

# Training the Most Important “Muscle” You Have...

## The Mind: Part 1

### Step 1: Accept Responsibility

*"Man is what he believes"* ~ Anton Chekov

"Whether you think you can or think you can't...You are Right!" That famous saying by auto pioneer Henry Ford has been one that I have used again and again in my training over the years. The fighters that I train have adopted many of the motivational sayings I have given them into their daily jargon. From "Answer the scratch," and "Through endurance you will conquer," to "If it is to be it is up to me," the guys are now constantly bombarding me, their peers and students with these statements when they are appropriate. Not only is this a good sign that they are listening and learning during my training, but these constant reminders are also improving their character as human beings. For a while I wasn't sure if this was possible, but now I know that it is. Everyone is in the process of an evolution. Which direction and the pace of that evolution is up to each individual. Only you can choose how you think and how you will behave. As Victor Frankl stated, "...Everything can be taken from a man but one thing; the last of the human freedoms--to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." According to this, you must first accept responsibility that you are the only one in control of your destiny. Once you realize this and hold yourself to a higher standard, you are primed to make instant improvement both physically and mentally.

## **Step 2: Adjust Your Current Standards**

*"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." ~ William Shakespeare*

The word "standard" is a very powerful concept in terms of training. Everything about the training you perform has some sort of standard, or perception, attached to it. When many of the fighters come in to train for the first few sessions their standards and perceptions are radically different than a number of sessions later. Even though this is interesting, it is far more important to see that the difference in perceptions of these athletes were all in their own minds. So, what I have found in training athletes over the years at the highest level is that changing their perceptions about their standards should be the next step toward improving their physical and mental performance once they have accepted responsibility that they are in control. One of my most often used sayings to my athletes over the last 8 years has been "If it is easy to do, it is also easy not to do!" What I mean is that anything you choose not to do because you think it is difficult is simply difficult because of the perception that you have created. As an example, I always ask new athletes I am working with if they think that eating right all the time is hard to do. Every one of them always answers that it is very difficult. My job is to change their perception and show them that it is not any harder to buy and eat the right food than it is to buy and eat the wrong food. That action is actually just as easy. Once an athlete is made to realize this, they instantly begin to hold themselves to a higher standard and see the act of eating well as much easier. You see, by creating in our minds that things are or may be difficult, we instantly build in excuses why we don't have to do them. This can be looked at as lowering our standards or simply as copping out.

Now, the idea of eating right versus eating wrong is pretty simple example for an athlete to make a quick shift in the way they perceive something. However, when it comes to the intensity of a workout, whether in terms of the amount of weight or the overall level of exertion, this is something that takes much more time to raise the standard. When I start with many fighters, they usually have little or no weight training experience. None of them enter the gym with the idea that they can slap 3 plates on each side of the bar and start blasting. I don't know why their perception of what is heavy or intense is so low, but that is where we often begin. As a result, we again have to change their standard by changing their perception. Once an athlete doesn't think a weight is so heavy anymore or that a workout is now not that tough, instantly they start to live at the ceiling of their new perceptions.

Next week, I look forward to sharing with you the other 3 keys to successful mental training.

**\*\*Remember to:**

- 1) Always plan ahead for what you are going to eat
- 2) Obtain adequate amounts of protein
- 3) Work on your flexibility and
- 4) Supplement your diet with a fish oil and multivitamin

Let me know if I can help. Email me [architectsports@gmail.com](mailto:architectsports@gmail.com)

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