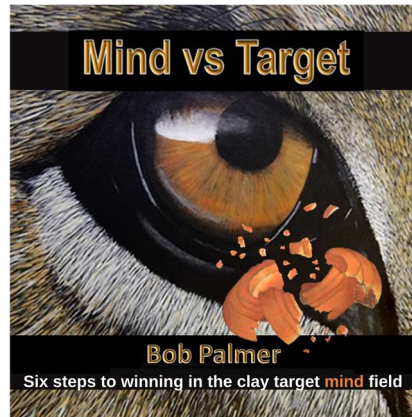


CHAPTER SUMMARIES AND EXERCISES



INTRODUCTION

Let's not mince words. The main goal of this book is to help you to win in your shooting game, whether that means winning competitions, winning at the club level so that you can hold your head high, or winning at the improvement game through on-going skill development. And, although winning is the ultimate goal, enjoyment of your shooting sport is what is going to drive you to that perfect victory.

Within the shooting sports there are notable shooters who are always at the top. Somehow, they learned to be consistent by way of incredible talent, many hours of training and many hours fighting through vast numbers of competition targets. So, you ask yourself, can I ever catch up and become as good as they are? And can I possibly do it sooner, rather than later?

Listen to this audio book by SportExcel High Performance Trainer Bob Palmer and gain the insights and practical applications of the SportExcel System which have resulted in many positive changes in teams and athletes - personal bests, championships, great relationships, rewarding experiences, business leadership skills, educational enhancement, balanced lives, and other bonuses of competing and coaching to win.

CHAPTER 1

Let's not mince words. The main goal of this book is to help you to win in your shooting game, whether that means winning competition HOAs, winning at the club level so that you can hold your head high, or winning at the improvement game through on-going class punches. And, although winning is the ultimate goal, enjoyment of your shooting sport is what is going to drive you to that perfect victory.

STEP 1: FINDING YOUR ZONE

CHAPTER 2

So, what is the Zone? Is it real or mythical? A perfect definition of the Zone is impossible, as every athlete who has ventured into that realm has his or her own. As for whether or not it is real, I'll leave that up to you to decide as you read this book in your quest to achieve it.

CHAPTER 3

Being in the Zone is an incredible and on-going personal, exhilarating experience. Most elite athletes know the Zone. And I can assure you that you have experienced it as well, in a very clear and specific way.

Exercise: <i>Finding your Zone Feel</i>
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CHAPTER 4

The notion that losses in sport can be useful, and that there are benefits to losing, often sparks disbelief. How could losing and feeling bad be good? So, instead of leaving you hanging with this advice, I'm going to teach you to get very excited when you lose so that you can wring every last drop out of what it is teaching you.

Exercise: *The No-Zone Feel*

STEP 2: OUTCOMES ALIVE

CHAPTER 5

Within the shooting sports there are notable shooters always at the top. Somehow, they learned to be consistent by way of incredible talent, many hours of training and many hours of fighting through vast numbers of competition targets. So, you ask yourself, can I ever catch up and become as good as they are? And can I possibly do it sooner, rather than later? In this chapter, I am going to show you how you can begin to equal the playing field by putting in extra practice time and competing in hundreds of additional tournaments - at no cost and with minimal time!

Exercise: *DEJA-VU DVD*

CHAPTER 6

Using visualization in Step 2 of the SportExcel System helps you acquire and fine-tune skills to compete at the highest levels. Because I've also worked with athletes in several other sports, I'll give you an example of how this exercise can be used from the point of view of learning a sport far removed from shooting - snowboarding! It will give you a sense of how you can accelerate your learning curve and practice in your head as opposed to on the range.

Exercise: *DEJA-VU Two*

CHAPTER 7

A very capable shooter told me in one of our training sessions that he was going to compete in a major competition and that his goal was to win for his family and his community as they had been helping him raise money for his training. He believed that winning honored their support, and, by default, losing dishonored it. What an incredible burden for any athlete to carry.

I held my tongue. I figured it would be a good experience for him to discover how being focused on the wrong outcome might be counterproductive. This chapter focuses on setting outcomes and sub-outcomes for achieving your sports dream.

CHAPTER 8

As you approach a new shooting season, you may be excitedly anticipating the shooting adventure that lies ahead. You'll be rested after taking time off to recover from a year of competitions. But with the hibernation over, this is the point in the season, before any targets hit, to set your specific outcomes for the year. When you project what you want to achieve - in a checklist fashion - you'll know month by month if you are achieving them and making any progress in your game. Even if you are just a recreational shooter, it will help make your season easier.

Exercise: *Countdown chart*

STEP 3: GUIDANCE IS LIKE GPS

CHAPTER 9

I believe that in sport, there are no winners or losers; only those who actively participate in guiding their mindset with regard to their outcomes, and those who leave it to chance (or to others). When I watch any professional sport, it usually takes me one look at the posture of the coach and athlete during a game to know whether they are either winning or losing. Unfortunately, for most athletes, the game runs their lives instead of them running the game. This chapter talks about staying in charge of your Zone and your game - win or lose - by using GPS-like guidance to manage your Zone.

