

THE BIG IDEAS

Attainment

= Accomplishing + Becoming.

Your Kid's Story

Lanny's and yours, too.

Goal Getting

Some key principles.

The 3 Stages of Every Goal

Attraction + Distraction + Traction.

Your Self-Image

How to build it.



Parenting Champions

What Parents Need to Know About the Mental Game

BY LANNY BASSHAM · MENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS © 2017 · 199 PAGES

“Ask any elite athlete what percentage of their sport is mental, and you will get a huge number back. The statement I hear most often is “My game is 90% mental!” Now, I ask the second question. “If your game is 90% mental, what percentage of your time and money have you spent learning mental skills?” The answer I receive most often is 5 to 10%. Now that just doesn’t make sense. The thing that is most important is the thing that we tend to ignore.

If the mental game is so important where are the mental coaches in our schools? There are plenty of technical coaches on the football field. Every team from baseball to track has a coach for technique. There are golf pros and tennis pros in every country club that can teach you to swing the club and the racquet. But where are the mental coaches? They are hard to find, you might think, but you would be mistaken. In fact, they are everywhere. They are the first person the young athlete talks to after the game or practice. They are in the stands, shouting encouragement. They share the joy in every win and the pain in each loss. The most important mental coach in every athlete’s life is the parent that drives them home from the game.

Parents are unprepared for the job, and though they love their children, they will likely do more harm than good as their mental coach. But that will not happen if you read on and implement the principles of this book. I plan to make you a skilled mental coach for the sake of your children. You are about to learn about Mental Management®. Prepare to be enlightened and empowered.”

~ Lanny Bassham from *Parenting Champions*

“This book is dedicated to the difference makers in our lives, to those who pave the roads so our travel is easier, to those who by their example show us the way, to those who suffer so we do not have to, and to those who have given their lives that we might be free.”

~ Lanny Bassham

Lanny Bassham is one of my favorite teachers.

He’s an Olympic Gold Medalist and World Champion rifle shooter. He won a silver medal after having what he calls a “mental meltdown” in the 1972 Olympics. Then he spent several hours a day for the next couple years talking to every gold medalist he could find about how they were THINKING while they were performing at such an elite level. In the next Olympics in 1976, Lanny won the gold and then began teaching his “Mental Management System®.”

Since then, he’s coached Olympic teams from all around the world (including Great Britain, Canada, India, Japan, The Republic of China, Korea, Australia and the United States). He’s also worked with the Navy SEALs, Fortune 500 businesses, the PGA and its players and other elite performers in sports and business.

He boiled decades of wisdom into his fantastic book [With Winning in Mind](#). He and I connected for an interview and I’ve been personally practicing many of his ideas for years. So... When we decided to create our Optimize 2020 event, Lanny was on the top of my list of people I wanted to be there so a) I could give him a thank you in person and b) we can share his wisdom with you.

I reached out. We had an amazing chat. (He's on!) That's when I heard about his latest book—this one. He sent me a copy. I read it the next day. It's AWESOME. And, well, here we are.

Of course, it's packed with Big Ideas and, as always, I'm excited to share some of my favorites so let's jump straight in!

ATTAINMENT = ACCOMPLISHING + BECOMING

“Attainment, now that's a word you don't hear used every day. It's a special one because it includes not only what you accomplished but also the way you accomplished it. Here at Mental Management System, we are so fond of the concept that my son Troy wrote a book called *Attainment - The 12 Elements of Elite Performance*. Attainment is both becoming and accomplishing.

Accomplishing is how we measure the External.

Becoming is how we measure the Internal.

Attainment = Accomplishing + Becoming

What seems to be lacking in the world's volume of work on performance improvement, in my humble opinion, is a different way of describing what those of us that compete are striving to do. We are not only seeking to win. We are also seeking to discover. We not only want to get to the top of the mountain we want to strengthen physically, mentally, and spiritually because of the climb. We are seeking to become something different than what we were when we started the struggle. We are seeking Attainment.”

That's from Chapter #1: The Question.

Lanny asks us: “Concerning your kids, I have just one question for you. What is more important to you, what your children Accomplish or who they Become?”

Well... Which is more important for you?

Lanny tells us that he's asked thousands of parents and they all give the same answer you did: It is who they Become.

As I read this section and reflected on the beautiful integration of BOTH *Becoming* AND *Accomplishing* to achieve what Lanny (and Troy) call “Attainment,” I thought of Aristotle and Martin Seligman.

