

## Attitude & Energy

by Steve King

I have no doubt that since taking up running you will have noticed that you've developed some positive attitudinal shifts, not just chemically induced by the exercise, but also through the social, environmental, relationship and racing experiences that have transpired.

I have been fortunate enough to have been involved in the sport of running for over 50 years and know that it has afforded me opportunities for personal experience, insight, growth and ultimately wisdom, that can be put to very good use if I choose to focus on what works and let go of what doesn't.

Whether through watching all great sportsmen and women or through analysing my own successes and failures, it is obvious, with the exception of fast-twitch activities, that relaxation is a big part of the key to being successful, i.e. letting one's natural ability and body's wisdom be in a FLOW state.

Another truism is that Attitude is everything. It will determine how you do and what you take from any experience, as well as what you give to any experience or performance. Having an Attitude of Gratitude allows for one to be in a natural FLOW state and to both give and receive positive energy in the forms of fun, joy and satisfaction.

When young or first getting into any sport, we are usually initially involved for fun, fitness and friendships. After time we may choose to move into a more competitive mode or reach a certain level of comfort or competence, whether by comparing ourselves to others or hopefully by comparing with our `former` selves or what we had previously perceived as our limitations.

Performance is usually presented as the pooling of three things;

- 1) Ability – the potentialities that are developed and refined by knowledge and experience,
- 2) Focus – taking notice of just one thing by narrowing one's attention to other input, including the modulation of energy levels, i.e. being able to calm down or energize oneself at will, which is often impaired by disturbances such as anxiety or depression,
- 3) Motivation – the reason one does something, which incorporates perspective, the ability to generate short and long term goals, and the flexibility to move from one to another.

I believe, that to achieve absolutely the best possible personal performance, we need to also include one's Attitude/Mindset and Energy State.

Firstly, let it be understood that "Winning is independent of the outcome." It is about achieving the best result in less than ideal circumstances, or doing the best one can under the given circumstances at that particular time.

It is by focusing on the process rather than on the outcome that you will achieve the best possible result – on the execution (such as when driving a car) - being in a spontaneous flow state.

To achieve the personal best of ourselves we must be prepared in the physical and nutritional realms, as well as having worked on the necessary technical/tactical issues. But many coaches would agree that the most important ingredient is in the mental arena. Chiropractors and other health practitioners refer to the Triad of Health, meaning the structural, chemical, emotional/mental elements of our makeup. If any one of these is out of balance then the other two areas get negatively impacted.

Hans Selye, an authority on the issue of stress, gave the name `Eustress` to identify and differentiate that which is a healthy level of stress, i.e. a motivating and rewarding level, from unhealthy stress. Unhealthy stress can cause panic, anxiety, hyperventilation, uptightness, anger and performance anxiety.

The first three items of the Suicide Status Form are

- 1) Psychic pain – which is an unbearable level of psychological suffering.
- 2) Press – pressures (stressors) that impinge upon one's psychological world.
- 3) Perturbation – which is an intense state of emotional upset and includes agitation, perceptual constriction, impulsiveness, and a penchant for action.

The underlying feelings that stress provides are; fear, pain, and fear of more pain. Suffering does indeed suck!

One item that gets little attention is the importance of sleep. Deprivation of it often lends itself to some form of mood disorder, therefore some discipline is needed and it should be viewed as training – a time when the batteries get re-charged.

If we seek a balance of performance and personal excellence, then we firstly need to ask ourselves whose needs are being satisfied by the athlete's performance? We need to be heading in a direction of our personal choice and desire, and not that of another by trying to provide some vicarious satisfaction for them or to attain approval from them.

At some levels you may note that you have you been your own worst enemy and that you find yourself constantly self-sabotaging when the palace of possibilities stand before you. If we have that awareness then it behooves us to stop living with the problem and start living with the answer, to recover or continue to repeat the sabotaging cycle.

By virtue of our past experiences, our energy levels and our attitude, we can find ourselves feeling spirited/motivated/enthused/passionate or dis-spirited and lacking the wherewithal to perform anywhere close to our true potential.

