

LAUREN MUNDAY

MINDSET
HANDBOOK

Mastering Your Mind for Success



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Why I wrote this book

When I was five, I was seconds away from drowning after playing in a flooded street and falling into an open drain. When I was seven, while learning to ride a bike, my little toe had to be sewn back onto my foot after it was almost severed from crashing into a large rock. In fact, over the past 30 years, I have suffered multiple torn muscles and ligaments, black eyes, a fractured leg and finger, and have been close to drowning on at least two other occasions, all while participating in sport; 12 different sports to be exact!

Although these injuries were traumatic and stressful at the time, I find it interesting that they have in no way discouraged my love of sport. In 2017, at the age of 28, I decided I needed to challenge myself once again, so I signed up to play Aussie Rules Football. I had never played this sport before, did not know the rules or positions, and had very limited football skills. Notwithstanding, I gave myself the goal of playing in the Victorian Football League (VFL), and put to the test the theory that ‘you can do anything you put your mind to’. I knew that even though I didn’t have the specific skill set required yet, what I did have was a **clear goal, an open mind and a yearning to learn**. Driven to succeed, I practised for hours with anyone who was willing to help me. I researched game structure, positioning, ball-handling techniques and became highly focused on learning from others. Before I played my first game, I was named captain and in my second year, I was playing in the state league VFL.

Although I was succeeding quickly and developing my ability to play this sport at a fast rate, competing at a high level started to play on my mind and it wasn’t long before the ‘mental game’ became a greater challenge for me than my original goal. I started to become too focused on the aspects of the game that were out of my control

and spoke negatively to myself when I made mistakes or couldn't grasp a skill or concept. I began to regularly feel anxious and shed many tears as I battled with my own drive for perfection, which in turn caused self-doubt. I took criticism to heart and became stuck in an overthinking trap on multiple occasions, dissecting everything I did each game or training session and every bit of feedback I did or didn't receive from the coaches. In the end, I injured my knee so badly during a tackle that I was forced to withdraw from the remainder of the season.

Only after I had distanced myself from the sport, did I realise the significant influence my mindset was having on shaping whether my experiences were positive or negative. I learnt that goals are important as they give us direction and purpose, but to handle the 'mental game', having an adaptive mindset and a toolkit of coping strategies, is essential. Developing resilience and the ability to adjust your mindset when navigating obstacles are some of the most valuable skills you can learn. This book highlights many of the strategies and mindset shifts that can ease fear and self-doubt, and regain focus and perspective when pursuing a goal. Concentrating on improvement as an ongoing journey, and understanding that the way you frame a situation and the thoughts you choose to have or listen to, can change the way you will handle testing situations. Psychologist Carol Dweck terms this to be a '**growth mindset**'. Those with a growth mindset 'are more likely to see effort as something that propels learning and to see setbacks as opportunities to build new skills'.

By reading and applying the concepts in this book, challenges in your life will become more manageable and you will discover things about yourself that give you the confidence and strength to achieve more than you ever thought possible.

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Introduction:

A bit about mindset

Is the glass half full or half empty? The way this classic question is answered provides a sneak peek into our fascinating minds. It's one way of demonstrating how people view their life and circumstances. If they answer, "half empty", this may show that this person often focuses on what they lack or cannot do. If they answer, "half full", this may show that the person is optimistic, focusing on what they do have and what can be done. Now, if you were to hold the glass out in front of you and asked yourself: 'how heavy is this glass?'; you'd find that the longer you hold it, the heavier it becomes. This can be a metaphor for holding on to worries and stress. The longer unhelpful or negative thoughts circulate in our minds, the bigger issue they can become and the heavier they weigh on us.

Each of these examples gives insight into our mindset. Mindset is a way of thinking. It's a set of attitudes, thought patterns, beliefs and perspectives that direct the way we feel and behave in a situation. Psychologist Carol Dweck has performed in-depth research on the topic of mindset and developed two distinct types: 'growth mindsets' and 'fixed mindsets'. She explains the difference as, "You try something, it doesn't work, and maybe people even criticise you. In a fixed mindset, you say, 'I tried this, it's over.' In a growth mindset, you look for what you've learned."

Mindsets are malleable. This means they can be moulded and shaped, providing us with the option of viewing situations as positive, negative, exciting, scary, possible, impossible... you get the idea. Your mindset can determine how your day unfolds, how you behave around your family and friends, and whether you are

open or closed off to new experiences and opportunities. It also plays a large role in determining how much you believe you are capable of learning.

When you are aware of your mindset, the reason for your actions or inaction becomes clearer. You'll observe whether you are limiting yourself by seeing obstacles, fear, self-doubt or worry as negative barriers, or if you welcome challenges as opportunities for learning and growth. When it comes to managing the 'mental game' while in pursuit of a goal, being aware of your mindset is extremely helpful.

Past NBA basketballer Kobe Bryant provides a great example of a growth mindset when he was recorded saying, "Losing is exciting." He explained that losing offers an insight into what can be done better or differently so that mistakes aren't repeated. Information you receive from both winning and losing or from doing something well versus making a mistake should be viewed in the same way. Analyse the situation. Identify what worked and what didn't. There will always be positive components to a situation as well as lessons to be learned.

One of the best things about your mindset is that it can be trained. If you decide you don't like how you feel or that you are not getting the results you want, a simple mindset shift can make a big difference in adjusting your actions and perspective. The more that you train yourself to think in this new way, the more that it becomes a natural thought pattern. Having the guts to review a situation truthfully, the courage to identify where change can occur and the inner strength to be kind and caring to yourself when you lack confidence or self-belief are what will contribute to a successful and positive schooling experience. Many practical strategies are outlined in this book to help you along the way.

You've got this!

The ‘THINK, SET, GO’ approach

This book is intended to be read in various ways: from one page per day to one page per week or intermittently when inspiration and direction is required. The book can be read in random order or using the categories outlined on the next page.

Every page has a different idea or concept for you to consider and is best followed using the ‘Think, Set, Go’ approach.

Some overlap of concepts is intentional to reinforce ideas.

As you read through each page, consider the following three steps:

THINK – Read the statement, quote or question at the top of the page.

Ask yourself: ‘what does this phrase mean to me?’

SET – As you read the body of text, consider how each scenario or concept relates to you, your goals or situation.

GO – Each page contains content or questions within a box.

Read, ponder, respond to and trial these ideas.

Ask yourself: ‘what will I commit to doing today to adjust my mindset and move in the direction of my desired goals?’

TIP: GO IS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP

Categories

To read this book via categories, refer to the topics below:

TOPIC 1: KNOW YOURSELF

Page 16 – Be unique, be yourself

Page 58 – You’re not a Lamborghini

Page 70 – “Feedback is the breakfast of champions”

Page 72 – If you ever need a hand, you’ll find it at the end of your arm

Page 74 – Know your game plan

TOPIC 2: SELF-TALK

Page 6 – “I am the greatest”

Page 26 – Things have a way of working out

Page 30 – “Thoughts are things”

TOPIC 3: GOAL-GETTER

Page 8 – “If you take out the team in teamwork, it’s just work. Now, who wants that?”

Page 10 – “Whether you think you can, or think you can’t, you’re right”

Page 14 – Run your own race

Page 48 – Teamwork makes dreams work

Page 78 – Maintain pace

TOPIC 4: HABITS AND ROUTINE

Page 28 – Make your bed

Page 42 – “A ruffled mind makes a restless pillow”

Page 62 – Everything comes and everything goes

Page 64 – Get excited by change

Page 84 – “When you wash the dishes, wash the dishes”

TOPIC 5: MOTIVATION

Page 12 – “Play is the highest form of research”

Page 24 – “Become comfortable with being uncomfortable”

Page 44 – Workload will expand to the time it is allotted

Page 52 – Motivation matters

TOPIC 6: PREPARATION AND PLANNING

Page 20 – Are you prepared for what’s coming?

Page 68 – “Fake it until you make it”

Page 76 – Set yourself up for success

Page 96 – “The main thing, is to keep the main thing, the main thing”

TOPIC 7: BE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE

Page 40 – “Think of things as easy and they will become so”

Page 54 – If we don’t change, we don’t grow

Page 56 – Be the best at getting better

Page 80 – “Hard work beats talent when talent doesn’t work hard”

TOPIC 8: OVERCOMING SETBACKS

Page 38 – Rule the rules!

