

1 - Forward

Thank You for purchasing the book 33 Habits and Beliefs of Championship Fighters. This book is about the champions mindset. In grade 11, I struggled in school and with my personal life, I was bullied to the verge of dropping out. I walked into a boxing gym and in 10 years, I held my Masters degree in Civil Engineering, Launched and invested into three companies and was earning over 6 figures as an engineering manager not including my dividends and assets.

Developing the champion fighters mindset and transferring it into other areas of my life led to this success. I became interested in the common qualities of championship fighters and saw many parallelisms in the ring, and in other areas of life.

Fighters are a different breed of athletes; MMA/Boxing/Muay Thai is not the same as tennis, basketball or other sports. You play tennis, you play basketball, you play baseball. You don't play mma/boxing or muay thai. When you're in the ring, your life is on the line. I have been in fights where I knee'd an opponent in the face and sent him to the hospital to be stitched back together. I have broken my training partners ribs, noses, etc. In many sports, there are metaphors for when one player imposes their will onto another player. However, in combat sports, we don't use metaphors, it is reality. When a fighter knocks another fighter out, he forces his will onto the other fighter. It is the most authentic experience that one can have, being in the ring. It strips you of everything, your ego, your money, your friends, your car, it is just you, yourself, and your opponent.

Beyond this, the mindset that is required to get in front of hundreds of people and risk your pride, your body, and your health is powerful. The habits, mindset, and beliefs of fighters can be applied into any part of your life.

A lawyer at my gym told me "Mike, succeed in the ring, and you will succeed in life".

I am very excited to share with you the 33 habits and beliefs of Champions

1.5 - Intro

Combat sports in my opinion is the most beautiful sport in the world. No other sport, will test the individual's preparation in a way as a fight. It is so simplistic, it goes back to our animal genes where we square off against another animal to fight for our food and our territory. As civilization evolved, we still linger on some of this primitive instinct. Perhaps this is why boxing offers the highest payout for any individual athlete.

Combat is also the best sport to test a human's discipline, work ethic, and spirit. There is no team to fall back onto, if you lose in boxing your health is on the line, it's not like tennis where if you lose it's 15-love. If you loose you can sustain serious injuries and possibly die. In the ring, it is very obvious to see if an athlete has trained or not. Cardio is fundamental for fighters. In the ring, it is easy to spot the fighter who has been doing his road work properly.

Fight training is very tedious and it can be easy to cheat. It's difficult to do the same workout day in, and day out, and sometimes the mind tells us to take an "easy" day. At this point is what separates the champions, from the average.

You can tell a lot about someone based on how they perform in the ring. How people act in the ring, is how people will act in real life. If you're on pads, and the coach miscounts your rounds, are you going to say "no coach we got one more?" Or are you going to take the easy route. This mindset can be seen in the "champion" level students, the ones that push and study that extra bit.

1) Champions are Driven by Something Deep Within Them.

In the Ring:

Champions do not train for the money or the fame. Champions focus on being the best that they can be, improving every element of their game from the strategies, implementation and tactics. A champion is not driven by shallow motives such as money, anger, revenge etc. The drive to become a champion comes from a place deep within their soul. The drive has to be strong enough so that when the frustrations and difficulties of training inevitably appear, they will be able to push through. Champions have something that draws them internally to attaining perfection. It is a deep and powerful desire. This can be seen in top tier fighters such as Mike Tyson whom trained 3 hours a day in the ring, then goes home and shadow boxes the strategies he just learned, followed by watching video, then sleeping with the gloves. As Cuz said "I never met someone that obsessed with boxing".

Champions are obsessed with improvement, they want to improve and be the best that they can be. When I was hanging out with a few professional champion friends, I realized that these guys live fighting. After training three hours a day, they would talk fighting. Then they would do "tactical" training where we didn't tire our physical bodies but trained our minds to go over the proper application of weapons and how to use it. They were obsessed with improvement.

In Life:

Money comes and goes. If you are only focused on getting rich or other shallow desires, you might be temporarily successful, but in order to be extremely successful you need to have some type of passion for what you do. At the end of the day, if you can only do something for 40 hours a week, then you probably won't be able to be successful at it. In order to be extremely successful, you need to be the best at what you do and that's going to take time, and hard work. If you're not passionate about what you do, your going to do it for a few years and say that's it. If you look at all the extremely successful people, they all overcame some type of adversity when they were running their business. There is a rule called the 10,000 hour rule where in order to be considered great at something, it takes approximately 10,000 hours.

2) Champions Understand the Importance of Your Network

In the Ring:

During a bout, only two fighters are involved (third man is the referee). However, the fight is the easiest part of the whole “fighting” experience. The most difficult part lies in the weeks, months, even years of training and preparation prior to the fight. It is impossible to maintain your intensity, and your motivation every single day. We are all human beings, we all get tired, we all get emotional, and we all will feel sad someday. In order to keep yourself motivated, you need to surround yourself with a group of people that know how to get your juices going. If you have a training partner that will always challenge you, it could be talking smack to you, being competitive, they will help you maintain focus.

I do not agree with the idea that 90% of success is just showing up. Showing up is critical, if you don't show up to train, you have absolutely no chance to improve. Showing up to the gym, and not being motivated will not get you the results you need. However, if your network of people is there to push you and drive you, it will get you over the humps in your training. In addition, if you get the right people in your network, you can even develop newer better techniques that will help you grow and improve.

In Life:

You are the average of your five closest friends. If you have a bunch of friends that are extremely motivated and driven towards your goals then you will more probably be successful too. However, if you surround yourself with a bunch of losers you will inevitably head towards that direction. You should be afraid to say goodbye to friends and make adjustments into your circle. If you truly want to be successful, you need to change your network until you are around people who are where you want to be.