It is important for us to figure out by whom or by what are we inspired or motivated. Nowadays many runners are motivated to run for the pursuit of fitness, camaraderie, challenge or charity, whereas, prior to the running booms, performance was the main

motivator. By virtue of the `everyman` involvement in the sport there are many who provide the inspiration that drives others to participate.

I have always found that my performances were `stronger` when, without their awareness, I dedicated a race to somebody of significance to me. The other times that I noted I always put in a full effort was in road relays – by dedicating a race to a person or a cause (inspiration/motivation ) I believe that we draw upon the inner passion, enthusiasm and spirit that also manifests in those team road relay events.

Having and harnessing the necessary mental components used to equate to being mature in an age-related sense, but it doesn't need to be any longer. It is about application of the knowledge. It is about letting go of what doesn't work and focusing on what does. We are the experts on ourselves and there is enough external expertise in all forms, including personal coaches and written material, that we do not need to keep re-inventing the wheel. There will be some up-to-date information and training methods that are worthy of our attention, i.e. the Pose method, but we do not need years and years of trial and error to figure out a good personal goal-oriented training program.

We need to be willing to risk and work at change if we have stuck to a routine that has never paid the dividends we have sought, as performance and experience alone do not lead to confidence. Confidence and belief are the biggest determinants of excellence and we have to make a personal commitment to excellence to reach the highest levels. This commitment is purposeful and planned and is based around fidelity to oneself. Although it would appear to be the ideal set-up, one should not rely totally upon outside support for providing opportunity, encouragement and motivation, as it is the person who has the internal self-driven fortitude, combined with confidence, belief, experience and wisdom who focuses on what works and lets it flow, while embracing and enjoying the process.

Our biggest fear is usually the fear of failure. The most used acronym for Failure is **Found Another Important Lesson Upon Reviewing Experience**. One way to reframe that same thing is to review a perceived failure as being feedback or fuel for future reference. Regardless of success or perceived failure, there is always a result - it is what you do with the result that counts. Are there any lessons from it that you can take away with you?

If you start putting yourself down you with negative internal dialogue or `roof brain clutter` then you have created and are already competing against one extra opponent! We therefore need to modify our self-talk. We can focus by using a written personal script list, which we can verbalise internally and can share with others, such as coaches or supporters, to use during an event. These scripts would be positive personal commands and/or positive, technical or mood phrases that can be used to counter fatigue. They could be reminder of a dedication/charity or simply to push/pull etc. They can also be used to help counteract pain and fatigue.

It does not mean that we need to analyse every little thing as we can get `paralysis by analysis`, but gaining confidence minimises the worries and remember that `Worrying is praying for what you don't want`.

After some racing experience, and possibly with the help of a coach, we should be able to identify our own key to consistency.

The only difference regarding pre-competition and competition conditions is having vs. not having control, the predictable vs. the unpredictable. We can have routines and rituals in our training phases but, given all the possibilities that a race or event can challenge us with, we need to be very flexible in order to achieve flow and high performance.

Emotion can be thought of and felt as either negative or positive, but it's how one chooses to use it that determines whether or not it will be productive and work for you or be destructive and self-sabotaging. Emotion is energy in motion and `energy flows where attention goes` (see below) Attention and intensity equals focused emotion. Over-arousal can be an issue - the antidote for which is relaxation.

Lance Armstrong, the six-time Tour de France winner, uses the acronym **CANCER** to represent those things that helped him survive the disease and fully grow as an athlete and humane being. The acronym stands for **C**ourage, **A**ttitude, **N**ever give up, **C**urability, **E**nlightenment and **R**emembrance (of fellow patients).

Millions of his yellow wristbands have sold as a result of people being inspired by the man and his cause. As a result, `Live Strong` has become a motivational personal script or self-mantra for many people.

Dr. Martin Collis of Vancouver coined the acronym **MELLOW** to encompass those areas which I believe allow for a balanced triad of health. They are **M**ind, **E**xercise, **L**aughter, **L**ove, **O**ptimal nutrition and **W**onder. These are indeed ingredients for a `spirited` existence.

The one thing we know for sure is that none of us will get out of this existence alive, so we might as well make our life something that we truly want it to be.