Page 46 – F.A.I.L = First, Attempt, In, Learning

Page 50 – Failure and achievement – acknowledge both

Page 88 – “A champion is defined not by their wins, but by how they recover when they fall”

TOPIC 9: LEARN TO ADAPT

Page 22 – Massage your mind

Page 32 – Psych yourself up, not out!

Page 60 – Get in touch with your senses

Page 90 – Let your body do the talking

TOPIC 10: MAKE IT HAPPEN

Page 18 – “Distracted from distraction by distraction”

Page 34 – “Act it and you will attract it”

Page 36 – Give visualisation a go

Page 94 – Healthy body, healthy mind

TOPIC 11: DON’T WORRY, THINK STRATEGY!

Page 66 – “What we fear doing most is usually what we most need to do”

Page 82 – Do you have the golf ball mentality?

Page 86 – Tackle and take down your worries

Page 92 – Are you ‘playing it safe’?

THINK

“I am the greatest”

Muhammad Ali, professional boxer

SET

Legendary boxer Muhammad Ali repeated the claim, “I am the greatest” so many times that even his opponents believed it. He’s been recorded saying, “I figured that, if I said it enough, I would convince the world that I really was the greatest.”

Sometimes it’s simply words that can make all the difference (both positively and negatively) to what you do and how you feel in a given moment.

What you say to yourself is what you will begin to believe. What you believe dictates how you feel. When you feel a certain way, you will act a certain way and this in turn directs how successful you will be in pursuing your goals. It all starts with self-talk.

GO

Think about what you say to yourself on a regular basis. Are you a positive or negative thinker? How does that impact your life and ambitions? Is self-talk helping you or holding you back from pursuing your goals?

Try this:

Throughout this book, you will find positive quotes, phrases and affirmations. List your favourite ones below and then place them somewhere you will read often, for example, around your room, your desk, in the bathroom, in the car and on your laptop or phone screen. The more you read them and apply them to your life, the more you will believe them and act accordingly.

Your mindset is a powerful driver in dictating health, happiness, success and achievement, and it all begins with self-talk.

THINK

“If you take out the team in teamwork, it’s just work. Now, who wants that?”

Matthew Woodring Stover, author

SET

NBA superstar Michael Jordan has been quoted as saying, “Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.” If you take this on board when considering how to tackle your next goal or task, you may find yourself feeling less overwhelmed and more open to assistance and feedback.

We can’t underestimate the benefits of teamwork and the situations in which it can be used.

When you feel overwhelmed or that there’s too much to do, be open to help and use those around you.

Minus the ‘Y’: think of changing what’s ‘yours’ to ‘ours’

GO

Tip of the day

When you feel worried or overwhelmed, take the pressure off by sharing your thoughts with a good listener. A good listener is someone who you can talk to without feeling judged, who you can bounce your ideas off, who may help you plan the next step and who you trust.

Choosing a person who understands you and who will listen to your thoughts and goals (such as someone who has been in your position before), is really important.

Different people can be helpful in different ways, and this is why it's important to be courageous in making new friends and to embrace bringing new people into your life.

THINK

“Whether you think you can,
or think you can’t, you’re right”

Henry Ford, businessman

SET

Many people have been conditioned with thoughts of what can and can’t be done.

Psychologist Shad Helmstetter found that, “In the first 18 years of our lives, the average person (from a positive home) is told ‘NO’ more than 148,000 times”, causing many of them to achieve only a fraction of their potential.

Those who pave their own way, navigating personal and social barriers and expectations, have often learnt to listen to their own intuition rather than just follow the crowd. They have consciously discovered how to challenge themselves by increasing responsibility and self-discipline rather than avoiding it.

We have a system in our bodies called the reticular activating system (RAS) located in the brainstem. It regulates attention, sleep and consciousness and is important in regulating how drowsy or alert we are, our sleep/wake cycle and how quickly we are able to think and react.

Our RAS helps our brains decide what information to focus on and what to ignore. When you have a clearly defined goal and belief that you’ll achieve it, you will influence what your RAS filters out and what it actively seeks to assist you in achieving your objective.

What you focus on becomes your reality.

GO

Do you ever ask others for their opinion when, deep down, you know the answer? Have you ever stopped yourself from doing something out of fear for what others might think of you?

Try this:

- Write down a goal that you will pursue today, this week or this year:

- Write down why this goal is important to you:

- Write down why you believe you have the skills and qualities needed to pursue this goal:

Read the above responses when you feel self-doubt due to other people's opinions.

THINK

“Play is the highest form
of research”

Albert Einstein, physicist

SET

Children learn particularly fast because they play. They are curious and focused on what they are doing and don't limit themselves by worrying about what others think or how they will appear. They are creative and consistently trial new ways of doing things, to see what works and what doesn't.

When it comes to life, there will always be things that you find difficult or wish you didn't have to do; but by making a mundane or tedious task into a game, it can become more enjoyable, or at least manageable.

Be curious, creative and maintain an element of fun in what you are learning or doing.

Information combined with emotion = long-term memory.

GO

Tip of the day

Find a way to get more meaning out of a mundane or tedious task.

Ask yourself:

- How can I turn something I have to do into a game?

For example, set yourself a challenge to complete the task by a certain time or compete with someone else. Motivate yourself with rewards or change your environment to make it more engaging/relaxing/inspiring.

- How can I incorporate what I am studying into my everyday life?

For example, how can playing golf or cooking a meal relate to what I'm learning in Mathematics? How can creating a piece of artwork relate to concepts I am learning in Science? How can playing my favourite video game relate to what I am learning in English?

Learn to play to learn.

THINK

Run your own race

SET

Have you ever found yourself in a sort of ‘life bubble’ surrounded by the same people, doing the same thing each day? When this happens, it’s easy to assume that everyone has similar goals. This can then cause you to compare yourself to others, drawing your attention and focus away from your own plans and progress onto theirs.

One way to break free from comparing yourself to others is to zoom out and to gain a different perspective by seeing the bigger picture. By doing this, you will notice that you have many options awaiting you, and there are no limits to what you can achieve or how you can do it.

Life often throws a variety of situations at us, changing our path and opening doors we hadn’t seen or expected. This is great to remember as it means new opportunities are always just around the corner.

GO

As change is a part of life, achieving goals requires adaptability, persistence and resilience. Maintaining this level of focus can be tricky on your own, so finding someone you trust to support you on your journey can be a great help.

Goal telling:

It can be scary or maybe even embarrassing to admit your goals to someone else, but often the pressure felt from doing so can drive you to make decisions earlier and gain helpful advice if you are open to learning from them. Choosing who to tell is very important as their opinion has the ability to redirect your path.

When finding the right person to speak to, consider these points:

T.E.L.L.I.T

- Think about how you can best explain your goal and practise saying it aloud.
- Evaluate why you want to achieve this goal and write down any questions you have so that you can receive relevant advice and information.
- Look to tell the type of person who would be most helpful in assisting you. This may be someone who has achieved your goal before, has taught someone else to achieve this goal or simply has a good understanding of what is required. Arrange a time that suits them. When they can focus solely on you, you will receive better information.
- Listen as they share their knowledge and write it down. It will be helpful to have this on hand down the track rather than trying to rely on your memory.
- Information that is gained from speaking to this person is simply information for you to consider. Decide for yourself which elements you will implement and what you will ignore.
- Trusting the person you choose to tell is important. Mutual respect is essential.

THINK

Be unique, be yourself

SET

In an elite basketball team, all players are considered taller than average. This is important as being tall brings the players closer to the ring in order to score. It is crucial, however, that to have a strategic advantage, not all players are the same height. Being shorter lowers the centre of gravity, allowing for players to have greater speed and agility, which increases the chance of breaking away from an opponent and reacting faster on court.

In sports such as basketball, teams must encompass athletes with diverse strengths, personalities, skills and abilities to navigate both expected and unexpected situations effectively.

Understanding your distinct strengths, personality, skills and abilities is helpful in your life, too. It will support you in facing challenges and in seizing opportunities for growth and success.

Discover and utilise your individuality to better react and contribute to life's circumstances and events.

GO

Leveraging your individuality can greatly aid in finding a more defined path forward.

Ask yourself:

- What makes me unique? What makes me, me?

- What subjects or activities capture my interest? What am I good at? What brings me genuine joy?

