

Where is your Achilles Tendon



We all have a Mental Toughness Achilles Tendon

I come across a lot of people who seem to be fairly mentally tough but with “specific” issues or weaknesses; and it’s often the weakness that “let’s them down” in difficult situations.

Mental Toughness is defined by psychologists as, *“A personality trait which determines, in a large part, how people respond to challenge, stress and pressure, irrespective of their circumstances”*

Mental Toughness is made up from four key elements; called the 4 Cs – Control, Commitment, Challenge and Confidence.

Each element is made up from two “components”

Control is made up from Life Control & Emotional Control

Commitment is made up from a Goal Orientation & an Achievement Orientation

Challenge is made up from a Risk Orientation & a Learning Orientation

Confidence is made up from Interpersonal Confidence & Confidence in Abilities

You can have very high “overall” Mental Toughness while being very low in one of the eight components that makes up the 4C’s Mental Toughness model.

The Mental Toughness Questionnaire MTQPlus is an extremely important and useful tool in identifying areas for developing your Mental Toughness; it measures both your “overall” Mental Toughness and each of the eight sub-components – all on a scale from 1 (very low) to 10 (very high).

Imagine someone with eights and nines (even tens) everywhere (Life Control, Achievement Orientation, Confidence in Abilities, etc), except for Emotional Control; even if the person has very low levels of Emotional Control; their overall Mental Toughness will come out in the high zone; not necessarily a nine or ten but probably an eight – which sounds very comforting.

Clearly, someone with the above profile will probably be out there looking for and taking on challenges, they will probably set themselves clear objectives and be determined to succeed and they will probably be confident in their abilities; however; however, when it all start to go horribly wrong, their lack of Emotional Control can become a real handicap – shouting, tantrums, name calling and, possibly, even worse.

Emotional outbreaks are normal, we all have to face situations that get “the better of us” and “letting off steam” is not always a bad thing, however; however, when it becomes regular it can start to tarnish your reputation.

I have focused here on low Emotional Control, but we all have our own Achilles Tendon; someone could have high scores everywhere except in one of the other elements; very low Risk Orientation or very low Interpersonal Confidence, etc.

They will not show the same behaviours as someone with low Emotional Control, but each “low” will manifest itself in some manner, particularly in difficult or stressful situations, and hinder optimal performance.

Low Achievement Orientation can lead you to “giving up” early

and not succeeding, low Life Control can lead you to being “led by the nose” into challenges that are not really for you, low Interpersonal Confidence can lead you to backing down when you are challenged and low Risk Orientation can lead to missed opportunities.

If you would like to get under the surface of your Mental Toughness and identify the impact of your “highs and lows” on your personal effectiveness, your wellbeing or your performance, do not hesitate to contact me: boblarcher@boblarcher.com