Harry-style individualism, it is teams of like-minded individuals who change the world. The following set of recommendations is offered to help you grow your sheepdog-strong team and eradicate fear.

**Tip 1:** Build a Sheepdog family. In a crisis situation, if you're spending all of your energy taking care of your family, which is common, you're not going to have as much energy to possibly help out your neighbors or community and be a part of the broader solution. If everyone's got some mental toughness skills and awareness development, they're more likely to be self-sufficient and can help you out, and that will allow you to turn your attention to other things. So have the color system discussion, and practice awareness drills, such as the Keep in Memory game (the KIM game is described in detail in the Unbeatable Mind Academy and is a way that SEALs use to train their memories and enhance awareness), travel mind games, and sensory awareness drills. Have fun with it, but ensure that they understand the importance of training the tribe. If you don't have an immediate family, then this extends to your closest friends.

**Tip 2:** Build a Sheepdog network. When a hurricane devastated San Jose Del Cabo in Mexico this year, my brother in law, who has a home there, was visiting my family in San Diego. Luckily he'd brought his daughter with him. However, this meant their home was left unprotected, and in the wake of the storm people were looting many neighborhoods in the area. My brother-in-law called up his daughter's boyfriend, whom he trusted and knew to be a Sheepdog, and asked him if he would check on their house. The boyfriend got a few of his buddies, fellow Sheepdogs, and they staged themselves in the house with their weapons for a few days until things calmed down. Looters ransacked much of the neighborhood, but not my brother-in-law's house. Natural disasters and even smaller local incidents can cause a crisis without warning, and you need to know how to take care of yourself and your loved ones. You can do that much more effectively if you're plugged in to a network of people who will all look out for one another.

**Tip 3:** Become a Sheepdog communicator. If you observe a situation or person who is obviously a potential threat, such as a suspicious man scoping the neighborhood several days in a row, take note and communicate it to your family and other Sheepdogs in your network. Don't be overly paranoid, but err on the side of caution. Report things to the authorities that your network believes to be a clear and present danger. Don't expect them to do anything right away, though; just keep watching, and be prepared to act if necessary.

**Tip 4:** Prepare more than others. For instance, when you travel, take the following actions:

1. Review the travel route on a map, and commit it to memory.
2. Print it out just in case. Phone GPS features are great until your battery dies or the signal disappears.
3. Locate some gas and food stops along the route and commit them to memory.
4. Fill your gas tank.
5. Check tire pressure on all five tires (don't forget the spare).
6. Have a "just in case" bag ready with snacks, tools, LED flashlight, rags, and medical kit.

**Tip 5:** Be an undesirable target! This is a no-brainer but will require you to situate yourself and act differently in public. This can include carrying yourself more confidently and avoiding areas that make you vulnerable, that are not well lit, are desolate (such as large parking structures), or just give you the heebie-jeebies. Keep a high-power LED flashlight in your car. The flashlight should be able to blast about 1,000 lumen. If someone you don't recognize approaches you at night, blind them with the light and, if necessary, use it as a weapon. The light will ward off 99 percent of the wolves and give you time to escape as their night vision will be shot for a good five minutes.

**Tip 6:** Mentally prepare to do things you previously imagined unthinkable. This is tough for some people, and you don't have to go bonkers with it. Simply visualize yourself dominating a fight by kicking the groin, gouging eyes, and thumping the evildoer in the neck with your pipe arm. If you want



self-defense training, I recommend Target Focus Training, Krav Maga or attending our SEALFIT SOF Immersion Academy. When you can see yourself winning the fight in your mind, then you will be more likely to respond offensively and not freeze in a real life situation.

A very real but extreme example is provided from one of my South African friends. There, car hijackers would stop people in their cars, simply shoot them, and then take off with their cars. In that environment you would not wait for the thug to come to your car but would use your car as a weapon and get out of dodge. Once I was in Kenya on a mission traveling on a highway when we passed a bus lying on its side. A fire was burning, and there appeared to be injured passengers inside. Our first instinct was to stop and help, but the Kenyan Special Forces driver skirted around it. He later told us it was a 'honey trap' where the perpetrators were trying to bait sympathetic foreigners to stop so they could mug them, or worse, kidnap them for ransom. If our driver hadn't been mentally prepared for these kinds of threats, which are unique to his environment, who knows what fate may have befallen us? The world is dangerous and chaotic...destiny sure favors the prepared in body and mind!

A final note: being Sheepdog Strong requires that you set aside worry about what others think of you. Many may think your training and preparation to be extreme. Don't make a big deal of it because those same people will be running toward you, frantically waving their arms when something goes awry. At the same time, be very discreet and have fun with the training. It is not my intention to turn you into an outlier. Quite the opposite: I want you to be a leader and to be viewed as the one willing to go the distance to train and prepare body, mind, spirit, and team for some serious kick-ass if the wolves come around. This is admirable and, frankly, necessary if we are going to maintain order in a world going slightly mad. In the next chapter, we will further discuss how we can advance our performance with five critical skills for leaders to learn.

# Chapter Eight: Critical Skills For Leaders

*One of the greatest ways to avoid trouble is to keep it simple. When you make it vastly complicated—and only a few high priests in each department can pretend to understand it—what you're going to find all too often is that those high priests don't really understand it at all....the system often goes out of control. —Charlie Munger*

To get to the heart of developing the mind, the second mountain of our journey, it is important to first understand its workings and limitations. With this knowledge you will be able to bypass faulty thinking with tools such as KISS planning, mental models, and visualization. Whether you lead a multinational corporation or a classroom of active kids, as a leader you need to be using your full mental capacity to make the best decisions in the future. But that is easier said than done because the mind is tricky and prone to leading us down the wrong path. You could say that it is easy to be clever but much more difficult to be wise. Wisdom must be trained or attained through much trial and error. The five keys to mentally tough leadership presented in this chapter will help you break up old patterns and replace them with new programming leading to better choices. You will learn to avoid the mental tricks and traps that mess us up and to access a deep level of wisdom.

Let's start by looking at the actual brain and the three components, or mini-brains that make up our whole brain. Then we will try to dissect how these parts of our brain cause us to behave the way we do. Next we will introduce several “mental models” that will help you avoid traps such as groupthink, procrastination and analysis paralysis. Finally we do a deep dive into how to use your mind more powerfully through visualization and positivity. To kick off this journey, let's take a field trip to the brain zoo.

## Train the Zoo Keeper

I'd be wealthy if I had a dollar for every time I put my foot into my mouth and down into my chest by jumping to a conclusion utterly devoid of truth or operating out of some BOO-inspired bias. So would you, I'm willing to bet. Even Charlie Munger and Warren Buffett, who run Berkshire Hathaway and are considered the savviest investors in the world, don't trust the workings of their minds. Instead, according to Charlie Munger (see *Poor Charlie's Almanack: The Wit and Wisdom of Charlie Munger*), they rely on mental models to help them frame better decisions and avoid the machinations their minds play, which they believe lead to flawed thinking.

Research over the last decade has peeled back the curtain on how this brain zoo operates. Using MRI and sensitive brain wave measurement equipment, scientists have been able to see what happens chemically and electrically in your brain when you perform certain actions. Different areas of the brain light up with chemical and electrical activity when you drive, have sex, or react to stress. The brain has been mapped based upon function and compared to the brains of other species. This information is to be taken with some skepticism because of the sheer complexity of the human brain as an organ and the inability to truly understand the workings of the mind as consciousness, but the point is that we are constantly increasing our knowledge of how we think, process information, and make decisions. As someone for whom mental strength and clarity is paramount, it's important that you try to stay on top of new developments in this area. Let me give you a head start.

Generally speaking there are three compartments of the brain—let's call them mini-brains—that have evolved over time, each building on top of the other to form the brain we have today. These

mini-brains developed along our chronological timeline and have different roles.

The Reptilian Brain is formed from the brain stem and cerebellum. This is our oldest brain. It is almost identical to a reptile's brain, hence the name. The reptilian brain regulates basic life functions like breathing, heart rate, and respiration (functions of the brain stem), balance, posture, and movement coordination (the cerebellum). It is also responsible for hardwiring behaviors from memories—so this is where deeply rooted training information is stored and retrieved. It may also be safe to assume that this brain is a component of the subconscious mind.

The Mammalian Brain evolved some 300 million years ago, so you probably don't remember it happening. It is called the mammalian brain because it is similar to the most evolved part of all mammals' brains. The prominent behaviors it regulates are the fight, flight, or freeze response and our need to feed and reproduce. It is also responsible for emotional behavior and regulating chemical and hormonal activity. When you get depressed, you can blame the mammalian brain. But you can then thank it for regulating your body temperature, blood sugar levels, digestion, hormonal balance, and other important things.

The Mammalian Brain houses the pituitary gland, which is the master hormone gland, and the pineal gland, which regulates sleep. It also includes the hippocampus, which is your memory sorting and storing tool, and the amygdala, which sifts and filters incoming information for threats and opportunities. This sub-brain is largely responsible for the bias toward negativity so prominent in the human condition. The fear wolf spends most of his time lurking here and sending fear signals to the third sub-brain.

The third sub-brain, the Monkey Brain, is the most recent addition to the zoo and is the seat of awareness, cognition, problem solving and creativity. It is more properly called the neocortex and is the "command center," where we reason, plan, intellectualize, analyze, verbalize, and learn. It allows us to interpret events and react to them accordingly. This new brain of ours is so complex it would be an injustice to try to summarize it here. When someone says you are operating out of "right brain" or "left brain" thinking, they are referring to the hemispheres of the neocortex. This part of our brain differentiates us from other mammals and is one of the reasons we have such enormous potential. The frontal lobe of the neocortex is your "executive office," where intent, focus, and willpower conspire to move you toward greatness or misery. In your teen years this area is not yet fully developed, which helps explain some of the hard-to-explain decisions you made in adolescence, a period well tended to by your emotional mammalian brain.

Now, it makes sense that these many “animals” in your head need a zoo keeper to keep them in line. Who does that job? Here’s a thought...how about the Witness? Let's consider the mind—as in consciousness—itself. This is what I call the Witness. The Witness exists independent of the organ of the brain. Many scientists and certain philosophers like to reduce the mind and consciousness to correlates of chemical releases and electrical firings in the brain. Feel free to openly laugh when they say this. Whatever you do, don't believe them for a minute. These are simply neurological byproducts of the mind thinking, accessing memories, imagining, perceiving, dreaming, and feeling. Your experience of a conscious mind certainly has chemical and electrical correlates, but it is a mistake to define consciousness as mere brain electrochemical signaling.

Studies of near-death and out-of-body experiences support this idea. The yogis and other Eastern spiritual traditions believe that the mind is consciousness, and consciousness is one's unique soul using the organs of thinking and feeling (the brain, heart, belly, nervous and neuroendocrine systems) to make meaning and to create your reality. The mind not only has its own unique imprint (like a fingerprint of the soul), it makes meaning from the collective stimulus of life experiences, and

has an interconnection to other beings and to a universal intelligence, the latter being that vast spirit that runs through all things. So, if the mystics are to be believed (and science is proving them right every day) then consciousness transcends, yet includes, the matter and functions of the brain itself, and it requires the brain to function well in our human form. But an untrained brain-mind is like an untrained body—weak, lethargic and not very functional!

To connect with and control this intricate mind, you must train your neocortex to acknowledge that it isn't the only animal in town, nor is it in charge. Only then can your Witness get back in the seat to become the zoo keeper and direct the activities of the mind-brain. The problem is that we have largely denied the Witness in our culture, instead identifying almost exclusively with thoughts in our brain as being the main thing. The thinker, the neocortex, doesn't want to give up the position it has been anointed with. Moreover, the neocortex is like a wild monkey—it is powerful and brimming with potential, but it is also dangerous and remarkably unproductive until trained. It is restlessly running from pain and chasing pleasure and greatly resists any attempt to settle it down for training.

We discussed earlier how martial artists, yogis, and monks learned long ago that they could train the monkey mind through concentration and sacred silence methods such as meditation. When they did this, they achieved a merging with the Witness (soul) and a taming of the thinking mind (ego). Then they could operate from their witnessing self while focusing their thinking minds with precision on the selected subject or object of attention.

If this all sounds too esoteric, this merging I speak of is not unlike the peak experience you have in a moment of flow when you are highly skilled in a specific domain, such as is a SEAL, first responder, or elite athlete in action. In the moment of laser-like intensity and challenge (the play or crisis) the mind operates from an unhindered Witness, time seems to collapse to just "now," and you are thrust into what feels like a state of flow. In these moments the frontal lobe of the neocortex is so focused on the object of attention that any other thoughts are forced out, allowing the unfettered direct perception of the Witness to target the object or action. As mentioned, in this state, the constructs of time and space seem to loosen their grip on the mind, slowing down or warping. In this manner the trained frontal lobe becomes your "flow activator" dissolving past and future into the present moment. Training so that you can activate the flow state, at will, takes time and patience. The witness process for mental control described in this book and sacred silence practices are the best way that I know of to accomplish this training (and this is a key focus of the Unbeatable Mind Academy). As soon as you begin training, you will note that the animals running amok in your mind take notice and line up to support you instead of fight against you.

As if the distracting chatter of the untrained monkey mind isn't enough to make you anxious, the way the neocortex interacts with the mammalian and reptilian brains is also a cause for concern. In 2011 economist and Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman wrote an intriguing book about how the mind works in decision making. The book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, provides remarkable insight into the tricks our animal brains play on us. Kahneman wondered how much control the neocortex really had over our thoughts and actions or whether the older brains had a say. His work basically proves that the "BOO" we have discussed in this book has a big impact on our thinking processes.

His central theme is that there are two primary modes of thought. The first (which he calls System 1) is the fast, instinctual, and emotional thought process driven by your mammalian and reptilian brains. The second (System 2) is the deliberate, rational, and logical cognition driven by the neocortex. Kahneman noted that System 1 is constantly monitoring the environment as well as the inner space to form down-and-dirty impressions of things. It probes for information important to survival and reproduction and will calmly take care of routine business—until it detects a threat or

opportunity related to both. Then it perks up and mobilizes the executive offices in the neocortex to activate System 2—in other words, to step up and figure things out with more detail.

The challenge arises in this dynamic interplay between the two systems. Due to the extraordinary amount of information flowing in from external and internal sources, System 1 must make assumptions and take shortcuts. Add to this the inherent laziness of System 1 (after all, it must save energy for the inevitable crisis), and you end up with the knee-jerk reactions and hair-trigger responses we all make that turn out dead wrong. The shortcuts and guesses made sense in the old days of detecting and defending against the saber-tooth tiger, or capturing the heart of the cave girl next door, but in today's world it can cause some troubles.

One interesting way this plays out is called the priming effect—wherein the brain will associate new information to the closest other idea, which then primes your answer. The priming effect is what leads to one of the more common errors of perception called confirmation bias, made famous by Malcolm Gladwell in his book *Blink* (more on him in a bit). This process goes mostly undetected, but the effects are obvious when you stop and look. An example Kahneman provides is if you have recently seen or heard the word eat, you are more likely to complete the word fragment so\_p as soup. However, if you just got out of the bath, you would be primed to read the word fragment as soap.

Kahneman describes an experiment in a company kitchen with an honesty box to pay for coffee. They put a picture of a flowerpot in the room and then later a picture with eyes. The employees contributed almost three times as much when the eyes were watching due to this priming effect!

Consider this sentence: Ann approached the bank. If you are a city dweller, you conjured up an image of Ann walking toward an ATM, but if you are a river guide you would be primed to see Ann glide up to the river bank in her kayak. When you buy a red Mazda, isn't it amazing how your mind confirms that practically everyone else suddenly owns a red car and there are now twice as many Mazdas on the road? How can we trust our minds when this type of gross misinterpretation is going on all the time?

Let's look at our proclivity to jump to conclusions with bias. System 1 works only with the information that it has ready access to. When evaluating people, System 1 is inclined to stereotype because if no other information is available, that is the only pathway we have to conjure an instant impression. This gave us an edge in the past, but that edge has long dulled. In one informative study, psychologist Solomon Asch asked subjects to say what they thought of two hypothetical characters: Alan and Ben. Here are the descriptions of the two: "Alan: intelligent, industrious, impulsive, critical, stubborn, envious; Ben: envious, stubborn, critical, impulsive, industrious, intelligent." As you hopefully noticed, the descriptors are identical but for their order of delivery. Subjects consistently rated Alan favorable to Ben because the initial traits in the list impacted the first impression meaning of the traits appearing later. The halo effect, where you transfer a trait such as good looks onto character when there is no other evidence to support the notion, is another manifestation of the priming effect of System 1.

Sales professionals are familiar with another gadget called the framing effect. How information is framed affects how it is processed. My friend Oren Klaff, best-selling author of *Pitch Anything*, uses the framing effect to dominate pitches for financing with great success. He has demonstrated how people unconsciously frame in negotiations and how you can break your frames and establish a new frame where you have the edge, albeit temporarily.

A final example of how System 1 distorts System 2 thinking is with loss aversion. The System 1 mammalian brain will see losses as a threat and cause us to avoid them at the expense of gains.

After all, threats are more urgent than opportunities. Consider the following example: "You are offered a gamble on the toss of a coin. If the coin shows tails, you lose \$100. If the coin shows heads, you win \$150. Is this gamble attractive? Would you accept it? Rationally it is good gamble because the expected value is positive. But most people reject this gamble because the fear of losing \$100 is more intense than the hope of gaining \$150. This loss aversion comes into play in all forms of negotiations. Since losses are felt more keenly than gains, the side that stands to lose will fight harder against it than the other side fights for it. It is also prevalent when it comes to cutting investment losses, which is why we tend to hold on to a losing stock. Selling a losing stock actualizes a loss, while selling a winning stock actualizes a gain. System 1 thinking will favor the latter over the former.

## **Shortcut the Gladwell Effect**

Now that I have dumped liberally on the human brain for its shortcomings, I wonder how we can shore it up for better decision making. Malcolm Gladwell, in his book *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, introduces us to the concept of mental intuition, which is gained through deep expertise in an area one is passionate about and spends a ton of time in. Gladwell tells us that those who master a skill, whether it be chess, basketball, or firefighting, are able to respond intuitively to a situation at a glance. The chess or basketball moves flow spontaneously and are almost always strong and creative. The firefighter, who has a sudden urge to escape a burning house just before it collapses, senses the danger intuitively without knowing how.

Gladwell posits that expertise at this level is formed from the intersection of deep knowledge and experience, expert skill, and presence. So based upon what we have learned about the brain so far, we can assert that this expertise is developed in the mammalian brain, which unconsciously picks up nuanced cues in an activity or environment one has great mastery over. The mammalian brain (System 1) presents these cues to the neocortex (System 2) at opportune moments for advantage, which show up as genius or creative brilliance. Since the mammalian brain has been well primed to look for nuances, those are now available to the thinking part of your brain and show up as insights. The neocortex, when trained or naturally in a present state of awareness, will be able to interpret these messages easily.

