

## LEADERSHIP – COACHING AND MENTORING PACK

November 2018

(Established 2006)

Welcome to this month's edition:

I was looking forward to receiving our Resilience Coach Damian's article, especially for the Leadership Pack. A key message I have taken from Damian's piece, which leads this month's edition, is "begin to realise, it's your interpretation of events that cause us challenges not the things themselves." I am going to recall this statement each time I face a situation over the coming weeks and months. Thanks Damian.

One of the chief aims of the Leadership Pack is that it will inspire and move you. I can't think of a better article to do this than **"Be aware, be very aware!"** written by my colleague, Sarah Bolger. November is Diabetes Awareness Month and Sarah asks us what does that actually mean?

For me, November is about reflecting on how the year has gone and planning for the year ahead. I do this in my personal life and for our company [www.dosh.org](http://www.dosh.org). I have written a blog post, 'GET UP AND GO! TAKE A LEAP FORWARD – PART 1' (Creating your Business Plan for life and work). Part 2 will feature in January's edition.

Mental toughness is a choice and a discipline, not an innate quality bestowed upon the lucky. In this article: '15 Qualities of Mentally Tough People,' Dr Travis Bradberry shows you how to get tough.

This month, I have chosen five Ted.com presentations which I personally recommend. Included in this month's selection is one from the late Stan Lee, the creator of a large chunk of the Marvel Universe. Stan Lee knew a thing or two about conjuring new superheroes from thin air. Another asks, why do some people do selfless things, helping other people even at risk to their own well-being? You will need to watch Abigail Marsh to find out.

This month's quotes have been taken from my wife's @JoyceRaw1 and @livelikearaw Twitter feeds – thanks Joyce. I am also on Twitter: @DoshLtd sharing leadership thoughts at 7am, 7 days a week. We welcome new followers!

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Blog: [www.leadershipintheraw.org](http://www.leadershipintheraw.org)

It's not about how good you are,

It's how good you want to be!

## Congestion not just on the M25



Take any large city and you'll find some kind of ring road to help people get around. London's M25, the Paris Peripherique and the Washington Beltway are three typical examples. One thing that these roads have in common is the frustration they can cause when it comes to congestion. The congestion isn't just caused by the volume of traffic. In fact, the roads are designed to cope with heavy volumes. They are however poor at handling drivers who drive erratically. A common example of erratic driving is believing there is a better option in a different lane. The more people switch, the more other drivers need to adjust their driving to accommodate them. Which in turn leads to a vicious circle of needing to change lanes and in some cases accidents.

So what has this got to do with understanding our performance? Our minds can sometimes feel like an overly congested ring road. Too many thoughts jumping in and out of our consciousness. Some going round and round resulting in us appearing to get more and more frustrated, just like someone trying to drive home on a Friday night. However, unlike the ring road scenario, we are not at the mercy of all the other drivers' behaviour.

It can seem like the things driving our thinking are coming from our external world. The work deadline, the challenging teenager, the outcome of the Brexit negotiations... There is an alternative way to consider this thinking, or at the very least where it's coming from. The alternative is to understand that it works inside out and not outside in. I get caught out by this continually. As I catch myself believing it's coming from the outside in, I realise that it is my own thinking about something that is generating my feelings (good and not so good). The thinking is brought to life by our consciousness which is extremely creative and compelling. As a result, we can get tricked into believing something is actually real when it's something we have made up that isn't matching the reality we face. Like being the director of our own movie.

Developing this appreciation, will help you think about the situations you face differently. This is how you used to interpret the world as a child. Over the years, the volume of thinking has grown. Much of it, unfortunately, is contaminated. The good news is that if we can tap into our wisdom we will be able to quieten/reduce the thinking down to something more useful. As we do this our creativity will get a chance to operate as it was intended. As a result, many of the things you might think of as problems, will either reduce or disappear completely, as you begin to realise it's your interpretation of events that cause us challenges not the things themselves. This isn't to say we don't have difficult things to deal with. I'm confident you will. It means that if we can appreciate the innate capacity to learn and be creative in our approach to handling them, we might just find we get more helpful and empowered thinking – and as a consequence, better results.

As always I'm interested in any thoughts or observations you might have.

