

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page features three blue circles of varying sizes. The largest circle is at the top, a medium-sized one is in the middle, and a very large one is at the bottom right. Thin blue lines connect the top-left and top-right edges of the circles, extending towards the top-left corner of the page.

# PSYCHOLOGICAL PERFORMANCE FACTORS

Champions are not made in gyms. Champions are made by something deep inside them: a longing, a dream, a vision. They have endurance to the last minute, they are a little faster and they have the ability and the will. But the will is stronger than the ability. Mohammed Ali

**Styliani-Fratzeska Chrysofaki**  
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## THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER - TEACHER

Catalytic role in the psychological field of sports training is played by the teacher-teacher.

### **The role of the teacher is fulfilled by:**

- the teacher who transmits the "art" of the sport, but also educates,
- the encourager who encourages, excites and helps to mobilize the athlete's potential
- The leader who guides, decides, plans, organizes.

However, while the role of the teacher initially appears to be three-dimensional, it is in fact multi-dimensional. It is therefore necessary to be knowledgeable about the subject from a technical and tactical point of view and has a wide range of knowledge in the fields of anatomy, physiology, traumatology, pedagogy and psychology. In addition to his ability to pass on his knowledge, he is also to maintain a relationship of trust with the athlete himself, the parent and the sports agent. In particular the relationship with the athlete contributes to the maintenance or not the emotional balance of the latter.

For the athlete, the teacher is not only the sports expert, but also his own person, who understands his problems and tries to solve them with him.

Also, to teach discipline not by intimidation, but by inspiring respect and trust and - knowing that it has an influence on children who love taekwondo - to handle interpersonal relationships with great sensitivity according to their specificities, long-term objectives and in the context of the philosophy that governs him or her and the sport.

As a result of all this, the teacher must cultivate and develop his personality and his scientific training, to take care of his athletic and social presence, to use appropriate methods for learning and motivating the athletes, to set goals and take into account the needs of the athletes, to be attentive to their needs and to be aware of the needs of the players the needs of the athletes before each objective.

The personality of the teacher should composure.

It becomes clear that the teacher does not only convey the technical and tactical knowledge of the sport but also perceptions and attitudes towards sport and life.

He is the protagonist of the sport environment. He is the link between the athlete, parent, agent and maintains the balance between them all' and to achieve this he must work with and for the athletes.

### **INTERNAL MOTIVATION AND EXTERNAL MOTIVATION**

Motivation is divided into internal (internal motivation) and external (external motivation).

If the goal and the motivation of an action coincide, then the athlete is exercising to exercise, exercising for the joy of the exercise itself, so we have internal motivation. This motivation is related to the individual's need to feel competent and assertive to reduce the uncertainty that exists in his/her environment, i.e. it depends on the individual himself/herself and how he /she feel.

According to Deci (1975) these needs push the individual to situations that create tension (sporting activity) and to situations that bring success.

If the goal and motivation are differentiated as the athlete trains for a specific purpose (e.g. for financial rewards, to obtain a belt, to gain media exposure) then his actions take the form of work and his motivation is external.

THE EXTERNAL motivation of an athlete needs constant reinforcement from exogenous factors (comments, rewards from third parties), while the internal ones directly satisfy the athlete who fulfills his/her goals with the importance of participation to each individual.

Later, young athletes switch to external motivation, which is difficult to resist, since they are offered prizes, uniforms, honors, money, etc.

At this point there is a risk of abandoning sport if at some stage the external motivation ceases and there is no internal motivation.

The internal motivation for the athlete makes his/her motivation stronger, while the external motivation is dominated by fears and insecurities.

Moreover, external motivation needs to be used in moderation and only when it helps personal improvement rather than participation.

This arrangement will improve the image that young athletes have of themselves, as it can be seen as evidence of their abilities

(Gerson 1977).

So, the general conclusion suggests that there must be a balance between athletic energy and its reward.

