

The Champion's Mind: Business Book Review

Hi there, it's Siimon Reynolds here from The Fortune Institute and periodically what we're going to do is talk about important business books that can help you advance further in your career. Today I want to talk about an unusual book in the business genre. In fact, it isn't arguably in the business genre at all.

It is called The Champion's Mind, by Jim Afremow. Jim Afremow is a Sports Psychologist. And why would I even bring up a sports psychology book for business? And the reason is that at The Fortune Institute I think we lead the world in looking at a lot of advanced mental tactics and strategies that elite athletes use in order to achieve a lot.

And we try and apply those principles to business and entrepreneurship. And we very often find that these very same techniques that help the greatest athletes perform better can help entrepreneurs perform better. And so we're always studying the leading areas and leading coaches in sports psychology and applying it to business.

So with The Champion's Mind, I guess the most important summary of this book is that Jim prepares a mental game score card. So if you want to lead in the mental game of business or in sports or in life, then you need to follow a score card and you need to map yourself, according to Jim Afremow, on these score cards every day. So what I thought I'd do is go through the different elements of the mental score card that Jim suggests that you map yourself on every day.

The first is goal setting, and his key point here is not so much, "This is what I'm going to achieve in a year" but rather, "What am I doing? What are my goals every day to get closer to that one-year goal?" So very much a short-term mindset with actual practices that someone has to do in order to be excellent. Let's say, as an entrepreneur.

After goal setting is mental imagery and of course we've read a lot about how much top sportsman and Olympic Teams are focusing on mental imagery. They see themselves performing very well and time again the research shows that when you see yourself performing well, you *perform* much better.

Next up is self-talk. Are you talking to yourself positively? Are you your own best coach? Or are you a nagging voice telling yourself, "You're not good enough... You're never gonna make it into business... Why are you even in this field?" You've gotta be very careful about the voices in your head and at The Fortune Institute we've got a whole lot of procedures for helping you make sure your internal chatter if supported so it's more likely to keep you

persisting and more likely to make you perform with much greater commitment and enjoyment.

Next up is confidence. What's your confidence level? Very important area in business. People who present with confidence close more deals. People who act with confidence get more done. So in my opinion, it's as relevant for business people as athletes - the power of confidence.

Next up in Jim Afremow's score card for mental performance is focus. How focused are you? In two ways, I would argue, the first is how focused are you about what you need to do to build your business. And second of all, how focused are you each day? Are you constantly being interrupted? Are you constantly going on the internet or handling emails? ...Accepting people coming into your room and asking you questions... Your staff and team members. What's your focus like in those two areas?

Next up is an interesting one: breath control. And you can imagine it's very important for athletes who are under high pressure not to lose control of their breath and get nervous. And it's a very interesting area that breath control is highly correlated to your mood. So when you change your breathing, you change your mood. If you breathe like you're relaxed and confident, you'll be relaxed and confident. Very interesting area to research and at The Fortune Institute we look at that.

Next up is mental toughness. Now Jim defines mental toughness in an excellent way in my opinion and he says mental toughness is, "I do what is hard and I stay positive under adversity". It's beautiful, isn't it? Shine a light on your own mental toughness. How mentally tough are you at work? Do you do the hard stuff and do you remain positive when things aren't going well? A really interesting concept to think more about.

Next up on Jim's mental score card in his book, *The Champion's Mind*, is anxiety management. Now the key distinction here is not that you don't have fears, but as Jim says, "Your butterflies fly in formation". You do have butterflies, but you've got them handled and they're flying in formation.

Next up is enjoyment, very important area, and it's interesting isn't it? You can do so many business courses but very few will talk about the importance of enjoying your work. Now in the athletic world, they understand that enjoying training and enjoying competition is a tremendous skill to be able to master and I would say that same is true in business. There are very few people who attempt to map themselves or score themselves on their enjoyment level.

But it's vitally important for two reasons, the first is;

- a. If you enjoy yourself more you have a happier life; and
- b. When you are enjoying your work, often that's a big attractor to clients and you get more business, and for staff too, they want to be around you.

Next up is body language: the importance of moving like a champion. That's a big subject just by itself and that's on Jim's score card.

And the last two are intensity: what's your ideal level of intensity? Very interesting area. Have you ever mapped yourself out of ten as to what the correct level or the perfect level of intensity is for you? Maybe it's 8, maybe it's 6. You know, you don't get too stressed, you remain calm. But mapping your intensity level is very interesting.

And finally, personal affirmations: what are your positive powerful statements that you're saying to yourself that are being pre-memorised and you're doing all the way through the day to keep yourself in a peak state?

So that is a very large mental score card and perhaps you do not want to do all those things. You might want to take the top five of those and then apply them in your business life and say, "Ok, this is where I am weakest... this is where my greatest opportunity is... I am going to create a mental score card each and every day for my business performance."

So *The Champion's Mind* by Jim Afremow is a very good book, lots of short chapters that can be very helpful. It is certainly a book that we recommend at The Fortune Institute and if you don't have time to read it, take control of some of those processes and apply them to your business life today.