



OPTIMUM COACHING



# 4th ENYSSP Workshop

## Barcelona

Sport & hypnosis: Learning to  
use dissociation in sport

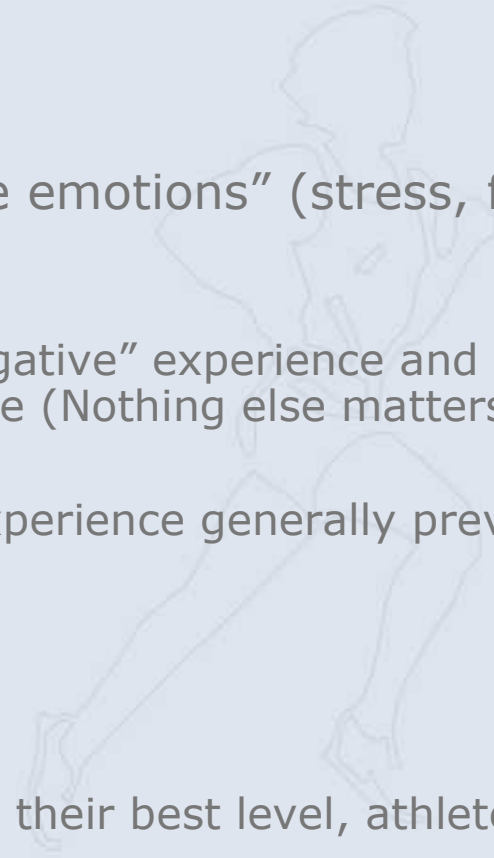
**Fabrice De Zanet**  
**Optimum Coaching**





## The problem...

1. When athletes experience "negative emotions" (stress, fear, anxiety,...)
  1. They are often "trapped" in this "negative" experience and their energy is focused on trying to escape (Nothing else matters)
  2. at the expense of performance !
  3. This way of dealing with negative experience generally prevent athletes to experience FLOW
2. As sport psychologists...
  1. We know that in order to perform at their best level, athletes should perform "in the moment".
  2. However **trying to** "perform" in the moment **is not** "being in the moment".
  3. So, how could we "teach" "performing here and now" although this experience disappears as soon as athletes want to grab it?





## The “solution”

Sport psychology is so simple...

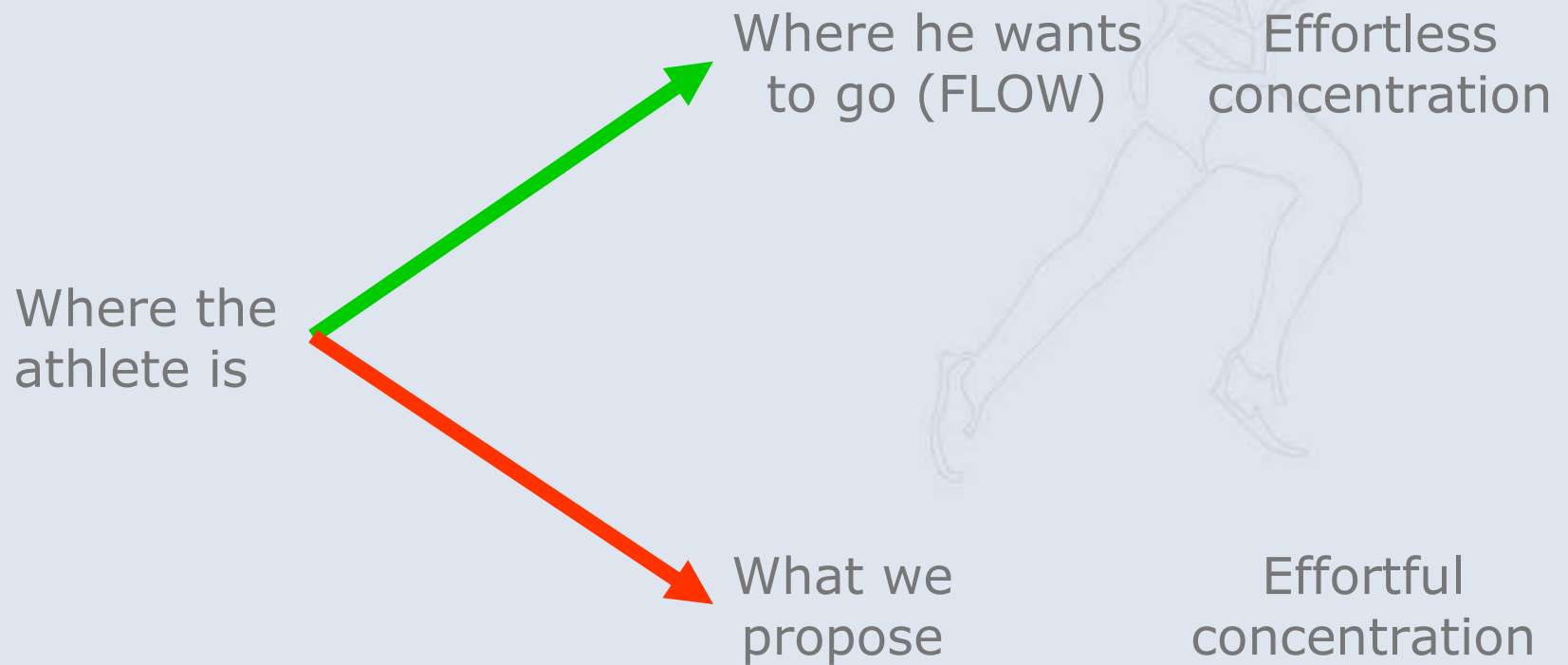
Remember Nideffer `s formula for success...

