

team shirts that read “chlorine: the breakfast of champions” and makes me want to be Mark Spitz on a Wheaties box. The stink inside my bike helmet reminds me of my dad’s squash rackets and my cousin Zander’s hockey sticks. Olfaction is the human animal’s most poignant sense. As an athlete don’t underestimate its impact. Use it to trigger your athletic mind-set. Natascha Badmann, who has won six Hawaii Ironman races, agrees with me that the smell of plumeria in Kona is a prime motivating fuel and a deeply embedded memory.

### SPLIT-LEVEL ARCHITECTURE ENTER FROM UPSTAIRS OR DOWN

*There comes a time in every rightly constructed boy’s life when he has a regained desire to go somewhere and dig for hidden treasure.*

MARK TWAIN

The split-brain model gives you a point of entry to start taking inventory. If what you are perceiving about the exercise process is coming from a gut level, it is coming from your down brain. You approach it objectively using behaviorism. If what you are struggling with involves issues of scheduling, motivation, planning, goal setting, or mental toughness, you know that it is an up brain activity, and you approach it with a psychology mind-set. As you familiarize yourself with identifying your motivations and inspirations, it will begin to become clear in most situations which approach you need to take.

Someone who is thinking too much on the field is being too up brain. You have to let it go or get out of the way, which means playing the game more from the down brain. If you let your brain psyche you out, it will cause you to choke or become overexcited. On the flip side, with practice you can change the script and dictate the cross talk sent down from your cerebrum. You can use its power to your advantage, but don’t think too much.

*There is a syndrome in sports called “paralysis by analysis.”*

ARTHUR ASHE

I watched Serena Williams lose in an early round at Wimbledon. As she shook her head in disbelief at her unforced errors, I realized she was thinking

too much and her cerebellum was not doing what it needed to do. I noticed the more she tried to hold in her grunts, the more frustrated she became. The referees at Wimbledon had asked her to quiet down on the grunting, which may have stifled her cerebellum.

As the sets slipped through her fingers, she started grunting again, loudly, which made me hopeful that she might save the match. She had obviously said, screw it. The same thing happened in 2006 with Andy Roddick against Roger Federer at the U.S. Open. Grunting is part of the way the primitive cerebellum communicates, and it works well in sports. When you are performing from the cerebellum, you need only one or two trigger words, and you need phonemes, the smallest phonetic unit, also known as grunts. When people are hypnotized, they process bottom up from the primitive brain up to the cerebrum.

*Good instincts usually tell you what to do long before your head has figured it out.*

MICHAEL BURKE

The ideal state of performance, being in the zone, happens during sport when you are functioning primarily from the cerebellum with a direct link to the prefrontal cortex. The rest of the brain is quiet. This state of fluid performance can be seen on brain-imaging technology as being very efficient, without any wasted mental energy or clutter. Only the areas that need to be used light up. The brain is right and exact in its firing. Practice and repetition are what allows for this efficiency between neurons. When you feel a state of fluid performance, the synapses between your cerebellum and prefrontal cortex are firing at the same rate. They harmonize at a frequency above the din of the rest of the neuronal choir in your brain.

## CHILDREN LIVE TO PLAY RECESS!

*If A equals success, then the formula is:  $A = X + Y + Z$ , X is work. Y is play. Z is keep your mouth shut.*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Try to remember that sport is play. As children we thought of running around and moving as play, and we loved to do it. As adults we call it exercise. The