**The Renew Series Week 1**

Welcome to Term 2! Hopefully you had a good break and are ready for the new term. Late last year I stumbled across an amazing Podcast by Dr. Amber Selking entitled “Building Championship Mindsets” and during Term 2 we are going to learn how to think like champions by renewings our minds. Checkout her website at: http://selkingperformance.com.

Today is our introduction to the series and we are going to focus on our Thoughts.

Then for the rest of the series we are going to explore 8 building blocks to help you think and act like a champion - to achieve greatness in you whole life:

Building Block #1: Awareness

Building Block #2: Motivation

Building Block #3: Confidence

Building Block #4: Intensity

Building Block #5: Attention

Building Block #6: Emotions

Building Block #7: Rehearsal

Building Block #8: Routines

Today is Session 1 and we will be talking about our thoughts!

**Exercise Part 1:** List 10 things that you HATE about your life.

**Facilitators Notes:** At your table, make sure each person has a pen and piece of paper and encourage them to focus on the activity and not waste time getting going. They should not over think the question but just start writing down things they DON’T like about their life - or things they wish they could change about their lives.

**Exercise Part 2:** Now list 10 things that you LOVE about your life.

**Facilitators Notes:** Encourage each person at your table to stop working on the things they hate about their lives and start working on the list of things that they love about their lives.

**Debrief:** Did you find it easier to list negative or positive things? Why?

**Facilitators Notes:** Lead a brief time of reflection around the table - maybe start with getting teens who found it easier to find things they hate about their lives to put their hands up and then have those who found it easier to list the things they love about their lives. It is likely that some people may be more positive in mindset already and they may have found the LOVE list easier to complete. Ask them for reasons why it was easier to list negative or positive items and also why that was the case.

**Key Insight #1: Thoughts Matter**

Why do thoughts matter? The more we think a certain thought, the more it becomes a real thing in our brains. Thoughts become protein patterns in our brain and they stay with us - they become part of our brain.

Our thoughts affect our emotions which affect our psychological response and ultimately that is what dictates our performance. The process is: Thoughts - Emotions - Actions. So what starts this process? Thoughts! And who controls your thoughts....WE DO!!

God's Word says that we must take every thought captive (2 Corinthians 10:5) otherwise it becomes a part of our brain. We must let go of some thoughts or replace them with new thoughts.

Dr Caroline Leaf says that research shows that 75 to 98% of mental, physical and behavioural illness comes from our thought life.

Romans 12:2 says: “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.”

We can renew our thinking and be transformed through it. We can rewire how we think.

**Illustration:**Our brain is like a muscle. When you go to the gym you break down muscles and then you build them up and they get bigger. But if you don’t work out or use a muscle it gets smaller. The same happens with our brains. When you stop using a negative thought it gets smaller and smaller and as you rebuild a more productive thought process it grows. We don’t just stop thinking negatively, we must replace it with a positive thinking process. We should list negative thoughts we are having and think of positive thoughts to replace them with.

**Practice #1: Eliminate Negative Thinking.** Be aware of your thoughts: Make a note of what you think about during the day. Remember that if you think negatively it will affect your emotions and that will affect your health and then your performance. When you find yourself thinking negatively do something about it. One way to help you do this is to put an elastic band on your wrist and when you have the negative thought stretch and let it go when you think negatively about something - you will stop thinking negatively because you don’t want to be hurt.

**Facilitators Notes:** Make sure everyone chooses an elastic band and places it on their wrist - do it yourself to set an example. Ask them a question or that two that would most likely cause them to have a negative thought and tell them to practise pulling and releasing the elastic band. Encourage them to do this throughout the coming week.

So our first key insight this morning is that thoughts matter!

**Key Insight #2: Thoughts Build Mindsets**

**Illustration:** Do you remember when you tried something new? It was difficult and you have to think carefully about every aspect of what you were doing. What happened in time? You started to do it on auto-pilot. What happened? You developed a mindset where your brain took over and you were barely conscious about what you were doing. We can also develop thinking mindsets that control us.

Every time we have a thought it sends an electrical signal through our brain. If the signal is repeated protein patterns start wiring together to create mindsets.

**What is a mindset?**A mindset is a patterned way of thinking about a situation or circumstance that influences our reaction or ability to engage in that situation.

Our brain is the initiator of all actions in our life and mindsets change how it works. It all starts in the brain!

Here is a Biblical example of how our thoughts change our actions: *“How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”* (Psalm 119:9,11). This passage says that as we put God’s words or thoughts in our hearts we won’t sin against God!

The goal is to build championship mindsets - ways of thinking that will actually help us think and therefore act like champions in ALL areas of our lives.

When your brain is in a positive state: (1) it thinks more clearly; (2) It thinks more creatively and (3) it problem-solves better. Do you want your brain to function in a health state for your studies, sports or life?

Proverbs 4:20-23 says that everything starts in our hearts or our thought lives: *“Turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to one’s whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”*

**Practice #2: The 3-2-1 Exercise.** End each day with a time of reflection where you ask yourself these 3 questions: What 3 things went well today? What 2 things do I need to do better tomorrow? What 1 thing have I learned about myself today? This does not need to take more than a couple of minutes. Write things down or type them on your phone.

**Facilitators Notes:** Make sure each person in your small group gets a piece of paper and a pencil and actually does the exercise - make sure they work along and don’t chat together as they do the exercise. If everyone is finished and the the groups are still busy, you can ask them what they got out of doing the exercise.

**Next Steps:** (1) Join the WhatsApp group. (2) Have your daily devotions. (3) Do the brain exercises.

**Facilitators Notes:** Before your group leaves your table after the prayer - make sure they have all signed up for the WhatsApp group.

**Prayer**

**Next Week:** Next Sunday we are going to start exploring the first of 8 Building Blocks (Awareness) to prepare us for thinking like champions.

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