



Hey, Don't Think, just Play: An "Interview" with Bob Palmer, High Performance Strategist

Who is Bob Palmer?

I'm a high performance strategist with Olympic medalists in two sports, lots of international and national champions and twenty years of experience with amateurs and professionals. I'm also a martial artist, a fourth degree black belt and have worked in the "mental game" for 20 years with more than 30 sports that I've never participated in. Shocked? Well, my skeet shooters, pro-snowboarders, pro-hockey player and pro-surfers aren't shocked, and neither will you be, especially after you learn my very successful system for winning.

So what do athletes and coaches see in working with you?

Great results, podium finishes, cash prizes and a reconnection with the fun of the game. Yes, FUN. I insist on it.

What does your program offer me as compared to most "off the shelf" books or programs on mental high performance or psychology? How are you different?

Well, here is a scenario of the typical athlete before he works with me. His game is about to begin so he follows the advice of a mental game book he purchased. (Pick any book, as they are all saying pretty much the same thing.) It told him to be positive so he smiles and struts his stuff. It said to use positive self-talk and he repeats over and over, "I am great and I'll do well and I'll score." He tells himself, "its one play at a time, one play at a time."

...He thinks about winning but he read that that was wrong and he remembers - one play at time, process rather than outcome. He remembers to be positive and strut again and then he says, 'I'm great, just play.' He remembers to calm himself by taking a deep breath, a necessary part of a pre-game routine. He plays well. He struts some more and tells himself, "One play at a time," but the score thought creeps in and he shuts it down by telling himself to breathe and go for process, not outcome.

...Over and over, play after play, same pattern and he succeeds. This is working! On the last play of the first inning (quarter, period, set, etc.) the thought of winning creeps in and he remembers to say, "One play at a time." And to strut. And to be positive. And to say, "I can do it." The first inning is over. Phew. This is working. A moment to breathe before the next inning. Strut some more, breathe, "I'm good, I'm good. I can do it."

I don't know about you, but that kind of thinking exhausts me. That kind of mental approach, although typical, is way too much thinking and way too much to remember. But that is the typical kind of advice you get for your mental game, and I can't imagine going through that every time you take to the field, court, rink, track, mountain or water. This kind of approach is not sustainable. /...2

Playing each play like it is the only one, using positive self-talk and trying to think positive are the fastest way down the tubes in any sport. I know. I've worked with over 30 different sports. There is another, better way than all this thinking.

So why all the faulty advice?

Much of the confusion around the mental game was created by observations of professional athletes turned psychologist or trainers who often learned to be high performers with very little idea of how they did it. So they either make it sound easy—just do it—or difficult—it is a lot of hard work—without actually giving any concrete strategies on how to get there.

What is the alternative?

It is actually quite easy to improve your game performance if you follow one basic rule. It is: **don't think**. Following all the “thinking” advice of various books will exhaust you. It might work for a play or two, but you will start thinking so much it'll negatively affect the technical and skill side of your sport.

Can you give an example?

I've been teaching my non-psychology, non-thinking approach for more than twenty years and recently put my system to the test with one of the best clay target shooters in an incredible game called American Skeet. This phenom, Paul Giambrone III, didn't need any help from me. Believe me he is that good. But a client of mine told me about Paul and I looked up his website. It was a funny story, because I was looking for an older guy, perhaps balding, and that is exactly what I saw. There was this older guy teaching a young man, except when I finally met Paul on Skype, I was shocked, as the “older guy” I'd seen turned out to be Paul's student and Paul was the young man.

My first conversation with Paul amazed me. At 26 years old he was already displaying the wisdom of coaches twice his age. I asked if this skeet shooter and coach would put my system to the test. He agreed and the result: He told me that he was already using the types of tools I was teaching him, but my system allowed him to use them sooner, to refine his game and to have no doubt as to whether he was in his high performance mode or not.

As elite athletes and how they think (don't think) are the model for my high performance system—football, hockey, baseball, snowboarding—athletes like Paul are an important test.

So what does an elite athlete like Paul think about as he prepares to shoot?

Well, remembering my previous exhausting explanation with all that thinking that came out of reading a typical book on the mental game—here it is from the point of view of Paul's thinking process as he calls “pull” to release the target in his turn to shoot:

Paul: Pull. [nothing else to report here]

/...3

That is it? That is all he thinks about or rather doesn't think about?

That's it. I have to agree that it is such a short paragraph for Paul, as he is intelligent and he does have a lot to say when he is off the field. However, his routines are so ingrained that he does no conscious thinking when on the station. None. And to him, sometimes it even seems like he is along for the enjoyable ride and that his body is just a shooting machine. No deep breathing, no self-talk, no being positive. He just IS and he DOES consistently smoke targets.

If this strikes a chord with me, what do I do to get training?

If you find this in anyway intriguing and would like to learn a six-step system that allows you to "not think," call Bob at SportExcel. He offers a free, no obligation session to introduce you to the Zone and then over the course of six weeks you'll learn to just BE with a system that will take your moments of brilliance to your whole game. And if you are still a bit skeptical that this can be accomplished and be fun, Bob offers a money back guarantee after the first paid session.

About the author Bob Palmer, B.Ed, B.E.S.



Bob Palmer, CEO and High Performance Strategist with SportExcel Inc., is internationally recognized as a high performance expert and has been instrumental in pioneering a non-psychology approach that is revolutionizing the field of sport high performance.

The SportExcel System has been embraced by athletes in the action sports of snowboarding, surfing and skateboarding, the team sports of football, baseball, soccer and hockey and other diverse sports such as Ironman, triathlon, heptathlon and the clay target sports.

His athletes in numerous sports have achieved podium success in the Olympics, PanAm, Commonwealth and X Games as a result. But further, his System is for everyone including young athletes and part-time athletes, with successes that are even more numerous.

If you are interested in signing up for a workshop or program, receiving his free newsletter or taking his free, introductory session, he can be reached at bpalmer@sportexcel.ca or toll-free at 877-967-5747.