Now, according to Gladwell, the capacity for this type of unconscious intuitive behavior takes years to hone—at least ten thousand hours worth of practice. But here is the catch: Gladwell's assertions are based on a "common" untrained mind. Yes, intuition can arise due to deep concentration on a narrow set of skills over a long period of time, but I believe it can be accelerated greatly when we train as I offer in this book. My premise is that when we actively engage in training the whole body-mind system rather than allowing our development it to be shaped gradually or haphazardly, then we are able to access the same level of genius that Gladwell speaks of in shorter periods of time. My experience in the SEALs and with my trainees has proven to me that this is possible, though scientific validation may be lacking as of this writing.

A word of caution: Though intuitive genius is a worthy goal, you must still use a two-pronged approach to training. What I mean is that as you train your mind, you must also examine your BOO, or that intuitive inspiration you receive may be primed with flawed beliefs. This presents an awkward paradox: Do you trust your gut implicitly or use it as a guide while seeking external validation? Perhaps the setting will dictate: in an existential crisis you will need to trust your gut, but in a multimillion-dollar business deal, it is a good idea to trust...then verify.

The point is that even established experts remain at risk of mental traps caused by improperly

interpreted intuitive moments. Like Warren and Charlie, SEALs also safeguard against this by using mental systems to better frame and back up their decisions. Models like this provide an insurance policy against the zoo-brain's tricks and traps.

## Use Mental Models

It is clear now that erroneous thinking is common and leads to botched communications and mission failure all the time. The mental challenges described above produce four productivity killers:

1. **Procrastination:** delaying action due to imperfect information
2. **Perfectionism:** delaying action due to an imperfect plan
3. **Analysis paralysis:** delaying action by trying to analyze too much information
4. **Groupthink:** taking the most tepid action poisoned by the confirmation bias of the group

Using mental models will speed things up and diminish or eliminate the impact of these four killers. Mental models frame a problem with good questions and create a standard for how to make a decision or create the plan. In the SEALs we used a number of these, including the OODA loop, the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP), the CARVER target evaluation process, and the SMEAC mission planning process. We will discuss two of these and include SMART-FITS goal setting as a third. To kick off the discussion, let's review the primary principle underlying all of these mental models: KISS!

## KISS Planning

When I planned my first mission in the SEALs, I used a flip chart and the ancient industrial-engineering art of flow charting. The chart was crowded with boxes and arrows depicting the entire mission, from planning stage to post-mission debrief. The big chunks that required lots of coordination were further broken out into separate flow charts with contingencies built in. It was a cumbersome process, to say the least. But when it came down to briefing the guys, the KISS rule prevailed. The chart was tossed, and the operators simply asked questions and talked their way through the mission. As they talked we all visualized everything that would go right and anything that could go wrong. Then we stepped outside, boarded the helo, and just did it. The only thing that has changed since those days is the tools we use. The flip chart has been replaced by a suite of mission planning software, a projector, and a bevy of laptops, but the KISS rule still applies. At its most basic level, it means that we must focus on the most radically simple means to execute a plan. Too many moving parts can lead to confusion and gridlock in a crisis.

Let's look at KISS in the context of planning. Keeping things simple means that you will rely on a good enough plan to avoid the four killers of performance detailed above. A good enough plan aims for an 80 percent solution. As soon as you begin to execute, you will get feedback, and then you will immediately tweak your plan with another good-enough solution. Thus begins the success cycle:

- Create a KISS plan using SMART-FITS, SMEAC or PROP -->
- Fail Forward Fast (F3) with rapid execution -->
- Actuate the feedback OODA Loop -->

- Develop new KISS plan -->
- Execute again -->
- Receive feedback and the success cycle continues

The KISS Plan has four components. The first is to select a target that FITS the mission. The second is to develop a SMARTP mission statement (goal) to attack the target. Third is to define either a detailed SMEAC plan or a hasty PROP plan to execute. Finally, use the OODA Loop process to fine-tune your execution in “F3” mode.

With an aggressive fail forward fast orientation, the team will execute on a good-enough plan and achieve micro-victories with increasing velocity. The KISS planning solution shuns groupthink, blows through procrastination, and leaves perfectionists wondering how you succeeded so quickly. Let's take a closer look at the individual tools in this KISS planning process.

## SMARTP-FITS GOALS

It is no stunning news flash that properly selected goals, tied to your One Thing and executed with a KISS good-enough plan, will propel you toward mission accomplishment. Goals not tethered to your purpose are wild goose chases, and a purpose without SMARTP-FITS goals is a fantasy awaiting regret. The funny thing is, though, that nobody teaches this at an early enough age to allow for massive success. We are left to figure it out ourselves because the academic community doesn't know how to do it either. This skill is so crucial that it holds a place in the Big Four of Mental Toughness taught to the SEALs.

Let's start by looking at the FITS part of the model for ensuring that your goals/targets fit you in terms of skill, timing, and purpose. I came up with FITS to help select the proper targets for our mission and the proper goals for our targets. The process is easy to remember—essentially you will use it to ensure that your target fits the mission and goal fits the target.

It is important to note that goals can be either "being" goals or "doing" goals. In other words, goals help us "do" things or "be" someone. Both are important, and it is good to know which you are looking at as you decide whether it's a good fit for you now. Being goals are typically long-term goals centered around becoming a certain type of person or gaining specific qualities, such as being a good leader. Doing goals are often a subset of a being goal and include gaining a specific skill or milestone required for mission accomplishment. For instance, if you have a being goal to be a warrior, then a doing goal would be to earn the SEAL Trident. If attending SEALFIT's Kokoro Camp is among your doing goals, then shorter skill goals, such as to perform the physical skills to standard, will be what you work on as you shoot for the big goal of succeeding at the camp.

The first order of business when selecting targets or goals is to consider whether it is tethered to and aligned with your One Thing and purpose. Goals that are aligned with your purpose, and set with SMARTP-FITS rules, back each other up like building blocks—they set the foundation for your future. Here is the FITS process:

**Fit:** Does your goal fit you and your team in terms of your skills, resources, time, and personality? Is it reasonable or a long shot? Will the return on your investment in time, resources, and energy be worth it for this goal, or should you be looking at a different goal with higher return on investment?

**Importance:** Is this goal strategically important to achieve your mission or purpose? Will your



mission fail if you do not achieve this goal? Is there another, more vital goal you should be directing your precious energy on?

**Timing:** Is this the right time for this goal? What has to happen first for this goal to become a realistic achievement? Is there some other goal or target whose timing trumps this one?

**Simplicity:** Is this a KISS goal? Can you break the goal into smaller micro-goals, aka stepping stones, to increase the simplicity and your chances of succeeding and gaining momentum toward your actualizing your vision?

Refer to image in Appendix 1: F.I.T.S.

Once you are certain that your target or goal fits you, then you will move to step two and state it in SMARTP terms to maximize your chances of success. SMARTP-FITS goals are precisely stated and possess attributes for effective execution. First, they are specific and detailed rather than vague. Part of the detail is that they are measurable and it is easy to determine your progress. In addition, they are assessed as achievable, which is first assessed when you determined that the goal fit you. Achievability speaks to your skills and available resources. Next the goal must be relevant, such that they make sense in the context of your overall vision and life direction. Then, as stated already, the goal must have a time boundary for achievement. A goal time frame that is too short or too long can be a setup for failure. Finally all goals must be positively stated to avoid subconscious negativity that may erode progress.

My friend Kyle Maynard set a goal to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. Here was the hitch: Kyle doesn't have any arms or legs. Many would think that this goal was not realistic or achievable for him. And it may not have been were it not for his incredible determination. He had promised a dying friend that he would spread the man's ashes at the top of the mountain, and so, fueled by a powerful "why," Kyle took more than two years to plan his adventure. Though others may not have understood, the personal importance of the trek is what also made it a fitting goal for Kyle.. His long planning time frame made the goal more realistic, and his honest assessment of his physical capability and discipline made it achievable. He ultimately bear crawled up the entire mountain to the summit, a remarkable success.

Two years ago I set a goal to improve a physical skill I needed for the CrossFit Games. I declared that I would learn to do double-unders in three months (two revolutions of a jump rope in a single jump is called a double-under). Two months later I hadn't gotten even close, and I realized that I had violated my goal setting method. I asked myself, Mark, why take on any goal unless you intend to take it seriously? The answer was I shouldn't. Nor should you. So I revised my goal to this: to perform twenty perfect, consecutive double-unders by March 30. The goal was specifically stated, measurable (twenty), it was achievable (at the time I could do about five in a row, I owned a jump rope, and could easily practice the skill three to four times a week), it was relevant (I wanted to compete in the CrossFit Games Open) and it was time bound and positively stated (I gave myself three months and a deadline). I wrote the goal down and checked in with it weekly. Do you think I hit it? Yes, easy day! But if I hadn't restated it in those terms and given it proper attention and consistent energy, I'd still be wishing I could do it.

Let me dig deeper into why SMARTP-FITS goals work so well. First off, properly selected targets ensure you are focused on the right things, and smartly articulated goals ensure that you are

employing the KISS principle with focused determination to achieve them. Without refined targets connected to our One Thing and purpose, and well-set goals to keep us focused, we are easily distracted, and our energy becomes diffused. Properly crafted goals with a strong implementation plan replace fantasy with reality and mobilize your efforts with an uncommon level of commitment. No more wandering or stumbling around in the dark with your personal and professional life.

A final note: Effective goal setting facilitates new strategies for learning and development. If your strategy includes a daily goal review during your morning ritual routine and a periodic progress review, there's a high degree of likelihood that you'll remain focused and persistent until you achieve it. These super valuable processes are key in the Unbeatable Mind training. I've included a simplified Morning Ritual in the Appendix, where you can also find info on our online programs. The daily review process allows for modification and shifting fire as the realities of the daily drive impact the timing and realism of the goal. Rather than accepting failure for something out of your control, you simply adjust the goal elements to the new reality and drive on.

## **SMEAC and PROP**

We are not done just yet. It's also invaluable to construct a strategy for executing your SMARTP-FITS goals. A goal without a strategy is like a travel destination without a plan to get there. Do you walk, drive, or take the bus and how do you navigate or secure fuel to complete the journey? Many details are involved in planning to accomplish a lofty goal. Begin writing them down in a list, and then establish dates for striking them off. Use the SMEAC or PROP method to plan your mission in detail. Then review your progress on a schedule that is suitable for you. I like to do it daily and recommend you do it weekly at a minimum.

The SMEAC mission planning process is a simple but detailed planning model that can be used for any initiative, whether a SEAL mission or a joint business venture. It is best suited for complex, longer projects and serves as a sort of concept or business plan.

**Situation:** The situation is the background study that helps the team to understand the reasons behind the current requirement to act. The SEAL teams call this background "situational awareness" and believe it is critical for everyone to be on the same page regarding the why of the mission.

**Mission:** The mission is a specific statement of what you intend to accomplish, where, when, and the measure of success. The mission statement with an end state goal should be written in SMARTP language.

**Execution:** The execution part defines how the mission will be accomplished. The execution also specifies the involvement of others, your course of action, your intended resources, and your Plan B.

**Administration:** the administration section of the plan defines the administrative and logistical details that must be coordinated prior to and during the execution of the mission or project.

**Command and control:** the command and control specify who's in charge, who reports to whom, and when they report as well as the format for reporting. So many missions and projects fail due to poor communication and accountability. The SMEAC process makes a terrific one-page project or business planning tool. Both this and the OODA Loop mental models are simple and effective tools that provide a standard operating procedure to quickly analyze large volumes of information and

make wise decisions.

When you need to execute fast and the mission is simple to define but you need to quickly determine the best course of action, then the PROP instrument is your weapon of choice. With PROP you will evaluate a quick course of action based upon four simple criteria:

**Priorities:** what are the key priorities that are driving your mission?

**Realities:** what are the ground truth realities you are facing, and what impact do they have on your options?

**Options:** list the most compelling options for a way forward that you and your team have come up with.

**Plan:** what is the plan you decided on?

PROP serves as an excellent rapid planning and opportunity analysis tool. When combined with SMARTP-FITS target selection, you have a handy toolkit for solving mission-critical challenges as you rapidly move toward mission success.

Refer to image in Appendix 1: P.R.O.P.

## OODA Loop

Once you jump out the door on a mission, the planning stages are over, and now you are into rapid execution “F3” or “fail forward fast” stage. In this stage of your success cycle, you will use the OODA Loop, developed by the late Air Force Lieutenant Colonel John Boyd. This brilliant man was a fighter pilot who ended up designing aircraft for the Pentagon. He distilled his instinctual expertise into a four-step process to simplify the teaching of rapid-fire, life-and-death decision making of aerial combat. OODA is a KISS tool of the most elegant form. OODA has us constantly evaluate our relational position to the enemy (or competition) and make decisions that keep us one step ahead of them. This is how it works:

- Observe the situation closely. What is your relative position to the enemy and how is their behavior going to impact you?
- Orient to the reality of your observation. Should you move left, right, up, or down? Should you adjust pricing or move into the marketplace faster?
- Decide on a course of action. Depending on the complexity and stakes involved, this can be a simple choice or a more complex decision after analyzing multiple courses of action.
- Act—nothing happens in life until we take massive action. After you take that action, you will immediately observe the impact of your action. Orient to the results, make another decision, and the cycle continues.

Your goal is to master this loop, seeking to minimize your team's performance time. In combat, or any highly competitive situation, a good strategy is to confuse or surprise your opponent into

slowing their OODA loop processing time. Thus you are moving faster while your competitor has slowed down, giving your team a great competitive advantage. This rapid planning tool is great for on-the-fly adjustments to your planning and decision making. When combined with PROP, it is a powerful tool for optimizing your decisions and shortening your planning cycles. If you have more time and must parse through more data, then falling back on the more deliberate SMEAC process may make more sense.

Refer to image in Appendix 1: OODA Loop

## **Visualize Success**

You learned in this chapter how your mind can trick you, and then you studied a few mental models as an insurance policy against this. The final skill of mentally tough leaders is to change the content and energy of your mind through structured visualization. Visualization is an incredibly powerful technique that will enhance your mental strength, allow you to tap into more of your mind power, and allow you to accomplish more challenging tasks. It is the more advanced component of the law of "win first in your mind," and as we discussed in Chapter One, many great inventors, entrepreneurs, and athletes use some form of visualization to create their desired outcomes in their minds while they act powerfully in the world. It is time we made this a routine skill.

Visualization is the creation or recreation of an external experience in your mind. Early pioneers of this skill include my own swim coach at Colgate University. Coach Benson had me swim the two-hundred-meter breaststroke in my mind with a stopwatch before bed at night. Other sports psychologists and top coaches began using visualization to enhance performance in the '90's and most Olympians report using it with great benefit in their training. There are two major forms of the practice of visualization.

Mental projection is visualizing a personal future state or victory. Visualized images create energy around a desired future experience before you experience it "for real." I call this type of visualization a Future Me visualization because you are envisioning a future "ideal" version of yourself. Earning the SEAL Trident is an example of a "future me" visualization. Achieving a major milestone with a new business venture is another example. In either case you create the event in your mind well before it happens. The visualized event is then charged with emotions and vivid colors, sounds, smell, and tastes. You will reinforce those visual images through repeated practice sessions. This process plants a powerful seed in your subconscious mind. Then as you work on achieving the goal (set according to SMARTP-FITS and following your SMEAC plan of course), your subconscious mind goes about supporting you with the resources necessary to nurture the event to its fruition. In a sense you could say that visualization rewires the System 1 brain to align with your goals, and is a part of training the zoo keeper.

The second form of visualization is a Mental Rehearsal, whereby you practice a skill or prepare for an event in your mind. A SEAL platoon will "dirt dive" a mission to set the patterns for winning in the mind prior to executing it for real. The SEAL operator will walk through a dive profile on dry land while visualizing every detail. In this manner he performs all the major elements of the dive before ever getting wet. This was an important part of my mission prep when I was at SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team 1. The mini-sub dives were often six to ten hours in duration replete with complicated navigation patterns. Dirt diving the missions prior to launch proved crucial during the mission when fatigue and Murphy's Law reared their heads. The mental rehearsal implanted the route in both conscious and subconscious minds and provided a memory aid as well as subtle physiological

cues. Additionally, it helped identify potential challenges before the mission hit the reality of the deep face-to-face.

Both forms of visualization can be performed from the first person or third person perspective. What I mean by this is that they can be imaged from your subjective frame as if you had a helmet camera on, or imaged from your objective frame as if watching yourself in a movie. Either method is effective; however, most people start with the objective frame and then migrate to the subjective frame as they gain experience.

Let's review why you will want to add this powerful tool to your mental tool kit. First, it leads to improved concentration in that the practice of visualization requires you to develop greater powers of concentration due to the effort required to construct and maintain the visual imagery. In the early stages, the training can be frustrating, especially if you have difficulty holding an image in your mind for long. You may be more kinesthetic or auditory in nature; thus developing the capacity to visualize will take patience.

Second, you will experience enhanced confidence as the result of the training. When you can clearly visualize an event skill in advance, your mental practice is accepted as real by your body. Though not as visceral as the physical doing of the event, the visual practice is still felt internally and strengthens a key muscle in any practice session—it leads to more confidence every time you do it, and as you see improvement, your confidence increases exponentially. Research has proven that visualizing yourself throwing a basketball into a hoop leads to better performance gains than doing it for real. This is because you can practice the shots perfectly in your mind, a feat difficult to pull off in the physical realm.

Next, closely related to confidence is the enhanced emotional control you will experience. If you fear performing to some degree, which we all do (especially for unsettling things such as public speaking), visualizing the performance repeatedly will dampen that fear response when you perform the event live.

A final note on visualization: When done well, a visualized event involves the sensations of feelings, emotions, and sounds to support the imagery. The objective is to create as realistic a mental representation as possible, as if you are really experiencing it. That is why it is really important to ensure that your image is positive, powerful, and as near to perfect as possible.

## **Be a Morale Officer**

The final set of skills for mental toughness is positivity. You learned in Chapters One and Two that your mind is charged through life experiences to be either positive and courageous or negative and fearful. Internal dialogue and beliefs affect your thought patterns and impact performance. Further, you learned earlier in this chapter that the nature of the mammalian mind is to constantly scan for threats and be poised to react to them. Is it any wonder that our minds feel a constant tug toward negativity?

It is imperative that all leaders train their minds to be the "morale officer" in charge of your own morale and the morale of the team. You achieve this by training to always remain positive. Positivity aligns with the universal law of attraction. A positive state of mind attracts positive support and teammates to help you accomplish your goals. Positivity is also imperative as you strive to develop higher states of consciousness and spiritual growth (see Chapter Eleven). It is easy to get stuck in negativity due to how our brains work and because we can internalize negative associations from circumstances that impact us deeply, such as a death or a trauma. By maintaining a vigilant witness in our minds and constantly feeding the courage wolf, negativity will atrophy, and positivity

will propel you to higher states of consciousness.

