

PERFORMING *MIND*

The psychology of human performance

Living and Working '*In the Zone*'

by Clinton Gahwiler

In business, sport and life the best human performances happen when we are fully engaged in the task at hand, while *instinctively* accessing all our existing knowledge, skills, insight and creativity. In sport we refer to this state as being 'in the zone'. Even the best athletes experience this only rarely to its fullest extent, but mental training helps one to get as *close* as humanly possible, as *consistently* as possible. Similarly in life, it is possible to manage one's time, energy and other resources in a way that optimizes one's functioning *.

Resolving the 'work demands vs. life balance' dilemma is critical to ensuring sustainable success in all life areas, including in one's career. Human beings are incredibly resilient, but if we don't look after ourselves while chasing corporate and financial success, the costs gradually and silently accumulate. Ultimately it affects not only our health, relationships and emotional well-being, but also the quality of performance which we are able to bring to our work.

True success requires a marathon rather than a sprint mentality. It is not unlike an aeroplane that can indeed be flown faster than the usual 2 hours between Johannesburg and Cape Town. The airlines choose not to go faster however, as it is less cost-effective over the longer term due to the fuel costs. Similarly, we can push ourselves for a surprising length of time, but from a longer-term perspective it is unlikely to be cost-effective. The reality is that putting in '120%' effort is as far *off* optimal functioning, as someone who is putting in only 80%.

Ironically then, facilitating peak performance is not just about pushing ever harder, but rather about pushing more efficiently – in the right way, at the right time, on the right things. Someone who is prepared to do this is what we might call a 'corporate athlete' - in short, a highly effective individual - who already has significant skills, knowledge and experience - yet stays open & committed to on-going learning in the pursuit of personal excellence & well-being, and who self-manages in a way that brings more quality, more consistently, and on a sustainable basis, to all prioritized life areas.

* The one-day '*In The Zone*' seminar run by Clinton Gahwiler, is designed to help participants find their zone of optimal functioning in business and life, through self management strategies which enable both optimal performance and sustainable well-being.

Clinton is a member of **The CHANGE Initiative (Pty) Ltd** and has run the psychology practice of the Sports Science Institute of South Africa (SSISA) in Newlands, Cape Town since 1995. He has a special interest in applying sport psychology principles in the corporate environment; assisting executives overcome mental blocks and optimizing their performance and well being.

www.performingmind.co.za