In our Notes on Aristotle's [Nicomachean Ethics](#), we talk about the wisdom from the editor who wrote the introduction to the classic manual of the art of living. His name is Jonathan Barnes. He tells us: “To call a man eudaimōn is to say something about how he lives and what he does. The notion of eudaimonia is closely tied, in a way in which the notion of happiness is not, to success: the eudaimōn is someone who makes a success of his life and actions, who realizes his aims and ambitions as a man, who fulfills himself.”

True happiness, in the Aristotelian sense, MUST include the successful actualization of our potentialities. THAT is the ultimate purpose of life. The highest good. The summum bonum.

Which leads us back to Barnes and another one of his brilliant points: “It will not do to replace ‘happiness’ by ‘success’ or ‘fulfillment’ as a translation of eudaimonia; the matter is too complicated for any such simple remedy, and in what follows I shall continue to employ the word ‘happiness’, guarding it with a pair of inverted commas. But it is worth considering Aristotle's recipe for eudaimonia with the notion of success in mind. The *Ethics*, we are thus supposing, is not telling us how to be morally good men, or even how to be humanly happy: it is telling us how to live successful human lives, how to fulfill ourselves as men.”

Sounds a lot like Attainment, eh?

“I was motivated to the point of passion. When a person is passionate about something, training is not something they HAVE to do, it is something they GET to do.”

~ Lanny Bassham

“Amateurs [musicians] practice until they can get it right; professionals practice until they can't get it wrong.”

~ Harold Craxton

" People appreciate things in direct proportion to the price they pay for them."

~ Vince Lombardi

So, check the box on the ancient wisdom side of things. Now for the modern science. Martin Seligman, as we've discussed many times, kicked off the whole Positive Psychology movement.

Side note: Seligman and his colleagues wouldn't have had to add the "Positive" to their "Study of the Soul" (which is what "psychology" literally means) if they had called it "Eudaimonology" in the first place (which literally means "Study of the GOOD Soul") but that's part of a longer chat we have in our Mastery Series/Optimize Coach program.

Seligman named his most recent book *Flourish*—which is the English translation of *eudaimonia*. He also tells us that Achievement is important. It's not *everything,* of course, but it's important.

He says: *"Here then is well-being theory: well-being is a construct; and well-being, not happiness, is the topic of positive psychology. Well-being has five measurable elements (PERMA) that count toward it: Positive emotion (of which happiness and life satisfaction are all aspects) + Engagement + Relationships + Meaning + Achievement. No element defines well-being, but each contributes to it."*

Yep. ATTAINMENT = Accomplishing + Becoming.

<- That's the ultimate game we want to win—becoming "champions of life."

P.S. We have a Note on Troy's great book *Attainment* as well.

YOUR KID'S STORY

"I was in sixth grade, and we were studying the Olympics in school. The teacher said, "You know it is possible that someone in this class might become Olympic Champion someday. I wonder who would have the best chance in the class?" A boy sitting next to me jumped right up and said, "Teacher, I don't know who would have the best chance, but I know for certain who would have the worst chance, Lanny!"

That's from Chapter 2 called "My Story" in which we learn about Lanny's journey from that sixth grade class to Olympic Gold.

We actually shared the same story in our Notes on *With Winning in Mind*. But it's so good that I thought we should talk about it again. (In fact, this was the first story I shared with Alexandra when I was telling her about the book.)

Imagine sitting in a classroom and having a kid say THAT about you. Gah. Lanny says that he was the worst athlete in his class. But... You know who gave him the hope and encouragement and confidence to believe he could achieve great things? His dad.

His dad was a military officer and a war hero. After one particularly bad day on the baseball field (when a ball hit him in the face and everyone laughed at him), Lanny told him, "I'm sorry, Dad. I'm just no good."

Then his dad channeled some Carol Dweck growth mindset wisdom and told Lanny, "No, you're mistaken. There is nothing wrong with you, son. You just haven't found what you are good at yet. Keep looking."

Emphasis on the most important three-letter word we parents can teach our kids: YET.

Note: Lanny's Mental Management System has three components: our Conscious Mind, our Subconscious Mind and our Self-Image.

Quick take: We use our Conscious Mind to set goals, train deliberately and build our skills. Our Subconscious Mind actually does the performing. Our Self-Image is what makes us "act like us."

They're all important, of course. But... It's the SELF-IMAGE that ultimately drives the show.

" My favorite principle of Mental Management addresses this issue: Every time you think about, talk about or write about something happening you improve the probability of it occurring in the future."

~ Lanny Bassham

" Focusing on the solution causes the Self-Image to Grow. Focusing on the Problem causes the Self-Image to Shrink."