We know that what the mind dwells on, the body reveals and therefore our primary goals should incorporate becoming a friend to the self and not, at times, being our own worst enemy and continually beating oneself up. We will inhabit our body 24 hours a day for the rest of our lives, so we might as well make peace with the vehicle and engine we drive in and provide it with the best possible fuel!

There are some important questions that we can ask ourselves in order to assist us in determining and developing our other life and athletic goals;

- How do you want to be, and how would you know when you are there?
- What dreams did you have as a child that you have given up on?
- Who do you wish you could be like?
- What would you like to do that you haven't been able to do yet?

- What would you do/attempt/be if your success was guaranteed?
- What legacy of self would you like to leave behind?

I am not a religious person but I do subscribe to the Huna philosophy which consists of seven basic principles;

- 1) The world is what you think it is.
- 2) There are no limits.
- 3) Energy flows where attention goes.
- 4) Now is the moment of power.
- 5) To love is to be happy with - love is the only ethic needed in Huna.
- 6) All power comes from within.
- 7) Effectiveness is the measure of truth.

As Frank Outlaw wrote *“Thoughts become words, words become actions, actions become habits, habits become character, character becomes your destiny”*.

Being the world’s leading experts on ourselves, I suggest that we need to utilise our own `inner coach` wisdom by calling upon what I call the *Independent All-Knowing Expert Observer`* part of oneself. By stepping `outside` of ourselves we can avoid athletic and other forms of self-sabotage by asking questions such as, “What advice would I give right now if I really cared for this person and I were watching him/her (meaning oneself) training/racing, or if I were coaching a runner in this predicament.” When we hear our own loving advice then we need to heed it by applying it to our self, even when a part of us doesn’t believe that we deserve it.

When, at some future point, you reflect on this time in your sporting life - this particular stage, ask yourself how you want to think of your performance and attitude or your own part in the team’s performance? Do you want it to be one of enjoyment and satisfaction or disappointment and frustration? Define the attitude you wish to take into it with you and observe the difference it brings to your overall experience.

The manner in which you train or practice will define your performance. For high performance one should incorporate deliberate practice, which is designed to take you out of the comfort zone, and pressure practice, i.e. tactical. One should not avoid focus on any weaknesses – in fact, the purpose of a drill is to expose weaknesses.

We are forever involved in self-dialogue and, if we find ourselves in a state of inner turmoil, some healthy reframes that we can use could include, “I am cordially invited to change my mind.” “I can choose peace instead of this.” “I can elect to change all thoughts that hurt.” If you have not yet achieved a goal and find yourself internally using put-downs, it is more productive to use a reframe such as “To this point I haven’t hit the stride that I want to.”

Sports psychologists now play a big part in elite athletes` training arsenals and regimens. Mental rehearsal is of vital importance to all goal-oriented athletes, regardless of comparative performance level. If our visualisation is of watching or observing a third

party, then it is passive and external, i.e. modeling. However, if it is in the first person i.e., seeing and feeling the self doing it, then it is internal, active and kinesthetic, which creates the desired simulation. It is therefore possible to use mental rehearsal as one's basic warm-up and it re-defines dry-land training.

Dr. George Goodheart developed a disputed means (Applied Kinesiology) by which, I believe, we can test the effects of beliefs, thoughts, statements, images etc. on our physical well-being and ability. Testing can also be done on the foods, medications and supplements that an individual uses. I have often demonstrated Applied Kinesiology and the body's innate wisdom as it comes into contact with substances such as water, coffee and tobacco, as well as with an electrical socket or battery – by reversing the polarity the body's resistance is lowered or heightened. Dr. John Diamond has authored the books *'Your Body Doesn't Lie'* & *'Life Energy'*, which detail what is happening, how to apply it, and its many applications and implications. Dr. Donald Lepore (*The Ultimate Healing System*) uses AK to determine the body's nutritional needs and deficiencies (fuller details are also available in my book *'Rapid Recovery'* or via my website – see below)

Applied Kinesiology has demonstrated that an athlete's motivation has a major impact on the mind/body/spirit energy level. If motivated by pride or greed (i.e. the thought of defeating opponent, becoming a star, making lots of money) then the arm will go weak – whereas if the motivation is about the honour of representing your country, your sport, or dedicating a race to someone, or just the sheer joy for the sake of excellence, then the arm will be strong. This could, in part, be a reason for someone who has little pressure on them to set a new personal record in the heats, but who then falls apart in the final due to the added pressure and mindset motivation shift it could facilitate!

