

WINNING SPIRIT

# Figure Skating

Find Your Inner Game



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## Author's Note

*Winning Spirit Figure Skating* is written specifically for ice skaters wanting to gain a competitive edge and a deeper understanding of themselves.

You can read this book straight through or randomly choose any chapter you'd like. Each chapter stands alone and contains a message, a reminder, an illustration, and a suggested activity. Several chapters have similar themes, but require you to look at them in different ways.

You'll notice that many times in this book you'll be asked to write down your experiences. There are Notes pages at the back of this book. To make this even easier for you, I've created a Workbook to enhance each chapter. I strongly believe that your athletic journey is worth recording.

Work passionately with the following information. Focus on each chapter and commit to personal improvement. At the same time, be patient with yourself and take the time to let the messages sink in.

Strive for success on the ice and, most importantly, strive to find greatness within.

—Tom Mitchell

## Thanks to My Special Team

*Adele Mitchell*—for supporting this project with her creative ideas and suggestions and for being a *great* skating mom.

*Carmen and Antonia Mitchell*—for being the inspiration to create the Sport and Soul series. Their willingness to share their inner thoughts and feelings about skating and their passion and enthusiasm for life helped me to stay focused on what is most important.

*Choeleen Loundagin*—for sharing her skating knowledge and expertise, for her friendship and professional encouragement.

*Snoopy's Home Ice*—for providing a truly magical skating environment.

# Finding Greatness Within





# 1

## ❧ Love What You Do ❧

One of the most awesome things about being a skater is that you have the privilege of doing something you really love. You are on the ice because that is where you want to be. Skating is not an obligation—it is a joy! You have chosen to become a skater because skating is one of your favorite things to do in life.

When you walk into the arena, you look forward to getting on the ice. Once there, you feel the fresh, crisp wind against your face and it makes you feel alive.

Because you love to skate, working hard at practice comes easily. When you love skating, you want to improve, day after day. Sometimes, you just can't get enough time on the ice and often, there is no place where you would rather be.

There may be times when the pressure of competition sets in and you feel a bit overwhelmed. You may lose some competitive spirit and need a rest from skating. This is natural and happens to some skaters from time to time. If this happens to you, remember why you fell in love with skating in the first place. Feel fortunate that you have found such a wonderful sport. Love it and participate in it with all your heart and soul.



## ❧ Try This ❧

Eliminate “I have to” from your skating vocabulary and replace it with “I want to.” “I have to” probably comes up often in your day-to-day life. So remember to make your skating experience a joy, not a job. Skating is something you *want* to do, not something you *have* to do. Think and say, “I want to practice. I want to work hard to improve. I want to be coached. I’m on the ice because it’s something I really love to do.”



I love to skate!

When I'm on the ice,  
there is no place  
I'd rather be!



## ❧ Have A Burning Desire ❧

If you want to become an accomplished ice skater, a burning desire is the most important quality to have. Desire is the inner energy that gives you the drive to practice hard and a passion to excel on the ice. It's an intensity that burns deep inside. Some days, all you can think about is being on the ice; some nights, you lie awake, practicing moves in your mind. You think about the next performance with childlike excitement.

Your desire gives you the motivation to be in outstanding physical condition. It drives you to work on and perfect your technical skills. It gives you tremendous energy to practice things like jumps, spins, and footwork. It motivates you to improve every day. Great skaters cannot have too much desire.

Pure desire comes from deep within, driving you onward to discover how good you can be. Desire for excellence cannot come from another person—it can only come from you.

Appreciate and use this fire within and turn it into excellent practice. Desire will take you to your goal.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Get a dozen 3 by 5 cards. On one side of each card, write your greatest desire. It should be the one most important thing you want to achieve on the ice. Keep it very simple, using only a few words to say what you really want.

Then, put one card in a place where you will see it every day. Continue placing the other 11 cards in private places where you will see them often. These cards will serve as daily reminders to focus on the goal.



I keep improving  
every day!

I turn my desire into  
excellent practice.



### 3

## ❧ Appreciate Your Special Team ❧

Special team members are the people who you depend on to make your skating experience possible. They could be your parents, grandparents, coaches, brothers, sisters, or anyone you rely on. Who are the members of your special team and what roles do they play?

Some members of your special team pay for day-to-day expenses. Others may drive you to practice and competitions. These special teammates devote many hours of their time to you. They sit in the stands to watch and cheer for you. Others teach and help on the ice. Some of these loyal teammates give comfort when you are hurt. They give you advice when you need guidance and direction.

Take a moment to realize how lucky you are to have such a fantastic team! Isn't it wonderful that these teammates care so much about you? Go out of your way to thank them for giving their time and energy to you. Tell them how much you love them. Appreciate your special team for they are at the heart of your success.




## ❧ Try This ❧

Make a list of every member of your special team. Then, write each one of them a thank you note or card. (You might want to keep a copy of your message in your journal.) In it, tell them how important and meaningful skating is to you.

Then, in your own words, tell them how much you appreciate what they are doing for you. Your words and thoughtfulness will show them that all of their effort is worth it.

Don't hold your feelings back. Be sure they know how thankful you really are. Maybe you have already told them this before, but it is always nice to get such a sincere message—the members of your special team will treasure it for years to come.



My special teammates  
help make it happen!

They give me  
encouragement,  
confidence,  
and love.



## ❧ Keep a Skating Journal ❧


It is a good practice to keep a skating journal; doing this will help you keep a record of your progress and become clearer about what you want to accomplish on the ice. You may find that writing down your thoughts and feelings increases your motivation and confidence. Writing often makes things more “real.” Your desire and emotion can come through and the power of your own words can inspire you.

Keep your journal in a place where you will use it regularly. Write down your hopes and dreams, your successes and achievements, your fears and failures. Capture memories and good times you have had with your coaches and skating friends. Whenever a new goal or dream pops into your head, write it in your journal. Writing down your goals can remind you of what you really want.

Your journal is not just something to write in. It is also something that you can reread later on. Some days, you will read what you have written and it will be just what you need to hear. This journal can become a good friend to you in the days and years to come. Remember, if your sport is worth doing, it’s worth recording.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Work with the *Winning Spirit: Figure Skating Workbook*, specifically written to complement this book. The questions and activities inside the Workbook are designed to get you to think and feel more deeply about skating. They will also help you to understand yourself better as an athlete and as a person.

A thought bubble above the text shows a ballerina in a tutu performing a dance move. The background of the page features a decorative border of stars and a faint illustration of a girl sitting at a desk writing in a journal.

Writing down my goals  
helps me to know  
what I want.

Keeping a journal  
helps me to  
understand myself.



## 5

### ❧ Believe In Yourself ❧

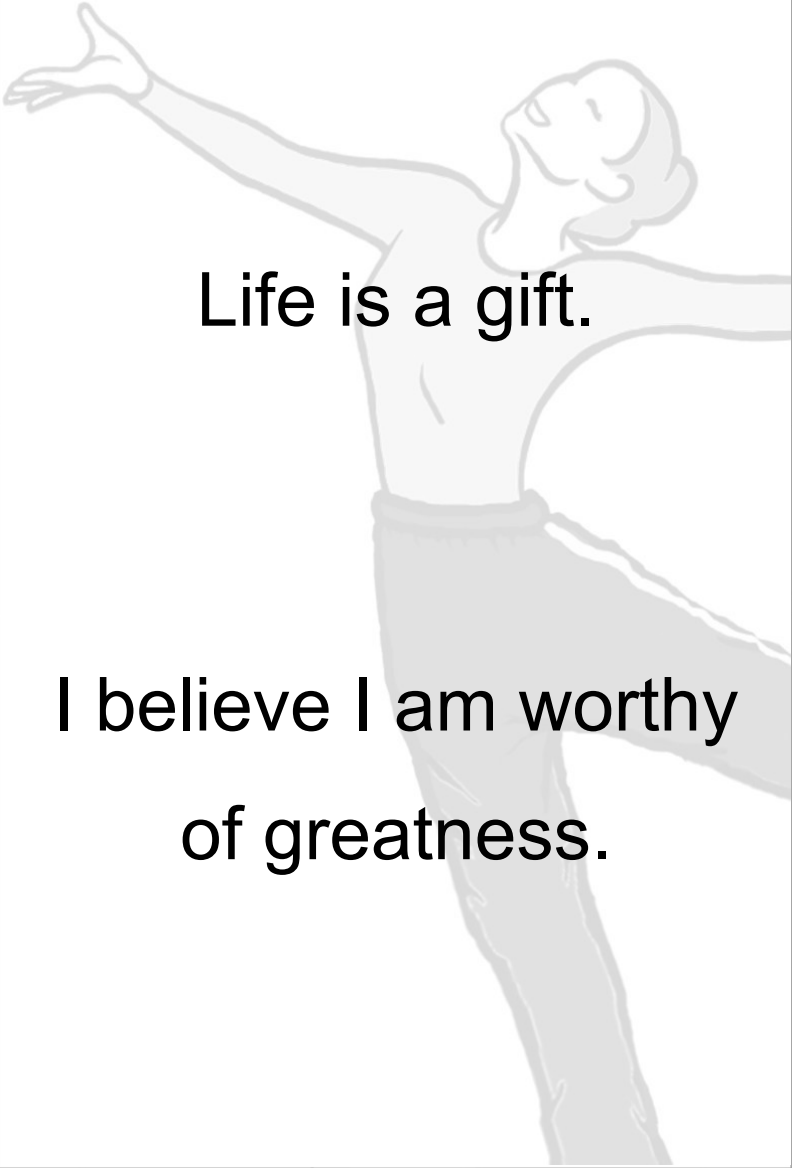
Although you love to skate, you are much, much more than an ice skater. Your life includes all of your other interests and activities as well as dreams and challenges. There are so many things for you to do. Skating is only a part of a full, rich life.

Appreciate yourself as a person as well as a skater. Believe in who you are and know that you are worthy of happiness and capable of greatness both on and off the ice.



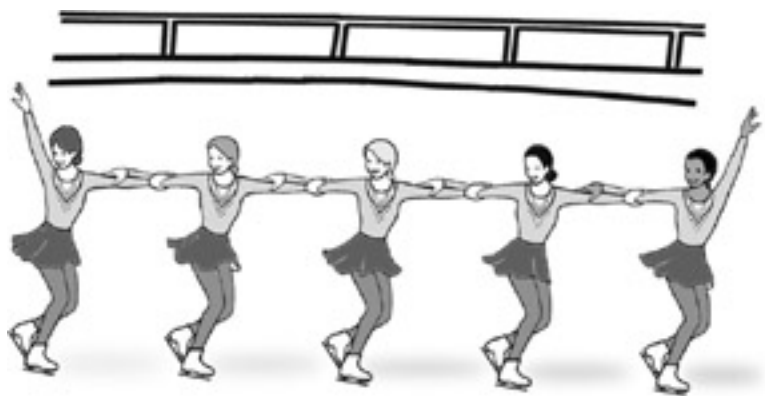
## ❧ Try This ❧

Ask your parents, good friends, coaches, or other family members what they like and appreciate about you the most. Ask them what they think your best qualities are. Make sure that you write down their answers in your journal. Do not be surprised if they don't even talk about you as an ice skater.



**Life is a gift.**

**I believe I am worthy  
of greatness.**



## 6

### ❧ Compete With The Best ❧


It is exciting to compete with other skaters who have skill and talent as great as your own. Competition pushes you to discover how much spirit you have inside. When you come face-to-face with skaters who are as good as you are, you learn a lot about yourself. These competitors can become some of your best teachers.

To really discover your greatness within, you need to test yourself with the toughest competition. You want to compete with the best. After all, it is easy to feel confident when you compete with skaters who have less talent and experience. But when you meet your match, you will have to pull from your inner power and see what you are made of.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Ask yourself, “Who are my most challenging and toughest competitors? What qualities and skills do these skaters have that make them so tough to compete against?” Write down all of your answers.

As you look over those answers, develop a feeling of respect for your competition. Try not to feel afraid or jealous of them. Rather, appreciate that their passion for skating is actually pushing you to bring out more of your own competitive fire.



Skating with the best  
brings out  
my competitive fire.

I find out how much  
I have inside.



## ❧ Experience True Victory ❧

Although there are no guarantees for a competitive outcome, your victory can be certain. Your *personal* victory depends on you, not the judges, not the end results, nor other people's expectations. Sure, everyone wants to win first place, the medal, or the prize. But winning does not necessarily mean gaining true victory.

True victory, the real gift of competition, happens when you apply your greatest effort, your best attitude, and your passion for skating. It comes when you are mentally tough, have steadfast will power, and never give up. It is achieved as you give all your heart and soul in competition. This is the kind of effort and energy that nobody can give you. It comes from you and you alone.

With this attitude, you develop self-respect and self-confidence. These are treasures that no one can take from you. This is your true victory.

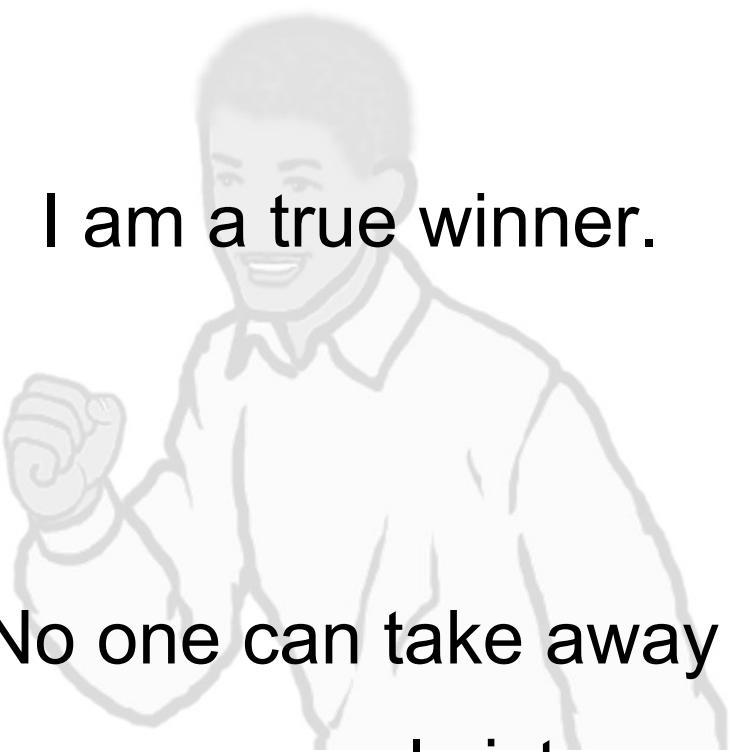


## ❧ Try This ❧

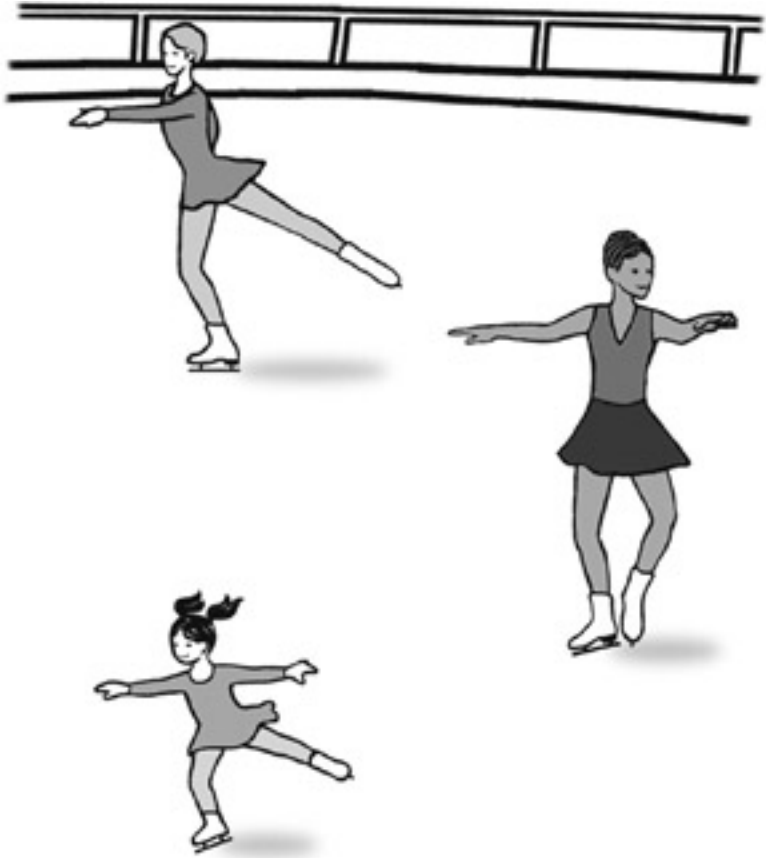
In your journal, write a simple statement about what victory *really* means to you. Include only things that you feel are important and true. Don't write something just because it sounds good or it's what you think other people want you to say. Write from your heart. Become really clear about your personal definition of victory. Before competitions, read your statement and let the words sink in.



