



Learn to Believe

Dr Ann Quinn

Director – Quinnessential Coaching

As tennis coaches, our biggest challenge with many players is getting them to really believe in themselves. I don't just mean believe, I mean to absolutely know in their heart and soul that they can do something. It is not just a belief, it is a conviction. You can see it in their eyes, hear it in their talk and observe it in the way they walk and how they move. They lead, they do not doubt. They are always positive even when the odds are against them. And when the pressure is really on, they thrive even more.

1 WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE NOW?

Before we can ever succeed, we must first believe we can win. It all starts with a thought. But what thoughts are you choosing to hang on to? What do you choose to believe? What has someone told you something in the past that you still believe eg: "you'll never make it as a player", "you're too slow", "your serve is useless". What are those beliefs that hold you back or doubts about your ability? What stops you from creating your dreams?

2 THE VOCABULARY OF SUCCESS

Once you have identified these negative beliefs, you must change them. We are what we think. What you believe is what you get. What would you love to believe? The choice is yours! Our mind does not know the difference between what is right and what is wrong. It acts on whatever you tell it. The way you talk to yourself – the specific words you use – control the way you think. And the way we think controls how we feel and what we do. If say you're 'angry,' or 'failed,' what kinds of feelings are you going to have? What kinds of questions will you be asking yourself? What will you be focusing on? But suppose, instead of 'angry,' you are 'peevd'? Instead of "failed", you have "learned something valuable"? Do you think you would start feeling different? You'd better believe it". Words really do have the power to change how we feel. Choose powerful, positive words! And success will feed on success, creating positive momentum in your life. Choose your thoughts and beliefs wisely. Challenge yourself to greatness.

3 HARD WORK – DO IT DAILY WITH INTENSITY AND PASSION

No matter how great you are, you must continue to work hard. There is no substitute for it. Winners don't just win. It is a result of incredible dedication and hard work day in and day out. As Billie Jean King stated, "INTENSITY is the number one common denominator to greatness", there is simply no substitute for hard work and self-discipline. You must practice intensely to play intensely. And that does not mean practicing only specific tennis skills but also mental skills. Develop your mental muscles too. Many recognise that tennis is as much as 90% mental, and it is. How much time are you devoting to



training those muscles? Don't just speak positively. Speak with passion. Say it like you REALLY mean it – with total conviction and from your heart.

4 INCANTATIONS WITH PASSION

What you consistently speak, you will become. Just as your muscles need to be kept in condition, your emotions and beliefs must also be trained to be in peak performance condition. The power of consciously creating your own empowering incantations is that they engage the entire triad: By creating new patterns of language, physiology, and beliefs, you guarantee that you have created a new cause-and-effect direction and destination for your tennis and your life. Knowing better will not make you better. You must speak with passion that which you wish to become. The consequences of incantations are more powerful than belief systems because incantations are an active use of neurology and physiology, whereas beliefs are passive – resident memory.

5 ACKNOWLEDGE YOURSELF

Another great way to foster self belief is to get players to acknowledge everything they do well – the good shots, the great points, the tough training, the positive attitude, and all the hard work. Players cannot just rely on their coaches, parents, partners or trainers all the time. Players should be independent, not dependent. Compliment yourself often. Many are so quick to be down on themselves when things go wrong, when they make a mistake, or just miss the line. On the other hand, they don't acknowledge the successes along the way, the great things they do. What you focus on is what you become. Positive words are great but make them even more powerful. Find a symbol or gesture to acknowledge you, such as a wristband or a pat on your shoulder when you play a great shot. Make it fun so your players will gain more enjoyment from their tennis too.

6 SEE YOURSELF ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS - EXPECT IT

Expect to win and persevere. When you expect to win, then you know it's just a matter of time. However most give up along the way. It gets too hard, there are too many obstacles in the way, they get down on themselves, and they give up on their dreams. As the saying goes, when the going gets tough, is when the tough get going. Winners see what they want to happen. They have clear pictures and feelings of the way they want to play. They visualise and experience the future, as they want it to be. Live in the certainty that you already have what you want. Claim it in your mind as an existing fact.

7 GET SUPPORT. COMMIT TO PRACTISING MENTALLY EVERYDAY

To help you believe even more, be sure to surround yourself with positive people – people who believe in you and totally support you. You know you can count on them no matter what happens. It is also important that you practise your mental skills daily. The way you acquire mental toughness, belief and confidence in yourself is very similar to the way you acquire your tennis skills: planned purposeful practice makes perfect. This means spending time on mental preparation each and everyday. Regularly seed the



feeling that you already have achieved whatever you want to achieve. It's yours. Live it. Vibrate it. Exalt it and thrill with it. Claim it, absolutely as yours. Practice each and everyday for at least 15 minutes. The key is to make a commitment to do it daily and make it a habit. Make good habits and they will make you.

"Your faith is your fortune. What you truly believe is what you will achieve. Believe you can do it. Believe you deserve it and believe you will get it. And you will!"

Ann Quinn