

# **Getting Mentally and Emotionally Fit For Sport and Life:**

A workbook to behave, think, and feel your way  
to optimal performance and well-being

Natalie Durand-Bush, Ph.D.  
School of Human Kinetics  
University of Ottawa

**This workbook is dedicated to all those  
who have nurtured in me the passion  
to learn something new every day.**

I

I walk down the street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I fall in.  
I am lost... I am helpless. It isn't my fault.  
It takes forever to find a way out.

II

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I pretend I don't see it.  
I fall in again.  
I can't believe I am in this same place.  
But it isn't my fault.  
It still takes a long time to get out.

III

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I see it is there.  
I still fall in... it's a habit... but my eyes are open.  
It is my fault.  
I get out immediately.

IV

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I walk around it.

V

I walk down another street.

(Unknown Author)

# Introduction

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**Getting Mentally and Emotionally Fit For Sport and Life** is a workbook that will help you design your life to be able to get the most out of yourself in your day-to-day living. It is a compilation of my work during the past 12 years with people from many walks of life, including hundreds of athletes from all levels. It is also a result of extensive conversations with colleagues, particularly Dr. Doug Newburg, with whom I conduct applied research and debrief consulting experiences. Through ongoing reflection and hands-on exercises, this workbook will assist you in refining various mental skills and perspectives to enhance your performance in sport and life in general. Although this workbook is athlete-specific, it's applicable to anyone. Whether you are a coach, parent, student, administrator, etc. go through the exercises and adapt them to your own context.

It has been demonstrated time and time again that mental and emotional preparation plays an important role in achieving excellence in sport and in life. Athletes having consistently performed at the top have been known to be mentally and emotionally resilient and be in control of their thoughts, emotions and actions, or at the very least, respond well to them. This workbook will help you collect and use personal data to think, behave, and feel your way to optimal performance and well-being. You will learn about your strengths and weaknesses in not only sport but also other important areas of your life, for example, work, school, leisure, and relationships.

If you want to know more about getting mentally and emotionally resilient, move on. You're about to embark on a challenging journey. If you think this is going to be easy, you're in for a surprise. Mental and emotional training can be as fatiguing and painful as physical training. Remember to carry a positive perspective throughout as this will allow to remain open and make yourself vulnerable enough to learn and change.

There are 3 parts and 10 sections in the workbook. You'll notice that they are all interrelated but they have been outlined in the following order:

<b>Part</b>	<b>Section</b>
A: Fundamental Skills and Perspectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-Awareness</li> <li>2. Goals</li> <li>3. Commitment / Motivation</li> <li>4. Focus / Refocus</li> <li>5. Self-Confidence / Positive Perspectives</li> </ol>
B: Psychosomatic Skills and Perspectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Intensity / Activation</li> <li>7. Stress Management</li> <li>8. Relaxation</li> </ol>
C: Cognitive Skills and Perspectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Imagery</li> <li>10. Training and Competition Plans</li> </ol>

**Part A** outlines skills and perspectives that are fundamental to your performance. In order to consistently perform in any sport at a high level, you must first know yourself inside and out.

You need to be aware of what helps and hinders your performance, and be in touch with what you need to do to remain engaged in your training, competition and organizational tasks on a day-to-day basis. This is much easier to accomplish when you know how you want to feel because one could argue that if you feel good, you'll perform and live better and you'll be more motivated to persevere in the face of difficulties. Once you know how you want to feel, you can set goals that will help you feel this way as often as possible. In a sense, goals are like a compass because they guide and give you direction as you face ups and downs throughout your career. Once you have set meaningful goals, you must learn to develop and maintain a strong commitment to achieve them. This is not always easy, however, your ability to focus and refocus in the face of distractions, as well as your belief in yourself and your capacity to achieve your goals will facilitate the process. Also, keeping a positive perspective in everything you do will make the journey more worthwhile and fulfilling. These skills and perspectives are crucial and that is why you should master them before you attempt to master any other skills presented in this workbook.

**Part B** describes psychosomatic skills and perspectives that are important for assessing and regulating the intensity with which you perform in your sport and life. They can be refined to control important mental and physiological components of your performance. First, you must be aware of the optimal intensity at which you perform your best in various situations. This intensity can be affected by many factors, including fear and stress, so you must learn to recognize which stressors distract you from training and performing consistently. Stress is inevitable in both sport and life thus you must develop skills to cope with and manage it positively. Relaxation is a skill that can help you do this and decrease your intensity when you are either over-anxious or too psyched up. On the other hand, you must also be skilled at increasing your intensity when you're flat, exhausted, or unmotivated. You must be effective at mobilizing energy when you need it and channeling it where it counts the most.