I am a true winner.



No one can take away  
my personal victory.



## 8

### ❧ Practice With A Purpose ❧

For you to become an accomplished skater, you must learn to practice with great concentration and focus. You must bring your best energy and effort to the arena.

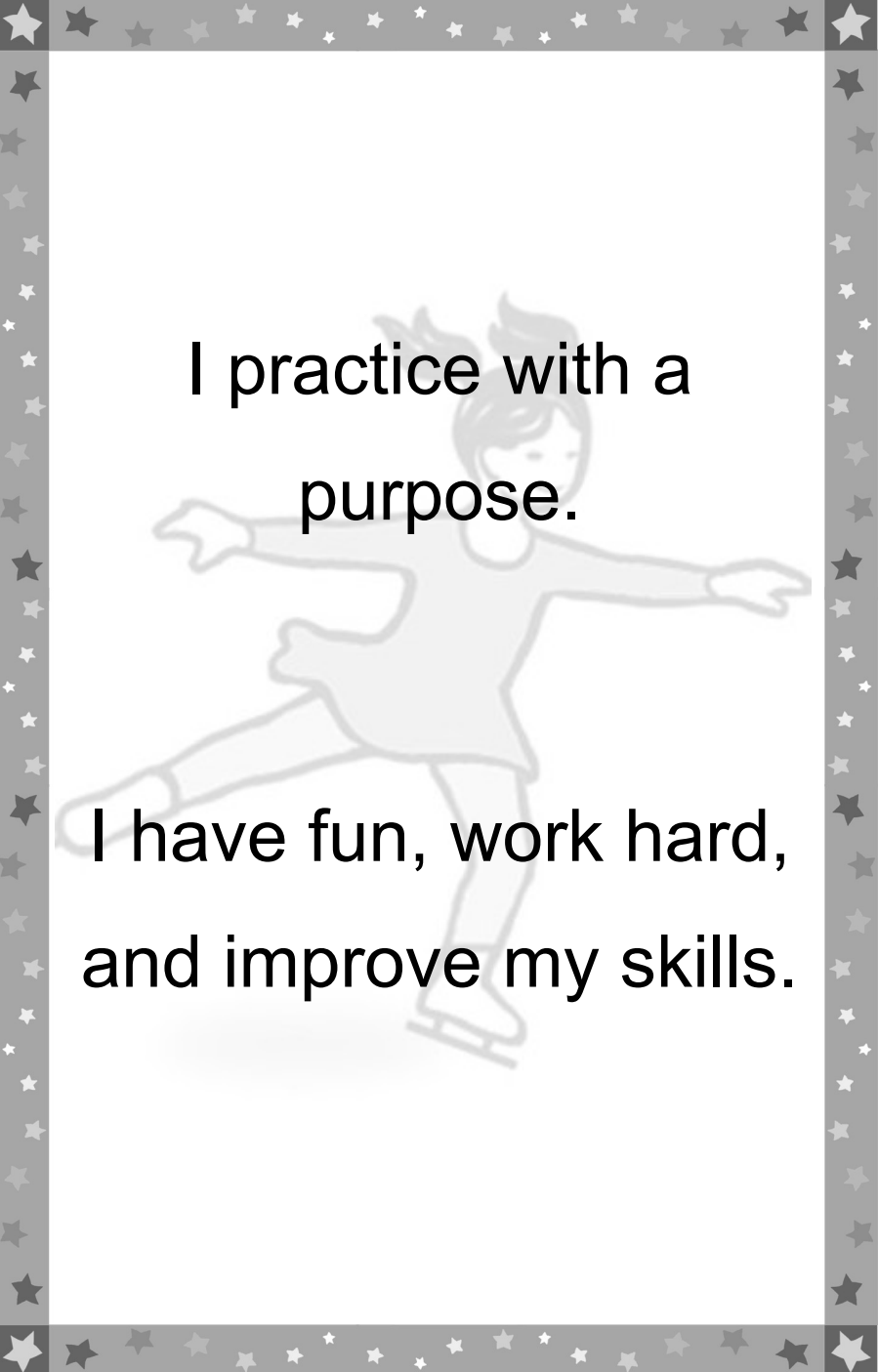
Practice is your opportunity to master your skills and repetition is an important part of practice. The more you practice, the more quickly you will improve. If you want to develop a new skill, put in extra practice. Do more than is required and you'll feel really good about yourself.

Practicing with coaches is great because you get to work with people who care about your success. They can push you to achieve more while making certain that you are developing the proper habits.

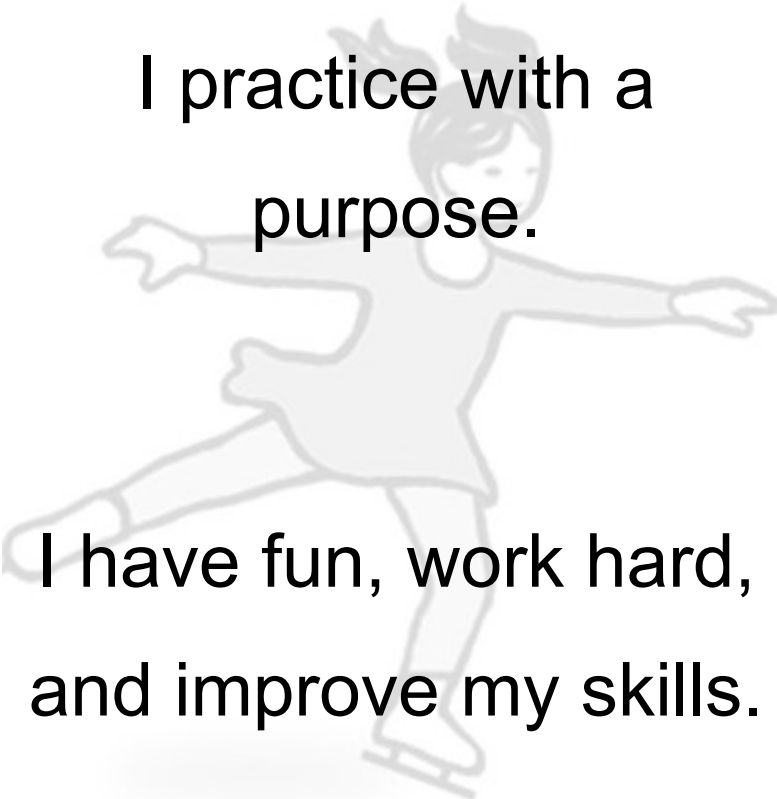
Also, spend some time practicing alone. This is good because you have to motivate yourself. Practice with the same intensity and effort you would bring to your performance.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Today, when you go to practice, go with one thought in mind—to improve! Pick one technical skill and work on it with all the concentration and energy you have. Keep working on it, doing it over and over, until you feel the improvement. You may not get it perfect right away, so be patient with yourself. Have fun while you work hard.



I practice with a  
purpose.



I have fun, work hard,  
and improve my skills.



## ❧ Be Creative ❧

Being creative means that you allow the artistic part of your skating to come out when you are on the ice. You feel special because your expression is unique. You are one of a kind.

You don't need to act or skate like anybody else. By simply being yourself, you allow your natural creative talents to flow. Allow your timing and movement to unfold into rhythm and elegance. This is a big part of creativity.

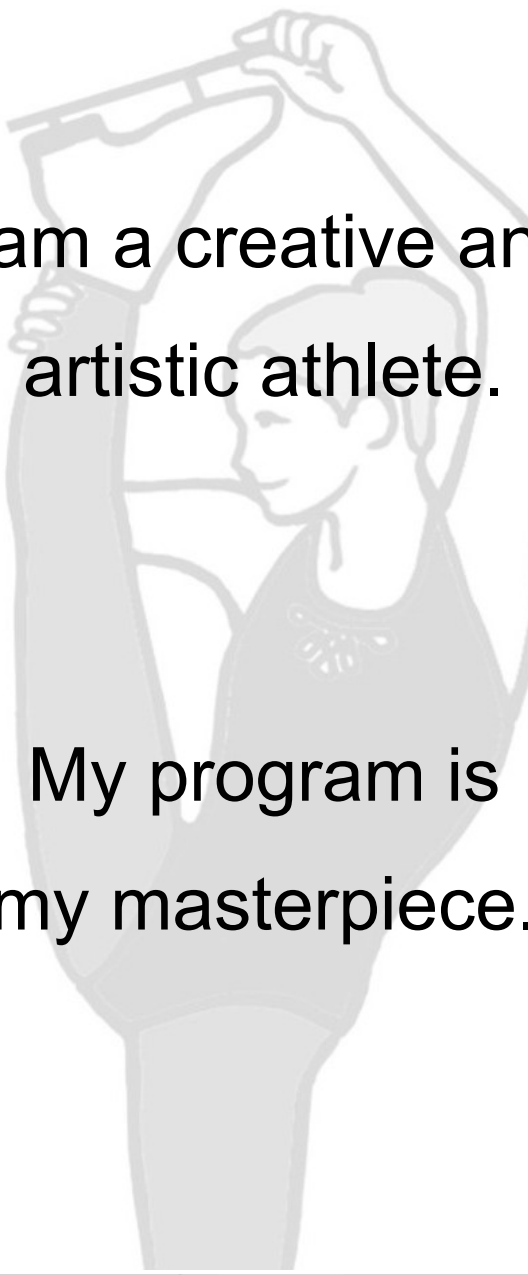
When you feel the music, you can create your own wonderful picture. The ice is your canvas, you are the artist, and your program is your masterpiece.



## ❧ Try This ❧

Find a time when a session isn't crowded and you can skate without worrying about bumping into others. Bring a song or a piece of music that you love and play it. It should be music that you are *not* using in a program.

While skating to this music, improvise your own program, adding your own moves. Don't worry about mistakes; don't even think about them! Try original jump combinations or make up new footwork. Create a new spin or trick. Let the music flow throughout your entire body—let it *move* you . . .



I am a creative and  
artistic athlete.

My program is  
my masterpiece.



## ❧ Be A Coach's Dream ❧

If you work hard, listen to your coach, and have a desire to improve, you are a coach's dream. Every coach loves a skater with this kind of attitude.

When you are a coach's dream, you make no excuses for what happened yesterday but rather give your full focus to today's challenges. You put all your heart and soul into practice and competitions. Bringing positive energy to practice not only pleases your coach, but it makes skating fun, too.

Being a coach's dream means that you understand the word *commitment*. You dedicate much of your time and are willing to give up other things. Your actions show that you care.

In practice, you work hard and develop good habits with a sense of purpose. When difficult situations come up, you are tough and courageous. You know there is no challenge too big for you to handle because you have the inner strength necessary to reach your goals.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Ask a few coaches if they ever had skaters with outstanding attitudes, skaters who were a coach's dream.

If so, ask them to tell you a story or share an example about these skaters. Ask what made those special skaters stand out in comparison to some of their other students. What special qualities did they possess? Write these down in your journal.

After you have gathered enough information, you will better understand what it takes to be thought of as a coach's dream. Are *you* a coach's dream?

I bring positive energy  
to practice.

I listen to my coach  
and work hard to  
improve.



## ❧ Work Hard for Greatness ❧

An outstanding skater believes that “there is no substitute for hard work.” If being a great skater came easily, without tremendous dedication and work, it wouldn’t mean as much. Skating would not be as challenging and success, not as sweet.

When you want to be a great skater, hard work is not only a must—it is also a pleasure. Time flies by as you put in hour after hour of training. Sometimes, when you push yourself to the limit, you will have an experience of deep satisfaction and joy.

When you have this experience, you understand that there is no substitute for hard work. You may stroke with full extension, jump with explosive power, or refine difficult footwork. Working hard on the ice is one of the best feelings in the world!

Your desire to work hard makes you special among the crowd. When you work hard, you gain immediate respect from other skaters, other coaches, and everyone who watches you. And you feel good about yourself because you know that by working hard, you increase your chances of finding your personal greatness.



## ❧ Try This ❧

Go to the ice arena where you skate and observe every skater. Ask yourself which skaters work the hardest. Watch how they practice. Observe how they warm up, work on their programs, and focus on improving. Out of all of the skaters whom you watch, choose only the ones that you think stand out as working harder than all the rest. Pay particular attention to their work habits and focus.

Then ask yourself if someone else were doing this exercise, would they choose *you* as one of the skaters who works the hardest?



I love to work hard.

When I give it my all,  
I feel good about  
myself.





## 12

### ❧ Remember to Have Fun ❧

It has been mentioned that there is no substitute for hard work. This is very true. Yet it is also true that skating can and should be fun. Skating is a time in your day when you get to smile, feel free, and let all outside worries drift away.

Sometimes, skating should feel more like play and less like work. Sure, it is important to develop good work habits and improve your skills. But remember, you first fell in love with skating because of the joy it gave you. You loved the cold, refreshing air at the arena and the excitement as you sailed around the ice. Things were simple. You enjoyed yourself.

As you become a better and more serious skater, the pressure of competition and the desire to win can cause you to forget about skating for the fun of it. Sometimes, skaters grow tired of the same routine, day after day, month after month, and year after year. Skating becomes more of a job than a joy. Skating feels more like work than play.

If you ever feel this way, try to remember the kid who was excited about gliding across the ice. Even if you are a serious and successful skater, every now and then, skate for the fun of it without worrying how you look. When you

jump, spin, glide, extend, and rotate, have an enthusiastic and childlike spirit. Enjoy feeling healthy, strong, and youthful. Feel the child within you, no matter what your age. Let go of all your cares. Be natural, free, and at ease.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Get some skating friends together and find a time when you can just play around on the ice. One game that is always fun to play is “Add On,” where one skater creates an element and each person adds on to it. Everyone has a part in making up a sequence of spins, jumps and footwork patterns.

For example, the first person does a waltz jump. The next person does a waltz jump and a half loop. The next does a waltz jump, half loop, and a flip. Everyone does what they can and everyone adds something to play with . . .



Skating is fun.



On the ice, I feel free.



## ❧ Confidence Comes From Within ❧

Sometimes you may get upset with people in your skating world. Perhaps you feel that they are frustrated with you or that you are not living up to their expectations. It may seem that they are not paying enough attention to you or not giving you enough support. You could be going through a period when you are just not connecting.

