

Preparing for Our Work Together *Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment*

As we have discussed today, your problem isn't the problem ... the way you react to your "problem" is the problem. We have four basic human emotions, all of them valuable and helpful, but only one of them pleasant. The struggle to be without distress is the problem, not the presence of these thoughts and feelings. Changing the way we respond to what our mind tells us (our thoughts) and what we feel (our emotions and physical sensations) is not easy but it is entirely possible. It helps to approach developing new skills with the correct attitude and mind-set. Here are some tips to keep in mind as you begin the journey of mental-skill development:

- Developing the skills of mindful attention, mindful awareness, and poise requires an active effort and commitment, both in-session and between our sessions. It is the same as your physical training that requires daily practice to improve.
- Keep an open mind about what you hear and what you are asked to do. Many of these concepts are different than what you have been taught to believe ... but if what you were taught worked you wouldn't be here! (For example, I have to think positively and feel confident to play well ... is an athlete going to the Olympics not supposed to be nervous?!?).
- Accept that results do not happen overnight. It is a process, developing one skill after another, building on the one before. Then playing them in more and more challenging situations. Mastery is a process of ups and downs, mistakes and successes.
- Be patient with yourself when you make a mistake, miss a practice, or have inconsistent success. These mental and emotional skills develop in the same way that all previous skills have developed in your life - with hard work, repeated practice, and gradually over time.
- Most importantly, remember that you are not here because you are broken or there is something wrong with you. You are having a "normal" reaction to high pressure. Excellence is what's not normal. If you want to be in the top 1% - then you have to do what 99% of others can't or won't. Respect excellence and let's get to work!