

Renewed

*Giving God your best by training
the mind of a champion.*

Julie Bell, PhD

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Dedication

To Wade, whose name means “Champion” and whose life meant Christ. He performed his best when it mattered most.

How to use this book

It feels a little odd adding this page to the book. After reading through the original manuscript I felt it was absolutely necessary. You will be asked to choose an area of your life you would like to improve or change. One area. Not two, three or thirteen.

Since I am the author of the book, I was certain I could work through two areas at the same time. By day four, I remembered why I wrote the book with instructions for a singular focus. Choosing more than one area to improve or change dilutes your effort.

If you really want to improve or change more than one area of your life, that is great. But do it in consecutive months. Simply prioritize today. Decide the ONE area you want to improve or change. Then work through the book. If you desire to intentionally improve another area of your life, work through the book again.

With this approach, you could improve six areas of your life in six months. If you instead choose to work through several areas the first time through the book, you will most likely stop before the end of your second week.

Enjoy the game!

Julie Bell

Contents

Acknowledgement	7
Day 1	9
Day 2	11
Day 3	16
Day 4	22
Day 5	24
Day 6	27
Day 7	30
Day 8	32
Day 9	35
Day 10	37
Day 11	42
Day 12	45
Day 13	48
Day 14	51
Day 15	54
Day 16	57
Day 17	62
Day 18	68
Day 19	71
Day 20	73
Day 21	78
Continuing the Process	82
About Us	93

Acknowledgement

I never could have imagined the journey to get this book completed. There are many people who ran the race with me. I'll start by thanking my dear friend Margie Scruggs. She has been a consistent source of encouragement from the first day. How much fun we had at our first writing retreat! We didn't finish the book, but we created wonderful memories. This book is dedicated to her son.

I also owe a tremendous thank you to my ghost writer, Matt Branaugh. The Lord brought us together through an interview prior to a speaking engagement for the NACBA. I enjoyed Matt's interview and was impressed with his ability to capture the message. Who knew my random comment about ghost writing would turn into a great relationship. Thank you, Matt, for your consistent effort, thoughtful comments, and writing talent. And thank you to your family for allowing you to take the time needed to complete *Renewed*.

Thanks again to the Home Team captained by Nelson. Mary-McCue, Myers Anne and Lemuel Nelson—you inspire me to take my game to the next level. I pray I will use the principles in this book to be a better wife and mother.

Thanks to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for my salvation.

Day 1

What would you like to get out of this book? Insight? Education? Life change? A new mindset? All of that is possible, but what if you decided what you really wanted out of this book before you started reading it? In his book, *An Enemy Called Average*, John Mason writes about this as positioning yourself to receive.

In the words of Performance Intelligence, we call it defining desired results. Performance Intelligence is about performing your best when it matters most.

Performance Intelligence is not for everyone. It resonates only with those who are at a point in life where they want to improve or make a change. If you want to take your game to the next level—whether on the sports field, on the corporate playing field, at home, or in your walk with our Lord—get ready to change your thinking.

Before we journey together, let me share a word about some of the terminology used in this book. Because of my background in sports psychology, I often make use of terms like “game plan” and “performance.” This is not done to suggest—directly or indirectly—that our lives are games, or that our daily activities and relationships with the Lord are based solely upon performance. Far from it. We know our faith in God through Jesus Christ is not dependent on acts—on performance—alone. Rather, these terms are my way of bringing intangible concepts into tangible form, using familiar language and references that can help people

like you better understand how they work, and how they might apply in your daily life.

I also use examples from the playing field. As with the terms I mention above, all of these are designed to best illustrate an underlying principle. Whenever possible, I've mixed in examples and illustrations from other walks of life, if only to make these principles accessible to as many readers as possible.

This book is set up for 21 days of recognizing your thinking, refocusing, and creating routines. Researchers tell us it takes 21 to 28 experiences to create a habit.

In the days ahead, may God's word transform your life as you take captive your thoughts and make them obedient to Christ.

Question of the day: What area of your life would you like to improve or change?

Scripture for meditation: "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men ..."

Colossians 3:23 (ESV)

Day 2

I finished a corporate keynote address one day when a woman walked up to speak with me.

“I really liked your message today. It is perfectly aligned with my beliefs,” she said as she shook my hand. “I practice witchcraft.”

I have no idea what the expression on my face looked like at that moment. I imagine a little shocked. I do remember my hand quickly pulling out of her grasp. “Lord, what did I say?” I thought to myself. I was taken aback. I went straight home that night, sat down, and created Bible references supporting what I present and teach. I wanted to make certain my teaching clearly pointed back to the Lord.

What I teach is something called Performance Intelligence. At first glance, it’s easy for some to assume it’s a positive, feel-good pop psychology disguised as professional coaching. And for good reason: Scores of self-help and self-realization books and speakers abound. Many who push these viewpoints believe they are the makers of their own destiny. They think they can will their way to success on their own strength, and can help others do it, too. Some believe in karma or other cosmic forces; that what they do now, or did in a previous life, affects present and future prospects for success.

We see gurus appear with Oprah or on popular television programs pushing these philosophies and promising happiness and success. The problem is that their formulas aren’t based on God’s Truth. They easily

lose sight of what it means to pursue true excellence. And while some may, in fact, reach success in their various endeavors through these methods, they usually pay a high—and painful—price physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually to do it.

I wrote *Performance Intelligence at Work: The 5 Essentials to Achieving the Mind of a Champion* as a way to show how the lessons that help athletes excel, be it in the training room or on their game's biggest stage, can do the same for working professionals. I wanted them to understand how the better management of their minds can make the difference between getting things done or not, between enjoying the work they do or dreading it.

The day I finished that book, I knew I would write this one. I knew it again the day when I met the woman after my corporate keynote address.

At its core, Performance Intelligence is about performing one's best when it matters most. Going deeper, it's grounded in the Biblical truth about who we are as followers of God. He created our minds to glorify Him. All of our life is an act of worship to God. He is interested in all of our lives—not just our time spent at church, but in the everyday moments of family, of work, of life.

Whether we're making a presentation for co-workers, teaching a daughter to ride a bike, or sitting down for quiet time with the Lord, we must be intentional with our minds. It starts by taking captive every thought and making each thought obedient to Christ as we read in 2

Corinthians 10:5. Paul instructs Christ's Church to think rightly, which will prepare us to maximize every occasion for Christ.

This book is designed to teach you how the right focus, confidence, and discipline in your mind can break down barriers in work, at home, and in spiritual faith.

The night I went home to research Biblical references to what I teach, I felt affirmed by what I found. I intuitively knew Performance Intelligence's foundation was scriptural. I was right. God's Word reinforces the principles of this concept. The verses I found became reference points for me every time I presented, whether it was a ministry, a corporate retreat, or a secular audience.

And now I hope to show you how it applies in your personal journey.

My background is in sports psychology. Sports psychology is based on the assumption you are mentally healthy. From that point, we capitalize on your desire to improve your performance. Our approach helps you recognize where you are, and then deliberately focus on where you want to go.

The beauty of this approach is that all of us have the ability to recognize our thinking, and then change that thinking to produce thoughts that set us up to succeed. Sports psychology is grounded in that precept. The process is easier for some people than for others, but with the right desire and the proper coaching, anyone can change his or her thinking. Changed thinking leads to a



change in people's actions to produce results that they desire.

Performance Intelligence is not about evaluating every thought and every action of your day, but finding the area you want to improve or change and then devoting yourself to that effort. Perhaps it's your daily task list at work. The list gnaws at you the moment you leave the office, becoming mental obstacles that prevent you from being fully present at home. Or maybe there are distractions that eat away the time you set aside to spend with the Lord. Or you've received a task beyond your skills at work. Whatever the case, this methodology will become ingrained naturally, giving you a way to approach these challenges and allowing your mind to focus on "... whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable..." (Philippians 4:8).

But to do it right requires a commitment from you. By reading this, I suspect you want to improve in some aspect of life. I pray you will stick with it.

Question of the day: In that one area of your life you want to improve or change, what is one thought you had today that was helpful toward change?

Scripture for meditation: "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is

admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—*think about such things.*”

Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

Day 3

Graduate school saved my life.

It was during this time that I began to experience three principles of the mind:

Number one, your mind is very powerful.

Number two, you control your mind—even though you don't feel like it all the time.

Number three, you have a choice in every situation. The choices you make in your thinking directly influence your behaviors—your thoughts lead to your actions.

I grew up with my mom, dad, sister, and two dogs in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Mom and I went to church almost every Sunday. I knew God. I heard about His son Jesus. I asked Jesus into my heart to be my Lord and Savior by praying a prayer that was something like, “Lord, I am a sinner. I have done wrong in your eyes. I want to do right. I want you to come into my heart. I believe that Jesus died for my sins so that I can have a relationship with you.” I prayed that prayer, but that prayer was about as far as the “God thing” went.

After graduating from high school, I left Muskogee to attend Oklahoma State University. I loved college and I really enjoyed learning. After my first year, I really wanted to investigate God. I wanted to learn what I believed about God and why. I had always said prayers to God, but I really thought that there was more to it than just praying. I thought that if God is the creator of the universe and all I do is pray, which to me was just a



shopping list of things I wanted from God, then I wasn't getting the big picture.

At this same time of my life, I was struggling with anorexia and bulimia. If you knew me then, you probably didn't know about this struggle. From the outside, I looked like I had it all together. I was in a sorority, I was a cheerleader, and I had great grades. I presented a wonderful front.