- How can I integrate these interests and passions more actively into my school life?

- Who shares similar interests with me and might make a good companion to team up with?

THINK

“Distracted from distraction by distraction”

T.S. Eliot, poet

SET

Why do many ballet dancers pull their hair back in a bun and wear costumes that allow their arms and legs to move freely? Hair buns, tutus and leotards allow dancers to minimise distraction – less distraction for the dancer and less distraction for their audience. Limiting the elements that get in their way keeps the performance at its best.

You may have noticed that when it comes to studying, classwork and committing to self-discipline, that distractions can be very sneaky. They can work their way into your life without notice and you can even be distracted while you are being distracted!

Not all distractions are created equal. In some situations, a distraction can be very useful in allowing you to take a break and renew focus. However, when it impedes progress and becomes frustrating, a change is necessary.

GO

If you're grappling with distractions, a lack of motivation or procrastination while attempting a task, ask yourself:

- How am I feeling right now?
- Am I avoiding this task and making it into a bigger deal than it needs to be?
- What aspects can I alter that are within my control to remain on task?
- What are the basic criteria of the task I am engaged in? Do I comprehend it fully, or do I need additional information?
- How can I make the task more captivating and enjoyable? (Perhaps by turning it into a game or working with a friend.)
- Have I consumed adequate food and water today?
- Are my dietary choices promoting health?
- How is my eyesight? Is there a need for glasses or an eye examination?
- Is the lighting conducive to my optimal work performance?
- Am I fatigued? Do I require an earlier bedtime or an improved night-time routine?
- How can I adjust my posture for enhanced comfort? Is my chair providing sufficient support?
- Have I taken a break? (If not, allocate yourself a specific break time.)
- Should I allot more time for 'fun' activities, indulging in hobbies, performing physical activity and doing the things that bring me joy in between bouts of work?

One small adjustment can make a big difference to progress.

THINK

Are you prepared
for what's coming?

SET

We can't predict everything, but some things we can prepare for.

Elite athletes plan to perform at their best, but they must also develop multiple back-up plans for unexpected events or to respond to the actions of others.

Take, for instance, a goal shooter in netball. During practice sessions, they don't confine themselves to shooting from a single spot on the court. Instead, they hone their skills from every area within the goal circle. This diversified training approach ensures readiness for any position they might find themselves in during the dynamic flow of an actual game.

GO

Let's have a go at planning ahead.

Begin by clearly identifying a goal:

Outline your plans of attack and remember there is always more than one way to achieve a goal.

Plan A

Plan B

Plan C

Remember to be open-minded to adapting and adjusting your plans.

THINK

Massage your mind

SET

As humans, emotion is an integral part of our being. It's normal for emotions to ebb and flow, and we can learn a lot about ourselves and a situation by noticing how it makes us feel. We also have the ability to influence our mental state by adjusting our behaviours and physicality.

Athletes often utilise massage as a means to release tension and promote overall wellbeing. While professional massage therapy is valuable, there are many things you can do to 'massage your mind' that will have a profound effect on the way you feel. Self-massage, laughter, breathing techniques, focusing on the things that are going well, enjoying the company of family and friends and connecting with nature are all simple techniques that can enhance your mood and relaxation, contributing to emotional regulation and a sense of balance.

GO

If you find yourself feeling stressed or overwhelmed, acknowledge how this is impacting your body.

Explore strategies to help you relax and prepare for future instances of stress.

Here are three techniques to help your body unwind and relax in under two minutes:

- Change your environment by stepping outdoors for a walk in the fresh air with natural lighting. Fresh air intake improves oxygenation in the bloodstream, enhancing immunity and aiding tissue repair and cleansing. Natural light exposure boosts vitamin D absorption through the skin, benefitting mental health and bone strength, and reducing the risk of certain diseases.
- Focus on your breathing using the Box Breathing technique. Control and slow your breath while diverting your mind by counting. Try inhaling for four counts, holding for four counts, exhaling for four counts and holding for four counts. This deep breathing maximises oxygen intake, promoting profound relaxation.
- Engage in muscle squeezing and releasing. Start from one end of your body, tensing and then completely relaxing each body part. This method alleviates pressure and enhances blood circulation in muscle groups, which can reduce stress.

THINK

“Become comfortable with
being uncomfortable”

Peter McWilliams, author

SET

Weight training can be uncomfortable as it creates small tears in our muscles. As our muscles heal, however, they become stronger and this is how we develop strength.

When it comes to the mind, each time you work through an uncomfortable situation, you are developing coping strategies and mental strength for when the next uncomfortable or unpredictable situation occurs. Think of it as a gym workout for the mind. Training your brain to embrace and utilise discomfort as a tool for growth will help you handle the variety of situations that occur in life.

GO

Sometimes feeling uncomfortable is what we need to improve. By practising the concept of 'being comfortable with being uncomfortable', you will begin to adapt faster and think clearer in testing situations.

Try these 'uncomfortable' ideas:

- Dress up in a unique outfit or costume the next time you head to the shop and aim to ignore what others think of you. The more you do this, the easier it will become as you build resilience to external opinions.
- Intentionally commit an error. Though it may seem unconventional, deliberately making a mistake can induce considerable discomfort, especially for individuals who prioritise perfection. This could be as simple as calling your pet the wrong name or putting water in your cereal instead of milk. This practice encourages your mind to embrace spontaneity and promotes creative responses when faced with unexpected situations or mistakes.
- Have a cold shower. Immersing yourself in cold water can significantly impact your wellbeing, alertness and cognitive (mental) function, preparing you for the day ahead.

Engaging in this challenge not only helps your mind develop resilience, but also exposes you to a rush of adrenaline and dopamine – essential hormones for boosting energy and motivation. Moreover, immersing yourself in cold water expands your blood vessels, allowing fresh blood to flow throughout your body.

Give it a try! Consider taking a dip in the ocean, plunging into a cold outdoor pool, briefly switching to cold water at the end of a warm shower or splashing your face with cold water each morning to enhance alertness and focus.

THINK

Things have a way
of working out

SET

Do you ever dwell on something so much that it becomes a bigger deal than it needs to be? Overthinking can be a trap that consumes your time and energy.

When faced with a challenging thought about the past or concern for the future, focus on identifying what aspects are within your control. If there's nothing actionable you can do, remind yourself to trust that things often have a way of working out.

Not every situation demands an exhaustive search for a solution or extensive contemplation.

Sometimes it's beneficial to go with the flow or make a decision and move on.

GO

Consider these tips to reduce overthinking:

- Write the thoughts that are playing on your mind. This can create a sense of distance from the situation yet reassures you that your thoughts exist on paper, freeing your mind, which can promote relaxation.
- Develop a mantra to repeat throughout your day when this thought occurs. Mantras are words or statements that aid in directing mental focus. Practise reciting one even during minor hurdles, to establish a consistent and beneficial habit.

Mantra examples:

- Keep it simple
- Trust the process
- Awesome! Here's another challenge
- You've got this
- Get back to basics
- My thoughts are in my control
- Focus on what matters
- I'm so grateful for... (think of something that makes you happy)

**You can find more mantras in the
'Think' component of this book.**

THINK

Make your bed

SET

William McRaven served as a Navy SEAL for 37 years. A Navy SEAL is a highly trained member of a specialised military unit focusing on unconventional warfare at sea, air and land. Since his career as a Navy SEAL, McRaven has shared numerous lessons learned. In a speech given to university students, he conveyed one of his most valuable lessons about the importance of making your bed.

McRaven explained: “By making your bed you will have accomplished the first task of the day. It will also reinforce the fact that little things in life matter. And, if by chance you have a miserable day, you will come home to a bed that is made – that you made – and a made bed gives you encouragement that tomorrow will be better.”

GO

Ideas to incorporate into your daily routine:

- Upon awakening, take a moment to say something positive to yourself. This could be a statement or thought that inspires motivation, gratitude or sets a constructive tone for your day.
- Make your bed!
- Engage in some form of physical activity like stretching, walking, yoga or running.
- Wash your face with cold water or have a cold shower.
- Enjoy a nutritious breakfast or a stimulating drink to kick-start your metabolism, understanding the importance of fuelling your brain.
- On your commute to school or throughout your day, take the time to admire what you're grateful for.
- At the end of the day, have the following day's activities and tasks planned.
- Lay out your clothes for the next day in advance.
- Establish a healthy winding-down routine before sleep. Not all sleep is equal. Your aim should be to obtain quality, restorative sleep. This may include performing activities like meditation, writing, reading, jotting down positive reflections from your day, gentle physical activities like yoga, spending quality time with family or listening to relaxing music.
- Create a conducive sleeping environment by keeping lights dim and avoiding arguments, loud music or intense exercise close to bedtime.

