

Building Nerves of Steel

By Kenda Lenseigne

Following on from my January 2017 article titled, "Getting The Most Out Of Your Investment", I wanted to include a follow up article on the training aspect of Mental Management®. Getting our brain to cooperate (staying calm and focused) is a component that most of us struggle with when it comes to competition. I write on this topic often, and yet, it seems there is always more to learn. Overcoming mental roadblocks in competition often starts at home with our training plan, first with identifying whether or not we are investing quality training time, with purpose. For example, quality saddle time in between matches does not mean robotically loping circles in the arena or trotting down the trail just to keep our horses fit; and quality gun handling does not mean zoning out in front of the TV while dry firing our gun. To find out if your training plan is balanced, grab a pen and fill out this short questionnaire:

I ride my horse _____ times per _____.

Of this time, I commit the following to:

- drills _____%
- running courses _____%
- trail riding/exercise only _____%
- I handle my guns _____ times per _____.

Of this time, I commit the following to:

- dry firing only _____%
- dry/live drills _____%
- live CMSA courses _____%

I have been a follower of the Bassham Mental Management® program for almost 9 years now, ever since a mounted shooting friend in Oregon, Matt Rockwell told me about it. I am a subscriber to their monthly MENTALCOACH newsletter and got permission from the Bassham clan to share this article in January's write up. I find it to be especially helpful for growing as a mentally mature athlete.



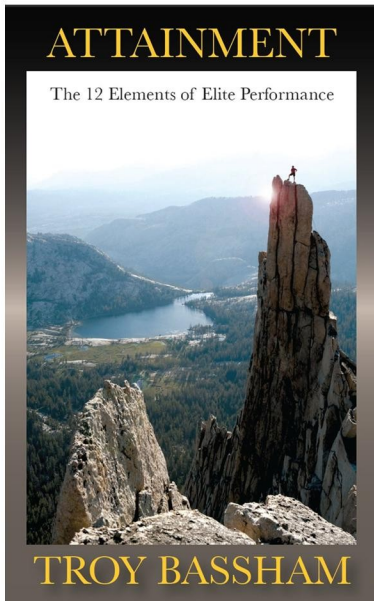
Overcoming Nerves in Competition

By Troy Basham

One of the most common issues we come across is how to handle nerves before and during competition. This is something that most people have experienced and have struggled with. There are things you can do to tackle this issue.

First, be disciplined and follow your training plan [see your answers above to make adjustments to your training plan if they are out of balance]. I see too many people fail to follow their training plan or do not have one in the first place. This is a must in overcoming nerves in competition. If someone is nervous because he or she didn't properly prepare for the event, I would understand why they would have trouble with nerves; however if the individual followed a plan and properly prepared, he or she would be in a position to trust their performance. Preparation is a key ingredient to overcoming nerves. When you properly prepare and nerves come into play just before or during the competition, you can remind yourself that you have prepared for this and are ready to perform.

Second, experience helps to overcome fear. For most of us the reason we become nervous is the fear of not doing well. We question if our performance will generate the result we desire. This adds more pressure in competition. However, with more competition experience we can overcome many of these feelings of nervousness and fear.



I remember going into my second National Championships and feeling less anxious than the year before. I asked my dad if this was normal. His response was spot on, as usual. "Last year you didn't know what to expect, this year you do. You are familiar with the facility, the competitors, and the situation you are facing." This is why veterans have

an advantage over the less experienced competitor. They can rely on their experience to reduce nerves because they know what to expect.

Third, you must have a strategy. The strategy we teach is a three step strategy. You begin with mentally rehearsing how you want to feel during the competition before your warmup. The focus should be on specifically how you want to feel during the event.

Some examples are feeling confident, calm, having fun, relaxed, and being process minded.

The next step is to do deep breathing techniques while mentally rehearsing your performance of the event. This is done just before the start of the event. It takes five minutes and in some sports can be done during the warmup period. Mental rehearsal narrows your focus and increases the probability of having a good start.

The final step is the fake yawn. This technique can be used immediately before the start of the event or during the event when nerves kick in. This strategy forces the individual to focus on yawning and not on being nervous, at the same time generating a calming effect. These simple strategies can provide you an advantage over your competition.

By Troy Bassham

Author of "Attainment - The 12 Elements of Elite Performance" and "Fore the Mind - The Mental Program for Golf" Visit: www.mentalmanagement.com for more information.

For more information on Kenda's mounted shooting articles on Mental Management®, which follows the Bassham plan, visit www.kendalenseigne.com/multimedia

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