**Part C** will help you develop cognitive skills and perspectives that will be extremely useful in your sport as well as in your daily life. Training and competing at a high level requires that you be able to maintain a solid focus on your goals and on the steps that will lead you to them. Developing sound training and competition plans will help you to maintain your attention on what's important and get back on track when necessary. Planning for competitions is vital because it allows you to structure and monitor everything you need to do to perform. Knowing ahead of time what you want to do, think, and feel before, during and after competitions will leave you with a sense of confidence, readiness, and anticipation. You will be more apt to automatically and consistently perform to the best of your ability. In conjunction to developing sophisticated focusing, refocusing, and competition planning skills, you can master the powerful skill of mental imagery. The expression "seeing is believing" lends credibility to developing this skill so you can witness your accomplishments before they actually occur.

It is recommended that you go through these parts and sections in the suggested order but if this doesn't suit your style or interests, go through them randomly, or complete the ones that seem most relevant to you. There is no guarantee that completing the exercises in this workbook will lead to dramatic changes in your performance. Let's face it, no amount of mental and emotional training can compensate for poor physical or technical skills, or for a lack of commitment to train and compete. However, it is hoped that as a result of your hard work, you will be able to feel, think, and do what is necessary for you to achieve optimal performance and

well-being in your sport and daily life. It is hoped that you will have learned how to be connected to everything you do to make every moment count.

Take advantage of this workbook because it is unique. Like a good coach, it respects your pace and style of learning and will help you monitor your progress. Challenge yourself to improve these important skills and perspectives that will prove useful in all aspects of your life. Final words: practice like you've never practiced before. In order to do this, you can make additional copies of relevant exercises for your own personal use at a later time.

I wish you all the best,

Natalie Durand-Bush, Ph.D.



**Part A.**

**FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS  
AND PERSPECTIVES**



**EXERCISE 1.1 – MY LIFE IN 400 WORDS** *(cont)*

Look back over your life story and pay attention to what you wrote. Why did you include these facts or events? What sticks out the most? As you read your story, do you find yourself reliving some aspects of your life? How do you feel? Do you feel the way you typically like to feel? Write down some of your reflections.

Reflections on my life story...



Now, review your written thoughts and put an “E” beside those reasons that are more external (i.e., travel, socialize with teammates, stay fit) and an “I” beside those that are more internal (i.e., feel good, get a high, feel satisfied and fulfilled). If you haven’t identified any “I” reasons, keep asking the question “why” to your “E” reasons. For example, “Why do you like socializing with your teammates?” “Why do you want to stay fit?” If your answer to the last question is “Because I want to be healthy,” ask yourself “Why do I want to be healthy?” and continue to do so until you get to an internal reason that typically reflects an inner feeling (i.e., I want to feel strong, powerful, engaged, unbeatable, connected) of why you do your sport.

By shifting your perspective to internal reasons, you may become more in tune with your inner self and respect what you are really after every time you perform. It might be difficult to describe or explain this feeling that keeps you coming back day after day, but it’s important that you identify it and stay in touch with it on a daily basis. Why? Because “feel” is fundamental to everything you do. Every time you practice your sport, work with your colleagues, play with your children, or study for your exams, you feel a certain way.

**FEEL IS FUNDAMENTAL TO EVERYTHING YOU DO**

Now let me ask you a crucial question. **Does the way you feel when you do different things affect how you perform or experience the situation?** Everyone to whom I have asked this question has answered “yes.” If you answered yes as well, this means that you must pay attention to how you feel in different situations so that you can be in a position to determine how this affects you and your performance and how you can feel the way you really want to feel as often as possible. Obviously, it might be unrealistic for you to think that you can feel the way you want to feel 24/7. Let’s face it, we all have tasks to perform in our daily life that are unpleasant and we all experience obstacles or setbacks that lead us to feel less than optimal. However, having said this, you can improve the way you feel in an attempt to improve your performance and well-being and the first step is to pay attention and increase your self-awareness.

So, for the next little while, your task is to pay attention to you and how you feel as you perform and live your daily life. Get your magnifying glass out and become your own little “Sherlock Holmes” and collect lots of data that will help you make important decisions in the future. As you are doing this, try to pinpoint exactly how you feel and how you want to feel and note your observations and reflections below.

This task might prove to be quite challenging because you might have never taken the time or been given the opportunity to consciously do this. Ask yourself, “How do I want to feel when I engage in my sport? Is it the same for both training and competition?” “How do I want to feel in my every day life outside of sport?” Some athletes have described wanting to feel “on fire,” “fluid,” “free,” and “at peace.” Others have used analogies such as “dancing” or “flying” to characterize how they want to feel. What’s important is that your depiction is real and meaningful to you and allows you to connect with how you want to feel. Once you know how you want to feel in not only your sport but also other important areas of your life, you will be able to design your life to try to experience these desired feelings as often as possible.

### EXERCISE 1.3 – HOW I WANT TO FEEL

In a few words or sentences, describe *how you want to feel* when you engage in your sport or other important contexts; not what you want to accomplish like “I want to win the gold medal,” or “I want to stop every puck in the game” as these are outcome goals and we will discuss these in a subsequent section. This exercise is about “feel” and the role it plays in your performance. Go back to recent observations you have made about how you feel and how it affects your performance or recall of one of your best performances during training or a competition and note the words that come to mind as you try to describe how you felt at the time. If it helps, think of an analogy or a metaphor that symbolizes how you want to feel. You can be creative with this.