Having a routine or ritual = a plan for success.

THINK

“Thoughts are things”

Napoleon Hill, author

SET

It's been said, on average, each person has anywhere between 60,000 to 90,000 thoughts every day.

Thoughts are the mind's way of helping us make decisions. We can choose to follow, question, ignore, let pass or deeply ponder over a thought, sometimes without even realising it. They're influenced by the things around us like social media, friends, family and what we learn about a topic. We also have internal sources dictating our thoughts, such as our feelings, interests, beliefs and confidence level.

To achieve a goal, managing your thoughts and self-talk is key. What you focus on tends to become your reality, so this is why it's vital for you to fill your mind with positive, productive thoughts, and to reduce negative thinking as much as possible.

GO

Goals are like a compass.

Goals play a significant role in guiding our lives. They empower both our conscious and subconscious thoughts to look for answers and make decisions that either bring us closer to or further from reaching our aims. When you have a clear vision of what you desire and believe it can be attained, you will likely notice previously unseen opportunities appear.

- Describe a goal that you have.

- What thoughts can you think to assist you in achieving your goal?

- If negative or hindering thoughts arise, how will you use them to positively motivate you?

Now, go about your day and pay attention to any occurrences that might help propel you towards your goal.

THINK

Psych yourself up,
not out!

SET

In life, at times you may fail, ‘stuff up’ or embarrass yourself. Therefore, it can be helpful to have a plan to manage your mindset in these moments. One way to do this is to focus on embracing challenges as exciting by telling yourself you now have another opportunity to reset or redirect plans. If you learn even just one thing from the experience, then you will be better off for the future.

Success is often more rewarding after failure.

However, if there is a weakness causing frustration that you don’t address, you might keep experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety due to recurring mistakes and setbacks.

Empower yourself by taking action on the aspects within your control.

GO

How can you psych yourself up and shift your mindset in the moment?

- **Physical activity.** Engaging your body in movement is a swift method to alter your emotional state by releasing pent-up energy. This might involve something as straightforward as taking a walk, jumping on the spot, shaking your hands, rolling your shoulders or even one minute of crazy dancing!
- **Breathing.** Taking deep, calming breaths with a focus on extended exhales can serve as a fantastic stress reliever for the mind, providing clarity and a sense of presence. This mindfulness technique assists in centring your attention on the present moment.
- **Gratitude.** Practising gratitude by acknowledging something positive about yourself or your environment helps foster positivity and optimism.
- **Embrace music.** Listen to music that makes you feel good.
- **Think of something that genuinely excites you,** such as an upcoming event, a happy memory or something that's recently made you laugh. Immerse yourself in that positive, upbeat mindset while completing a mundane task. Remember, not every activity requires your undivided attention.
- **Keep life in perspective.** Try to identify what's worth worrying about and what's not. Your time and energy are valuable – look after them.

THINK

“Act it and you
will attract it”

Unknown

SET

A few years ago, my uncle purchased a small house on a two-acre block of land. In the back corner of the property, he decided to build a giant garage. The garage was bigger than his house and at the time he did not have much to put in it. My uncle truly believed, however, that one day he was going to own a large motorhome.

He didn't know when this would happen, but he completely believed it would, which is why he designed the garage to have a giant door and an extremely high roof. Eight years later, he had his motorhome and it fits perfectly into the garage... just!

Imagine yourself in one, five or even 20 years' time. What type of life would you like to be living? How would you like to spend your time? To increase the belief that your goals will come to fruition, the trick is to see yourself achieving them and to bring that enthusiasm and confidence into every day. This will encourage you to focus on the things that will support your goals rather than obstruct them.

Envision yourself composed, happy, empowered and skilled in this area, and then carry this confidence into how you think, study, plan and take action.

GO

What would it feel like, look like, sound like to reach your goal?

Envision your goal and then draw pictures, stick cut-outs and write words that show these exact visions occurring.

Creativity is key, so don't hold back on imagining what you want. Stick your vision board to the bathroom mirror or by your bedside to view each morning and night. This will assist you in keeping focused on your goals and aims.

Have a go at drawing your picture below:

Now, decide what element of your vision board you can implement today and get started.

THINK

Give visualisation a go

SET

The first person to run a mile (1.6km) in under four minutes was English runner Roger Bannister. Before he did this, no one had found it possible. Bannister relentlessly visualised the achievement in order to create a sense of certainty in his mind that it was obtainable, ignoring the lack of evidence that it could be done.

Forty-six days after Bannister achieved his goal, Australian John Landy beat Bannister's time followed by many runners who have now beaten it since. Why is everyone now able to do it? By achieving this goal, Bannister broke both a physical *and* psychological barrier.

Sometimes we need to ignore everyone else and their limiting beliefs and just focus on making things happen for ourselves.

GO

Visualisation uses the occipital lobe located at the back of the brain, which is responsible for vision as well as being able to visualise scenes never actually witnessed before. Many successful people utilise the strategy of visualisation as a way to imagine their goal fully, as though they are in the moment, thus creating a feeling of having achieved it before.

Visualise yourself doing and achieving what you want first. Then action and implement your plans with confidence. As you have already achieved the task once in your mind, believe that it is possible in real life. Things are usually easier the second time you do them.

Here are some tips on how to use visualisation:

- Aim to begin this process in a comfortable space where you are free from distraction.
- Relax your breathing and concentrate on a specific goal that is important to you.
- Imagine yourself performing the steps to achieve this goal. What would it feel like, look like and sound like to obtain it? Truly imagine yourself in this position.

Then GO and DO what needs to be done!

THINK

Rule the rules!

SET

Rules are a fundamental part of life. They help maintain order and prevent chaos in our society. In sport, rules ensure fairness and provide a common understanding of how the game is played and the goals to achieve.

Rules might sometimes feel restrictive. To avoid feeling limited, it's helpful to be creative and curious, focusing on what you *can* do rather than what you can't.

As humans, we're adaptable. Unlike other species, we have the ability to thrive in a range of situations and to create our own environment. When it comes to your mindset, you are free from rules.

Only you have control over your thoughts.

GO

This research exercise can help you to learn from the lessons of others to better understand that your mindset is only as limited as you let it be.

Research the following athletes and pinpoint a moment of courage during their sporting careers when they defied norms and disregarded public opinion.

Hint: Embrace the underdog approach

- Michelle Payne
- Kathrine Switzer
- Steven Bradbury
- Abebe Bikila
- Michael Edwards (Eddie the Eagle)
- Jessica Watson

THINK

“Think of things as easy and they will become so”

Unknown

SET

The next time you are confronted with a challenge, have a go at telling yourself the quote, ‘think of things as easy and they will become so’. By simplifying tasks in your mind, and focusing on one element at a time, you can allow yourself the space to identify what’s important and what’s not.

This mindset is also useful when others claim something is too challenging. Remember, everyone is unique, and what one person finds difficult might not be the same for you.

Maintain the belief that you’ll discover a solution and overcome the challenges on your path.

It comes down to your perspective.

GO

To simplify a task:

1. Divide complex tasks into smaller, more achievable parts for easier management.
2. Achieve clarity by listing all components of the tasks and arranging them based on their importance, addressing the most critical aspects first.
3. Focus on being effective and efficient rather than simply 'working hard'.
4. Organise your day to incorporate both work and breaks. When it's time to work, work; when it's time to play, play; and when it's time to rest, rest.

THINK

“A ruffled mind makes
a restless pillow”

Charlotte Brontë, author and poet

SET

It can be difficult to sleep when your thoughts are circling and your mind is busy, but without adequate sleep, our ability to function, react, manage emotion, make decisions and problem solve are impacted.

A positive of sleep, however, is that we do not have to ‘make up’ for the amount of sleep we’ve lost. Just a simple power nap can make a world of difference.