Damian Piper

Performance Coach and Consultant

Are you a tech leader? You could benefit from the Thriving Tech Leaders LinkedIn Group

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12126158>

Like on Facebook [www.facebook.com/effectivechallenge/](http://www.facebook.com/effectivechallenge/)

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"Great leaders are almost always simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate and doubt to offer a solution everybody can understand". Colin Powell

**Be aware, be very aware!**

**<https://leadershipintheraw.org/2016/11/29/be-aware-diabetes-awareness-month/>**

November is Diabetes Awareness Month but what does that actually mean. Well, to be truthful, probably not a lot to most people. Unless it involves someone that you are close to, a friend or family member, there is never that need to delve that little bit deeper than seeing it on social media and maybe scrolling past it or maybe hitting the like button just to look involved. I am as guilty of that as the next person until for us, all of a sudden, it did actually mean something.

In 2013, our little boy Charlie was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes and that day is ingrained in my memory. I remember every word that the GP said to me and then once we got to the hospital everything became a blur of urgency, medicines, explanations, injections, insulin. People were using medical jargon I did not understand like DKA and to be honest it was downright scary. I wasn't aware when we went in that within a few weeks I would be an expert on nutrition, biology, chemistry, food science and begin thinking like a chemist. They also don't tell you when you are in hospital that you will become more determined than you ever thought possible to ensure that your little one doesn't get left out of things. The hardest thing for me is when school friends don't invite him to playdates, parties and sleepovers because other parents are scared of the responsibility and too right, I would be the same in their shoes. We go on every school trip with him and my husband even went on his residential trip this year, so he now knows how to build a raft and has many a campfire song up his sleeve!

If you have no experience of anyone with diabetes, firstly I am so pleased for you, but secondly I would say it's more important for you to make yourself aware of the symptoms, as you won't have the knowledge that naturally comes from knowing a sufferer. Every 6 seconds, someone in the world dies from a diabetes related complication but although there are nearly 3 million people living with the condition in the UK alone, only 10% of them have Type 1 like Charlie, so people don't always understand it or are even aware of it. There are over 29,000 children in our country with Type 1 and

this scary number is growing by about 4% every year, especially in children under the age of 5. Nobody knows why. It has nothing to do with diet or exercise and is not hereditary.

Let me explain. There are two main types of diabetes. Most people when they think of diabetes think of Type 2, which is where the pancreas doesn't produce enough insulin or the body doesn't react properly to insulin. It usually, but not always, appears in people over the age of 40 and is generally treated with diet and activity, although medication or insulin can also be required.

Type 1 diabetes, like Charlies, on the other hand, is a very different disease. It is an autoimmune disease which mainly affects children and has no cure. The pancreas does not produce insulin at all and as a parent you have to literally step in and be the pancreas for them. I can't remember my career counsellor mentioning that job!! For you or me, our bodies naturally produce substances to keep our blood glucose at a safe level but for Charlie that's a full time job! He has to test his blood 10-15 times a day, he has to calculate how much carbohydrate is in everything that he eats and I mean everything and then he has to work out the correct amount of insulin to give to counteract the food. We try our best to control his levels but it's impossible. You must have heard the phrase "like plaiting fog" well I think it was meant for us. Everything affects him. Eating, not eating, exercise, just sitting around, being unwell, being too cold, being too hot, stress, excitement and the best one of all... growing up! Yes that's right growth hormones are my worst fear especially as they tend to kick in more when Charlie sleeps. During the day, Charlie can tell me when he feels "low" or "high" – that always gets a few funny stares in public. When he is asleep though he can't do that obviously, so we test his blood 2-3 times throughout every night. It was like at the age of 7 we had a newborn again but without the nappies thankfully! Most parents are so glad when they get their children to bed but for us we can't wait for him to get up safely in the morning.

SO ... What do you all now need to do? Well, as a parent you definitely need to know what to look for and how to act quickly. Type 1 diabetes hides very easily in childhood ailments and is often passed off by GPs as flu sometimes with fatal consequences. Thankfully, my GP was fantastic but that's not always the case. The things that you need to look for are listed below but there are far more symptoms:

1. Feeling more tired than usual
2. Losing weight
3. Going to the toilet more often
4. Being more thirsty than usual

In hindsight, Charlie's symptoms were coming on for probably over a year.

