

Taking Dominion

The Yonex French Open just ended over the weekend and this was the fourth major badminton tournament Nozomi Okuhara has missed due to injury since the Tokyo Olympics. Badminton fans will never forget the grueling match of almost two hours that saw the petite Japanese beat Indian superstar PV Sindhu at the 2017 World Championships! As a former world number one, she is admired for her tenacity and well-known for her pre-game routine.

The ritual of Okuhara standing in front of the court, talking and energizing herself before she enters the court and takes four courtesy bows to the line judges is part of her routine before every game. Professional athletes, such as Okuhara, master their minds before they act. The ability to stay focused and stay in the present, to feel confident, and to sense our body's reactions in high stake situations are key ingredients to reaching peak performance. A lot of athletes use emotional control routines before and during games to dispel jitters and summon confidence. Each of these is mastered at practice as well as at competitions both big and small.

Likewise, Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States of America, and Winston Churchill, known as the Prime Minister who successfully led Britain through World War II, were both known to master their emotions.

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patrick.pacificpillars@gmail.com

Lincoln channeled his negative emotions into a letter he called a 'hot letter'. Both gentlemen vented their frustrations through letters that were never sent. Their actions were similar to what can be found in the Psalms of the Old Testament - Selah, which means 'pause and consider'.

To pause and consider is the same reason why a basketball coach calls time-out during games; to disrupt the momentum of the opposing team, to regroup and correct his team, or to gather his team together to focus on executing the next game tactic.

The practice of mindfulness has gained popularity as a way to ease stress, stay engaged and improve performance. Self-control, or mindfulness, is translated from the Greek word Egkrateia as used in the Bible, meaning to take control and dominion. In other words, instead of being influenced, distracted or subdued by anything that comes into our minds, we are able to dominate them with Self Control. Wouldn't that be nice, to have the ability to focus and dominate over every distraction as if we are commanding a game controller?

Even though self-control practices won't be easy, they may be what will catapult us to the next level of our aspirations. Let's chat!

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