The body’s circadian rhythm is a rhythmic sleep/wake cycle that occurs over a 24-hour period. During the day, alertness is enhanced due to light exposure allowing us to stay active and awake. At night as it gets dark, the hormone melatonin is released to promote drowsiness and encourage a healthy dose of restorative sleep.

While we may not be able to force the sleep process, we can most certainly encourage it by considering our sleep preparation habits.

GO

Consider these sleep-enhancing strategies:

- Have a notepad or journal next to your bed ready to write down any thoughts that are playing on your mind. By putting thoughts on paper, you may find it easier to drift off to sleep.
- What temperature is your room? Research has shown that having a cool room temperature is ideal in helping our bodies drift off and stay asleep.
- Having a warm shower before bed encourages your core body temperature to cool down, which assists a comfortable night's sleep.
- Turning off technology at least 30 minutes before you plan to sleep assists in decreasing brain stimulation, encouraging relaxation and restorative sleep.
- Maintaining a darker room while preparing for sleep will assist the brain in switching off. Sunlight (natural light) early in the day is also important in encouraging the body and mind to naturally awaken.
- The time you get up affects the time your body wants to sleep at night, so think twice before having regular late-morning sleep-ins.

THINK

Workload will expand to the time it is allotted

Parkinson's law

SET

American scientist, author, writer, diplomat and political philosopher Benjamin Franklin has been quoted saying, "If you want something done, ask a busy person." This is because a busy person doesn't have time to dwell on things for too long. They will focus on the essential elements and find the most efficient way to accomplish the task.

Procrastination is the practice of unnecessarily delaying important tasks. Often, we do this when we have too much time and not enough pressure to complete the task.

A useful approach to completing tasks is by narrowing the time frame available to accomplish them. Finishing tasks ahead of schedule allows for more time to engage in activities you truly enjoy.

GO

Aim to do less by being more efficient.

When it comes to homework and studying, the more it's avoided, the larger the task of completing it may become. It can be easy to think you have plenty of time, but the future is unpredictable, and unexpected events can throw off your plans.

Ask yourself:

- What task/s do I have due?
-
-

- Choose the largest or most tedious task and note when the deadline is:
-

- If there is no deadline, create one.
- If the deadline is in a couple of weeks, bring it forward and see if applying pressure encourages you to attack it sooner.

You can always use the extra time you have given yourself at the other end, to continue to improve it if needed.

- My new (adjusted) deadline is:
-

Decrease the deadline and smash it out!

THINK

F.A.I.L = First, Attempt, In, Learning

SET

If you try new things, take risks, experiment and test yourself enough, you will most likely mess up at some point and make mistakes. This is a good thing as we learn more from failure than we do from success.

The best sports teams don't expect perfection, but rather have a plan of attack to combat whatever the game throws at them. They know when and how to change their set-up and positioning in order to adapt in the moment.

When you mess up or fail at something, you can either choose to act on it and make a change, or you can remain the same but will most likely make the same mistake again.

GO

Follow these four simple steps to help you learn from failure:

1. Be honest with yourself and know what is and isn't working (if you don't know, find out).
2. Make a change, big or small, to support you in improving the outcome.
3. Commit to implementing this change the next time you are confronted with the task and then reflect on how you went.
4. Tell someone about your plan so that they can hold you accountable.

THINK

Teamwork makes dreams work

SET

Why do sprinters have spikes on the bottom of their shoes or footballers have studs in their boots? Studs and spikes stop the athlete from slipping by increasing friction.

In both elite team and individual sports there are groups of coaches, trainers, experts, scientists and managers working behind the scenes.

Who is in your team and who is going to keep you on track, to stop you from slipping on the field (in life)? Who's working with and for you?

GO

Ask yourself:

- Who is in your team, assisting you with achieving your goals?

- Who are you missing from your team, i.e. are you missing someone who can support you in a specific area, such as a friend, family member or teacher to debrief with, keep you motivated or learn from?

- Why is it helpful to have a range of different people in your life to learn from?

- What can you do to gain more helpful and meaningful relationships? (For example, call or meet with people more often, make others feel good, cared for and considered.)

THINK

Failure and achievement –
acknowledge both

SET

Humans are generally very good at noticing what goes wrong in their day. This is not always a bad thing as observing failure or hardship can allow us to redirect our actions, reflect and reset.

To feel at our happiest and most fulfilled, however, achieving small goals, overcoming fears and noticing the positive parts of our day need to be acknowledged, too.

GO

'Stuffing up' in life can allow you time to reset, reassess and regain focus. Best of all, it can enable you to discover new things.

- Describe a time when you failed to obtain a goal or a desired result.

- How did you react to this setback?

- What did you discover from this situation that you can now use going forward?

- Describe a time when you achieved a goal or a desired result.

- How did you react to this achievement?

- What did you discover from this situation that you can now use going forward?

THINK

Motivation matters

SET

To be motivated means to be ‘moved into action’, but sometimes we need to take action first in order for motivation to follow.

One way to do this is to think of your future self. What type of person do you want to be? What type of life do you want to be living?

What kind of fun do you want to be able to have? Connect the current task with its impact on your future goals. For example, if you want to have more free time, complete your homework as soon as you get home. Motivate yourself by initiating just one aspect of the task to get started on. Don’t think too much about it, just begin.

Set yourself up to succeed.

GO

Here are some ideas that may help you feel inspired to act:

- In your free time, read books or watch documentaries and videos about people who have achieved their goals. Discovering how others conquered procrastination and setbacks in their lives can be intriguing, and these stories may serve as reminders when you face motivation challenges yourself.
- Speak to someone who can give you some tips about how to stay on task, such as librarians, teachers, career advisers, sport coaches, parents, siblings. Most people have had to overcome procrastination at one time or another.
- Discuss your goals and aspirations with someone who understands and listens. Speaking about this may encourage you to feel the motivation to act.
- Be in the moment. By focusing on the present moment, you may find it easier to begin what needs to be done and less likely to waste time worrying.
- Do something out of the ordinary. Try doing an element of the task in a new way. This could be as simple as studying in a different location or writing with a different-coloured pen. This could be working with someone you don't normally work with or talking aloud responses to a question before you begin writing.
- Start with an easy element of the task. By starting here, you can build momentum and before you know it, the harder part will be finished, too.

THINK

If we don't change,
we don't grow

SET

Athletes gain mental toughness, stamina, skills and confidence by repeatedly putting themselves into challenging situations. They practise tasks under lowered pressure and then increase difficulty by adjusting elements of a drill or task and adding opponents or obstacles. The physical and mental discipline of high-performing athletes allows them to overcome their fears, enhance self-belief and develop their critical thinking skills.

Parkour is an activity that is a good example of this. Developed in France, Parkour combines military obstacle course training with gymnastics-type movements. A Parkour athlete's aim is to perform a range of movement skills while travelling over, under and through buildings and obstacles within various challenging environments.

Athletes begin by learning the fundamentals of gymnastics and callisthenics before increasing the number and types of challenges in their path.

When thinking about your own life, what's one change or adjustment you could make to assist you in progressing to your own 'next level'?

GO

Tip of the day

Train and prepare like an athlete.

- When trying to master a skill, learn the fundamentals and then increase pressure and difficulty over time.
- Stay open-minded and flexible. What worked previously or for others might not necessarily work for you now.
- Having multiple strategies at your disposal to support you in maintaining focus, motivation, self-discipline and perseverance can be invaluable as you navigate studying, learning or training.

THINK

Be the best at getting better

SET

No matter what level you are at, improvement is always possible. Remembering this encourages an adaptive and flexible mindset, taking the pressure off results and outcomes.

Consider this surfing example:

URBNSURF is a manmade wave pool in Melbourne that caters to different levels of surfing ability. Some surfers prefer to surf in a wave pool such as this rather than the beauty of the natural, yet unpredictable, ocean. Designed to replicate the perfect ocean wave, pools such as URBNSURF give surfers a chance to develop their skills in a consistent and predictable environment where they can continuously hone their skills.

One way to focus on 'getting better' at school is to complete your homework tasks in a controlled environment. A controlled environment is one where the general elements remain the same each time you perform the task. An example of this could be studying for a test in a similar environment to how the official test will be completed. This may mean limiting noise, using only the items required under test conditions and keeping distractions out of sight. Improving the way you perform smaller tasks can make larger tasks become easier.

GO

To feel empowered and in control, simply focus on improvement rather than mastery.

Ask yourself:

- What is an area of my education I would like to improve upon?