3) Champions Know that there are no Shortcuts to Success.

In the ring

Fighting is the most difficult sport in the world. When a fighter is in the ring they become stripped of any ego and anything fake. In the ring, the individual with only themselves. In the ring, one cannot pretend to be tough because the truth will be exposed once you get hit. Anyone can have a plan, but the moment a fighter get punched, they fall back onto their instincts. At this point, it's their training that will cushion their fall. At this point, they will find out if they woke up early to run, and more importantly, when they ran did they push themselves or did they go on cruise control.

“You can map out a fight plan or a life plan, but when the action starts, it may not go the way you planned, and you're down to your reflexes - that means your [preparation:]. That's where your road work shows. If you cheated on that in the dark of the morning, well, you're going to get found out now, under the bright lights.” - “Smokin” Joe Frazier.

When someone gets hit, their body injects adrenaline and they will instinctively push their body to defend themselves. If they do not possess the cardiovascular strength to maintain intensity than that fighter will fatigue quickly. They will find out if they listened to their coach and hit the bag six hard rounds.

At this point, if they looked around for 2 rounds, then did a half ass job for 3 and took the last round to cool off, they will find out. When one gets hit, one defaults to what's been engraved into their mind.

An individual can take short cuts and possibly get off 1 to 2 maybe even 5 easy wins. However, champions understand that there are no shortcuts to being a great fighter and that there is only 1 way; the hard way.

In life:

Life may not be as decisive as being in the ring. There are opportunities to take short-cuts, one can live an average life if they choose to cut corners, and take the easy path. One can probably get a comfortable job in an office, and not work hard and stay there for their entire life.

However, to excel and reach greatness, one cannot cut corners. Champions and high achievers drive themselves to reach heights that normal people do not dream of. If someone is operating a business, and they want to be in the top 1% of their market then they better not take shortcuts and make sure that everything is done right.

The great thing is that the reality of success isn't anything special; it's doing the right thing day in and day out. There isn't a secret that makes people millionaires; it's always doing things the right thing consistently day after day.

4 - Champions Remove their Lids.

There was an experiment; flea's were placed inside of a jar and immediately the flea's jumped out. The fleas were placed inside the jar with a lid on it and left for a few days. When the lid was removed, the fleas would not jump out of the jar, despite being able to. What is even more interesting is that the offspring of these flea's would develop the same limitation, despite having no idea why they limit themselves.

In the ring

In combat or any general physical activity, when one's mind begins to send feelings of fatigue or pain, their body is at about 20% of its limit. The human body is incredibly durable and resilient. The weakest link, is the mind.

We often set imaginary limitations on ourselves. When one thinks/asks "Can I do that" or "Am I talented enough" one places an imaginary lid on themselves. Instead, by saying "I am talented" or "I can achieve anything, granted I put in the work" will remove your lid. You will absolutely astound yourself with what you can achieve. Psychologically, it gives you a massive advantage over your competitor if you "unlid" yourself and believe in your abilities.

However, it is imperative that the will to fight, should never be confused with the ability to fight. A fighter who has unlimited belief in themselves without the adequate supporting

action is a fool. Anyone who does not dedicate themselves and put forth the training to support their self belief will find out quickly that he can not achieve his goals.

Let me re-instate: "The will to fight should never be confused with the ability to fight".

In Life

"Unlidding" is for the individual who has limited themselves mentally. These individuals may often ask "Who am I to do that" or "That's not for me". This type of self talk must be changed to "I can do it, If i Pay the Price" and "Everything is within my Grasp". Remember, one's self talk is not just with themselves, it is them telling the universe what to attract to them.

The mind is very powerful, by removing your lid and pursuing your wildest desires you will manifest them into your life. By un-lidding, and focusing all your efforts on one goal you will automatically become focused, ambitious and goal oriented. Yes, you will fail a few times, and yes you will experience setbacks. However those things are mere steps to success.

How do you know something means a lot to you? What defines something worth achieving? You define how much something means to you by the setbacks, obstacles, and difficulties that you encountered prior to achieving it.

Never doubt yourself. Set your goals high and work your ass off.

Unlid yourself, then jump as high as you can, but remember you still need to jump!

5) It's Not a Sprint but a Marathon

In the ring:

Getting in fight shape can take a few months but the time it takes to develop the skills, both muscle memory and mental memory can take years. It is not something that can be done a few times a week, for a few weeks and become a world class fighter. The only way to improve your technique and refine it to a championship level is by training it over and over again.

Sometimes this might mean kicking a bag 300 - 500 times a day 6 days a week (in addition to your normal training) for 6 month. The key to success in the ring and to be a championship level fighters is in the consistency of training, not only in the intensity.

In addition to this, as you extend the period of your training, your physical conditioning may match your opponent. The difference in fighters is often the reaction of the individual, and what he/she will fall down to, his instincts in a fight.

This is only learned by consistently training and engraving the techniques into your mind. There is no shortcut around this. Engraving the technique in your mind allows your body to react instinctively, like how you would snap your head when someone calls your name across a noisy room.

In Life:

Many people overestimate what they can do in one day, and underestimate what they can achieve over a period of time. Many people see the end result of other people's accomplishment and become overwhelmed. When you see an franchise of 200 stores, or a multi billion dollar company like Wal-Mart. What people fail to see is their humble beginnings, the beginning of one store, for example, the very first tim hortons. Did you know that wal-mart started as one department discount store in Bentonville Arkansas?

You should set long term goals, however break them down into small tangible steps that you may do slowly and develop in a sustainable growth. Don't get sucked into seeing the end result, even with these tech companies that seem to appear overnight. when what you should be looking at is the 10 years of coding practice, or development practice that required to build that one product overnight.