1. Identify the critical elements of a task
2. Keep attention of the critical elements
3. Ignore non-essential distractions





# The problem of the solution





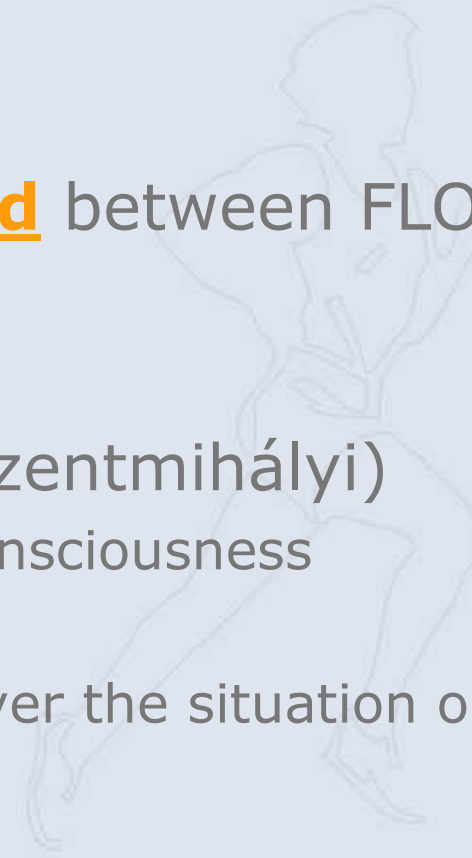
## My contribution...

1. Focusing (and attention) is considered as a crucial determinant of performance
2. But...
  1. What are the “critical elements” of a task ?
  2. How is it possible to keep attention on those critical elements ?
  3. How is it possible not to focus on distractions ?
3. To what extent hypnosis provides sport psychologists with an interesting framework and useful tools in order to help athletes to focus for performance ?



## My contribution...

- There is a **common ground** between FLOW and hypnosis
- Components of Flow (Csíkszentmihályi)
  - A loss of the feeling of self-consciousness
  - Distorted sense of time
  - A sense of personal control over the situation or activity
  - Effortlessness action
  - Absorption in the activity (action awareness merging)





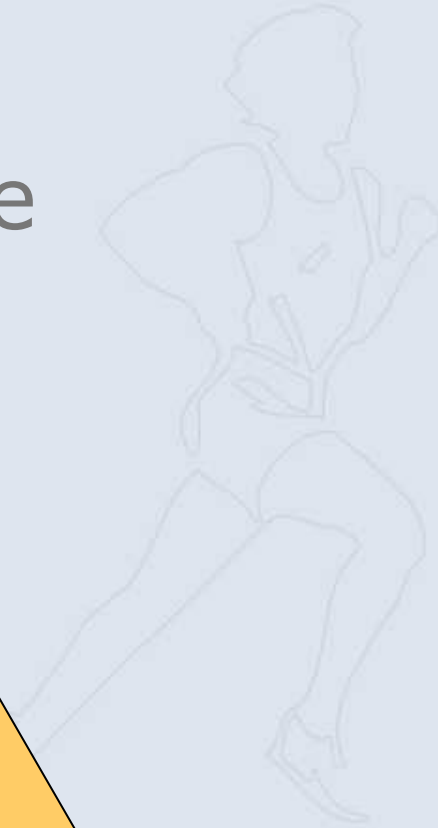
## My contribution...

