

WORKSHEET 7

RECONDITIONING YOUR BELIEF SYSTEM:

The use of affirmations (which under the term 'positive self-talk' plays an important role in sports psychology) can help us reprogram or strengthen our belief systems as well as to reach our goals. What we believe about ourselves and about our capacity to grow and to succeed has a profound effect on what actually happens.

Exercise:

1. Decide upon the attribute or aspect of yourself or your practice that you want to change or improve. For this you can work with the self-assessment worksheet or the balance wheel. Choose something that would have the most impact on the aspects of your playing that you are working on and that needs to be dealt with now.
2. Formulate a positive statement about the attribute/aspect that you chose. Make your statement in a short clear form as if it is already a reality e.g. "I am confident" and not "I want to be confident" or "I will be confident".
3. Before every practice session repeat this sentence out loud to yourself.
4. Continue doing the affirmation for 30 days, or until you feel as if you really believe it. Don't worry if you don't believe the affirmation at first.

WORKING WITH AFFIRMATIONS

To make the exercise stronger, combine it with a brain integration exercise so that both hemispheres of your brain 'get the message'. With arms outstretched, start repeating your affirmation whilst slowly bringing your hands closer together. Clasp your hands together, take a deep breath and repeat your affirmation one last time.

Examples from case studies:

Frederick wants to improve his concentration as he notices that he is easily distracted whilst practicing and during performance, especially during difficult sections of a piece. His affirmation: ***"I am engaged!"***

Sonia has been told that her playing, although very good, is too mechanical. She realizes that in order to convince others of her musical expression, she needs to feel more convinced herself. Her affirmation: ***"I am convinced!"***

David is tense and nervous when he performs. His affirmation: ***"I play with ease and confidence!"***