He started by vomiting. Not regularly so that you would be concerned, just maybe once every 6 weeks or so. He was never ill before or after vomiting and was full of life at that point. He would simply stop in his tracks, vomit and then run off again as though nothing had happened. **I put it down to excitement or his food not having settled!**

Then his legs ached. **Growing pains I said.**

A rash. **It's so hot this summer, it must be heat rash!**

Then he started to drink more. **Remember that hot summer?**

Go to the toilet more. **Well he was drinking more it just made sense!**

Then came the tiredness and the loss of weight and then I became concerned and took him to the GP but not before he developed fruity breath, like pear drops. This, I now know, is a sign of diabetic keto-acidosis!! Pheww long word. So that's what DKA was in hospital!! This is the body starting to break down fat for fuel and can be fatal.

But you can see how you can miss some of these signs. For goodness sake, I missed all of them for quite a while, as they don't all come together so you don't do the maths.

If my contribution to Diabetes Awareness Month is to get just one person to read this post and remember even some of it then I am happy with my little self.

Please take some time, if you can, to have a look at the short slideshow that Charlie has put together, with a little bit of help of course, even if it's only for the great soundtrack.

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/slideshow-master/sjbolger69@yahoo.com/20161115170328.mov>

Be aware, be very aware!

**Source: Sarah Bolger**

"Be the reason someone still believes in magic, truth, authenticity, compassion, intelligent conversation, loyalty, courage and love that doesn't have an agenda." Brooke Hampton

Dear Steve,

### **How to avoid fireworks by email**

Picture the scene, you receive a long, nasty and very negative email.

It basically says that you and your department are useless and that everything is all your fault. It is likely to be copied to everyone in the organisation and will invariably end with 'Kind Regards'.

How do you reply?

It depends on what outcome you want:

1. If you want to upset them, don't reply at all.
2. If you want to confuse them, simply reply 'Thank You' – just to them, don't copy anyone else in (this ends copy copy syndrome).
3. If you want to go to war, then vent your wrath, anger and fury on them, write a long, defensive and even more aggressive reply...

or write that email and then send it to yourself only. Make sure you remove their name from the 'To' box before you begin writing!

Why do the second option? Because in 24 hours you will regret anything you write in anger now and because what you write will actually contain information that will be helpful for when you take the lead in sorting any issues out, in person, properly and professionally.

David

(Source: David Taylor author of the Naked Leader series – which I highly recommend)

“If you fall seven times, stand up eight times.”

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

## **GET UP AND GO! TAKE A LEAP FORWARD – PART 1**

(Creating your Business Plan for life and work)

### **November 1988 - Nightfall in Berlin**

Even though it is dark this evening, this part of the Berlin Wall is lit up from the spotlights coming from the watch towers of the GDR (German Democratic Republic) guards from the Eastern side of the occupied zone. I can hear their dogs barking and can see the guards watching me through their binoculars - for once they are not tracking me with their semi-automatic weapons. They are definitely getting friendlier but I am not sure why.\*

Leaving our flat in Kisselnallee in West Berlin and running towards Spandau Forrest for a long run, I am now running along a track hugging the Berlin Wall. This has been my daily route for the last 18 months, since we arrived as a family on New Year's Eve 1986 and, like all of my runs, I am lost in thought.

We have had an exciting time in Berlin, our youngest daughter Bettina was born at the military hospital and now I have received my posting order for Colchester. It will soon be 1989. I am not going to wait until 1st January, or when I arrive back in the UK, to start planning my objectives for a new tour. I need to start thinking now about what I am hoping to achieve in my first year and over the next three years. So I start to think and I start to plan. It's a long run, I have plenty of time to think about:

- Buying our first house and setting down roots for our family
- Passing my driving test (stuff always has got in the way until now)
- Getting promoted! An ambition to make Warrant Officer as soon as possible.
- If I want promotion, I need to deliver on a large scale project of some kind as the competition is fierce.
- Becoming a track athlete for a top running club. Chasing trophies and medals, both for my teams and individually.

I need to get up and go.... take a leap forward!

## November 2018 – In autumnal Colchester

It was raining heavily last night but this afternoon the sky is blue and the leaves are golden and red both on the trees and also on the pavement, as I 'enjoy' a long run through the streets of Colchester. Sunday runs are always the best for thinking and creative thought, because there is no deadline I need to keep, so once again I am lost in thought and those thoughts turn once more to planning for the coming year.

During the last 30 years, since leaving Berlin, I have exceeded my personal aspirations and dreams and it is now about holding on to what I have and what I have achieved. That is a challenging objective in itself and one I have to work hard at every day.