In reality, I was in trouble and I couldn't fix it myself. It was in this time of internal struggles that I found Christ, the Son of God, who came to this world and died for all my imperfections.

I totally understood Christ's love for me through a couple at OSU—Dave and Toni Martin. Dave was the associate athletic director and one of his responsibilities was to oversee the cheerleaders. I did a lot of cheerleading at OSU and I even taught camps in the summer. One summer, I was teaching camps and didn't come home much. One weekend I came into Stillwater for OSU cheerleading practice. It was pretty obvious that something was not right with me. I was in trouble. Not only did I look sick, but my waist-long hair was completely crimped, my bangs stood straight out, and I wore one huge dinosaur earring! Pretty scary, I'm sure!

We practiced at Dave and Toni's house. After practice, they sat me down at their picnic table and asked me if I was sick. It was a very simple question and I was ready to be honest. They were ready to show me how much God loved me. I was reminded of what I had learned in

my head back in Muskogee. I had been given a free gift of eternal life when I prayed that prayer. I didn't have to be perfect before I could have it. It was free. Dave and Toni not only talked about this, they modeled it.

From that moment, they loved me back to health and really modeled Christ's love for me. They didn't wait until I was healthy before they helped me. They joined me where I was—stood by me through the laughs and tears—and loved me back to health. That is what Christ does. He doesn't wait until you get your act together or for you to clean up your act. He doesn't wait for you to be perfect because that will never happen. He already loves you. Right now. Right where you are.

This is the point in the story where I truly learned the power of our minds. Before heading to graduate school, I went through some group and individual counseling for my eating disorder. I was counseled with what I call an “alcoholic mentality”; that is, you will always have an eating disorder, but you will be able to function okay.

So I functioned. I mostly eliminated the behaviors of my eating disorder. I still had bad days, but clinically, I guess you would say that I was well. But there was still a problem. I had the behaviors taken care of, but I still was pretty messed up in my thinking.

This continued during graduate school at the University of Virginia, where I studied how minds can influence athletic performance. Then I moved to Nebraska for one year and a day. I only knew one person in Omaha. I worked at home, so I spent a lot of time



talking to my dog Spych and talking to God. I also listened to God. One day I realized how messed up my thinking was (remember, I had just spent four years studying how your thoughts lead to your actions).

Here is what I learned in Nebraska: I really loved the Lord. I knew that. I also trusted the Lord. I believed Jeremiah 29:11: “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

I believed that verse in every part of my life except this whole eating, body image, food issue. I didn’t really trust the Lord there. I was more or less competing with God in this area.

I had been arm wrestling with the Lord. It was a win/lose proposition. I thought, *If I give this issue to the Lord, then He wins and I lose. I can’t lose... what if God wanted me fat.* And “fat” to me was even one pound more than I wanted to weigh. I had to choose between seeing a win/win outcome or a win/lose.

As I became aware of these thoughts, I stopped—literally—as I walked through my den. I said to myself, “Wait a minute. This does not make sense. God doesn’t play win/lose games. God is about win/win. I trust the Lord and He promises hope for a future.”

This sounds simple, but it was a huge step for me because I had to say to the Lord, “Okay, God, I trust you with this. I am ready to stop this internal struggle. I am ready for you to take this... no matter what it looks like in

the end. NO MATTER WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN THE END. I trust you. I surrender all.”

I was ready to go from arm wrestling with the Lord to holding hands, working through this together.

Four years later, I started giving my testimony completely healed from the behaviors AND thoughts of an eating disorder. I didn't have to live with it the rest of my life. Unless I am speaking to a group about this part of my life, the eating disorder just isn't a part of my present.

A lot of people struggle with some of the same issues I did. It might not look the same on the outside, but the general issues are very common:

- A need to be perfect
- Pleasing others
- Worrying about what other people think of me
- Buying into our culture's view of "normal":
 - Body image
 - The right car
 - The right house
 - The right income

I want to tell you that the place to experience true freedom from these struggles is with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. When I remember that Christ accepts me as I am, it frees me to live my life with confidence.

But each of us must choose it.

Think about what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 10:5. It says, "... take captive every thought and make it obedient

to Christ.” When we choose this, we unlock the door to real transformation in all that we do.

Remember, your mind is very powerful.

You control your mind.

You have a choice in every situation. The choices you make in your thinking directly influence your behavior. I pray that you choose to focus on Christ.

Question of the day: Where are your thoughts more aligned with the world than with Scripture?

Scripture for meditation: “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV)

Day 4

What comes to mind when you hear the words, “coaching voice”? Some responses include “authority, instructions, encouragement, harsh, demanding, or strong.” Most people think back to a coach they experienced.

When I speak of your Coaching Voice, I am actually talking about that voice in your head. Your Coaching Voice has a technical name: self-talk. It is that voice that sometimes tells you that you are wonderful. Other times it tells you that you are not wonderful and you never will be.

There are a few interesting points about your Coaching Voice. First, your Coaching Voice is the most influential coach you will ever have. Of all the coaches you have experienced, none will provide more influence than that voice in your own head.

Second, your Coaching Voice can be trained. Research shows habits can be changed. Think of your Coaching Voice as a habit. Sometimes it’s a good habit; other times you might want to fire it.

We also know from research that you have owned your Coaching Voice for a long time. You probably started recognizing it around the age of five. That’s the age my daughter first recognized her Coaching Voice.

“Mom, I can talk in my head and no one can hear me”, she said. I was excited to see what I had studied in books coming alive in my children. A few minutes later I heard my five-year-old talking to her younger sister.

“I can talk in my head”, the older child said.

“I want to hear”, the younger one replied.

“Put your ear up to mine and see if you can hear,” the older one said.

Clearly the Coaching Voice was there, but the children were still a few years from grasping the full concept of it!

Your Coaching Voice has great influence. It has been around awhile. It can be trained. This is good information to know about your Coaching Voice.

When you think about your Coaching Voice, ask yourself if you would pay that coach to work with your child or your spouse. Is your Coaching Voice consistently equipping you to give your best to God? If not, you can fire that Coaching Voice today! During the next few weeks, you will learn how to hire the right Coaching Voice.

Question of the day: What would your job description say if you were to hire a new Coaching Voice?

Scripture for meditation: “A tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.”

Proverbs 15:2 (ESV)



Day 5

Liu Shih-kun was one of China's top concert pianists in 1966 when the Cultural Revolution swept the country, bringing political, social, and intellectual upheaval. A ban on Western music led to six years of imprisonment for Liu. Beaten badly enough at one point to suffer a broken forearm, and often left in isolated confinement, Liu never touched a piano during those six years, according to a 1979 interview with *People* magazine.

How did he endure?

"I kept practicing music in my head and I even composed a concerto—though I had no paper or pen to write it down," he told the magazine.

Stories like these remind us of one simple but important truth: Your mind is powerful.

The even better news is that you control your mind.

Do you agree? Complete this simple exercise to find out for sure. Think of the words you know to a song. Sing a few lines in your head.

Now sing the same song with the same words, only this time, slow the song down.

Now do it one more time. This time speed it up.

If you can speed up the song, slow down the song, or even change the words to the song, you are controlling your mind. It's that simple.

When you put these two principles together—your mind is powerful and you control your mind—you are ready to understand the third principle: you have a choice

in every situation. The choices you make in your thinking directly influence your actions. Here's another way to say it: Your thoughts lead to your actions. That is important, so read it again: Your thoughts lead to your actions.

What does the Bible say about our “thought life?”

We've already identified your Coaching Voice (the technical term is “self-talk.” The theological term might be “thought life.”)

Is God concerned about your thoughts? In Romans 12:2, Paul encourages us to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. It is a transformation from the inside out. Often, we look for outward transformation rather than inward transformation.

We can experience outward transformation in minutes. We can change our clothes. We can cut our hair. I sometimes put goofy, silly-looking buck teeth in my mouth, which immediately transforms me with an uncontrollable urge to slouch and to give a big belly laugh. All of these changes are part of an outward transformation.

What if we only focused on the outward transformation in Scripture? When the Lord transformed someone, he often marked it with the outward change of a name. In Genesis 17, Abram's name changes to Abraham when the Lord makes a covenant with him to be the father of a great nation. Further into Genesis, in chapter 32, Jacob wrestles with an angel of the Lord, and his name later is changed to Israel. In the New

Testament, Saul persecutes Christians until his powerful encounter on the road to Damascus transforms him into Paul, one of the early church's most influential leaders.

These are stories of transformation from the inside out. I believe God is calling us to transformation—not external, but internal—that begins with the renewing of the mind. And from that change on the inside, the world will see a new creation on the outside.

Question of the day: We often look at the actions that need changing. Thinking of the area of your life you want to improve or change, what is one thought that needs to be changed?

Scripture for meditation: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

Day 6

One of my favorite books of the Bible is Numbers. I know that isn't a favorite of many, but I really love it. The story of the twelve spies going into the Promised Land to size up the challenge and create a plan to take what God had assured them is such a great example of thoughts leading to actions. Ten of the spies thought one way. Two of them had different thoughts. Thoughts lead to actions and actions lead to results.

If you had been one of the twelve spies, what would you have thought? That God made a promise and He keeps his promises? Or would you have thought about the strong people and the fortified cities?

The choices you make in your thinking directly influence your actions.

At one time or another, all of us have received a challenging assignment. It is up to us to figure out how to get it done. Do we execute? Can we execute? Or do we allow our brains to get in the way? It shouldn't seem like such a long way from the brain to the follow-through, but it's amazing what can happen to us within a few seconds.