When you see a fighter win a big knockout in one round, don't look at that one round. Look at the hours, days, weeks, months even years, that that person trained to pull that 1 round K.O.

6) Championship Understand the Concept of Working smart, not just hard Work.

In the Ring:

Without a doubt, hard work beats talent when talent refuses to work hard however, champions understand that there is a certain way to approach training. They seek to understand how the human mind and body relates to maximum their performance. Do great fighters train hard? Absolutely. However, do great fighters run 40 km a day? No probably not because that doesn't make sense, that would be appropriate for someone marathon training.

champions understand the proper way to approach training, to work specific energy systems, to work on weaknesses, to train their technique. As such, they are able to effectively use their energy to yield the desired result. In life, and in the ring, you may choose to fight the current, and do what is perceived as correct. Or, you can stop, think about what you are doing, and figure out a different way to look at your problem so that you are intelligently approaching your issue. When I studied (and from experience) the way the highest level fighters trains, they are not always just punching the bag, or pads as hard as they can. They sometimes slow things down, and break a specific move down to the technical details. A straight right hand, can be timed perfectly over a lazy jab. So the smart fighter will train this technique slowly, and focus on the execution and timing. Then after he develops the basics, they will speed it up on the bag. With this approach, you are able to intelligently pick and secure the moves.

In war, if there was an army camped behind a fortress, you could choose to send all your men and try to get ladders, climb your ladder, then get over the wall potentially losing most of your men. Or, you could camp outside the fortress and kill all the supplies deliveries until everyone starved to death; while you steal all their food supplies. Both options will get you the same result, except one will save you a lot of your forces.

In life, this tactic can be applied. If you are given ten minutes to cut down a tree, you should spend the first 8 sharpening your sword. So think carefully about your execution, and how you can work smart, and not just hard. Make sure your going in the right direction, before mindlessly working away.

7) Champions have a Clear Vision of Themselves.

In the Ring:

The greatest fighters, have a vision of who and what they want to be. After Mike Tyson got into boxing in prison, his coach took him to meet Cuz and after sparring for only 1.5 rounds, Cuz said "That's it, that's the future heavyweight champion". This was before Mike Tyson even had an amateure fight. After this point, everything surrounding Mike's day was around becoming the heavyweight champion of the world. Training intensity was always targeted at becoming the heavyweight champion. When Cuz talked to him, it was always calling him "Champ", even when Mike Tyson didn't realize he was a champ. He was building his confidence, his vision and his self image.

Everything in life revolved around becoming a champion. After training Cuz and Mike would study tapes, after studying tapes when everyone was sleeping Mike would shadow box. Then when he slept, he was so focused on becoming his dream, he would sleep with his gloves.

If you want to become a champion, you must have a vision of exactly who and what you want to be. Anything outside of this vision, is a distraction towards your goals. Sometimes, school is a distraction to your education and this is a great example of that.

Would it have made sense for Mike Tyson to go to school? No, because his education was in the ring, and his goal was to become the next heavyweight champion of the world. Don't get me wrong, you don't need to quit school to become an amature champion, however if you want to become the number Champion of the world, you need to probably train six hours a day and six days a week.

In Life:

In order to achieve greatness, you need to have a clear understanding of exactly who/what you want to be. A clear goal gives you a direction and a compass for your life. It also gives you something to focus your efforts on. This way, you are not looking for things to fill up empty time. By coincidence quite often, these "time-fillers" are a nothing more than a waste of time and resources. Anything that is not moving you closer to your goal, is moving you away. There is no such thing as staying still.

Arnold Schwarzenegger was 15 when he first saw a magazine of body builders along with a blueprint. At this point he knew exactly who and what he wanted to become. He began his path to his goal and nothing would stop him. He ate well and trained consistently every day, never missing a session. His goal was ALWAYS on his mind, everything he did in his day was oriented towards him reaching his goals.

8) Champions Embrace Fear and make it their friend

In the ring:

Fear is a powerful weapon that every fighter experiences. When a fighter walks towards the ring, fear is rampant in their mind. They walk toward the ring, but ask themselves “Why am I even here?” or “Why didn’t I just do something easier like golf or tennis”. Then as they walk into the ring, they feel like they are walking into the arena as a gladiator who may very well die. They are so nervous they want to vomit. They walk into the ring and as their opponent takes off their robe they look at their body and think wow this person is fit/jacked and ready to go. What is ironic is that both fighters are thinking the exact same thing.

Everyone gets scared, we are all human beings.

As the fighters walk into the center of the ring, they make eye contact and slowly all their fear is gone. Now, only instincts kicks in.

Fear is a very powerful weapon that champions use to their advantage. The fear of getting knocked out, getting embarrassed in front of their friends and family is real, so they keep that in the back of their mind. That thought lingers there are they train and if they ever want to slack off, that fear stops them.

Fear is there to push you, fear is an element there to protect you. As the late Cuz D’amato says, “Fear gives the deer a rush of adrenaline or temporary heightened sense so that they may escape their predator”. Fear is there to help you. If you didn’t feel fear before your fight, that is when you know something is horribly wrong.

In Life:

You should not fear, fear, rather embrace it. If you didn’t do things because of fear, well you probably wouldn’t do much. On the other than if you never feared anything, then you would just end up doing stupid things. Fear is a good emotion, embrace it and use it to your advantage.

Frequently, fear is something that is built into your mind. After getting involved with fighting, I learned to not worry about my feelings of fear. I used to present in front of hundreds even thousands of architects and engineers, and I got nervous but I asked myself “what’s the worst that can happen?” and “so what if that happens?”.

9) Champions do not accept failure, they do experience lessons and steps.

