

# BECOMING AN EMPOWERED *Athlete*



**This ultimate E-book is designed to help you unlock  
your Inner Power and True Athletic Skills.**

***YOU ARE A  
POWERHOUSE!***

**COACH ALISTAIR TAIT**

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# INTRODUCTION

How does one become an "Empowered Athlete?"

Are we born with an internal drive to achieve goals or is there a catalyst that lights a fire within us to begin a journey towards self determination?

My own journey began as a small skinny kid, with a name that caused me to be teased a lot growing up and I needed something that set me apart and made me strong.

Running hard and fast became my salvation and gave me a sense of purpose and belonging.

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I remember feeling totally free during some of the fun runs that my parents entered me in. Even though I was small, it didn't matter, I would choose a coloured shirt to chase and felt a sense of achievement as I went past them and found another shirt to catch. I could never explain what it was about running that I loved so much, it was a feeling and it felt good!

As I got older and went through puberty, I began to get stronger and faster and I loved the feeling of pushing myself to find new limits. I felt like I didn't have to rely on anyone and I had some sense of control in the sporting part of my life. I experienced some relative success and it began to form part of my identity and gave me a sense of belonging. I was known as "Al the Runner" and I loved it!

Looking back now, running was far more than physical for me, it connected something spiritual that my sense of self needed.

When I joined the local senior athletic club I found my tribe, my community of people like me and I felt I could be more of myself than I could at school, where it feels like there is so much pressure to fit in at times.

Running for me was more than a sport and became a journey of personal and communal discovery, where every stride carries the weight of personal achievement and the lightness of shared goals. Athletics had a transformative effect on me, especially as a 400m hurdler that had to clear obstacles that were both physical and mental to perform at a high level.

These challenges set me up for life, which is full of hurdles that we must find a way through, rather than avoid and it has become a metaphor for how I approach my life and find ways to grow and learn.

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# VISUALISE SUCCESS

Throughout my athletic journey, I always looked for ways to improve my performance, especially during important events like National Championships. Nervousness before competitions often caused me to waste precious energy before stepping onto the track, leaving me feeling like I hadn't reached my full potential.

Driven to enhance my performance and understand how top athletes handle performance anxiety and high expectations, I delved into sports psychology, focusing on visualization and breathing techniques. I started by listening to audio sessions with headphones, paying attention to the content, music, and my breathing rhythm. I found that evenings provided the perfect setting for this routine, creating a calm environment where I could relax, leading to better sleep.

As I progressed, I began using visualization tapes to recreate race day scenarios and train myself to achieve a state of focused composure. I imagined going through my warm-up, executing my race plan, and visualized myself as calm, relaxed, and concentrated. Initially, the mental images were slow, but with consistent practice, my visualizations became more vivid and precise.

This practice soon extended to my training sessions, and during my warm-up laps (with hurdles set out), I could mentally see my stride pattern and feel my race before actually running it, making me feel prepared and eager to compete.

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# HOW TO UNLOCK YOUR POWER WITHIN



## *Self-care*

I was fortunate enough to have amazing coaches as mentors, that took their time to understand how to communicate and motivate me to be the best athlete I could be.

I would use visualisation and meditation to calm my mind and control the anxiety that would come from competing.

These days we call that Mindfulness, but what does that mean for you?

Finding your "Mindfulness" may come from listening to music, writing in a journal or walking your dog.

Meditation is different for everyone, so find the thing that slows your mind and calms your heart.

10 long, deep, slow breaths, fully in fully out is amazing for slowing everything down and relaxing your muscles

**Self-care is listening to what your body and mind needs.  
Trust your inner voice**

# Train Your Mind, Win the Game!



Discovering inner peace and calm doesn't necessarily require the adoption of Zen practices or mastering complex yoga poses. Sometimes, the simplest method can be the most effective. Just finding a moment to sit quietly, directing your focus towards the gentle rhythm of your breath, can significantly contribute to a sense of being centered. Initiating this practice in a familiar, quiet and peaceful environment—be it at home or any place that resonates tranquility for you—lays a solid foundation.

With regularity, this practice teaches a valuable lesson: the ability to calm your mind and slow your breath is always within your reach, regardless of your surroundings or circumstances.

This realization empowers you to face life's challenges with a newfound serenity, accessible anytime and anywhere.

CULTIVATING INNER FITNESS.

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# Mindful Practices for Athletes.

Reach your peak performance both mentally and physically by trying some of our mindfulness tips for sport



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# Mindfulness tips for Athletes.

Reaching peak performance in sports isn't just about physical training; it's equally about mental preparation. Incorporating mindfulness into your routine can significantly enhance your focus and calmness, especially when nerves threaten to derail your efforts before a big competition.