It becomes clear that:

- When the instructor knows the motivation of his athletes, he can reinforce them appropriately.
- The hierarchy of motivation is proportional to the age and interests of the athlete.
- Motivation can be converted from external to internal.  
The instructor must know the basic needs, interests, values and personality of each athlete, create internal motivation and set goals.

Particularly in young ages involved in sport, healthy motivational foundations must give, starting from the analysis of the causes that lead the practitioner to the sport.

Based on the pedagogical principles of sport, we pay attention to the directions and motivation that we will give to the children.

This means that:

- We do not demand success in every way.
- Winning is the means and not the end.
- Sport serves man and not man serves sport.

With the correct perception of the exercise in taekwondo the healthy motives are created, which are the solid foundations of support for the athlete.

## **MOTIVATIONAL APPLICATION**

The motivation in sport focuses on one point: to help the athlete become responsible by allowing him to have more control over his life (martens 1993).

This means not only the athlete's awareness that every action has an impact on his final performance, but also the prevalence of a sense of autonomy, so that he considers himself as the main cause of his performance.

So, in order to use the motives as well as possible, given their importance in sporting behavior, we must bear in mind that we owe to :

1. The athlete should feel that he/she is constantly learning something new and progressing. The variety and complexity of stimuli offers constant motivation and avoidance of boredom and immobility.
2. Adjust training conditions and the difficulty of competitions to give the opportunity for success and improved performance (Kauss 1980). This is particularly important for young people in order to create a positive image of their future expectations and to increase motivation to participate and try.
3. To create a friendly and enjoyable climate in training along with seriousness and discipline. It is clear that when the student has internal motivation, he is training for the joy and enjoyment of the exercise.

4. Understand the specificities and needs of each age group (e.g. adolescence) and create motivation. The organization of lectures, screenings, celebrations, demonstrations and other sporting events by the concerned teacher-teacher, touches the pulse of athletes and increases their motivation.
5. To make a proper selection and definition of objectives.
6. Link motivation to the senses of sight and hearing, i.e. by using audiovisual media (video, etc.) to convey messages that reach and reinforce the motives.
7. To develop the positive way of thinking. This effort has to work within the framework of a consistent strategy, both in the gym and outside of it. Let not forget that we think negatively, because we are used to it.
8. As teachers we give special importance to the extra-athletic behavior and the way of life of the athlete, because among other things we act as a role model and a person of trust for young athletes.
9. Pay attention to the empowerment of athletes' behavior through rewards.

The positive reinforcement contributes decisively to improving self-confidence and self-esteem of the athlete, especially when it emphasizes the autonomy and responsibility of athletes:

- The support must be clear and specific, i.e. for a certain element of technical or sporting behavior, not indefinite.
- The bonus must be given in the time and place in which the desired performance takes place.
- Reinforcement should not be continuous because it loses its value, especially when the trainee is learning the technique.
- There should be no positive reinforcement for negative behavior. Bad habits exist because there was once positive reinforcement for similar actions.

- Punishment should be avoided because it is only temporarily imposed.
- Avoid negative verbal reinforcement that insults and belittles the athlete.
- To reinforce effort and good behavior in general by giving more importance to performance than to results.

## SET GOALS

Setting goals is the most vital area in motivating athletes, while the goals themselves help to build athletes' potential and direct their efforts.

IN SETTING GOALS the following conditions must be taken into account:

1. To be achievable and proportionate to the athlete's abilities. This means avoiding exaggerations.
2. To be clear and specific. This increases patience, resistance to fatigue and pain, but ultimately the performance of the athlete, which is the result of the right conditioning.
3. Have moderate degree of difficulty, so that there is a challenge and effort to overcome it. Too much ease can lead to boredom, while too much difficulty can lead to be higher than what has been achieved on previous occasions.
4. Should be accepted by the athlete and consistent with his needs and desires. Thus, the athlete realizes the path, which will follow to achieve the goal and becomes more receptive to the training load.
5. When an end goal is set, there must be evidence of progress towards achieving it, so that there is constant motivation.
6. To be able to be measured in order to be evaluated.
7. Aim to increase motivation by focusing on behavior first, then on winning. Performance first and then the result, self-transition first and then the result of the match.