Although you may not be getting a feeling of confidence from those around you, there is another kind of confidence that no one else can give you. This kind of confidence comes from within.


To have inner confidence, you need to trust your technique and rely on your preparation. You have to love to compete and perform. You need to know that you have what it takes to succeed. You must go deep within to find your confidence.

When you are confident, it shows in the way you skate. You feel ready to take the ice and to skate toward personal victory.



## ❧ Try This ❧

In your journal, list every skating skill that you possess, from the simplest to the most difficult. As you look at your list, put a plus (+) next to everything that you feel confident about. If you feel extremely confident, put a double-plus (++). Do not ask for anybody else's opinion; this has to come directly from you. If you are honest with yourself, all of your pluses will show you just how confident you are about your skating. When you find a skill or any other aspect that did not get a plus, do not lose heart. Instead, think of this as a challenge and an opportunity to improve and to eventually add more pluses to your list.



I know that I can get  
the job done.



I trust my training and  
my preparation.



## ❧ Welcome the Pressure ❧

All coaches love a skater who thrives in pressure situations. The reason for this is that coaches know that pressure plays a big part in competitive skating. Over time, they have learned that if skaters are going to have success, they will have to use pressure to their advantage. They will need to channel the pressure they feel into excellent performance.


However, competition can bring out intense feelings of anxiety because you know you are expected to be your best. When you perform, you are judged and evaluated. Competitive skating forces you into the spotlight, often alone. There may also be expectations from your coach, parents, and friends that make you feel even more anxious. This is a lot to deal with.

The fact is that you have made the choice and commitment to be a competitive skater and will be performing regularly under this kind of pressure. You will be under the critical eyes of judges, spectators, and other competitors. Since pressure and tension in skating are unavoidable, why not welcome them into your life? Instead of struggling with it, make friends with the tension you feel and let it help you skate even better. Thrive on the energy it gives you and

notice how it brings out your fiery spirit. When you find yourself in an intense pressure situation on the ice, say to yourself, “I *love* the pressure. Bring it on!”

## ❧ Try This ❧

The night before your next performance, competition or test, go into a room where you can be alone. Get into a comfortable position and practice a few minutes of relaxation. Then, in your mind, see yourself in the arena where you will be performing. As you think about your program, you may begin to feel some anxiety. That’s good! Invite and welcome all the tension you can feel. As the intensity within you begins to build, breathe deeply. Continue your deep breathing and see yourself skating exactly the way you want to skate. This creates a mental picture of success. Continue to let the pressure and intensity grow. Keep breathing deeply. Welcome that pressure and intensity.



**I thrive in pressure  
situations.**

**I love the pressure.  
Bring it on!**



## ❧ Think Like A Beginner ❧

When you first started skating, you were eager to learn as much as you could. Your mind was open and your enthusiasm was contagious. Being new to the sport, you wanted to improve and were willing to be taught. You looked forward to practice and competition with a childlike excitement. You had the mind of a beginner.

Over time, things change and you are no longer a beginner. You will have had many hours on the ice and may have had several coaches. You will have experienced the highs and lows of competition. You may even become an outstanding skater.


Have you ever noticed that some skaters have lost their childlike enthusiasm? They forget how excited they once felt and why they loved to skate. They become so good that they take their natural athletic ability and their hard-earned skills for granted—and the passion starts to fade.

If you ever find this happening to you, remember why you fell in love with skating. Recall the enthusiasm and excitement you once felt on the ice. Reawaken your innocence and think like a beginner again.



## ❧ Try This ❧

This is a good exercise if you have been skating competitively for some time now. Whenever you feel overwhelmed with competition or are just taking it all too seriously, find photos of yourself when you first started skating. Maybe you or others have kept a scrapbook of your various competitions. Look at the first medals you won. Possibly, you have videotapes of your earliest programs. It is important to remember your earliest memories of skating. Try to feel the excitement you had as a child. Recall how much fun you had and the good feelings that flooded you. Remember what it was like to think and feel like a beginner. Renew the joy!

A black and white line drawing of two children sitting on a bench. The child on the left is a girl with long hair, and the child on the right is a boy. Both are wearing ice skates and have their hands clasped in their laps. The background is a simple horizontal line representing the bench.

Every time I skate,  
I have something  
to learn.

I love to discover new  
things about myself!



## ❧ Affirm What You Want ❧

When you know what you want, using positive and encouraging statements can help turn your goal into a reality. These are called *affirmations*, inspirational words or phrases that you quietly say to yourself or aloud to help you remember your goal.

When you repeat an affirmation, you train your mind to focus on what you want to achieve. When you use an affirmation, remember to keep it simple and speak to yourself in a natural way, as if you have already reached your goal.

Affirm goals that you feel are possible to reach, but don't limit yourself. It's good to set high standards and expect greatness. Think big! Say your affirmations with feeling. Command the champion within you to come out!

Think of these affirmations as if they were seeds planted in your mind. With repetition and practice, these words will firmly take root. What you are really doing is strengthening your belief in yourself. Over time, these ideas will help you to feel more confident. When this happens, you will be the skater you have always wanted to be.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Imagine that someone at the arena comes up to you and tells you very positive things about your skating. Imagine that those encouraging words fill you with confidence.

What did that person say? What were the exact words? Write them down in your journal and read them over and over. Let them sink in until you can feel that they are true.

What encouraging words do you say to yourself? What affirmations do you use to help make your dreams become real?



I put positive thoughts  
in my mind.

I speak encouraging  
words to myself.



## ❧ Communicate With Your Coach ❧

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to learn from your coaches when they communicate clearly? They teach you skills and knowledge through their simple and direct words. When they explain things, you easily understand them. Their instructions are clear and you are able to apply them on the ice. There is no confusion about what they expect from you.

Often, your coaches will communicate through body language or facial expressions. You can sense the meaning of their messages. You can just tell if they are serious and want you to work harder and concentrate more. Sometimes, they give you a smile, a glance of confidence, a hug, or a nod.

You should learn to be a clear communicator as well. At the right time, share your ideas. Express your emotions and let your coach or others know what is going on inside your head. Don't assume that they know what you are thinking or understand what you are going through.

Sometimes, it takes courage to speak directly because you may think that what you have to say will be rejected. Maybe you think that it isn't important enough. But



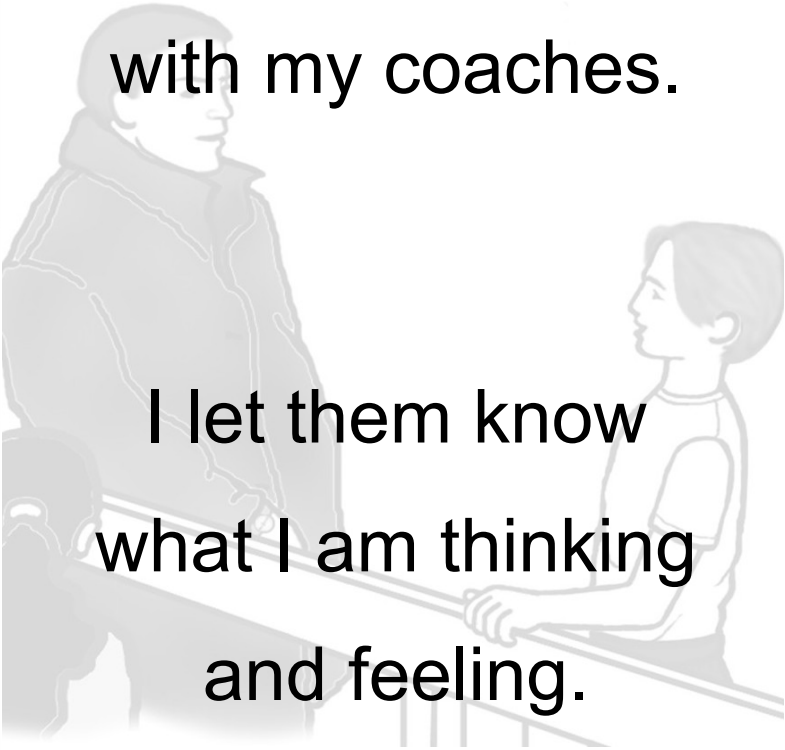
eventually, you will need to speak up for yourself.

Why not start now? Learn to clearly communicate what is on your mind. What you think and feel is important.

### ❧ Try This ❧

The next time that you feel concerned or confused about something that involves your coach (or anyone else, for that matter), ask for some time when you can sit down and talk. You may want to write down your thoughts before the meeting so that you will remember everything you want to say. Be truthful and honest when you talk, but also be respectful. If you do this whenever it is needed, your relationship will grow and you will find it easier to communicate in the future.

I communicate clearly  
with my coaches.



I let them know  
what I am thinking  
and feeling.



## ❧ Know Your Inner Circle ❧

As an ice skater, you are taking part in a competitive and artistic sport. You will be challenged as you face tough opponents. Your skill will be evaluated at each level. People will watch and comment on your talent, technique, and ability to perform in pressure situations. They will form opinions about what you can and can't do as they compare you to other skaters. People will talk about you; sometimes they'll say kind things, sometimes unkind.

But the only opinions that really matter are those from people who have your best interest at heart—your coaches, parents, family, and true friends. It is natural for you to want to impress and please others when you skate. However, some people who hardly know or care about you will make comments about your skating. Remember that these people are not part of your “inner circle.” How you choose to deal with their comments will make a big difference in how you skate as well as how you feel about yourself.

It can be very hard to let negative comments and opinions roll off your back. But this is what you must do if you want to be free of them. Try not to value the opinions of people who do not have your best interest at heart. When you


remember where these comments have come from, they will not have power over you. Rather, place value on what you and the members of your inner circle think.

## ❧ Try This ❧

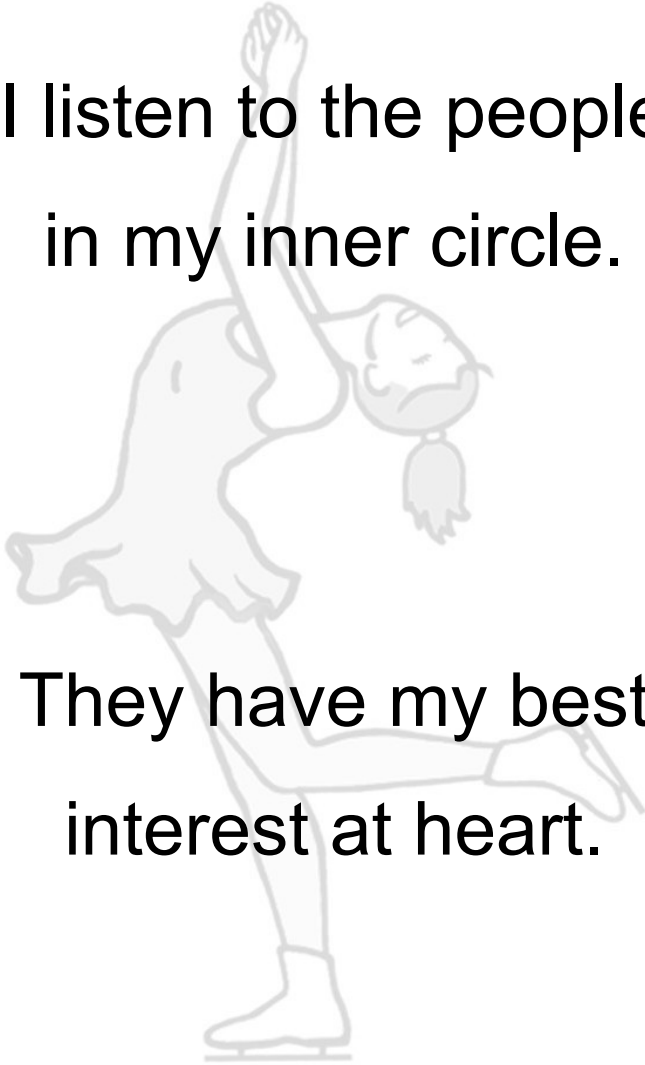
On a sheet of paper, draw a large circle. Then write the names of every person you know who has your best interest at heart at different locations within that circle.

If you hear negative comments, decide if those critics are members of your inner circle. If they are not, ask yourself, “Do these people really want me to succeed? Do they really care about my happiness?” If not, turn your attention away from their comments and free yourself from their critical and potentially harmful words.

If they are in your inner circle, listen carefully to them because you can trust them and they may say something you need to hear.



I listen to the people  
in my inner circle.



They have my best  
interest at heart.



## ❧ Let Your Emotions Out ❧

After preparing for competition, your expectations are high and you want to skate your best. You believe that you can do it and, when you do well, you easily show your happiness—you wave and smile, you may hug your loved ones, or perhaps you even cry for joy.

But what happens if something goes wrong and you don't skate well? Maybe you fall, are late on your music, or are not able to land all of your jumps. You come off of the ice feeling like a failure and no words of encouragement can comfort you.

If this happens to you, it is good to let your emotions out. Yes, there are times when you must be tough if things don't go your way. You have to wait until the right time and place to show your feelings.

But your emotions are real. Your feelings are hurt because you care so much. Sometimes, you need to tell somebody how you feel and share what you are going through. At other times, crying may be the healthiest thing that you can do. In fact, your tears can make you stronger



because they help wash away your emotional pain. Letting your emotions out helps you to move on.

Emotions are a part of your spirit as a skater. Although you have to learn when to do so, your emotions need to be released and expressed.


### ❧ Try This ❧

“Mad, Sad, and Glad” is a powerful exercise—you get to express a wide range of emotions. Find several friends with whom you feel free to express yourself.

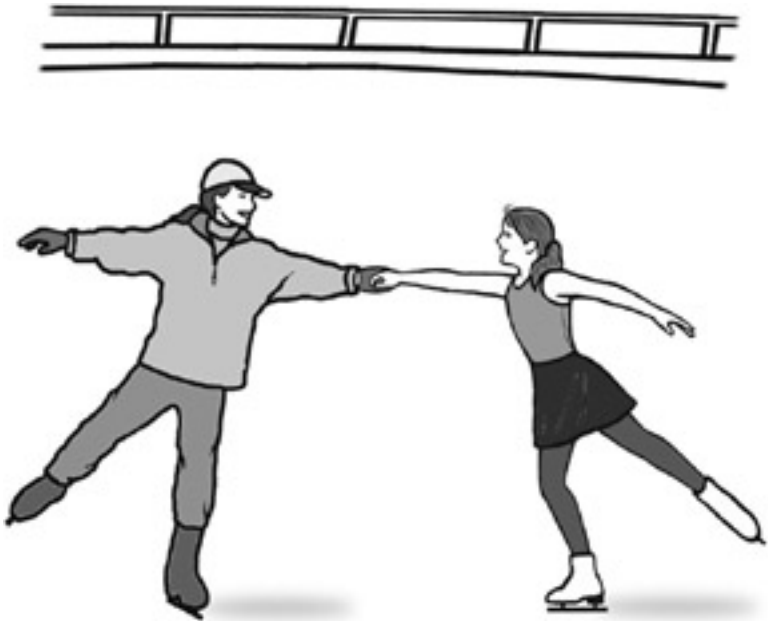
After explaining the exercise to them, you first tell something about skating that really makes you *mad*. Next, you say something that makes you *sad*. Finally, you recall something that makes you *glad*. After you’re finished talking, ask your friends to tell you what makes them mad, sad, and glad.

You can also do this exercise in a journal.

Emotions are part of  
my spirit.



I express myself  
both on and off the ice.