~ Lanny Bassham

It's interesting (but not that surprising) that Carol Dweck echoes this wisdom. I hadn't caught the parallels until I opened the Note on [Mindset](#) to find this wisdom. Dweck tells us: *"For twenty years, my research has shown that the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life. It can determine whether you become the person you want to be and whether you accomplish the things you value."*

Important note: As always, we're going to have a really hard time giving our kids something we don't have. So, let's make sure we're exemplary growth mindset champions modeling the very things we hope our kids embody!

P.S. Was Lanny simply a gifted rifle shooter? No. He started out average. But he LOVED it. Most of the kids on Lanny's high school rifle shooting team trained twice a week. You know how often Lanny trained? Twice a DAY. (Hah!) But... He makes the very important point that such a high level of passion is very rare and that we want to make sure our commitment level (as parents) matches our kids' commitment level—wherever that might be!

P.P.S. When I first saw the cover and title of the book, I thought of the etymology for the words *parenting* and *champions*.

In our Notes on Angela Duckworth's [Grit](#), we reflect on the fact that *parenting* literally means "to bring forth" as in: "to bring forth the best within" our kids (and ourselves!).

In our Notes on Jim Afremow's [The Champion's Mind](#), we talk about the fact that the word *champion* comes from the medieval Latin *campio(n-)* which means "fighter"—which makes me think of winning the ultimate combat Socrates talks about in *The Gorgias*: *"I desire only to know the truth, and to live as well as I can... And, to the utmost of my power, I exhort all other men to do the same... I exhort you also to take part in the great combat, which is the combat of life, and greater than every other earthly conflict."*

GOAL GETTING

"Winners have one thing in common. They are goal getters. Ask parents if it is important for their kids to have goals and most will say it is important. ..."

Most books on goal setting are result oriented, and I have a problem with that. I have no problem with setting a goal to have a winning performance, move up in a class or to make the team, if you are setting the goal to identify the process of attaining the goal. Remember attainment and accomplishment are not the same thing. Accomplishment is all about the outcome, and it is important. We determine who wins by accomplishment. It is the score, the color of medal and the place on the list of competitors at the scoreboard. What it does not measure is what your young performers learned or their growth as a competitor. It does not measure who they have BECOME. Attainment is the total of accomplishment and becoming."

That's from Chapter 6 on "Goal Getting" in which Lanny walks us through the core tenets of his Mental Management goal getting process. (Note: Goal GETTING not Goal *Setting*. :)

Lanny is ALL (!) about PROCESS goals. He tells his students: *"You can predict and control how many days a week you train. You can control what you choose to think about and do. You can determine the competitions you enter and how you decide to train for them. Only set goals on things that YOU can control. Keep your focus on you, not your competitors. Rehearse in your mind the process of executing a combination of mental feelings and technical moves that get results. Your success is determined by how well you can control what is in front of you, not by worrying about the outcome."*

It's funny because when Lanny and I chatted about our plans for Optimize 2020 (5 Days, 101 Luminaries, 1 million people Livestreaming), he told me that hitting THAT goal was harder than winning a gold medal. (We both laughed and I laughed as I typed that.)

" Remember, coal under pressure produces a diamond. Performers in control under pressure produce winning scores."

~ Henry Kissinger

"I hope that you will agree with me that successful people are willing and able to do what unsuccessful people are not willing or not able to do."

~ Lanny Bassham

Which is why my PRIMARY focus is on the PROCESS. Starting with the most fundamental things like solid AM and PM bookends that ensure my ENERGY is where it needs to be. Rocking the protocol with more precision than ever so I can try to make my prior best my new baseline and have the emotional stamina as I strive to create a great event while launching Coach-II and doing all the other things we're committed to.

So... How are YOUR goals and your kids' goals? You focusing on the PROCESS?

THE THREE STAGES OF EVERY GOAL

"There are three stages to every goal. The first two are well known by everyone. The third stage is one of the items of importance that only the top 5% seem to know. It is vital you understand and can teach all three stages to your children."

Lanny has two chapters on Goals—one called "Goal Getting" and another on the "Mental Management Goal Setting System." Check out the book for the 10 steps of their system but know that Step Number 1 is "Determine a dream worth trading your life for."

(Other steps include: 2. Decide when you want it; 3. List the pay-value (WHY you want it); 4. Honestly evaluate the obstacles in your way (WOOP!); 5. What is your plan to get your goal?; 6. Evaluate your plan before you proceed; 7. Schedule your plan; 8. Start Now; 9. Before reaching your goal always set a new one to take its place; 10. Hold on to the end or trade up.)