- How can I create an environment that will support my improvement?

Don't forget to learn tips from those who have achieved your goal before.

“Success leaves tracks”

Brian Tracy, author

THINK

You're not a Lamborghini

SET

A Lamborghini can function at 100% capacity again and again.

It's a machine and that's what it's made to do.

You are not a machine.

Humans do not have a consistency function; therefore, we require regular breaks, adjustments and feedback in order to perform at our best. Humans need support structures. Unlike a machine, we have a whole suite of hormones and brain chemistry influencing how we feel and, therefore, behave. Noticing how you feel is helpful, as it provides you with important information and direction about what you value and how you can best respond to the world around you.

Taking time out to do the things you enjoy, spending time with the people you love, being grateful for all of the good things in your life and caring for your health can set you up to better cope under pressure.

GO

Pressure points

- Are you aware of emotions and how they impact your day? Try to think ahead as to when stress or feelings of being overwhelmed may arise and plan for it. Is there anything happening regularly that gives you an anxious feeling? For example, is there a common stage in a class, sporting match, social situation where you feel frustration, negativity or worry arise the most?

- What happens to your body and mind when you feel this way? For example, do you get sweaty or flustered, quiet or unable to think clearly? If you can't recall, come back to this question following a future scenario.

- What can you do the next time this situation occurs to help you feel better, think more clearly and respond confidently?

THINK

Get in touch with your senses

SET

How many senses do you have?

Some scientists believe we actually have more than 21!

Some senses that you may not know of include:

Thermoception: The sense of heat

Nociception: The sense of pain

Equilibrioception: The sense of balance

Proprioception: The sense of body awareness

Your senses constantly provide you with valuable information helping you to perceive and understand the world around you. They also offer suggestions and cues that you can use to adapt and adjust to your environment. When it comes to studying, learning and pursuing goals, small changes can significantly alter mood, shift attention, boost productivity and increase relaxation. Examples of this include reducing noise to increase focus, enhancing natural light to increase alertness, adjusting room temperature to stabilise body temperature, or consuming food or beverages to decrease hunger or thirst.

GO

Our senses often influence our actions, and much of this happens without us realising. The next time you need a shift in mood or motivation, pay attention to the important signals and information you are receiving from your body and the environment around you.

Try this two-minute senses meditation:

This meditation can be performed in whatever space you are currently in.

Take a moment to slow your breathing and concentrate on each of these five elements as you find relaxation in your current surroundings.

Step 1 - Focus on five things you can see

Step 2 - Focus on four things you can hear

Step 3 - Focus on three things you can touch

Step 4 - Focus on two things you can smell

Step 5 - Focus on one thing you can taste

THINK

Everything comes and everything goes

SET

In 2022, Biniam Girmay had been celebrating after becoming the first African professional cyclist to win a Grand Tour stage of Italy's Giro d'Italia cycling event. As he was on the podium popping the champagne bottle after receiving his award, the cork flew up and smashed straight into his eye causing a haemorrhage that forced him to withdraw from the rest of the event.

This 'cork' example demonstrates just how quickly a situation can change and why it's important to enjoy the moment you are in.

The same can be said for the goal-achievement journey.

By developing a habit of acknowledging what's going well, your focus will begin to shift to searching for positives (wins) throughout your day, instead of focusing on the negatives. Maintaining a habit of accurate self-reflection, plus having a toolkit of mindset and coping strategies on hand, can help you to maintain perspective when you feel anxious or nervous about an upcoming event or situation.

Moral of the story: life is like a rollercoaster.

You will forever go through high and low periods. What you focus on matters most. Encourage yourself to be in the present moment as that is the only moment you can truly be in.

GO

We don't watch sport to only cheer at the end,
we celebrate every goal.

Plan a time each day to write down your 'wins'. These are the things that went well and could be as simple as getting out of bed as soon as your alarm goes off, arriving at class on time, enjoying a chat with a new friend, confronting a challenging issue, speaking up for yourself or doing something thoughtful for someone else. Aim to write these down for one week and take note of how this makes you feel. The longer you perform this exercise, the more natural and optimistic your thought patterns will become.

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

THINK

Get excited by change

SET

In the game of netball, players pivot to alter their direction on the court. The pivot allows them to aim and pass from a more advantageous position or to shoot from the optimal angle. It allows players to quickly adapt and adjust to the game's dynamic nature and to consider better opportunities.

Similar to netball, life itself is characterised by constant change. While sudden changes might initially appear daunting and cause stress or worry, they also present us with opportunities to reassess our circumstances and find improved paths or positions.

In the pursuit of your goals, making even minor adjustments in how you approach them can have a significant impact on the outcome. Sometimes a slight tweak in strategy or a shift in perspective can surprisingly lead to significantly improved outcomes, surpassing what you might have envisioned.

GO

Ask yourself:

- Is there anything I can do to shift and adjust my current habits and routines in order to put myself in a better position to achieve my goals?

An example may be if you're feeling unhappy or disconnected from your current circle of friends, joining a new club or sports team could be a great way to connect with individuals who share your interests and values. This offers an opportunity to meet new people and potentially form friendships with those who have similar hobbies, passions and goals as you.

Or if you're dissatisfied with your academic results, consider reaching out to someone who can provide a fresh perspective or help you better understand the content, criteria or how to approach your responses. Seeking guidance can make the material clearer, more manageable and more meaningful.

THINK

“What we fear doing most is usually
what we most need to do”

Tim Ferriss, author

SET

Many people go through life not even coming close to doing what they are capable of. Often this is because of self-doubt, unclear goals or no goals at all. Many people may also believe and care too much about what others think about them. Sometimes comparison can cause inner conflict and confusion, leading to negative thinking and limiting beliefs. Other times it is because people fear feeling fear itself and prefer and therefore aim for comfort. All of these factors decrease progress.

Although it is natural for humans to be attracted to comfort over discomfort, the more we embrace our fears, the more we will accomplish.

GO

Confront your fears:

- Think of a difficult task or situation that you are avoiding. Describe it below and outline the aspects that are worrying you.

- Why do these worry you?

- What elements are in your control?

- What elements are out of your control?

- What's one thing you will do to move past your fears and tackle your worries?

THINK

“Fake it until you make it”

Unknown

SET

Pop star Rihanna, when asked during an interview for E! News what she does on the days she doesn't feel confident, replied, “I pretend”.

Self-doubt often surfaces when pursuing goals. However, much like the cause-and-effect principle in physics, your thoughts, preparations and actions play a pivotal role in shaping outcomes. This may involve doing tasks you find challenging or believe you're not capable of. It may mean taking a deep breath and simply doing what needs to be done.

Focus on the elements within your control. Concentrate on the process rather than the outcome.

GO

When self-doubt appears, try this:

- Describe a situation in your life where self-doubt can be felt.

- What would you tell a friend or classmate if they were in this situation?

- How can you view this situation from a different perspective? Explain.

- Are your thoughts reality or are you blowing them out of proportion?

- What would your first coping strategy be if your worries turned out to be true?

- What can you do to manage your emotion and progress forward the next time self-doubt arises?

THINK

“Feedback is the breakfast of champions”

Ken Blanchard, author

SET

Always available from both your internal and external environment, feedback is information that provides you with insight. This insight can contain valuable details and helpful tips to direct you on your goal-achievement journey. When actively seeking improvement, even a minor adjustment might yield significant results.

After performing a task, notice how you felt and consider whether you can adapt an element to enhance what you were doing. For example, if you felt anxious or uncomfortable speaking in front of the class, could you change your body language to demonstrate confidence, have a sip of cold water or consciously slow down your breathing?

It’s also important to gain feedback from someone else about how you went. Just be careful to ask this of those who are supportive and can provide helpful tips. Sometimes we hear thoughts from people who think too differently. Diversity can be beneficial if you are looking for alternative viewpoints, but if you are after meaningful guidance, make sure you speak to those who understand you and your aims.

Gathering truthful feedback can be confronting yet helpful, but believing feedback from those who can’t relate may be harmful.

GO

Tip of the day

Learn to stop, listen and feel throughout your day.

The next time you are confronted with a difficult situation, try asking the following question:

- What feedback am I receiving from my body and mind?

