

MENTAL

“Learning to regulate the chatter”

This book contains the framework of the five (5) mental skills and a personal roadmap for development. Your new goals will include self-awareness and self-regulation and the objective is to regulate disruptive thoughts and distracting emotions. This is my best effort to help you bridge the gap between who you are and your true potential. These ideas are based on the newly revealed truths found in the field of Neuroscience and the learned behaviors supported in the study of Emotional Intelligence.

Parrish Owen Taylor

Chapter 8

Alonzo Goes To Nebraska

“These five mental skills are transferable; the same five will help you achieve in all domains, in life and in competition”



On July 27th, 2011, we were sitting in the Lincoln Nebraska airport returning home after a visit with the Nebraska Football Coaches. I almost missed something so subtle. These five mental skills are transferable.

The three of us sat in the airport. Dr. Garrison, Alonzo's mentor, was on the computer while Alonzo was on a phone interview with Rivals.com. As the two sat watching the Rivals website changed word for word during Alonzo's interview, I reflected back, pulling up my own words and mental pictures of Alonzo talking with different coaches.

During the two full days of meeting with coaches and taking the tours, Nebraska demonstrated how much they wanted Alonzo. From the moment we stepped onto the campus, the "wow" factor was everywhere.

One individual conversation kept popping up in my brain. Our final meeting of the day was with Tim Beck, Nebraska's quarterback coach. It was this conversation with Coach Beck I was able to re-affirm for Alonzo how his five mental skills were working during the meeting. At this point, we needed Alonzo to better understand how to apply the five mental skills in the classroom. At the time, Alonzo's GPA did not meet the minimum required by the National Collegiate Athlete Association (NCAA).

Coach Beck greeted us with a smile and came right to the point by saying, "Others have talked to you about what we can do here at Nebraska. I want to show you". Immediately he pulled up a long list of game films and before we even sat down, Coach Beck had us all staring at the big-screen, watching Nebraska game plays.

The dialogue between Coach Beck and Alonzo was amazing. Watching them review Nebraska plays and respond to defensive players created so

much energy in the room. Even the coaches sitting around the perimeter of the room were on the edge of their seats. Coach Beck would start the game film, stop suddenly, and fire a question at Alonzo. In a calm, cool manner, Alonzo would give a specific, detailed, yet short answer. Alonzo was in the zone, “flow” was the emotional state and judging from the coaches in the room, Alonzo nailed it every single time.

On the outside, there was every reason to be overwhelmed, “frazzle” and an emotional state of highjack. The visit to the Nebraska campus and football stadium, the hospitality from all the coaches and staff, the magnificent facility, the friendly people and players, the heritage and legacy in the Nebraska football program. We actually sat in Tom Osborne’s office; the man is a legend. And yet Alonzo was able to regulate his thoughts and emotions with no signs of distress, fear or anxiety.

On the inside, at least for Alonzo, he concentrated

and was organized. He knew his priorities and was prepared for every question and provided the correct answer within a mere 3-5 seconds. Alonzo was at peace. He was in the “optimal state” of “flow” he was clearly in the “zone”.

He wasn't thinking about all the external conditions on the outside. He was thinking and feeling his motivation for the game; the moment, the rush of adrenalin when thinking about what to do, 'go left or go right, go high or go low'. He was in the now, in the moment of each step of the play as it unfolded on the big-screen.

Regardless of what was going on around him, Alonzo had the presence of mind in the moment, delivering the right amount of stress hormones and adrenaline for the task. For well over forty-five minutes, Coach Beck challenged Alonzo with questions and seemed amazed at his every response.

So there we are, back at the Lincoln airport,

replaying my own game film from an hour earlier watching Alonzo and Coach Beck. At this point, I am past all the glamour and glitter of the visit and focused on the problem. Why the academic struggle?

If these five mental skills are truly transferable, why is there optimal performance on the athletic field of play and poor sub-standard performance in the classroom?

It's obvious that Alonzo can summon his talents and flex his mental skills on demand. Athletically, in most cases, achieve extraordinary results. We can clearly show how Alonzo uses his five mental skills on the field in competition and as a result, his physical ability stands out and amazes everyone. And yet, academically, there is a struggle to achieve the necessary results.

And that's when it hit me. Alonzo was suffering from poor conditioning and a lack of academic motivation.

If my theories were correct, we could break through the academic hurdles and at the same time, strengthen his athletic performance. Once we learn awareness to these mental skills, we can transfer these skill sets and ultimately improve decision-making in all aspects of life.