Therefore this afternoon my focus, during this long run, is all about 2019 Business Planning for the company I work for [www.dosh.org](http://www.dosh.org). Again I cannot wait for 1st January, I need 'to get up and go...take a leap forward'.

We think our company and team is dynamic, progressive and driven so I need to think big, very big! Our criterion for a plan for 2019 will be:

- Do something nobody is expecting – by being audacious
- Creating a wow factor for the people we support
- The difference we can make in another person's life
- Make 'commitments' because we are committed to doing what we say we will do. (We are not in the business of 'wishing' or 'hoping')
- Endeavour (showing real intent to see things through to the end because 'trying' doesn't cut it)
- It has to be viable and sustainable
- A plan for the unexpected

"Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase. Just take the first step."  
Martin Luther King

By the time I have completed my run, I have sorted (in my head) the majority of the objectives for 2019. I now need to consult with my colleagues, they may have better ideas or they can improve on the ones I have (they usually do).

Finally.....

I am always excited by the coming of each New Year; it is an opportunity for change, development, growth and reinvention, both in my personal life and also my work. So November is a time for reflecting on the current year and planning for the next one.

I have until the end of December to complete the first draft of my company Business Plan. In part 2 of: 'GET UP AND GO! TAKE A LEAP FORWARD' I will share with you what we have agreed on.

"All men dream; but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds, wake in the day to find that it was vanity: But the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dreams with open eyes, to make it possible". T.E. Lawrence

### Footnote:

- \* I thought there was something different in the atmosphere coming from the East when I was out running that night in 88; however I could never have predicted the Berlin Wall coming down six months after I left Berlin. For a flavour of what it was like to run along the Wall, here is a short video: 'The Wall of Berlin 1988'  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R09JKtlxq6g>

A good reason to always plan for the unexpected?

Source: Steve Raw [www.leadershipintheraw.org](http://www.leadershipintheraw.org)

"Attitude is the difference between an ordeal and an adventure."
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### **YOUR ROUTE TO THE TOP - BE A WINNING BRAND**

**Specialise.** Think like Google, Virgin and Coca-Cola – what do you want to be renowned for? Find your forte and focus on it.

**Clarify your vision.** What do you want to achieve with this brand? How can you align it with personal and career goals?

**Live and breathe it.** Don't try to be something you're not. Your brand is you! Just as a vegetarian doesn't eat meat when no-one's looking, give it your all – all the time.

**Market yourself.** What have you done today to let the world (or at least your colleagues and customers) know that you are uniquely contributing? Think about the best ways to advertise your message – network, Thera Voice etc.

**Stay curious.** Keep ahead of the competition by bringing a breadth of new experience to everything you do. Project stuck in a rut? Look through your contacts and find the most far removed person in there. Invite them out to lunch and pick their brains on what they would do.

**Don't do things by halves.** Starting with today's to-do list, do everything so it makes you proud. If you can't get it right first time, postpone it until you can. Not happy with that report? Reframe it as a draft to work on together with a peer or line manager rather than the final piece.

**Keep it real.** Don't leave your personality at home. Know the skills and traits that make you stand out from the rest. You are a whole package – so show people exactly what they get if they invest in you.

"Always start with thanksgiving; be thankful for what you already have and see the miracles that come from this one simple act." — Jim Rohn

**Make gratitude your No. 1 focus.** Put your family first, be kind to others and relish everything that brings you joy—even the small stuff!

### **1. Family First**



When you look back on your life, you'll remember your relationships more than anything else. Make a list of the people and relationships that you need to work toward improving. Carve out time for them.

## **2. Give forward.**

Gratitude isn't just a thank-you card. It's paying forward the gifts you've been given. Write down your top three strengths and reflect on how you could use those to help others.

## **3. Relish everything.**

The point of self-reflection is to reassess what really matters in your life. As you're journaling, draw a little star next to each memory that brought you joy. Revisit these regularly.

## **4. Find feedback.**

We don't always see ourselves as clearly as we could. This week, reach out to your five closest people and ask where they see opportunities for growth in your life.

## **5. Slow down.**

Although there are numerous benefits to a thank-you note, focus on the act of pausing to sit down with a pen and paper. Take a moment to appreciate this gift of a brief pause in a busy world.

To your success (and growth).