## psycho-emotional control

### .attention and concentration.

Attention is the process by which the athlete directs the perception of the stimuli received by the senses. Attention is a selective function, which refers to both the senses (hearing, vision, hearing, etc.) and cognition (thinking, imagination).

Depending on the level of arousal of the athlete and the ability to process the incoming stimuli, he selects those relevant to the activity, which interests him, excluding the non-relevant and orients his reactions to the specific field, e.g. ignore the discouraging cries of members of the opposing team. To do this takes time, through a process of trial and error, to understand that experienced athletes are more effective in selecting incoming vibes.

Another important property that characterizes the span of attention in taekwondo is the ability to direct attention to the points of interest each time.

The caution with regard to the direction parameter is internal or external, while with regard to the width it is narrow or wide.

When we perceive stimuli from the external environment (opponent, teacher, spectators, etc.) the attention is external.

When we perceive stimuli from the internal environment (mind, body) attention is internal. Such stimuli are thoughts and muscle sensation.

From these arise the four styles of attention: wide-inner style, wide-outer, narrow-inner, narrow-outer, which arise depending on the athletic activity and the attentional capacity of each athlete.

In taekwondo, mainly the flat-inner style is used, before the start and during the breaks of the match, when the athlete directs attention to his inner environment (body sensation) and exposes it to multiple stimuli (tactical planes), while during the race, mainly in a flat-external attention style, as he directs his attention to the external environment (opponent)



and at the same time, to the key points of the opponent's movement in the playing field.

Narrow-inside attention style we have in special techniques (fractures), where he directs his attention exclusively to the feeling of his body and the object of fracture.

A prerequisite for good performance is the speed of directing attention to the style, which may vary depending on the situation.

Furthermore, the most representative aspect of attention in sport is concentration, which is the conscious directing and maintaining of attention to a specific field of observation or to selected mental and/or physical activities.

This means that the athlete can direct and maintain attention to the environment, (e.g. opponent) or to him/her self (e.g. in the performance of a tul, a fracture, a concentration exercise) with greater intensity and duration.

It is an active process of attention as long as the participation is conscious and deeper, which - as contradictory as it sounds - is achieved effortlessly and without pressure. Includes the synchronization of motivation (when there is a direct interest in the activity performed), the control of excitation (when the athlete is at the ideal level of excitation and is ready to face whatever happens), vigilance (where the stimulation is maintained for a long period of time), detection (where he evaluates the stimuli he receives from the opponent to discover points - goals), the conscious control of thought-emotions (self-control) and the clear orientation to the goals (will and determination).

THE breakdown in concentration is due to a combination of internal and external factors.

a. internal factors are due to internal experiences and they are:

- Negativethoughts: thoughts that are not identified with the goal, such as those related to desires, needs and interests.
- Emotional factors, such as anxiety, before the race, due to lack of psychological preparation of the athlete.
- Lack of motivation and interest.
- High expectations, which may come from the teacher or third parties or from excessive self-assurance on the part of the athlete, leading to misjudgment of the opponent and reactions of aggression or desperation.

b. External factors are stimuli from the environment, which vary in intensity and magnitude or are repeated or create great contrast or are constant and cannot be controlled by the athlete directly but only indirectly by ignoring it.

Such stimuli are the voices of the spectators, the presence or absence of loved ones, unfair refereeing, the challenges of rival athletes, the good or bad current performance of competitors, the good or bad current performance of the opposing athlete, the tactics of the opponent in the playing field, the pain due to injury, the lighting conditions and other factors relevant to the living in the place where the competition is held.