8.1 Conditioning & Motivation:

As we stood there in the airport, I called Alonzo over to an empty ticket counter where we could talk. It was time for a development plan to start re-conditioning his belief system and the tool to use was his internal chatter.

At best, Alonzo had been a below average student his entire academic life. His unregulated chatter for over sixteen years would repeat these false accusations and over time Alonzo, like you and I, we start to believe these lies. He would hear it at home, he would hear it at school from his teachers and guidance counselors and without fail his daily assignments and report card would validate this lie that he was and always will be a weak student.

As we stood there at that empty ticket counter, I wrote down the following words on piece of paper, *“I am a good learner”*. I asked Alonzo to write these words in his notebook and repeat them for me ten times out loud. He played along, although you could see his doubt and confusion.

I asked Alonzo, *“Do you believe that? Do you believe you are a good learner?”* He paused for a moment, as if searching for the correct answer rather than the truth. He gave me the “yes” but I could hear and see the hesitation. He didn’t really believe it.

Together, we reflected back and talked about the time with Coach Beck. He agreed it was a magical moment and after a little coaching, he could see the mental skills at work during the time and talks with Coach Beck.

This was the affirmation Alonzo needed, in order to see it for himself. He now had proof that in mere seconds, he could read the defensive

players and make quick decisions on what action to take next. His natural motivation for the game made learning the defense easy and his ability to learn and respond came natural and quick.

Alonzo was an exceptional learner and now he had the proof to validate this idea in his chatter. Alonzo couldn't deny his ability to learn the defense and respond with the correct answer when talking with Coach Beck. Motivated by the game, watching game films (mental images), flexing his mental muscle (five skills), Alonzo had impressed the entire room. He demonstrated his ability to learn the defense quickly and respond on demand and in the moment.

The working theory was to coach Alonzo on how to discipline his chatter with *"I am a good learner"*. This statement is a great example of a simple, short series of first-words that supported his task. He had enough evidence to believe the statement was true. It was up to him to discipline his mind and repeat it often in order to build and re-

condition his belief system.

The next challenge was motivation. How to motivate Alonzo with academic achievement in the same way he was motivated by playing the game of football?

I ask Alonzo if there were any highlights from the last couple of days, anything that really impressed him or felt special. As he began to speak, I could see the opportunity and told him to take a moment to write a few things down. He was encouraged to “ink it and not just think” so we could review and discuss later.

He listed all seven coaches that he spoke with and highlights from each conversation. What caught my eye were the references he made about school. He wrote, *“I like how they are interested in my studies. How dedicated they are to the players in the classroom. The entire team earned a 3.0 GPA.”*

This was the missing motivational-link we needed for Alonzo, a personal experience to nourish his much-need academic self-motivation. It was on this piece of paper we were able to find his new words and mental pictures to motivate achievement in the classroom. The Nebraska experience of walking through the study lounge, meeting his personal study “mentor” and the structured approach of combining athletics and academics made a critical impression on Alonzo. In other words, these seven coaches and the new conversations about how important his grades were and more importantly all the resources that would be made available to him to ensure his success motivated him to new academic achievement.

Alonzo’s chatter was seeking inward and looking at what he liked and what motivated him from the two-day experience. All the talk and attention on grades and study support would aide in his self-motivation to achieve more in the classroom. After speaking about the experience with Coach Beck,

Alonzo recognized his ability to learn and now had the right motivation to apply his mental skills in the classroom.

The notes that follow are actual remarks and assignments from that day and weeks to come when working with Alonzo. I've included this remarks in the book as more insights and examples on how we can all take these complicated subjects and learn to break down the ideas and disciplines and begin putting them to use in your day to day chatter.

8.2 Working Notes:

Self-Reliant (reference the Emotional Intelligence profile); Alonzo had scored low on this critically important competency of emotional intelligence. This profiling tool would enable us to bridge the gap between applying his five mental skills and daily achievement. It was important that Alonzo learned to rely more on his own inner dialogue rather than the opinions and views of others around him. The solution was awareness and

disciplined chatter on his daily achievements. He was instructed to reflect back in the past-window at the end of each day and talk to himself about what he accomplished on his own.

8.2.1 Assignment #1

(Conditioning & Re-Programming)

“I am a good learner”. Alonzo was encouraged to say it often and confirm it with repetition in his inner dialogue. He was instructed to write this phrase fifty times daily and then supporting it with little achievement from the day such as learning a new football play, working to learn a new subject from class.