I found the work of the late Dr. David Hawkins to be particularly valuable in this area of research. In his book *Power vs. Force*, Dr. Hawkins parses consciousness energy into levels of negativity and positivity. He goes into great depth about the feelings and associated behaviors of each level.

Dr. Hawkins shows that when we act below the level of courage, we are in negative territory. Our goal is to condition ourselves to feed the courage wolf so we remain at or above the level of courage. Ideally we are energetically aligned with optimism, acceptance, gratitude and love. Dr. Hawkins' positivity stages, which will strengthen performance and develop your consciousness, shown in progression from moderate to highest positive energy, are:

1. Courage
2. Trust
3. Optimism
4. Forgiveness
5. Acceptance
6. Reverence, Love
7. Joy, Serenity
8. Peace, Bliss

Negative attitudes attract negative energy and weaken the mind and body, degrading performance and life in general. Furthermore, if allowed to dominate, these energies will interrupt growth and lead to stagnation at lower levels of consciousness. The relentless drumbeat of negativity from network news, negative self-talk, or gossip exacerbates this problem. The Hawkins' negativity stages of consciousness, shown in progression from low to lowest energy, are:

1. Pride, Scorn
2. Anger, Hate
3. Desire, Craving
4. Anxiety
5. Grief, Regret
6. Apathy, Despair
7. Guilt, Blame
8. Shame, Humiliation

Changing the negative belief and dialogue to a positive one will dramatically impact performance—personally and with your team. Using the witness process, you now have a powerful tool for maintaining positivity. Identify the space between a thought or emotion and the reaction. As you witness negativity, interdict it ( in other words cancel the negative thought patterns), and then redirect the mind toward one of the positive patterns noted above. Interdiction is done with a power statement that will interrupt the negative thoughts and energy. Once the negative thought pattern has been successfully interdicted, it is maintained with your mantra, such as mine, which is: "looking good, feeling good, oughta be in Hollywood!"

Now that we're taking this discussion of positive focus to the next level for you leaders, let me mention that our bodies must get into this "morale officer" game as well. A power statement can be

supported with a power posture. Saying, "I got this" while slouched in a defeated position is self-defeating. Your subconscious mind will feel the weak position and override the power statement. Better to stack the deck in your favor by combining a power statement and mantra with a powerful body position. When I sense the fear dog nipping at SEALFIT trainees during a grueling workout, I will shout out a power statement and throw my arm into the air in a power posture sign of strength. The athletes join in, and I watch as their attitudes and body language change immediately, as if jolted by a bolt of electricity. Soon they are smiling, and the worst of the suffering is behind them. Sprinkling in a dose of humor puts the finish on your role as a morale officer.

Now that we understand the intricacies of our minds and have new skills for mentally tough leadership and kick-ass performance, let's turn our attention to developing a powerful team. The reality is, a true elite leader hones his or her skills and significantly advances personal evolution in the crucible of the team, becoming a master through the experience of helping others to master themselves as well. In other words, the synergy of a strong team elevates everyone's game. Let's look at how this is possible.

# Section 5: Build Your Team And Take Action



# Chapter Nine: Team Leadership

Up to this point, we have focused on developing personal mastery. But my guess is that none of you is a Rambo warrior operating solo in an uncaring world, or a spiritual renunciate, denying human contact, speech or normal human joys. Although there are examples of these individuals following such paths as their “darmha” (the Buddhist word for purpose), they are a small minority, and I don’t recommend either. In fact, to support my recommendation, take a look at the renunciation vows of the Catholic Church priesthood – how is that working out for them? Not well, obviously, with sex abuse scandals galore undoubtably due to the repression caused by the good intentioned, but ill-informed plan.

I imagine that you operate in a complicated web of interpersonal relationships and teams. These include, but are not limited to, your immediate and extended family, work and professional network teams, a sport or athletic team, and a circle of friends.. But how often have you participated on a team where the teammates serve each other, never quit, have a terrific attitude and achieve victory time after time? I am willing to bet not very often, if ever. Let’s work to change that.

Something I noticed when I was in the SEAL Teams was how much a powerful team elevated me as an individual, leading to higher performance and a sense of well-being and growth. On the other hand, I also noticed how the dysfunctional teams I participated on sowed discontent, made me agitated and slowed things down, hampering my performance and the team’s collective performance. This point is an under-appreciated aspect of teams: The team affects the individual just as much as the individual affects the team. A bad team will spoil an individual, and one bad apple on the team can ruin the whole bunch. This principle is very important and should impact how you recruit, select, acculturate, train, and maintain peak performance with your teams.

The Unbeatable Mind way is to elevate team mastery to the same level of importance as personal mastery because they are intimately linked. We must strive to bring teams into the Unbeatable Mind philosophy and training framework—a team that trains together outperforms together. The purpose of this chapter is to open a dialogue about how to develop team mastery. This is just an overview to present some new thinking and tools, as the subject deserves more attention than I can give it here.

Team training can take many forms, the design depending upon your goals, how much time you have (never enough), your budget (so much is wasted on junk training with no impact), and the nature of your work environment (especially the risk factors involved). Whether you do daily or weekly workouts, brown bag lunches with speakers and case studies, reality-based scenarios and missions, or an annual outdoor adventure, I recommend you get serious about team training.

When I was in the SEALs, everyone trained all the time. But the units that took training the most seriously far outperformed the rest. Team training must be supported by the whole organization and should not be seen as a random occurrence, a drain on productivity or a nuisance by the leadership. In addition to skill development, teams that rely on physical work, such as the military warrior, first responder, electrical lineman or roughneck, benefit greatly from a well-designed daily functional fitness program combined with periodic challenges. A team workout will ramp up camaraderie, accountability and respect on the team. Did I mention that performance soars when a team works out together? A good example of this principle has been implemented by the Southern Lineman Training

Center (SLTC) in the Southeast. This company, which trains electrical linemen, uses the daily SEALFIT workout and periodic 20X challenges to train the staff and students, with excellent results.

I would like to offer ten simple guidelines to consider when establishing team training, which will set the stage for success:

1. Participation should be mandatory—sharing risk and experience is a key factor in a team's cohesion. A teammate who happens to be sick, hurt or busy every time the training comes around is quickly noticed, with diminished trust and professional respect soon to follow.
2. Ensure that all teammates check their egos at the door—participation, a team versus individual focus, and best effort far outweigh impressive performance in a training event.
3. If the training involves a physical challenge, ensure that you understand the safe methods for scaling the exercises and drills for those less physically capable. This makes it safe for all, and removes the very real concerns of injury by less-trained (not less competent) individuals. The point is to provide a vehicle of growth for all and not to hurt or embarrass anyone.
4. Someone must be designated to lead the training if you, the role leader, aren't feeling competent enough or lack the time to do it. The appointed leader should plan the session, provide for safety considerations, brief the mission, lead the debrief and most important, participate.
5. If you do decide to lead the training, it is a good idea to hand-off leadership roles once in a while to give others a chance to experience the role and share the wealth of learning and the responsibility. Training is a fail-safe way to develop leadership as well as team cohesiveness.
6. When it comes to physical training (such as with CrossFit or SEALFIT), insist on accuracy before intensity. It is key to ensure proper form is developed on the movements and lifts before going hog wild with loads and speed. Injuries occur when newcomers move too fast with poor form. I experienced this myself and now take considerable time to on-ramp new athletes at my training center. When consistent accuracy and ability to move the external loads safely is evidenced in action, then it is fine to ratchet-up the intensity. A note on honesty in training: nothing will destroy trust quicker than a teammate cheating on a simple thing like the repetition count or shortcutting the range of motion on a movement. No one wants to watch a teammate do half the work in half the time, or move a tremendous load half the distance, then marvel at his or her brilliant performance!
7. Engage experts to help take the team to a higher level: hire a coach to lead training, or a subject matter expert to teach a seminar that trains the trainers. There are a lot of nuances in training teams and though it may be alluring to do it in-house, the results will speak for themselves. I have done it both ways and now routinely bring in experts to guide my team's development.
8. Have the entire team participate in the setup, the brief, mid-training equipment adjustments, the debrief and cleanup of each training event. It is noticed and frowned upon to have someone pop in mid-way through a training event, or bail as soon as it is over, leaving the debrief and clean up to the rest of the team.
9. Safety trumps being hardcore. The biggest benefits of training accrue from consistent effort over an extended duration of time (not one time, but months and years). It does nothing to hit a workout like an NFL linebacker, and then be too sore to do anything for a week. You start back at ground zero every time with that approach. Instead, develop an awareness of your thresholds, assess the risk factors, and then plan to train below your thresholds. This approach will mitigate the risk of a sidelining injury. The safety of the individuals, and by extension, the whole team, is more important than proving that you can train harder than everyone else. Having said that,

consistent effort by the entire team over extended periods of time will produce astounding results.

10. And finally, make sure training is fun. There is no longevity with a training program that is just too hard, too boring or ill designed. For training to have the desired, long-term growth impact sought, it should be super-fun and rewarding. If it is not, then take a hard look at why not and change it up.

Beyond physical training, let's look at some other tools and tactics to train team mastery.

## **Promote Failure and Risk Taking**

It is no surprise that I promote the principle of risk taking and pushing to the brink of failure to learn and grow. Sitting on our laurels and avoiding risks leads to stagnation and fear of the unknown. The main unknown, in this case, is your own capacity to tackle challenging things well and to endure the discomfort and pain that accompanies them. The same applies to your team, which will be timid and unsure unless challenged. You must set the conditions for your team to take risks in order to learn. You must also be willing to lead by example and take personal risks, and even fail in front of your team. Your authenticity as a leader is enhanced dramatically, especially as your team observes you fail and rebound from it. This point is so important I will reiterate it one more time: as a leader, you must do your part in creating an environment where failure and risk-taking are encouraged and supported as positive aspects of training and operation.

I am not suggesting that you become reckless. On the contrary, the training I propose includes planning and managing risk deliberately. I often design training that looks like it simply cannot be accomplished, and am occasionally surprised when it is. Yes, it can be frustrating and it requires emotional control, but this uncommon approach gives the trainees a sense that not everything is an "easy day" or will go as planned. They must learn to innovate, adapt and overcome on the fly. The point when imminent failure is acknowledged becomes a vivid team learning moment. The team must stop, regroup, communicate under pressure and come up with a different solution. What went wrong? What would work better? Where should we go from here? In the team debrief, you can give them feedback, such as asking what they learned about themselves, what their reaction was to the mind game the instructors played on them, and how they can respond better the next time. Teams develop that Fail Forward Fast (3F) mentality we spoke of earlier as they get comfortable with elevated risk. Use the crawl, walk, run approach with this method for best results. Ultimately, the more challenging the event, the more valuable the lessons and the deeper the mastery.

## **There Is No I in Team**

If you've ever had the privilege to be on a great team, such as a winning sports team or an elite special ops team, you'll implicitly understand the saying "there is no I in team." Aside from the obvious point that a team is a group of I's coming together to accomplish a mission, the reality is that once the team is formed, the I yields to the We. So teammates must come to the team and then take their eyes off of themselves, setting them onto their teammates and the mission.

Some may think you sacrifice yourself with this approach, with all that focus on others and not enough on yourself. That is patently false. What actually happens is that you now have an entire team looking after your interests. Your interests align with the team's interests. That is one of the reasons why you will grow stronger on a strong team versus a weak team. The bottom line is that effective team training makes for resilient teams full of mentally tough individuals. The individuals are tougher

than they would be if operating as sole practitioners. So my advice is to take a 3 Sphere approach to development: create the conditions for the individuals to maximize their potential, then elevate team training in importance to further support individual development. Hold teams accountable to a high standard of “we” and then get out of their way. Watch team performance and the attitudes of the teammates improve dramatically, which will positively impact performance in all other areas.

## Get Real

SEALs pride themselves on training more realistically than any other special ops force. When the call comes to get in the fight, it is just another day. In fact, I was pondering this when I watched the movie *Captain Phillips*, about the merchant skipper taken hostage by Somali pirates. A few of the SEAL snipers who ended that scenario were buddies of mine, and they said it was “just another op,” in spite of the media frenzy around their remarkable sniper skills. They had trained so long and realistically for that type of mission that when the mission came, it was no big deal. In fact, the movie does a great job of portraying their nonchalance as they saunter off after the op. They were not hopping around giving high-fives and lining up for the cameras. What great behavior to model: Just do your job well without any expectation of fame or fortune, and move on. Better to be like a SEAL and simply vanish into the background to await your next assignment. Unfortunately this behavior was not followed after the Bin Laden raid, due to the enormous media and political pressure on the operators involved to speak publicly about the mission.

Let's look at this concept for your team's training. Whatever training is right for you, endeavor to make it as real as possible. See the gym, range, or case study as a laboratory environment used to train when you can't get out into the real world. Then try to get into the field for realistic, scenario-based training as often as possible. Do things that replicate the actual job of the team. For SEALFIT that means we perform exercises that look like what a special operator may face in the field, such as rope climbs, weighted box steps, and farmer carries. For a nuclear power company client of mine it meant simulating a damaged nuclear reactor and going through an extremely realistic crisis reaction drill. These types of things are common when the risk is high and less common, but equally valuable, when the risk is lower.

The more your training is like the real deal, the more mentally prepared your team will be. They will have a “been there, done that” state of mind because of the simulated environment. This type of work helps to prepare them for the known as well as the unknown factors affecting performance. The SEAL ethos says, “We train for war, fight to win, and defeat our nation's enemies.” So we train for war by simulating war. It is hard to the point of disbelief, but we certainly appreciated it when in the hot zone. The SEALs, and other elite military units, have learned that the more they train in peace, the less they bleed in war!

## Functional Team Training

I covered this in some detail above but will hit it again here from another angle. If you can perform physical fitness training with your team, then do it. It's exceptionally rewarding. If you can do it, then the training should be functional and, equally important, done together as a team (as opposed to just offering an open gym or yoga room environment). It is much more fun and beneficial to train with a team, and it facilitates leadership and team cohesion. Functional training means that you are training the body of the individuals and the collective team to move safely and naturally, which has an effect on confidence, mobility and long-term health. They will stay engaged on the job with lower risk of injury or burnout. For instance, in a typical office gym, you have a few excessively

complicated machines that triangulate the body so you can isolate a single muscle group. But how often do you configure your body so you are limited to using just an arm to throw something or using a single leg to climb a tree? It seems pretty silly when you stop to think about it. We don't move in isolation naturally, so who had the genius idea that we should train our bodies that way? There are some forward-learning corporations that are building CrossFit® or simple functional training gyms into their workspaces. This is an inspiring development with great potential to positively impact the health and productivity of the workforce—assuming they staff it with trained coaches. Incidentally there is a similar movement in some charter schools, which bodes well for the future health of the nation.

Another defining attribute of functional fitness training is that it is, well, hard. We have a saying at SEALFIT: we do today what others won't so we can do tomorrow what others can't. The point comes up again: hard work is good for you and shouldn't be avoided. Our pop culture and heavy-handed regulatory government have vilified anything hard as "bad." This is a shame because we humans respond to hard work with growth and we atrophy when things are too easy. The culture of "easy" is further perpetuated by the media and conglomerate industries that push our culture toward short-term pleasure at the expense of what is good for us in the long run.

At my SEALFIT training center, hard work is defined as below-threshold strength and stamina development, with short bursts of intense and often gut-wrenching threshold training to develop the capacity to work even harder. It also happens to be intensely rewarding and a blast. The training culminates periodically (every 12-18 months) with a big challenge, such as our 50-hour Kokoro Camp, the shorter, but still intense 20X Challenge or GORUCK and Spartan events (More on these types of challenges next). This type of functional-fitness training forges team spirit, mental toughness and a tenacious edge. It creates a "new normal" for what it means to work hard, with a revamped perspective on what you can accomplish personally, and what a unified team can accomplish. Hard functional team training builds grit and makes you more useful to your organizations, families, and communities.

## **Mind Games and Challenges**

Working harder is just part of the solution; structuring team training to develop the awareness of the team turns it from one-dimensional to a multi-dimensional training tool. Expanding your team's sense of what is possible in one of the five mountains, such as the physical mountain, allows them to perform beyond previous mental or emotional limits on other tasks as well. I often inject mind games into training to require trainees to tap into the Big Four Mental Toughness Skills of goal setting, breathing, positivity, and visualization. Here are some examples of mind games I use:

False summits: We're at the end of a grueling, fast-paced six-mile run. The finish line looms ahead, you see the training center, and you begin to anticipate a relief from the agony. You're almost there...just a few more seconds...wait! Oh no...why aren't the trainers stopping? Suddenly your world is shocked as you adjust to the new reality that your run apparently isn't quite over. Some trainees drop out, hands on knees and heaving for air, because they can't recover psychologically from the letdown. I am sure you can understand how potent this training is in the engineering of mental and emotional resilience. How often in life do circumstances whip around right when you believed you had it, just when you thought you had made it to the top? Can you pivot on a dime to recharge your efforts with enthusiasm? The false summit training teaches you to abandon the letdown immediately and positively lean into the new reality.

There's the use of chaos in this area of training: move faster...drop down...on your feet...drop

down...just who is in charge of this goat rope anyhow? Chaos can be extremely disorienting and the feeling of being out of sorts very demotivating. The simulation of chaos can induce fear and a lack-of-control feeling that must be overcome to solve the challenge. This form of training may elicit howls of protest at first, but it's your job to educate the team: The point is not to harass them but to inoculate them against failure when real-world chaos and rapid change set in. This training is best issued by experienced trainers who comprehend how to deliver intensity without it coming off as feeling like harassment. It is delivered with a genuine, heart-felt desire to help the individuals realize their innate capacities. One of the reasons Kokoro Camp has a worldwide reputation for its authenticity and ability to generate real breakthroughs is our willingness to perform this level of training and the care that we take in delivering it.

Imagine how valuable it would be to know you and your team are prepared when that unexpected change arrives. The team will develop emotional control and maintain calm in the center of any storm. As mentioned, it is hard to "get" this principle from the sidelines. It must be experienced personally to understand the benefits.

## **Go to the Challenge**

You, your teams and organizations will be tested greatly in the years ahead. It is just the way things are, and always have been. One of our stands is that destiny favors the prepared, in mind, body and spirit. So in this context it makes sense to meet the challenge head on, before it comes to the team. You, the team and the organization as a whole will be better prepared to handle all challenges with resiliency if you deliberately challenge the team beyond the norm in advance. I recommend a weekly and monthly challenge of a physical and mental nature requiring an extra level of commitment to complete. These can come in many forms and I suggest trying the physical challenges below. Though some may seem unreasonable at first, when you complete them your team's confidence and internal strength will be fortified.