In the ring:

Every fighter falls down. Even an undefeated fighter like Floyd Mayweather will experience failure in some shape or form. It could be an injury to his hand, it could be his family situation, it could be so many things in life. Life happens, however if champions viewed these things as failures then they wouldn’t be where they are. Champions such as Floyd Mayweather always moves beyond their issues and looks at them as lessons and steps.

When Floyd Mayweather lost in the olympics, he was essentially stripped of 10's maybe 100's of thousands of dollars as a professional fighter. To give you an idea, Oscar de la hoya in his early professional fights made 50,000 because of his gold medal while Mayweather made 5,000. This never stopped mayweather as he focused on what he need to do to ascend to success.

On the other hand, the guy that actually beat mayweather, went on to lose in the semi finals. Both mayweather AND this fighter suffered a similar loss. However today, this fighter is living off welfare and living in a apartment for 500 dollars a month while Mayweather makes around 300 million a year.

In life:

Never EVER EVER EVER quit.

No matter what happens, do not quit. Every single time you get knocked down, laugh it off, don't take yourself too seriously and move on. If you put yourself in a state of resourcefulness, and never accept failure but look at them as steps you will be very surprised how the universe will align itself to help you.

Opportunities (sometimes hidden as work, or as a favour for someone else) will come up, and it's up to you to grab it when it passes you. One of the greatest ways to experience more success is simply by failing more. Every single time you fail, you may choose to learn and grow or you may allow it to defeat you.

10 - Champions create chaos to disrupt their enemies, but keep calm on the inside.

In the ring:

"Control their Emotions to Control their actions, control their actions and control their destiny" - Driven Fighters

When a fighter is emotional, skilled fighters will take advantage of this. An emotional opponent is easily angered. Angry fighters are predictable, using only their favourite weapons. When one fighter can force their enemy to become emotional, they control them. When the skilled fighter recognizes what weapons their opponent like to use, it is not hard to select the weapon that is more effective to counter it.

By being able to cause confusion, anger or frustration through action, intimidation, and even by a conversation, one may take their opponent off their game. One can play with their opponents mind by pretending like nothing hurts. This may put a hint of self doubt into the opponent's minds and make them question themselves and their abilities.

In Life:

When you are dealing with a large business transaction, you can actually use some strategies to force your opponents to make an error by causing disruptions in their day. If

you know that your opponent is easily irritated, perhaps irritate them the night before or even the moment before the presentation.

Rattle them up, so they make mistakes.

However, through all of the smoke, you must remain calm. Only with a calm state of mind can you be effective and perform at your best.

11) Champions Understand the Power of Self Talk

In the ring:

Fighters fight an opponent in the ring, however the real battle is against themselves. A fight is very physically straining, but also very mentally and emotionally difficult. The human body fails not because of its physical limitations but because of the mental capacity that the brain has been trained to conceive. For example, it is well known that a bullet wound is lethal. However, in the military, soldiers are trained to view bullet wounds as non-lethal. Those who view bullet wounds as non-lethal have a much higher survival rate as the former.

There are many emotions going through a fighters mind at each phase of the process. Starting from the preparation, to fight night. Their thoughts and conversation with themselves affect their performance. Thoughts become action, which becomes results. Champions meditate and think about their performance, about where their mistakes are and about mentally preparing for battle. Going through the process of positive and encouraging self talk will improve one's chances of performing well on fight night.

Self talk is not only to encourage positivity but also about the fight. What signal triggers what move, and what responses are there to those moves. It's critical that one envisions these things. After a fight, self talk will communicate how one felt, if there was a victory are there areas to improve on? If there was a loss are there ways to improve and changing your mistakes?

In Life:

Positive self talk will help you overcome your obstacles in your life. Remember, quite often the exact same event can be interpreted in many different ways. I always think about the brothers who experienced the same traumatic upbringing. The two brother shared the same abusive, drug dependant single mother yet one of the brothers became vastly successful while the other became homeless. When asked why each of them were in their unique situation, both answered: "Of course I am here, look at my past."

One of them used their troubled past as fuel to their fire while the other used it as water to douse the flame.

It is up to you to pick how you want to interpret events in your life. Is it going to motivate you? Is it going to stop you? Is it going to make you laugh? Your self talk can change how your filter determines what the events that happen to you means.

12) Championship Fighters Know they know nothing

In the ring:

Combat sports is one of the sports where the more that you do something the more you will realize that you know nothing. As you start training, you might feel great one day after your body adapts to training, then you start sparring, and you feel like a complete newbie again. After you start sparring, you spar athletes of a higher caliber and once again you feel completely new. Even after years and years of training, you will still meet someone in this world that will make you feel like a newbie.

Even at the highest level, you don't know everything and are always trying to improve. That's the only way you will be able to be a top level athlete is if you are always continuously learning, improving and staying mobile. If you start becoming stagnant you won't be able to last. Beyond this, if you have an ego, you cloud your own mind. You start thinking that you don't need to train, or start to overlook an opponent. One of the biggest problem with becoming a champion is staying hungry, because many mediocre fighters become champion once and then say ok I have made it.

Only the greats continue their work and improve and become multiple weight class champions, hall of famers etc.

In life:

In your own life, there is no way you will know everything. The moment you start acting like you don't care, when you don't respect others and think you know everything is when people will immediately stop respecting you and you will stop growing. When you remove yourself off all your ego, and just focus on growth and improvement, you will allow yourself to reach new levels.

In addition to this, no one likes being around someone that is extremely cocky. When you are open minded to advice, suggestions, it makes you more likable.

13) Champions are educated

In the Ring

Great fighters are very educated. Education does not only come in the form of school, personally, I have my masters degree in engineering from the top institute in Canada and I can genuinely say that studying required to become an elite level fighter far exceeds what I did for school. The degree of dedication required to become successful as a championship level athlete is much more difficult than sitting in a classroom and taking notes.