Observations / Reflections as I collect data...

Another way to get in touch with how you want to feel is through an image, picture, or photo. A 62 year old man with whom I worked wanted to do triathlons and had to overcome his fear of swimming. He wanted to feel different in the water in comparison to his running and cycling and he did a collage in which he included personal photos and pictures of different water scenes from magazines. He hung this up in his room to remind himself of how he wanted to feel on a daily basis. Take some time to find a picture or photo (or more than one) and include it below with a description of why and how it makes you feel the way you want.

**EXERCISE 1.4 – A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF HOW I WANT TO FEEL**

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a visual representation of how the user wants to feel. The box is currently blank.

Now that you have reflected upon how you want to feel and what this might look like through a picture or photo, take the opportunity to examine yourself a bit more. Becoming more aware of your inner self will help you determine what you truly need to do to achieve and maintain optimal performance and well-being.

It is likely fair to assume that you look at yourself in the mirror every day; some do it more often or longer than others. For this next exercise, I invite you to spend whatever time you need in front of the mirror to take a good look at yourself from head to toe and note your observations. Don't force things, try to be as natural and authentic as possible and most importantly, be honest.

### **EXERCISE 1.5 - MY SELF-IMAGE**

Look at yourself in the mirror and note the first words or thoughts that come to mind.

Now put on your sports gear (or next time you're going to a practice or game and have your gear on), look at yourself in the mirror again, and note the words or thoughts that come to mind this time.

What do these words/thoughts tell you? Are they positive or negative? How did you feel when you looked at yourself in the mirror? Was it different when you put on your sports gear? Do you like what you see at the present time? How you perceive yourself will inevitably affect your performance, both in training and in competition. Therefore, if you have less than positive thoughts or statements, you must make an effort to shift them to positive ones. If you don't feel good when you look at yourself and believe you can feel better, do something to change this. Be aware of what you want to improve and WHY, and start by building upon your strengths. So, having said this, should you improve your self-image, and if so, why and how will you do it?

<b>EXERCISE 1.5 - MY SELF-IMAGE (cont)</b>		
<b>What I can improve</b>	<b>Why I want to improve this</b>	<b>How I will do it</b>
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•

Do the previous exercise on a regular basis. When you walk in front of a mirror, get into the habit of telling yourself something positive. If you find yourself saying something negative, change it to a positive. If you see something you don't like, focus on your qualities to improve it. This way, you will consistently be more optimistic and you will most likely feel more fulfilled and confident about yourself and your sport performance.

To continue this reflection on positive aspects of yourself, do the following exercise to highlight what is unique and special about you. To assist you in doing this, imagine that the most important person in your life (e.g., mom, dad, coach, best friend, partner) is giving a talk at a banquet in your honour and is raving about how you distinguish yourself from others and why you are so special.

**EXERCISE 1.6 - HOW I AM UNIQUE AND SPECIAL**

My top 10 list of how and why I am unique and special:

10.

9.

8.

7.

6.

5.

4.

3.

2.

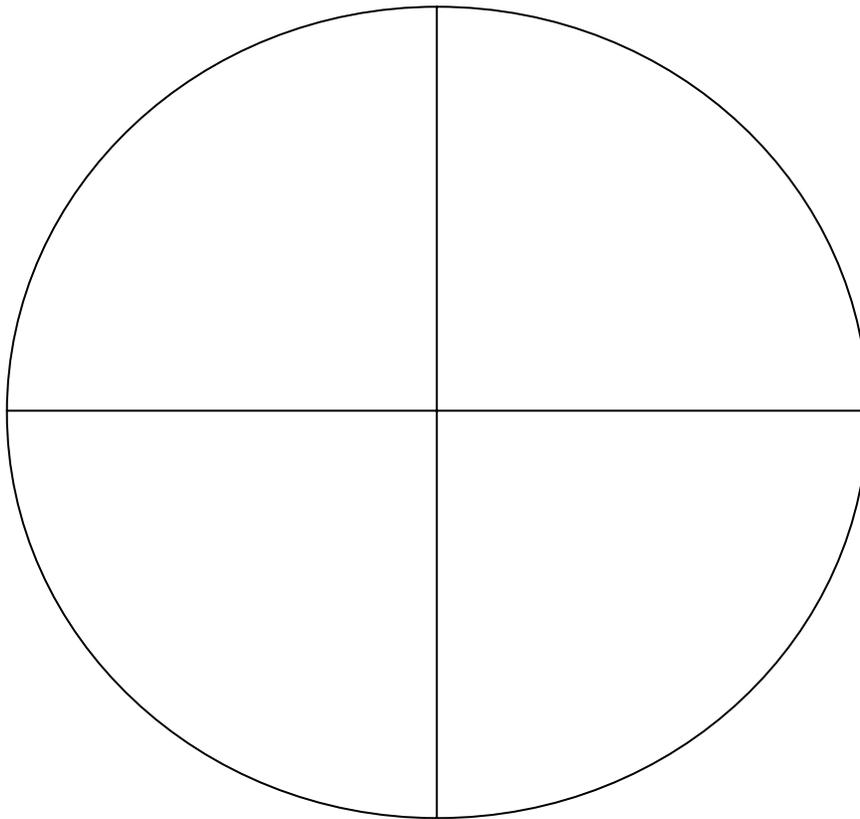
And the number one reason why I am unique and special is.....