One effective strategy is to use music and motivational quotes to anchor your mental state. Choose a song with lyrics that resonate deeply with you, allowing the melody to guide you into a state of deep focus and immersion.

Similarly, listening to powerful quotes from movies or renowned sportspersons can ignite your motivation and readiness. These auditory cues serve as mental triggers, transforming your nervous energy into a poised and pumped up state, ready to tackle any challenge that comes your way on the field, court or track.

By blending these mindfulness tips with your physical training, you're setting the stage for achieving your ultimate peak performance.

# TIPS FOR MORNING RITUALS

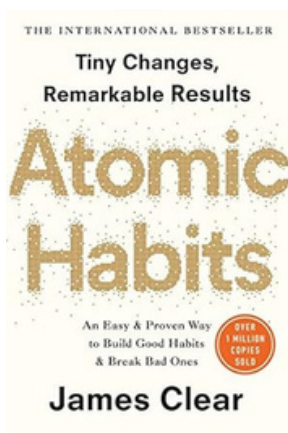
## Prepare for Success:

- Get ready the night before or set a labeled alarm as a reminder.
- Keep your yoga mat or journal in plain sight for easy access.
- Team up with an "accountability" buddy.
- [The Optimal Morning Routine - Dr Andrew Hubbard](#) - Youtube

In his book "Atomic Habits," **James Clear** discusses habit stacking, emphasizing that small habits, no matter how minor, lead to significant changes over time.

For example, to achieve my goal of waking up at 6 am daily, I set my alarm 5 minutes earlier each week until waking up became effortless. Another useful tip is to place your alarm or phone far enough away so you must get up to turn it off and avoid hitting the snooze button!

If part of your routine includes walking the dog, they can serve as your natural alarm and reminder!



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# TIPS FOR MORNING RITUALS

## Prepare for Success:

Having an accountability partner can make a significant difference! When both of you are committed to activities like yoga, running or walking together, take turns motivating each other and making progress towards your fitness and performance goals.

Knowing that someone else is depending on you can be a powerful incentive!



# DAILY JOURNAL

## Prepare for Success:

Daily journaling can help recognize obstacles and promote healthier habits. This may involve monitoring bedtime, water intake, and the quality of your nutrition. It also brings attention to challenges at school or work, acknowledging their influence and prompting action or seeking guidance. These aspects significantly impact both our mental and physical well-being.

For me, Journaling revealed a pattern of prioritizing others' needs over maintaining personal boundaries. Understanding the effects on self-worth, sleep, and motivation, I reflected and considered necessary changes.

Now, I pause and assess my feelings about situations, evaluating their impact on me. Initially hesitant to say "No," I now trust my intuition and no longer feel compelled to justify my decisions, feeling more empowered as a result.

A book that was extremely helpful for me was "The Four Agreements" by **Don Miguel Ruiz**.

1. Be Impeccable with Your Word
2. Don't Take Anything Personally
3. Don't Make Assumptions
4. Always Do Your Best



[MORE INFO HERE](#)

# Daily reflection journal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

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## TODAY I'M THANKFUL FOR

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## TODAY'S SELF-CARE ACTIVITY

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## MOMENTS THAT MADE ME SMILE

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## ONE THING I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO TOMORROW

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DATE

MOOD

# DAILY JOURNAL

YOUR THOUGHTS

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GOALS

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ACTION ITEMS

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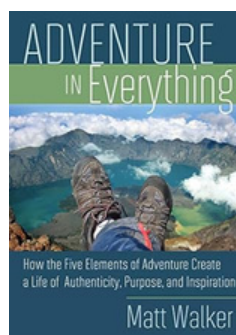
# CHANGE THE SCRIPT



Our self talk can be quite negative at times and that little voice often tells us we cannot do things and should just give up. It is often trying to protect us from some pain or embarrassment we experienced at a younger age. Maybe you had a big fall over a hurdle and don't want to experience that pain again. But life is full of obstacles like hurdles. So, how to change the script?

## Reframing

Begin by questioning the accuracy of your inner voice. Is there any proof that the same outcome will occur again? Expressing thoughts in writing can be incredibly impactful. In the book "Adventure in Everything" by Matt Walker, there is an insightful exercise named "I can, if I". This exercise is a fantastic method to map out your path to achieving goals, acknowledging potential obstacles along the way.