Challenges don't have to be physical, of course. I have found that if you can identify or create a challenge that has a Five Mountain nature to it, growth comes faster because it is an embodied learning experience. That is why crucible training is so effective—it works on the trainee physically, mentally, emotionally, intuitionally, and spiritually. Many of the athletes I trained who went on to be SEALs tell me that the actual SEAL Hell Week was easy (a relative term, of course) for them after doing Kokoro Camp. Challenges without a physical component can still be very effective, such as taking on a new language or a musical instrument, or embarking upon a service project in a third-world village. Spiritually oriented challenges, such as a ten-day silent retreat, a thirty-day yoga immersion or a vision quest are excellent choices as well. The point is to choose a challenge and get to it!

Challenges can be major, like those cited above, but even a more sanguine challenge once a week or month will go a long way toward exploring your edge and propelling your growth. Below is a suggested list of physical and mental challenges you can consider taking on. Be sure to thoroughly prepare for each exercise, scale as necessary, and reserve some recovery time for after it's over.

**Safety tip 1:** It is important to listen to your body during a challenge event such as those proposed below. If a potential injury is looming, don't gut your way through it. That's not determination, it's stupidity. It's your ego taking the helm. Back off and try the challenge another day, there's no reason to risk injury to prove something.

**Safety tip 2:** If you or a teammate is completely untrained, don't attempt to execute these exercises. Visit SEALFIT.com to check out the online training and exercise videos or attend a SEALFIT Fundamentals Academy and work to a baseline level of competence. Train hard, but be smart. Doing the following challenges with your team should be great fun, not lead to injury or frustration.

**20X physical-mental challenges**—scale to two-thirds for intermediate athletes and one-third for beginners who have the skills to perform the tasks.

- 1,000 push-ups
- 1,000 sit-ups
- 1,000 pull-ups
- 100 rope ascents
- 1,000 eight-count body builders
- 1,000 burpees
- 3,000 Kettlebell swings in thirty days
- One-mile walking lunge wearing a twenty-pound vest

When ready, try the first one to understand how shattering a paradigm builds extreme confidence in your ability to push through self-imposed limits and meet your new 20x factor.

## Use Standard Operating Procedures

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) are processes for routine, mundane tasks that carry great risk if not done the same way every time. An example is the SOP for a SEAL assault team entering a house on a direct action raid. Imagine the chaos if they used a different way every time or if one member of the team decided he had a better way of doing it on his own. It would be a mess, even if the enemy was sleeping. Imagine a pilot and copilot winging the takeoff procedures for a 747. Not a comforting thought.

SOPs can be a great tool for developing tough teams because they get everyone performing to the same standard and ingraining that routine into their “System 1” minds. This then frees up the individual's “System 2” mind for more creative solutions to the other challenges that will inevitably arise. SOP's can help us get out of the rational, linear mind and into the non-rational, holistic mind, leading to more integrated solutions and a higher order of thinking. SOPs also help us prevent mistakes of judgment at a team level. Essentially we train the mundane to allow us to access flow and act with virtuosity at the point of greatest intensity in a process or mission.

What routine tasks surrounding team training can be built into SOPs? Here are some ideas to consider:

1. The structure of a training plan itself can be an SOP. The periodicity, duration, and event layout can be done in a similar format and sequence every time.
2. The pre-training preparation can be an SOP. This includes the equipment prep, individual prep, the brief and the warm-up.
3. The flow of the training can be an SOP. How the teammates interact to support each other and keep the training sessions moving along between elements can be structured.
4. The debrief and post-training OODA feedback loop can be an SOP.
5. The communication protocols can be an SOP.

Great teams strive to standardize routine tasks like those above (the list applies to any type of training, not just physical skill training) so that time is not wasted reinventing the push-up every time someone new comes on the team. New ideas and improvements to SOPs are encouraged, but not on the fly. The post-training debrief is the place to discuss changes, which can be implemented in future training.

## **Keep It Simple, Again**

I will keep this short because we have addressed this principle in detail already. When it comes to team training, the KISS principle applies to the equipment, methods, and movements selected. The best team training is simple. Simple—not easy. You may have blown a lot of time on 3D computer simulations or the latest in monitoring equipment that had little impact on team effectiveness. I can train a team more effectively with a bunch of heavy rocks than all the \$10,000 machines in a Gold's Gym combined. Simple tools and methods lead to more creative solutions and a more functionally effective result.

Complicated training and workouts with complicated exercises can confuse or even injure your team. Keep it simple in terms of tools, workout protocol, instructions, and organization. A good log, a weight vest, a large space with a pull-up bar and a collection of dumbbells has all the right stuff. Get creative, and build your own equipment if necessary. Above all, keep the mental clutter to a minimum. Measure success with benchmarks to build team confidence and enhance team fortitude. As your team gets tougher, you will get tougher, and you will progress toward mastery as an individual and leader.

In the next chapter, we will examine some character traits you can expect to cultivate naturally on your path to self and team-mastery. The virtues in Chapter Six are foundational to living an exceptional life. But the following character traits we'll discuss arise as the result of extended training and layered self-awareness. My recommendation is to study them in yourself and in others, as these characteristics will be markers of progress. You will also know when you are in the presence of the right individuals to support your journey.



# Chapter Ten: The Integrated Self

William Wallace leading his clansmen in the movie *Braveheart*, King Leonidas leading his Spartans into battle in the movie *300*, King Arthur, Spartacus, The Last Samurai, and now the modern-day SEAL Marcus Luttrell of *Lone Survivor* fame are examples of the warrior-leader archetype in our media culture, some real and other fictional. The warrior hero is a source of inspiration, their character is different, and they seem to draw power from a mystical place. Portrayed in the films as larger than life, they serve as examples of the traits of mastery I want to discuss now. These traits include being unfazed in the face of imminent danger; unquestionably sure about the action to take, and embracing the suck with silent fortitude. You may even know a real-life master yourself, like I do.

Earlier I spoke about my first mentor, Kaicho Tadashi Nakamura, who displays the traits of mastery introduced in this chapter. He exemplifies a stoic strength, a beginner's mind and an uncommonly disciplined approach to his life. His character and example continue to inspire and influence me to this day, even though I am not training with him any longer. Many others, in all walks of life, are similarly humble and quiet professionals who strive to live up to the standards that masters like Kaicho Nakamura represent. Even though mastery seems like a goal or destination—and to a certain extent, it is—true masters know that a warrior will never stop learning, never stop pushing boundaries, and never stop growing. So masters focus on mastering the details of the journey every day, rather than the end-state. As stated above, the traits in this chapter are signposts on your journey and it is important to note that there is no perfection in any of them. There is only perfect trying, and the results will be informed by the stage of the journey and the personality of the student.

But sooner or later, the warrior will be called to step into the breach and serve beyond the call of duty. My friend, Glen Doherty, found himself in a situation which tested his character in a way that warriors prepare for, but hope doesn't come. On September 11, 2012 the U.S. embassy outpost in Benghazi, Libya, came under a well-coordinated attack by terrorists. Glen, with an order to stand down, ignored the directive and raced to rescue the Americans under siege. He did not hang out and wait to hear about the tragedy later, or to be told what to do, but disobeyed orders to courageously act for the safety of others and putting his life at grave risk. Glen exhibited all the traits of mastery: single-point focus, uncommon resolve, a positively-charged attitude, discernment, unflappability, fortitude, a focus on the welfare of others, and a humble acceptance of his responsibility. Glen's actions were directly responsible for saving eighteen American lives—but it led to his own demise. As you embark upon your own Unbeatable Mind journey, let the sacrifices of Glen and the traits of mastery he exemplified serve as an inspiration to stay the course and to never quit!

## Single-Point Focus

The Spartan King Leonidas was so focused on defeating the Persians at Thermopylae that he was willing to fight to the death. His example was so inspirational to those he led that three hundred of his most disciplined warriors followed him to the last moment. What Leonidas understood was that this victory was not about his personal valor but about the survival of the entire Greek way of life. It wasn't a military victory he sought, but a moral, symbolic victory of the brave, free Spartan over the enslaved, fear-motivated Persians. So with single-point focus, Leonidas led his men in the most formidable battle of their lives. He didn't let discomfort or minor challenges distract him from his vision and mission. Though he and his men lost the battle, the Greeks won the war, and went on to inspire our Western way of life. Were it not for his single-point focus, we may all be speaking

Persian.

A similar example could be made of Winston Churchill and his unwavering focus on defeating Nazi Germany. The Brits could be speaking German now had he not held his course. These warriors stepped into the breach to save entire cultures, not their own skins. That kind of selfless determination is the warriors' way.

Why was single-point focus so critical to these victories? Because it allows you to narrow your attention to only the most important things that impact success right now. All else is ignored, postponed to a later date, or subordinated to another person (delegated, in business). When the risks are high, such as on a parachute jump, it is this focus that ensures survival if an accident occurs. If a physical altercation occurs unexpectedly, it is this focus that allows one to dominate the opponent. It is also what allows serial entrepreneurs to succeed time and again with new business ventures.

## Uncommon Resolve

It took me considerable resolve to write three books in one year in 2013 when I finished *The Way of the SEAL*, *8 Weeks to SEALFIT*, and the first edition of *Unbeatable Mind* all in an eleven-month period. Some may even call that uncommon resolve. The same kind of resolve is required for any worthy goal or project that has an unreasonable level of challenge. Getting through SEAL training requires uncommon resolve. A recent BUD/S class secured from week 4 of 40 weeks total with only 27 trainees after starting with 175. That means 148 of the trainees either got injured or lacked the resolve to go the distance within the first month of a ten month program. With those stats, it is easy to see how uncommon resolve is required to become a SEAL, and why there are only roughly 175 total new SEALs minted yearly.

Is resolve a quality that can be developed? Of course it can—it is a natural corollary to forging mental toughness. You develop uncommon resolve by fortifying the five key attributes of your character. They are:

1. **Desire:** related to our discussions throughout this book about passion, for uncommon resolve you must desire the outcome as if your hair were on fire.
2. **Belief:** you must believe in your purpose, your mission, and yourself.
3. **Attitude:** you must have a positive, can-do attitude and be able to mobilize a team with it.
4. **Discipline:** you must be willing to give up unnecessary attachments and commitments and put in the right amount of daily effort toward your goal.
5. **Determination:** you must have an unwavering commitment to finish the job, stay the course, and never, ever quit.

If your resolve requires stepping into the breach at risk of life or limb, as Glen Doherty did in Benghazi and Michael Murphy did in Afghanistan, then you will require each of these attributes in full measure—a desire to serve, an unmistakable belief in your skills and the rightness of the action, an attitude of "will do" versus "I'll try," the discipline to pull it off, and the determination to go the distance...regardless of the consequences. Imagine how powerful your actions will be when you apply this attitude with that level of commitment to the goals in your life? I dare you to find out.

## Positively Offensive Attitude

No matter how shitty things get, you can always find the silver lining. You can make the choice to let go of any attachment to the misfortune and move on to the next target. Sustaining a positive

mind-set is the first part of this trait. Then expanding that positivity into an offense-all-the-time attitude will take it from a passive quality to one with explosive power. The main outcome is that you will never let circumstances or another individual, team, or organization control your actions. You will always be one step ahead, dictating the next move. This does not sit well with hard-core analytical types who want to know every step of a plan. Rather it requires great flexibility of thought and action and a willingness to plot a new course when the circumstances dictate.

When I set out on a new venture or project, I expect to find victory "where it is every day" and to have fun in the pursuit. What I mean by this statement is that I expect setbacks, so I prepare for them mentally and with contingency plans. The day will bring its own set of unexpected challenges and I seek to turn them into opportunities, or at a minimum, mitigate the negative and earn a lesson from the setback. Remember your new concept of what was previously known as "failure." When you prepare yourself for setbacks, you don't worry that things aren't going as planned. You find victory no matter how conditions have changed. You find victory no matter what.

With this approach, often within a few months of launch, a project has taken on a totally new form based on the lessons learned and new directions taken. Rigidity gets you killed on a SEAL op and will get you metaphorically killed in business or in your job. Hold a vision of the outcome you desire, and then allow for spontaneity and setbacks to inform the actual direction on a day-to-day basis. Remember, no plan survives contact with the enemy, and without an attitude of positively-charged offense you can get blown around by the winds of change or manipulated by others who outmaneuver you. Find victory right here and right now with the cards you are dealt. Excuses, finger pointing and soul-grinding negativity will slow you down and destroy the opportunity for the most creative response.

When things go off the tracks, the master doesn't assign blame and wallow in self-pity; rather he or she immediately seeks the positive lesson and then acts on it with an offensive attitude.

## **Discernment**

There is an old saying that "the road to enlightenment is littered with fallen seekers." When I reflect on the traits of masters, I note how rarely we see these qualities in folks who crave the public spotlight, including most politicians and entertainers. Mastery eludes these individuals because it requires detachment to wealth and fame, instead directing one's energy toward the "higher" values we've been exploring in this book. If fame or fortune comes as the result of self-mastery and service, then it is not used for egotistic or hedonistic pleasures, but rather as a platform to serve even more.

Discernment is defined as being keenly selective in judgment. This is not easy to achieve. The master is very discerning about how he or she spends time and mental energy. The ego is tempered with patience and humility, allowing for the attention of good works to be directed outward in service while the intention is directed inward toward spiritual development.

The mastery trait of discernment is cultivated by first developing a distrust for the untrained mind. This means that you start with an expectation that your thinking will be flawed and then strive to cultivate right thinking through training, education, mental models, and trial and error. This is good news for you. If you've been following along then you have seen how complicated our zoo-like minds are and you should already be wary of your own thinking! But using the tools in this book and then going beyond, you will move from awareness to right thinking more easily.

There are five primary ways the mind "thinks":

1. **Direct perception:** the induction of data and information into the mammalian brain and directly perceiving it in a present mind state
2. **Accessing memory:** your neocortex tapping the mammalian brain for stored information
3. **Analysis:** deductive reasoning using the neocortex via the frontal lobe, predominantly with the left hemisphere
4. **Creating and Imagining:** New idea creation using the neocortex, working with the visual language capacity of the mammalian brain, to create new thoughts and images formerly not part of your mental repertoire. Creative imagining also means you will access stored memory and possibly external sources of previously unknown knowledge
5. **Dreaming:** Beyond the scope of this book, and I doubt science will ever really understand this aspect of thinking.

The trait of discernment requires that you are fully aware of all five of these modes, striving to understand them, and finally improving them through training. I want to be clear: There's no such thing as perfect thinking and there's no perfection in mastery either. No, it's a constant process of trying to clarify your thinking. For discernment, what I'm saying is that you must master your ability to recognize things like mind traps and faulty thinking so you can bypass them and get to right thinking. You're asking questions about what stories you're buying into, what beliefs are driving your behavior. That's where discernment comes in, because as you ask yourself these questions, you start to discern truth from falsehood, reality from illusion, and right from wrong. This is the warrior's path—you don't take anything for granted, not even your own thoughts and behaviors.

Enhancing direct perception is done through breathing, concentration and meditation exercises. Intelligence from intuition and an expanded awareness is the fruit of this labor. Accessing stored memory better is achieved by practicing and drilling memory, such as the Keep in Memory game, drills such as those provided at Lumosity.com, and practicing to remember names. Memory can be improved by tying visual images to the information, making memory a right/left hemisphere and neocortex/mammalian brain process. Strengthening your analytical skills can come through the focused use of the mind in problem solving or practicing mathematics, statistics, logic, and engineering. The use of mental models such as OODA loop, PROP, and SMEAC will also aid in this process.

This is a good place to mention the science of creative problem solving. For years creativity was assumed a subconscious process, often unlocked through silence or deep immersion in a problem. Think of Albert Einstein losing himself in a problem so thoroughly that he would wander around in his underwear and forget to dress (I am making that up, but it probably happened!). But in the 1940s a Russian named Altshuller became fascinated with what he posited as a theory of invention. After studying 300,000 patents, he noted that they boiled down to solving about 1,500 types of problems and that there were roughly forty methods that were used by the inventors to solve all of those problems. He presented his findings to Stalin, who promptly sent him to the Gulag for twenty-five years as a "patent spy." Safety tip: be careful what you share with paranoid, maniacal dictators.

Fast-forward to a few years after Stalin moved on to meet his fate, and Altshuller had been released from the Gulag and codified his theory into what is now known as TRIZ, which is the Russian acronym for "the science of invention." The process is now in use by NASA and a growing number of scientific and engineering firms to accelerate problem solving. I don't have time to go into all forty of Altshuller's solutions here, but I will briefly mention a few so you get the gist. These can be applied to any type of problem, though they were conceived primarily to solve scientific issues:

1. Look at your specific problem, and then state it as a general problem. Then find a solution to the general problem, and apply it to your specific issue.
2. Look at your problem by reversing it or turning it upside down.
3. Look at your problem from another perspective or another dimension altogether.
4. See if you can solve your problem with a different element (water, air, etc.)
5. If your problem is fixed, make it moveable, or vice versa.

If you are interested in this line of thinking and learning more about this tool, I recommend the book *Da Vinci and the Forty Answers* by Mark Fox.

In spite of all the training to improve discernment, the ability to discern truth from falsehood, good people from bad, and right from wrong is still cultivated through life experiences as well as trial and error. Expect to experience greater discernment after six months or so of Unbeatable Mind training—as your awareness expands and your mind opens up to the new ways of thinking.

## **Excelling in Chaos**

One of the more useful traits of mastery for leaders to develop is to remain perfectly calm and controlled in even the most chaotic circumstances. A master is unflappable while under extreme pressure, able to make good decisions and lead his team to victory. In fact it is this quality that is most attractive to followers in high-stress, high-risk environments. Seeing a leader take control of a bad situation is a huge relief for most people, and those who can do it well are considered natural leaders. Picture Rudolph Giuliani during the 9/11 disaster. It is a skill you can develop, and the most valuable tool to do so is our Box Breathing drill.

We covered box breathing in detail earlier, but I want to reiterate that through deep, rhythmic breathing you are able to control and focus your mind's conscious activity, regulate your heart rate and diminish symptoms of the stress response. This allows you, the leader, to maintain situational awareness and make better decisions in a crisis. A healthy dose of confidence earned through regular training and experience doesn't hurt, either.

## **Situational Awareness**

Let's look at situational awareness a bit more as it is an important aspect of excelling in chaos. Imagine in a chaotic situation how there are lots of things happening, and you could easily be caught off-guard or even be aware but focused on the wrong things. When you are situationally aware, you'll be more keen to the subtleties of what's going on and maybe even their origin or intention. This in turn will help you zero in on what you need to focus on right now to move through the chaos and find success. You'll see what's coming down the pike and so you're able to move to avoid it or prepare to face it.