Education can be attained through training, time spent with a coach or mentor, or it can be attained through reading and learning. In order to become great at martial arts, or even any sports it is important to study what has been done, how it was done, what works, and what doesn't work. Any issue that you have had, someone else has probably done it so reading

and studying is an critical element of becoming a good fighter. Studying techniques, and thinking about how to execute them.

One of the greatest example is Mike Tyson, in his biography he explained how anything that he did outside of boxing was actually in the way of his real education (becoming the heavyweight champion of the world). His education involved in the gym training, conversing with elite fighters, studying tapes, thinking about what worked, and also additional foot work/shadow boxing at home.

In Life

This mentality carries over to all aspects of life; as such it's important to educate yourself not only through school but constantly seeking growth. No matter what industry you are in, one characteristic that will serve to be beneficial is the hunger for more knowledge. Whatever job you are doing, education doesn't stop when you are no longer in school. The consistent growth will make you a leader in your industry.

14 - Champions expect failures, and obstacles

In the Ring:

Champions expect failures, and obstacles. Champions understand the journey to anything worthwhile is covered with obstacles. Even at the beginning of the journey, they have mentally prepared themselves to accept obstacles, not as things that will defeat them, but as stepping stones.

This type of expect the worst but hope for the best philosophy is effective because it does not surprise the individual when something goes wrong. I have seen people who place themselves on such a high alter, thinking that they are the best and when something goes wrong, they fall from their alter the hardest. On the other hand, the individual who expects falls, is not surprised, and says on well, and keeps on going.

In Life:

In life how often do we lock our minds in one way of thinking, or set our goals and expectations in stone. Then when something surprising comes up, it is so devastating that it completely shocks the individual?. How often do people think so highly of themselves, then for example, in a relationship when one person breaks up with the other, the individual who placed themselves on such a high altar falls off and breaks.

If we stayed humble and expected failures and obstacles, when bad things occur it's no longer a surprise. Of course, how often does the worst case scenario happen? Not very often, however it's better to be prepared.

15 - Champions are Leaders and Inspire Others.

In the ring:

In sports like Muay Thai and boxing there is a huge emphasis on successful senior fighters passing on the art and knowledge to a younger person. The philosophy is that the skill is a gift that was given to the senior fighter, and therefore it is their role and responsibility to pass on the gift of martial arts to the generation after.

This has been a common characteristic amongst the highest level of competitors as the top tier fighters always took time to inspire and help the people around them. It's almost like the top level athletes are giving back what they received when they were coming up. Top tier fighters always took time to re-invest into the younger generations.

The most successful fighters use their achievements to attempt to inspire or change the direction of less fortunate people such as troubled youth, youth with broken families, people struggling with drugs, etc. They understand that they are in a position of influence and carry this in the back of their mind. This guides them to act professional, mature and how a champion should carry themselves.

In Life:

In order to be a successful person, it's important that you focus on helping others. Karma is a real thing. I think if you are able to add value to other people's lives without thinking about yourself, you will find that whatever business you are in, you will do well. One key thing to become not only a better person but also a successful person is helping others. We must live a life where we go out of our way to help others, it is a characteristic of the champion.

It is humbling as well as a good reminder for the champion that nothing should be taken for granted. When you have this mentality of helping the less fortunate, it helps you realize how lucky and how many amazing things you have in your life. This will help motivate you to work harder in the other areas of your life as well as developing a more positive outlook on life.

16 - Champions Obsess Over Clear Goals.

“Thoughts become things.”

One common characteristic among all champions is that they spent time to visualizing and to think over their goals. Champions obsess over winning that championship belt. They wake up and the first thought is what they are going to move towards their goals, they think about it as they are brushing their teeth. They visualize the techniques that they will execute in training that day. They study tape, and think about what works. They may do only perform three hours of physical training, but they are training mentally. Great fighters obsess over their goals. It's not something they do for fun, they have a goal in mind and they do everything around that goal.

Mike Tyson revealed in his book that he wouldn't sleep at night because he was up all night shadow boxing. He talks about how he would watch old fight clips all day to study his favourite fighters and how they moved. He would sometimes sleep with his gloves on. From

the beginning when cuz saw him sparring (age 15) he always said you're going to be the heavyweight champion of the world. At this point the objective became the heavyweight championship of the world. Anything outside of that was a distraction.

In Life:

If you want to be successful at anything, you need to be obsessed with it and always strive to improve. You can't become successful at anything without become absolutely addicted to it so that you can be the best at it.

17 - Champions have a Good Sense of Humor

In the ring

When fighters are preparing for a fight, the fight camp can be boring. In order to pass the time, you have to be able to laugh and make jokes and make it fun. When things are fun you will be able to do it more enjoyably. In addition, champions are able to make jokes about things that normal people would lose their mind over. This is actually a strategy to stay calm in stressful situations. This mentality can sometimes be interpreted as someone not being serious, or someone not taking the situation seriously. In reality, it is the exact opposite, the person that can laugh about problems is the one that can overcome them easier.

In Life:

“Your problems are not real problems.”

If knew the problems that many people in this world are experiencing, hunger, war, political instability, you would realize that many of your problems are not real. By being able to laugh at your problems and shake it off, you can make light of any situation in your life. When you are stable, and do not get too excited nor bummed out about any major event, then you are able to move past it. A lot of what happens in your life is all about how you interpret things. You have a force field around you that filters everything. Whatever comes to you is filtered through this field. This field has the ability to decide if an event is positive, negative or neutral. It also has the ability to determine its effect on you. Do you know who controls this field? You!

18 - Champions Play Chess, Not Checkers

In the Ring:

Champions understand that fighting is not a game of checkers, a very simple one dimensional game. In reality, fighting is like chess where there are different attacks that offers different advantageous and disadvantageous. One piece (A) or “technique” may trump another piece (B), but C may trump B yet A beats B.