## ❧ Be Where You Are ❧

Sometimes you will hear skaters talking about their future as they look forward to competition. They think that the next level of competition is where the real “big time” is, where recognition and true success await them. Don’t be fooled. Never let your search for the gold in the distance blind you to the treasures at your feet. Right here is the best place and right now is the best time.

It also seems strange when you hear successful athletes talking about their past with a sense of longing to somehow get it back. It seems that a part of them yearns for the time when they were in it for the love of it instead of for other reasons. With a gleam in their eyes, they recall the times when their sport was fun and joyful.

Although it is good to have goals and aspire to higher levels in skating, remember that the best place and time for you is right here, right now. Take a look around and see all that you have. Appreciate your present level. Your upcoming competition is just as important as anybody else’s. Your skating today is just as important as that of the best skaters in the world. Enjoy yourself and be glad to be where you are.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Each time you find yourself worrying about your future, wasting unnecessary energy wondering if you will be a success, say to yourself, “right here, right now.”

Likewise, if you find yourself thinking about past mistakes and wishing that you could do it all over again, say to yourself, “right here, right now.”

This simple-yet-powerful exercise, if practiced over and over, trains your mind to think in the present moment. Your attention focuses in the “here and now” and you get rid of useless thoughts about things that you can’t control.



The best place is  
right here!

The best time is  
right now!



## ❧ Deal With Tough Situations ❧

There may be situations that arise in the skating arena that are difficult to deal with. Often, the difficulty comes from a lack of communication or a misunderstanding between you and someone else.

If the problem is with a coach, a friend, or a member of your family, remember that these are the people with whom you need to have healthy relationships. Work through the conflict and create a positive feeling between you and the other person. Confront these tough situations so that everyone can clear the air and focus on skating.

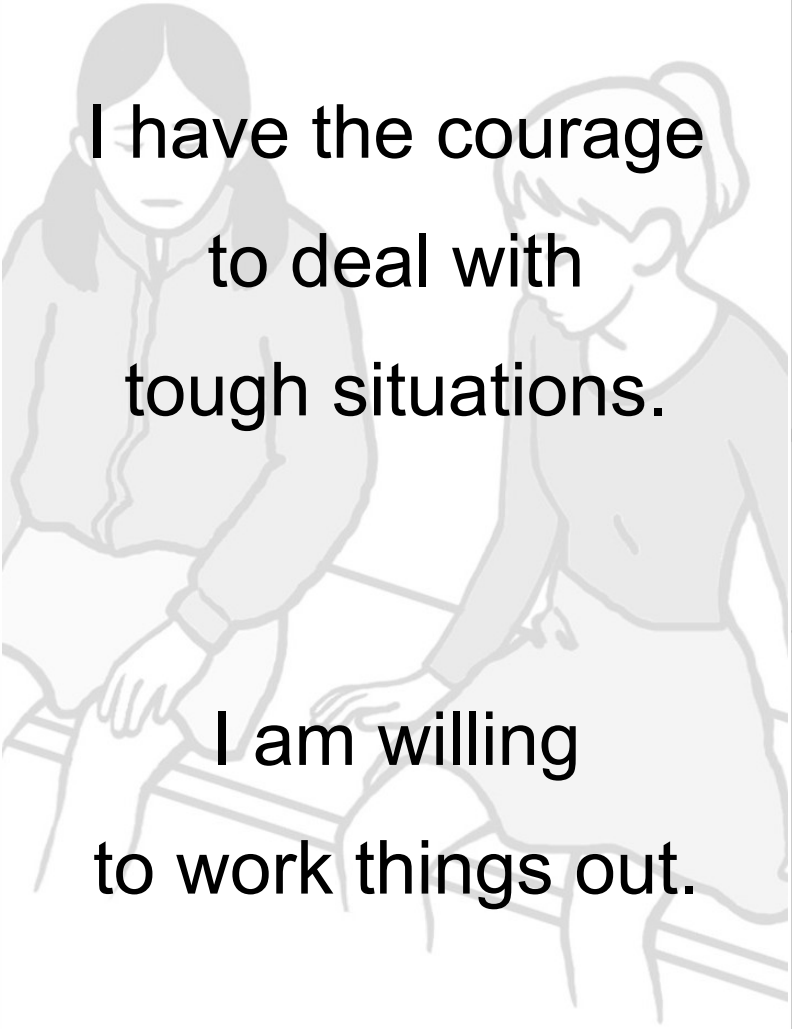
Sometimes it is difficult to bring up sensitive issues. But if you want to have a healthy flow of communication, you must be willing to talk. Be brave and suggest a time to talk things through. Find a place where you can be alone and can talk face to face. Express your thoughts and get your feelings off your chest. Be as direct and honest as possible without being hurtful. Listen well and be ready to hear what the other person is thinking and feeling.



## ❧ Try This ❧

Be aware of how people in your life deal with difficult situations. You may find that many people say they are going to clear the air with someone, but when it comes down to it, they can't find the courage to discuss their disagreements, frustrations, or challenges.

When you find people who are brave enough to confront tough situations head-on, ask them how they do it. Ask them how they find the courage to not back down and have the strength to work things out.



I have the courage  
to deal with  
tough situations.

I am willing  
to work things out.



## ❧ Strut Your Stuff ❧

Although nobody likes to hear skaters bragging about their accomplishments, there is nothing wrong with knowing that you are good. You have put a lot of time and dedication into skating and you are confident of your skills and technique.

When you are feeling good about your skating, there is no need to hold in your happiness. Be proud and confident that you can express yourself so well on the ice.

When you walk into an ice arena and feel good about yourself, a powerful presence flows from you. You are good and you know it, so don't be bashful. Don't try to hide that competitive glow! Once in a while, it's OK to strut your stuff.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Put on your favorite music and sit down with your journal. Make a list of everything that you like about yourself. Really get into it. Don't feel embarrassed or shy—after all, it's *your* journal! Anything and everything that you like and appreciate about yourself should be included.



I bring confidence  
to the ice.

I fill the arena with  
my presence.



## ❧ Enjoy Your Success ❧


It is wonderful when you perform well. It is a great feeling to reach a goal. When you stop and think about all of the time, effort, and energy you have put into skating, it's remarkable!

When you are fortunate enough to skate really well, take the time to enjoy your accomplishment. Celebrate your success! Take a deep breath, smile, and be happy. Be proud of your personal victory and enjoy it for a while before moving on to your next challenge. Give yourself a pat on the back. You deserve it.



## ❧ Try This ❧

The next time you achieve personal success on the ice, go out of your way to celebrate it. You can celebrate any way you like. You can have a special moment with your coach, with yourself, or share the moment with friends and family. You can also write about your accomplishment in your journal. *The important thing is that you give something back to yourself* for all the effort that you put forth.

A faint, light-colored illustration of a young girl with pigtails, wearing a jacket and boots, holding a bouquet of flowers. She is surrounded by falling confetti. The entire scene is framed by a decorative border of stars and confetti.

**I enjoy my  
accomplishments.**

**I celebrate  
my success!**



## ❧ Share What You Know ❧

No matter what your age, if you have been a skater for a while, you have most likely gained valuable knowledge about your sport. You have learned how to practice and prepare for competitions. You understand dedication and what it means to set a goal and reach it. You have developed skating skills as well as an ability to focus and concentrate.

To continue growing as a person as well as an athlete, it is important that you share what you know with others. There will always be beginning skaters who want to be able to do what you do on the ice. They may end up loving skating just like you.


When you share what you know with others, you learn something more about your sport and you feel good because you taught someone something new.

You don't need to be a coach to share what you know with others. Nor do you need to be an expert. At the right time and place and in a friendly and caring way, give back some of the same positive attitude and enthusiasm that was shared with you. It is often said that the best way to master something is to share it with or teach it to others. When you do this, you are completing a cycle of giving and receiving.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Ask a few non-skating friends or relatives to go to a public session with you. They could be complete beginners or maybe have a little skating experience. Once you are on the ice together and see how they skate, teach them some of the basic skating skills that you know so well.

For example, you could demonstrate forward and backward swizzles, a one-foot glide, a squat, and a snow plow stop. Depending on their skating ability, you could demonstrate more advanced tricks. Who knows, by taking the time to share skating with others, you may expose them to a sport that they might enjoy for the rest of their lives!

A grayscale illustration of two people. On the right, a person wearing a cap and a jacket is helping another person on the left. The person on the left is wearing a jacket and pants. The person on the right is holding the arm of the person on the left, suggesting assistance or guidance. The background is white, and the entire scene is framed by a decorative border of stars.

**I share what I know  
with others.**

**I enjoy helping people.**



## ❧ Free Your Mind ❧

Coaches and skaters often say that a successful performance is more mental than physical. However, many skaters only practice the physical part of their sport. They have not yet learned the importance of mental training.

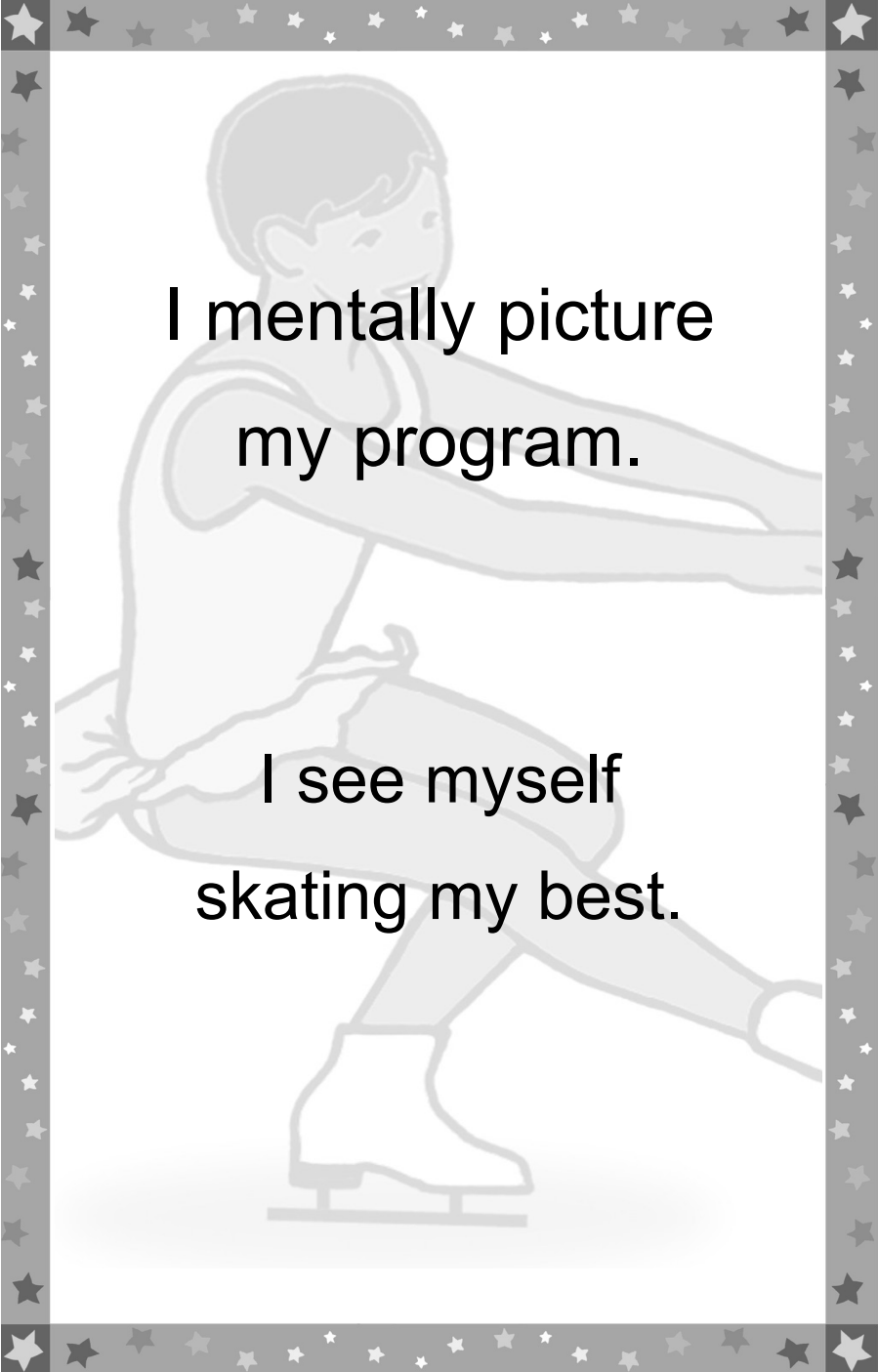
Learn to increase your power of concentration by focusing your mind on your goal. Your mind and body work together as one, so when you focus on what you want to accomplish, your body will follow along.

Practice mental training by focusing on every detail of your program. In your mind's eye, rehearse all the elements one by one; see and feel your jumps, spins, and footwork. The clearer the picture, the better your results will be.



## ❧ Try This ❧

This is an age-old exercise that quickly helps you to increase your ability to focus and concentrate. (For young skaters, make sure you have an adult's help.) Light a safe and secure candle with a flame that is easy to see. Place the candle on a table and sit in a chair next to it. Make sure you are at a safe distance from the candle. Next, look directly into the center of the flame. Do not strain your eyes; remember to blink! Continue concentrating on the flame for three minutes. Next, blow out the candle. Close your eyes and place the palms of your hands over your eyes. You will be able to see the flame inside the darkness of your closed eyes. Continue focusing on the flame until it fades into the darkness. Repeat once or twice a week until the flame's image stays steady in the darkness without fading.



I mentally picture  
my program.

I see myself  
skating my best.



## ❧ Know Your Inner Coach ❧

As a skater, you are constantly getting information from other people and from outside sources. For example, you are regularly instructed and given information by coaches. You may get advice from judges and other skaters. Sometimes, you will pick up information while watching skating on TV, or from reading skating books and magazines.

The most important source of skating information and inspiration is your coaches. They work with you to develop your talents, skills, and competitive spirit. Listen carefully to them.

However, it is also important to know the coach within yourself. All of us have a presence inside us that can give direction and guidance when it's needed. This is sometimes called "the voice of the inner coach."

Become close to your inner coach. Listen to its gentle voice as it supports and encourages you. In your own private way, become aware of this mighty force within you.

## ❧ Try This ❧

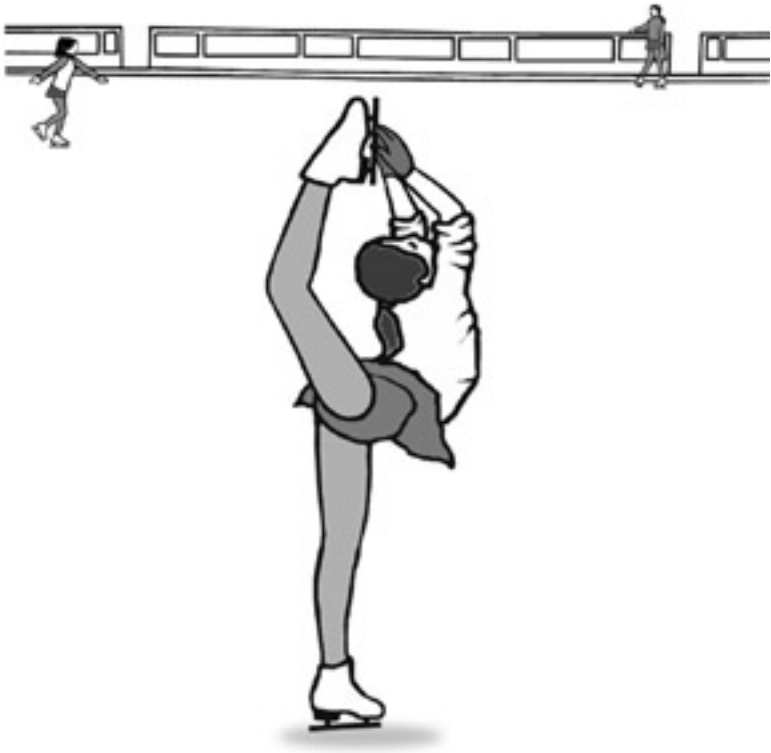
The next time you find yourself lacking confidence, feeling confused, or needing a solution to a problem, go to a favorite place where you can be alone. Be relaxed so that you can have a conversation with yourself as if you were talking with your best friend. Tell yourself what is going on and what you are feeling. Don't hold anything back.