Awareness of the situation all around you, near and far, internal and external, includes:

- Personal thoughts and emotions
- Thoughts and emotions of your team
- Thoughts of your enemy
- Awareness of your surrounding environment
- Awareness of and alignment with the natural laws that govern human behavior

When I was at SEAL Team 3 as a young junior officer, I had the privilege of being in the same

platoon for three rotations—a total of close to four years. A few of the people I started with were with me for that duration. During that time I developed an uncanny sense of what my teammates were thinking and feeling during long missions. Extended durations of silence, hand signal communications, and intuitive on-the-fly decisions became automatic. Often the thoughts my teammates were having flashed through my mind, or I would just "know" what they were going to do. I also noticed that this situational awareness diminished when I wasn't in the field working with all my senses. I want you to know that it's possible that a team working together intimately can develop this level of being in tune. This awareness extends into a frequency that could be described as telepathic. But even on an individual level, a highly developed and refined awareness is going to provide you with internal and external sources of information that will help you when danger's lurking or an opportunity is opening up. For these reasons, I believe practicing situational awareness in particular will lead to better decision making under stressful situations.

Mike Jaco was one of my hand-to-hand combat instructors in a thirty-day course called SCARS I attended while in the SEALs. Years later he found himself as a contract security operative in Iraq at the height of the war. Mike had developed the subtle intuition skills I alluded to earlier to such a degree that he found them to be a lifesaver in the combat zone. On multiple occasions he was able to sense or see images of an impending danger zone, such as an ambush or IED attack. Maybe they were true precognition incidents, or maybe they were products of his System 2 brain after processing the constant flow of input from his radar-like System 1 brain. Maybe there's no real difference between the two. Regardless, Mike was intuitive enough to pay close attention to these signals after he learned that he was right most of the time, and would direct his team to take different routes to avoid a perceived threat. His experience was pronounced and intriguing, and in our modern world requires a multitude of studies before we trust it's veracity. But the reality is that pre-cognition was not unique among warriors through the ages, yet they valued the skill and didn't question it's validity.

## **Fortitude**

When they lean hard into any workout, project, or mission they deem worthy, masters eventually will smack into a wall of challenge, just like you and I. They experience pain and discomfort at a physical, mental, emotional and even spiritual level, also like you and I. However, what separates them from the common is that they reflexively embrace the suck and step up performance in anticipation of these moments. They exhibit the trait of fortitude.

The key is that when you hit the point where the fatigue, discomfort or pain is almost intolerable, where you feel you can't stand it any longer, with fortitude you will activate a positive attitude and determination to double down on your efforts, while opening to the aliveness of the moment. When you do this you'll note how utterly indomitable your spirit actually is when the rain comes pounding down, when you swallow the urge to wince in pain, whimper, or project weakness and, instead, persevere against the odds. In these moments when you have no choice but to suffer, or quit, you learn to suffer in silence and embrace the suck to get through it with grace.

Embracing the suck-type fortitude is developed by pressing hard into your challenge, deliberately internalizing any expression of pain or discomfort. Do not participate in your own pity party, as staging a defeatist attitude will undermine confidence in you and put a crack in your leadership. Projecting weakness creates weakness because your body will follow your weakening mind.

Intriguingly, recent research on happiness by David Lykken and Auke Tellegen, from the

University of Washington, suggests that over half of what makes a person happy is within our sphere of influence to change. Consider that fortitude involves accepting this fact and taking responsibility for making that change, for taking control of your current state rather than letting external forces determine it for you. If so, then one of the best expressions of fortitude is that you simply find the means to put a smile on your face during challenging training and events. Although this may be difficult at first, it will get easier with time and practice.

In fact, putting a smile on your face is not just pretending to be positive—I believe you are actually forcing yourself into a happy place. Studies have shown that a smile brings the same level of stimulation as eating a bunch of chocolate bars (so if you are using that tactic to brighten your day, then smiling instead will have the added benefit of weight loss!). Smiling releases endorphins, serotonin, and natural painkillers. Though studies are inconclusive, mental health practitioners report that smiling therapy has also improved the optimism and feeling of happiness of clients suffering from mild depression. They employ daily twenty-minute sessions during which the patient just sits and smiles. I don't know for sure if being happy makes one smile more or if smiling more makes one happy, but it would be hard to dispute that the two are linked. I recommend putting a smile on your face when you workout and are most put to the test. My experience is that it does make a difference, even if it is just a placebo effect. And hey—smiling is free!

For example, during SEALFIT training we ask athletes to smile during the hardest part of the training. It does require serious willpower and concentration to do, which enhances mental control. And it is great to see trainees, who have often been up for over thirty hours, smiling or laughing up a storm. The positive impact on the rest of the team is cathartic. Smiling and laughing can give you strength and, I believe, even enhance your pain tolerance. Focusing on the mantra "pain is weakness leaving my body" will add an element of determination to your embrace-the-suck moments.

Another excellent way to develop fortitude is to take your eyes off your own suffering and fix them on the suffering of the others. If they're in the same boat as you, they will be suffering as much as you are. Lending an encouraging word and helping hand will comfort them while leaving you in a more positive state. It is impossible to be negative when earnestly helping another in need. Also, your teammates will want to follow a person who is embracing the suck and serving her teammates. So slap a smile on your face, support your teammates and repeat the phrase "Pain is weakness leaving my body," or "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul" (from William Henley's "Invictus"). You will notice pain begin to dissipate and a new source of internal strength arising. As you grow more tolerant to pain by embracing the suck of the challenge, you will develop deep inner strength and control over your response. You are well on your way to mastery!

## **Humility, Revisited**

We talked earlier about the importance of humility as a virtue of character excellence. Whenever I am in the presence of a real master, I am struck by how humble he or she is. In fact humility has become a litmus test to determine whether someone is a master or charlatan. There are many brilliant people in the world masquerading as masters. Yet they are incomplete in that they have not integrated their five mountains and continue to act with an inflated ego. Lacking humility, they display a mock show of caring for others while acting out of self-interest.

I mentioned earlier that I see this in the corporate realm in the form of feel-good philanthropy, where it is good business to embrace giving, but it is often done to look good, to receive a tax break, to network with a wealthy social or political class, or because everyone else is doing it. This type of philanthropy is out of the self-interests of the leaders and does not truly come from a place of humility

(I am not saying that this type of philanthropy is all bad, rather that it lacks the characteristic of humility). The same holds true for individual action when that action is transactional in nature. I have seen a rush of unqualified individuals start functional training gyms with no more than a two day training certification. Their lack of humility for the science and art of coaching often leads to injury amongst their clients. Similarly, even in the yoga community ego runs rampant as teachers try to outdo each other with dangerous routines set to rock music in 105-degree heat, or launch teacher certifications without the qualifications to do so authentically. The master approach is to first train for ten years, then teach for ten years, and only then to begin teach the teachers.

True humility is what Nelson Mandela displayed when he returned to the prison, where he was held for a large part of his adult life, to forgive the prison guards and thank them for being his teachers. When I see Kaicho Nakamura teaching karate to blind teenagers and a marine gravely risking his life to rescue a young child caught in the line of fire, I am witnessing humility.

However, humility should not require a moment of extreme crisis or twenty years of training to develop. You can choose to develop it now by seeking to remove the ego and self-serving behavior from your actions. Focus on helping others, especially when it is inconvenient or not in your personal interests at that moment. You have learned in these pages that you can't really control anything but your mental and physical reactions to events. Humility requires that you surrender your need to control anything but your breathing, mind and response to stimulus. Accept that you cannot control every little detail of a situation or person. The best you can do is to try to stay one step ahead of things and focus on giving rather than taking.

Your personal humility is also deepened by releasing attachment to desires and to expected outcomes in your life. If you let go and let things flow, you will allow the moment to unfold naturally while your heart can guide you. Be OK with what is, and try to merge with the energy around you rather than fight against it. The humble person flows with the current, while the ego seeks to swim against it—or reshape the river.

## **Kokoro Spirit**

Humility is a cousin to Kokoro, which we earlier stated means to merge your heart with your mind in your actions. As you are aware, it is not natural for most Westerners to put the needs of others before self in a heart-centered approach to life. We have been steeped in a story of staunch individualism and separation for many decades. That is why those individuals who can do it stand out so much to us and we hold them up as special.

But we can train Kokoro. The Buddhist practice of loving kindness is a powerful means, yet you need not become a Buddhist to practice it. This book has proposed a blending of the best of Eastern and Western training approaches in an integrated personal development plan, which will allow you to find and develop your Kokoro spirit. Through Kokoro, you will frame your challenges intellectually but solve them with a heart-centered approach that includes the interests of all parties, in all three spheres of I-Self, We-Team, and It-Organization. Cultivating Kokoro requires you remain focused on your larger responsibility of fulfilling your purpose in the service of others, the environment and ultimately the global family. In the section of this chapter, we will examine the scenery from the five plateaus, or levels, of consciousness, that you should expect to encounter on your journey to develop the Five Mountains and find your Kokoro spirit and your consciousness itself.

In Chapter Five I mentioned that one of the foremost modern American philosophers is Ken Wilber, who developed a meta-philosophy of life he calls Integral Theory. Wilber proposes that



human experience can be mapped and that one's consciousness can grow and deepen through a variety of methods toward higher stages that transcend the limitations of earlier and less complex stages. Additionally, Wilber says that consciousness is expressed in four quadrants of I, We, It, and Its, which can be collapsed to the three spheres of I, We, and It, as we have discussed in this book.

To quickly review, the I sphere is how an individual experiences the world from within herself. It is about her own subjectivity, including worldview, morality, self-sense, intelligences, etc. The We sphere is culture, how a particular group of individuals make meaning of the world. Finally, the It is the objective world that is measurable. The It sphere is actually two in one for these purposes because it represents both individuals and systems in terms of objective markers and behaviors. Wilber's Integral Theory is a useful reality map that we have evolved for Unbeatable Mind to provide a map of an integrated warrior-leader development model. This helps us make meaning of the world we live in and co-create. It also helps reduce the likelihood of mental categorical errors and reductionist thinking. It complements our Five Mountain developmental philosophy nicely and provides a framework to understand vast areas of human knowledge.

Now I will introduce the aforementioned Five Plateaus as an evolution of consciousness and provide you a simple interpretation of each.

## **The Five Plateaus**

The stages of development that all of us have the potential to experience during a lifetime have been mapped by experts from several fields. Psychology, human performance and spiritual traditions such as Yoga and Buddhism have all opined on them. Even the esoteric writings of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity contain representations of the higher states and stages of consciousness. I call these stages "plateaus" because, as you climb the Five Mountains of development, your consciousness will plateau at a level before breaking free and traveling to the next. At each new plateau "the view" of your conscious self gets more expansive and becomes more inclusive.

A problem can arise in your personal development if you get stuck at a plateau and do not possess the knowledge, desire, or energy to climb to the next. The Five Mountains and Five Plateaus can guide you in these stuck moments as they represent both the domains of development as well as the stages of development, and provide a map to guide for how you may experience consciousness itself.

Human development is not just about getting smarter and upping your cognitive intelligence. All of your intelligences come into play. Consider Mother Theresa, who was cognitively intelligent but not off the charts smart. Yet she operated out of a higher spiritual intelligence and moral development than most of humanity. The bully down the street (insert "corporate fraudster" or "dictator" here) may also be intelligent, yet he appears to operate at an egocentric or socio-centric stage of moral and emotional development. Unlike Mother Theresa, his world, in the moral and emotional sense, does not include many others but is limited to himself and his particular in-group. In simpler terms, the bully hasn't progressed much beyond his physical-instinctual self (sex, fighting, and feeding) and he is not much concerned for anyone else but his in-group (tribe, gang, clan).

Mother Theresa's consciousness, however, has risen to a much higher plateau, expressed with a world-centeredness (beyond ego-centric and socio-centric), and she exhibits compassion for the entire human race. For the bully, the center of gravity of his consciousness, where he spends the majority of his time, has plateaued at a less complex stage, and thus he experiences the world in very different ways than a Mother Theresa. It is a mystery why some, like Mother Theresa, rise to such heights while others dwell at the lower levels. Perhaps it has to do with the karmic energy that the

soul brings into this life (if you believe in re-incarnation). Advanced souls, like Mother Theresa, are meant to serve humanity and don't have as much negative karma to burn as the thug, and are able to lock onto their higher-order purpose quickly in life. The bully spends most of his life creating additional negative karma and has difficulty breaking free to lock onto a higher purpose, or grow beyond his current level of consciousness.

The most important point is that some folks get stuck in a consciousness rut at less mature levels while others break free and progress to higher stages of evolution. It helps to understand how the Five Mountains are expressed in a self-sense (I), and a behavior (It) and a worldview (We) manner, as well as to note where your center of gravity is now along the Five Plateaus. Then you can work to unlock your potential and integrate in each sphere through your training.

In Chapter Eight I introduced the work of another great American philosopher, Dr. David Hawkins. His research showed that most humans experience, at most, a five percent growth in consciousness during their entire lifetime. That is because most people aren't trying to grow! But clearly you are, and with the integrated training model of the Unbeatable Mind, I believe you can reach the Fifth Plateau.

It is important to note that each plateau is necessary as a building block for the next level that proceeds. As you develop you will integrate each level in a “transcend and include” manner so that you will have an all-level appreciation and acceptance at the Fifth Plateau. What follows is a brief, and overly simplistic description of how life is experienced at each of the Five Plateaus of Consciousness.

Refer to image in Appendix 1: Five Plateaus of Consciousness

**First Plateau:** The Physical-Instinctual Self. At this plateau, the earliest one developmentally, we operate out of our lowest instinctual, animalistic self. We seek to get immediate physical needs met, such as eating, sleeping, defecating, and, if age appropriate, messing around. It is at this stage where our sexual energy plays an important role. The healthy expression of this stage would lead to healthy sexual development, interest in functionally developing one's physical skills, and fueling one's body properly. It would also manifest with an individual being in touch with his or her primal nature and needs. The unhealthy expression of this stage would lead to using the body for mere gratification of immediate physical needs and desires without care for long-term costs and effects to self and others. Of course, many struggle with all of this, which causes imbalances in the body and can later negatively affect the healthy development of future stages.

One of the aims of development in our physical mountain is to overcome imbalances to get fit and healthy at this plateau. A healthy body benefits and supports future growth and development. At the psychological level, those stuck at this plateau can be violent people whose primary focus is on themselves at the expense of others. They have a tendency to be closed-minded with a victim mentality. For them life is meaningless, and they will join a gang or end up in jail as interpretive proof of their empty philosophy. This plateau is a natural starting point for young children, and thankfully only a small percentage of adults get stuck at this stage.

**Second Plateau:** The Emotionally Driven Self. At this plateau individuals operate out of their emotional selves. In less healthy expressions of this level, they are often malcontent and difficult to communicate with due to wild emotional swings. They use emotions as tools to get what they want, as opposed to using force (the first or physical plateau) or logical argument (the third or mental plateau). They must have it their way, or they will throw a tantrum or use emotion-based manipulative tactics.

Children and their future adult selves can get stranded here due to various troubling life conditions. The negative psychological manifestation presents that of an absolutist who is able to function within society but remains convinced that his or her way is the only way, that his or her tribe (family, football team, country) is worth fighting to the death over. The healthy expression of this particular plateau would be an individual who is in touch with his or her feelings and uses them to connect with others.

**Third Plateau:** The Mental Achiever Self. This level of consciousness will find well adjusted, success-oriented members of society busy achieving important stuff. Moral and emotional development is typically stabilized and healthily expressed in one's ability to relate well to others. At this level, one's IQ and rational thinking mind play key roles. Personal growth is important but often limited to the rational mental self. Self-centeredness is possible—balanced with a concern for others—but often short-term thinking comes at the expense of others or the environment. Because they have developed their rational minds and emotional intelligence to some degree, those on this plateau can better manage their instinctual and emotional selves. Many in business and service professions express healthy aspects of this plateau. An unhealthy expression of this could be seen in a Type A corporate executive who is so driven that he or she loses sight of other important values, such as health, connection to family, and spirituality. Life is good for them as long as their needs are met: "I've got mine; I'm good to go, so don't bother me" can be the prevailing attitude. This plateau represents by far the largest in our Western society, where the stories of individualism and capitalism play to its strengths. The self-determination felt at this level is an enticing and powerful view, but it can create problems because it doesn't acknowledge the interconnected nature of all things.

**Fourth Plateau:** The Sensitive Self. Those at this level transcend achieving solely for the sake of personal or material earnings and instead seek to achieve with goodness directed toward others and the world. Their hearts as well as their rational minds drive them. It is common to find those on this plateau focused on areas that are outside of selfish physical, emotional, and achievement-oriented realms, such as sustainable community transformation and health in disadvantaged regions. The body, emotions, and instincts are well managed and expressed in new and unique ways. The mind is directed toward higher-order purpose and self-actualization can play an important role. Intuition is not shunned, and feelings of connection grow as they see the world as an interconnected whole.

Though this plateau is an exciting step toward a fully integrated life, like all stages it also has a shadow side. The shadow can be seen in attachment to one's newfound identity, expressed as spiritual egotism and exclusivity toward others. What I mean is that there is a tendency to feel special and unique at this plateau, leading to a superiority complex, which can impede further growth. Spiritual egotism is found in the new age movement, where there is a translation of spiritual and religious experience into enlightenment language without a corresponding transformation of consciousness to the more enlightened Fifth Plateau, integral level, and beyond. This stage can ignore or even demonize "less evolved" individuals or groups of people. Animosity can develop between mental achievers and sensitive do-good types because both find it difficult to deal with each other respectfully or to find win-win solutions together.

**Fifth Plateau:** The Integrated Self. In this plateau the heart, mind, and spirit begin to integrate in the individual, creating a world-centric, service-oriented sense of self. Truth, wisdom, and love are felt and expressed universally. Individuals transcend the limits of tribal and national identity. The earlier

plateaus are integrated, and the shadows of each begin to clear up.

A major difference between Plateau 4 and 5 is that those operating at Plateau 5 can meet the others at their respective levels. They don't demonize them or treat them as a class that needs pity or a handout. Those who operate with a Fifth Plateau consciousness tend to be great reconcilers and communicators and are "world-centric warriors." They are also aware of the possible dysfunctions at each previous plateau and hold them in their mind/heart in a compassionate way. Many great many spiritual leaders and warriors throughout history have been at this plateau, and today a growing number are entering it as humanity appears to be entering a new age of spiritual awakening and social awareness.

As you enter deeper into the stream of development toward mastery, and remain disciplined in your training, you will find yourself gaining momentum toward this and potential higher stages. The Fifth Plateau is not necessarily the final stage of development, as consciousness has a primal drive to evolve. The question remains: What plateau do you most identify with now as your center of gravity? You may find that, at your finest moments, you identify with Plateau Five, but then you get drawn into a negative situation and are pulled back to Plateau Three as a hyper-mental achiever or Plateau Two as an emotional malcontent. Keep in mind that your upbringing highly influences development through these plateaus and your ability to operate consistently at the higher levels. We all move a bit fluidly between the plateaus, but with dedication to growth, we will find that our center of gravity shifts upward and we spend less and less time in the lower plateaus and more in the highest. We will also find ourselves expressing the healthier side of each plateau and have an easier time course-correcting when necessary.

