

Having an Alter Ego

Holly Grayton

Don't feel confident going into the ring? Do you find yourself watching other people wishing you had their confidence, attitude, style, etc? Develop an alter ego to help your performance!

Sometimes when I'm in a tough situation at work or in a group situation I think to myself, "If only I were like [fill in the blank], then I could pull that off." So I would change my voice a little, or use the phrases that person in particular would use to get through the situation. Recently I was listening to a podcast by Todd Herman, a performance coach and advisor, and he was applying the same tactics for his athlete clients.

Basically he advises that in order to amplify your strengths, you should create another version of yourself, the person you want to become in the competition arena – a spirit animal, a super hero or alter ego – and get out of your own way. Here are some steps to help:

Self-analysis – identify and suppress traits that don't serve you in the competition arena. In the podcast Todd gave an example of a tennis player who, as a person, really values fairness. On the court the player would find herself dominating play but subconsciously the fairness value would kick in and she found herself letting her opponent get some points – just to be fair! Sometimes that opponent would capitalize on the momentum of getting some points and would win. This value definitely didn't serve her in competition.


Talent magnifier – Ask yourself who you respect in our sport, and why? What traits and skills are part of this person? Find and magnify these talents within yourself.

Artefacts – Todd suggests getting something like a bracelet or ring that would act as a trigger or a reminder to be your new alter ego. Whenever the particular artefact was put on, it signified the transformation into the alter ego and the associated state of mind.

Immersion – Practice becoming this person when you're on the field of play. When you are about to go 'on stage' so to speak, be completely immersed in your alter ego. If that person creates a sense of calm and confidence, then do that. If that person is particular about learning their courses, then do that. If that person wouldn't talk with friends during the July/August 2017

course walk, then don't. If that person would meticulously check their tack before mounting, then do that. If that person wouldn't get frustrated by a mistake, or would be brave enough to get a big gallop before the first jump, use that to help you step into the new you.

Let it go – The final realization is to be so comfortable stepping into your alter ego that it loses its individuality, it becomes you. In other words, you've embodied it.

So once you have thought up your alter ego, name it; give this character a history that authenticates them. Put that persona on when you are getting ready for your next round and see how it goes. Keep it to yourself if you want to. This is about you overcoming obstacles, nobody else needs to know. 



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