Listen for inner direction so that you can clearly see what steps you need to take. Allow a few minutes of silence to pass as you listen for a message or an answer from within.



I listen to  
the coach within.

My inner coach  
is always with me.



## ❧ Aim At The Effort, Not The Result ❧

Doing your very best and feeling good about yourself is winning in the truest sense. When you skate well and are proud of your performance, you feel like a winner, no matter what the judges think. However, you have chosen to be a competitive skater and you know that your performance will be judged. The results will be posted and you will either place or you won't.

If winning or placing in competition is the most important thing to you, you set yourself up for disappointment every time you step on the ice. If the final results are more important than how you feel about your skating performance, you have placed your success and happiness in the hands of the judges. Since you may not always win, or be pleased with the results, you must learn to be pleased with yourself.

Naturally, it is good to want to win. That means that you have a strong competitive spirit and take pride in your skating. But there are no guarantees of how the results will come out. Who knows? Every skater whom you skate against may have an outstanding performance. Possibly, you will skate the best performance of your life and not even place.



Instead of paying so much attention to what the judges think (which is out of your control), why not focus on what *is* under your control?

Concentrate on bringing out your very best when you get on the ice to perform. Focus on doing all the things you have worked on in practice, one element at a time.

### ❧ Try This ❧

Immediately after your next competition, before the results are posted and discussed, take a few minutes to be alone. Ask yourself this question: “Did I give my best effort?” If the answer is yes, be proud of yourself. Feel good that you stayed focused and gave it all you had. For a few minutes, don’t even care if you placed—be free of worrying about the final results.



I feel good about  
myself when I give my  
best effort.

I focus on one element  
at a time.



## ❧ When You Fall, Get Up! ❧

Participating in skating can be risky in a variety of ways. When you skate, you run the risk of falling and hurting your body. Every skater falls and there isn't a skater alive who doesn't know how painful a hard fall can be. Also, there are times when you will make mistakes.

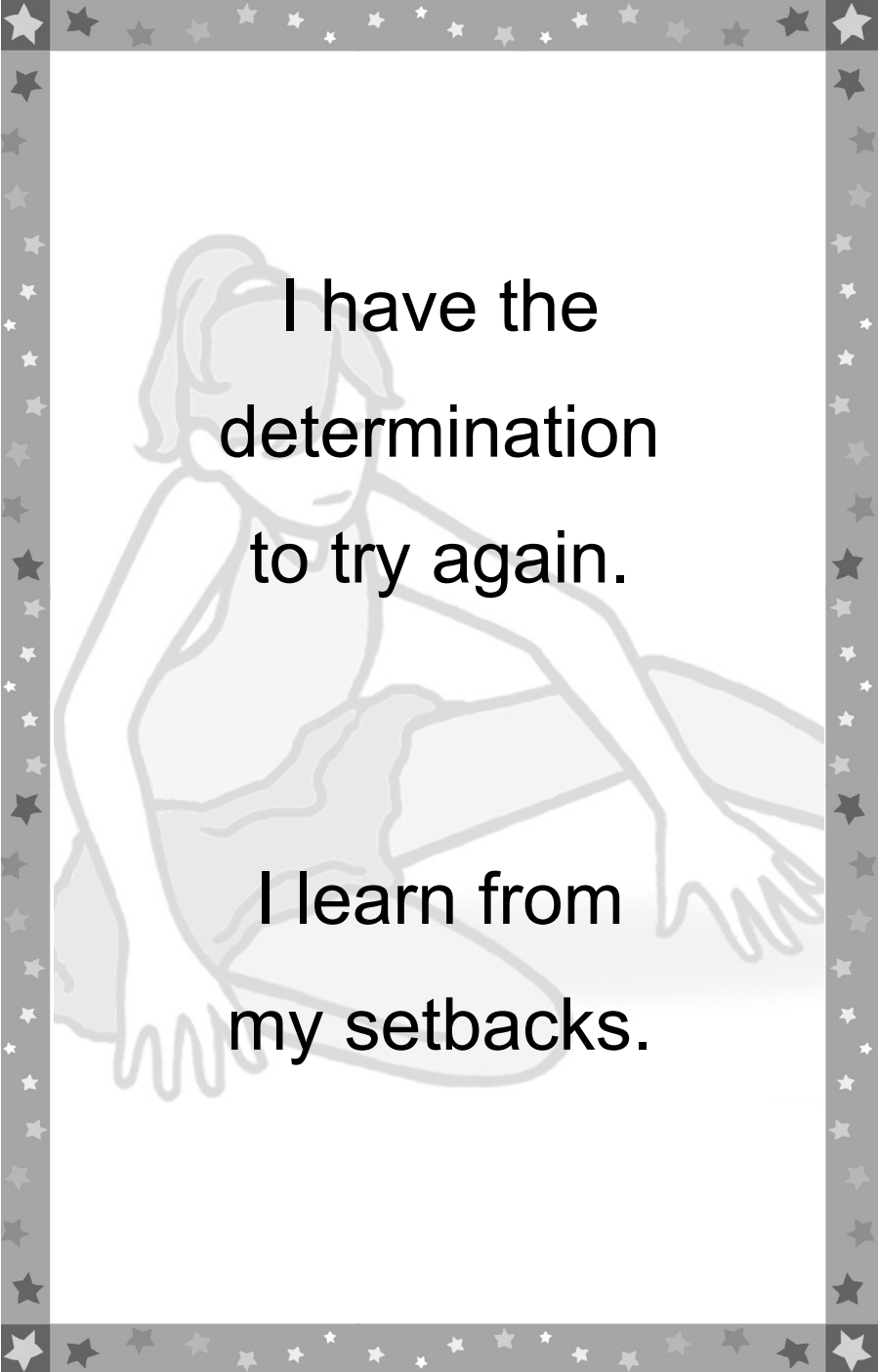
If you skate long enough, you will not escape being humbled. Although you skate your best, you could fail to reach your goal. You could temporarily lose your confidence and courage.

When you have a bad practice or performance, let it be the fuel that gives you even more motivation and determination to improve. When you fall or fail, find the strength of character to get up, move on, and try again.

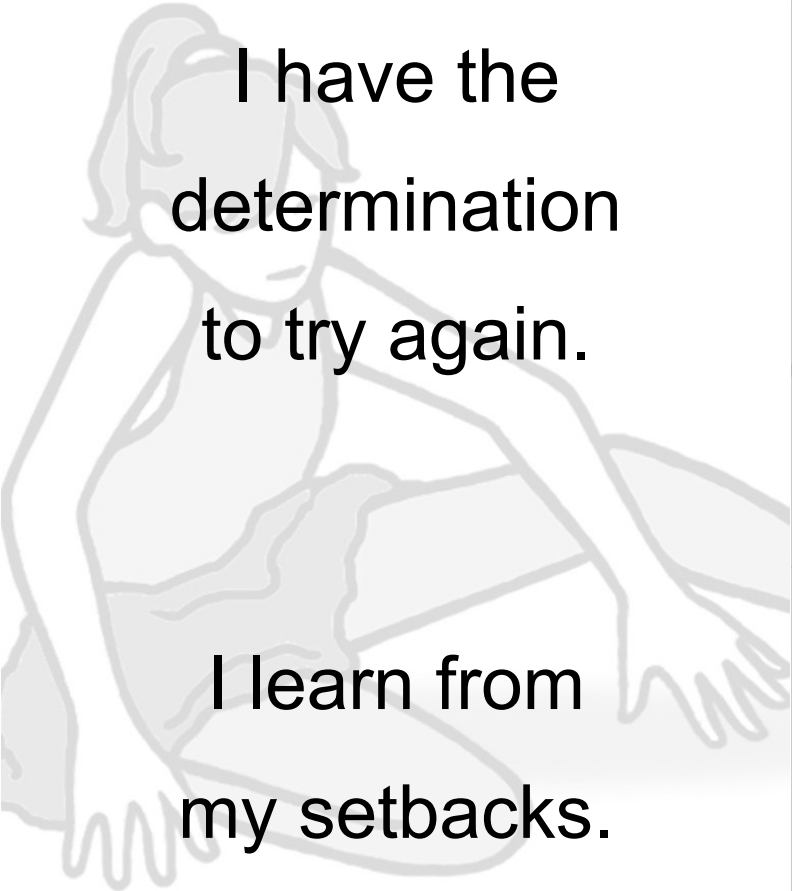
## ❧ Try This ❧

Write in your journal about the biggest setback or low point you have experienced in skating. It could have to do with messing up your program, not being prepared, or getting into an argument with someone before a competition. It may have had to do with getting too nervous or trying too hard to be perfect.

With each setback, one learns a lesson. What are the lessons you have learned?



I have the  
determination  
to try again.



I learn from  
my setbacks.



## ❧ Put Yourself In Their Skates ❧

In sports, compassion and humility are not often talked about. After all, you compete against other skaters and everyone wants to win. You are not usually taught to put yourself in someone else's shoes. You are trained to think only about your own success.

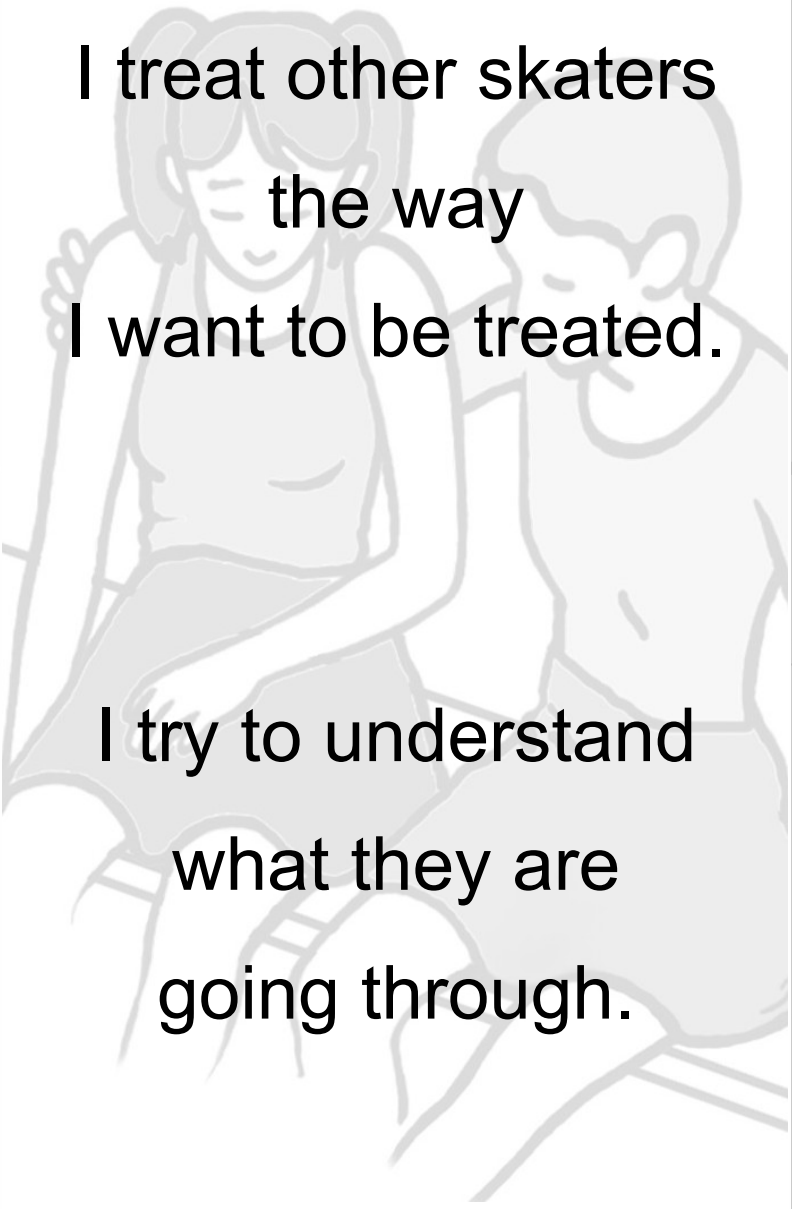
However, you can be a fierce competitive skater and still be a compassionate athlete. You can treat other skaters the same way you would like to be treated. You can win and still be gracious by understanding what others are going through.

When you are compassionate, you care about someone else's situation and understand what they are feeling. You care about more than just your own success. A caring person radiates kindness and inner strength. These qualities are at the heart of a true champion.



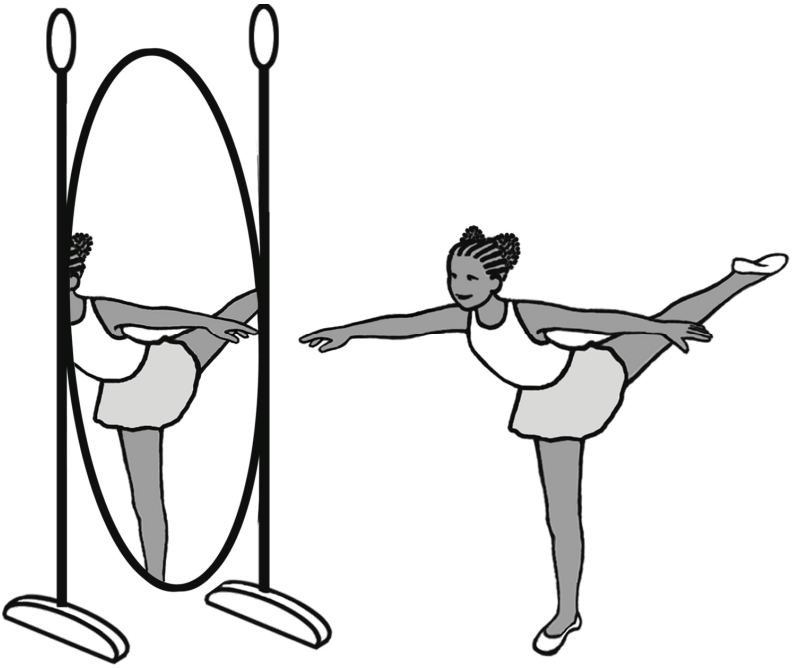
## ❧ Try This ❧

When you see other skaters having a tough time, this is an opportunity for you to practice a little compassion. From your own experience, you know that there are many things that can cause skaters to feel unhappy—a hard fall, a poor performance, hurt feelings, or any number of personal problems. The best thing you can do is to simply ask if they are okay and if there is anything they need. Be a superior listener. You don't have to give advice or offer solutions. Just let them tell you what they are thinking and feeling. Show that you care; sometimes, that's all it takes.

A faint, grey-toned illustration of two skaters. On the left is a girl with pigtails, wearing a tank top and shorts, with her arms around a boy on the right. The boy is also wearing a tank top and shorts, and has his arms around the girl. They appear to be in a supportive or comforting embrace. The background is a light grey with a pattern of small white stars.

I treat other skaters  
the way  
I want to be treated.

I try to understand  
what they are  
going through.



