# Mind

## Mind

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# Mindset Basics

To quote Larry Cain; “The mind wins first”. This is so true but it is fair to say that without preparation “The Mind loses first”

On most races, the most likely culprit for poor performance, is your mind.

## Why our minds hold us back

Evolution has given us many built in protections against over exerting ourselves and causing physical harm. SUP racing and especially SUP Endurance Racing looks a lot like flogging yourself to near death and your mind will try really hard to make you stop doing it.

## The good, the bad and the great

The good news is that the Mind can be trained in similar manner to the rest of your body.

The Bad news is that it takes just as much effort to train as your muscles do.

The Great news is that you can make huge performance gains quite quickly with mindset tweaks that would take months and years to make by physical training.

## How hard can it be

To train the mind you are going to:

* Have a really deep look at how your motivation and self esteem are built up
* Evaluate how you react to various situations
* Practice techniques to improve your response to those situations
* Store the stuff that really works for you as a lifelong Toolkit that will get you through training and races

!!! Note Quick Wins Mindset training will start to make noticeable improvements from the day that you start doing them

# Journalling

!!! Info “Journalling summary”

- Write down everything  
- Put in Stats as well as Feelings  
- Review it every month and look for patterns  
- You will learn what works and what does not  
- Weird stuff will emerge sometimes (Every time a new Marvel Series comes out, my training hours dip)  
- Use it to improve training over time  
- Use it to prepare positive Self Talk

Journalling is mentioned in pretty much every self help and performance management book ever. This is because it is super powerful.

* Writing things down makes you think about them BUT The real power is when you read it later and “actively recall” what you were thinking about.
* Active Recall is a learning Super Power and really helps embed knowledge.
* At it’s simplest form, a journal is just a diary
* The next level up is structured to capture certain info that you view helpful such as
  + Date
  + Location
  + Distance
  + Session Details
  + Feelings
  + Weather
  + etc…
* The gold standard journals add in Mindset Training and get you to explore things like:
  + Goals
  + Motivation
  + Strengths
  + Weaknesses
  + Phrases that keep you going
  + Phrases that just destroy you
  + Why these things are true
  + Limiting beliefs
  + Ways to overcome Limiting Beliefs
  + etc…

An example of this style of journal is [April Zilgs Athlete Agenda](https://www.aprilzilg.com/athlete-agenda). It is a physical book/journal and you write things down as they happen.

Some journal examples are in the [Resources Appendix](/resources)

# Motivation

Most of what you believe about motivation may be less than the truth

There are two key types of Motivation

## Intrinsic Motivation

These are the Internal rewards that nobody else ever really sees. The 3 Sub-groupings are:

* Autonomy
* Purpose
* Mastery

### Autonomy

This is basically being independent and doing as you wish

Modern day life does a lot to remove this and it is critical to carve out space and time to allow yourself Autonomy.

The two big areas for me in this area are:

1. Training on my own
2. Racing on my own

Both these areas let me do what I believe needs to be done and when I think is best. I might be wrong sometimes, but it is still nice to be able to make your own choices.

The opposite can be training in a group. This has a horde of benefits, but someone is always being held back by the slower paddlers, or being pushed into Threshold training whilst trying to keep up with the faster paddlers.

Sometimes you just need some time and space to do your own thing. Don’t feel guilty. It is good training methodology to get the best from different training patterns

### Purpose

This could fill a book, but the short answer is that everyone wants to have a greater purpose. A benefit of this is that Purpose is a fairly stable motivator. It is a good foundation for you motivation as it is unlikely to go away suddenly

It is also an area of deep satisfaction when you move that little bit closer to your purpose and if you fulfil it, there are usually a list of even bigger things that will take it’s place next year.

It is quite healthy to have a Yearly purpose and also have a multi year purpose. This balances having something that you can move towards quickly and actually accomplish against not having a purpose to get you through the off season.

Your Multi-Year purpose is the one that stops you eating too much over the winter holidays.