Let's take a quick look at the three stages of every goal: **Attraction** (when we're fired up and focused on how awesome it'll all be), **Distraction** (when the obstacles hit us in the face and we wonder what we were thinking when we set the goal), and **Traction** (when we recommit to our process and get to the Finish Line!).

Lanny shares a funny story to make his point. In his 50's, he decided to go back to school and get his B.S. in computer science in an accelerated program that required him to work weekends. He was "Attracted" to the goal because he thought it would help his business, etc.

He wanted to get straight A's. In his very first test, he had NO CLUE how to answer the very first question (which was worth 25% of his grade). He sat there thinking to himself, "Why am I here?" Get this: That SAME day he was being inaugurated into the rifle shooting Hall of Fame but didn't go because of this test. Enter: Distraction phase full of doubt, etc. Then he pulled it together, flipped to the next question, finished the test and did his best. Enter: Traction phase.

As he handed in his exam, he told the teacher that would be the best 75% he'd ever seen. At which point, the teacher looked at the exam and realized he had accidentally thrown in a question from a DIFFERENT programming language altogether. Hah. Oops. Lanny got his straight A's. By focusing on the PROCESS and maintaining Traction.

Lanny wraps up that chapter saying: "Teach your children, at times when all seems lost when they are ready to throw in the towel; success may be just around the corner if they move to the Traction stage of the goal."

Got any good goals worthy of you? Here's to rocking ALL THREE phases and getting to the Finish Line!

P.S. Check out our Notes on Nir Eyal's great book [Indistractable](#) where we talk about the fact that the OPPOSITE of "distraction" is "TRACTION."

P.P.S. Those three phases of goal getting also remind me of "The Lag" from Todd Henry's [Die Empty](#). He tells us: "The lag is the gap between cause and effect. It's the season between planting a seed and reaping a harvest. It's the time when all the work you've done seems to have returned little to no visible reward, and there is little on the horizon to indicate that things are going to get better."

"When you find your kids beating themselves up, you must correct this abusive behavior. Remind them that if they prepare properly, there are few things in life they cannot accomplish."

~ Lanny Bassham

" Learning to help your children turn negative attitudes into positive ones is an important skill. When the Self-Image changes, performance changes."

~ Lanny Bassham

When you are in the lag, the only thing that keeps you moving forward are (a) confidence in your vision and ability to bring it to fruition, (b) a willingness to say no to other things that tempt you to divert from your course, and (c) daily, diligent, urgent progress."

YOUR SELF-IMAGE

"Your Self-Image is like a container holding all of the imprints. You need to picture more hits than misses. That's the key. If you rehearse making the shot before and after an attempt, your Self-Image cannot shrink. Only think about what you want to happen when you are off of the court. Reinforce your successes and learn from your failures."

That's from the second-to-last chapter on "Changing Self-Image." Good news: We CAN change our Self-Image. Reality: It will be hard work.

Of course, Lanny gives us a bunch of tips on HOW to Optimize our Self-Image by paying attention to how we're talking to ourselves in the three phases of any task: **Anticipation Phase** (when we Consciously rehearse a solid performance and imagine rocking it) + **Action Phase** (when we put all our training into motion and Subconsciously let it rip) + **Reinforcement Phase** (we feast on the good stuff "That's like me!" style and calmly analyze what "Needs work").

When I studied his take on how to build Self-Image by controlling "imprints," I thought of some parallel wisdom from Abraham Maslow. In his great book [Toward a Psychology of Being](#), he tells us: "The serious thing for each person to recognize vividly and poignantly, each for himself, is that every falling away from species-virtue, every crime against one's own nature, every evil act, every one without exception records itself in our unconscious and makes us despise ourselves. Karen Horney had a good word to describe this unconscious perceiving and remembering; she said it "registers." If we do something we are ashamed of, it "registers" to our discredit, and if we do something honest or fine or good, it "registers" to our credit. The net results ultimately are either one or the other—either we respect and accept ourselves or we despise ourselves and feel contemptible, worthless, and unlovable."

Which brings us back to Aristotle and Seligman and how to win the ultimate game of life. We all want to Flourish, to live with eudaimonia. We do it by living with virtue. Moment to moment to moment. TODAY.

Here's to bringing forth the best within ourselves and the kids we're lucky enough to raise.

B

Brian Johnson,
Philosopher in Residence

About the Author of "Parenting Champions"

LANNY BASSHAM



Lanny Bassham created a system of mental control he called Mental Management®. For the past 40 years, Lanny has been teaching Mental Management® to Olympians, business owners, Fortune 500 Corporations and the elite of sport and business community.

About the Author of This Note

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Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives so they can actualize their potential as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + practical tools. Learn more and optimize your life at optimize.me.

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