## ❧ Critique Yourself ❧

It is an important step in your development as a skater to critique yourself. Asking yourself tough questions will help clarify where you stand. You will discover your strengths and weaknesses and a better understanding of who you really are.

Identifying your strengths will build your confidence and self-esteem. Identifying your weaknesses will make you more determined to work even harder.

When you critique yourself, be completely honest. Self-reflection is essential to finding greatness within.

## ❧ Try This ❧

With complete honesty, ask the following questions:



What are my strengths?



Where do I need to improve?



Am I a coach's dream?



Do I practice with a purpose?

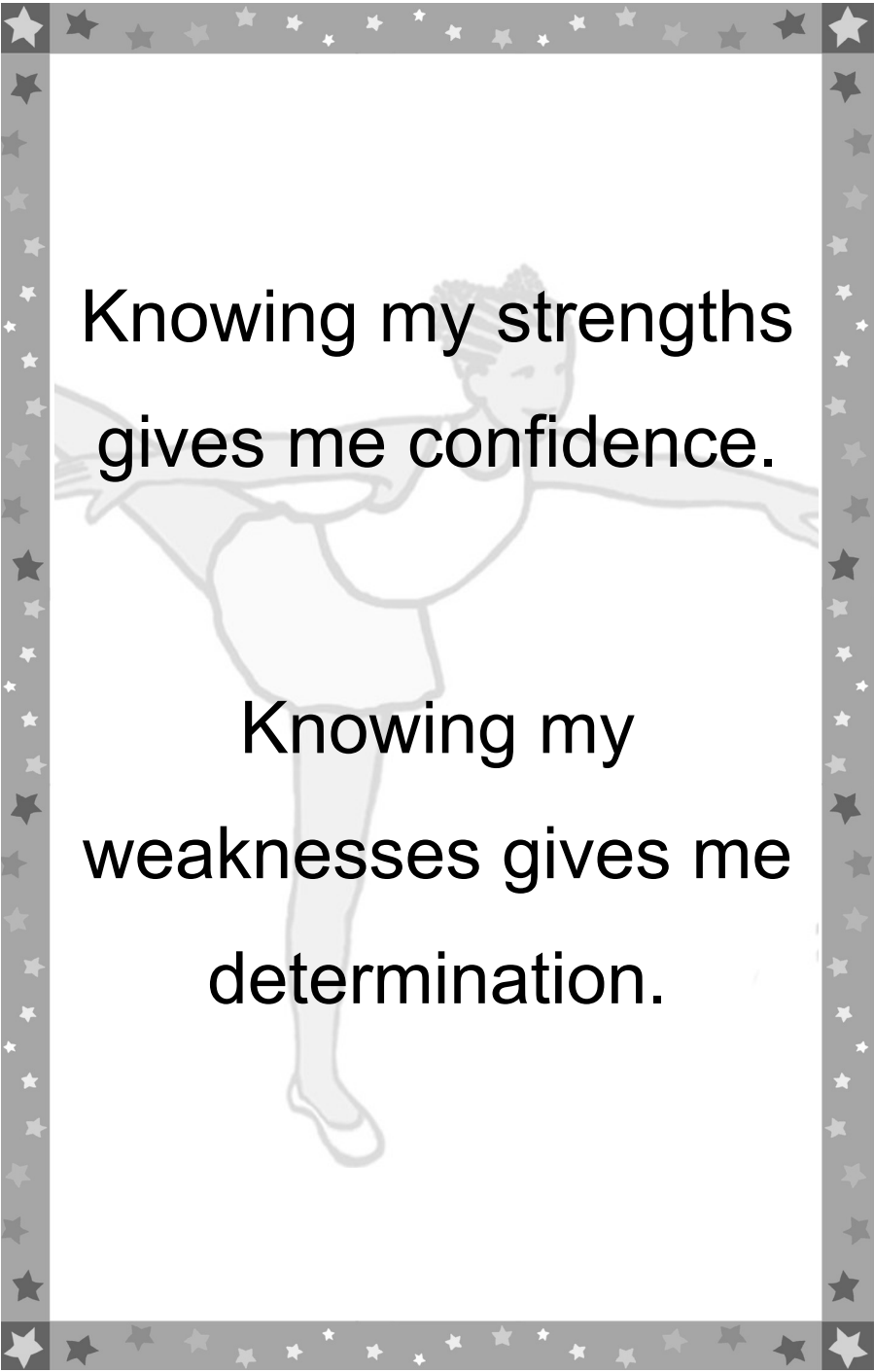


Am I prepared?

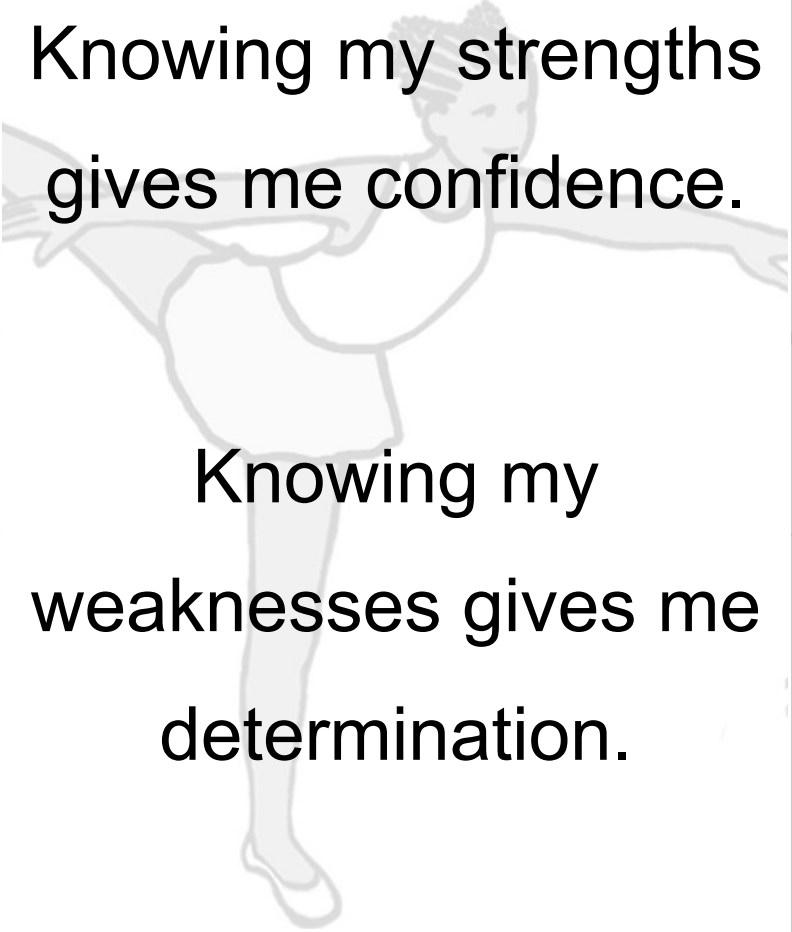


Do I enjoy competing?

Do this exercise regularly. Record your answers in a journal. It will be interesting for you to see how your answers change in the weeks, months and years to come.



Knowing my strengths  
gives me confidence.



Knowing my  
weaknesses gives me  
determination.



## ❧ Skate In The Moment ❧

Skating teaches you how to live in the present moment. If you recall, when you first started skating, you put all of your attention into what you were doing. You were not worried about the past or the future. You just wanted to be on the ice. You were skating “in the moment.”

Memories are as important as your dreams. They both serve a purpose. However, try not to dwell too much on your past accomplishments or mistakes. Try not to worry too much about the future; it’s not here yet!

When you bring your attention into the present moment, you become aware of what is happening on the ice *right now*—how you feel and what you need to do. When you learn to center in the moment, you are calm, poised, and confident. Your skating feels great!



## ❧ Try This ❧

Pick an element in your program and imagine that you are about to perform it at an event. Feel the pressure of knowing that you only have one time to do it.

Then perform it, bringing your entire focus into making that element the best it can be.

Try this with every element in your program. Each time you repeat this exercise, the most important thing to remember is to bring your full attention into each element, one-at-a-time.



I bring my full attention  
into the moment.



I know this time won't  
come again.



## ❧ Use Your Imagination ❧

When you use your imagination, you can see things in your mind's eye before they actually happen. You can see yourself accomplishing moves, jumps, spins, or footwork.

Learn to use your imagination. Let dreaming help you with skating—think about one of your goals and then see yourself doing it. Pretend that you are skating with perfect technique. Daydream as long as you want about every aspect of your skating. Once you see yourself skating in your dreams, that image will build confidence in you to go for it.

Before an event, pretend that you are skating your entire program. See yourself having a great performance. With your vivid imagination, visualize every element—see it in your mind and feel it in your body. First see it, then believe it and, finally, achieve it.

## ❧ Try This ❧

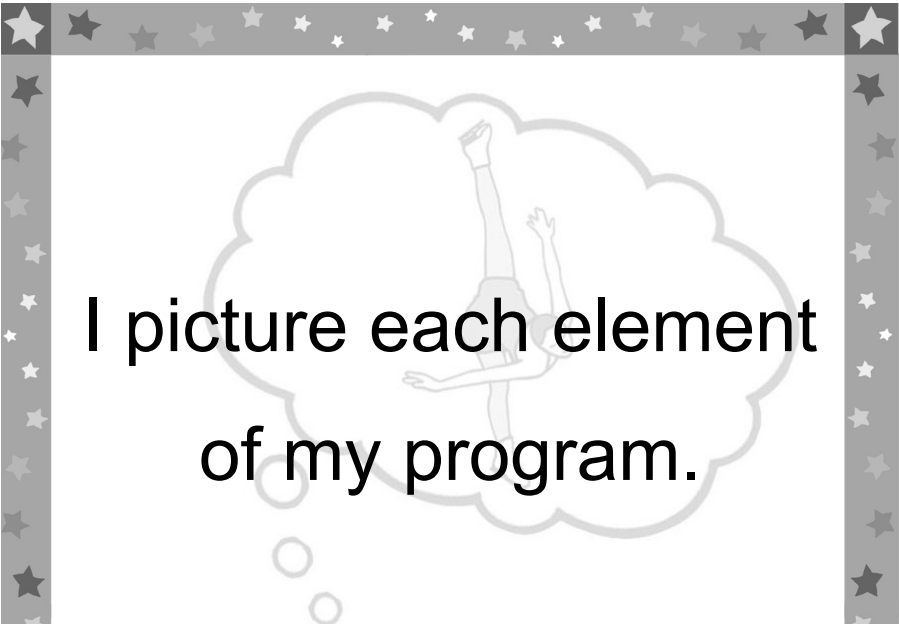
Imagine that you are stepping onto the ice for warm-up before a competition. Get on the ice and imagine you are in your knees, pushing with full extension. See yourself with your head held high as you skate tall.

Focus on your jumps. Imagine that your positions feel comfortable; you trust each set-up and follow through on your take offs. The power explodes upward from your ankles and legs as you lift into the air. You have centered rotation and are over your skating hip as you prepare to land. Your checkouts are strong, your timing for your combinations is precise, and your landings are balanced and solid.

Next, imagine that you find the sweet spot on your blade and center every spin. Each position is fully extended with a strong back. Spin faster and faster until you feel yourself blur.

Now imagine your footwork: you are quick and light on your blades. Feel the rhythm of your movement.

At last, imagine warm-up is over and your name is announced. Say something positive to yourself as you take a starting position. As the performance begins, make every movement count. The arena is filled with your presence.



I picture each element  
of my program.



I see my  
great performance.



## ❧ Relax For A While ❧

Finding time to relax is not as easy as it sounds. The world does not often encourage relaxation. You may live a fast-paced life, running from activity to activity wanting to get many things done. Sometimes, you may feel the anxiety of falling behind. You want to do well on the ice and still have time for other interests. Even though finding time to relax may not seem to fit into your busy schedule, relaxation is necessary.

The pressure of performing can cause a build up of tension. Although competitive tension is good and you need it to skate well, too much tension can cause you to tighten up and lose your rhythm and flow. Relaxation calms and centers you, allowing you to focus in the moment.

Relaxation is healthy for your mind and body. It feels good to relax. When you enter into a state of deep rest, your muscles loosen and new energy flows throughout your body. You feel recharged. Stress fades as your mind becomes quiet and open.

There are many ways to relax. You can listen to

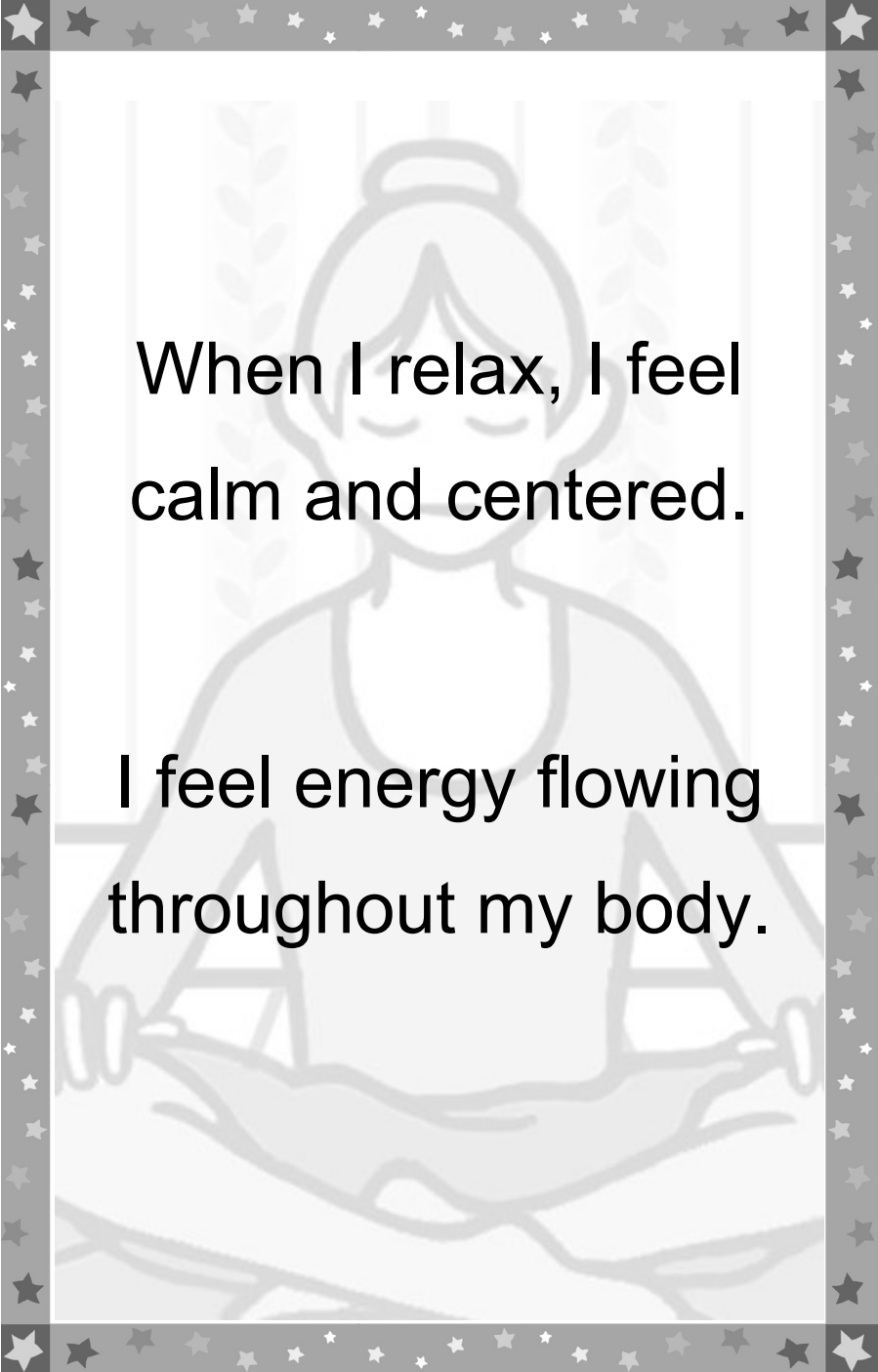


relaxing music, soak in hot water, or just sit quietly. Stretching with deep breathing can help to bring you into a relaxed state. The important thing is that you find a method that works and make time to enjoy some deep relaxation.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Find a place where you can be undisturbed. Get into a comfortable position such as sitting in a chair or on a mat with your hands on your knees or folded in your lap. Keeping your back straight, relax your shoulders and close your eyes. As you settle in, bring your attention into the present moment and become aware of your breathing. Allow your breaths to become full and deep. Breathe naturally as you notice the air move in and out. When your mind wanders and thoughts pop into your head, gently guide your attention back to your breathing. Slow, deep breathing will help you become calm and centered.