Performance

Flow

Hypnosis

Dissociation



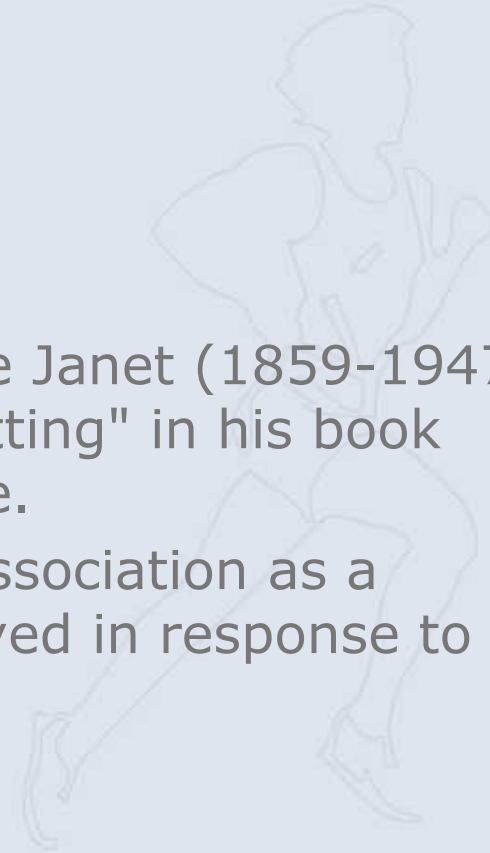


# What we “know”

## 1. Dissociation ?

The French psychiatrist Pierre Janet (1859-1947) initially coined the term "splitting" in his book *L'Automatisme psychologique*.

He emphasized the role of dissociation as a defensive mechanism employed in response to psychological trauma.



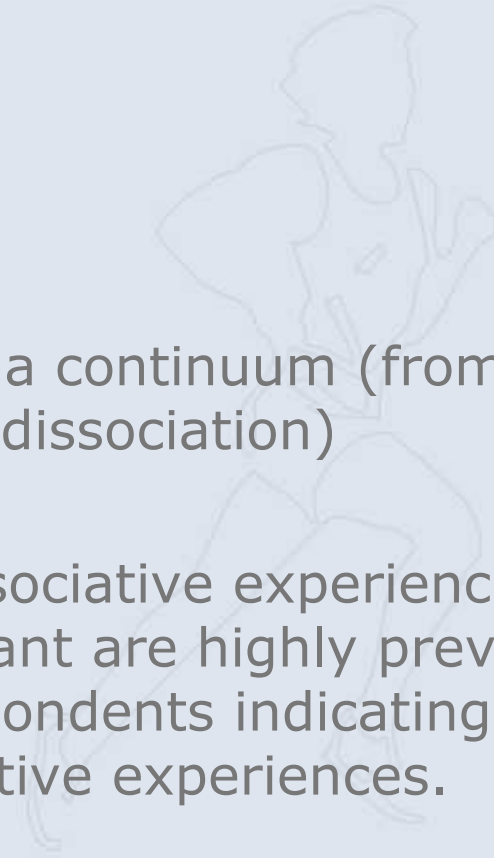




## What we “know”

### 1. According to the DSM-IV

1. Dissociation is considered as a continuum (from daydreaming to pathological dissociation)
2. In the normal population dissociative experiences that are not clinically significant are highly prevalent, with 60% to 65% of the respondents indicating that they have had some dissociative experiences.



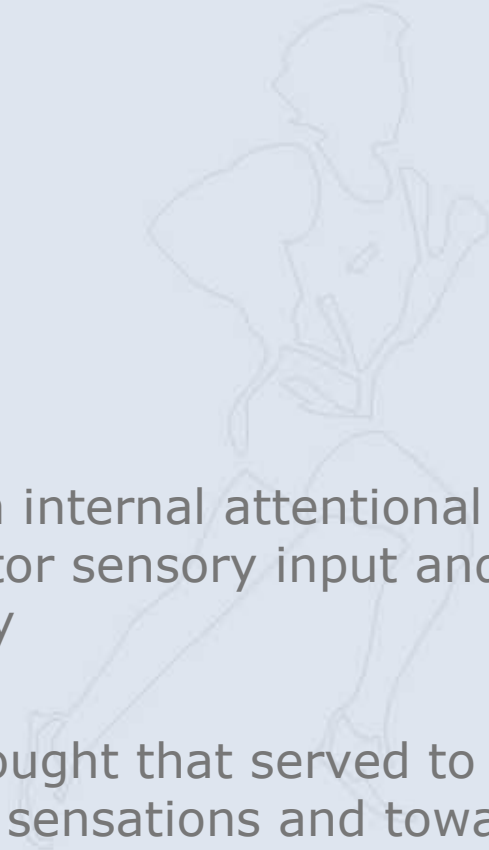


# What we “know”

## 1. In sport psychology

### 1. Morgan and Pollock (1977)

1. Association is regarded as an internal attentional style where athletes seek to monitor sensory input and adjust their effort accordingly
2. Dissociation refers to any thought that served to divert attention away from internal sensations and toward external distracting stimulation





