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Do you want to achieve your best performance in any endeavor you desire, and then relax, feeling completely rejuvenated? Have your health and fitness goals eluded you, no matter how hard you work to attain them?

You're in good company. While many people attend self-improvement seminars and follow the latest exercise fads, they usually don't take away tools that stay with them and help them achieve lasting changes in their lives. Often they fail to master the abstract theories these seminars present. Or they exercise without a sense of body awareness.

A promising solution to this common problem is Discipline of Success, a new hands-on program that incorporates psychology, kinesiology, ancient traditions, neurofeedback, stress reduction and mind/body integration, as well as the latest scientific brain research and the martial arts.

Having a difficult time reaching your health and fitness goals? Here's how to blend mental and physical training to attain peak performance.

The Discipline of Success

BY ARMAND BYTTON, PHD AND STEPHEN I. SIDEROFF, PHD

Yes, Martial Arts

The Discipline of Success program teaches participants how to tap into their mind's resources, achieve a state of heightened awareness and harmonize with their body's natural cycle. We train attendees in specific body/mind exercises: stretching, boxing and other martial arts. Why exercise? Because through these disciplines it is easier to bring together the mental and physical tools that enable the integrated functioning of our brains.

Our workshop participants literally absorb these success tools right "into their body." Says Ted, a computer programmer and avid basketball player who has been attending the weekly workshops, "I felt a wonderful sense of my body's natural power and rhythm, and my sharpened focus has carried over into my job and on the court."

Using Your Brain Power

Brain research has shown that some people operate primarily out of the left side of their brain, focusing more on an analytical approach to the world. For others, the more intuitive, creative right side predominates. When we experience balance and flexibility by using both sides of the brain, our effectiveness grows exponentially.

In addition to the brain having two sides, it also has three overlapping layers. The oldest and deepest part of the brain addresses our survival needs. On the next level, we experience emotions. The third level (and most recent addition) is the cortex, which gives us cognitive and intellectual behavior, including self-reflection. Discipline of Success training integrates all levels and both sides of the brain.

If you can access all three levels of your brain in striving for your goals—that's firepower. The more firepower, the greater the chances for success. This is the path to more effective and deep-seated changes. And the effects go well beyond health and fitness.

"I've been composing music for 20 years, but I couldn't seem to break through to the next level of my career and access a deeper creativity," admits Aaron, a film music scorer. "But since I've been using this approach, I've written what I think is my best work, and it has just flowed out of me. Who would have thought that boxing would relate to music?"



▲ The Performance/Recovery Cycle.

The Performance/Recovery Cycle

No matter what the situation, the essence of who you are manifests in every behavior. We can call this your "presence". How much presence you bring to a situation determines how wisely you address each situation and how people respond to you. Discipline of Success helps you shape this moment-to-moment presence through the four parts of the Performance/Recovery Cycle.

Performance and recovery are the two opposite yet complementary forces—such as reaching in and going out of one's self—that dynamically interact to produce success. Olympic runners are taught to relax their muscles in order to improve their speed. The basketball player at the free throw line must control tension to sink the shot. And of course, golfers must achieve a balance of readiness and relaxation together with focus.

These two primary factors—performance and recovery—incorporate these phases: Off-time, Training, Delivery and Recovery. This is the basic cycle from which learning, development and breakthroughs are supported, nurtured, guided and maintained.

Phase 1

You begin the program by preparing for training with the transitional process of goal setting and prioritizing. What goals do you need to achieve to consider yourself successful? What are the most important goals in your life right now? "Knowing what I want



has always been hard for me," says Katie, a university student majoring in political science. "This program has helped me to understand myself better and to access my own inner wisdom. Now that my direction is fully in place, I'm getting better grades and grasping complicated concepts with ease."

Phase 2

Once you've decided on your objectives, you are ready to enter the training phase. Focus and motivation support the training phase in the cycle. Why have you set yourself on this course? How much do you want the benefits of achieving these goals? What you are willing to do and sacrifice to achieve these goals? These are the key questions forming and supporting your drive toward success.