Continue taking slow, deep breaths for several minutes until you sink into a feeling of peace and tranquility.



When I relax, I feel  
calm and centered.

I feel energy flowing  
throughout my body.



## ❧ Be A Determined Skater ❧

When you talk to elite athletes about what has made them so successful, they will often talk about the power of determination. They understand the importance of having an iron will. Determined skaters rise to the top.

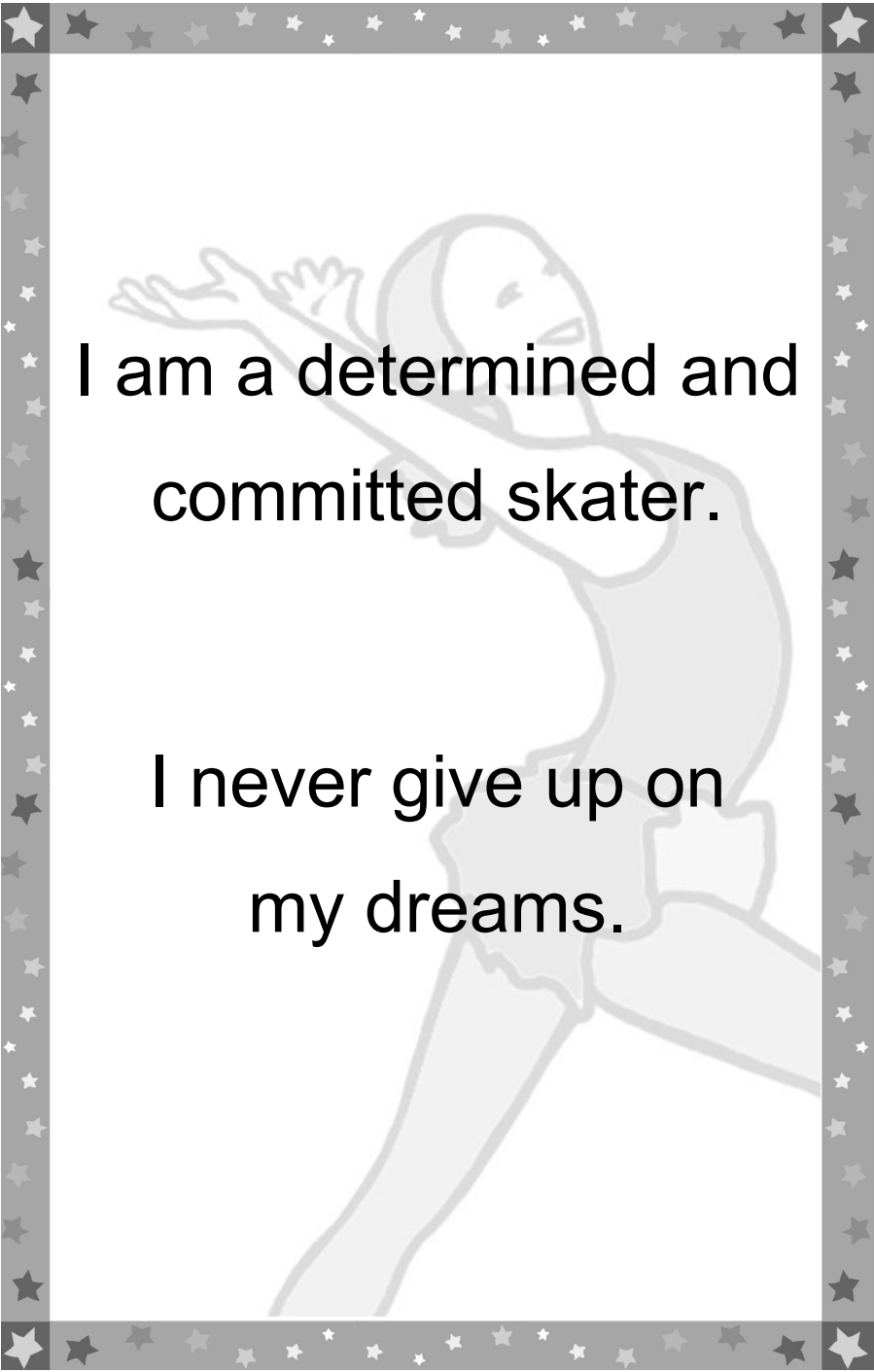
When you are determined, your desire does not lessen in time; it burns steadily, day in and day out. Be a skater with strong will and conviction. When things get tough, as they sometimes do, a determined spirit will help you through the difficulty. If you experience a setback in your training, being determined will help you to overcome it.

Be consistent in your desire to achieve, no matter how difficult the challenge. Protect your dream. Never give up!

## ❧ Try This ❧

Recall a time in your life when you had a big challenge ahead. Possibly there was something getting in your way and the odds of success seemed to be against you. Maybe others around you didn't believe you could succeed, but within you was a fierce power of determination. You knew that you could do it—and you did! Remember how you tapped into that power and how it pushed and guided you?

This is a good one to write about in your journal.



I am a determined and  
committed skater.

I never give up on  
my dreams.



## ❧ Protect Yourself ❧

In the world of skating, there are going to be times when you need to protect yourself. When least expected, there may be an obstacle in your path. There may be people who attack your confidence. For example, someone may be jealous of your success. These people may attempt to rob you of your spirit and enthusiasm. This may cause you to seriously doubt your abilities.

If this happens to you, stand firm and protect yourself. Although your feelings may be hurt, nobody can rob you of your confidence; *it is based on your proven skill and talent*. Likewise, nobody can rob you of enthusiasm because it is a part of you.

Protect yourself by believing that there is true greatness within you—self-worth does not depend on what others say or think.

Quietly, but surely, dismiss these negative influences and replace them with feelings of confidence and belief in yourself. Talk to yourself with positive and encouraging words. Build a protective shield around yourself. Using your imagination, surround your body with courage as if it was a cloak. Remind yourself that there is a champion within you.

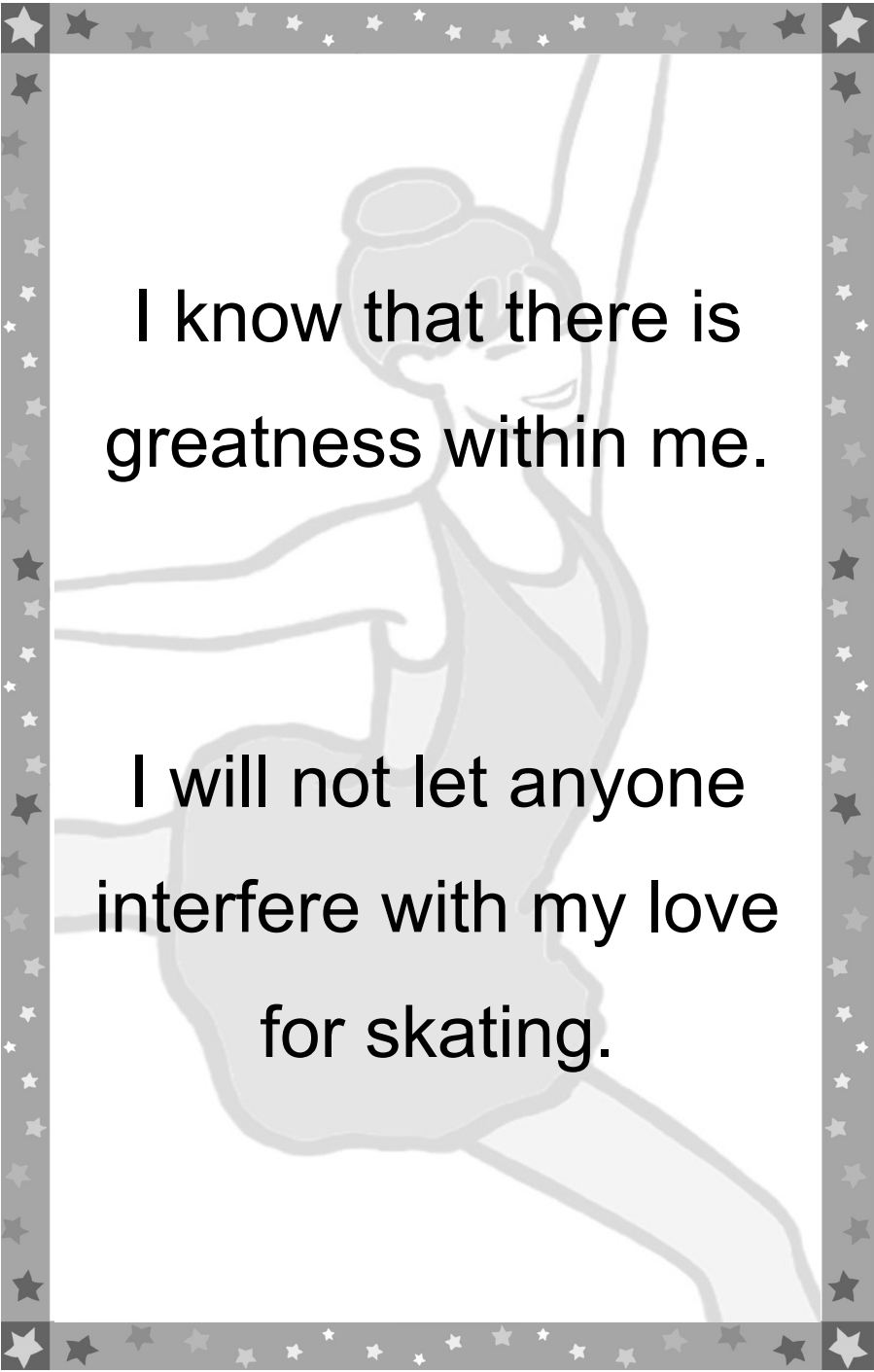


## ❧ Try This ❧

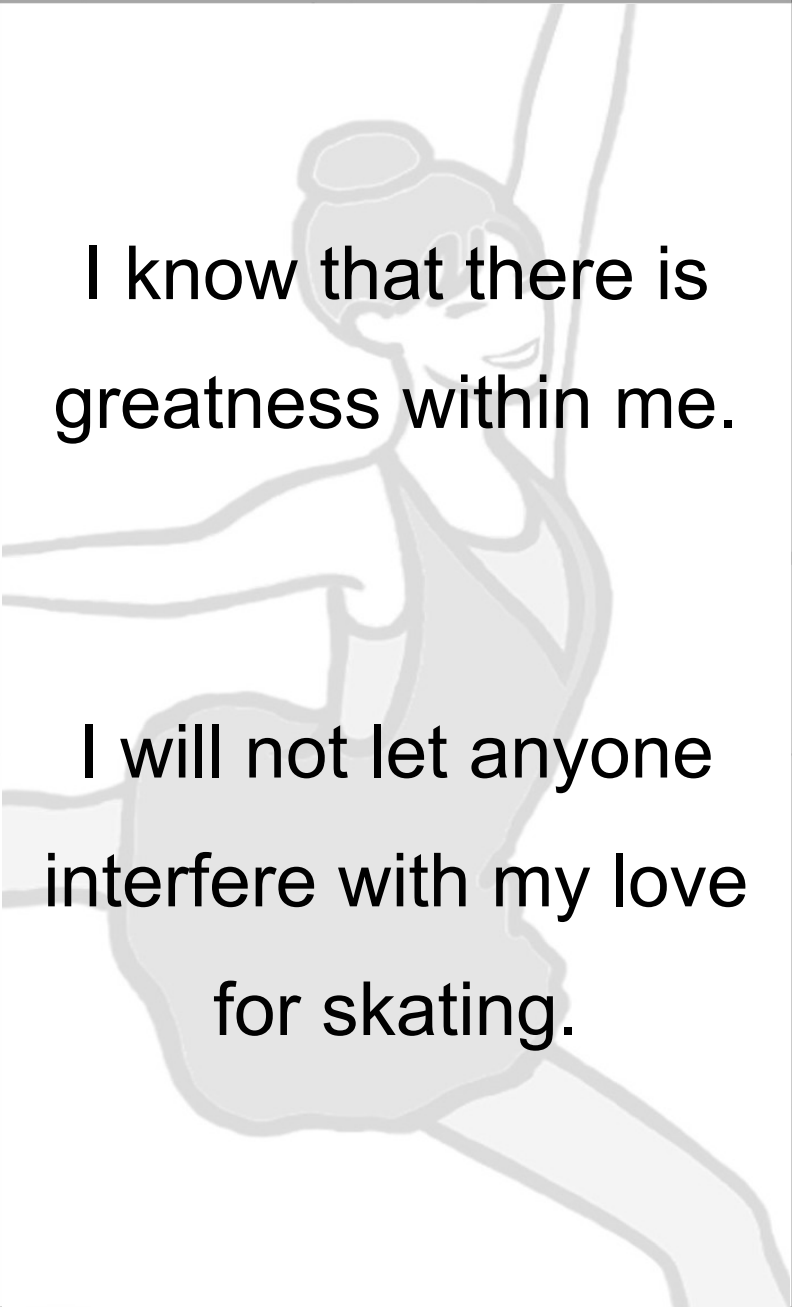
Get in a comfortable position and begin to practice a few minutes of deep relaxation. Make sure that you pay attention to your breathing, allowing your breaths to become slow and deep.

Then, using the power of your mind, begin to imagine that a shield of light is surrounding your entire body. Visualize it encircling and protecting you.

The next time you are in a situation when something has a negative influence on you, use this technique to protect yourself. Imagine that the shield of light is blocking out everything that is not helpful so that you can remain positive and confident.



I know that there is  
greatness within me.



I will not let anyone  
interfere with my love  
for skating.



## ❧ Ask For Help ❧

As you strive to improve your skating, you will need lots of help along the way. Hopefully, you will have a supportive family and good communication with your coach. However, coaches also work with other skaters and your parents have jobs and other responsibilities to think about. Any of these people may be unaware of something that is bothering you.

Don't expect people who love and care for you to be able to read your mind. Whenever you feel troubled or confused about something, ask for help. There is no sense in ignoring what you are going through or thinking that a problem will just go away. Sometimes, another point of view from someone you trust and respect is exactly what's needed. Asking for help is a big step in your personal growth.

If you need extra help on the ice, make sure that your coaches know about it. They may think that everything is just fine, but really you may be frustrated, or seriously questioning yourself. Don't be afraid to share your struggles.