# What we “know”

## 1. In sport psychology

1. Mainly examined in the context of endurance sports

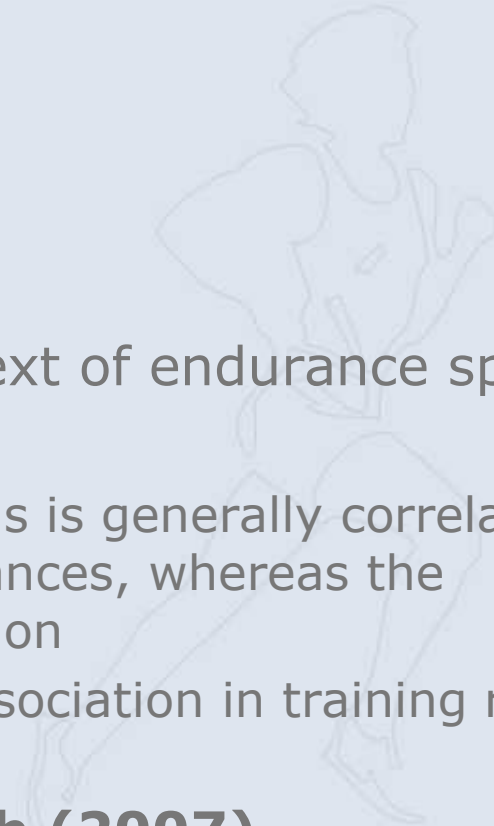
### 2. **Masters and Ogles (1998)**

1. An associative attention focus is generally correlated with faster running performances, whereas the opposite is true for dissociation

2. Runners generally prefer dissociation in training runs and association in races.

### 3. **Hutchinson & Tenenbaumb (2007)**

1. Dissociative coping strategies can be influential on perceived and sustained effort at low to moderate levels of exercise intensity, but they are not likely to be effective at higher levels of exercise intensity





## What we “know”



Paula Radcliffe **counts her steps** when she struggles in a race.

“When I count to 100 three times, it’s a mile,”.

“It helps me focus on the moment and not think about how many miles I have to go. I concentrate on breathing and striding, and I go within myself.”



## What we “know”

“It is almost as if I get out the way... Because of the training...”

“It is as if my body is doing the work... I sit back and watch...”





## What we “know”

### 1. In the context of Ericksonian hypnosis...

“Dissociation is the psychological capability of a person to separate herself from an experience or from a feeling. (...) Dissociation is a neutral psychological capability that can be used for something either positive or negative.”

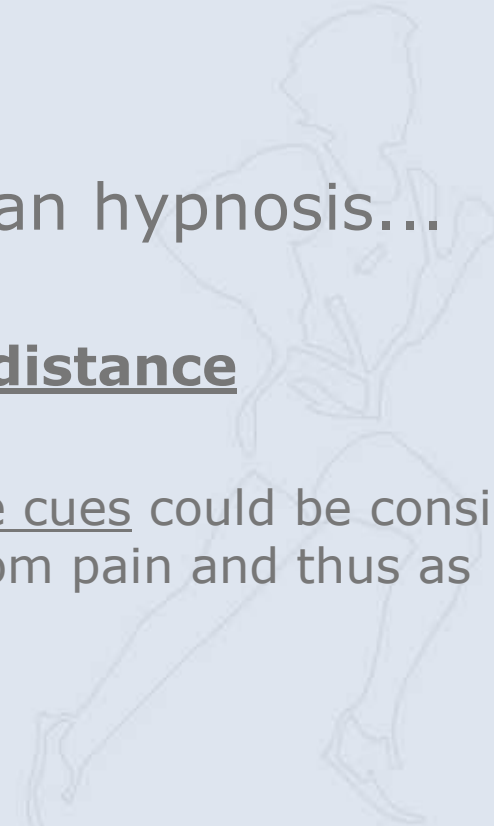
*Edgette, J.H., & Rowan, T. (2003). Winning the mind game. Using hypnosis in sport psychology.*

When psychological demands are high, dissociation is the capability to create a distance between me and my experience in order to create some comfort.



