

## **‘Fears and Doubts’ supporting documentation**

**If you would like to return to the video seminar at any point then the exact time points that each section starts within the video seminar are as follows:**

**Part 1, Fear >> 2 minutes 26 seconds**

**Part 2, Historic Fear >> 10 minutes 36 seconds**

**Part 3, Doubt >> 21 minutes 20 seconds**

**MENTAL HEALTH AND HAPPINESS IS ALL ABOUT MANAGING YOUR THOUGHTS AND PUTTING HEALTHY COPING STRATEGIES IN PLACE THAT EMPOWER, RATHER THAN HURT YOU AS A PERSON.**

**THE STARTING POINT IS TO IDENTIFY YOUR FEARS AND DOUBTS.**

How to tackle fears and doubts.

1. Step one - change your relationship to fear.

A key point is to understand that you are not special. Everybody has fears and everybody has to learn how to cope and manage them.

The bigger the project you're attempting, the bigger the fears. So basically, if you don't attempt anything difficult, then you will have smaller fears. Big fears are actually an indication that you're stretching yourself and trying to do something that is more difficult than what you've previously done. It is an indication that you are doing well if you are taking action despite the fears. The realisation that fears are a good thing, moves you in the right direction.

2. Step two - write them down.

3. Step three - analyse if any of your fears and doubts are actually based in a reality with proper perspective. (shark story – rational to fear sharks, irrational to think there is a good chance you will encounter one)

4. Step four – Chunk it down.

Once you've written it down, and it is a realistic fear, then you can start to think about how to look at it through a different Lens, from a different perspective. The fear of a big goal is viewed totally different if you chunk it down into the small steps you will need to take on the journey to achieving the goal.

5. Step five - lean into your fears and understand where you feel it in your body.

Often fear starts with a feeling in the body before the actual thoughts and if you can identify where it starts in your body, you can cut it off with a rebalancing thought before it becomes the big fear. As you think differently this feeling in your body will subside.

#### **Awareness of the following helps:**

1. When fear hits take 3-4 deep breathes
2. Monitor your **Tone of Voice**
3. Reassure yourself that you are fine, that some fear is normal – plus the excitement, nerves and fear is usually what attracted you to want to do the activity.
4. Rehearse how you will feel – lose or lessen the feeling in your body where the fear starts.
5. If you have prepared well, relax and let things happen.

It is imperative that you are smart when you are tackling real fears and set about creating a plan because part of managing fears is the building a good action plan.

As an example, if you're trying to become a top tennis player, begin to chart practice and the progress that you are making to become a top tennis player. The fear of losing is offset when you know you are doing the work to get better and that progress is the goal and winning only a bi-product of the process of improving.

Sadly, many athletes do the hard-physical yards and neglect the mental side of the development process largely because it can only be measured subjectively and through feeling with no tangible way of plotting the progress, other than your own subjective graph you can create. Never underestimate the accuracy of feeling that is personally measured, which if done honestly can give you great confidence. Competence, more than anything breeds confidence so stick to the process of getting better.

There's a lot of work involved. It takes years to build the foundations, the skills that you need to become an expert at anything.

The number one aspect here is not to fear your fears and doubt, but to accept them and then start to plan how you can take the actions that will help you become strong enough to no longer fear these fears or to at least have them at a very, very manageable level.

Increased knowledge is a major antidote to fear. Once you clearly understand where you are and what you need to do in order to lessen or get rid of a fear, then it is far easier to manage in your

mind and not become paralyzed. In a future [Mindset College](#) module we teach you how to plot on an “Infinity Change Cycle”.

## **Doubt**

The logic doesn't change as you get better, because you face higher and higher resistance. The good thing about that, it means that the resistance that you are offering your opponents is also higher, so you have improved. The formula basically says that the higher you get, the tougher it's going to be, but conversely the tougher you are, so in a better position to cope.

John McEnroe famously said the biggest jump he ever had to make was from number two to number one. This is because the higher you get, the margins become so small that you have to put in hours and hours of training and practice just to improve a millimetre. Whereas at the start, when you put in hours and hours of practice, you improve quite rapidly.

