

## ANXIETY: DEALING WITH YOUR FEARS

*“Of all the liars in the world, sometimes the worst are your own fears.”*

-- Rudyard Kipling

- Fear creates muscle tension and distractions.
- It steals your heart by taking away your nerve, creating worries, and killing your confidence.
- It makes you compete with your mind and stops you from enjoying the competition.
- When you give in to your fear, you are focusing on NOT doing something in your Running, Jumping, or Throwing instead of focusing on what you WANT to do.

### STEPS FOR DEALING WITH FEAR AND ANXIETY

- 1) **Recognize** your fear(s)
  - a. Involves physiological changes, emotions, and specific thoughts
  - b. Felt as anxiety
  - c. Fed by “what-ifs”
  - d. Figure out your favorite what-ifs and you’ll identify your fears
- 2) **Understanding** your fear(s)
  - a. Fears are very powerful and trick you into believing things that aren’t yet real
  - b. Many of your sport-related fears result from your emotions, imagination, and distorted knowledge
  - c. When you’re not performing well, you look for indicators in your performance that fit that frame of mind (you “see” the signs of failure)
  - d. Often you create rituals to deal with your fears
    - i. Those that involve circumstances outside your control will lead to failure
    - ii. Those that you control can be positive and calming
- 3) **Take action** to neutralize your fear(s)
  - a. Approach your fear
    - i. when you avoid what you fear, you give it power
    - ii. when you closely examine your fear, you can see what’s behind it
- 4) **Fear busting strategies**
  - a. To beat your fear, you have to do the thing you fear over and over again
    - i. Break it up into parts
    - ii. Work on each part of your fear individually
  - b. Reframe your fear
    - i. When you move up in competition level, you stretch your physical and mental limits → it’s supposed to be scary!
    - ii. Fear is the key to improving your performance → you have to bust through it to get better
  - c. Re-focus your concentration
    - i. Dismiss any “what-ifs”
    - ii. Focus on what you can control
  - d. Challenge the logic behind your fear
  - e. When nothing else works, dissociate from your fear (ask me for an exercise to do this)

Reference: Goldberg, A.S. (1998). *Sports Slump Busting*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.