1.

In order for you to be able to appreciate not just yourself but all of your life, think about what is important to you. You may ask, "Why should I do this?" Well, it is likely that if you're not doing well or feeling good in one area of your life (e.g., relationship with family or significant other, work, school), this will affect other areas, including sport. The following exercise will help you clarify the important aspects of your life and with this information, you'll be able to determine if you feel the way you want to feel (e.g., satisfied, fulfilled, engaged, connected, in harmony) in these areas. If not, you'll be at least aware of this and be in a better position to make desired changes.

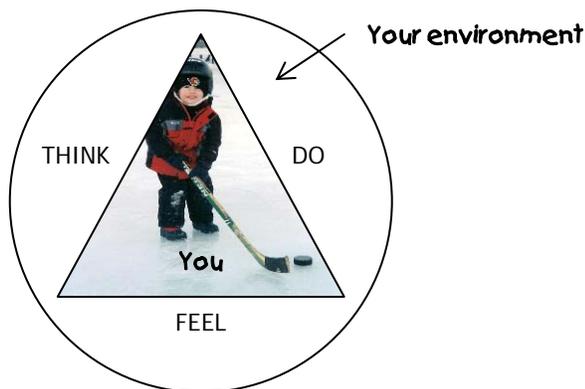
**EXERCISE 1.7 – IMPORTANT AREAS OF MY LIFE**

Use this circle to create a pie chart in which you can delineate the important facets of your life. Include as many as you want. As you do this, reflect on why these facets are important to you. For example, do you feel obligated to value these areas because your parents told you you should? Or do these areas truly mean something to you? Valuable data that you should consider while attempting to answer these questions pertain to the way you feel. Do you feel the way you want to feel when you engage in these different areas or when you play the different roles that you have in your life? Are you neglecting certain areas or roles? If so, why and can you make any changes? Write your reflections below.



Reflections...

## b) Increasing Awareness of Performance



Now that you have taken some time to reflect on who you are as a person and you have a better understanding of your strengths and weaknesses and what's important to you, you can shift your attention to your performance in sport or any other context you find relevant. After all, if you are going to improve it, you must invest some time and effort into figuring out what works well for you and what doesn't. When I think of performance, I use a very simple figure to depict what's essential to consider. I use a triangle to represent the

three critical facets of performance, which are your thoughts, your actions/behaviours, and how you feel. At the center of this triangle is you and everything that you bring to your performance and around the triangle is your environment and everything that might affect you from it.

In the next exercise, you will recall your best and worst performances and consider your thoughts, actions and how you felt at the time. Note any relevant information regarding yourself and your environment. Paying attention to details will help you to improve minute aspects of your performance that could make a substantial difference and lead you to become more consistent.

### EXERCISE 1.8 - EXAMINING MY BEST AND WORST PERFORMANCES

Think back to one of your best performances in your sport or other context. Close your eyes and imagine yourself being there at that very moment. Try to recapture the thoughts, feelings and actions that guided your performance. Ask yourself the following:

- What made me outstanding at this particular event?
- Did I do anything special or different?
- What was it that made this event such a memorable one?

Now, shift your thoughts to one of your worst performances. Try to remember everything about that event that made you perform poorly.

- What distracted you before or during the event?
- Did you feel, think or do anything different than you normally do?
- Did your environment influence you in any way?

It's not always pleasant to think about negative experiences, however, it is a useful step in drawing valuable lessons and becoming more aware of things that prevent you from performing at your optimal best. Note that there is a difference between being aware of something and completely focusing on it. The goal of this exercise is to help you become conscious of rather than excessively focusing on what impedes your performance. It is typically more beneficial to think of things you should do rather than things you should not do.

**EXERCISE 1.8 - EXAMINING MY BEST AND WORST PERFORMANCES** *(cont)*

Write down your thoughts as they relate to your BEST and WORST performances in your sport so you can use this information to better yourself in the future.

<b>The day before the event:</b>	<b>BEST</b>	<b>WORST</b>
I felt...		
I thought...		
I did...		
In general, I was...		
In general, my environment was...		

EXERCISE 1.8 - EXAMINING MY BEST AND WORST PERFORMANCES <i>(cont)</i>		
The morning of the event:	BEST	WORST
I felt...		
I thought...		
I did...		
In general, I was...		
In general, my environment was...		

