

# CHEAT SHEET FOR THE ATHLETIC BREAKTHROUGH

To create the breakthrough for our athlete we need to influence them by creating leverage. We create leverage as coaches, parents and mentors when we fully understand their approach, emotions, feelings and thoughts, and use that understanding to help them step into change. When we are able to reach our athletes where they are, we are also able to help them shift their attitude (language, posture, their self-awareness- the way they carry themselves), mental maps (habits) about life on or off the field and their inner voice.

I like for my athletes to go through a visualization training process with their eyes closed for two reasons.

1. We create a setting for them to focus.
2. They increase their imagination.

## Step 1

What is their APPROACH?

Have the athlete explain their current approach towards their goal.

When an athlete is faced with a problem, what are the chances they can fix it if they're in the same mindset of when the problem was created?

Find out what their goal is and change **the way they view it**. Use the feelings, emotions, and thoughts that they explain to you about why they are feeling depressed, anxious, and nervous.

### **Use Visualization Training.**

Visualization training is a powerful form of training that can make an athlete feel as if he's already accomplished a goal, that is, she's reached a new performance milestone before actually attempting it physically. This is one aspect of the mental blueprint to becoming mentally strong. As you'll see, I add this in every step for any client I am with.

### **Exercise:**

With the athlete standing tall and their **eyes shut**, have them think about what it would feel like to achieve their goal.

1. Ask them how they see themselves in the moment of competition. This is one way we find out about their inner voice, their reason for wanting a change, their habits, and attitude.
2. Ask them what do they hear.
3. Ask how they feel after they see themselves completing their goal. What are the emotions?
  - If there is doubt, go to step 4
  - If they see success, tell them to hold on to this image and remember the feeling they currently have. Reinforce to the athlete that they can easily get into this same mental state prior to a competition if they practice this exercise. Our emotions are directed by our focus and our focus is directed by our emotions.

You're now getting a better understanding of the mind of your athlete.

HINT: If a goal seems too hard or unrealistic to the athlete, **train their mind first**. Get them to see everything happening prior to the challenge. Look at step two

4. Tell them to create mental pictures of success and hold on to them. Subconsciously, we do a great job remembering pictures to keep us on track of the goal. These mental pictures may ~~will~~ even pop up during competition if practiced enough.

6. Finally, have them write down everything they just visualized. When we start to write our thoughts on paper, it begins to stick with us. We are now creating the wiring process of the mentally strong athlete.

Let's dig a little deeper...

## Step 2

**What does their ROOMMATE continue to tell them?**

What does your athlete's inner voice continue to say?

Ask, how does this keep you from achieving what you want in your sport, your position, and your mental approach towards competition?

When athletes continue to describe themselves as not being able to achieve their goal, they create a habit which they hold as the truth.

Questions to reprogram what [Kobe Bryant](#) would call his "roommate," or inner voice.

Before asking questions, get the athlete to take three deep breaths to calm themselves down and increase their mental state of being present.

1. What do ~~they~~-you really want? (Here is where the focus is generated)
2. What is holding ~~them~~-you back from this goal? (Here is where their inner voice comes into play)
3. If this is a mental block show the athlete what they don't see.
  - a. Break their pattern of the story they keep telling themselves.
    - i. Create a successful and winning environment. The athlete has to see that there isn't anything physically holding them back.
    - ii. Take them out of competition and during practice work on the difficult task to show them they can overcome the challenge.
    - iii. Take video to show them their story isn't true.
    - iv. Take notes on the player who is getting more time than them. Explain to your athlete that they can do even better with time and dedication.

4. If this is a physical challenge, provide them with a quality trainer that works on the areas of physical preparation -- strength, power, endurance, mobility, stability, speed, acceleration, deceleration and agility.

The last step!

5. Use visualization training to new story!
  - a. How do they picture their new rituals?
  - b. How do they view their new state of mind?
  - c. How do they view themselves?
  - d. How do they mentally prepare themselves? How do they block out the negative inner voice?

Coaches, mentors, and parents you can learn specialized sequencing of these questions through the work of [NLP](#).

### Step 3

What is their ATTITUDE?

How we think, act, and feel is controlled by our attitude.

One of the many ways to change an athlete's attitude is to change their **physiology**.

**Increase their flow of hormones through exercises.** Get them feeling great about themselves with the rush of endorphins. A change in movement will change the way they think and feel. This is why exercise is so essential. It changes the way we feel. This will increase creativity, motivation and their state of mind.

After they've done some type of body weight circuit or gone for a run, get them involved in **positive reinforcement by feeding their mind**.

### CHANGE THEIR PHYSIOLOGY BY CHANGING THEIR FOCUS

***Focus on positive reinforcements.*** Place incantations and affirmations around the house in the areas where your athlete spends most of their time (the refrigerator, the bathroom mirror, the front door, the background of a computer, on the phone, on the drawers in their bedroom) These are reminders to encourage a continuously powerful state of mind. This constant reminder will help change their current beliefs and mental blueprint.

***Focus on language.*** Listen to the words that they are constantly using to describe their emotions. Break this pattern by using words that are engaging and cause a powerful state of mind. The way we use our words will cause a change in the physiology as well.

*Focus on asking questions: Question will change the attitude and demeanor of the athlete.*

In order to change our focus on the goal we'd like to achieve we need to ask ourselves questions. Questions help create a new mindset, they motivate us, they help us visualize, they wire us for success.

So, there you have it, understanding the younger athletes approach, how they interperate their inner voice, and their attitude will help create the new standard for cultivating the futures next superstar.

Until Next Time,

Joe Giangrosso