The late Stephen M.R. Covey wisely said, "seek first to understand and then to be understood." It takes courage to see truth clearly, especially when it comes to your own beliefs and worldviews. If you realize that you operate mostly from a Third Plateau mental achiever consciousness, yet dip into Second Plateau emotionally driven and/or First Plateau physical gratification-based behavior when under stress or unfocused, the good news is that you are not stuck there. You can change. You can develop to the highest stages of consciousness through focused intention and, most effectively, through integrated training.

One final comment: I mentioned earlier that, theoretically, only those at the Fifth Plateau of consciousness can consciously transcend and include all other levels. When you break through to this stage, even if in a temporary, non-ordinary state, you will have a "new consciousness benchmark" that will serve as a guidepost for your continued work. These temporary peak experiences help you trek, over time, to that new terrain as a permanent center of gravity.

Let me provide a real world example of a temporary non-ordinary elevated state and how it supported development in a trainee of mine. I will preface it by saying that I designed the Kokoro Camp to smash paradigms and uplift trainees to a temporary Fourth or Fifth Plateau experience. This occurs through the realization that they cannot complete the required work as an individual. They are forced to engage their team with a Fifth Plateau perspective, which is often experienced as a peak state of consciousness. I watched this happen with former NFL Tight End Derek Price during Kokoro Camp 17. His words describe his shift from Three to Five:

*"When I signed up for SEALFIT's Kokoro Camp it was about having a personal goal. I wanted to see if I could complete the program. I wanted to test my limits and find out if I was mentally tough enough. I had been searching for ten years after leaving the NFL for that "next level." I've been tackling business and personal challenges and knocking them down one at a time,*

*trying to prove how smart and tough I still was. Even after several Ironman and Open Water distance races I was not feeling satisfied, yet couldn't put my finger on it. Then Kokoro Camp shattered my paradigm and solved the puzzle for me. There, I finally experienced, emotionally and spiritually, that it's not about "me," it's not about what can "I" do. I learned that what is important is what my Team can do and how I can help others achieve success and significance. It opened a new door in my life and presented the very puzzle piece I'd been looking for. It opened me to the bigger picture and helped me connect with my heart-mind."*

By taking his eyes and mind away from his own narrower needs and placing them on his teammates needs, Derek released his Third Plateau achiever self and stepped into the universally connected Fifth Plateau of heart-centered consciousness. There he was witness to his heart merging with his mind while tending to his teammates' needs. He starved fear and fed courage in others and in so doing opened up to a more selfless and expansive state of consciousness. The shift allowed an influx of energy and a transcendent experience, which he could later reference during his personal journey toward self-mastery.

# Afterword

A few months after graduating from BUD/S training, I was reviewing a book written by my mentor, Kaicho Nakamura. The title was *One Day, One Lifetime*, and it was a collection of the Zen meditation lectures I had experienced the prior four years. The saying, "one day, one lifetime" has stayed with me since then and serves as a reminder to me that every day is important and could be my last. I have learned to live each moment fully and in the present, and avoid treating even a single day as a dress rehearsal.

This same attitude is required of self-mastery, which will be achieved as you develop your personal Five Mountains and integrate at the Fifth Plateau. Ultimately you will experience this integration as a union of your rational mind, your heart, and your witnessing self. With this integration you will begin to experience more presence and will use your whole mind for creative and holistic thinking. Your actions will be powerful and positive. A presence will be enjoyed, whether sitting in silence or performing a workout or problem-solving through a critical project—or even if you find yourself in a fight for your life. The signposts that indicate you are making progress on this incredible journey include:

- Experiencing increasing moments of peace
- Sensing an expanding field of awareness
- Being able to perceive truth better—cutting through the nonsense of the world
- Feeling more love for your fellow humans and for all sentient beings
- Feeling a sense of urgency to become a steward for Earth
- Finding you can accomplish any worthy task you set your mind to
- Tapping into your intuition and gut feelings frequently and using this skill to make wise decisions
- Finding beauty and grace even in mundane or dismal situations
- Experiencing true selflessness

On April 23rd, 1910, Theodore Roosevelt delivered a speech whose words have inspired generations of warriors and leaders since:

*It is not the critic who counts; nor the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust, sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spend himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory or defeat.*

Mr. Roosevelt was articulating the value of avoiding the deathtrap of gossip and other mindless distractions and staking your life on a path of boldness; of translating this boldness into action, to never drift or shirk from defending your values, to stand your ground and never sway. He's talking about acknowledging and honoring your passion by taking aim with that passion and shooting for the moon. Only through bold action can we make physical contact with our working limitations, and then

shatter them again and again.

The antithesis of boldness is to stall. Boldness shrivels up and dies when you say today is no good and that you'll start tomorrow. The energy is drained during hesitation's perpetual spin. Waiting for the perfect time to act—until you have the complete kit bag full of tools and weapons, or the perfect partner, or some perfect orchestration of conditions. This sort of delay will leave you back with those timid souls who know neither victory, or defeat.

But, as you have learned, taking bold action doesn't mean that we are always acting. Many mistake constant action for productivity and progress. The Warrior's Way is to first plan for bold action, win in the mind, bulletproof the mission and then, act with boldness. And during this state of action and execution there are moments to take pause and evaluate the battlefield to see what has changed since you acted last. In this pause you will reorient yourself, your team or organization to the new reality. You'll devise new tactics and a fresh strategy, and with this invigorated plan explode out of the blocks with boldness. In this process there is a balanced flow between acting, observing, thinking and acting again. Boldness requires this balance, or it can quickly look like foolishness.

So how can you develop your facility with boldness? Here are some ideas to ensure boldness in life and business:

- Hang around people who are doing bold things and study their way. I offered an Unbeatable Mind seminar once at an event for a non-profit called [Operation Underground Railroad](#). Tired of seeing nothing being done to stop the insidious sex slavery trade, this group has decided to take massive bold action. In 2014 they rescued over 300 girls from slavery in South America. It's as if they listened to Roosevelt's speech and immediately banded together and went for it. This is the type of bold to model.
- Take action before you think you are ready. I do this all the time and then have to make course corrections, refund customers when something breaks and rebuild it in flight. But I have no regrets for this approach. A good example is the [Unbeatable Mind Academy](#), where I finished developing each lesson literally days before it was due to be delivered to the customers in 2012.
- Whatever you think you can do, think bigger. With three billion people due to come online via mobile devices in the next three years, I encourage you to think bigger with your business and professional goals than you think you can right now. Why not impact a million, or even a billion people?
- Train to be bold. Commit to taking the information in this book and applying it into a custom integrated training regimen.

Unbeatable Mind training will embolden you, and steer you away from becoming one of the critics, one of those who waste precious energy illuminating the faults and failures of others. I am asking you to get into the arena and taste the sweet joy of victory and capture the precious lessons of defeat. Training must be constant and relentless. Push yourself to find new 20X limits, test your grit daily and stay in the arena, never shying from a challenge. Set audacious goals and knock them down one incremental victory at a time. Push your development to the Fifth Plateau and you will soon stand out in all you do. You will be uncommon and live each day as if it were a lifetime. It's your time now, so step up and be Unbeatable!

# Ten Secrets to Success

This book has covered a lot of ground and we've swam deeply into some areas you may never have thought about before. As you know by now, finishing the book doesn't mean you have finished your journey; in fact it's just beginning! To help you stay on track, I will leave you with a list you can copy into our journal or tear out of the book to refer to at least once a day as a reminder of the path you've chosen. I hope that it inspires and reinvigorates you as much as it does me.

1. Live an examined life, and embrace sacred silence.
2. Know your One Thing, your purpose, passion, and principles.
3. Connect all your small actions to these.
4. Develop mental and emotional control: master the Big Four of Mental Toughness and Emotional Resiliency.
5. Challenge yourself to find your 20X, and improve daily.
6. Turn to others in service, and develop a winning team.
7. Align to win in all three spheres of I, We, and It.
8. Select SMART-FITS targets.
9. Employ KISS "good-enough" planning.
10. Take massive action, and then fail forward fast.
11. Never, ever quit.

Hooyah! See you in training.

Mark Divine



# Mark Divine



Mark is a creative developer of cutting edge training programs for warriors, athletes and professionals. His innovative programs include the integrated functional fitness program **SEALFIT**, the life acceleration program **Unbeatable Mind** and the integrated yoga system **Warrior Yoga**. His books include the NYT bestseller **8 Weeks to SEALFIT**, the Amazon and WSJ bestseller **The Way of the SEAL**, **Unbeatable Mind**, now in it's 3<sup>rd</sup> edition and printing, and **Warrior Yoga** (Spring 2016).

Originally from Upstate New York, Mark holds an undergrad degree in economics from Colgate University and an MBA in finance from New York University Stern School of Business. Mark's first career was with Coopers & Lybrand (now PriceWaterhouse Coopers) as a Certified Public Accountant. Four years after joining Coopers, Mark left behind the corporate world to pursue his vision to become an elite Navy SEAL officer. At twenty-six he graduated as Honor Man (#1-ranked trainee) of his SEAL training class number 170. He served for nine years on active duty and eleven as a Reserve SEAL, retiring at the rank of Commander in 2011.

Mark embarked on his third career as an entrepreneur in 1996, co-founding the successful Coronado Brewing Company (CBC) and founding the e-commerce site [www.NavySEALs.com](http://www.NavySEALs.com). He later sold his interest in CBC but continues to run NavySEALs.com as the leading website for SEAL gear and information. In 2006 he launched US Tactical, a government contracting business, where he

gained contracts with Naval Special Warfare Group ONE for training support and with the Navy Recruiting Command for a nationwide mentoring program for SEAL trainees. This latter program was credited with increasing the quality of Navy SEAL candidates and reducing the attrition rate at BUD/S.

Today Mark is focused is on serving and growing the SEALFIT and Unbeatable, LLC businesses and communities. He lives in Encinitas, California, with his wife Sandy, son Devon and their dog Danger. Home is a short run to the SEALFIT Training Center, where he can usually be found training and coaching.

## **Certifications, Experience, Honors**

- Author, *Way of the Seal*, *8 Weeks to SEALFIT*, *Unbeatable Mind*, *Warrior Yoga*
- CPA, New York State
- SEAL BUD/S Class 170 Honor Man
- SEAL TEAM 3 Platoon CDR
- Commanding Officer NR SEAL Team 1
- Commander, US Navy
- Colonel, Kentucky Order of Colonels
- Ambassador, Navy SEAL Foundation
- US Army Master Fitness Course
- Various special operations courses—Advanced Free Fall, SDV Operator
- Trained Ashtanga Yoga teacher (200 hours)
- Certified ViniYoga teacher (500 hours)
- S.C.A.R.S. Military H2H instructor
- Seido Karate: black belt
- Goju Ryu Karate: black belt
- Saito Ninjitsu: brown belt
- Special Advisor to Women's Olympic Cycling Team
- WarriorYoga creator
- Board Member, Center for Integral Wisdom

## **Testimonials**

This book is a life changer; it lays out the blueprint and brings to the forefront unconscious patterns and with dedication and diligence provides a path to freedom. Freedom from the prisons created and reinforced through our own behaviors. WOS is written in a user-friendly format providing key tools and exercise to allow one to captain their own ship. This book is essential reading for the person who wants to hold their head high and their life to a standard they can be proud of. It is for the person who is ready to lead and succeed but doesn't exactly know how to implement that plan. I continue to read and reread this book as it keeps my head in the game, but it has allowed me to grow from a place of fear to now act from a place of passion as I pursue my dreams as a physician. —**Dr. Gabrielle Young**

As you probably know, you're running a world-class program—and by far the Best I've seen of what else is out there—there is nothing comparable or close to what you have. —**Paul Tharp**,

## **Command Master Chief, SEAL Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Training**

Thank you for the amazing insight and awareness. I've been involved in team sports my entire life, and nothing comes close to what I have achieved with Unbeatable Mind and Kokoro Camp. I am a better person, father, husband, athlete, and businessman because of it. Thank you. —**Tommy Hackenbruck, Rogue Fitness Athlete/UTE CrossFit**

I just wanted to drop a line that is straight from the heart. Thanks to you I've invented a whole new way to do my work. The work I do is very physically demanding, but through your teaching on meditation, breathing, and mental toughness—I'm working at an elite level. My boss says, "I wish I had five more like you." Thanks coach for your Unbeatable Mind book, training and your leadership. —**Jerry B**

Coach Divine, Your book *Unbeatable Mind* is one of the greatest I have ever read on development and I reference it daily, but the significance for me has been more personal. Constant revisiting of your concepts is what kept me from coming apart on the darkest days of my separation. That I could survive the heartache of this I can survive anything else emotionally thrown my way. And as you say emotional and mental are tied to physical. I want to thank you so very much for all you do. —**Chad M.**

As a student of Unbeatable Mind for the last two and a half years, I have seen extraordinary results. While I have always considered myself an achiever, this program has been transformational in the way I show up as a leader in both my personal and business life. While embracing the five mountain approach to self development, the most profound changes have come from creating a daily schedule incorporating a morning ritual. This practice has enabled me to tap into my purpose and brings clarity to my priorities. With my priorities clear, this practice has given me enhanced focus and energy in how I approach each day. Coach Divine emphasizes that we become masters of what is behind us and apprentices for what is ahead. He teaches that self mastery is a life long pursuit....it is not a destination but a path traveled. —**Robin Brown, Chief Executive, Scripps Green Hospital**

For anyone, especially women, who have found the power of sport to be a source of inspiration and transformation, developing an Unbeatable Mind is the key to accelerating success. Commander Divine's team has created the system to achieve transformation in all areas of life. —**Tamara Christopherson, US Olympian**

I've had a decent level of success in areas ranging from athletics to business, for which I am very grateful. This success has come from one consistent factor: My mental outlook. When "good sense" told me to quit, something else, told me "just a little more." I did not have a name for this, nor did I understand how to formalize this process of success, until I met Mark Divine and studied his Unbeatable Mind program. My only regret with regards to the UM program is that I did not find it decades earlier than I did! —**Robb Wolf, Best Selling author of The Paleo Solution – The Original Human Diet, [www.robbwolf.com](http://www.robbwolf.com)**

## **Course Offer**

# **What Would Mastering Unbeatable Mind Principles Do For Your Health, Fitness, Income and Overall Level of Success?**

The Unbeatable Mind Foundations Course is the heart of our intensive online program. Its step-by-step, interactive format offers you a virtual front-row seat at our integrated training center where you'll learn from Mark Divine and his team of coaches -- right from the comfort of your own home. You'll get:

- Insightful video instruction from our academies and seminars, audio recordings, interviews presentations and articles
- Big 4 of Mental Toughness Presentation, given to Navy SEAL Trainees.
- Monthly Warrior Yoga and exercise videos.
- Meditation and awareness practices drawn from elite warrior traditions
- Monthly Subject Matter expert calls, covering nutrition, fitness and special ops
- Membership to a private Unbeatable Mind Facebook Group
- Much, MUCH more introduced monthly!

**Sign up for the Unbeatable Mind Foundations Course Today** – we're offering it for an exclusive discounted price when you go to: [www.unbeatablemind.com/bookoffer](http://www.unbeatablemind.com/bookoffer)

Hooyah,

Mark Divine

## **About The Way of the Seal**

ALSO BY MARK DIVINE



"*The Way of the SEAL* is *The Book of Five Rings* for the twenty-first century. Mark Divine is a true master."

—DON MANN, FORMER U.S. NAVY SEAL  
AND AUTHOR OF NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER  
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BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *GIRLS' GUIDE TO  
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"Whether you are a Fortune 500 CEO, an entrepreneur building your own empire, a student, or an athlete, what you'll find in Commander Divine's book *The Way of the SEAL* is the complete roadmap for creating the next highest version of yourself. It's a must read!"

—JOE STUMPF, MASTER REAL ESTATE  
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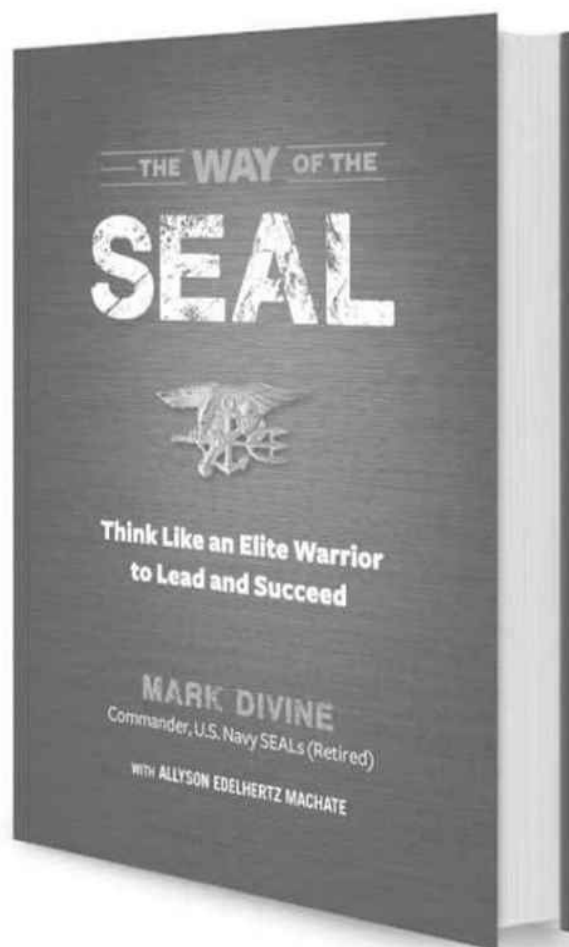
"Commander Mark Divine is a proven leader, successful business owner, and mentor to civilians. If you're ready to take a stand, look no further than *The Way of the SEAL*."

—BRANDON WEBB, FORMER U.S. NAVY  
SEAL AND AUTHOR OF THE  
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER *THE RED CIRCLE*

"In *The Way of the SEAL*, Mark Divine delivers a set of tools and techniques that have been proven to develop a strong sense of purpose, a high level of mental toughness, and an ability to be more productive."