## ❧ Try This ❧

Ask yourself if there is anything going on in your skating that you could use some extra help with. Are you struggling with an aspect of your skating? Are you feeling unprepared or anxious about an upcoming event? Is anything else going on in your life that is causing you to lose some of your direction and motivation? Do you need some help?

If so, identify people who can help. Have the courage to ask for advice. When you do get sound advice, make sure that you really understand it. Then, put this knowledge and advice into practice and see what happens.

A faint, grayscale illustration of a girl with braided hair, wearing a winter jacket and a skirt, standing on an ice rink. She is holding onto a wooden handrail. In the upper right corner, a pair of legs in ice skates is shown holding onto the top bar of the handrail, suggesting she is being helped or supported.

I ask for help from  
people I trust and  
respect.

I tell them  
what is going on  
inside of me.



## ❧ Push Out Your Greatness ❧

There are some days when skating feels easy and natural. Your movement feels graceful and powerful and seems to happen without effort. This special place is often called “being in the zone.”

Skating in the zone allows hard work and skill to come together into a flow. You have power in your jumps, full extension in your stroking, and a center for every spin. Your timing is precise and your exit positions are strong.

However, no one *always* skates in the zone. There may be days when it is difficult to find enough energy to skate your best. You may be tired or frustrated.

These are the times that challenge you the most. This is when you need to push out your greatness. With great concentration, discipline, and will, you must give it everything you have. You must challenge yourself during practice, putting your competitive spirit to work.

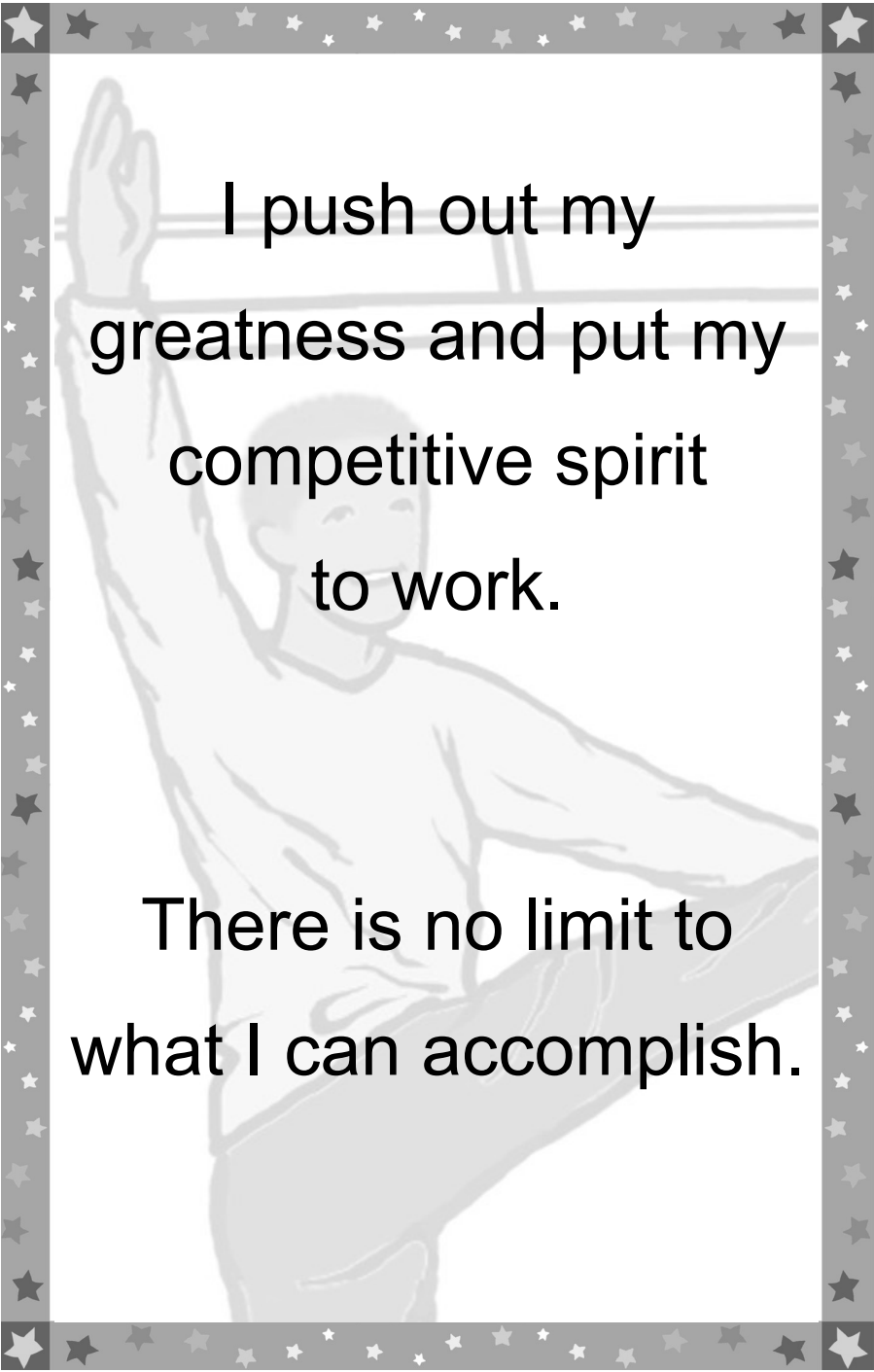
When you train yourself to push out greatness, you attract success like a magnet.



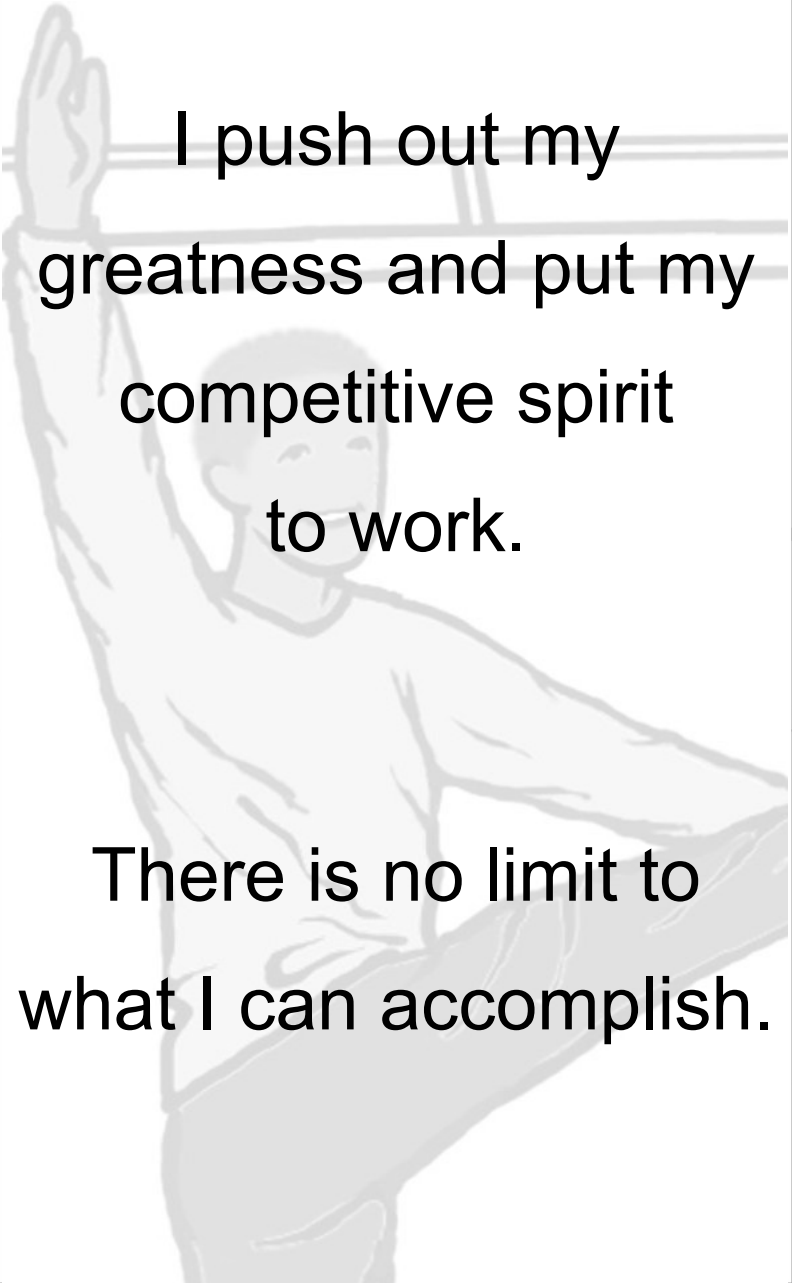
## ❧ Try This ❧

Pick any day in your skating schedule. For example, let's say the day you're thinking of is Monday. From now on, every Monday will be your "Power Day!" Mark it down on a calendar.

Power Day is that one day each week when you take your skating to another level, no matter what. On Power Day, you will practice with greater concentration, energy, and intensity.



I push out my  
greatness and put my  
competitive spirit  
to work.



There is no limit to  
what I can accomplish.



## ❧ Use Fear To Your Advantage ❧

Every competitive athlete has fear. Understanding fear is a huge step in your growth. This is not to suggest that living in a state of fear is healthy. Too much fear will rob you of your confidence, causing you to over-think and tighten up. However, having some fear in the competitive arena can be good.

In skating, there is always the chance that you could fall. There is always the possibility of colliding with another skater during a practice session. Also, when you perform, you risk having a bad performance.

The best thing that you can do is to learn to use fear to your advantage. Pay attention to any fearful feeling and ask yourself, “Why am I afraid?” If you are afraid of getting hurt, accept that possibility and become more alert and aware. If you are afraid of failing or falling, accept that this could happen and move forward with courage. If you are afraid of criticism, get ready to hear it and use what you hear to improve your performance.

Use your fear to find more courage and confidence.

## ❧ Try This ❧

(This exercise is intended to have you face your fears and then move on.)

In your mind, see yourself getting ready to perform. Then imagine that while you are skating, the very thing that you fear will happen, does happen. In other words, bring your fear out in the open where you can become aware of it.

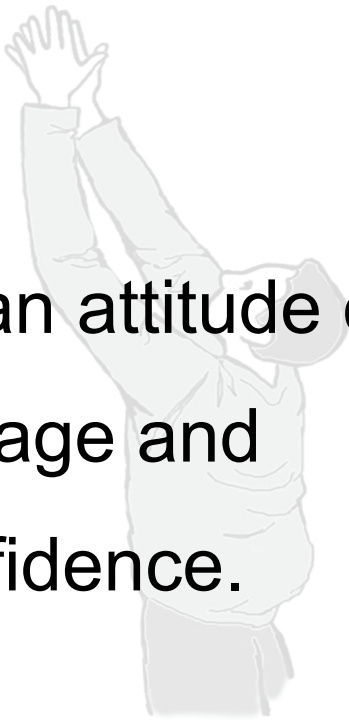
After you have faced this fear, you will realize that it is not the end of the world. You still have your love for skating and your spirit to compete.

Finish this exercise by once again imagining yourself preparing to perform. This time, see everything happening perfectly, just the way you want. Put powerful images of success in your mind.

Record the results of this exercise in your journal.



I use fear to my  
advantage.



I create an attitude of  
courage and  
confidence.



## ❧ Be Thankful For What You Have ❧

Competitive skaters have a tremendous desire to improve. They expect greatness from themselves. Once skaters reach a certain level, they usually want to test themselves at the next. It is satisfying for skaters to push themselves and strive for their personal best.

Every now and then, just appreciate what you have and how much you have accomplished. Appreciate your health and conditioning, the thrill of competition, and all of the skill and talent you have. Be grateful that you are part of such a tremendous sport and thankful for the friends that you have made along the way. Appreciate your coaches, parents, other skaters, and especially the time you have to practice. Look around and you'll be amazed at how much you have going for you *right now!*

It is good to want more. Just make sure to take some time to appreciate what you already have.



## ❧ Try This ❧

Before falling asleep, lie down and think about all of the good things that have come your way because of skating. As you relax in bed, feel how incredibly fortunate you are to have so much going for you. Create a mental picture of all that you have—all of your physical skills; all of your accomplishments, both big and small; the friends you have made; the hours you have spent skating. Feel the freedom that you have when you are on the ice. Before you drift off to sleep, take a moment to appreciate all of your wonderful treasures.



**I appreciate being  
alive!**

**I am surrounded by  
life's treasures!**



## ❧ Celebrate Skating ❧

There are so many great things about ice-skating. It teaches excellent life lessons and provides many wonderful experiences. For example:



You develop confidence and self-discipline.



You become strong and fit.



You get to perform and show your unique expression.



You have fun on the ice.



You learn how to concentrate and focus your mind.



You learn to develop courage under pressure.



You make friends with other skaters.



You share in the great spirit of competition.

**What else gives you all of this? Isn't skating *fantastic*?**

## ❧ Try This ❧

The next time that you have a report to write or a speech to give, do it about your love for skating. This will be an easy assignment because there is so much to write or talk about. (Your journal will be full of ideas and experiences!) Sharing your skating stories will interest your audience. They will be able to feel your enthusiasm and passion for skating. When you explain how you practice and prepare for competitions and how much fun you have on the ice, whoever is listening to or reading your words will feel your love for skating.



Skating is  
*a fantastic sport!*

**I love to skate!**

# WINNING SPIRIT NOTES

# WINNING SPIRIT NOTES



Tom Mitchell, Ph.D. has spent his adult life coaching and teaching others how to discover their unique, greatness within. His passion for exploring the boundaries of performance excellence began as an athlete in his native Pennsylvania. His avid study of sport psychology, motivation, and leadership, has led Tom to a richly varied career as a college coach and professor, motivational speaker, NBA sport psychology counselor, business coach and team building consultant.

Using many of the mental training practices that are found in athletics, he skillfully integrates sport psychology principles into business. Speaking passionately about the intangibles or "soft skills" found in highly successful teams and leaders, Tom teaches us how to practice these intangibles and create a winning culture.

Based on these success principles and proven practices, Tom co-founded MVP Performance Institute, bringing his speaking and coaching to a wider audience.

In 2005, Tom and NFL legend Joe Montana, co-authored an Amazon #1 Best Seller, "*The Winning Spirit, Sixteen Timeless Principles that Drive Performance Excellence.*" He also co-authored "*Winning Spirit Basketball*" with NBA Hall of Famer, Chris Mullin.

## Charles L. Darr

### Editorial

Charles spent his professional career teaching writing, literature, and humanities at the university level. His love of teaching, interest in book design, and promotion of self-awareness in his students, eventually resulted in his collaboration with the author as the editor of 13 books. Charles generously dedicated his time, editing every book in the Winning Spirit Sports Series.

## **Winning Spirit Sport Series**

The Winning Spirit Sport Series grew out of a book and a journal, originally written for my two young daughters 22 years ago, who were (and still are) athletes and performers.

Having been a coach my entire adult life, I felt it was important to give them something that would guide them in their athletic journeys. I wanted to provide a way of encouraging them to strive for excellence in their sport while having balance in their lives. I wanted them to have a better understanding of the habits and behaviors that are at the heart of an athlete's success: good communication skills, an outstanding work ethic, and the ability to focus and concentrate.

As a coach, my mission is to help athletes better understand themselves as well as improve their performance. My goal is to present universal character-building concepts in an easy-to-understand format, that can be put into everyday practice.

It is my hope that the material will encourage and motivate readers to achieve rich and fulfilling lives, both as athletes and as human beings.

— Tom Mitchell  
April 2022



**TOM MITCHELL**  
**WINNING SPIRIT COACH**

[www.TomMitchellCoach.com](http://www.TomMitchellCoach.com)