**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRENGTHS OF WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION**

**BY GED MUSTO**

As I am approaching my own personal milestone of 50, I have set myself a new goal for my training, somehow to be mentally stronger than ever.

Over the years of doing stamina and endurance challenges, I have found that my training patterns has changed on numerous occasions, but most importantly the one aspect I have toned in most of all is the all-important breathing.

20 years back I had the pleasure of meeting a Grandmaster Ushi who was delivering a karate master class, during the class I was closely studying his breathing and technique. I managed to have a 5 minute chat with him, I asked him how he managed to produce so much power to body-weight ratio, Ushi then explained that the human body is like a finely oiled machine, and every muscle and joint has to be produced like cogs in an engine…and he also stated that strength, endurance, stamina and endurance within training are at least 60% mental strength and 40% physical strength, and ever since then I have taken this precious advice on board, his advice alone was worth much more than reading books and articles on mind-psychology.

Years of middle distance running and cross country skiing gave me the platform to attempt stamina and endurance records, and to also participate in cross training competitions.

4 World Records, 7 British Records, 1 Army Record, numerous other stamina feats achieved within the 20 years since, my training program has changed significantly, whilst I stay to my trusted old-fashioned training principles, the power of the mind is probably stronger now than what it was when I broke the one hour of sit-ups back in 1999.

Over the past couple of years I have pushed myself harder than I ever thought my body could take. As physically fatigued as I was during the workout, my mind was not tired. It was stimulated. I had pushed my body to be much more aggressive and relentless in the workouts. I had no idea what the hell I was doing or where I was getting this new level of determination and strength. In retrospect, I was learning how to activate my will in a completely different way to the way I trained when I was serving in the forces. I was making the connection with my thoughts and letting my mind lead my body.

There is an online exercise challenge site by the name of konkura, and suddenly I was finding myself up against competitors more than half my age, and in the 21 challenges I have taken part in, I am top in 16 of them, all of them physically and mentally demanding. So the outcome from my new found mental training is that I have started to crush my times, and finish not only first, but way ahead of everyone else.

As you begin the journey to empower your mind, you will be constantly tested. Your worst enemy will not be your competition. Unfortunately, the lowest blow you will receive will be from yourself.

You will hear many negative thought patterns often during your trial of cerebral improvement. Learn to change the negative thought pattern into positive self-talk. So instead of saying, “I’ve got three more sets to go. I can’t do this,’’ say “I’m stronger mentally. I did five sets, so three more sets will be easy for me.”

Mental toughness is all about your thought process. Your thoughts can make you do what most would consider unconceivable. This is what this training is all about.

Being mentally tougher can help sustain all the work you put in to improve your body and strength. More importantly, being mentally tough can help improve your quality of life as well as your training.

Take a look at your training programs, and make the decision whether or not you need to change it for something more challenging, I have done so and am enjoying the training more than any other time, quite simply because I know how much further I can push my body.

It is a very challenging adventure but a worthwhile one.

Good luck with your journey, and good luck with the training!!!

GED MUSTO. 2012