Source: USA's The SUCCESS Team

"Attitude is the difference between an ordeal and an adventure."
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## **My top Ted.com picks for November**

Each month, I trawl through Ted.com for inspiring and or thought provoking presentations so you don't have to. This month here are the ones I have chosen for you:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/matthias\\_mullenbeck\\_what\\_if\\_we\\_paid\\_doctors\\_to\\_keep\\_people\\_healthy](https://www.ted.com/talks/matthias_mullenbeck_what_if_we_paid_doctors_to_keep_people_healthy)

This presentation was recommended by Sarah Bolger from [www.dosh.org](http://www.dosh.org)

What if we incentivized doctors to keep us healthy instead of paying them only when we're already sick? Matthias Müllenbeck explains how this radical shift from a sick care system to a true health care system could save us from unnecessary costs and risky procedures -- and keep us healthier for longer.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/sophie\\_scott\\_why\\_we\\_laugh](https://www.ted.com/talks/sophie_scott_why_we_laugh)

Did you know that you're 30 times more likely to laugh if you're with somebody else than if you're alone? Cognitive neuroscientist Sophie Scott shares this and other surprising facts about laughter in this fast-paced, action-packed and, yes, hilarious dash through the science of cracking up.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/abigail\\_marshall\\_why\\_some\\_people\\_are\\_more\\_altruistic\\_than\\_others](https://www.ted.com/talks/abigail_marshall_why_some_people_are_more_altruistic_than_others)

Why do some people do selfless things, helping other people even at risk to their own well-being? Psychology researcher Abigail Marsh studies the motivations of people who do extremely altruistic acts, like donating a kidney to a complete stranger. Are their brains just different?

[https://www.ted.com/talks/chip\\_conley\\_measuring\\_what\\_makes\\_life\\_worthwhile](https://www.ted.com/talks/chip_conley_measuring_what_makes_life_worthwhile)

When the dotcom bubble burst, hotelier Chip Conley went in search of a business model based on happiness. In an old friendship with an employee and in the wisdom of a Buddhist king, he learned that success comes from what you count.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/stan\\_lee\\_what\\_makes\\_a\\_superhero](https://www.ted.com/talks/stan_lee_what_makes_a_superhero)

As the creator of a large chunk of the Marvel Universe, the late Stan Lee knew a thing or two about conjuring new superheroes from thin air. In this instructional and charmingly idiosyncratic talk, Lee shares a few lessons on how to write your own super powered characters and deploy them in stories that connect with the largest possible audience.

"Life is a series of thousands of tiny miracles. Notice them."
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### **15 qualities of mentally tough people**

Source: Travis Bradberry

<https://www.success.com/15-qualities-of-mentally-tough-people/?mpweb=574-7411614-742481119>

Mental toughness is a choice and a discipline, not an innate quality bestowed upon the lucky. In this article, originally published on LinkedIn Pulse, Dr. Travis Bradberry shows you how to get tough.

We all reach critical points in our lives where our mental toughness is tested. It might be a toxic friend or colleague, a dead-end job, or a struggling relationship.

Whatever the challenge, you have to be strong, see things through a new lens and take decisive action if you want to move through it successfully.

It sounds easy. We all want good friends, good jobs and good relationships.

But it isn't.

It's hard to be mentally tough, especially when you feel stuck. The ability to break the mould and take a bold new direction, requires that extra grit, daring and spunk that only the mentally toughest people have.

It's fascinating how mentally tough people set themselves apart from the crowd. Where others see impenetrable barriers, they see challenges to overcome.

When Thomas Edison's factory burned to the ground in 1914, destroying one-of-a-kind prototypes and causing \$23 million in damage, Edison's response was simple:

Thank goodness all our mistakes were burned up. Now we can start fresh again.

Edison's reaction is the epitome of mental toughness—seeing opportunity and taking action when things look bleak.

There are habits you can develop to improve your mental toughness. In fact, the hallmarks of mentally tough people are actually strategies that you can begin using today.

### **1. They're emotionally intelligent.**

Emotional intelligence is the cornerstone of mental toughness. You cannot be mentally tough without the ability to fully understand and tolerate strong negative emotions and do something productive with them. Moments that test your mental toughness are ultimately testing your emotional intelligence (EQ).