Exercise: *Shifting between Zone and No-Zone Feel*

CHAPTER 10

I have worked with hundreds of very talented athletes, many of whom have lost the passion in their sport for any number of reasons. Some are related to past performance, some to problems with learning, and others are related to self-perception. However, my findings indicate that the number one reason for losing passion is due to a history of having an overbearing, obnoxious or abusive person involved in their athletic life. And the number two reason is due to the athlete's continuing to relive the negative effects of this person - long after - by way of "self-talk", which tells you that some underlying No-Zone experience has just surfaced. This chapter focuses on how to fix self-talk to get your Zone back.

Exercise: *Curing the Self-Talk Blues*

CHAPTER 11

Distracting comments come in all shapes and sizes on the practice or competition range. I'm sure you have heard many of them:

"You know that you are only two shots away from a perfect round!"

"The first station is always the most difficult."

"How is the change in your stance coming along?"

"Does your arm still hurt?"

"Sure is windy."

Each statement does a remarkable job of drawing your attention away from hitting the target. Therefore, one of the most important rules in any sport is that you get what you think about (or what others want you to think about). This chapter talks about setting deliberate, powerful outcomes rather than let them be set inadvertently by subconscious minds or by others.

STEP 4: TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

CHAPTER 12

Step 4 of the SportExcel System provides you with some of the tools that every elite athlete already knows how to use. They will give you the means to break old habits, learn new skills and gain perspective. You will learn how to step into the shoes of your sporting heroes and model specific skills. You'll learn how to step back from a problematic relationship and fix what is bothering you. You'll learn to slow down fast targets and make any range feel like it is your favorite. And, with a bit of practice, you'll have the tools working for you subconsciously.

CHAPTER 13

Elite athletes only remember what helps them, whereas the average athlete remembers everything. Our minds often forget bad experiences over time, simply by the addition and sheer volume of other experiences that are more pleasant. But why wait for the pleasant to crowd out the unpleasant? Why wait for the empowering experiences to crowd out the disempowering? Why wait for happy experiences to crowd out the sad? Let's learn to do it now by using our natural ability to mix and jumble memories together in very positive ways.

Exercise: *FUSING*

CHAPTER 14

There is a sad fact about training in any shooting sport and it is this: The more you practice shooting, the more targets you'll miss. And the more you miss, the more it can hurt to miss (even as you might be becoming a better shot). Similarly, the more competitions you enter, the more you'll have the opportunity to miss even more targets, at least at the outset. And the more people you meet at competitions, the greater the likelihood that you'll be embarrassed many more times by those missed targets than if you just stayed at home and watched a movie.

So why do we do it to ourselves? This chapter's theme is: You have to enjoy adversity (love to miss) before you can ever enjoy winning.

Exercise: *LOVE TO MISS*

CHAPTER 15

I have had the opportunity to work with many coaches, athletes, businesspeople, professionals and a mix of professional singers, dancers, and musicians from around the world. A common theme, if any, has been that of failure or defeat and the intense emotional content it carries.

As kids, we were pretty much a blank slate skill-wise and so we learned quickly. But many of us as adults now find the ease of learning new skills to be more elusive. Fortunately, you can resurrect your natural ability at any age with an exercise I will teach you in this chapter.

Exercise: *TALENT MODE*

CHAPTER 16

A person's posture is a clear window to their state of mind, and probably their soul. When you change past memories with some of the tools already discussed, the result is a very strong and very powerful posture. In this chapter we will further develop and strengthen your ability to maintain this kind of posture. In doing so, it will not only prevent No-Zone thoughts from entering your head but will also help you to get rid of them whenever they do.

Exercise: *POWER WALK*

CHAPTER 17

Most of us will have days when targets are a blur. Our friends smoke them, and we miss them. In one round the targets are big and bright and in the next they revert to being small and dark. We search for solutions such as eyewear or gun combs or come up with excuses such as cloud cover, background distractions or brightness. But more often than not, you have simply lost your Zone and it can nullify all your training and experience by dulling your senses, particularly your vision. In this chapter, we will look at training your brain to see the target better and make seeing and hitting targets so automatic that the targets ink-ball themselves.

Exercise: *VISTA*

CHAPTER 18

Perception plays a huge role in all sports. In hockey and soccer, for example, it is typical for average caliber players to perceive goaltenders as difficult to beat. For these players, goal scoring becomes a two-step process where the athlete sees (1) the goaltender, and then (2) the opening. Elite athletes use a one-step process and see only the net openings.

It is the same for shotgunners in the clay target sports, where the two-step process involves seeing (1) the background - sky, trees, birds, butterflies... (2) the target. When this happens, the usual excuse is that the targets were difficult to see, and "nobody" was able to see the targets very well that day.

However, some shooters score well regardless of the conditions or background. And, if you ask them why, they might even tell you that it was their lenses. But it is really their ability to take the target in one step, not two. This chapter gives a tool for learning how to turn smoking the target into a one-step process by training your brain through the help of a children's book!