Once we start thinking about a difficult task, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, we begin contemplating the details, and too often we convince ourselves that we're the wrong person for the job, regardless of the reason. Before we know it, we're convinced there is no way to get it done. Our confidence is shot.

Depending on our thinking, our thoughts set us up for either success or failure.

Perhaps you're a real estate agent who just moved to a new city where the market is struggling. You might think, "This is a tough market." On the surface, that's not a positive or negative thought, but if you really think about it, it doesn't set you up for success. When you think about what a tough market it is, your next thought likely begins, "I will be lucky if" You are already planning for failure.

At this point, it is time to change your thinking. Your thoughts lead to actions and your actions lead to results. Create new habits in your thinking with a three-step method: recognize, refocus, and routine.

First, recognize your thinking. It is difficult to change a thought pattern without first recognizing the need to change. Once you do that, you can refocus and create new routines (another way of saying "habits").

Recognizing your thinking means paying attention to those conversations in your head, your Coaching Voice.

Listen to the voice in your head and then evaluate: *I am thinking this; does this thought set me up for success or failure?*

When I read Numbers 13 and 14, it's clear the twelve spies didn't think the same way. Joshua and Caleb had thoughts that set them up for success. They chose to focus on the truth: *The Lord has given this land to us.* They proceeded with that mindset as they went about doing what the Lord asked them to do—scout out the Promised Land. They saw the opportunity.

The other ten spies had such a different thought life. They saw the opposition. It set them up for failure. We will look more into their thinking when we dig deeper into confidence.

Question of the day: What thoughts do you consistently have that lead you to the same actions and undesired results?

Scripture for meditation: “Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel... At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land... And they told [Moses], ‘We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. However, the people who dwell in the land are strong and the cities are fortified and very large’... But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, ‘Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.’”

Numbers 13:2; 25, 27–28; 30 (ESV)

Day 7

Once we learn to recognize our thinking, we can refocus when our thoughts are not helpful. When you refocus, you choose to think about something differently, preferably by coming up with a thought that sets you up to succeed. Some believe refocusing means lying to oneself. It does not mean that at all. You simply choose to turn your attention to another fact.

Let's say you're not a morning person. If you remind yourself of this fact every morning, it won't get any easier rising the next day.

Now, if you told yourself, "I love the morning," as a way to refocus, then that would be lying because you don't really love the morning.

Imagine if you refocused on a fact instead. You think, "It's morning." No commentary. Just the facts. The alarm goes off. You get out of bed. You simply state a truth you believe about what's ahead. When you use this refocusing technique and focus on the facts, who knows what you might find? Whether you actually become a morning person is irrelevant.

Celebrate the recognized thinking, and the refocusing of that thinking, to produce actions that set you up to succeed.

I believe the value of daily quiet time in God's Word allows you to refocus throughout your day on the Truth. When we don't intentionally refocus, distractions can easily cause us to doubt the Truth. When Paul encourages us to "... Take captive every thought to make



it obedient to Christ,” in 2 Corinthians 10:5, that doesn’t sound passive, does it? These are very intentional words. Recognize the thoughts that are not your great Coaching Voice. Refocus on a different fact that trains a new Coaching Voice, one that encourages, one that empowers, one that moves you past doubt, be it about yourself or about God.

Question of the day: Do you have a “go to” thought when you are frustrated or overwhelmed, or when times are tough?

Scripture for meditation: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

Day 8

As a third and final step, it is time to create new routines in your thinking. Researchers say it takes 21 to 28 experiences to create a new habit like going to the gym. A lot of people go to the gym the first week in January, but the ones still going the last week of that month are the ones most likely to go in the following months.

Most people understand that actions come from habits forged by actions. The true revelation, though, is that those actions begin as habits in your thinking.

To illustrate this, let's go through an entire "recognize-refocus-routine" example.

Let's say someone habitually thinks she is not an effective presenter. Those thoughts lead to poor presentations, and poor presentations only confirm her thinking. If that person approached her thinking differently, this is what it might sound like: "I am being asked to do a presentation; I must have something valuable to say. I walk to the microphone and say, 'Good Morning' with a strong voice."

This recognizes the old thinking (thinking you are a bad presenter and will mess up) and creates a new one (thoughts of confidently walking to the microphone). The old habit of thinking is focused on the mistake. The new habit of thinking comes when you play out a new



experience in your brain. You know what happened, and you are familiar with the mistake. Now you know the correction, but you have to choose to focus on the correction to create the new habit.

What I just provided is a simple look at recognize, refocus, and routine. Avoid a Coaching Voice saying that something should have been, could have been, or would have been. Play out the new experience in your mind in the present tense. Here is a mistake, here is the correction, and this is how I will experience it in a new way.

It's easy to say, "I won't do that again next time." However, if you don't correct it in your brain, you replay those negative images and create thinking habits you don't want. Recognize the mistake one time to see how to correct it. After you recognize it, refocus on the correction. Then, review that correction until it becomes routine—a new habit of the mind.

Question of the day: Thinking of the area you want to improve or change, what is a habit of your mind that is holding you back?

Scripture for meditation: "But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new



*self, created after the likeness of God in true
righteousness and holiness.”*

Ephesians 4:20–24 (ESV)



Day 9

In the Book of Numbers, the Lord instructs Moses to teach the Israelites focus. Creating the tassels was a way to remind the Israelites that they were set apart. The instructions weren't vague, either. God didn't tell them to create their own unique marker. He told them tassels. And not green ones. Or red. But blue ones, each placed in a specific way. There even was a specific instruction to pass these directions on to future generations.

That attention to detail was a call to focus because an ability to focus can lead to greater things. We can learn to focus, too.

Understanding focus is as simple as this question: When you look at a glass window, do you look at the glass pane or do you look through the window? Some will look at the pane, and some will look through it. There is no right or wrong answer. This simply demonstrates that everyone fundamentally knows *how* to focus. The challenge is learning *where* to focus.

When we learn to focus, the distractions do not go away. We just stop paying attention to them. As you read this book, you can pay attention to the reading or you can pay attention to the waistband of your clothing, or your shoes on your feet. Your clothing sensations are always there. You just don't pay attention to them all the time because your attention is focused somewhere else.

Champions separate themselves from contenders by what they do after a distraction. One who performs best when it counts can refocus on the purpose of the action



and the plans to accomplish it even after a distraction comes along.

All of us have encountered people who are real champions when everything is going well. Then a diversion arises and they become so distracted they have difficulty refocusing. Distractions constantly happen.

The good news is that you can train this focus. When I work with clients who express nervousness about public speaking, I ask them to describe the condition. They invariably will talk about having shaky hands. My advice is to squeeze a pen or grasp the podium while giving their presentation. That's focus. When your hands are occupied, they are tight and unable to betray you. You spend less time thinking about the hands and more time thinking about the presentation.

Question of the day: To improve or change that one area of your life, where must you focus?

Scripture for meditation: "The Lord said to Moses, 'Speak to the people of Israel, and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each corner. And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes ..."

Numbers 15:37–39 (ESV)



Day 10

In *The Giving Myth*, author Stephen B. McSwain recounts going to the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus as a child and watching as a lion tamer, armed with a gun at his side, a whip in one hand, and a stool in the other, pranced “around with reckless confidence.” Whenever a lion challenged the tamer, the tamer didn’t unleash the whip or take out his gun. Instead, McSwain said, the tamer immediately hoisted “the four-legged stool squarely into the face of the lion and, almost like magic, the lion would freeze and become paralyzed.”

McSwain continued: “I learned later that the lion was attempting to focus on each of the four legs of the stool at once, causing the great beast to become disoriented, distracted, and divided.”

Learning where to focus is really about developing a singular focus. In a world that celebrates fast-paced schedules and minute-to-minute news cycles, it may be hard to imagine living this way. Many of us multitask— we’re often encouraged, sometimes even forced, to do so in a variety of settings. With each additional task we accept, though, our attention diminishes. Focus decreases. We lose effectiveness, and like a lion, we become distracted and disoriented.

To focus, your mind and your body must be in the same place. In the Christian life, a singular focus is to love the Lord with all our heart, strength, and mind. In our professional and personal lives, the singular focus may

involve any number of things, such as a project or a relationship.

We reach a singular focus when we value it as a priority, and our priorities are most often evident through where we spend our time. When we recognize it takes time to gain a singular focus, we become more intentional. Distractions arise, but we can dismiss them because we have already prioritized our singular focus and committed our time and mental energy to it.

Any number of examples can begin to make this real for you. Later in this book, we'll go much deeper, especially on the singular spiritual focus each of us is called to obey. But consider these two practical ways a singular focus can make such a difference:

1) Each week, you enter a regularly scheduled meeting often feeling frazzled and unprepared. By adjusting your calendar to include preparatory time before the meeting creates a singular focus: a readiness to tackle the meeting's agenda.

2) Every day, you pick up a child from school. The conversations feel disconnected and distracted. Before arriving at the school, give your mind time to mentally prepare by passing on a last-minute phone call to a client or to a friend. Instead, think through the things you want to know about your child's day, about the test she spent the prior night worrying about, or the peer he struggles to stand up to. This singular



focus allows you to create a loving, meaningful greeting, and dedicated time directed to your child.

In the July 2011 issue of *Wired* magazine, writer Thomas Goetz explains the feedback loops scientists believe our minds use. We're presented with evidence, the relevance of that information, a possible consequence of it, and then an action we can take. In one California community, the use of radar-equipped signs flashing a car's current speed (evidence) while displaying the legal speed limit (relevance) reminds people of speeding tickets or accident risks (consequences), which has led to an average reduction in driver speeds (action) of 14 percent.