<b>EXERCISE 1.8 - EXAMINING MY BEST AND WORST PERFORMANCES (cont)</b>		
<b>At the site of the event:</b>	<b>BEST</b>	<b>WORST</b>
I felt...		
I thought...		
I did...		
In general, I was...		
In general, my environment was...		

EXERCISE 1.8 - EXAMINING MY BEST AND WORST PERFORMANCES <i>(cont)</i>																						
Right before the event:	BEST						WORST															
I felt...																						
	extent to which I felt the way I wanted to feel (%)						extent to which I felt the way I wanted to feel (%)															
Physically	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Mentally	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Emotionally	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
I thought...																						
I did...																						
In general, I was...																						
In general, my environment was...																						

EXERCISE 1.8 - EXAMINING MY BEST AND WORST PERFORMANCES <i>(cont)</i>																						
Here you should consider what happened at the beginning, half-way through, and toward the end of the event. Also note any other key moments during the event.																						
During the event:	BEST						WORST															
I felt...																						
	extent to which I felt the way I wanted to feel (%)						extent to which I felt the way I wanted to feel (%)															
Physically	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Mentally	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Emotionally	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
I thought...																						
I did...																						
In general, I was...																						
In general, my environment was...																						

EXERCISE 1.8 - EXAMINING MY BEST AND WORST PERFORMANCES <i>(cont)</i>																						
After the event:	BEST											WORST										
I felt...																						
	extent to which I felt the way I wanted to feel (%)											extent to which I felt the way I wanted to feel (%)										
Physically	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Mentally	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Emotionally	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
I thought...																						
I did...																						
In general, I was...																						
In general, my environment was...																						

**EXERCISE 1.8 - EXAMINING MY BEST AND WORST PERFORMANCES** *(cont)*

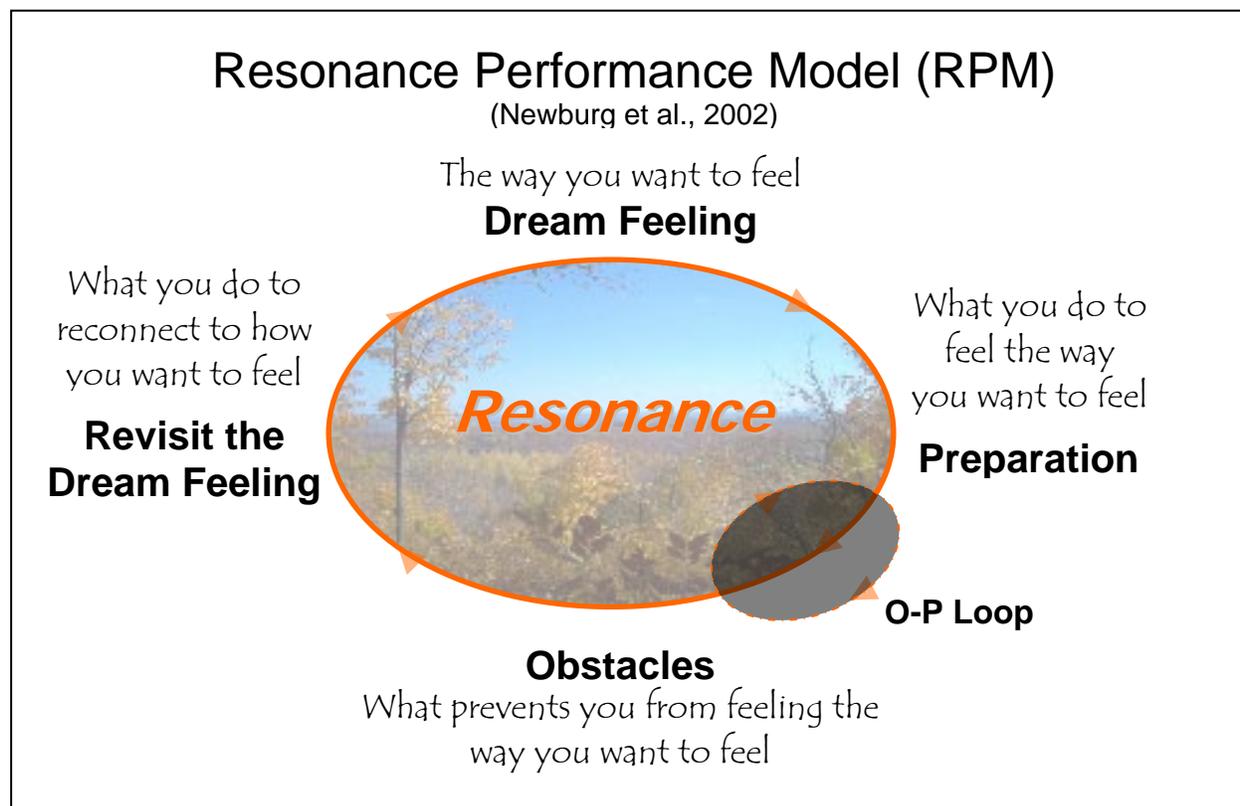
Compare your two sets of responses. What are the differences between your BEST and WORST performances? What, if anything, was different about the way you experienced these events? Did you feel physically, mentally, or emotionally different? Did your actions and thoughts differ? What about your general self and environment, any disparities there? Write your reflections below and try to be as specific as possible.