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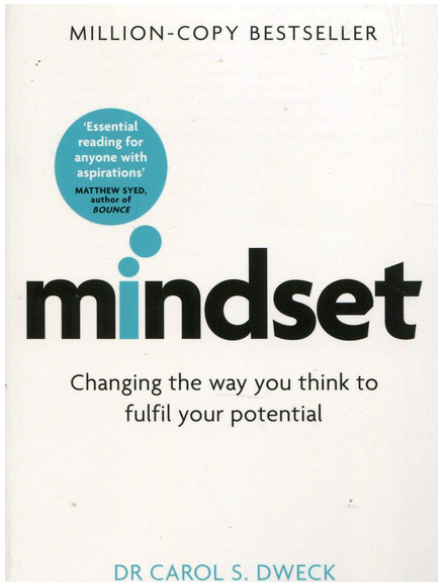
# GETTING ON TRACK TO NEW HABITS

<b>I CAN</b>	<b>IF I</b>
Get better quality sleep	Establish a wind down routine before bed

<b>TOP 3 GOALS FOR THE WEEK</b>	<b>3 DAILY TASKS TO ACHIEVE WEEKLY GOALS</b>

# FIXED MINDSET

## *vs Growth Mindset*



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A fixed mindset suggests that you are born with certain traits and thinking patterns that cannot be altered.

Dr. Carol Dweck's research demonstrates that the mindset you embrace significantly influences how you navigate through life.

For instance, in sports, it might manifest as "I cannot run, and I struggle with long jumps."

On the other hand, a Growth Mindset acknowledges that while you may not excel at running at the moment, with guidance from your coach, you can enhance your running abilities through consistent training.

Although you may not be happy with your performance in long jumps yet, you are committed to improving and achieving longer jumps in the future.

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# EFFECTIVE GOAL SETTING

[MINDTOOLS LINK](#)

## IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS AND GOALS:

Your individual strengths can indicate your career and life preferences.

Define what success signifies to you by listing past achievements that were fulfilling.

## SET MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Create a brief list of benchmarks to monitor your advancement.

## ESTABLISH PERSONAL ASPIRATIONS:

Delve into your career and life aspirations, then pinpoint the goals you are most passionate about across various life aspects.

## INTEGRATE THE INITIAL STEPS:

Align your goals, strengths, and success aspirations to pinpoint **the ultimate goal**. Ensure the goal follows the **SMART** criteria and is expressed in a compelling manner.

## CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE:

Continuously revise and enhance your statement until it clearly articulates your thoughts and measurement strategies.

# **SMART GOAL EXAMPLE – COACHING**

## **SPECIFIC**

Create world class programs that produce real and measurable outcomes, increases engagement and improves peoples all-round athletic ability, confidence and enjoyment of sport.

## **MEASURABLE**

Track Athletes results and progress in training and competitions.

Track Athletes number of sessions completed.

Seek feedback and reflections from athletes and parents.

## **ATTAINABLE**

Take notes during and after coaching.

Schedule time every week for Data entry.

Schedule monthly reminder for athlete feedback, to allow for adjustments in the program, if needed.

## **RELEVANT**

Training must be challenging enough to provide improvements in performance and be fun enough, so that athletes will continue to attend and enjoy training.

## **TIME BOUND**

Review the Annual Plan's effectiveness at the end of each season, each month and quarter and make iterations along the way. Keeping things on track allows you to stay ahead of the curve.

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# VISUALISATION TECHNIQUES FOR ATHLETES

## MICHAEL PHELPS 23 OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALS - VISUALISATION



Visualization goes beyond simply daydreaming about achievements like gold medals.

In fact, it involves tricking your brain into perceiving your mental rehearsals as reality.

This is the essence of visualization – the brain struggles to differentiate between actual and imagined scenarios. Visualizing your desired outcome becomes challenging when your mind is cluttered with numerous thoughts, so achieving mental clarity is the initial step.

Michael Phelps, for instance, would systematically relax each part of his body before mentally replaying his ideal performances like a videotape every night.

## KOBE BRYANT - MINDSET OF A WINNER



Kobe was a big believer in the power of visualization and the importance of having an established routine. Before each game, he would close his eyes and imagine himself playing in the game.

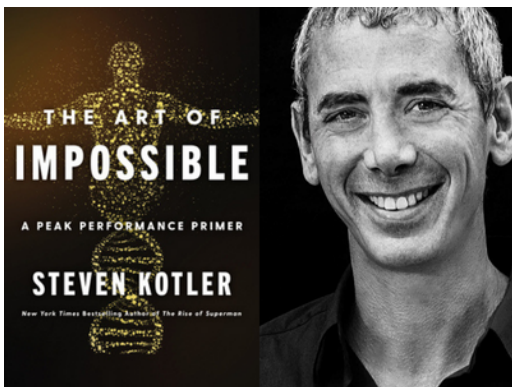
He would visualize himself making the right moves and doing the right things.