## MENTAL TRAINING

Mental training is the mental representation of movements, while the definition of Kostaras and Schuh (1990) as imagination training is inventive.

It is used not only for learning motor skills, which is very important for the field of technique and tactics, but also for the control of racing anxiety. It is a complementary intervention in the psychological preparation of the athlete, encouraging him to intensify his efforts, to concentrate more easily, to increase his combativeness, to reduce his anxiety, and to believe more in himself and in victory.

Weinberg et al. (1982) showed when the combination of relaxation and mindfulness training benefited taekwondo athletes more than other relaxation or mindfulness training techniques. Taekwondo athletes who practiced relaxation and mindfulness training daily performed better than those who practiced them shortly before competition or training.

Moreover, it is worth pointing out that mental training done with the guidance of an expert was no more effective than that done by the athlete alone.

Among the mental training techniques that exist and are used for similar purposes, we distinguish the "internal and external mental training" (Zervas 1992) or "internal and external imagination" (Seabourne 1997) in another formulation.

Internal mental training refers to the athlete's ability to "feel" his performance, while in external mental training he imagines himself performing as if he sees his idol in the ceiling. A prerequisite of both is to be preceded by the application of a relaxation technique.

Park and Seabourne (1997) prefer following a 2' training session, stressing that the "inner imagination" technique is more effective than external mental training:

1. Close your eyes and relax for (10'')
2. Concentrate on your breathing, feeling the movement of the diaphragm.(20'')

3. See, feel, feel your movements and your kicks.(30'')
4. Take some time to repeatedly practice your favorite technique(30'')
5. Enjoy the feeling of perfect balance, control of movements, maximum speed and elasticity.(10'')
6. Let those feelings grow stronger(10'')
7. Open your eyes slowly(10'')

Immediately after the mental training, it is necessary to follow the practical execution of the techniques with shadows. The physical technique, moreover, is identified with the mental technique. There is no restriction as to the time when the mental training will be performed. It can be done at any time of the day and in any place.

### MENTAL ENERGY

In fact, a psychic that is experienced, but not described in specific terms. It is the energy that we feel has charged our body, while at the same time we remain calm and which leads to a higher level of mental capacity for performance.

Mental energy is expressed not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. Positive mental energy is attracted to activities characterized by cheerfulness and optimism, while negative mental energy is attracted to those characterized by anger, anxiety and resentment.

This finding leads to the control of mental energy and its correct channeling. Something like this is evident in breaking techniques, in tuls, and in the match, when the athlete plays the opponent quickly and with rhythm, i.e. following his rhythm and being one with him, which means that at the right moment, he will be on the alert, in order to take advantage of his opening in defense or the break of his rhythm. The athlete identifies with his environment, which in this case is the opponent and this is the key to the athlete charged with mental energy. At that moment the energy is

channeled into action and cannot be diverted by the influence of other factors.

Understanding the importance of mental energy in the psychosomatic preparation of the athlete is crucial for his performance. Thus, in order to control it, it is essential to avoid its unfortunate losses.

When each athlete can experience his/her mental energy, then he/she will start to feed and maintain it. Stressful situations, such as the unknown environment or others, which prompt the athlete to act, as well as the excessive exercise of the ability to concentrate, intensify the loss of mental energy.

The ways that favor the pumping, but also the saving of mental energy are focused on the adequate psychosomatic restoration of the organism and the positive way of thinking.

Negative psychic energy is reversible, but that is why it is necessary to be deeply aware that it is not from external factors, but from our own reactions. The individual himself is the source of his negative energy. It is at this point that the opportunity presents itself to reverse the flow of the source and to make the energy available to strengthen oneself by adopting a positive approach to situations.

In conclusion, given that physical and mental energy affect each other, the athlete needs to take care of the regulation of his mental energy, so that at the time of the race to be at the ideal level of energy quantitatively. The athlete, in the context of a healthy motivation and with the proper organization of his life, will be able to achieve his goals.