## What we “know”

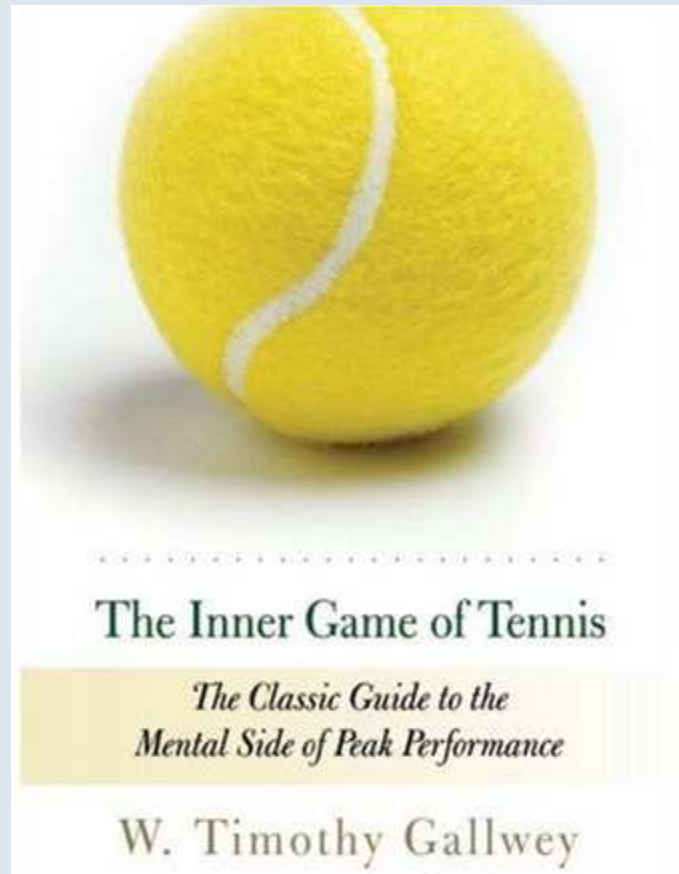
1. In the context of Ericksonian hypnosis...
  1. Dissociation is a question of **distance**
    1. I.e. focusing on performance cues could be considered as a way to take distance from pain and thus as dissociation.
  2. Dissociation is a **process**
    1. Something that “you do” rather than something that “you are”
    2. Sidney and swimming : “I am focusing on focusing”





# Why dissociation... And hypnosis ?

**1974**

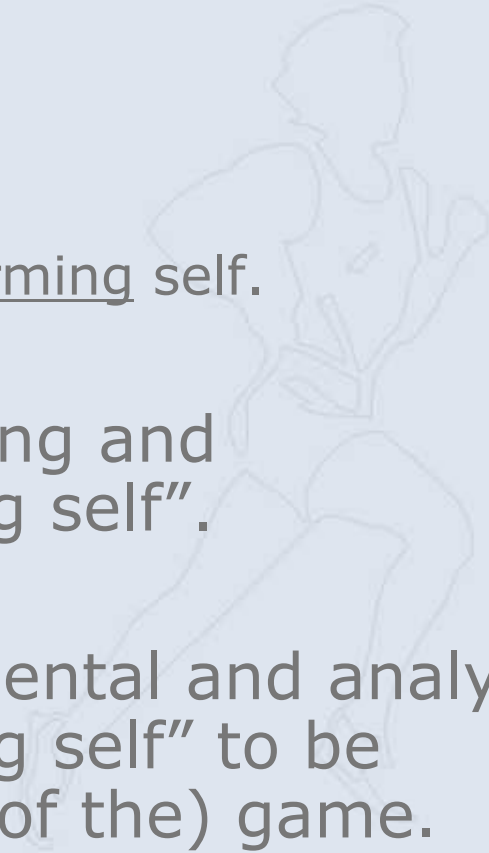






## Timothy GALLWEY

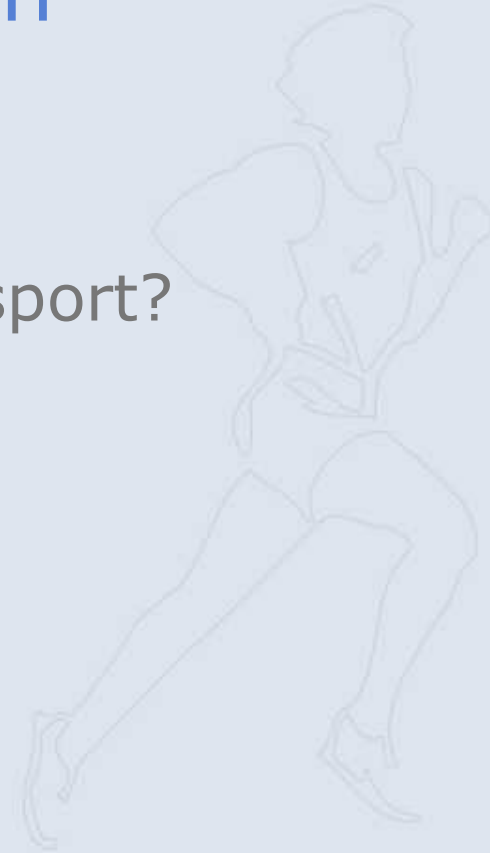
- Athletes have two selves:
  - the thinking self VS the performing self.
- One main obstacle to learning and performance is the “thinking self”.
- The “thinking self” is judgmental and analytical and prevent the “performing self” to be **absorbed** in the (pleasure of the) game.
- In the “Ericksonian hypnosis” framework, this is “dissociation”.