For example:

- Are my muscles feeling tight? If so, relax them one by one.
- Am I shallow breathing? If so, focus on deep breaths out.
- Am I using positive or negative self-talk? If negative, begin speaking to yourself as though you were advising a friend.
- Are thoughts making me feel overly anxious or stressed? Stop and focus on the present moment as this is the only moment you have control over.

THINK

If you ever need a hand,
you'll find it at the end of your arm

SET

Positive relationships are fundamental to our wellbeing and have a powerful impact on our decisions. We often depend on others to help us through tough situations or to talk through our problems, but sometimes we have to trust our own experience, abilities and intuition. This can be a life-changing skill.

At the age of 16, Australian sailor Jessica Watson learnt this lesson very quickly. Sailing solo around the world, she had only her knowledge, experience and self-belief to assist her in some of the roughest seas, horrendous storms and dark, scary nights in the middle of the ocean. When announced a 'hero' by the Prime Minister, Jessica replied, "I don't consider myself a hero. I'm just an ordinary girl who believed in her dream. You don't have to be anyone special to achieve something like this, you just have to find your dream, believe in it and work really hard."

Improving the relationship we have with ourselves is an ongoing process. The good news is you don't have to travel around the world in a small boat to build self-belief. To boost confidence and self-belief, try incorporating positive self-talk, tackling avoided tasks, stepping out of your comfort zone, ensuring physical health through staying active and eating well, prioritising restorative sleep; embracing the opportunity to learn from failure and, most importantly, being kind to yourself.

GO

- If you were on your own without anyone to help, do you think you'd feel confident and trust your decisions? Why or why not?

- What will you do to improve the relationship you have with yourself?

The more action you take to reach your goals, the more proof you'll gather. The more proof you've got, the easier it is to believe in yourself and what you can achieve. Believing in yourself not only speeds up your progress, but also opens up opportunities because you'll become more fearless and knowledgeable along the way.

THINK

Know your game plan

SET

Understanding the way you learn best for your unique body and mind is a massive advantage when achieving a goal.

It will make learning easier and you will remember information at a greater rate. Everyone learns differently, so it's important to know what works specifically for you.

Check out the list below for strategies on learning styles and consider which methods are most suited to you, your personality and interests.

Select a few of these techniques to incorporate into your study plan:

Auditory Learners (Learn by listening)	Visual Learners (Learn by watching)	Tactile/Kinaesthetic Learners (Learn by touching and doing)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviewing• Debating• Discussion• Giving oral reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computer games• Maps• Graphs• Charts• Animation• Posters• Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drawing• Board games• Building models• Songs with hand motions• Role plays• Drama

THINK

Set yourself up for success

SET

In sport, athletes will always perform a warm-up before they train or compete. This prepares their body for what's to come, prevents injury, directs their focus and puts them in the headspace needed to attack the session.

Have you ever thought of warming up your mind before studying, learning or doing a challenging task that requires attention?

Putting yourself in the right headspace can make learning and adapting to situations more manageable as it's easier to concentrate and focus.

Consider a situation where you might not be in the mood to tackle a task, are avoiding a tough conversation or are feeling low on confidence. By recognising your emotions and employing strategies to shift from a negative mindset to a more positive and productive one, you'll discover that handling stress, adapting to change and overcoming setbacks becomes much more manageable.

GO

Preparation is key.

Prepare your mind before attending to a stressful task or challenge.

Some examples include:

- Write down and read over positive quotes, affirmations or mantras.
- Talk your worries through with someone who makes you feel calm.
- Visualise possible scenarios and a positive action and response plan.
- Listen to music that gets you into a motivated, positive headspace.
- Go outside to get some fresh air or change your environment.
- Have a healthy snack and a drink of cold water.
- Improve body language and posture – roll your shoulders back and down, slow your breathing rate, smile or, even better, let out a big laugh to pump up your mood.
- Start by doing just one small thing in the direction of your goal. This will build momentum, focus and confidence.

THINK

Maintain pace

SET

Eliud Kipchoge is widely hailed as one of the most exceptional marathon runners in history. His ground-breaking achievement in 2019 marked the first time an individual completed a marathon in under two hours. To accomplish this remarkable feat, Kipchoge utilised a strategy involving a leading car and a team of runners who collectively maintained the pace required for him to achieve the sub-two-hour time limit.

In distance running, sustaining a consistent pace enables the body to cover more ground without succumbing to early exhaustion. Speeding up excessively can lead to burnout, while running too slowly might give competitors an edge.

Likewise, adhering to a consistent pace is a principle that often aligns with goal achievement.

GO

Runners reduce unnecessary stress by pacing themselves, and you can do the same when looking at your life.

Tips for the goal-achievement journey:

- If you are worried about how much you have to do – an upcoming assignment, deadline, exam or test – aim to just focus on maintaining pace.
- Don't go too hard. Don't go too easy. Persevere.
- Find a pace that works best for you so that you can maintain effort long term.
- Put one foot in front of the other and chip away.
- Don't try to master everything at once.
- Practise patience and trust the process. Worthwhile goals take time and effort.
- Have breaks (with a time limit) to reset and recover.
- Have things to look forward to once the task is complete.
- Look after your health by fuelling and hydrating with high-quality food and drink.
- Incorporate a hobby into your daily routine so that you can have a mental break.
- Start working as soon as possible so that you keep time on your side.

THINK

“Hard work beats talent
when talent doesn’t work hard”

Tim Notke, basketball coach

SET

It is often said that high-performing athletes, musicians or actors make their craft look easy. ‘They’re a natural’ is a phrase often used to describe this. You may be able to relate to seeing such talent within your peers or teammates. Although there are definitely such cases where natural ability shines through, there are a number of things that anyone is capable of in order to become better at a specific task, skill or activity.

Strengthen your mind by doing challenging things, trialling new methods and processes, and by taking positive risks. Don’t be surprised if you fail often. In fact, this is a great way to improve, learn fast and build resilience.

GO

The best athletes work hard to develop their physical fitness for peak performance. High results in these areas give athletes an advantage. Instead of focusing on the body, let's have a go at applying these fitness principles to the mind.

Balance – When making a decision, consider your options. Look at the pros and cons to make the best decisions at the time.

Cardiovascular endurance – To sustain a good level of progress you need to find ways to destress and relax. Riding the 'heartbeat rollercoaster' (switching from being emotionally very high to very low) can be exhausting, so aim to maintain a level of consistency.

Flexibility – Being able to adapt to your situation can make all the difference to how you will cope. Think of your mind as Play Doh. It can be moulded, shaped and changed by your thoughts and what you choose to focus on.

Power – Feeling out of control can be very stressful. Know your strengths (your superpowers) and focus on implementing these when you feel out of control.

Speed – Know when to move quickly or when to slow down. Don't waste time dwelling on things that are not important. Have a plan of attack, then act.

Agility – Get used to switching things up. Just because something has always been a certain way doesn't mean it can't be improved or seen from a different perspective.

Coordination – Consciously coordinate your life. Plan time for work, rest and play.

Muscular endurance – Prepare yourself for the long term. Everything you are doing now in life can affect you later. Make thoughtful choices so that you can endure what life throws back at you down the track. Set yourself up to benefit in the future.

Strength – Build resilience by using the tough times to gain clarity and direction. It's all part of the personal growth process and will assist you throughout your life.

THINK

Do you have the golf ball mentality?

SET

Do you know why a golf ball has dimples?

The dimples create turbulence (irregular motion) in the air, making the ball fly further and gain more lift. Each ball has between 300 and 500 dimples, which balance each other out, making the ball fly on a more predictable path. When a golfer can predict how the ball will behave in various conditions, they can better plan and execute their shots.

Often in life it is the unknown that can create the most stress. Finding a way to generate predictability can therefore have a positive psychological impact on how we approach each task and challenge.

When confused, worried or stressed, ask yourself,
what elements are in my control?

GO

Think, prepare and act like a golf ball.

Ask yourself:

- How can I bring more predictability into my life? What daily routines, positive self-talk or improved organisational skills can I incorporate for a more structured and stable lifestyle?

- Which aspects of my life need extra time and attention to foster a sense of balance and calm? Reflect on prioritising adequate sleep, indulging in hobbies, and spending quality time with family and friends.

THINK

“When you wash the dishes,
wash the dishes”

Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist monk

SET

What will you do tonight or tomorrow evening when you get home?