High level fighters understand it is important to select the right technique for the right move. They also understand that it is important to incorporate other elements such as mind games. The fighting game at the highest level is very complex and in order to succeed, the fighter must fight smart. A fighter that plays the game like checkers, where he/she may just go for the “ko” with their biggest strongest move will quickly find out that his opponent will quickly select the right counter weapon and easily defeat him. A smart fighter will read his opponent and utilize his opponent's weakness and match it with the fighter's strengths.

A even smarter opponent will purposely move the fight to where the opponents is most uncomfortable, even if the fighter isn't comfortable there, but knows that regardless, he's still stronger.

In Life:

In life, you won't win by playing checkers. You must think and carefully and utilize your opportunities when you have them. You must learn what personalities each individual has and how you need to respond to that person. In order to succeed in any business you must think carefully about your moves and know when certain tasks many need to be done for the overall goal.

19 - Champions Create their Own Environment

In the Ring:

Earlier this article it was noted that elite level fighters understand the power of their environment. Having the right environment is absolutely essential to push, challenge and motivate yourself. However, what happens if you don't have the right environment? Well, they have to create it. Champions understand that if something isn't going the way that they want it to go, then they have to go out of their comfort zone and change it.

Even if they don't know if there is a better environment for sure, they have to know that there is, and that eventually the universe will align and put the right people in their path. Championship fighters are not scared to go out on a limb if they are not happy with their current situation to find something new and better.

In Life:

How often do people create stories in their own mind of their limitations? I can't achieve this because of reason A, B or C. If you want to be successful and your situation isn't allowing you to be successful then you need to change your situation. You are like a car heading towards your goals, anyone in your car better be doing everything they can to be helping you reach your destination. If anyone is not, then they are slowing you down.

This is extremely difficult to do because we all get comfortable, and we want to take the safe route. However, it isn't important to make the difficult decisions, it is imperative that you make the difficult decisions you need to reach your goals. Sometimes this might mean cutting out certain friends, this might even mean limiting contact with family members, it could mean moving to a new city.

Whatever you need to get into the right environment, you must do. At the end of the day, if you do not succeed because of your own environment, then it is still your fault.

20 - Champions are Interdependent

In the Ring:

One critical concept is the difference between independence and interdependence. A high level fighter is interdependent to not only his team, but also the other fighters that may be possible an opponent in the future. This is because an interdependent relationship will be able to move the enough group forward faster than if everyone was independently working together. Instead of thinking competition, championship fighters are thinking about teamwork, how to train together to improve everyone's level. If a fight happens, then it happens, but as a whole, the interdependent relationship will be able to move the team as whole forward.

Unsuccessful fighter will try to achieve everything by themselves, but he/she will quickly find out that his growth will be limited. The reason is that human nature works better as a team. One plus one = 3. Elite level fighter will often hold sparring sessions with the other elite level fighter in their network and discuss strategy. This type of training dramatically increases the learning curve of everyone in attendance.

In Life:

Interdependence is the ultimate way to achieve teamwork. You should never view other people as competition but see them as ways you can learn and grow from them. For example, when in a group work environment an interdependent person will keep their mind open to new ideas even if they don't agree. Individuals on a team should share information and not see this as a way to lose their advantageous over others. Interdependence is the ultimate goal for many companies in the world, with this type of working relationship people are more positive, happier and

21 - Sometimes You Win, Sometime You Learn.

In the Ring:

Champions understands that life will have its up and downs. If not then you're basically not living. It's important not to let the good times get to you head and the bad times get to your heart. It can be hard not to lose motivation when you put all your effort into training and working towards a task and then not succeed. However, it is super important to understand that in order to reach the stratosphere level of success, you will need to learn certain things that are only attainable through defeat and/or loss.

Champions keep their mind calm, regardless of his well they do, or poor they do. When they do well, a fighter will often say "I wasn't too happy with my performance tonight, I didn't like how I did do a,b,c." similarly, if they lost, they will say "I wasn't too happy tonight, I have to

go back to the drawing board to continue working on what I need to work on. The elite level fighter knows that losses are part of winning, and that you will learn the most from your losses.

In Life:

In your life, there is going to be good moments, bad moments, moments where you succeed and moments where you fail. If you beat yourself up every single time you run into an obstacle then you will beat yourself constantly and damaging yourself. If you keep a calm state of mind and accept failures, obstacles and adversity as learning opportunities then you keep yourself much more grounded. Keep this in the back of your mind as you move towards your goals and experience minor steps.

22 - Champions Know How They Want Others to View Them.

In the Ring:

Champions have a vision of what/who they are. From the beginning, they know how they want others to view them. Regardless of where they are at the moment, they know where they will be. From the beginning, they work with the end in mind. This keeps them focus on the big goal at the end of the journey. When they focus on this, it prevents any minor obstacles from stopping the individual from fulfilling their goals.

In Life:

This is a very powerful tool to change the direction of your life. If you are not happy with how your life is going, it is important to ask how do you want people to view you? Do you want to be like A, or B, or C? When you decide how you want other to view you then you able to keep that in the back of your mind and then work towards that goal. When you understand what you want you want to be, you start to loose focus on the many small insignificant obstacles that are in your life.

23 - Champions Make a Habit of Doing Something They Dislike, Like They Love it.

In the Ring:

Champions understand that there is absolutely no way they will always feel good. It is easy to do something when one feels like doing it. When you are feeling great and it is a nice sunny day out it's pretty easy to go for a run. It's even easier if there's a big group of people going with you. However, the days that separate the crowd of people from the champions are the days where no one else wants to go for a run. These days are the winter months, or when its raining, and cold, or even the early mornings. I can confidently say, no one enjoys waking up at 5 am to go running 5 - 10 km. It's probably one of the most boring, and relentless activities in fight training. Even being a varsity cross country runner, where I can run 4 minute km at 60% of my max heartbeat, I still don't enjoy running 5 - 6 days a week, every day, 5 - 10 min a day, it's boring, it's not fun, and it is relentless.