He would also visualize the outcome of the game and how it would feel to win.

This was something that Kobe did before every game and he believed it helped him to stay positive and focused.

# VISUALISATION TECHNIQUES FOR ATHLETES

## [Use Flow state to Achieve the Impossible - Steven Kotler](#)



What is "Flow?"

It's that feeling of being totally relaxed, and time seems to slow down and you feel on auto pilot. You finish that race or game and it felt effortless.



## [Lead up to Race day Visualisation - \(7.5 mins\) Tend Athletics](#)

## [Game Day Meditation for Athletes \(5 mins\) - Mindstrong Sport](#)

## [Inside an Olympians Mind - NYT](#)

The night before a cross-country ski race, Sadie Bjornsen relaxes her muscles and works her brain.

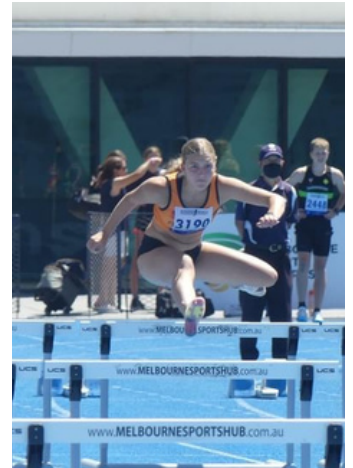
## [Mindset Of Champions - Simplilearn](#)

Usain Bolt, Michael Phelps, Serena Williams, Neymar, LeBron James

# FINDING YOUR CHALLENGE POINT

## Feeling what is possible

PRACTICE



Technology has provided us with ample opportunities to observe and document sport performance, which young athletes find captivating. However, does it truly substitute for the sensation of the experience? When we line up for a race, confidence and the assurance of our ability to perform are crucial.

I have found that a 3-step method works best:

- Provide the athlete with an external visual cue to adjust their movement pattern.
- Record the repetition or movement, review it together, and discuss a cue that reinforces the movement.
- Repeat the movement, inquire if the athlete noticed any changes, and then present the video evidence for reinforcement.

Ultimately we want the athlete to be able to feel what is going on, use their own intrinsic cues to change the movement outcome and feel the changes.

This is the "**Empowered Athlete.**"



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# References & Further Reading

## **A Voyage into the Visualization of Athletic Performances: A Review**

Fadare A. Stephen<sup>1\*</sup>, Lambaco P. Ermalyn<sup>2</sup>, Mangorsi, B. Yasmin<sup>3</sup>, Lorchano. J.D. Louise<sup>4</sup>, Tercio, B. Juvenmile, 2022

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Phillips<sup>2</sup> ; Sallie A. Scoggin<sup>2</sup>, (2023).

## **Achieving Flow: An Exploratory Investigation of Elite College**

**Athletes and Musicians:** Roberta Antonini Philippe<sup>1\*</sup>, Sarah Morgana Singer<sup>2†</sup>, Joshua E. E. Jaeger<sup>2†</sup>, Michele Biasutti<sup>3</sup> and Scott Sinnett<sup>4</sup>, Frontiers in Psychology - March 2022 | Volume 13 | Article 831508

## **Effects of a SMART Goal Setting and 12-Week Core Strength Training Intervention on Physical Fitness and Exercise Attitudes in**

**Adolescents: A Randomized Controlled Trial** : Yijuan Lu <sup>1</sup>, Kehong Yu <sup>1,2,\*</sup> and Xiaomei Gan <sup>1</sup>

Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2022, 19, 7715

**Self-Talk in Sport and Performance** Judy L. Van Raalte, Professor of Psychology, Springfield College and Andrew Vincent, Springfield College : Oxford Research Encyclopedias (2017).

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Alistair Tait is a former track and field athlete and has since taken his love of athletics, health and fitness into coaching and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Sports Coaching - PE and a Level 3 Performance Coach accreditation with Athletics Australia. He is passionate about mentoring young athletes and adults to unlock their inner "Powerhouse" and achieve their goals in sport and life.

*Empowering Lives and Unlocking Potential Through  
Athletic & Team Sport Coaching*

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COACHING & CONSULTING

# JOIN OUR

# *Masterclass*

Mind and Body are connected.

In our Masterclass, Coach Alistair Tait will work with you to unlock your "Powerhouse" and find the movement improvement cues that work for you.

You will also build your Inner Power toolbox so that you have the mental resilience skills to achieve your sporting and fitness goals for life!



**GRAB YOUR SEAT!**

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