

# Developing your Mental Toughness



If you want to develop your Mental Toughness, you need to “get below the surface” and understand what Mental Toughness is and what makes up Mental Toughness.

In the benchmark Clough and Strycharcyk model of Mental Toughness, it is defined as “*A narrow, plastic personality trait which helps to explain how individuals respond to stress, pressure, opportunity and challenge, irrespective of circumstance*” and it is made up of 8 factors or elements:

**Life Control:** this is about being in control of where you are going in your life; it’s about having an “internal” compass and being guided by your values and your objectives – this doesn’t mean being “self-centred”, but it does mean making conscious life decisions.

**Emotional Control:** this is about being able to manage or control your emotional reactions; it’s about being able to stay calm and grounded in difficult situations – this doesn’t mean being cold or denying your emotions, but it does mean accepting your emotional state and “deciding” how to behave.

**Interpersonal Confidence:** this about being able to face up to difficult people; it is about standing your ground without becoming aggressive – this doesn’t mean shouting others down, but it does mean staying assertive.

**Confidence in Abilities:** This is about being confident in what you know and being able to explain and “defend” your arguments; it’s about “knowing your stuff” – this doesn’t mean being arrogant and aloof, but it does mean being prepared.

**Goal Orientation:** this is about setting clear, concise and measurable goals; it’s about detailing what you want to achieve – this doesn’t mean being a control freak, but it does mean identifying what success means for you.

**Achievement Orientation:** this is about not giving up easily; it’s about being tenacious, focussed and determined – this doesn’t mean becoming stubborn and blinkered but it does mean achieving what you set out to achieve.

**Risk Orientation:** this is about proactively seeking out challenges; it’s about being willing to get out of your comfort zone and taking on stuff you are uncomfortable with – this doesn’t mean being impulsive or reckless, but it does mean being selective with regards to the challenges you take on.

**Learning Orientation:** this is about taking the time to learn from everything; it’s about learning from successes and it’s about learning from failures – this doesn’t mean getting lost in introspection and self-flagellation, but it does mean identifying “transferable learning” from every situation.

If you want to develop your Mental Toughness

- Take control of your life
  - Focus on what is important for you
- Manage your emotional response
  - Be at peace with your emotions
- Be assertive
  - Respect yourself and others
- Become unconsciously competent
  - Prepare, prepare and prepare until you can do it without thinking about it

- Set SMART goals
  - If you can't measure it, you can't manage it
- Focus on your priorities
  - Not just what is important, not just what is urgent – but what is important & urgent
- Challenge yourself, physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually
  - Proactively take calculated risks in order to grow your comfort zone
- Look back and learn from everything you do
  - Don't just accept success or failure, identify what worked and what didn't work

If you would like to discuss developing your Mental Toughness, do not hesitate to contact me – I have been an accredited Mental Toughness trainer since 2005 and a Master Trainer since 2017