Mental Toughness & Wellbeing – Control

Much has been written about how Mental Toughness contributes to increased performance; however, even more fundamentally, Mental Toughness has a significant impact on Wellbeing.

In fact, Wellbeing is almost a "precursor" to high performance – it is difficult to perform well if your Wellbeing is low.

In this series of four posts, I will look at how each of the "4C's" of Mental Toughness can contribute your Wellbeing.

In this post I will look at Control.

Control has, as do all of the C's, two sub-dimensions; Life-Control and Emotional Control

High Life Control is about knowing both "where you are going in life" and "why you are going there". It's about being clear, without being dogmatic, about things like your personal life vision, your mission & purpose and finding what the Japanese call your Ikigai – the reason why you get up in the morning.

It is often said that, "more people fail through lack of purpose than lack of talent"; having talent is great but if you don't know how to focus that talent, its potential will simply dissipate and probably leave you feeling frustrated.

Those with high Life Control have a kind of internal compass that helps them to make life decisions, especially major life decisions, on their own values and deep beliefs

Clarifying your purpose, etc., is not about being ego-centric & rigid and blindly ignoring the values, beliefs and needs of others in order to satisfy your personal objectives. Deciding to do something to "satisfy" someone else, is not a sign of lack of Life Control – assuming, of course, you have consciously decided your course of action, rather than deciding because you do not want to feel guilty or upset the other.

To develop you Life Control, you need to be clear about what is important for you in life, your values, your beliefs, your desires …….. and how much (and why) you are willing to compromise them.

The other sub-dimension of Control is the somewhat misnamed (at least for me) Emotional Control.

Emotional Control is, in fact, not about controlling your emotions; it's not about gritted teeth and clenched fists denying that you are angry, sad or frustrated.

Emotions "happen to us", we do not choose to be angry, happy, joyful, sad, etc.; something happens in our external world and, almost instantaneously, we feel something in our internal world.

Emotional Control, in terms of Mental Toughness, is about how you manage, or control, the expression of your emotional state; it's how you deal with the behavioural aspect of your emotion.

Those with high Emotional Control are firstly, aware of the build-up of their emotional state, secondly, they use their emotional state as "information" to help them understand what's going on and, thirdly, they are able to focus their

emotional energy into something positive.

One of the keys to high Emotional Control is being aware of your personal “emotional highway”, no one goes, for example, directly from neutral to blind rage; there are intermediate states – from neutral to irritated, from irritated to agitated, from agitated to annoyed and then on to angry and finally blind rage.

If you can identify where you are on your emotional highway, you can ask yourself, “why am I feeling this?” and “what can I do to avoid being overcome by my emotions?”; you can also maybe express your emotional state to others around you and your desire to remain calm.

Positive emotions contribute to increased connection to others and confidence and helps build constructive, healthy relationships – all essentuial in terms of high Wellbeing.

If you would like to explore your Mental Toughness and how you can increase your Wellbeing and performance do not hesitate to contact me: boblarcher@boblarcher.com