Goetz and others view the reminder of the consequence in the feedback loop as the catalyst for behavioral change ("people must have a sense of what to do with the information"), and while that's likely true, I also suspect something else is going on. When presented with specific information, isn't that driver's singular focus suddenly about just how well—or poorly—he is driving? The radio, the screaming kids, the ringing smart phone, or virtually any other imaginable distraction gets pushed aside in that moment as he determines his needed corrective measure and executes it.

If you had that singular focus in all that you do, I'm guessing a lot of things would change for the better in your life. It's not a 100-percent guarantee of constant peace. Yet it would bring a peace that comes from a life

lived with intention—intentional decisions and intentional words.

A singular focus is the right start. But it's only the start. Whatever we focus on largely dictates our direction.

In other words, we need a singular focus, and it needs to be a singular focus on the *right* thing. Too often, we focus on what we don't want to have happen rather than where we are going and how we will get there. Focus is a matter of paying attention to what is most necessary at the right time. This doesn't mean that the distractions go away. It just means you are in control of your focus.

It also means not getting hung up on failures. Top performers make mistakes, yet they find ways to consistently perform at a high level and stay on top. How? They don't focus on their mistakes. When they fail, they identify what they did wrong *and* how to correct it. That effort requires a process of charting the right steps to take the next time they're presented with the situation. And that leads to a greater probability of rising past the problem.

Many golfers talk about how they need help focusing on their game. I only have to watch them play a few minutes to diagnose their problem. They drive the golf cart right up to the ball, jump out, and assess the situation.

"I've got water over there. I don't want to hit it there," or "There's a sand trap right in front of the green. I don't want to go there."



They spend their time focusing on what *not* to do rather than focusing on *what* to do.

Question of the day: Do you find yourself with a multitasking mindset—thinking of one thing while doing another?

Scripture for meditation: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.”

Matthew 6:33 (ESV)

Day 11

Many consider American skater Michelle Kwan to be one of the sport's greatest competitors of her time. Despite winning numerous world championships and national titles, though, some say she'll be remembered more for two Olympic gold medals she let slip away. In both the 1998 and 2002 Winter Games, she held leads only to lose them after skating slow, conservative routines.

As an *ESPN.com* article recounts: “At 13, I was fearless,’ Kwan said after settling for silver in 1998. ‘I looked at everything so positive. When you’re older and been through it all, you know how bad it can get. There is a fear of failing.”

The difference between playing not to lose and playing to win is your focus. Playing to win is all about having a plan and implementing it. You focus on your plan. It motivates you and you move forward. It's all about the pursuit of the goal. It is playing out a vision. It is proactive. When you are focused on playing, the winning takes care of itself.

Playing not to lose, on the other hand, is not motivating. You are defensive, tentative, and cautious. The effort lacks excitement because it's about protecting what you have rather than creating what you want. You really aren't even playing.

Too often I find believers playing not to lose. We can sit on the sidelines worried about what others may think,



worried about making a mistake based on a worldly evaluation. That is not the abundant life.

Think about the message of salvation. We all fall short, but because of Christ on the cross, we are a new creation. We are instructed to repent—to completely turn from our sin and to believe that we are cleansed in Christ’s blood.

If I were standing in front of you right now, I would illustrate this concept by turning to the left as I talk about my mistake. As I talk about repentance, I turn my body completely to the right. A 180-degree turn. “As far as the East is from the West,” (Psalm 103:12, ESV). With repentance comes a belief: *I am a new creation and I walk in the direction of the new creation.*

Too often, believers place a heavy emphasis on repenting for their mistakes but they neglect to take the necessary steps to move forward. This is not about negating the importance of repentance. This is about addressing the mistake of never turning toward improvement, never focusing on embracing the new creation. I remind myself of my sin over and over, so in effect, I’m not turning from it. I am trying to walk into the new creation backwards.

Our Coaching Voice tends to focus on the mistake:

Here is what you did wrong.

Why did you do this?

Will you do it again?



Focusing on the mistake makes it all the more likely the mistake will happen again. Focusing past the mistake to the correction increases the likelihood that the correction will happen next time.

We must focus past our mistakes (sin) and refocus on the correction (who we are in Christ), making a complete turn so that we can believe in the renewing power of Christ's love.

There is a great dialogue in the movie *Chariots of Fire*. After losing a race, the character Abrahams said, "I don't run to take beatings. I run to win. If I can't win, I won't run." His girlfriend then states the obvious: "If you don't run, you can't win."

This holds true in everyday situations, too. Some people say, "Don't forget." Others say, "Help me to remember." Some say, "I can't do this." And then there are those who say, "I am going to do this."

Top performers in any walk of life realize this subtle distinction. That's partly why they can refocus after a mistake. They have their eyes only on one thing, and they won't allow anything that they control to derail them.

Question of the day: When do you play to win and when do you play not to lose?

Scripture for meditation: "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

John 10:10 (ESV)



Day 12

The Israelites ran hot and cold with their confidence in the Lord. The Lord wants us to be 100-percent confident in Him all the time. Too often, though, our confidence is driven by our circumstances, rather than by our unchanging Lord.

True confidence is the 100-percent certainty that comes when we give our lives fully over to God. We not only understand our value to Him in this life, but our value to Him in the next life. We'll talk more about true confidence a little later, and the ways our day-to-day living can experience this true confidence and reflect it to those around us.

Before we do, let's consider another important aspect of confidence in our daily lives. It's the confidence we need to approach our daily activities and relationships. Our trust in God absolutely plays the primary role, and it's the first source we turn to about such matters. But consider the actual moments when it's time to demonstrate that confidence. You seek the Lord's leading, and ask Him to move you. How do you move?

Confidence is an interesting topic, whether it involves job performance or a personal goal. People often say they are 80-percent confident about something. I suspect they are not so much 80-percent confident as they are 20-percent doubtful.

To train our thinking to give our best to God, I believe you have to be 100-percent confident. Anything less creates conditions that rob you of your opportunity. You



can reach that level of confidence if you're focused on the skills and knowledge within your control rather than focused on the uncertainties that are out of your control.

In October 2010, 33 men spent 69 days trapped in an underground mine in Chile. The world anxiously watched, waiting for rescuers to develop a way to get them out. The time came to send someone down a makeshift shaft inside a capsule-like device to begin the rescue. Manuel Gonzalez accepted the task without hesitation. Why?

"Maybe I was brave because I took that responsibility," he told journalist Jonathan Miller with London's Channel 4 News shortly after the successful end to the operation. "But I was very proud and confident in what I was doing because we had tested the capsule before and it didn't have any problems."

In other words, Gonzalez wasn't focused on what could go wrong. Instead, he climbed inside that capsule confident in what it would do because of the dedicated care and practice put into it. You could say he kept his confidence in what he believed, and it allowed him to kickstart one of the most dramatic human rescues in the early 21st century.

Would even the slightest of hesitations by Gonzalez have ruined the rescue? It's hard to say. But what we do know, generally speaking, is that when you allow doubt to enter your mind, it changes your performance.

For example, it is difficult to be 100-percent confident about getting a job because other people are involved in the process. However, you can be 100-percent confident



in your ability to articulate your strengths, make eye contact, deliver a firm handshake, and do what it takes to put you in the best position to get the job.

With 20-percent doubt, your skills aren't as sharp; you may hesitate. At 40 percent, there's a good chance you won't follow through. Whatever the level of doubt, its mere presence robs you of what you set out to do. Even worse, at the end of the experience, it precludes you from learning because the doubt changed your approach, masking the misstep in need of correction. Perhaps it was the words chosen. Maybe the body language. Or the presentation. You don't know because you lacked 100-percent confidence in your skills. That keeps you from knowing which skill requires further training.

Question of the day: How would a little more confidence (in the area of your life you want to improve or change) affect your outcome?

Scripture for meditation: "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well."

Psalms 139:13–14 (ESV)



Day 13

Many books and consultants advocate the pursuit of goals to help individuals and teams achieve. It's common to see many people trip up, though, because of their preoccupation with the end result.

It is helpful to have a goal and understand what it looks, sounds, and feels like to accomplish it; it's a great motivator to train skills with an eye toward a successful completion. But focusing solely on the outcome the entire time will become a distraction, even during the project, process, or event.

As the late tennis great Arthur Ashe once said, "Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome."

With singular focus, the journey, the process, and our confidence in that moment—in other words, simply playing with an unshakeable belief in what you can do—should command our attention. When we do, the outcome will take care of itself. If you do not get the outcome or result you desire, you can do something about that. You can identify the thoughts behind the actions that led to the disappointment. Recognizing those thoughts, refocusing them, and creating new routines will move you a long way toward the success you desire.

This requires true confidence in doing what you know you can do, though. Without it, it's too easy to zero in on the anticipated outcome alone.



The first mistake of confidence is placing your confidence in the outcome rather than the process. The second common mistake is what I call “all-or-nothing confidence.” How can someone truly be confident if they wildly swing from 100-percent confidence to 60-percent confidence? 20 percent? Or zero percent?

As you list the skills involved with something, consider these two questions to move you toward success:

- 1) How confident are you that a particular skill makes a difference in the desired outcome?

- 2) What is your confidence in your ability to execute the skill?

If you are less than 100-percent confident in your ability to execute a skill, create a plan to train that skill. If you are still unsure that executing a particular skill makes a difference in getting to the desired outcome, you must make a decision. Indecision leads to procrastination and poor execution. As Yoda said, “Do or do not. There is no try.” Determine whether executing a certain skill matters; if it matters, do it with confidence.