Unlike your IQ, which is fixed, your EQ is a flexible skill that you can improve with understanding and effort. It's no wonder that 90 percent of top performers have high EQs and people with high EQs earn \$28,000 more annually (on average) than their low-EQ counterparts.

Unfortunately, EQ skills are in short supply. TalentSmart has tested more than a million people, and we've found that just 36 percent of these are able to accurately identify their emotions as they happen.

### **2. They're confident.**

"Whether you think you can or think you can't—you're right." – Henry Ford

Mentally tough people subscribe to Ford's notion that your mentality has a powerful effect on your ability to succeed. This notion isn't just a motivational tool—it's a fact. A recent study at the University of Melbourne showed that confident people went on to earn higher wages and get promoted more quickly than others did.

True confidence—as opposed to the false confidence people project to mask their insecurities—has a look all of its own. Mentally tough people have an upper hand over the doubtful and the skittish because their confidence inspires others and helps them to make things happen.

### **3. They neutralize toxic people.**

Dealing with difficult people is frustrating and exhausting for most. Mentally tough people control their interactions with toxic people by keeping their feelings in check. When they need to confront a toxic person, they approach the situation rationally. They identify their emotions and don't allow anger or frustration to fuel the chaos. They also consider the difficult person's standpoint and are able to find common ground and solutions to problems. Even when things completely derail, mentally tough people are able to take the toxic person with a grain of salt to avoid letting him or her bring them down.

### **4. They embrace change.**

Mentally tough people are flexible and are constantly adapting. They know that fear of change is paralysing and a major threat to their success and happiness. They look for change that is lurking just around the corner and they form a plan of action, should these changes occur.

Only when you embrace change can you find the good in it. You need to have an open mind and open arms if you're going to recognise, and capitalise on the opportunities that change creates.

You're bound to fail when you keep doing the same things you always have, in the hope that ignoring change will make it go away. After all, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.

#### **5. They say no.**

Research conducted at the University of California in San Francisco showed that the more difficulty you have saying no, the more likely you are to experience stress, burnout and even depression. Mentally tough people know that saying no is healthy, and they have the self-esteem and foresight to make their no's clear.

When it's time to say no, mentally tough people avoid phrases such as "I don't think I can" or "I'm not certain." They say no with confidence because they know that saying no to a new commitment honours their existing commitments and gives them the opportunity to successfully fulfil them.

The mentally tough also know how to exert self-control by saying no to themselves. They delay gratification and avoid impulsive action that causes harm.

#### **6. They know that fear is the No. 1 source of regret.**

Mentally tough people know that, when all is said and done, they will lament the chances they didn't take far more than they will their failures. Don't be afraid to take risks.

I often hear people say, "What's the worst thing that can happen to you? Will it kill you?" Yet death isn't the worst thing that can happen to you. The worst thing that can happen to you is allowing yourself to die inside while you're still alive.

It takes refined self-awareness to walk this tightrope between dwelling and remembering. Dwelling too long on your mistakes makes you anxious and gun shy, while forgetting about them completely makes you bound to repeat them. The key to balance lies in your ability to transform failures into nuggets of improvement. This creates the tendency to get right back up every time you fall down.

#### **7. They embrace failure...**

Mentally tough people embrace failure because they know that the road to success is paved with it. No one ever experienced true success without first embracing failure.

By revealing when you're on the wrong path, your mistakes pave the way for you to succeed. The biggest breakthroughs typically come when you're feeling the most frustrated and the most stuck. It's this frustration that forces you to think differently, to look outside the box and to see the solution that you've been missing.

#### **8. ...yet they don't dwell on mistakes.**

Mentally tough people know that where you focus your attention determines your emotional state. When you fixate on the problems that you're facing, you create and prolong negative emotions and stress, which hinders performance. When you focus on actions to better yourself and your circumstances, you create a sense of personal efficacy, which produces positive emotions and improves performance.

Mentally tough people distance themselves from their mistakes, but they do so without forgetting them. By keeping their mistakes at a safe distance, yet still handy enough to refer to, they are able to adapt and adjust for future success.

#### **9. They won't let anyone limit their joy...**

When your sense of pleasure and satisfaction are derived from comparing yourself to others, you are no longer the master of your own happiness. When mentally tough people feel good about something they do, they won't let anyone's opinions or accomplishments take that away from them.

