
MENTALITY

“If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves.”

~ **Thomas Edison**

“We are still masters of our fate. We are still captains of our souls.”

~ **Winston Churchill**

“Today I will do what others won’t, so tomorrow I can accomplish what others can’t.”

~ **Jerry Rice**

“I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become.”

~ **Carl Jung**

“Life isn’t easy, but you never quit. Never. I may not have been the best, but I can always give my best. That’s how you demonstrate toughness.”

~ **Jay Bilas**

Sometimes the routine of life gets the best of us. We don’t challenge ourselves, we don’t try to improve or grow. Instead, we remain in our rut or our comfort zone. We are okay with where we are at. But how many true success stories have ever occurred as a result of taking the easy way or staying the same? It just does not happen.

Comfort is dangerous. It takes pushing ourselves to new limits that we never knew were possible. It takes grit. We have to be mentally tough to maximize our potential. We must have a

mentality that embraces adversity as much as achievement. We must also welcome change for the opportunity that it is.

In 2010, Jesse Itzler noticed something special in a man that was running an ultramarathon. Alongside his six-person team, all rotating through, this man was running all alone, in a 24-hour race. Talk about someone with mental toughness! He ran a 24-hour race with the bare minimums of water, a chair, and crackers all by himself! This man turned out to be a Navy Seal. So, impressed by this man, after the race, Itzler tracked him down at his base in California, and invited him to stay with him and his family for a month to be his fitness trainer.

This Navy Seal was a perfect demonstration of mental toughness. He was a man who knew no limits, a man who understood that he was capable of so much more than that initial barrier of “you can’t”. How many times are we faced with this as competitors? When has your mind told you that you’re done or that you can’t go further? When have you listened?

I’ll be the first one to admit that my mind is my biggest enemy when I’m running a race or when I’m in double-overtime. When competing or working towards success, our minds are always the first to turn on us.

I know a coach that has his team run a treadmill test. The way this test works is his players start at a 7.0 speed and advance by 0.1 every minute. They go until they cannot go any further. Some players literally fall off the treadmill. This test is completely a test of mental toughness. There is no speed or

distance to reach that is considered as “passing the test”, the test is to see how mentally tough each player is. It’s a test to see who is going to quit once their legs get tired. Falling off the treadmill signifies that you were incapable of taking one more step.

A lot of people quit when they hit that first wall of “you can’t”. A lot of people will listen to that wall that tells them “stop” and be done at that moment. That’s what makes the difference between those that are successful and those that are not. Do you continue to push?

When we get caught up in life and what is comfortable, we forget to keep improving. It’s easy to fall into that trap! We don’t try to break that mental barrier to become tougher. Jesse Itzler knew the importance of continuing to grow and continuing to push himself, and that’s why he invited a Navy Seal to live with him for a month. His motivation skyrocketed when he saw how tough this Navy Seal was. The Seal had a trait that was indescribable, and yet so powerful that he wanted it too.

Jesse Itzler is no ordinary man. He is someone that is very physically fit. He seems to be very busy and shouldn’t be bored in life. He is a former rapper turned owner of the NBA’s Atlanta Hawks. His wife is Sara Blakely, the Billionaire founder of Spanx. Itzler founded Marquis Jet, a private plane company and then sold the company to Warren Buffet. He was at the forefront of the coconut water craze with Zico.

When asked why he was willing to shake up his rich and wonderful life by bringing in a Navy Seal to

kick his butt, he answered, “I felt like I was drifting on autopilot in my life. Wake up, go to work, go to the gym – repeat. I wanted to shake things up. I wanted to get better.”¹

Auto-pilot won't get us anywhere significant. It is not a guiding force that leads to success. Maximizing our potential is not easy but it is so very worth it. Our mindset will help determine whether or not we are willing to truly be as successful as we are capable of being.