Question of the day: What are the skills involved in changing the area of your life that you would like to improve?



Scripture for meditation: “Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”

Hebrews 10:35–36 (ESV)



Day 14

One of my favorite sayings about confidence came courtesy of one of the professional anglers I work with: “Confidence is the best lure in your tackle box.”

Consider this statement for a moment. It speaks to us on several levels. It tells us that confidence should be part of our everyday equipment, a natural part of our everyday lives.

When I ask people, “What does confidence mean?” they have a hard time coming up with a definition. But ask them, “What does confidence look like?” and they quickly begin to give me a list of things. They know it when they see it. Genuinely confident people have their heads up and their shoulders back. They walk with purpose. They are comfortable in their own skin. They are magnetic. Simply put, they know their stuff.

The next question I usually ask is, “When do you need confidence?” People respond with a variety of answers, ranging from “I need it when giving a presentation” to “I need it when leading a PTA meeting” to “I need it when attending a networking event.”

In truth, we always need it.

What I coach people to understand is the connection between confidence and a desired outcome. I often ask, “Do you have to be confident to have a desired result, or does a desired result make you confident?” This line of questioning causes one to ponder personal confidence. Typically, the result is an understanding that if someone wants a desired result, that person must have confidence



first. Once they understand this principle, my clients decide to train confidence in everything they do.

A golf workshop I once conducted illustrates this. We were on the putting green, and I explained to the golfers how to methodically train their confidence. We talked about being confident in the process rather than the outcome. We talked about the skills involved in sinking a putt. Each golfer lined up three balls, and I asked them to focus on rolling the ball along an imaginary line leading directly to the hole. I wanted them to be 100-percent confident they could roll the ball on the line.

After rolling her ball on the line she picked, one golfer drained a nice 20-footer.

“Oh, that was lucky,” she said.

Is it really lucky to do something intentionally and then achieve the results you intended? Not only is attributing an outcome to luck bad theology, it is just inaccurate.

I seized the coaching moment. “Every thought you have makes you more confident or more doubtful,” I said. “Do you think ‘That was lucky’ makes you more confident?” I pointed out no luck was involved. She chose a line, she focused on rolling her ball on the line, and the ball went in. She had a plan. She was confident. She executed. Where’s the luck? Your overall experience on the putting green isn’t the determining factor for future success. What you think about your experience is the determining factor.



Confidence comes down to a choice in your thinking. Which do you choose: Confidence, assurance, belief, and faith, or doubt and fear?

Question of the day: What thoughts undermine your confidence in that area of your life you want to improve or change?

Scripture for meditation: "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Hebrews 4:16 (ESV)



Day 15

Youth gymnasts do not have the luxury of being “sort of” confident when taking a skill from the floor to the balance beam. A “sort of” performance can result in significant physical injury.

The same can be said in life. “Sort of” confidence leads to subpar results.

As a culture, we’re accustomed to focusing on failures. That focus leads to “sort of” confidence. So to train confidence, I coach my clients to begin recognizing successes every day. Driving home at the end of the day, most people dwell on the unaccomplished, the things left undone on the to-do list. Rarely do any of us spend thinking time on the tasks we completed. They are history.

However, I coach people to stop and recognize the things they did, the actions they took that created the outcomes they checked off the to-do list. The checked items are their successes. Recognizing the actions necessary to create their daily successes is a key part of training their confidence for the next day and beyond.

Every time you recognize a success, you give yourself a reason to be confident. Every time you recognize failure, you give yourself a reason to doubt.

Think about changing your approach. When you fail or make a mistake, transform it into a correction in your mind. If I am a gymnast standing on the balance beam and say to myself, “Don’t fall,” what am I thinking about? Falling. Correcting that thought, I would say, “Shoulders



up.” The mistake is focusing on what not to do. What-to-do thinking focuses on the correction.

Although we must keep our shortcomings in perspective, society challenges that. We exaggerate poor performance, acting as though wallowing in it will teach us a lesson. From a young age, we are either training confidence or doubt. If your child plays soccer, and all you talk about is what she did wrong on the field, you are not training her confidence. However, if you ask about all the great plays she made on the field, you will end up having conversations that teach corrections and train confidence. Ask a young soccer player to tell you what she did right on defense. She most likely will tell you what she didn't do wrong. “I didn't let my man get by me,” is a statement focused on not making a mistake. “I stayed in position,” is a statement focused on what she did right.

Understand this: Dwelling on poor performance increases doubt so much that the next time we have an opportunity to perform, we approach it with more doubt than confidence. This yields an undesirable outcome.

We need to intentionally choose thoughts that make us more confident. Thoughts about success will train confidence. Recognizing success on the basis of where you are today will increase your ability to recognize success on a daily basis.

Question of the day: What success have you experienced this month in that area of your life you want to improve or change?



Scripture for meditation: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9 (ESV)



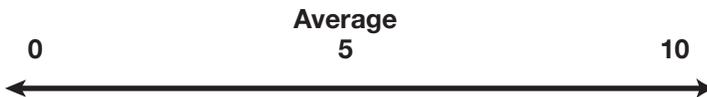
Day 16

It is amazing how a simple tweak in thinking can turn a good leader into a great leader, a good mom into a great mom, a good life into an abundant life.

Remember, every thought you have makes you more confident or more doubtful. To train your confidence, you have to recognize your success on a daily basis. To recognize success, you must accurately define what success means to you. All too often, people exaggerate their failures and minimize their successes. It's a product of our culture. From a very young age, we get back homework assignments with big red circles around errors. Our teachers mark our papers with minus nine or minus seven, highlighting the places where we've failed.

To break away from this unhealthy emphasis, it's vital for people not only to recognize their personal successes and their personal failures, but also what it means to be above average.

Each person has a personal evaluation scale. Because it is personal, you should use only your own scale for evaluation. Your performance must be based on your personal strengths, skills, and talents:



The scale is easy to process. On the far left is 0, reserved for the worst errors, the ones you hope no one was watching when they occurred. On the far right of the scale is a 10. That represents the exceptional. The middle of the scale represents your average. Average is where you are consistently today. A weekend golfer cannot use Phil Mickelson's drive as their definition of average. Average is where you consistently perform today. That is why it is so important to understand that this is a personal performance evaluation.

Don't be distracted by the word "average." Few of us want to be average, but the point here is to find *your* average and know where you stand so that you can push toward something better.

As you assess your scale, ask yourself how bad a performance has to be before you consider it a failure. How far below your average would a failure or mistake be?

Now flip the question: How good does a performance have to be for you to consider it a success? Many say it has to be a 10. But a 10 is reserved for exceptional performances. These performances happen infrequently, so such a definition leaves everything below it as a failure.





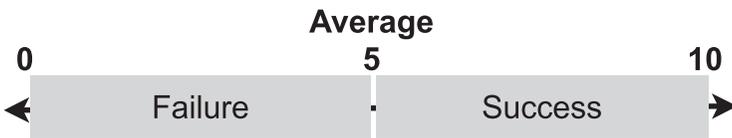
Using an inaccurate evaluation in which only a 10 is a success will lead to frustration, lack of motivation, and burnout. Sadly, those sentiments will affect your entire life.

As a mom, I mentally review my interactions with my children as I lay in bed at night. On average, seven out of ten interactions are pleasant. I looked them in the eyes. My voice was calm. Good connections were made. Then there are those other three interactions. I was impatient. My comments were short, perhaps even terse.

If, on a particular day, nine of ten interactions are on the pleasant side, that would be above average. But what do I think about at night? Am I focused on the nine or the one? That's the issue in a nutshell. Do we recognize our successes (the nine), or do we look at those things we call failures?

There is a real consequence to inaccurate evaluation. By focusing on what you have not accomplished, you're subjected to stress and anxiety. You feel like a loser when you get home. You feel like a loser when you walk through the door. Most important, the vibe you give to your family when you walk through the door is the one they ultimately will reflect back to you.

Consider this alternative: If average is where you are consistently today and everything below average is a failure, everything average and above has to be called a success. With this refocus in our thinking, how might the drive home be different? We drive home from work reviewing success: the seven items we accomplished on our ten-task list. We feel like a winner. We open the door like a winner, and the family greets us exactly the way we feel—as a winner.



Deep down, we all have a fear of being average, and that fear will keep us from accurately evaluating our performance. Very likely, you know a person like Bob. He says, “It makes sense that average to excellent is success. But this won’t work for me. I know that I am harder on myself than anyone else. That’s what makes me perform better.” But is he really? His thoughts lead to frustration, lack of creativity, lack of motivation, and burnout. It’s not because Bob isn’t trying. It’s because, regardless of what he does, it’s not seen as being good enough. So, no, he is not performing better.

Question of the day: In that area of your life that you want to improve or change, how would you describe your average?

Scripture for meditation: “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

Philippians 1:6 (ESV)

Day 17

If average is where you consistently find yourself today, this suggests room for improvement. As you improve your skill, the performance you previously referred to as an 8 just six months ago becomes a 6 on the scale, meaning that you have more game in you than before.

As you define your new average, you take your game to the next level. Your average is improving. This is good news. Your performance is average and will always be average, but it's your average. This scale does not encourage mediocrity. A performance someone pegs as a 10 today may be a 7 a year from now because that person is more talented and skilled compared to today. This requires the person to accurately evaluate his or her individual performance on an ongoing basis.