While it's impossible to turn off your reactions to what others think of you, you don't have to compare yourself to others, and you can always take people's opinions with a grain of salt. Mentally tough people know that regardless of what people think of them at any particular moment, one thing is certain—they're never as good or bad as people say they are.

#### **10. ...and they don't limit the joy of others.**

Mentally tough people don't pass judgment on others because they know that everyone has something to offer, and they don't need to take other people down a notch in order to feel good about themselves.

Comparing yourself to other people is limiting. Jealousy and resentment suck the life right out of you; they're massive energy-stealers. Mentally tough people don't waste time or energy sizing people up and worrying about whether or not they measure up.

Instead of wasting your energy on jealousy, funnel that energy into appreciation. When you celebrate the success of other people, you both benefit.

#### **11. They exercise.**

A study conducted at the Eastern Ontario Research Institute found that people who exercised twice a week for 10 weeks felt more socially, intellectually and athletically competent. They also rated their body image and self-esteem higher. Best of all, rather than the physical changes in their bodies being responsible for the uptick in confidence, which is key to mental toughness, it was the immediate, endorphin-fuelled positivity from exercise that made all the difference.

#### **12. They get enough sleep.**

It's difficult to overstate the importance of sleep to increasing your mental toughness. When you sleep, your brain removes toxic proteins, which are by-products of neural activity when you're awake. Unfortunately, your brain can remove them adequately only while you're asleep, so when you don't get enough sleep, the toxic proteins remain in your brain cells, wreaking havoc by impairing your ability to think—something no amount of caffeine can fix.

Mentally tough people know that their self-control, focus and memory are all reduced when they don't get enough—or the right kind—of sleep, so they make quality sleep a top priority.

### **13. They limit their caffeine intake.**

Drinking excessive amounts of caffeine triggers the release of adrenaline, the source of the fight-or-flight response. The fight-or-flight mechanism sidesteps rational thinking in favour of a faster response to ensure survival. This is great when a bear is chasing you but not so great when life throws you a curve ball.

When caffeine puts your brain and body into this hyper-aroused state of stress, your emotions overrun your behaviour. Caffeine's long half-life ensures you stay this way as it takes its sweet time working its way out of your body. Mentally tough people know that too much caffeine is trouble, and they don't let it get the better of them.

### **14. They don't wait for an apology to forgive.**

Mentally tough people know that life goes a lot smoother once you let go of grudges and forgive even those who never said they were sorry. Grudges let negative events from your past ruin today's happiness. Hate and anger are emotional parasites that destroy your joy in life.

The negative emotions that come with holding on to a grudge create a stress response in your body, and holding on to stress can have devastating consequences (both physically and mentally). When you forgive someone, it doesn't condone their actions; it simply frees you from being their eternal victim.

### **15. They're relentlessly positive.**

Keep your eyes on the news for any length of time, and you'll see that it's just one endless cycle of war, violent attacks, fragile economies, failing companies and environmental disasters. It's easy to think the world is headed downhill fast.

And who knows? Maybe it is. But mentally tough people don't worry about that because they don't get caught up in things they can't control. Instead of trying to start a revolution overnight, they focus their energy on directing the two things that are completely within their power—their attention and their effort.

Mental toughness is not an innate quality bestowed upon a select few. It can be achieved and enjoyed.

What else makes people mentally tough? How many of these 15 qualities describe you?

"Fear makes the wolf bigger than he is."

German proverb

Renovating yourself can sometimes be a conscious move, or it can be something you just stumble upon. Take advantage of the opportunity. The biggest difference between people who "do" and those who "don't" is a matter of simply going for it.

Take a hard look at where you stand in life and renovate where necessary. Get intentional about the things you want to change and take the first step today!

1. **Stay strong.** Exercise is crucial for a healthy heart. This week, aim to walk 10,000 steps per day and try to hit the weights twice per week.
2. **Self-care.** Stay alert by taking time out of your day to meditate or do a yoga routine—anything that will help you recharge.
3. **Fuel creativity.** To get your creative juices flowing, allow yourself to be bored. Taking a step back can give you a fresh perspective.
4. **Deal with it.** When you face inconveniences, how do you handle them? When problems come your way, make the best of them rather than allowing them to defeat you.
5. **Learn more.** Reading is the best investment you can make in your personal development. Set a reading goal for yourself and stick to it.

To your success (and growth).

Source: The SUCCESS Team

“By letting go, it all gets done.”

Lao Tzu