One of the main reasons for many doctor's office visits is due to hypoadrenalism, though it will often be given other names such as fatigue or depression. Nutrition is a big factor for all, but especially so if you are engaged in athletic activity. It is easy for our system to become depleted of essential nutrients, vitamins, minerals, amino acids etc. and water and electrolytes such as potassium and sodium are vital. Dehydration is a major issue that was only really appreciated as such with the running boom of the 70's when aid stations became more readily available in road races. With the body being made up of around 70% water and through Dr. Masaru Emoto's fabulous book *'Messages from Water'*, which beautifully illustrates the impact of thoughts and images on water, (see the film *'What the Bleep do we Know'*) we are only now becoming fully cognisant of the statement that *'what the mind dwells on the body reveals'*.

Dr. William Tiller, a Stanford professor who is working on the genome project, has spoken about the major role of *'loving intentionality'* in healing and his work and opinions are also featured in the same film. Dr. Wayne Dyer has been the host of a popular TV program called the *'Power of Intentionality'*. These issues have been somewhat minimised in the past, but clearly they have a major impact in our overall athletic, fitness and wellness goals and successes.

Neurological Disorganisation (Polarity Switching) can happen to anyone on a temporary basis as a result of some form of toxicity, including `stinking thinking`/negativism, allergens – even nightmares (as the body cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is imagined). However there are some people who have a major problem and the `norm` for them is being in a permanent state of reversal. This would possibly show itself in their gait – that, when walking or running, instead of their left arm moving forward as their right leg does, it is the left arm and left leg that does so. Another sign can be when someone constantly says the exact opposite of what they mean, i.e. East when meaning West. This `state of reversal` will have a detrimental effect on a person`s purview and perceptions of the universe and of themselves. With pre- and post Applied Kinesiology testing, I will often demonstrate the impact of the `Collarbone Breathing` correction method for Neurological Disorganisation. Apart from shifting the mental reversal state, those tested also note a big increase in their resistance strength. I use this technique every morning (as well as the four correction points listed below) for maintenance and prevention (from reversal) as well as to maximize my physical, emotional and spiritual strength. It should also be used prior to any competition or potentially nerve-wracking or uncomfortable experience.

There are four other reversal correction points that I recommend be used daily and for pre-competition;

- 1) The adrenal massage.
- 2) The tender spot near heart - clockwise rub (Neurolymphatic Reflex point).
- 3) Tapping under the nose (the `Peak Performance` point + under the bottom lip - these are the end points of the Conception and Governing vessels.
- 4) Tapping the side of the hand (karate chop point).

For a fuller description of Collarbone Breathing and these four reversal correction points and how, when and why to do them, refer to `*Rapid Recovery*` or to my website at <http://www2.vip.net/~stking/> and look under the headers `Collarbone Breathing` and `Performance & Psychological States`. It should be noted that doing this energy regimen on a daily basis will take only two or three minutes and has no cost attached to it except the time - but the potential payoff can be the optimal experience of the palace of possibilities.

Most people carry with them some form of miasm or predisposition to a certain ailment, such as the chicken pox virus, which, if it gets `expressed`, can manifest as a painful case of shingles. However, we do have the ability to create much healthier forms of cellular memory by means of visualisation, training and racing experience that we can specifically gear towards expression at the peak time in order to experience and be rewarded with the desired athletic goal. Visualisation is now an accepted and validated tool of sports psychology (remember that the body does not know the difference between what is real and what is imagined) and the whole system will start to respond well as it gains a comfort level `knowing` that it has been in the imagined scenario many times before.