## Practical contribution

- How to “dissociate” ?
- How to use dissociation in sport?
- Examples



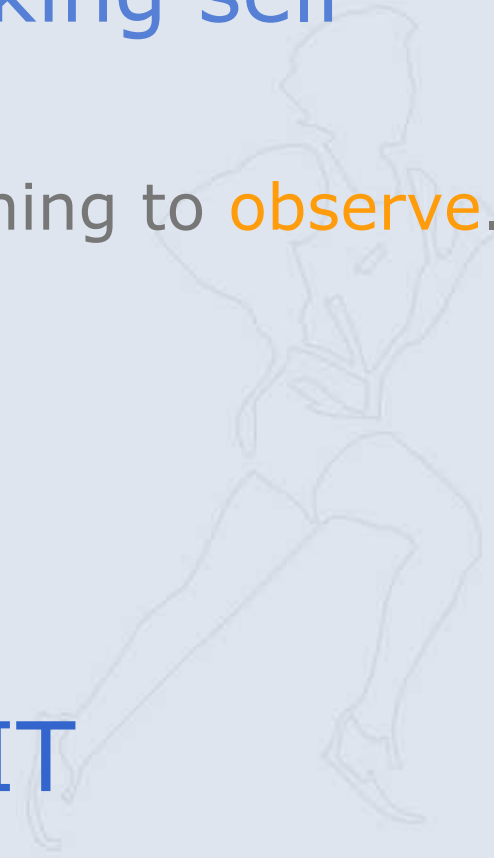


## #1 – Block the thinking self

1. Give “thinking self” something to **observe**...

BACK

HIT





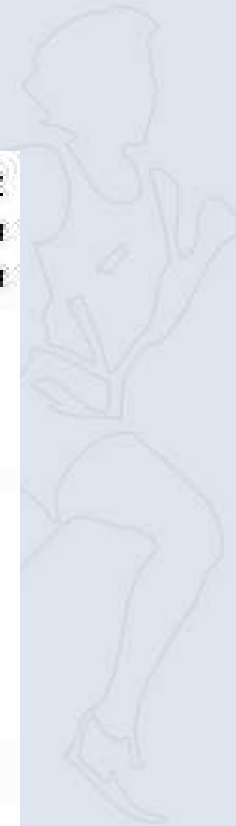
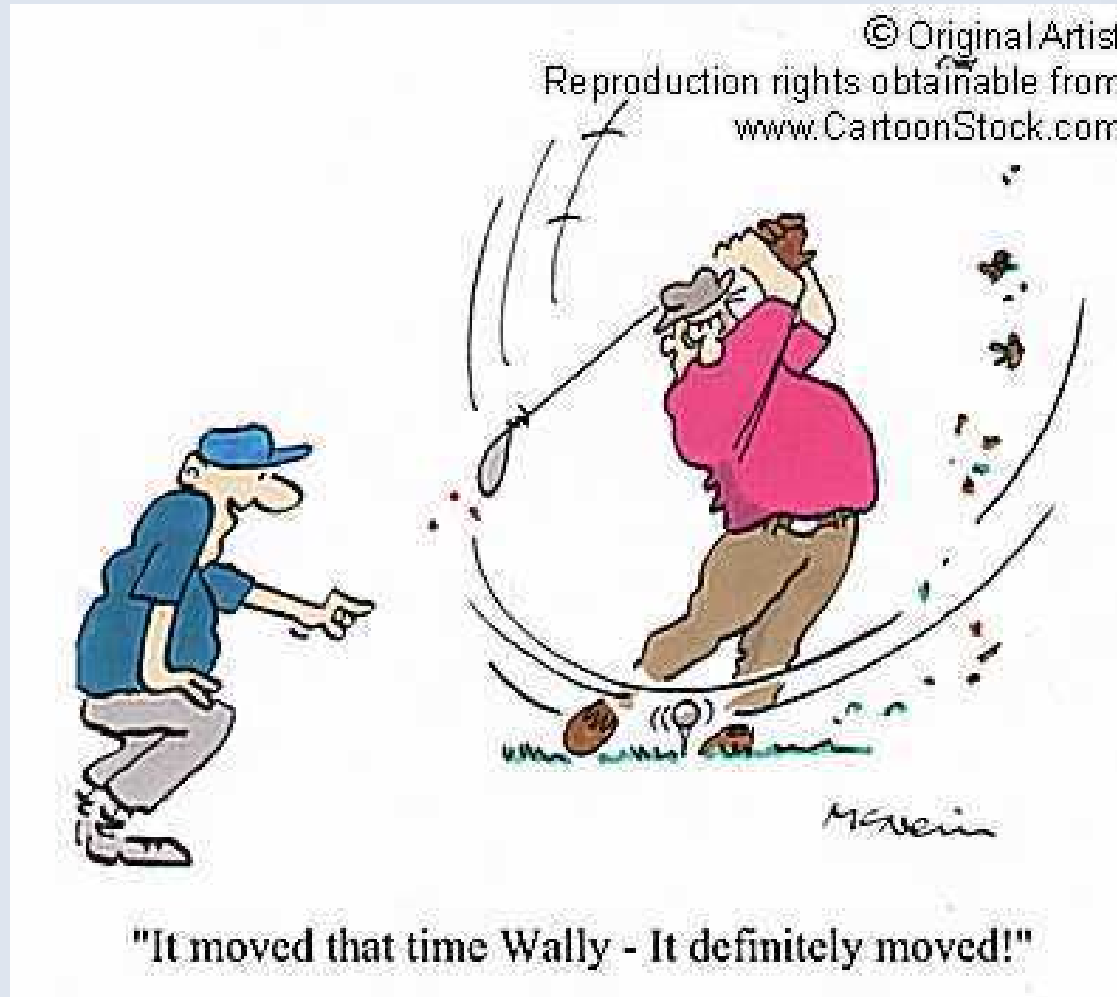
## What you are supposed to do...