Now that you have begun to reflect on various aspects of your performance, identify your current strengths and weaknesses in the four following areas of your sport: 1) physical skills, 2) mental skills, 3) technical skills, and 4) tactical skills. The more specific you are, the more information you'll have to work with in your quest to become a better athlete. Consulting the previous exercise may be helpful.

<b>EXERCISE 1.9 - MY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES AS AN ATHLETE</b>	
<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<i>Physical</i>	
<i>Mental</i>	

<b>EXERCISE 1.9 - MY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES AS AN ATHLETE</b> <i>(cont)</i>	
<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<i>Technical</i>	
<i>Tactical</i>	

At this point, you have collected a lot of information about yourself and your performance that you can use to start enhancing your sport and life pursuits. I would like to propose to you a unique tool that may help you integrate this information and start designing your life to achieve optimal performance and well-being. The Resonance Performance Model (RPM), which was developed by my colleague Dr. Doug Newburg (2004), depicts four dynamic and intertwined components that lead to the experience of resonance. Resonance is a powerful process that allows you live in harmony with your environment on a daily basis. In essence, this process is based on feel because as I mentioned previously, feel is fundamental to everything you do and whether you are aware of it or not, it affects your performance and well-being.



To summarize it succinctly, the process of resonance is *a way of life* that allows you to feel the way you want to feel, prepare to feel this way, anticipate and respond well to life's obstacles that get in the way, and revisit the way you want to feel when you need to. The RPM is yours to personalize so that it is most meaningful and effective for you. You must own and be accountable for your personal process of resonance. No one can do this for you. Having said this, what is your own personal process that will help you *resonate* in your daily life and even help others resonate around you? Take some time to reflect upon it and complete Exercise 1.10 to initiate the process.

**How you want to feel:** You have already attempted to identify how you want to feel in different areas of your life. This will likely change with time because you are constantly evolving, learning, facing obstacles, and being influenced by your environment in so many different ways. What's important is that you check in on a regular basis and make observations. You'll notice

that you will become better at articulating and connecting with desired feelings. How you want to feel should be a key reference point in your life because everything else can be built upon it.

**But how should I feel?** There is no right or wrong answer here. You are the only person who can figure this out. Feel is a subjective experience, meaning that everyone has their own unique way of defining, living, and regulating feel in their life. Feel can be experienced at different levels and at varying intensities. For example, it can be at a physical or physiological level (e.g., feel strong, cold, butterflies in stomach), cognitive level (e.g., feel confident, focused), emotional level (e.g., feel sad, happy), spiritual level (e.g., feel a sense of meaning, connected to a higher force) and any other level relevant to you. Also, it is important to note that feeling the way you want to feel does not mean that you have to feel happy all the time. All emotions (e.g., happiness, sadness, guilt, anger, fear, etc.) play a vital role in life. If you experience any type of loss, you will likely feel sad and this is ok and normal. However, you must pay attention to how “feeling sad” affects your performance and daily life, as well as that of others in your environment. Feeling sad, empty, and angry is part of any grieving process but it can drain your energy and lead you to feel unhealthy after a while so you have to be able to process and regulate this.

When my mother passed away, I experienced a tremendous sense of loss and I was extremely sad my first year without her. But what I noticed was that as I was listening to music during my drive into work every morning, I had some alone time and I allowed myself to be sad and get it out of my system. Once I got out of my car, I felt relieved and more at peace and I was ready to start my day. So if you would have asked me how I wanted to feel at 8am in the morning during that period of time, I would have told you, “sad.” But I didn’t want to feel that way all day. I consciously made the effort to feel connected and focused with my students and colleagues during the day, strong and powerful during my workouts, and playful and at peace with my family in the evening. Things have changed since then because although I still feel sad about the loss of my mother, the feeling of excruciating pain that was in my solar plexus for so long is no longer there. This feeling has gradually shifted into a feeling of inner peace.

**Preparation:** What are you currently doing to feel the way you want to feel as often as possible? What seems to work for you and what doesn’t? The previous exercises you completed will help you figure this out. You might have all the best intentions to do something (e.g., exercise 5 times per week) but are you really doing it and to the best of your ability? An important question to ask here is “What are you willing to work for?” What you include in your preparation has to be realistic and inspire you rather than discourage you or sit on your shoulders like a heavy weight. In your quest to be the best you can be, you will have to engage in some activities and types of training that are not enjoyable. In these situations, you have to try to make the best of it. Sometimes, shifting your perspective, focusing on learning, or trying to feel as best as you can is helpful. I used to dread administrative meetings but I realized that I was approaching them the wrong way and I wasn’t focusing on being in the moment and trying to find meaning in the process. I know I can’t get out of these meetings because they are part of my responsibilities as professor so I made the conscious decision that I was going to make them worth my while and I was going to feel better by contributing and learning from them. It made a huge difference. Be creative, try various things, take risks, and you’ll be surprised at how things can change for you.