8.2.2 Assignment #2 (Self Reliance)

Daily Achievement: Using another tool that we teach within the mental and emotional training program, Alonzo was encouraged to use his “Six-cylinder” list and identify in writing at least ten small daily goals he wanted to achieve. For example, the easy goals like praying, attending football practice, going to each class. He was

encouraged to find the easy, low hanging fruit in order to discipline him for achievement of the larger more complex goals.

At the end of each day, reflect back through the past-window and hold himself accountable to achieving his goals. The objective here is to reflect at the end of each day and seek out your achievements. It's more than simply checking things off the to-do list. It's to discipline yourself and look back at your little achievements that will in turn prepare you for even greater achievements down the road. You must learn to nourish this achievement drive within yourself by reflecting back correctly each and every day.

Notes & Quotes:

1. Dr. Daniel Goleman - Latest findings on the brain: Emotional Intelligence Webinar
 - www.danielgoleman.info
2. Robert Sapolsky – Stanford University
Professor, “Distress: The Body’s Silent Killer”
– National Geographic Documentary
 - http://www.thegreatcourses.com/tgc/professors/professor_detail.aspx?pid=124
3. History Channel’s Documentary: “The Brain”
2013
4. Les Brown – Author, public speaker
 - <http://lesbrown.com/>
5. Jim Rohn – Author, public speaker
 - <http://www.jimrohn.com/>
6. Dr. Jeff Garrison – Sport Medicine, Former NFL player

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- <http://mollydaniels.wordpress.com/>

To all those who have encouraged, remained patient and persevered on my behalf by continuing to stay on me. As God as my witness, your words remained in my chatter and were a critical part of making this dream become a reality.



Mavs, Pats win openers in Lafayette Semistate

By FRED LANE
Staff Sports Writer

McCabe's big-play baseball team edged Logansport, 5-0, in the second game of the opening round of the Lafayette Semistate Saturday afternoon.

The Mavericks, 24-14, advanced to the semistate title game Saturday night against Terre Haute North. The Patriots trailed in the day's opener.

The two games were played before a crowd of about 1,500 at Losh Stadium in Columbian Park.

McCabe produced a pair of clutch hits and several sparkling defensive plays to eliminate three-time state champ Logansport.

With McCabe leading 2-1 in the top of the third inning, Steve Robinson — a senior hitting .247 — led a two-out, two-run surge.

Logansport added single runs in the sixth and fourth innings, but McCabe and Bruce Robinson led off the lead in all but three. McCabe added the insurance run for the Mavericks in the top of the fifth.

Taylor, who finished with three hits in three at-bats, tied a school record by center field, which was interrupted by Jerry Snyder. The ball rolled up the center field fence.

McCabe Coach Jake Burton. "He had an excellent year last year, but has been struggling at the plate this season."

"It's easy to get frustrated with a bad season, but Steve never quit. And today, he came through with a big, big hit for us and made a super play in right field, too."

In the bottom of the sixth, Robinson drove into foul territory to catch a fly ball for the first out.

Jay Brown finished the inning in the sixth, catching a foul pop near the Logansport dugout, and hitting down Snyder's hard-to-ground ball for an unassisted play for the third out.

And Bruce Robinson — brother of Steve — added the final Maverick defensive jewel, diving to catch Tony Belden's line drive at third base for the second out of the seventh inning.

"We hit it where they weren't, but they got there anyhow," lamented Logansport Coach Jim Turner, whose team finished with a 23-9 record.

Baseball is a game of inches, and those inches worked their way. Plus, McCabe played an outstanding game.

McCabe's Dan Payne allowed two earned runs on eight hits, and the senior pitcher hit fourth straight com-



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5 MENTAL SKILLS & ABILITY

The chatter in your head that never shuts up.

By design, the chatter is constantly running without any effort from you. That's why we call it chatter.

It was over thirty years ago as a young athlete and soon to be graduating senior from Purdue University that I quickly became aware of the chatter. That negative rant in my head that would just keep playing the same words over and over.

Science and technology have come a long way since that time, specifically, the field of Neuroscience. We are learning more now than ever before in history about the brain and how thoughts and emotions impact different body functions.

The fact is, that chatter is designed to help you achieve in life.

What is intended for your good actually becomes your enemy from within if you are not careful with its magnificent power. As in all great power, without discipline, great power becomes a great weakness.

The chatter in your head is an asset; a great strength designed and imparted to you. You must learn how to use it. More importantly, learn to use it on demand. And then, teach it.

This book is the latest in science, rooted in scripture and made "user-friendly". It is dedicated to you understanding the chatter, realizing the gift and taking responsibility for the gift in your own life.

Based on the study of Emotional Intelligence & Neuroscience

To learn more about...

The Mental & Emotional Training Program



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