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Unbeatable Mind Academy and NavySeals.com

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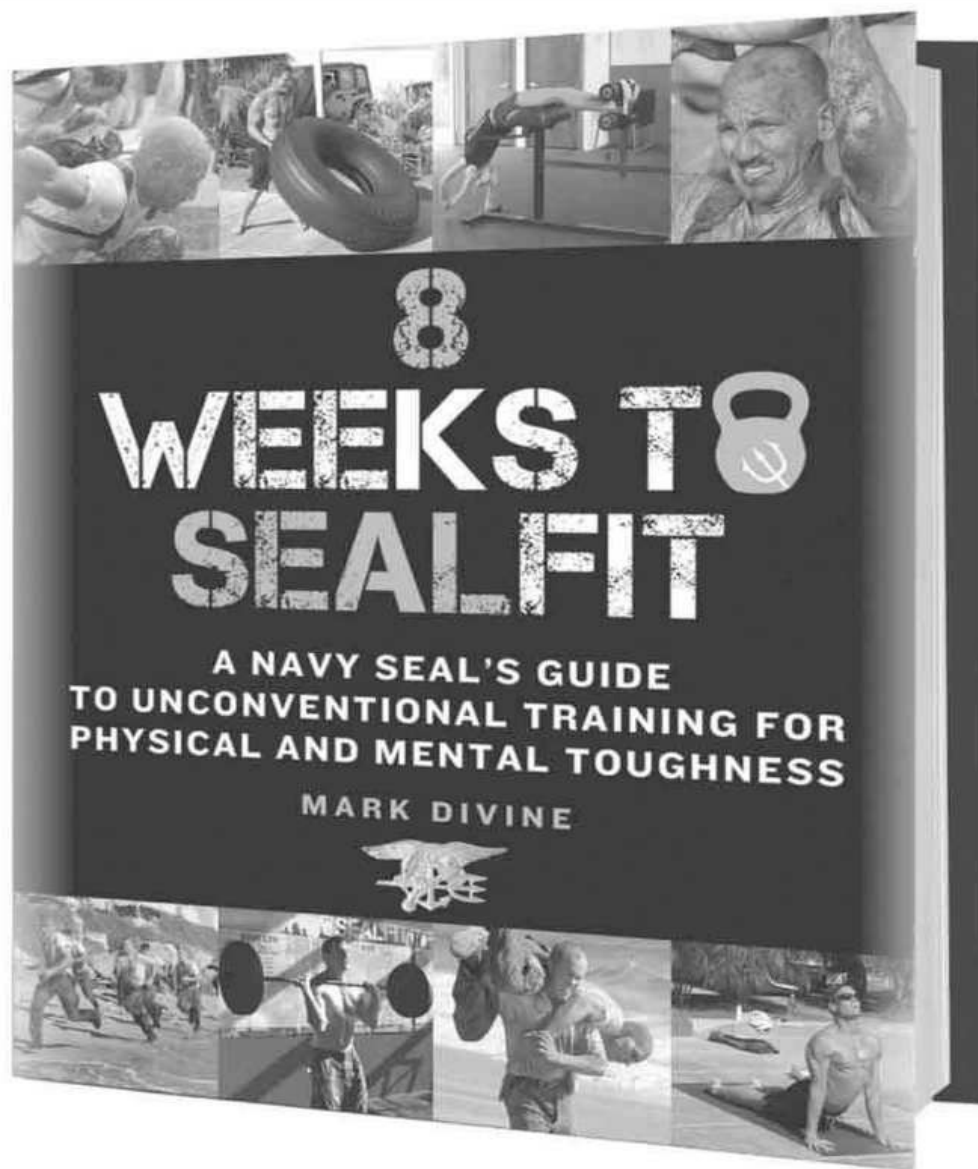
Reader's  
digest

## About 8 Weeks to SEALFIT






**1 8 TOUGH WEEKS,  
EXTREME RESULT.**



**TRAIN WITH FORMER NAVY SEAL  
COMMANDER MARK DIVINE.**

Available wherever books are sold in (April 2014) •  St. Martin's Press





# Bonus Preview: From the Book—Warrior Yoga: A Core Practice of Unbeatable Mind

The Unbeatable Mind approach and the toolsets that I have included in this book are the culmination of a search I began with the martial arts at 20 years old, three decades ago. As I described early in this book, the experience provided by my mentor, Kaicho Tadashi Nakamura, was the first time I had engaged in a way of training that attended to a spectrum of dimensions, not just the physical. The integration of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual training into one focused practice not only surfaced my internal voice and purpose, which led me into the Navy SEALs, but also provided me with an improbable set of skills allowing me to thrive in what is the most difficult and elite military training in the world.

So when I departed for the Navy and bid farewell to my martial arts training, I knew I had only just begun my journey. Over the years I searched long and hard to find a practice that continued what I had started back in 1985.

Life as a SEAL Team operator and leader was another formative experience whereby I learned the value of constant and never ending training of body, mind and spirit. Though we didn't use those words, our value of "earn your trident every day" was a siren call for the brand of relentless and varied training that makes SEALs so effective. We simply trained harder and in more unique ways than anyone else, unlocking vast potential for personal success and mission accomplishment. The habit of integrated training done daily, combined with periodic challenges and a strong ethical foundation, have become the essence of Unbeatable Mind. Training of this nature unlocks the huge potential that lies dormant in all men and women. It also unlocks the attitudes and behaviors for what make highly functional teams, those that operates at a level where super success is not merely hoped for, but inevitable.

As noted, during my Navy years, I continued to look for forms of personal development that could come close to what my formative experience provided. The search led me to become an expert instructor in San Soo Kung Fu based Special Combat Aggressive Reactionary System. SCARS is a very effective military hand-to-hand combat program, absolutely fun to learn and teach, but by design a purified fighting system based on an offensive mind set. It is suitable for a special ops combatant, but not for the type of self-mastery training I was seeking.

Upon leaving the active duty Navy, I resumed my search and took up with two different martial arts programs and launched US CrossFit. Each had a lot of offer in the physical arena, but lacked the other mountains in any credible form. So my search continued, and I began to understand how unique and robust my initial raining had been with Seido and the SEALs. It was in 1999 that my search led me to the door of a yoga studio in North County, San Diego. I took on a 60-day challenge of a hot yoga class every day for 60 days. This system had a series of 26 yoga poses, performed in a specific sequence that takes about 90 minutes, all in a room heated at 104-degrees F. At the end of the 60 days I felt amazing - physically, mentally and emotionally - I felt I was back on track.

Throwing myself into the world of yoga, I gave it the same energy that I did the martial arts. Yoga, as my studies revealed, is far more than an effective way to boost flexibility and mobility. Many thousands of years in the making, it is the oldest total personal development program known to man. It also has deep warrior roots. I write about these roots in my book *Warrior Yoga*, published by St. Martin's Press. Warrior Yoga is a core practice of Unbeatable Mind, and the book covers the full spectrum of the training, including the movement, breathing, visualization and meditation drills and exercises you have read about in this book.

The word Yoga means to Yoke, or to Unify your ego self and mind, with your soul self, or

“Witnessing Mind.” It signifies that the practice of yoga is designed to integrate and develop you fully as a human, connecting you to your spiritual self and advancing your consciousness. Perhaps the most intriguing text on yoga was written around 400 CE by Patanjali, known as the “Yoga Sutras.” Along with describing yoga as a science of mental development, Patanjali introduces us to the “eight limbs of Yoga”:

**Yama** – This is a foundational ethic, a code of morality and character to live by.

**Niyama** – This is about developing disciplines leading to purification of the self (mind, body and spirit).

**Asana** – The physical postures, what most people think of as yoga.

**Pranayama** – This is about control and mastery of the breath and life force.

**Pratyahara** – This is about developing awareness of, and mastery over the senses.

**Dharana** – This is about developing deep powers of concentration.

**Dhyana** – This is about meditation and developing singular presence.

**Samadhi** – This is spiritual enlightenment, the union of the witness self with the ego self. It is experienced as bliss.

What I learned from these 8 limbs and through my Ashtanga Yoga teacher Tim Miller, is that authentic yoga was meant to focus on developing each of these 8 limbs in a holarchic manner, meaning that you transcend and include the earlier levels as you progress. I couldn’t help but notice the similarity to the teaching of American philosopher Ken Wilber, whose integral theory espouses a similar integrated development in multiple intelligences, leading to higher states and stages of consciousness. Integral theory pointed toward human beings possessing the capacity to transcend, through training and development, to the highest stages of consciousness, similar to the yogic concept of Samadhi, or enlightenment. I had found a program in Yoga that had in it’s original design a map for complete development, unlocking maximum potential in the human being. Now, if I could just find a single program that captured and practiced all of the 8 limbs.

A turning point in my experience with Yoga occurred in 2004, when I was deployed to the war zone in Baghdad. On the C-130 flight into Iraq, I found myself countering the jitters by finding some space in the cargo area and, with deep breathing exercises I learned in the SEAL, a series of poses and visualization, I performed the first session of what I now call “Warrior Yoga.” Rather than be overwrought with nervous energy, stress and distracted thinking, by the time we landed I had established mental and emotional control, burned off stress and grounded myself in the present. I continued to explore the boundaries of these methods while in the combat zone.

The experiment led to me combining tools and techniques from the martial arts, functional fitness, SEAL mental toughness training, Apache warrior spirit training and, of course, Yoga. The outcome proved to be so effective in my personal life that I decided to use the method to train SEAL and SOF candidates, as well as elite athletes, when I started SEALFIT in 2007. The high level of

success these warriors and athletes had by employing the Warrior Yoga and Unbeatable Mind principles in their high stakes careers emboldened me to continue to refine the language and integrate new tools. This iterative process has led to the principles in this book and the companion Warrior Yoga book. They work together to discipline and propel us along our five-mountain path, day in and day out, leading us toward self-mastery in service of humanity.

If you are interested in beginning this powerful training, the Unbeatable Mind Academy includes online video instruction and DVD based training. We also offer an immersive 2-day Warrior Yoga seminar and teacher training in Encinitas, CA and periodic retreats at other locations.

See [www.UnbeatableMind.com](http://www.UnbeatableMind.com) for details, and good luck with your training!

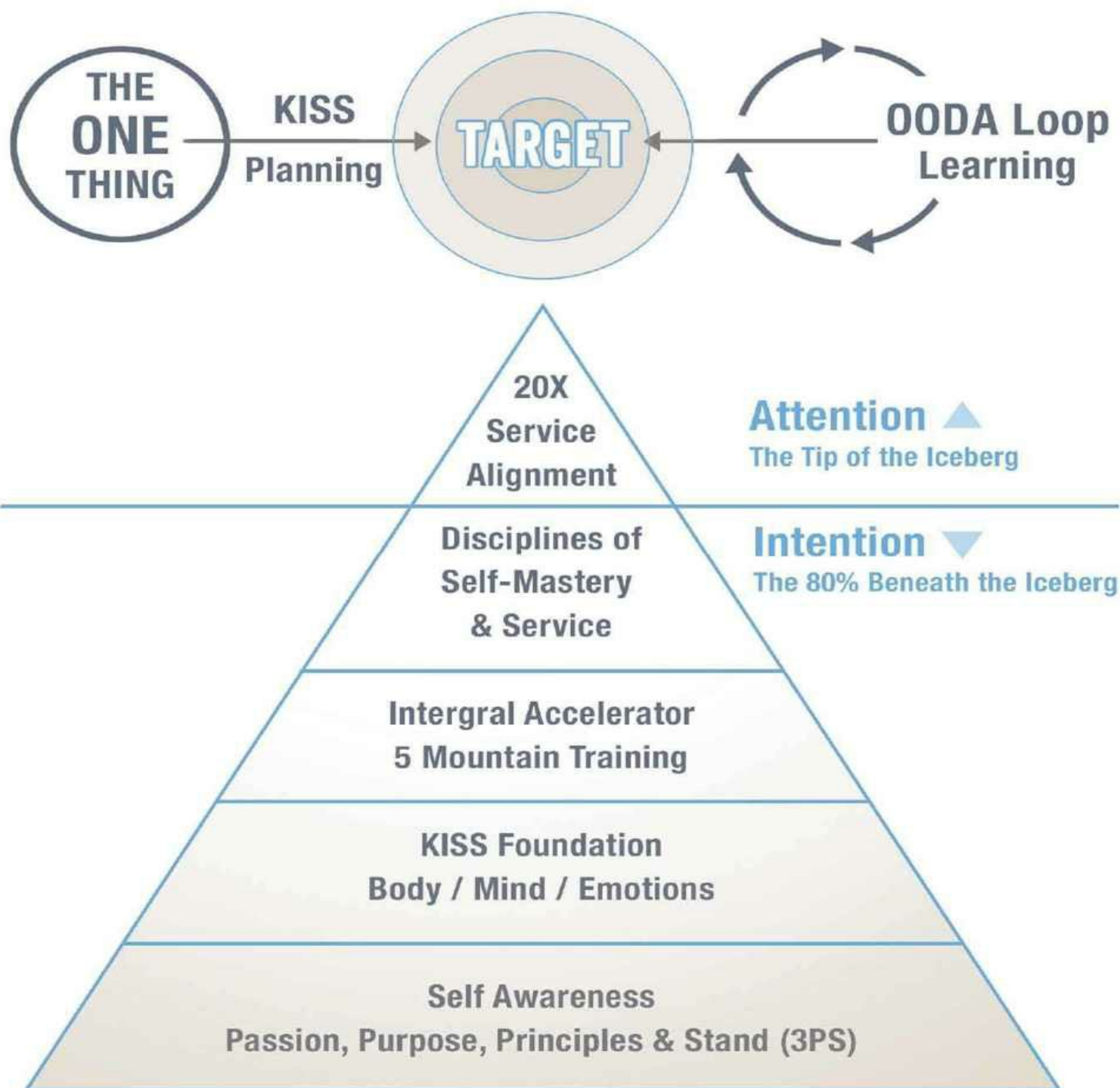
--Coach Divine

# Appendix 1: Illustrations

# UNBEATABLE MIND

FORGING MENTAL TOUGHNESS

## FRAMEWORK

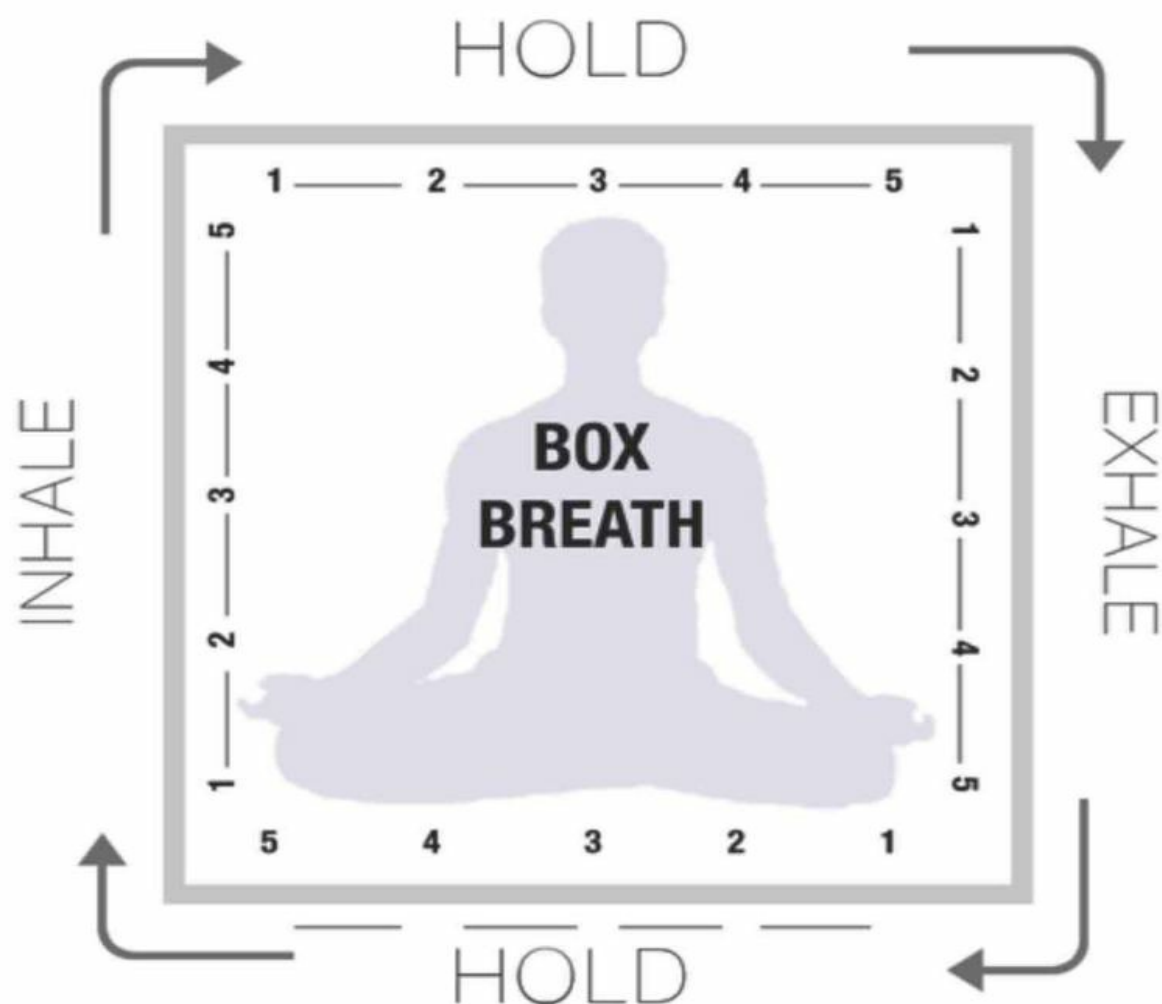




# BOX BREATHING

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**5 X 5 X 5 X 5**



**REPEAT MINIMUM 5 TIMES,  
OR LONGER AS TIME ALLOWS**





# THE BIG 4 OF MENTAL TOUGHNESS

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Breathe In...  
Breathe Out...



Stay  
Calm!

## BREATH (arousal) CONTROL

stress management



## MENTAL CONTROL

Control Positive Inner Dialogue



## VISUALIZE SUCCESS

Win in your mind first!



