

37. The Emotional Handbrake

Completing the exercises, using the tools and techniques, and following through with The 12 Week Performance Success Programme contained within this book may be all you ever need to achieve an ideal level of performance arousal, enabling you to consistently perform in The Zone. However if you still find yourself several steps away from performing in The Zone after having completed the 12 Week Performance Success Programme at least once or twice, and diligently applying the exercises and techniques provided, don't fret!

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Internal barriers - The emotional handbrake

Occasionally we experience blocks, only to have everything 'click' when we least expect it. It is not unusual to experience these internal blocks or mental barriers in your journey to The Zone. Be patient – you can and will succeed!

Firstly, remember that if you've come this far and discovered that you have taken one or more steps towards more controlled performance arousal, you are on the right track! Reward yourself!

Secondly, the process of controlling performance arousal and performing in The Zone can sometimes take longer than originally expected. Give yourself the time you need to take further steps in the right direction.

And thirdly, this part of *Performing in The Zone* has been specially included to provide you with some additional sources of help and advice in your journey to optimal performance. By examining these complimentary sources outlined here, you may very well find the answers you are looking for.

A charmed past

There are very few of us who have what one would consider a 'charmed' past. By charmed I mean a life thus far filled only with 100% positive experiences – a life growing up in the perfect encouraging family, learning from the best teachers, experiencing an ideal school environment, associating with the most fantastic and supportive peer group, living in the safest neighbourhood, and so on.

Defence mechanism

According to the philosophy of the Rosen Therapy holistic treatment method (among others), we as humans possess a 'defence mechanism' which has the ability to protect ourselves at times when we undergo the various negative experiences, emotional stresses, and traumas in our lives.

This 'defence mechanism' can be manifested physically as tension in various parts of the body, helping us cope with both mildly negative as well as more traumatic experiences

when they occur. However, the 'defence mechanisms' created to help us in times of strife can in fact cause us problems later on if we are unable to 'switch them off' or release them when they are not needed. If this happens, the emotional stresses and physical tensions built up during negative times can become ingrained in our behaviour, affecting many parts of our lives, including our state of mind before and during performing situations.

Baggage

In other words, if you haven't been able to fully deal with the negative experiences of your past, it is possible that you can be carrying around some sort of emotional baggage, blockages, or internal barriers, whether you are aware of this or not. These barriers may be preventing you from achieving an ideal state of mind in your performing situations.

Driving with the handbrake on

One way of thinking about the concept of holding on to old emotional baggage and internal barriers is driving a car with the handbrake on. You can still get to certain places, but it might be a struggle. Moreover you avoid the biggest hills because you 'know' that the climb will be too tough – something along the way may overheat, get worn out, or even break down completely.

Solutions

So how do you release the emotional handbrake – old physical and psychological tensions – to allow yourself the best possible chance of fully achieving your true potential, climbing the hill as it were, obtaining an ideal state of mind for your performing situations, and performing in *The Zone*? There are no simple answers to this question, as we are all different, have all experienced various events in the past – both positive and negative, and have handled these events in a variety of ways. The exercises, tools, and techniques in Part Two of this book, and The 12 Week Performance Success Programme in Part 3 may have provided you with a partial solution. However, there are also many other complimentary sources of advice and help that you can explore. A selection of these alternative sources of help can be found here in this part of *Performing in The Zone*.