Success is a powerful motivator. When people see themselves as average and perform at a level of 7, they are excited about an above-average performance and eager to develop and improve more.

Accurate evaluations are important because other words can replace success and failure. Every time we have a failure, we give ourselves a reason to doubt our ability. Every time we have a success, we give ourselves a reason to be confident in our ability.

Confidence, and our efforts to train it, is just the beginning. We must realize that true confidence can only be accomplished through a trusting relationship with Christ. When we trust who we are in Christ, we can

remain completely confident, regardless of our circumstances. As Ephesians 3:11–12 teaches us: “This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him.” (ESV)

As important as confidence is, we are not always confident. Why is that? God wants us to place 100 percent of our confidence in Him. And the truest confidence we can have is the confidence in a God who loves us and wants the best for those who obey Him.

Yet throughout the Bible, we see numerous examples of people who should have had that confidence, but allowed doubt to creep in and undermine them. Case in point: the predicament of the Israelites in Deuteronomy, and how their confidence ran hot and cold. It’s a perfect example for us to understand what robs us of confidence, how we can influence the confidence of others, and how we can remain confident ourselves.

Moses goes before the Israelites on the banks of the Jordan River. It’s his chance to explain the significance of the Promised Land to the next generation. But that won’t be easy. This next generation of people listened to their parents grumble against the Lord for 40 years. Their parents had the chance to take the Promised Land. Instead, they squandered their chance. The resulting consequence—40 years of wandering—was severe.

And so for those next 40 years, they grumbled about their circumstances, questioning whether the Promised Land was all that it was supposed to be anyway. They



suggested they may have been better off as slaves in Egypt. Then, when they recognized their sinful ways and attempted—against Moses’ advisement—to take the land, they lost.

For that next generation, that’s a lot of negative messages to hear and watch. Anyone inundated with something for long enough has a strong chance of believing it.

So when Moses goes before this next generation, he has to not only fight that rising tide of negativity, but he has to do it knowing, as speaker Mark Davis points out, the Israelites were 14,589 days late in making this entrance.

They had a past—as a nation—that wasn’t too pretty.

Moses recognizes the reality of their circumstances. How does he approach the speech?

He recounts the plight of their people. He doesn’t sugarcoat it by any means. God made promises to Israel. Israel disobeyed.

But note this about his approach: Moses doesn’t wallow in the past, either. He just states the facts, and he reminds them that there is more to the story. After the generation died, God said take this land and that land. God said he would make those nations tremble in fear—and He did.

Moses goes on to recount his sin and the consequences that wouldn’t allow him to cross into the Promised Land. But the Lord still let him see it—the completion of the whole story. Even in moments when he



directs responsibility at his fellow countrymen (Deuteronomy 3:26 and Deuteronomy 4:21) he doesn't wallow in the past.

Instead, he points them toward a future. Know where you came from. Don't dwell on the past. Remember who the Lord is and what He has promised. Look forward to the future.

You can see where this is heading. Maintain true confidence and then act. This gets repeated again later in the Bible, and you get the sense that this message rings as true for us today as it did that day on the banks of the Jordan River. When we look ahead to the New Testament, we hear Jesus say, *I know you. Yes, all of you. It doesn't matter. Don't wallow in that sin. I've taken care of it. Now you just need to look forward to your future.*

As Paul writes in Romans 3:23, "... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ..." (ESV). A simple way to say this is, "we are all in the same sinking boat."

Take inventory of your life. Not compared to anyone else. Just you next to the righteousness of Jesus. Where do you stand? You are a sinner. Don't sugarcoat it. Don't wallow in it.

Don't let your past get you down, either. Again, if you hear something long enough, you begin to believe it. What have you been hearing, either from yourself or from others? That mistake you made in college? High school? Two weeks ago? Is that who you are? How many times have you reminded yourself of that? Whether it was a



one-time mistake or a season of life, is it really who you are today? If you keep letting your past get you down, it will be hard to be a different person.

In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul writes, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (ESV).

Some of us hold on to things about ourselves that simply are not true. The Gospel message is that you have to let go of that so you can fully accept Christ and follow Him, walking as a new creation. And when you do, you do it with the true confidence of knowing what He says—and what He promises—is true.

Confidence. Where does it come from? It comes from trusting. You can have confidence in talents, but the confidence you really need first is a confidence—the absence of doubt—in who you are in Christ. Through the ups and downs of life, this confidence will get you through.

As a believer, you are a beloved child of God. When it comes to work or relationships or even acts of faith, you can train your mind to put forth your very best, honoring God in all that you do because of the confidence you place in this effort and the preparation that put you there.

But the ultimate confidence is the true confidence that comes in a life fully given to the Lord. Walk forward as a new creation. Build your confidence on those words. That is true confidence. Everything else flows from that.



Question of the day: Where is your past (remembering your failures) getting in the way of your future (the possibilities God has planned for you)?

Scripture for meditation: “This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him.”

Ephesians 3:11–12 (ESV)



Day 18

In sports we talk about seasons. We have the pre-season, the post season, the regular season, and sometimes the off season. How have you defined the season you are in right now? Is it that two-a-day pre-season effort? Maybe you are in your final season and you want to finish strong.

One of my football players was about to begin pre-season. I made a comment about the tough workouts ahead.

“It’s preseason. It is supposed to be tough,” he said, to my surprise. “That is how we know we can give it our all every day of the regular season.”

I learned two lessons from that quick comment alone. First, you must define your season. When you know the length of the season, you know you can make it. There is nothing worse than feeling that your twelve-hour days are going to last the rest of your life. It isn’t the twelve-hour days that lead to burn out. It is thinking about the season lasting for the rest of your life that leads to burn out. Conversations in your own mind about the undefined season wear you out.

Second, you must set expectations tied to a purpose for your season. This football player knew he would have to work hard during pre-season. He also knew why he would have to work hard. The “why” motivated him not only to give his best during the season but also motivated his Coaching Voice to set him up for success.



As my conversation with the football player continued, I learned another lesson. His team was preparing to be undeniable. That was the mindset. The team was good. It had much success in past years. But it seemed to miss that top spot year after year. This year would be different. The players decided that they were going to take their game to a new level and spread the gap between them and the competition. How could they do it?

Individual effort and commitment. Every player committed to a “game-ready mindset” for every play of every practice, and that meant every player would consistently improve his game. Collectively, the improvement would make the entire team undeniable.

You can have that game-ready mindset every day. I heard of a woman who started her day by saying, “Yes, Lord” as her feet touched the floor every morning. That was her way of getting game ready for what He would bring to her life that day.

I think of Esther and her game-ready mindset. Rather than rushing straight in to see the king, she set aside time to plan and prepare. She took time to create a winning game plan. She could focus on the winning game plan rather than the outcome (possible death for approaching the king).

Question of the day: When you want to give your best, do you take time to focus on your desired result and your winning game plan prior to the task?



Scripture for meditation: “Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, ‘Go gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.’”

Esther 4:15–16 (ESV)



Day 19

Joe Gibbs, the former head coach of the NFL's Washington Redskins and owner of Joe Gibbs Racing, describes the process of creating a winning game plan in his book, *Game Plan for Life*. He talks about how his football coaching staff would spend three days together creating the winning plan for the upcoming game. Why would they do this? Because the plan is where the effort comes in. The execution of the plan improves when you have confidence in the plan. With a winning game plan, you don't have to wonder if you are doing the right thing at the right time for the right reason.

In a similar manner, Performance Intelligence also emphasizes a winning game plan. In our Winning Game Plan Workshop, we teach a process for creating one. When participants complete the workshop, the result isn't a nice book with their entire life outlined— the “plays” to call, when to do what, and so on. No. In fact, I don't know anyone who has life all tied up like that.

Instead, we strive through the workshop to teach the *mindset* of continually building and tweaking your winning game plan so that when you find yourself driving down the highway looking at the mound of trash on the floorboard of your car, you can say, “I don't have a WGP for keeping my car clean.” At that time, you have the tools to confidently create and consistently execute a WGP. Think about that relationship. A confidently created plan is consistently executed.

A winning game plan directs your focus, increases your confidence, aligns your competitiveness, and improves your self-discipline.

God gave Noah a winning game plan. He told Moses to send twelve spies to get a winning game plan. Jesus continues the idea of a winning game plan in Luke 9 when He tells the disciples how to travel and what to do if they are not welcomed.

A winning game plan starts by knowing what's important now. My husband and I have decided that discipleship is important in raising our children. With this in mind, we have a winning game plan that helps us to be intentional in what we do with the kids. When you know what is important, your actions support it.

Question of the day: In the area you're working to change in your life, what would be a winning game plan that would position you for success?

Scripture for meditation: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

John 15:5–8 (NIV)

Day 20

I have worked with a number of athletes in a variety of sports. Even after all of my work with them, I remain amazed at the training and effort necessary to create a champion, from football two-a-days in the August sun in Texas to repeated early-morning gymnastics workouts that leave the athlete's calluses peeled and bleeding to everything in between. Beyond such grueling workouts, athletes must adhere to other elements of their winning game plans: meals, curfews, and dozens of other details.

Can a non-elite athlete tap into that kind of self-discipline?

Absolutely. But it comes from more than just saying it. The common denominator among great athletes is a desire to improve. They want to improve and then remain consistent. I have found that most people say they want to improve, but on the basis of their actions (and therefore their thinking), I question whether they really do. Research indicates that 45 percent to 55 percent of Americans want to lose weight, yet only 15 percent to 20 percent say they work a plan to reach that goal. Do you just say you want to improve, or do you really have a desire to improve?