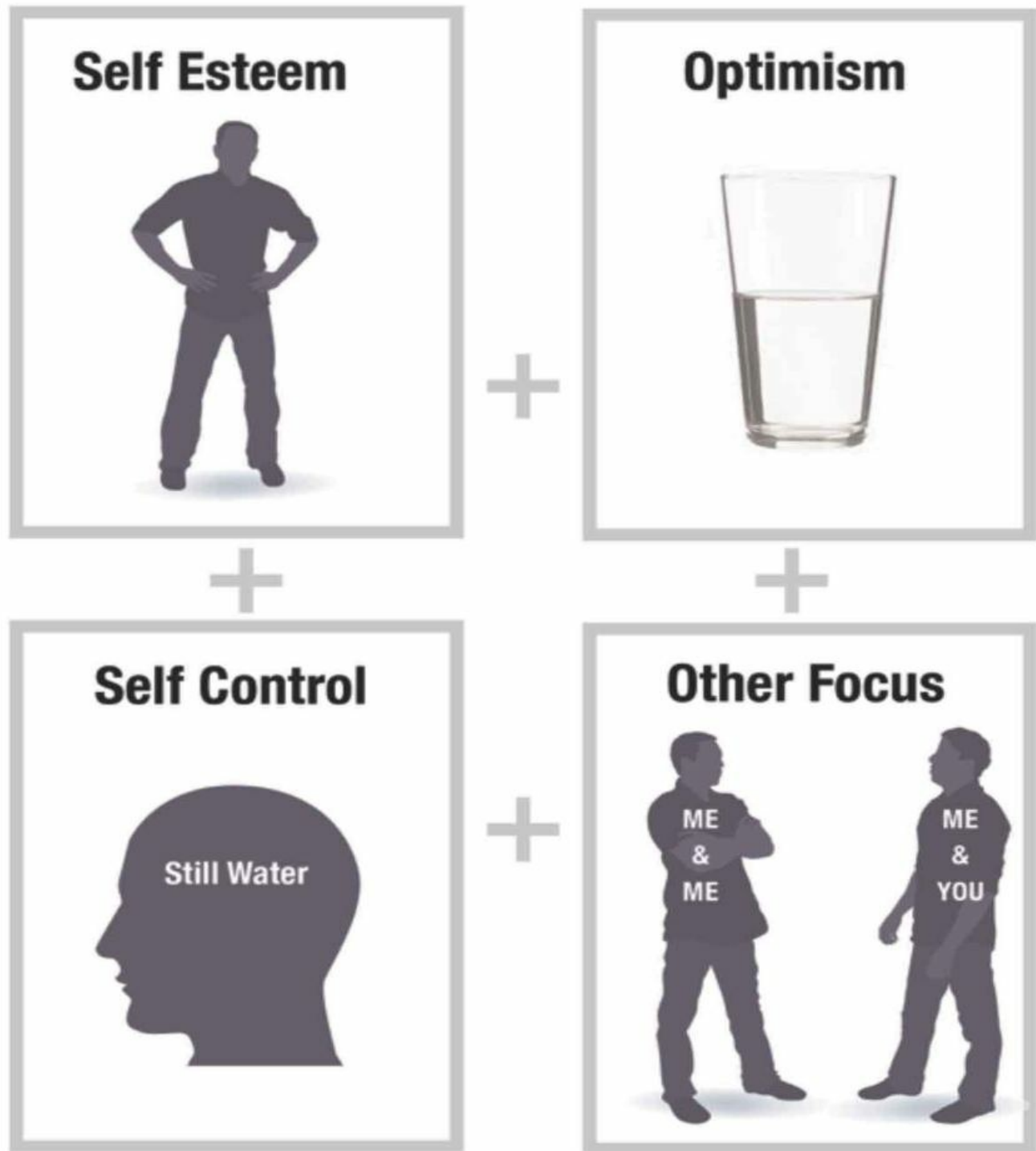
## GOAL SETTING

S.M.A.R.T - F.I.T.S & Micro Goals



# BIG 4 of EMOTIONAL RESILIENCY

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These four add up to Emotional Resiliency



# 5 MOUNTAINS of SELF MASTERY

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# 3 Spheres

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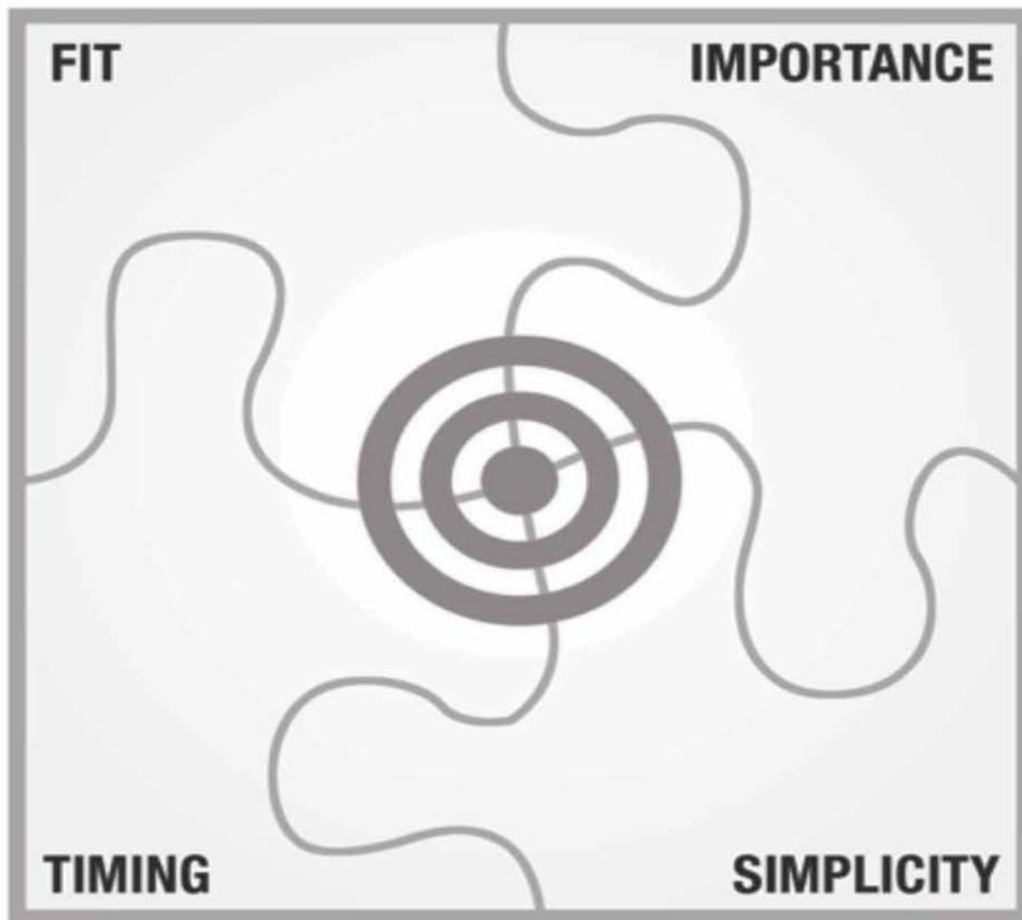


# F.I.T.S

FIT - IMPORTANCE - TIMING - SIMPLICITY

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## Target Selection Tool



All four pieces of the puzzle must fit  
for it to be an ideal target.



# P.R.O.P

PLAN - REALITIES - OPTIONS - PATH

## RAPID PLANNING TOOL - OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

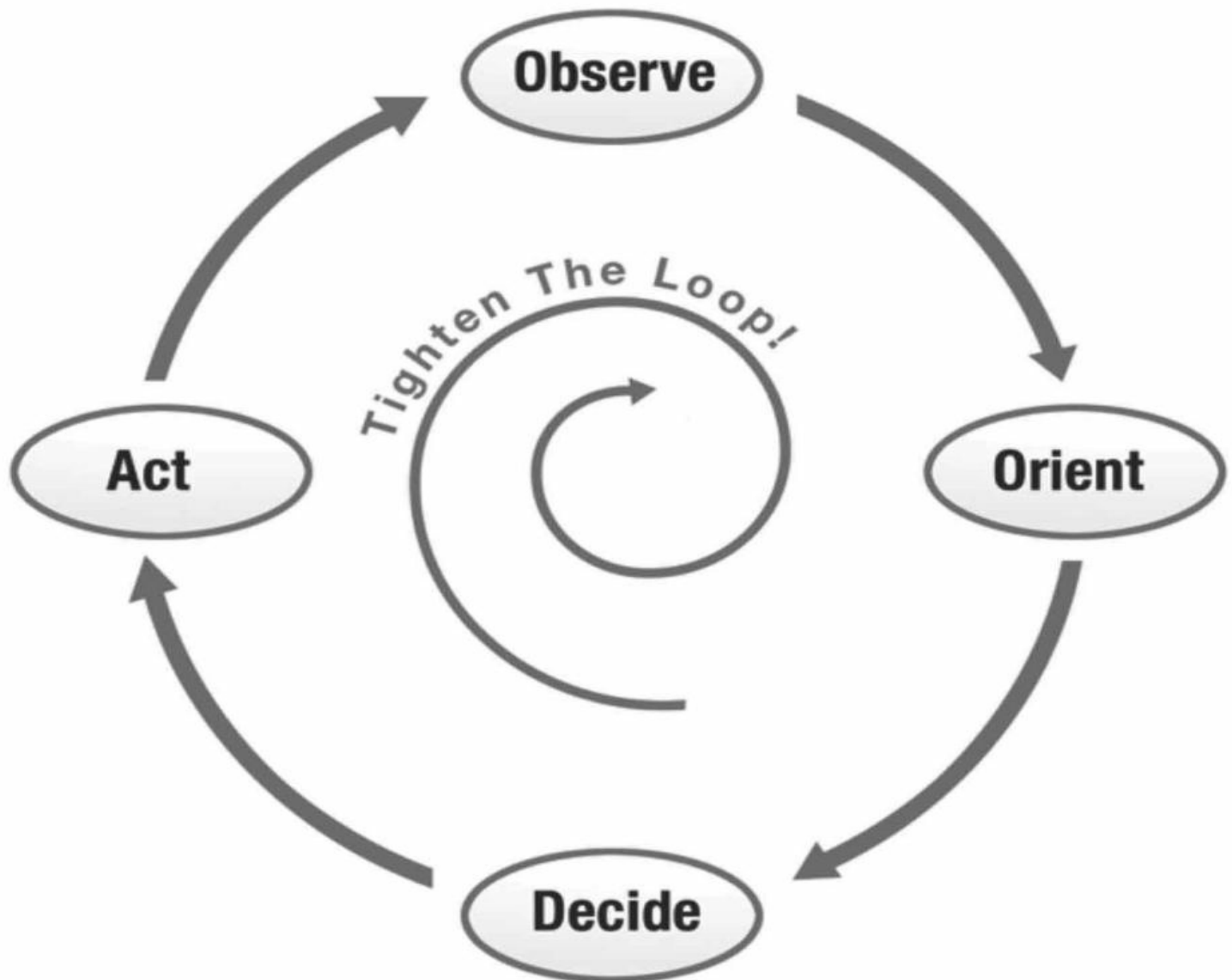


1. Define Priorities
2. Identify Realities
3. Analyze Options & Rank Courses of Action
4. Determine Path - Your Way Ahead.

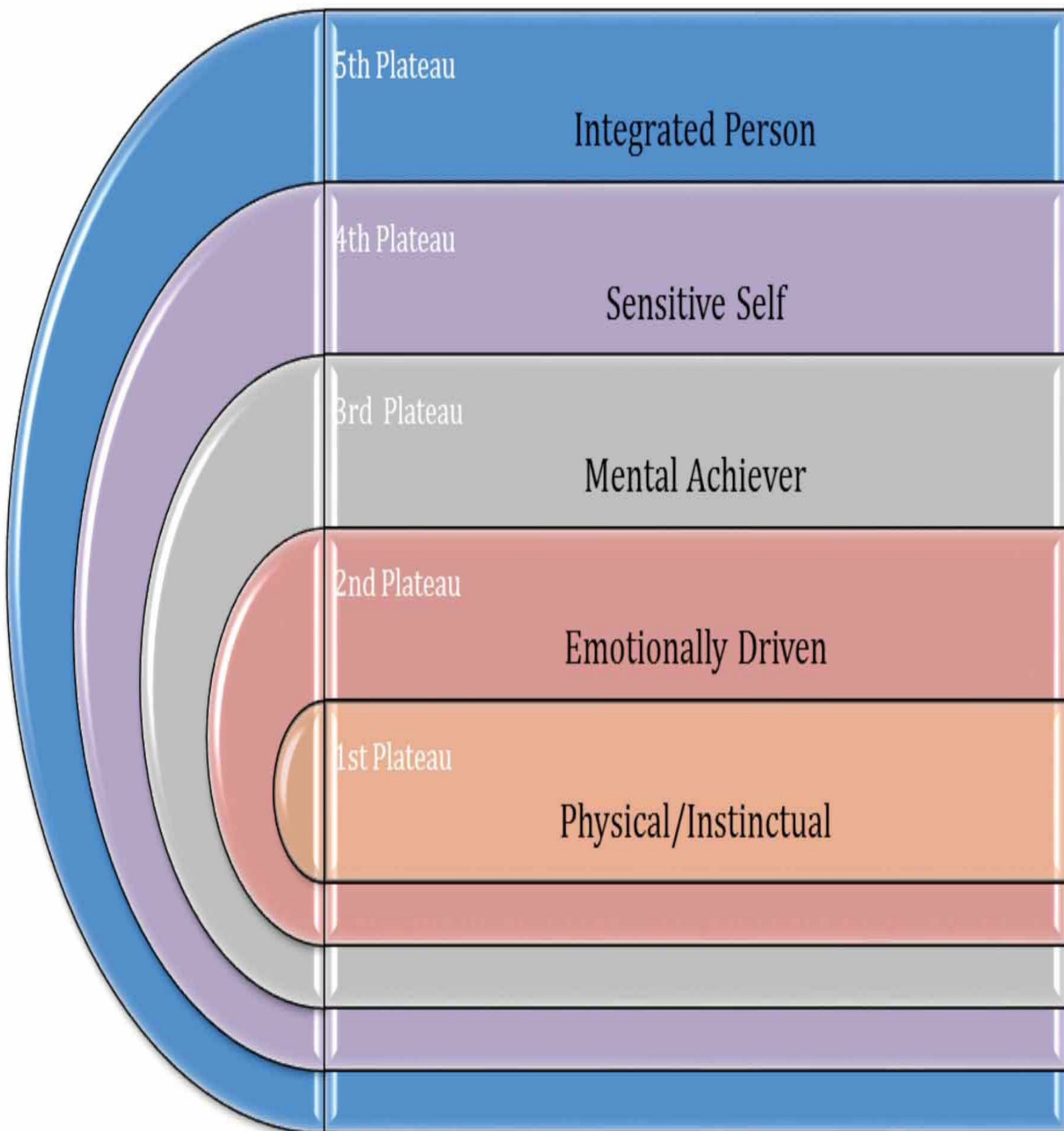


# OODA LOOP

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**Five Plateaus of Consciousness**







# Appendix 2: Tools

## Morning Ritual

The goal is to engage your body and mind in a positive manner from the moment you wake, thereby sparking & enabling your greatest potential.

*Time required: 5-20 minutes*



1. Drink a glass of water with a Gratitude Attitude, Journal answers to empowering questions



## 2. Prep to Win the Day (short concentration/meditation) on key objective



## 3. Somatic Practice (Mindful Movement): Breathing, Yoga & Visualization

# Appendix 3: Reading List

## Reading List

As I review new books and reference them in our Unbeatable Mind Academy online program, I update the Unbeatable Mind Reading List online at [www.unbeatablemind.com/readinglist](http://www.unbeatablemind.com/readinglist)

### Success, Philosophy & the Mind

- *Way of the SEAL*, by Mark Divine
- *Theory of Everything*, by Ken Wilbur
- *Integral Spirituality*, by Ken Wilbur
- *Man's Search for Meaning*, by Viktor Frankl
- *Think and Grow Rich or The Law of Success*, by Napoleon Hill
- *Being Peace*, by Thich Hhat Hanh
- *Yoga Sutras*, by Patanjali
- *As a Man Thinketh*, by James Allen
- *The Power of Now*, by Eckhart Tolle
- *Grandfather*, by Tom Brown, Jr.
- *The Search*, by Tom Brown
- *4 Hour Work Week*, by Timothy Ferriss
- *The Talent Code*, by Daniel Coyle
- *The Soul of Leadership*, by Deepak Chopra
- *Unleash the Warrior Within*, by Richard J. Machowicz
- *Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot*, by Jim Stockdale
- *On Killing*, by Dr. Dave Grossman
- *Book of Five Rings*, by Myomato Musashi
- *The Art of War*, by Sun Tzu
- *The War of Art*, by Steven Pressfield
- *Integral Life Practice*, by Wilbur, Patton, Leonard, Morelli
- *Ageless Mind, Timeless Body*, by Deepak Chopra
- *The Answer to How is Yes*, by Peter Block
- *The Present*, by Spencer Johnson
- *An Invented Life*, by Warren Bennis
- *Jacob the Baker*, by Noah Ben Shea
- *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, by Stephen R. Covey

- *The Story of Philosophy*, by Will Durant
- *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, by John J. Ratey
- *Power vs. Force*, by David R. Hawkins M.D. Ph.D.
- *Da Vinci and the 40 Answers*, by Mark L. Fox
- *One Day, One Lifetime: an Illustrated Guide to the Spirit, Practice and Philosophy of Seido Karate Meditation*, by Kaicho Tadashi Nakamura.
- *Abundance: The Future Is Better Than You Think*, by Peter Diamandis
- *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, by Daniel Kahneman
- *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking*, by Malcolm Gladwell
- *The Speed of Trust*, by Stephen M.R. Covey

## **Kokoro & Warrior Spirit**

- *The Fighter's Mind*, by Sam Sheridan
- *Mind Power*, by Kazumi Tabata
- *Karate-Do: My Way of Life*, by Gichin Funakoshi
- *The Warrior Ethos*, by Steven Pressfield
- *Born to Run*, by Chris McDougal
- *There is a Spiritual Solution to Every Problem*, by Wayne Dyer
- *Light on Yoga*, by K. S. Iyengar
- *Light on Pranayama*, by K. S. Iyengar
- *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*, by Shunryu Suzuki
- *Three Pillars of Zen*, by Phillip Kapleau
- *Awakening Spirits*, by Tom Brown
- *Intuitive Warrior*, by Mike Jaco
- *Warrior Mindset*, by Michael ASken
- *Living the Martial Way*, by Forrest E. Morgan
- *Essential Spirituality*, by Roger Walsh
- *Gates of Fire*, by Steven Pressfield
- *Unbroken*, by Laura Hillenbrand
- *The Long Walk*, by Slavomir Rawicz
- *Extreme Fear*, by Jeff Wise
- *In Search of the Warrior Spirit, Fourth Edition: Teaching Awareness Disciplines to the Green Berets*, by Richard Strozzi-Heckler

## **Fitness and Nutrition**

- *8 Weeks to SEALFIT*, by Mark Divine
- CrossFit® Journal articles “*What is Fitness*” and “*What is CrossFit*” by Greg Glassman
- *Starting Strength*, by Mark Rippetoe
- *Natural Hormonal Enhancement*, by Rob Fagin
- *The Paleo Solution*, by Robb Wolf
- *Fixing Your Feet 4th Edition*, by John Vonhof
- *Becoming a Supple Leopard*, by Kelly Starrett

## **SEAL / SOF / Military History**

- “*Spec Ops - Case Studies*”, by Adm. William McRaven
- *Lone Survivor*, by Marcus Luttrell
- *Warrior Soul*, by Chuck Pfarrer
- *The Warrior Elite*, by Dick Couch
- *Down Range, Navy SEALs in the War on Terrorism*, by Dick Couch
- *The Finishing School*, by Dick Couch
- *You Want Me To Do What?* by Jeff Kraus, published by SEALFIT/NavySEALs.com
- *One Bullet Away*, by Nathaniel Fick
- *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne*, by Stephen E. Ambrose
- *Blackhawk Down: A Story of Modern War*, by Mark Bowden
- *Killing Rommel*, by Steven Pressfield
- *Generation Kill*, by Evan Wright
- *The Afghan Campaign*, by Steven Pressfield
- *SEAL of Honor*, by Gary Williams
- *Robert's Ridge*, by Malcom MacPherson
- *The Last Stand*, by Nathaniel Philbrick
- *Fearless: The Undaunted Courage and Ultimate Sacrifice of Navy SEAL Team SIX Operator*, by Adam Brown