***A common error is to think that the person you are in the present, who is afraid of a higher level, is the person you will be if you do the work to get there!***

If you honestly don't think that you're tough enough, think carefully because no one is tough enough at the start. According to the success formula, as you go up through the levels, you will become tougher and therefore as a person, mentally you will have evolved into a different mental animal, far more able to cope at that level. You cannot imagine being that much tougher until you are.

A good analogy is if you go into the gym and you can squat 50 kilos and you look at a hundred kilos and think it's impossible for you to ever squat so much. Over time, when you get close to a 100kg, it doesn't seem impossible, but it is still very heavy. The difference is you're just much stronger so you can cope with that heaviness. In other words, the weight is the same as when you thought it was impossible to lift, so all change comes from within you from the work you do, not by magic.

If you put maximum effort in and run a hundred meters in 15 seconds, you're going to be just as tired as Usain Bolt running it at 9.8 - the effort is the same, just the capability is different. The 100 meters Usain runs is not easier for him if he is putting in maximum effort.

The lesson here is whatever level you are starting from get into the habit of putting in maximum effort so that climbing the ladder never becomes a matter of effort, just the time it takes to get to each new level.

## **Predicting a negative future – this is unfair:**

Past evidence shows that you are good at winning tennis matches and solving problems that arise in the preparation or during matches. Therefore, the most likely outcome is a successful performance that you enjoy, with a decent chance of winning. If you stress, then your mind starts to predict a future that says that the match will not go well. Doubt and fear happen and get worse when the mind does not analyse a

situation effectively and begins to automatically assume the outcome as negative. The bottom line is statistically at least giving yourself a 50/50 chance of a positive outcome is actually fair, rather than not thinking about it and assuming the distorted low odds that stress, fear and doubt facilitate.

## **Historic fear**

What is meant by the term “historic fear”? Historic events can have an impact on how somebody feels about (for example their backhand) in the present moment.

If historically you have had a bad backhand and then you work extremely hard to get it better, often even when it is vastly improved, the moment that the you play one or two bad strokes with your backhand, your mind immediately panics and goes back to time when the backhand was truly bad. This is not the current reality. Even once the backhand is much better, you will still make mistakes, but this does not mean that the backhand has gone back to its original place.

When a person does this, I call it historic fear. Historic fear is very powerful, so much so that often a player will often develop a phobia about a certain stroke no matter how good it becomes because the expectation is based on a perfection that is not possible. The way the person measures the stroke is unrealistic and totally different to the way he/she measures their other strokes. Awareness that this is taking place is the first step to overcoming historic fear.

Things to remember when this occurs:

- Be aware that of historic fear. For example: if a player misses a backhand and is fearful of hitting the shot, he/she must remind themselves that no matter how good the stroke is, it is normal to still miss many shots.
- Take stock – the mind is going back to a time that is no longer relevant.
- Take a breath
- Show mental toughness and say – “My backhand is good. I have evolved.”

When encountering this tell yourself that this isn’t you anymore. In the same way when a toddler stumbles, he/she doesn’t panic and think that he/she can no longer walk again.

## **Comparison as a motivator**

In an ideal world you want the mind to develop with the game. Often the game progresses but the mind can lag behind. It can happen the other way (mind overtakes the game) but it is less common.

Remember ‘in matches you compete and do what you can’ and assess your game and progress after a match. NEVER use a match as practice for what you have been learning because if you are not competent enough yet, you will not become competent in the match. What you have learned will be there and what is not yet automatic will not. Keep practicing until it shows up in matches.

When you make a comparison with someone else ask:

Is what you're comparing better than yours? If yes, were they born with it? No, so your challenge is to get as good as them using the comparison as a motivator not a stick to beat yourself up.

Use a simple scale...



Plot where on the line you think you are. Find perspective and ask how you can get to where they are. Compare to yourself, find inspiration in others. Never adhere to a closed belief that it is out of your hands to get as good. Maybe you won't, but for sure if you work at it you will get closer. As you improve beware of historic fear creeping in and destroying your progress