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Mental Aspects of Practical Shooting



The Mental Process of Performance

Years ago, most people believed that all it took to be a champion in any sport were the physical abilities and attributes, and correct technical training and knowledge. Anything to do with mental attitude simply was not considered part of the game. Sure, sportsmen were aware of stress in competition, but the champions always managed to win, so superior ability seemed to be the solution to that as well.

Today we know differently. Sports psychology has progressed in leaps and bounds over the past 30 or 40 years, and no coach or sportsman today believes that success can be achieved through technique alone. Ask any serious IPSC shooter how much of his success he considers to be technical and how much mental, and he will probably reply, “At least 80% of my sport is mental.” But ask the same person what portion of his training schedule is dedicated to mental training, and he will probably look at you with an embarrassed smile.

Even though most of us know we need to improve our mental skills, we continue to spend all our time and effort on the technical aspects of the sport: improving the draw, reloading, shooting faster splits. We keep working on these skills and see improvement during practice. But then, under pressure of a big match, we are unable to reach our goals. Yet we persist, going away from a disappointing match performance believing we need to brush up on technique.

The reason for this obstinate persistence is clear. It is much easier to understand and implement technical training than to figure out how our mind works, and how it influences our performance.

Today there is an abundance of books, movies, and seminars to help you tackle this challenge and learn more about improving your mental skills. Read, learn, and understand these mental processes. They` are without a doubt the key to improving your match performance.

How do our thoughts and attitudes affect our performance? Well, first you have to understand the elements of thought, and how they interact.