However, you have to do it, there is nothing to it, you must have cardio and conditioning to be a successful fighter.

In Life:

In life, the things that separate the champion, from the average people is in the tasks that are not fun, repetitive and require attention to detail. However, these tasks are difficult for a reason, if you want to be a champion, you need to make a habit of doing things that you don't like, like you love it.

If you want to succeed at anything in life it is actually very simple. It is not the complex things that makes the difference, it is the small repetitive things that are important. How one can focus on the small details is what separates the bottom 90% to the top 10%.

As an engineering manager of million dollar projects, I can attest that the most costly mistakes are often made because of one tiny small element that was made, which led to a huge issue down the chain.

24 - Champions Take Ownership of their Own Actions.

In the Ring:

Champions understand that they are ultimately responsible for everything in their life. It doesn't matter where they are, what their situation is. I have heard stories of twins, who experience a brutally traumatizing experience, and one becomes successful and the other become a complete failure. Their reasons when asked was the exact same, they both said "Of course I am a success/failure look at my situation."

Champions understand that how they perform the night of their fight is completely up to themselves. Champions must recognize their own weaknesses during their sparring sessions, during their pad work, communicate with their teammates and figure out where their weaknesses are and work on it. The champion understands that if they want to be better than the rest, they need to identify their weaknesses and put extra time and improve it. Champions know exactly what needs to be done, but may need his team to tell him where to focus on.

Champions, never blame their environment for their outcome for they understand that their environment changes based on their interpretation, so they can choose to respond to it like a champion, or make excuses like a loser. Now, the champion mindset understands the value and power of their environment, however they are ultimately for cultivating this environment. If your gym or your friends are not supporting you, as a champion, you must be able to find yourself an environment that cultivates your growth.

In Life:

Your life is in your hands. It doesn't matter what life throws at you, you have the ability to direct your life and improve your situation through conscious endeavor. A strong leader,

mentor or role model does not try to pass the blame onto other people. If you start blaming others and trying to show how much better you are, or how hard you work then you automatically ruin your opportunity to achieve greatness.

Its up to you to lead by example and inspire others to work harder, if you are a ceo of an organization, never blame others for why the business is failing, it is your responsibility to get people to work.

One characteristic of an under performing organizations can be easily identified. If the leaders at the top of the organization are “champion” performers. Do they mentor, inspire and take time to help others succeed? Or are they always blaming others for the shortcomings of the organization? Do the leaders give credit to other people or do they try to always make themselves look the best?

If you want to carry the champions mindset over to your business, it is critical that you take ownership of your own actions.

25 - Champions have Over the Top Self Confidence in Themselves.

In the Ring:

Champions carry themselves as a champion should. This does not mean they are cocky, or arrogant but they are 100% confident in themselves. They have this type of confidence because they know that they have put in the work to have that type of confidence. An athlete that has put in their work, every single day they worked and destroyed themselves only to re-build and become stronger will walk into game day 100% confident because they know there is no way their opponent can be more prepared.

A Wharton/Harvard MBA graduate will more than likely be extremely confident in themselves at graduation because they understand that they have work extremely hard and that they will have fantastic opportunities with high earning potential.

In Life:

You need to have confidence wherever you go. Having confidence will make people respect you, however attempting to pretend like you have confidence without the skills to back it up will make people lose respect for you very quickly and will make you look foolish.

In school, one year, I had a big exam during my masters degree, I needed an A to get accepted into my graduate program, anything less than A would basically mean I was kicked out (conditional student). I reviewed every single lecture note three times, memorized everything, then practiced the previous 10 years of exams about 5 times each. I walked into the exam, and I knew the answer to the question within reading the first five words of each question because I found some of the question structures were similar. I finished that 3 hour exam in 15 minutes; and scored the highest in the class.

This is having the champions confidence. The champion may act confident because they work extremely hard, and they reap the benefits. People enjoy being around these kind of

people, because they are not cocky, but people recognize that they work hard, and understand where their confidence comes from.

26 - Great Fighters Train hard, and also Party hard.

In the Ring:

One of the less traditional characteristics of champions is that they know how to unwind. Champions love life. Champions are having fun all the time doing whatever they are doing. It's hard sometimes to train 20 hours a week, working full time, or being a full time athlete doing the same thing day in and day out. It's important to mix it up and have some fun in your life, and when you are having fun it can help reset your system and allow you to get back to training/improving.

Champions know the importance of relaxing.

In Life:

“Work Hard, Play Harder”

The human body needs rest. You need to set a clear line between work and relaxing. When its time to work, don't do what I call “bullshit” work. Don't have facebook open, checking your phone, when you work, hustle and grind for the entire duration. Now, when you are enjoying, don't think about work and let loose.

27 - Great Fighters Define their Own “Norm”.

In the Ring:

Champions do not allow outside influences to affect their performance or their game plan. They define what is normal to them. Some champions train three times a day, at unusual times, that is fine because they are working to whatever works for them.

Champions do not allow what other people think is normal affect their norm. By thinking like this champions actually remove any potential invisible previous barriers that were set.

In Life:

In today's society many people are told exactly what to do, how to think, and how their life should be. Starting in highschool, we start picking courses that will ultimately affect what we take in grade 12; which will become prerequisites for university or college. The problem is that this type of education doesn't work for everyone. Einstein said that if a fish were judged by its ability to climb a tree then it would think that it were stupid for its entire life.