Exercise: *VISUAL ACUITY – “Where’s Waldo”*

CHAPTER 19

Imagine how different your current shooting performance would be if your past was only you and the target - no other people. How much more pleasant the shoot would be with no one attempting to throw off your game, to distract you with tantrums or to intimidate you with their prowess.

So, you might ask, can I change my perception of them - the good, the bad and the challenging - so they disappear as well? Many athletes have the necessary technical skills, but at the subconscious level they envision themselves as less significant when comparing themselves to other athletes, and, as a result, are easily intimidated and defeated by presence rather than skill. These athletes need to step back and get a new perspective on the situation, which the strategy in this chapter is all about.

Exercise: *MIND COACH*

CHAPTER 20

As a high-performance trainer, I work with shooters who shoot near perfect scores in practice and then falter in competition. In most sports it is called choking, a phenomenon that every athlete has experienced at least once. As frustrating as it is, it is easy to fix, especially in an athlete's early years. This chapter talks about the role of the coach as the emotional ballast in their athlete's sport and gives strategies for carrying out this role.

Exercise revisited: *MIND COACH*

CHAPTER 21

I am very supportive of parents of young athletes because I was one, and I know what they go through. They spend more time with their athlete than the coach and yet often feel undervalued by both the coach and the athlete. They also can get blamed for the many behavioral sins of their child. This chapter is aimed at parents who wish to overcome this stigma and be a benefit to both the coach and their child.

Exercise revisited: *MIND COACH for parents*

CHAPTER 22

Talk to any athlete or coach and they often speak of "momentum" rather than adrenaline. They speak of tennis matches where one athlete will be down a few sets and slowly the momentum will shift in favor of the other. They speak of golfers who suddenly find the Zone midway in a round and move to an effortless swing. They speak of Olympic-level skeet shooters who allow their routines to run effortlessly and mindlessly.

We call this momentum but in pure chemical terms it is a stable supply of adrenaline. These comfortable adrenalized states often occur in the middle of competitions, when, in my experience, the bags may already be packed for home. If you are not in the Zone at the outset, expect a struggle. This chapter gives a strategy for creating the adrenaline that you need to ensure momentum for your sport.

Exercise: *THE A-BUTTON (Adrenaline button)*

CHAPTER 23

At a karate competition in which I was competing a number of years ago, I found myself shifting from foot to foot like a single tree swaying in a perfectly still forest. All the other black belts were standing stock still. I certainly remember feeling good and was surely in the Zone, moving to keep my body loose and to maintain the adrenaline that I had built up while warming up. I also understand that my adrenalized swaying was blocking everything else out - my fellow competitors, the judges, the noisy spectators, and internal self-talk.

The exercise in this chapter will help you develop your "feel" game and will keep you trusting your technique, experience, and preparedness without having to think. You will simply run on automatic, fueled by adrenaline.

Exercise: *POWER SHIFT*

STEP 5: THE SYSTEM

CHAPTER 24

A skillful Zone is often referred to as Unconscious Competence - you don't have to think about what you are doing anymore - you are just good at it subconsciously. This requires incredible trust in your abilities, and, when you are in this state, shooting is easy. There is no self-talk and especially no easy explanation of what is happening; it just happens without thinking. The exercises in this chapter will help you to learn to trust your skills and to build subconscious competence.

Exercises: *TRUST-BUILDING*

CHAPTER 25

I work with many different sports and many great and passionate athletes, but I also get a few that require attitude adjustments. They simply lack that same kind of passion and often make any number of excuses for not winning. Give me a passionate athlete with limited skills anytime over one who is disinterested yet has fabulous skills.

Attitude - how you view the world - is critically important as it affects your resiliency. You can either immediately forget mistakes and move on, or you can carry them for the rest of the competition, perhaps all of your life. In this chapter we will look at how to know our outcomes, act on what our internal GPS is telling us and continually apply the correct tools from the SportExcel system in order to ensure that we can start to win consistently.

Exercise: ATTITUDE IN ACTION

CHAPTER 26

"What is a grown man like me doing standing up here in front of my peers making a fool of myself at this shooting competition?" is the question one trap shooter asked after his first few disastrous experiences. He was quite delighted to hear that there is a term for his trial by fire: Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG), which justifies putting ourselves in "harm's way" with the expectation that we will eventually get that perfect score and suggests that people have the ability to learn from their experiences, no matter how traumatic.

This chapter summarizes how the SportExcel System can help you with your own personal and performance struggles in shooting, in life and in relationships.

STEP 6: THE BEGINNING

CHAPTER 27

You now have a beginning, a system that works like no other, to help you to win by getting you in the Zone and keeping you there. The tools of the system are very powerful, and, based on my findings and results with hundreds of athletes and over many thousands of hours of training, easy to learn and apply. My athletes win; my coaches win.

The insights and practical applications of the SportExcel System have resulted in many positive changes in teams and athletes - personal bests, great relationships, rewarding experiences, business leadership skills, educational enhancement, balanced lives, and other bonuses of competing and coaching to win. Take your new tools and apply them - the system doesn't work - you do. The tools don't work - you do. And, in order for you to work, you need to practice. I wish you great shooting, great enjoyment, and great growth, whatever your sport and whatever your projected level of attainment.