### Mastery

Mastery is in itself very satisfying. All the intrinsic motivators are stable slow burns and do not tend to disappear when you succeed.

You will go through phases of being a student, journeyman, teacher, master.

True mastery often follows a cyclic pattern as described in the Japanese Shu-Ha-Ri principle:

* Shu: Students learn a technique as well as they can. They follow teh rules and take in as much as they possibly can
* Ha: Students gain proficiency and start to look at the underlying theory, how, when and what-if. They may start to learn other techniques but they are still following the rules at this point.
* Ri: The students become the masters and they no longer need to follow the rules. They understand what lies beneath every drill and technique, and can mix things up any way that they need to. They are adapting and creating their own techniques that they will probably pass on to others.

This all makes sense and most people stop here, but now comes the good bit. In many Japanese schools the next step is cycling back into being the student (Shu) in an other discipline. This keeps the learning evolution alive an dwell within an individual and stops them becoming the old guy that says “I’ve being doing this for 30 years and I know what I’m talking about”

An even purer form is to start the cycle again within your sport and try to think like a Master and a novice at the same time.

You see this in Golfers and Tennis players all the time. They might be the best in the world but they are constantly looking for a Better Serve or a longer drive. They will often take an entire season of poor performances whilst dialling in a new technique.

!!! Info - A key point here is that there are often short term dips in performance when you try to improve. This may dent your motivation but the longer view is that you will come out the other side even better. - It is important to keep the learning mindset alive no matter how experienced you are at things. The constant intake of new skilsl and knowledge will keep the motivation flames of mastery alive and well. - Nature has an amazing capacity for humbling us. If you are on the sea or a bumpy river, remember that every day is a learning day.

## Extrinsic Motivation

These are the **External Rewards** such as acclaim, victory and respect from others

These are great short term motivators such as in the lead up to a race.

* Wanting to win a race
* Be lauded by your peers
* Not be looked down on by anyone

BUT

* They are very dangerous to rely on.
* If they are an add-on to Intrinsic motivation then thats fine.
* Intrinsically: you may love racing because you are getting quite good at it. This wont change if you come in 2nd.
* Extrinsically you may be distraught that you cam in 2nd in a race you wanted to win.
* The message might be that Extrinsic goals are great at short term motivation to really push your limits, but you need a strong base of Intrinsic motivation to rely on if you don’t meet any of those goals.

# Paddling Psychology

Racing Hurts and can be a bit boring. There. I said it. The secret is out.

There are two areas that you need to perfect for success

* Training Mindset
* Racing Mindset

## Racing Mindset

The Racing Mindset is by far the easiest:

* It involves a very real and observable goal, and doing what is needed to get it.
* Set a very clear goal. Obsess about it. Talk about it. Telling people your goals adds pressure on you to achieve them.
* There is lots of powerful short term Extrinsic motivation (More on that later in the Motivation section)
* Positive visualisation will help. Imagine yourself crossing the finishing line. Everything else is just what happens to get to that point.
* Realism is also important. Learn to anticipate the pain and effort needed to perform well…and be OK with that.
* Compartmentalise if that helps: Acknowledge pain and tiredness and then lock them in a mental box for later.
* Don’t obsess about things that you can’t control. If the weather is bad or you chip your favourite race fin then just let it go.
* Love the weather. Train in bad weather and you will have an advantage over everyone else. When bad weather hits, it is then a good thing for you during a race.
* My favourite two techniques in longer races are: 1. Pick people off, one at a time. Just lock onto the person in front and feel the joy of slowly reeling them in. As you approach them save a little pace until you are ready to blow past them (Smile and make it look easy) 2. If you can’t reel in the person in front, then start to concentrate on the back of their board. Just stare at it and nothing else. You will quickly find yourself in a light trance. This meditative state will help you ignore aches and pains.

## Training Mindset

This is much harder. You put in hours of training for some future benefit that can seem a very long way off on a cold winter day.

