

## Qualities of the MTO - and how to train for them.

The workshop participants were given a definition and had to come up with ideas about training for the qualities. One or two editorial rights have been exercised and these are in purple. Many thanks to all in the workshop who worked hard on this part of the session.

### Resilience

*Definition:* The ability to bounce back from adversity, pain or a disappointing performance. The mentally tough runner can realize and admit a mistake, understand a missed opportunity, isolate the lesson, and quickly move on to focus on the immediate goal ahead.

*Training:*

- Every leg was the last one - concentrate on the next.
- Need to get beyond disappointing performance.
- Routine debriefing:
  - Acknowledge things that went well.
  - Openness in debrief.
  - Analysing what went wrong and what can be learnt.
- Seeing every mistake as an opportunity.
- Each control is a new start.
- 'Dump' all negative experiences that have happened until the race is over.
- Look forward to the next race and start saying your mantra - "I can".
- Dealing with injury in a positive way - what can you do when injured?

### Focus

*Definition:* The ability to focus in the face of distractions or unexpected circumstances. The mentally tough runner doesn't avoid situations, but instead addresses them right away.

*Training:*

- Keeping out distracting thoughts / interruptions.
- Looking through your 'lense' to decide what to focus on.
- Acceptance that O demands focus.
- To improve focus use the "mental dump" idea (Get Screwed Fund).
- Address situations that are relevant straight away:
  - Don't look for unnecessary features. OR state this positively 'Look only at necessary features'.
  - Don't get bogged down in unimportant detail. OR state this positively 'Concentrate on the important detail only'.
- Know what to focus on.
- How do you regain focus?
  - Take next control slowly.
  - Stop & re-focus on what matters.
  - Use trigger words.
  - Use mental dump.
- Self-awareness in relation to the event.
- Train with distraction (other people, listening to podcasts, horrible weather, pedestrians).

### Strength

*Definition:* The ability to handle an unforeseen turn of events and remain balanced and calm, continuing to be competitive. The mentally tough runner remains both strong and flexible, able to respond to any situation that arises. Uses perfectionism adaptively rather than becoming self-defeating in the quest for the ideal.

*How we use it:*

- Adapt goal to fit circumstances.
- Accept things that are outside our control.
- Focus on positive.

*Training:*

- Mental rehearsal - explore "What if?"
- Develop strategies for dealing with unexpected events.
- Review strategies & experiences - ask what we could have done differently AND what did we do well? **Very important to be positive - think about swapping these two things around!**
- Share ideas with other people.
- **What do you want from each race? To win or to perform to the best of your ability (i.e. try not to let yourself down).**
- **Relocation exercises in training = unforeseen events!**

## Vision

*Definition:* The ability to keep moving forward with your objective, even when there are no immediate signs of getting closer to the finish line. The mentally tough runner creates a clear picture of the goal, visualizes it often, and keeps that image in the forefront no matter what. You imagine all the possible scenarios, and have a plan for moving through each one successfully.

*Training:*

- ✓ If permitted visit the finish, rehearse crossing the line. Remember that experience.
- ✓ Create intermediate achievable goals.
- ✓ Adapt to changes in how map interpreted.
- ✓ Personal targets for year.
- ✓ Plan safety bearings.
- ✓ **As well as having a picture of the goal, picture the stages you need to get through to reach the goal (and where you are in these stages).**
- ✓ **Whole - Part - Whole; think about going 'Non-comp' at a local event to train for the goal (part of the plan should be training in the areas you need to work on instead of always playing to your strengths = competing).**
- ✓ **Sometimes admitting that the goal was unsuitable for the time and reassessing.**

## Openness

*Definition:* The ability to learn and be open to all possibilities. The mentally tough runner is willing to listen and take feedback, knowing that's where real changes take place.

*Training:*

- Find a 'third party' mentor / someone you admire and want to learn from.
- Complete the coaching certificate.
- Use RouteGadget & Winsplits & other Internet resources.
- Put my routes onto RouteGadget.
- **Chat with other competitors after the race, ask what strategies they used on legs you either struggled with or felt you could have executed better. They will also learn from you, from the areas you performed well in.**
- **Sometimes you can be too 'bruised' after a race to talk about it. Have some time to yourself, reflect on the positive parts of the race and then talk with others about their race and learn from that.**

## Trust

*Definition:* The ability to have faith in oneself. The mentally tough runner learns to trust that the body will know what to do when it's race time. You trust in your training and your plan. You believe in yourself. You go with what you know. You stay mentally tough and keep moving forward, even when the finish line seems far away.

*Training:*

- ❖ Negatives:
  - Easily distracted.
  - Believe you must be 'wrong'.
- ❖ Trust in your map reading? May be difficult to trust so . . . use other skills to fill the gaps:
  - Training to build on weaker areas.
  - Practise.
  - Resilience.
  - Focus.
- ❖ To trust in your training you have to train!
  - What does training for orienteering involve?
  - Do you run across rough ground or on pavements?
  - Do you do intervals?
  - Do you do hill sessions?
  - Do you run with (any) map to practice map reading while moving?
  - Do you push yourself in training so that you know what pain feels like and that you can keep moving?

## Preparation

*Definition:* The ability to anticipate situations ahead of time and feel prepared so there is a plan of action for anything that might happen. The mentally tough runner doesn't panic in a crisis. You have a method to stay mentally calm, adjust your pace, and follow through with your plan.

*Training:* addressed through the 'What if?' sheets.