As we continue to install and reinforce our desired memory cell images and feelings, then the whole person begins to experience and enjoy a `flow` state, whether one is performing or in competition. Performance anxiety is one of the main obstacles to those `white light` moments and that is why I incorporate energy techniques such as Tapas Acupressure Technique (TAT) and Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) for quicker and more complete installation of the goal-oriented visualisation and cellular memory.

Success will be more likely to come if one has an expectation of success. Therefore, by changing one's goals to that of performance process rather than only on the outcome, the event will be a fully present one with constant access to one's `inner coach`, and the body/mind/spirit will have shifted from an anticipatory anxiety-based to an excitement-based experience.

It has been said that you cannot have a strong emotion while you are physically relaxed. Therefore, if you find yourself having strong emotions that stiffen the body and stifle the possibilities you might need to consciously remind yourself of that and choose to do the simple `Wet Noodle` exercise. Just allow yourself to relax as much as is possible in a given situation and give an internal command for every part of you to relax, release and totally flop – just like a wet noodle. The progressive muscle relaxation combats any pressure or perturbation. Notice whether or not you have the ability to observe thoughts in your head without any reaction to them (sympathetic nervous system or otherwise). If you are able to then you are in a *Tapas* state, which allows for total psyche and physical relaxation.

The simple Serenity Prayer contains a magnificently powerful message that has been a guide for millions. It states, "Grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference."

Dr. David Hawkins, author of *Power vs. Force`* (which fully endorses the use of Applied Kinesiology), stated that "*All stress is internally generated by one's attitudes.*" Gerald Puls, a 75+ yrs old Ironman competitor from Pueblo, Colorado sent me a card that stated, "Exercise is the chain that links us to the Chariot of well-being. Well-being means happiness, but happiness is also an attitude, and the best attitude is one of gratitude."

How lucky we are to be able to choose to run for fun, fitness, adventure, competition or to complement and honour our existence. Our attitude of gratitude needs to extend to those who help make it possible, whether they be our loved ones, race directors, volunteers or those who assist in our healthy overall maintenance. Putting out positive words, thoughts and vibrations - and being willing to receive them, allows for the quantum possibilities to be personally and globally impactful.

We have to recognise that life is indeed, at times, a struggle and that winning or losing are in the hands of the gods. We must therefore learn to celebrate the struggle! Albert Schweitzer stated that, "The greatest discovery of any generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind."

As a final note of coincidence, providence or serendipity, you might find it interesting to note that, when using the word ATTITUDE and the number that corresponds with the letters of the alphabet, i.e. A(1) T(20) T(20) I(9) T(20) U(21) D(4) E(5) you get a grand total of 100. The attitude you choose to carry with you directly determines your experience of everything!

“He who cannot change the very fabric of his thought will never be able to change reality.” President Anwar Sadat.

“All stress is internally generated by one’s attitudes.” Dr. David Hawkins.

“The only thing I could change was my attitude and by changing that, everything changed.” Anthony de Mello. “Nothing has changed except my attitude – so everything has changed”. *The Enlightenment* by Anthony de Mello.

“The greatest discovery of any generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.” Albert Schweitzer.

“The longer I live, the more I realise the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for the day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our Attitudes.”  
(Charles Swindoll)

### Recommended Books

Armstrong, Lance. with Sally Jenkins. *It’s Not About the Bike*. New York: Berkley Books. 2000.

Diamond, John. *Your Body Doesn’t Lie*. New York: Warner Books, 1979.

Emoto, Masaru. *Messages From Water*. Tokyo, Japan: Hado Kyoikusha. 2001.

Hawkins, David. *Power vs. Force: the Hidden Determinants of Human Behaviour*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, Inc. 2002.

King, Serge. (not related – honestly!) *Mastering Your Hidden Self: A Guide to the Huna Way*. Wheaton, Ill: Quest Books. 1985.

King, Stephen P. *Rapid Recovery: Accelerated Information Processing & Healing*. Victoria, B.C.: Trafford Publishing. 2004.

Lepore, Donald. *The Ultimate Healing System*. Provo, Utah: Woodland Books. 1988.

Nickel David J. *Acupressure for Athletes*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., Inc. 1984.