

THE CREATIVE GORILLA #116

How might a creative leader retain mental resolve when under pressure...?

Maintain Mental Resolve...

"Robert Green is confident he has the mental resolve to bounce back from the World Cup howler that helped the United States draw 1-1 with England."

BBC Sport website 13 June 2010



Do you have mental resolve?

Driving home the day after England's World Cup match with the USA, I listened to BBC radio. They were interviewing a sport psychologist who explained how people react after making the kind of mistake that England's goalkeeper Robert Green made in the match, fumbling the ball and enabling the USA to equalise.

He went on to discuss how sport psychologists toughen athletes' mental resolve in four areas:

1. Concentration is the mental quality to focus on the task in hand. There are two areas of focus: 1. The Broad - Narrow continuum; the athlete focuses on a large or small number of stimuli. 2. Internal - External continuum; the athlete focuses on internal stimuli (feelings) or external stimuli (ball). Common distractions are anxiety, stress and

fatigue

2. **Confidence** is driven by the belief an athlete can achieve their goals, leading to more enthusiasm, perseverance and positive thinking
3. **Control** of emotions (e.g. anger and anxiety) is essential for successful performance in adversity. Lack of control causes mental and physical affects which reduce performance
4. Full **Commitment** to the goals they wish to achieve (or save in Robert Green's case), is essential

SO

Listening to the discussion, it struck me how we might relate the 4Cs to creative leadership. After all, it can be tough challenging the status quo. Here are tips on how you might improve your mental resolve, based on advice given to athletes.

Concentration

1. Within your overall goal, focus on short term goals and create a trigger word (what might be called an "anchor" by business coaches) for when your concentration starts to lapse. E.g. within an overall goal to increase sales, you might use the word "communicate" for when you

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write articles to increase sales, reminding you not to answer e-mails or be otherwise distracted.

2. Develop routines for the different aspects of your goal, e.g. setting a certain time aside to write articles (I usually write Gorillas on Sunday morning)

Confidence

Use mental imagery to:

1. Visualise situations when you have previously been confident
2. Imagine how you can / will cope with various difficult situations

Control

1. Change your focus away from what is causing the anxiety. Relaxation techniques such as meditation achieve this

Commitment

1. Clarify the overall vision
2. Share development of goals
3. Monitor progress
4. Increase task interest and enjoyment
5. Enhance team work

ACTION

1. Consider also how attention to the 4 Cs might help when facilitating meetings How might you help yourself or your team to achieve more using the 4 Cs? [For more information on the 4 Cs, click [here](#) for a link to my source, sport coach Brian Mac]

TO CLOSE

England is out of the World Cup and as usual the post mortem analyses have begun.

Whilst top footballers, like many entertainers, get paid a great deal of money, I wonder how the rest of us would feel if a camera was trained on us at work 100% of the time, highlighting every mistake (as well as our successes). What kind of mental resolve would we need then?

Enjoy Wimbledon, or if sport leaves you cold, enjoy life...

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