Preparing or planning is important if you want to consistently feel and perform at your best. Do you have a routine, a schedule, or a plan to help you get through important events such as competitions or exams? Can your plan be refined or improved? What about being spontaneous, natural, or organic? What role do these qualities play in your life and how do they affect you and your plans? You must take time to consider how you work best; with or without a plan? With or without freedom? A bit of both? If you haven't tried one way or another, you cannot make an informed decision. Don't sell yourself short and rule something out because you have not tried it or because people have told you that it doesn't work. Remember, Sherlock Holmes...

It is important to recall the different roles, responsibilities, and freedoms you have and determine if they allow you to be who you want to be. One thing for sure... your preparation will involve making decisions. Make sure you have all the data you need to make informed choices that will allow you to feel the way you want to feel. Consider the benefits as much as the costs and don't be afraid to take a leap if it means you will feel better and live the life you want. Lastly, remember that preparation can be fun and engaging and you can actually experience desired feelings as you are preparing for something larger or more long-term.

**Obstacles:** Who doesn't have obstacles in their life? What I really like about the RPM is that it is real. It leads you to anticipate, embrace, and overcome obstacles and setbacks that you face on a regular basis. Some obstacles are bigger than others and are tougher to digest. A bunch of smaller obstacles in your daily life can, however, lead to the same results if you don't pay attention enough. They will catch up with you when you least expect it! So what are the big and small obstacles in your life? One way to identify them is to consider what prevents you from feeling the way you want to feel. Which ones are more external (e.g., parents put too much pressure, coach can't communicate, partner dumped you, opponent cheated) and internal (e.g., afraid to fail or disappoint others, no confidence, too nervous, negative thoughts)? Have you ever thought about the obstacles that you can and cannot control? Typically, it is easier to start working on internal obstacles because you have complete control over them. Also, note that an external obstacle can become internal with time if you do not deal with it effectively.

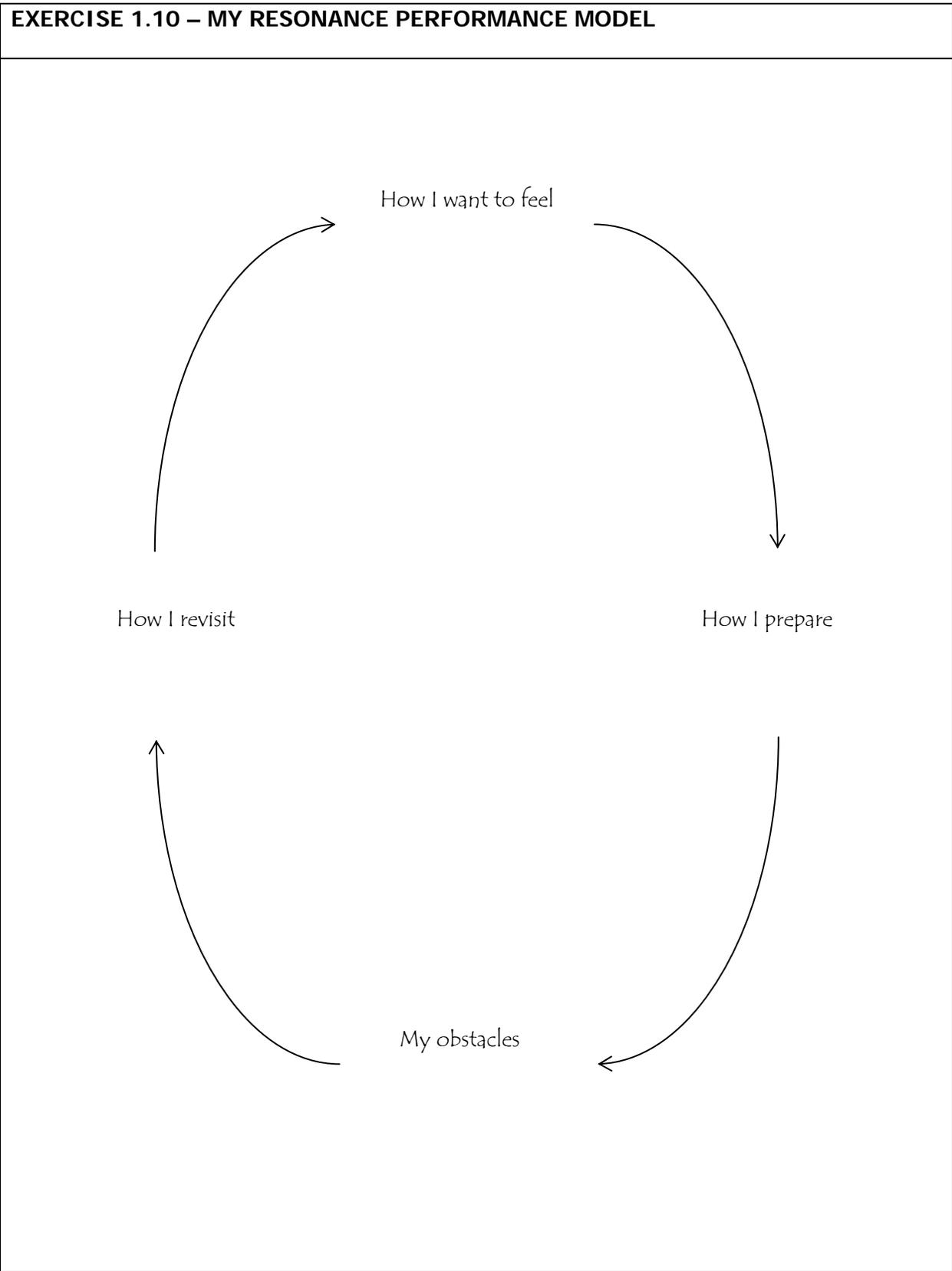
Another point to consider about obstacles is that when you face them, you typically experience undesired feelings. You get upset, angry, frustrated, annoyed, impatient, disappointed, afraid, etc. So what is most important here is your awareness of these feelings and your response to them. Newburg (2004) termed this "the response to the response." If you are not aware that you are not feeling the way you want to feel (maybe because you have never figured this out, hence the importance of doing so), you can stay stuck and feel lousy for a long time or maybe for one minute too long during an important game, which costs your team the victory. So how do you typically respond to obstacles? Can you shift your perspective to initially respond better to them? What if you prepare for them based on past experiences and what you can expect in typical situations? Will it make it easier for you to face and overcome them? Do you have a response to an initial undesirable response? Does it allow you to reconnect with how you want to feel? Take some time to answer these questions for yourself.