Engaging in training with this sense of determination—to not stop until you reach your goal—causes change to occur in your behavior. During the training phase, we teach specific movements and routines of martial arts, boxing and stretching. For example, a participant learns four basic punches for the performance routine. These martial arts techniques substitute as surrogate behaviors for your life objectives. The goal here is to perfect the stretching and boxing movements by fully committing to them.

Phase 3

In fact, this level of commitment actually drives changes at the body's cellular level. There are many people who are good at what they do. But it takes discipline to be very good and ensure success. Our program ingrains into your mind and body the habit of success to create the desired breakthroughs in your life.

In the transition from training to delivery (performance), the emphasis is on preparation through establishing a calm body. One of the most insidious dangers in performance is inappropriate tension. This nervousness results in less physical control. It throws off your rhythm and your intuition. The best way to be prepared for performance anxiety is to practice some form of relaxation exercise or meditation. Calm also allows you to feel more in control and available for any unexpected shifts in the situation.



▲ Dr. Armand Bytton, a participant, and Kathy.

◀ Heavyweight boxer Carlos Monroe teaching the four punches.

"If you can access all three levels of your brain in striving for your goals—that's firepower. The more firepower, the greater the chances for success."

Here is where all the preparation meets opportunity. Here is where everything is on the line. Our workshops lead participants through a routine using the four punches. Right now you may be saying, "But I'm not interested in being in the Olympics. Why make my performance

into something bigger than necessary?" Because it is intensification of will and effort right at the point of performance that determines lasting change.

You can compare your behavioral patterns to a rubber band. No matter how many times you stretch that rubber band, when you let it go it returns to its "remembered" position. In the same way, without mastering this totally present and focused performance through training, your behavior can return to its remembered position of less than effective effort.

When you harness your mind's limitless power and act with presence attuned to your natural cycle, there is nothing you can't achieve.

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Phase 4

From performance, we transition into recovery. Here you assess and evaluate the quality of the presence you showed during the performance. Then you melt into total relaxation. You release the stress of the performance, fully restore your energy and heal any injury. The cycle completes as you take time to engage in behaviors and thoughts that have nothing to do with the rest of the success cycle. This is Off-time.

Anna, a trial lawyer and a workshop devotee says, "Through this mind/body training I've been able to focus more while preparing for a case and stay calm amidst the

tense atmosphere of a trial. But more importantly I've found it easier to switch gears into my family life so that I feel fully refreshed and completely present."

We present this program in two-day introductory workshops, as well as in a series of weekly classes. You can improve your success by following the process described above, selecting a favorite physical activity to become the focus of the cycle. This behavior can be anything from jumping rope to roller-skating. The key is bringing all the mental training to the physical activity.

Like all disciplines, this approach requires practice, but the training will remain in the memory banks of your mind and body to be accessed whenever you need it. Ultimately, Discipline of Success is about achieving a balance and harmony in all aspects of your life. When you harness your mind's limitless power and act with presence attuned to your natural cycle, there is nothing you can't achieve.

For more information on Discipline of Success workshops and weekly classes contact Life Design Technologies at 888-277-7373 (888-277-Perform), or <http://www.lifedesign-tech.com>

—Dr. Bytton is an authority in the design, development, and implementation of interactive learning programs. His models are currently being used successfully in a variety of fields, including corporate leadership programs, adult education training and health education. Dr. Sideroff is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist in private practice in Santa Monica. He is also Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences of UCLA's School of Medicine. Dr. Sideroff develops technology for performance enhancement and leads training workshops in the United States and internationally.



Brief and Effective Relaxation Exercise

- In a quiet environment, sit in a comfortable chair with no distractions.
- Focus on your breathing by following the air going in and out of your body.
- Count 3 seconds breathing in and then 5 seconds breathing out.
- As you breathe out, feel yourself letting go of the air.
- Use images of "melting" and "sinking" into your chair to facilitate letting go.
- In a similar fashion, bring your awareness to various muscles and feel them 'letting go' just as you let go of your breath.
- Enhance this process with images of warmth and heaviness: imagine your hands being warmed by the sun, warm water, etc., and feel your hands and arms sinking into the chair or your lap.
- Each time you exhale, repeat the words, "I am feeling calm" to yourself.
- Repeat the above process at least once each day for 5 to 15 minutes.