You may follow a routine similar to this: grab a bite to eat and something to drink; perform some physical activity or participate in a hobby; do something relaxing before finishing homework tasks; eat dinner; organise your bag and clothes for the following day; have a shower; brush your teeth; put on your pyjamas; and get into bed.

If this was your routine, how many of these things can you do at the same time?

Sometimes things have to be done individually in order to achieve the best result. By focusing on one thing at a time and giving it your full attention, you can improve your efficiency, reduce stress and confusion, progress further in the task and increase your overall sense of accomplishment.

GO

Avoid feeling overwhelmed by breaking down tasks.

Ask yourself:

- What are the main tasks you have to complete today or tomorrow?

- Choose the most complicated or tedious task and break it down into steps:

Starting a task by doing one small thing increases motivation, focus and momentum. You've got this.

THINK

Tackle and take down your worries

SET

Why do players tackle their opponents in football?

Football players tackle their opponents to gain control of the ball and, consequently, the game.

Similar to being in control on the football field, taking charge of your thoughts and attitude is crucial in life. Worry often arises when something feels beyond our control, and the stories we tell ourselves can either quickly encourage or diminish this level of worry. Hence, it's essential to be truthful and to know what to focus on and what to ignore.

Pay attention to whether your thoughts support or hinder your progress. Be honest in reflecting on the situation, devise smart plans and recognise the positives in your current circumstances.

Avoid unnecessary stress about past mistakes or future uncertainties, and you'll discover it's easier to manage your thoughts effectively in the present.

GO

Take control of your mind.

Shift your focus to what's going well instead of what's going wrong. By doing so, you'll start noticing things that contribute to your goals, things you might have overlooked. Focus on what you can control and let the rest take care of itself.

Ask yourself:

- What do I need to tackle? What is coming up that will need my attention?

- What proof do I have, from previous experiences, that gives me confidence in pursuing this goal?

- What can I do to achieve the outcome I am after? What's in my control?

When working through a challenge, think of it as a time to gain more knowledge and problem-solving skills. You may not always achieve the outcome you're after, but the lessons that you are learning now will help you in life down the track.

THINK

“A champion is defined not
by their wins, but by how
they recover when they fall”

Serena Williams, professional tennis player

SET

Just as an athlete diligently recovers from setbacks like losses, disappointing training sessions and games, or unavoidable injuries, it's imperative to grant your brain the opportunity to recover and recharge following a demanding day, a challenging task, an unexpected result or a tough conversation.

Adversities are a large part of achieving a goal, so preparing the body and mind to cope, react and navigate obstacles is essential in gaining continual improvement.

GO

Try this:

Below are some of the recovery techniques that athletes perform after training or competition. Which of these strategies could you adopt to help you recover from setbacks or challenges on your own goal-achievement journey?

- Massage/muscle relaxation
- Stretching
- Slow jog/walk
- Refuelling with nutritious food
- Hydrating with water
- Sleep/rest
- Review your game plan (the situation) and make adjustments
- Repeat your favourite mantras and perform positive self-talk to calm the mind and maintain perspective
- Reflect by writing in a journal or by talking to someone who understands what you've been through
- Write down the things that are going well
- Do something to take your mind off the situation if it's getting you down
- Enjoy spending time with positive people

Have a go at one or two of these strategies the next time you need a mental break.

THINK

Let your body do the talking

SET

Good communication is like a secret weapon. It helps you understand and explain things clearly, build strong connections and relationships, and solve problems efficiently. Being able to express yourself well is key to personal and academic growth. It boosts your confidence, leadership skills and ability to work with others, but it's not just about what you say. There are other ways to communicate to get your message across.

Body language is a universal language, which can affect your attitude and how you're perceived by others.

For example, in a job interview, giving a firm handshake, nodding to show you're in agreement and sitting up straight to show your eagerness are all nonverbal cues that allow you to present as confident. Simple things such as relaxed shoulders, a warm, sincere smile when engaging with someone and making eye contact when conversing can have a profound effect on the way a conversation progresses.

There are many uncontrollable factors in life, however, body language is something you are in total control of, so act the way you want to be perceived.

GO

Consider how your body language affects your day.

Ask yourself:

- Do I need to change my posture to improve how I feel?
- Am I standing or sitting tall and breathing calmly?
- When acknowledging others, am I smiling?
- How would I hold myself if I had already achieved my goal?

- Have a go at adjusting your body language the next time you feel nervous or uncomfortable, then describe the situation and outcome below:

THINK

Are you ‘playing it safe’?

SET

The instinct to play it safe – stay within our comfort zone and avoid risks – is a natural way for humans to shield ourselves from pain and discomfort. While our ancestors literally needed to stay safe due to threats from wild animals, today, without such dangers, it’s easy to find and continue to do the things that bring us comfort.

Avoiding tasks like homework or challenging conversations, because they seem difficult or time-consuming, is a tactic employed to stay within this comfort zone. Sticking to familiar habits and routines that feel good can also be a way of avoiding the discomfort of trialling new ones, even if they may lead to greater satisfaction and accomplishment.

It’s common to stick to what works because change can be intimidating. However, staying in your comfort zone doesn’t encourage growth and progress.

While we don’t want to cause unnecessary pain, feeling discomfort can be a sign that you’re heading in the right direction, challenging your beliefs and learning. Being open-minded and trying new, positive experiences and challenges may also lead to failure, and that’s OK. Failing may mean you’re pushing yourself out of your comfort zone, and that’s where growth happens.

The tough times, scary moments and uncomfortable choices may turn out not to be as bad as you thought.

GO

Think of a task you have been putting off doing because you are fearful of failure, embarrassment, making a mistake or it taking up too much time and effort.

Try this:

- Ask yourself, what's the worst thing that can happen from doing this task?
- Ask yourself, what's the best thing that can happen from doing this task?
- Make the 'best thing' your focus.

Sometimes just starting can be the hardest part.

THINK

Healthy body, healthy mind

SET

Research has shown that physical activity is effective in increasing brain cell production as well as returning the body to a state of homeostasis (balance). This can reduce the impact that high amounts of stress has on the body and mind (such as increased blood pressure and lowered immune function). A meditative state can also occur when repetitive physical activity is performed, for example, when practising tai chi, swimming or jogging, as well as the release of mood-enhancing hormones such as endorphins.

Aim to improve your health, wellbeing, memory and learning potential by increasing the level of physical activity in your day.

GO

Ask yourself:

- How can I move my body more regularly?

If you need guidance, try these ideas and notice your body and mind adapt:

- Schedule more exercise into your life such as walking, riding your bike, scooter or skateboard to school or by participating in sport.
- Factor in more physical activity which simply involves 'moving the body'. This could include going for walks with friends, playing with your pets, stretching while watching TV and standing instead of sitting while doing homework.
- A great time to do physical activity is first thing in the morning as it will kick-start your metabolism, increase blood flow and stimulate cognitive (mental) function. Another great time is when you feel anxious or unhappy. Physical activity increases motivation and releases mood-enhancing hormones, such as dopamine and endorphins.

Note: If the idea of increasing physical activity is overwhelming, break the task down into smaller chunks. For example, instead of going for a run, mix up your session by walking, power walking and jogging from tree to tree. Listen to your favourite music or an audio book or podcast if you need to distract your mind from the activity.

THINK

“The main thing, is to keep the
main thing, the main thing”

Stephen Covey, author

SET

Have you ever had the feeling that your mind is full and messy?
I like to call this ‘Mindfullmess’.

Whenever you feel overwhelmed or anxious about something and
that ‘Mindfullmess’ feeling kicks in, simplify your thoughts and
keep the ‘main thing’ the ‘main thing’.

By keeping your focus on one thing at a time (and the most
important thing first), your mind will find the space it needs
to think more clearly.

Organise your thoughts.

GO

Try this:

- Write down everything you have to do and number the tasks from most important to least important.
- While considering how to order your tasks, think about the ones that you are most confused about or fearful of and do these first as they will probably require more time.
- You may then want to create a timeline of when things are due followed by adjusting the deadline, i.e. if a task is due on Monday, tell yourself it's due on Saturday so that you have Sunday as a spare day in case you need it. By decreasing the time frame you have to do something, you may decrease procrastination.

My to-do list:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

The next time you have that 'Mindfulness' feeling, flick to a page in this book to be inspired by a new idea or perspective.

*Do something every day in the
direction of your goals!
You've got this.*

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