**Revisit how you want to feel:** This "response to the response" leads me to explain the revisiting component of the RPM, which is as key as the other ones. This part of the process helps you plan for and integrate in your daily life ways to reconnect with how you want to feel when you're feeling off. With time and practice, you'll get good at this. It will become a way of life. However, don't take it for granted because the obstacles will be there. So if you don't

consciously check in on a regular basis, you might be caught off guard and slip into a vicious cycle where you will prepare, hit an obstacle, get frustrated, and prepare ever more, hit an obstacle, get even more frustrated, hit another obstacle, and on and on it goes. Newburg termed this the obstacle-preparation loop. What is apparent in this cycle is that you will work harder but not necessarily smarter. By being so focused on working harder or getting better, there is a chance that you will lose sight of why you are doing what you are doing. You will forget that feeling the way you want to feel is a reason why you engaged in this in the first place. So, be smart and make sure to reconnect and make the time for this. Sometimes it's as simple as calling a friend, going for a walk, taking a break, listening to music, watching your favorite movie, playing with your kids or your pet. It's usually not that complicated, it's a matter of doing it. But in this fast paced, outcome oriented society, it's easy to forget about yourself, your process, and what's most important to you. Do you easily get caught in other people's agendas and lives? Is this what you want for yourself?

Sometimes you need to reconnect more quickly than others because there is a lot at stake. For example, during a competition, you can't wait any time. If you have a bad start, you have to find a way to recapture how you want to feel, otherwise this could affect your performance. You will see that many exercises in the following sections will help you to develop this. For example self-talk and visualization are common strategies that athletes use to revisit how they want to feel. In many cases, this not only allows them to re-immerses themselves in the moment, it re-energizes and motivates them to persevere and give it their all.

So if you have not already done so, I invite you to start developing your own process of resonance to get the most out of your performance and life. If the word "resonance" does not mean that much to you, feel free to change it to call your process something else that is more relevant. Like I said, you have to make this process your own for it to be effective and motivating to develop and sustain over time. As you will complete the other sections in this workbook, I encourage you to keep your process at the forefront so that you can refine it as you evolve and learn so much more about yourself. Enjoy the ride!



**TABLE 1.1 - SUMMARY SUGGESTIONS**

1. Strive to be engaged in everything that you do. Live the way you want to feel every single day.
2. Ask yourself every day how you can become a better person and a better athlete. This will help you become increasingly aware of intricate details necessary to enhance your performance.
3. Regularly make observations and note 1) what helps and hinders your performance during training and competitions, and 2) what you learn from these situations.
4. Take ownership of your life and be accountable for your thoughts, actions, and how you feel because you are the one who is in control.
5. Learn as much from your successes as you do from your mistakes. After a win or a great performance, stop to reflect on what happened and how you would repeat that performance. This type of reflection leads to consistency.
6. Collect data on an ongoing basis to make informed decisions. Don't let others decide for you if you don't have to.
7. Pay attention to all important areas in your life because they affect each other.
8. Remember why you do the things you do. Sometimes it's all you need to get through a difficult situation.
9. Always challenge yourself to learn something new every day of your life.
10. Love and appreciate yourself and what is unique and special about you.

Personal Notes...