In Romans 7, Paul shares his struggles with doing the very things that he doesn't want to do and his inability to do the things he wants to do. He wants to change.

Do you have a desire to change? I do. I want to be more consistent in my quiet time.



In any situation requiring self-discipline, including mine, voluntary accountability is needed.

As we have said, great athletes have a winning game plan that dictates what they need to do. The difference between their record of success and that of others is that they have self-discipline. They have confidence that taking those actions will create the desired results. Self-discipline compliments all the other attributes of Performance Intelligence. Self-discipline is a matter of doing what you say you're going to do.

This isn't willpower. Willpower is a fist pump; you grind out a performance, even in unfavorable conditions, to make it to the finish, be it a race or a project. Self-discipline, though, is all about being intentional. It's a handshake. You identify what you want to change. Now you shake hands with a teammate, a coach, a spouse—even yourself—to establish accountability as you move forward. This is voluntary accountability.

When you choose voluntary accountability, you bring your mistakes to light and ask for coaching. You seek help to correct a mistake.

But *you* must seek it. Voluntary accountability takes initiative. If an accountability partner has to call you, or if you say to someone, "I want you to hold me accountable," then you're not choosing voluntary accountability.

When a runner has trouble getting off the blocks, he goes to his coach for improvements. When a basketball player can make free throw after free throw in practice

but continues to miss in games, she goes to her mental coach. Athletes recognize where they need coaching and then choose voluntary accountability to take their game to the next level. You can do that, too.

One night, I was at dinner with my husband. I told him about my strong desire to be a better mom. We have a winning game plan that includes parenting, but I know I am not consistent with following the plan. I know when to discipline and how to work my schedule so that we can spend time together as a family, but sometimes it takes more effort than I feel like making.

“If a super nanny was sitting on our couch, I know I would be a better mom. That accountability would help me be more intentional,” I told him. “I would stop what I am doing and look into the eyes of my children every time I am speaking to them.”

Because hiring a super nanny is not in our plan, I asked my husband to let me be accountable to him. He would not have to ask me how things were going. Instead, I would talk to him about whether I was—or was not—following our winning game plan. With this handshake agreement, we committed to voluntary accountability.

A few days after this dinner conversation, I scheduled a coaching appointment on a Saturday morning. I often have Saturday morning appointments, but this was different. I was out of town several days leading up to it. I needed to be home with my children on this particular

Saturday. After making that mistake in my scheduling, I went to my husband.

“I messed up,” I said. I asked him to help me think through it so that I could schedule better for our family the next time. That conversation allowed me to change the way I schedule appointments. If I had not chosen voluntary accountability in that situation, the conversation would have been very different. I would have headed out the door feeling some guilt. A simple question from my husband, such as “Where are you going?” would have put me in a defensive posture, not a coachable mindset.

In this case, voluntary accountability not only was good for me as a parent, it also was good for my marriage.

We see other instances where voluntary accountability effectively works. At a coaching workshop with business leaders, one participant expressed his doubts to the group about implementing Performance Intelligence.

“I know how to do this. I know I can go back and be a great coach to my team,” he said. “But in a couple of weeks, I will end up back the way things were before.”

“I hear you asking for voluntary accountability,” I replied. I asked him to schedule time on his calendar in about 10 days for coaching. He would make the call to me and he would talk about the execution of his winning game plan.

Initially, there is nothing natural about voluntary accountability. At first you will feel uncomfortable. That is

okay. The great news is that the more you do this, the more natural it will become.

I like to get up early in the morning. In theory, I get up to have quiet time. The reality is that many times I jump into life without having that time alone with God. If I want to be more consistent in my quiet time, then when I see my husband in the morning, I will tell him about my quiet time. Knowing that I'll be telling him about my quiet time will help me to be more intentional about having it.

Question of the day: What one area of your life would improve if you implemented voluntary accountability?

Scripture for meditation: "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate."

Romans 7:15 (ESV)

Day 21

The irony of self-discipline is that it requires more than just one's self. Success starts with trust in the Lord, and it continues with the right people around us to cheer, critique, and coach us along. But how do you find the right people to hold you accountable?

Let's change the terminology a bit. Instead of "accountability partner," a concept many of us connote with negative thoughts and feelings, what if we instead sought a "thinking partner" or "coach"? This subtle shift in thinking makes a big difference in what we look for in someone who can help us—and how they can help us.

Recently I was on a triad coaching call, which I often recommend following a keynote address or workshop I give. In a triad call, I serve as the coach for three other people. Over time, I step back as the coach so that those on the call can coach each other. During this particular call, we talked about the role a coach plays in our life.

"You need a coaching relationship before you need a coach," I told the group. This distinction is critical because I strongly believe in coaching. The best athletes in the world use coaches, even at their peak levels of performance. Many artists and musicians maintain ties with mentors who help them refine their crafts and performance skills. The coaching isn't always conducted through a formal relationship, but everyone needs that person they trust who can get them back in their games. With a coaching relationship, it's someone you know you will contact—voluntarily—when you need coaching after



you've messed up, gotten off track, or lost your way and need someone to guide you back and move you forward.

In my life, I have five people who serve that role. I run with two friends. We implemented voluntary accountability. We text each other on running mornings to see who is up and who will sleep in. There are times when a 5 a.m. run is not part of the winning game plan. On those days, we get to let each other know and skip a run guilt-free. This is how voluntary accountability works best: No guilt. No condemnation. The recipient admits where they are, and where they need to refocus. And the coach, friend, or thinking partner encourages that refocused thinking. The person you choose for voluntary accountability believes in you and in the promise that God is doing a good work in you. Your voluntary accountability partner believes in you when you don't have the strength to believe in yourself anymore.

In addition to my running partners, I have a coach. We focus mostly on business, but I have found myself reaching out for needs in my personal life. When our coaching relationship started, we met often, but for short periods of time. As the years passed, and my ability to recognize when I needed coaching improved, the frequency decreased. I have routine check-ins and I have the ability to reach out for coaching whenever I need it.

My husband is also a coach. We believe in voluntary accountability with each other. He knows my heart and never dwells on mistakes. He is quick to refocus on the promises of Scripture rather than becoming a monkey on

my back. Even with all those good things, it is hard for me to choose voluntary accountability with my husband. Why? Because I don't want to disappoint him! I want to be the Proverbs 31 wife all the time. But this side of heaven, I won't be that wife every day. So I choose voluntary accountability with my husband and it truly brings us closer as a couple and helps me become a better wife and mother.

Finally, I have my prayer partner. We pray about our thinking, not just our actions. We believe the Lord has brought us together to help each other think differently so that we can act differently. We honestly share our thoughts and we pray that God will help us consistently think differently.

So where do you start? Do you need five people in your life for voluntary accountability? More? Or less? Start with one. Think about your current relationships. Choose one area of your life you want to improve or change, then think of one person you are currently in a relationship with that could serve as your coach, thinking partner, or partner for voluntary accountability. Use this as a start to build a mindset of voluntary accountability. From there, you will discover other areas of your life you want to improve or change. Perhaps the same person can help you, or perhaps you will sense a different relationship fits better. If it's the latter, you can use the experience of the first coaching relationship to guide you as you build the next.



Question of the day: With the one area you want to change in your life right now, who comes to mind as a possible coach or thinking partner?

Scripture for meditation: “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

2 Timothy 2:1–2 (ESV)



Continuing the Journey

Now that you've completed the 21 days of *Renewed*, it's time for us to move from thinking about our thinking to applying practical training to our thinking. To run the race set before us, we need to be game ready. Training our mental game is an essential part of being game ready. Hebrews 12:1–2 references our mind. We are instructed to lay aside every weight and sin that entangles us. These are instructions for our thinking and not just our actions.

What descriptions do you apply to the world's finest athletes?: "A powerful server." "An arm like a rocket." "Good hands." "Championship outlook." "A winning attitude." Frequently you might describe those athletes as "mentally tough." When we talk about all-star athletes, we are just as likely to mention their mindsets as their physical skills.

Take a moment to think about how much of your game is mental. Regardless of your chosen pursuit, whether you are a doctor, lawyer, lumberjack, mom, or accountant, pause and reflect upon the mental part of your game. I often ask groups, "What percentage of your game is mental?" Depending on the sport or profession, the answers fall within a range of 50 percent to 90 percent. There is a mental component to learning a skill and successfully executing that skill. The follow-up question I ask is, "How much of your time do you spend training your mental game?" More often than not, they answer, "I don't know."

Outlined below are strategies for training your mental game. When we work with an organization, we initially explain that a keynote presentation is designed to make an impact. An impact is great. Usually when I hear a good speaker, I feel the impact. However, a couple of hours or days later, I yearn for the true change spurred by the speaker's message.

Real change comes from the deliberate reinforcement of the message. At the Mind of a Champion, we call that "spaced repetition": The delivery of the message in a way that consistently reinforces the themes to create new habits of the mind that lead to productive actions.

Think back to when you were in school. Once you were presented with a concept, the teacher often gave you homework to reinforce that concept. This chapter gives you the homework needed for the spaced repetition of the message that will train Performance Intelligence and develop the Mind of a Champion. Understanding these fundamentals will help you attain the best results.

Assignment #1: Visualization

Visualization is a common technique that sports psychologists teach. Many people have heard of the value of visualization but believe they cannot do it. When someone tells me he cannot visualize, I ask how often he practices visualization. This question makes the point that it is a skill that can be trained. If you can "remember when," you can visualize.