- 1 From your head...
- 2 To your neck...
- 3 To your shoulders...
- 4 To your back...
- 5 To your arms...
- 6 To your core...
- 7 To your hips...
- 8 To your hamstrings...
- 9 To your feet...





## And the result...





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# BACK - HIT

Back

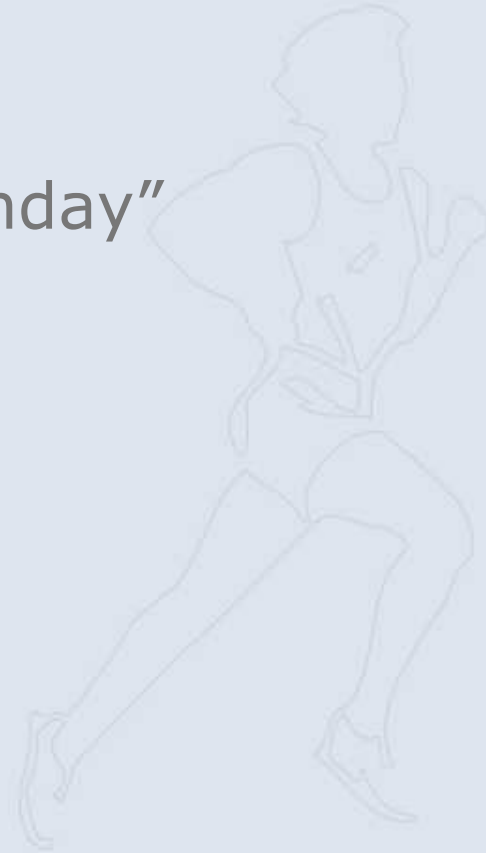


Hit



## #2 - Play as if...

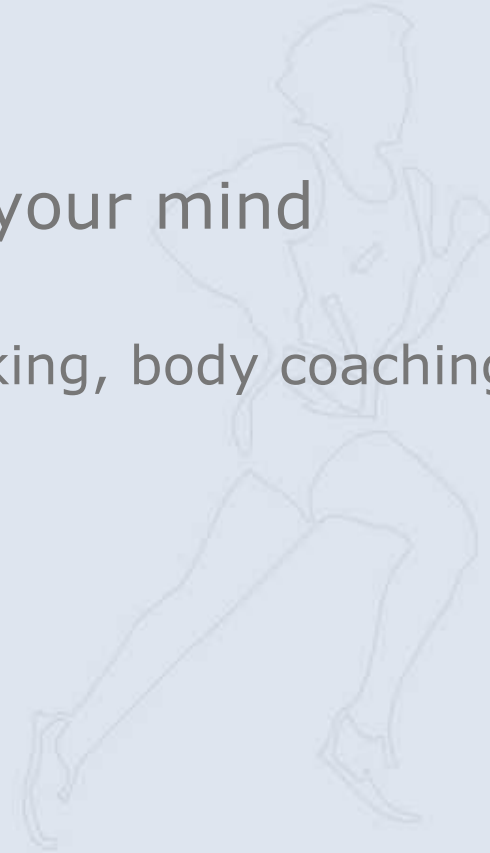
1. Scene from "Any given Sunday"