Everyone on this earth has their own route to chase and what they what they want to do . It's isn't right to allow others to define what route you want to take in life. Perhaps you do want to go to school for fiance because you are interested in getting your mba and becoming a business consultant. However, there are a lot of other routes that can be taken. Champions define their own norm, it can be a difficult road to travel, however, they enjoy what they do and love the life that they live.

28 - Champions are Excellent Communicators

In the Ring:

Champions are fantastic communicators. They understand the value of effective communication to their team mates, sparring partners, and even business related tasks. In the gym, it may be up to the other team mates to identify areas of weaknesses in the individual's game. The other teammates especially their coach can see holes that the individual will not be able to experience. It is also important to understand how to handle constructive criticism, and that sometimes people may get emotional since an individual may have worked extremely hard yet feels that someone else is attacking them. However this is where effective communication skills come in.

If someone is not able to take criticism then he/she may find that they are not identifying their true weaknesses and may find out on the day of the fight, when it is too late.

In Life:

Communication is one of the most critical skills that one can acquire. You may be the most educated person and possess all the education however, if you can't put what you know in simple terms and communicate it effectively to others then what you know is useless.

In addition, proper communication can express how you feel, while improper communication may give people the wrong impression of what you are trying to say.

29 - Champions Expect Brutally Honest Criticism and Hate "Sugar Coating"

In the Ring:

Champions hate having advice/criticism sugar coated. They understand that their number one objective is to succeed and win their fights; therefore, they must follow the proven steps to success which involves constant improvement and accepting change.

When people sugar coat information, what they are really doing is setting the individual up for failure and telling them I don't think you can handle the truth. This is far worse than hearing the truth straight; since the truth is obviously there and if its there is an issue in the individual's skills, they need to address it before stepping into the ring.

In Life:

If you want to become successful, you must surround yourself with people that will tell you the honest truth about you. If they really cared about you, then they would tell you exactly what you need to know to grow and improve. If you surround yourself with people who avoid difficult conversations you may avoid temporary pain, to be soon replaced with a life of problems.

30 - Champions are not defined by their circumstances but define themselves.

In the Ring:

Many champions have experienced severe adversity in their life. From poor families, suicidal family members, drugs, abusive family members etc.. The common characteristic was that championship level fighters use these things as fuel to drive themselves as they train and fight. Other people who experience similar events may actually use these events as a reason why they are not successful. However, a champion understands that they are not defined by their circumstances or by what happens to them.

Champions define their own life.

In Life:

Almost everyone has experienced difficulties. Some people have experienced problems worse than others, however the one common trait of successful people is that they always move past their issues. Often the more difficult obstacles the stronger the individual became.

“Smooth Seas do not make a good sailor”.

31 - Champions understand the concept of Kaizen.

In the Ring:

Kaizen is the Japanese term for continued growth and development. It focuses on always re-inventing your processes and looking to streamline your production. Now, as a fighter, you aren't producing a product....but you are! Your product is your punches, kicks and knees. You improve your product by training and experimenting with different training methods. One common characteristic of champion fighters is that they are always looking to improve. They are never satisfied. Champions understand that there is either growth, or loss. There is no such thing as staying still.

My friend Simon Marcus is the best example of this, when he won his recent kickboxing world title, in his post fight interview the first thing he said is that he wasn't too happy with his performance that he could have done more to end the fight faster. This concept of Kaizen keeps you hungry, and being hungry is the only way you can be on the champion level. You don't get to be a champion by be lazy, or by training 3 times a week. You become a champion by thinking about improving every waking moment, training 3 hours a day 6 days a week.

In Life:

Kaizen is a concept that Japanese automobile manufacturers began to use to improve their production. This concept allowed their factories to produce cars that were far superior to American factories. If you keep kaizen in the back of your mind and you keep on focusing on improving yourself, you will quickly see how much you can improve your life.

32 - Champions Fear Regret.

In the Ring:

You can lie to your friends, your coaches or your trainer partners. However, you can't lie to yourself. Come fight day, you will know if you worked hard or not. Only you know if on those early mornings, did you do your road work with all your heart, or did you skip out on running. Only you know if you did those extra sets which will give you a small advantage over your opponent. After you come out of your fight, the most rewarding moment is training your hardest, having a war, and coming out on top because of all your hard work. Sometimes, even if you lose, as long as you gave it your all, and worked your hardest, you won't feel bad.

On the other hand, if you didn't train hard, and you lose your one shot at becoming a champion, you're going to remember it for the rest of your life. You will beat yourself over and over again saying why didn't I work a bit harder. You will regret it for the rest of yourself, do not let this be your.

In Life:

In life we can always take the safe road, the safe job to get a decent pay, with decent benefits however often what limits us from being great, is good. It's that small decision to take a risk and put down the safe and secure route and dare to go for the great. Sometimes this can be the decision to put in extra work, and go for additional education and become great. This can mean working extra hard, so that you become an expert. Whatever it is, never have regret. One of the worst things I have ever seen is from my grandpa when he tells me that he regrets not taking more risk in life. That he hates that he went through life being "safe" and taking the "comfortable" route.

33 - Champions Understand the Game of Numbers.

In the Ring:

"I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks but who has practiced 1 kick 10,000 times" - Bruce Lee.

The fight game is a game of repetition. In order to refine your technique to the point where you may beat your opponents weapon you must simply practice that move more. If you want to develop the skills required to elude and counter your opponent's attacks, you simply need to reach a certain amount of repetition.

This is the most difficult part in fight training, doing the same task over and over again. It is very boring, most of the time you are by yourself with the heavy bag, or at most a pad holder. However, this is the essence of victory and often what separates the winner from the loser is who has practiced more.

In life:

If you want to be the best at what you do, there is nothing around hard work. If you want to be better and more skilled, you need to practice.