I honed my ability to coach visualization when I was working with a 10-year-old gymnast. We started simply. I asked her to describe her house. I asked her about the colors in her room. I asked her what stuffed animals were on her bed. Next I asked her if she had ever had other stuffed animals on her bed. Her “yes” answer led me to ask her to close her eyes and move the animals around on the bed. She easily did that.

Next I asked her if she had ever watched *Cinderella*. I asked about the colors and sounds in the movie. We played a little “remember when” game. Again, she did this easily. Soon we were ready to move the visualization exercise to the gym.

These steps helped her understand the power of the visualization skill, allowing her to gain control over the movies in her mind. She used the skill in the gym and on the way home. At practice, she visualized an upcoming skill or routine while waiting in a line. On the way home, she visualized corrections. If she was working on a specific improvement, she could zoom in or visualize it in slow motion. That allowed her to perform better.

You can use visualization to improve your skills and increase your confidence. If you lead a team of people, here is an example: As you prepare for an upcoming performance review, visualize yourself challenging your employee to step up her game. Hear your firm voice, see your reassuring face, and feel your heartbeat increase as the employee becomes defensive. Continue to play it out in your mind as you see yourself refocusing the



conversation and communicating to your employee that you really believe in her.

Assignment #2: Decisive Decision

To quote the renowned sports psychologist Bob Rotella, “The best decision is a decisive one.” When you find yourself struggling to make a decisive decision, simply make the decision in your mind only and then spend a few days acting as if it were true. This is an extension of the visualization exercise.

When God calls you to do something, commit to it. Make a decisive decision to give your all for Him, whether it is on the mission field or leading your company. Continue to commit to that by taking “captive your thoughts and make them obedient to Christ.”

Assignment #3: Experience and Expectations

Throughout *Renewed*, I talked about how thoughts lead to actions and actions lead to results. Let’s focus on improving the factors that influence your thinking. Your thoughts are influenced by your experiences and your expectations.

In regard to performance, it really doesn’t matter what you experience. It matters what you think about that experience. I can help many people take their game to the next level by having them think differently about their experiences.

For example, you just endured a two-hour practice. You did many things right. But on the way home, you

focused on the three things you did wrong. You went away from practice more doubtful, rather than more confident.

Or you taught a Sunday school lesson. You delivered the message you felt the Lord put on your heart and in your mind. However, because of your thinking about the one thing you intended to say but didn't, you continue to doubt your ability in this area.

What you think about your experience directly influences your expectations. The way you interpret an event sets up your future expectations. In the broadest sense, you expect success or failure. "I will probably run late," is a simple example of expecting failure. Recognize where your thoughts set you up for failure and where they set you up for success.

Assignment #4: Journal

Keeping a journal is a great way to know if you are training your mental game. It is an exercise in self-discipline. If you need a starting point, consider spending the next month reading *Renewed* again and then writing an entry after each day's message. You will see the benefits of journaling within a week. Here's why:

1) Journaling allows voluntary accountability. At the end of the day, you know if you did your homework.



2) Journaling increases your focus so that as you write, you pay attention to training specific areas of your thinking.

3) Journaling lengthens your attention span.

To receive the maximum benefit of journaling, you should follow a specific formula, and I use the acronym “WIN” as a reminder. Go figure!

The *W* in WIN stands for *warm-up*. If you are going to journal your thoughts, you need to take 30 seconds and write down every thought in your head, from buying milk on the way home to the big presentation you have scheduled in two days. That gives you a half-minute to warm up your brain, clearing room for you to focus on the next two important sections of journaling.

Before entering the next two sections of journaling, read that day’s entry for *Renewed*. Based on what you read, then target one specific area that you want to improve.

Then shift to the *I* in WIN, which stands for looking at the *ideal*. It gives you a chance to recognize a success based on that day’s reading. What did you do well today? What were the actions that created the desired outcomes? Take time to write this down. Remember that success is defined as average to excellent (Day 16).

It is important to recognize your success with a period at the end of the sentence. Do not qualify why something is a success, and don’t discount the success for one



reason or another. When you say, “I was very organized today, and I am usually not,” you are undermining your success. You almost get a check mark in the confidence side of the scale, but you take it away with the last comment.

“I was very organized today.” Period. Let your success stand alone. Write about successes only. You will have an opportunity to refocus your thinking about your mistakes next.

The *N* stands for *new experience*. This is a time specifically established for you to correct your mistakes in the area you read about that day. A new experience starts with identifying the mistake. It can be a mental mistake or a physical mistake. Either way, you correct it by saying what you would do differently if you could.

The new experience is where you play out your correction. You take the information, make the correction, and see yourself applying that correction as you visualize the new experience. For example, you had your coffee in hand, the house was quiet, and you were ready to open your Bible and study. Instead, you decided to take a quick peek at email just to see what came in during the night. An hour later, you are still sitting at the computer and you are rushing to get in to the shower to get to work.

Rather than continue to replay that unwanted distraction in our heads over and over again, just leave that unproductive thought habit behind. Focus on the correction. It’s easy: I am awake, I have my coffee in my hand, and I walk past the computer and sit in my big



chair. I close my eyes and start my quiet time with prayer. The new experience allows you to see it in your head. Visualize your new experience. It is a valuable use of your time when you see yourself correctly doing it.

You went through the journaling process correctly if you spent more time describing and explaining the new experience than you did discussing the mistake. Too many people spend 15 minutes talking about a mistake they made, and when they replay the new experience, they do it in 15 seconds.

When I talk about journaling, I don't necessarily mean writing a story. Not everyone is a writer. You can journal in story form. You can journal with a list of bullet points. You can vocally journal. What I look for is whether you have visualized your success. Try it while driving home from work. Talk aloud. The process is not as effective if you just say it in your head. It will work if you follow the WIN process and do it aloud.

One other helpful tip: As you write, always keep white space on your journaling pages for capturing miscellaneous thoughts that emerge. As much as we try not to think about something, once it's in our minds, it distracts us. Write it down in the white space to release that thought.

Journaling is a way to know that you are training your thinking. It is an exercise in self-discipline. When you embrace the new experience, create a correction, and play it out, you must speak in a clear, confident voice that demonstrates that you have the skills to do it. Whenever

you hear people using phrases such as, “I might,” and “I should,” they have not made a decision. That indecision on a correction leads to poor results.

Finally, don’t take on too much to journal. As you start out using *Renewed*, focus on that day’s topic and how it relates to you at that moment. You cannot journal about your entire day in one setting or it will take hours. Journal for 10 to 15 minutes, either vocally or in written form. It provides you with an opportunity to focus on specific, desired results.

Assignment #5: Journaling and Performance Intelligence

Once you re-read *Renewed* and journal on each of those 21 days, you will want to continue the habit of journaling. Here are some key thoughts to keep in mind:

Focus: Most people have more control over their thoughts when they are writing or speaking, as opposed to just thinking. The WIN journaling method will help you focus on recognizing your success and refocus on corrections to create new routines.

Confidence: The WIN journaling method will methodically train your confidence. Every time you look at your success, you give yourself a reason to be confident in your abilities. Every time you correct a mistake, it is like erasing a doubt check mark and putting in a confidence check mark. When you accurately apply



the success-failure scale and look at success in the range from average to excellent, you will become more confident. More confidence leads to more success.

Winning game plan: Your winning game plan will give you direction in terms of where to focus for the WIN journaling. Recognize the results you are achieving in relation to your winning game plan. Refocus your thinking to align your thinking with your desired results.

Self-discipline: Many of my athletes have a difficult time distinguishing between times when they are thinking about mental training and times when they actually are training their mental game. Keeping a journal will help you move from thinking about mental training to doing it.

Competitiveness: The WIN method of journaling keeps you focused on improving your game. As you journal, you will evaluate your average and look at success in terms of average and above-average experiences. Your journal is not about comparing yourself with others. It is about moving your game to the next level.

Question of the day: What is a realistic time of day for me to build in a journaling habit, using each daily reading entry for Renewed as a starting point?



Scripture for meditation: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1–2 (ESV)



About Us

The Mind of a Champion is a coaching organization in Dallas, TX. We are a team of professionals who coach Performance Intelligence™ —the ability to perform your best when it matters most. Performance Intelligence is made up of five attributes: Confidence, Focus, Self-Discipline, Competitiveness and a Winning Game Plan. We work with organizations, teams and individuals who perform either on the corporate playing field or athletic playing field. Our methodology is grounded in the principles of sports psychology.

We work with winners who believe they have another level to their game. We coach the mental side of the game to get you there. The Mind of a Champion team trains you to recognize your thinking so you can refocus that thinking to create new routines of the mind. By training your mental game, you can use your strengths, talents, skills and resources at the right time, in the right place and with the right intensity.

Through an initial Impact Session (Keynote, Workshop or Corporate Advance a.k.a. Retreat), we coach the five attributes of Performance Intelligence. This is followed by Spaced Repetition—periodic reinforcement of the attributes to support desired results.

We are not a traditional consulting or training organization. We coach you through the gap between a learned skills set and the what-to-do thinking required to perform your best when it matters most. By bridging this



gap, you improve your ability to achieve results and exceed professional and personal goals.

Our team is anchored by Julie Bell. Dr. Julie received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Oklahoma State University and a Master's and Doctorate of Sport Psychology from the University of Virginia where she studied under Dr. Bob Rotella.

To really appreciate Dr Julie's teachings is to understand that her faith and her family are paramount in her life. She is first and foremost a pastor's wife. She is also the mother of three beautiful children. Her family is her unwavering support; encouraging her to apply Performance Intelligence to every aspect of her life.

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