The answer is:

* Sign up for a race
* Pros
  + This gives you a definite goal
  + It gives you a timescale
  + It gives you motivation
* Cons
  + You will panic and want to quit. DON'T
  + You will doubt your abilities DON'T. Thats why you are training
  + You will doubt your kit. You will make more difference than kit will BUT i personally use every Race as an excuse to upgrade kit :-o
* Work on your motivation. Intrinsic motivation is what will get you through those early season training sessions. Paddling for the pure joy of it and knowing that with every paddle stroke, you are improving. Enjoy the people you are paddling with and sometimes it even means stopping mid session if you are passing a nice waterfront coffee shop.
* Unexpected rewards are great, just don’t do it too often, or it becomes expected, and your sessions will start to suck.
* Train in a group
  + Training groups that stay together quickly become friends. This can get you through your worst training “Off Days”
  + If a group does not fit, then try other groups. You might end up evolving through several groups to reach your potential
  + Learn to accept a place in the group. You might be:
    - The Student
      * You don’t instantly need to be as fast or skilled as everyone else. Good groups will let you fit into this role and improve at a rate that suits you.
      * You might be “Not Invited”to certain sessions where the group wants to blast. This is OK. Your time will come.
    - The Journeyman
      * You have served your time and are now a pretty average member of the group. Enjoy this phase. Most people expect nothing more from you than being “Able to take care of yourself”
    - The Teacher
      * You have knowledge to share :-)
      * Just remember that not everyone is receptive all of the time (or any of the time)
      * Help people set and achieve their goals and all will go well
    - The Strongman/Rock
      * You can lead a draft train for eight hours into a headwind and everyone loves you.
      * Stay humble and enjoy knowing that you make those around you feel more confident
      * Consistency is the key here. Learn to measure your pace very accurately and not speed up too suddenly for others to keep up.
      * You are also the person who can help to push others just beyond their comfort zone without breaking them. You are a coaches dream when you can accurately add 0.25km/h to the average pace.
      * Be the expert in measuring pace both in time and effort.
    - The Medic
      * You are good at putting people back together (Mind & Body)
      * You always have a supportive word and plenty of Duct Tape.
    - The Slug
      * Don’t be the slug.
      * You refuse to accept any other roles but still expect to spend all day at the back of a draft train being towed along.
      * You may even be tempted to pop out from the draft train after several hours and sprint the last few hundred yards and beat everyone else.
      * Everyone hates you
      * Slugs are Students with Ego Problems
      * Don’t be the Slug.
* The Mental Toolkit that you will build, is the best tool to get you through the rough sessions and push you to really push hard during the good ones.

# Self Talk

**Self-Talk can be Instructional or Motivational**

!!! Info “Self Talk: Instructional”

- These are the prepared phrases, cues or prompts that you use to:  
 - Maintain good technique  
 - Do the right things at the right time  
 - Remember to Breathe  
- They will be things like:   
 - Reach to the Catch  
 - Pull the paddle straight  
 - Vertical Paddle  
 - Breathe dammit (In the voice of Star Treks Dr. McCoy)  
 - Stomache, Shoulders, Superman (It will make sense if you have read that section :-o)  
- They can be liberally sprinkled like candy at any stage of a race to remind you to stay on top of your technique.   
  
They are discussed at length in the Skills section

!!! Info “Self Talk: Motivational”

- These are the prepared phrases, cues or prompts that you use:  
 - to keep yourself going when things get hard  
 - They are like a little toolkit that you develop over time and can use when needed  
 - Each of the phrases is created by you, in response to reflection and conscious decision to improve in a specific circumstance  
 - They need to be practiced.   
- They will be things like:   
 - Trust the training. You can do this!!  
 - You've finished much longer races. You can do this in your sleep  
 - Your new paddle will make you 12% faster (sometimes we tactically lie to ourselves and choose to believe it)  
 - I would rather die than be beaten by my wife, AGAIN!!!  
- Your self talk is personal to you. It might be serious, funny, cryptic, long, short or anything else that works.  
  
  
\*\*Mind Training is still hard work but worth it\*\*

I can’t give you a list of perfect Motivational Self Talk as it has to be personal and the real power of them is the Thought and Intent that you put into them when creating them

They really are a beautiful thing when you work on them.