## #3 – Use your body

1. Use your body... To focus your mind
  1. Michael Chang
  2. Brain reboot, meditative walking, body coaching...

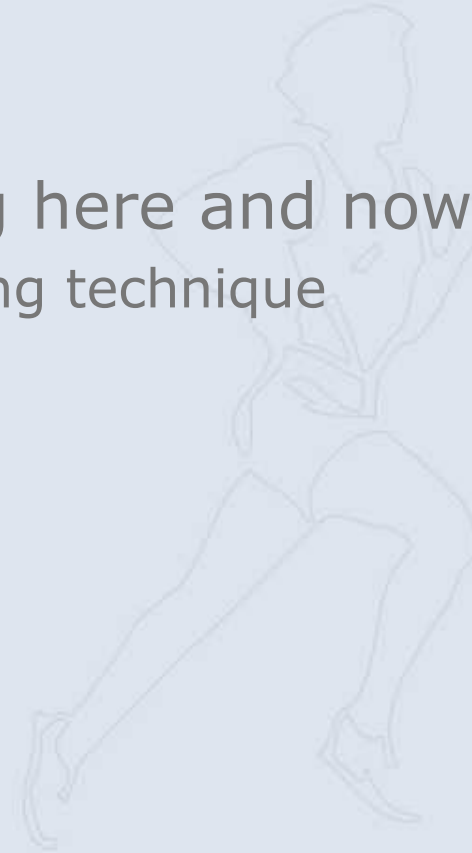






## #4 – Here and Now

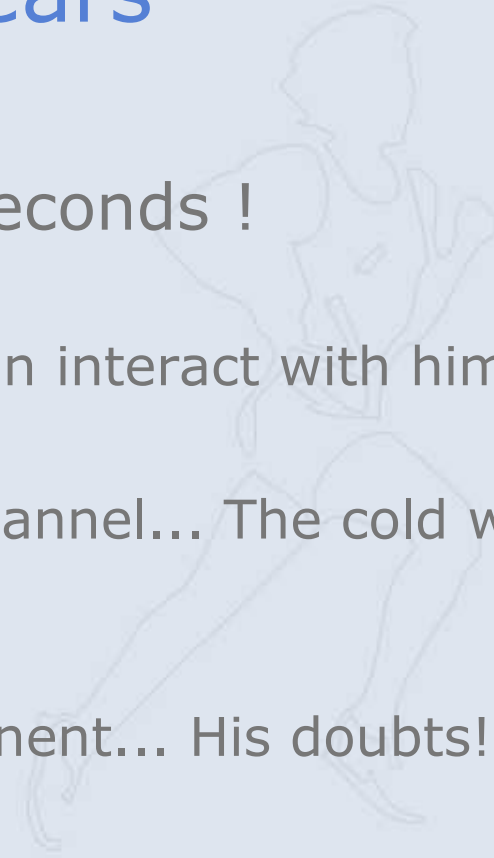
1. Focus on what's happening here and now...
  1. Michael Schumacher's focusing technique





## #5 – Talk to your fears

1. LOST : give your fears 5 seconds !
  1. Fear is somebody and you can interact with him !
  2. Sidney wants to cross the Channel... The cold water is your friend !
  3. Jérémy fights his worst opponent... His doubts! Now, his doubts have a face !

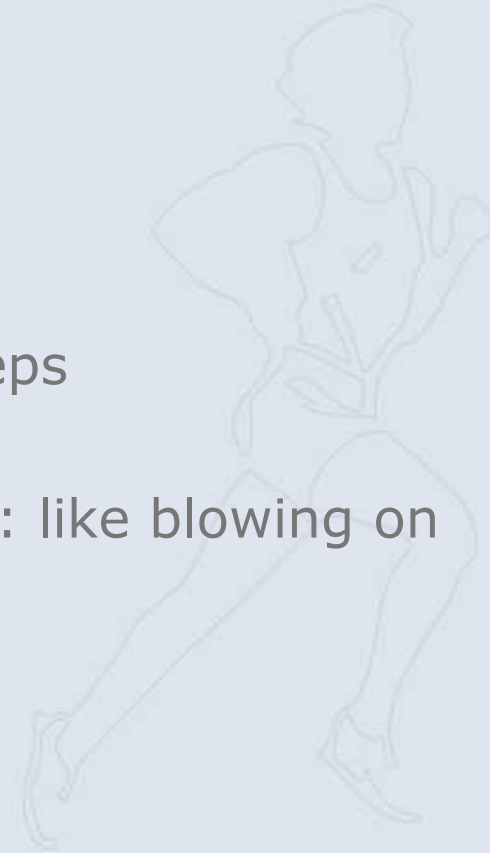




## #6 – Use repetition

### 1. Link action and focus

1. Paula Radcliffe counts her steps
2. Sidney breathes to warm up : like blowing on cinders





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Thank you for your attention