So there are steps we will follow, to create Motivational Self Talk. Each of them will take some time and only after they are complete will you come away with a fully functional toolkit BUT You can work on a couple of the big ticket items from end to end to give you a quick win.

!!! Info “Quick Wins”

\*\*My quick win was working on not giving up when I was behind my peers in races\*\*  
   
- I worked through the following steps and pretty much discovered that "shame" motivated me. It was actually one of my major reasons for just quitting when I was having a bad day. I learned to try to use the negative emotions as a positive and so flipped the "Shame" on it's head by developing this self talk phrase:  
 - \*\*"What will you think of yourself tommorrow"\*\*  
   
- This keyed into the much longer lasting feelings of shame that would haunt me if I quit.   
   
 - Everyone is different and what works for you will be deeply personal   
 - \*A shrink might also have a field day with my Self Talk phrases\*  
  
\*\*The core of your Tookit will be\*\*  
  
 - Personal Performance Statement  
 - Self Talk  
 - Why it Matters  
 - Limiting Beliefs you want to overcome  
  
\*\*You Can have a quick go at writing these right now and then develop them over time\*\*

## Steps

In the following sections we will walk through these steps:

* Goals
* Hopes
* Fears
* Cue Words
* How we handle adversity
* How we want to handle adversity
* Feelings when things went well
* Feelings went things went bad
* Strengths
* Weaknesses
* Motivation
* Intrinsic Motivation
* Extrinsic Motivation
* What we feel happy and grateful for
* Training Partners; Who works well with you and who does not
* Do you have an idea of your Performance Sweet Spot
* Blame
* Breathing and Choosing your Emotions
* Remembering to stop and enjoying the view sometimes
* Toolkit Draft Version

# Personal Performance Statement

This is where you write:

1.     **What you need to do, to perform well**  
This will change as your skill levels and focus change.  
It will say the things that you are currently concentrating on to improve your performance . It is your space to say how you will build on your strengths and improve on your weaker areas.

2.     **Who you intend to be this year, when racing**  
This is a great area to break out of your limiting beliefs. If you do work to develop Trust in yourself then it should shine out here.

If you don’t think you can do a 25km race then paddle several fast 30km sessions and learn to Trust the training.

Know it and Say it here.

Are you trying to win or just gain experience?  
Are you targeting a peer group to be at least as good as?  
Pick a totem animal for fun: ·      Cheetahs, wolves, gazelle, hawks are all good ·      Lambs, tree sloths and snails are not as good  
BUT  
You must go with what makes sense to you  
If you need to concentrate on the “unstoppable consistency of a snail” then go for it.

3.     **How you will deal with adversity**  
This is a great place to consciously decide to cope better with adversity  
This will tie into the Self Talk phrases that you prioritise.  
This section is the “What” you will do, and Self Talk is one of the ways “How” you will do it

p.s. This is a statement to yourself. You can use any language you want as NOBODY ever needs to see this but you.

p.p.s. If you go full “**I am the wolf in the forest hunting rabbits blah blah**” then I wouldn’t print that section out….just in case.  Or maybe it’s a great way to psyche out your friends….

# Toolkit (Draft)

# The toolkit

This is the bit you take with you. It can be in your head, on your phone or written down somewhere.

If you are expecting a really bad race, then pick your top motivational phrases and Sharpie them on your hand or arm.

## Performance Statement to myself

## Self Talk

## Why it matters

* Template for SUP Toolkit

# Things to work on to develop the Toolkit

## Challenging or overcoming Limiting Beliefs

# The Supporting Truths

## Strong words

## Positive Thoughts

## Positive experiences

## Limiting Beliefs?

## Sabotage?

## Strengths

## Weaknesses

## Acomplishments

## Failures

## Hopes

## Doubts?

## Goals

## To be avoided

## Motivations

## Demotivators

## Positive Emotions

## Negative Emotions

## Training Groups and People

## External blockers