

# Mentally Tough by Ron White

One of the least talked about factors of success is being mentally tough. Mental toughness will allow you to endure adversity, hardship and setbacks, and ultimately achieve success.

The next question is: What does it mean to be mentally tough?

- It means when trouble and heartaches head your way, you are not permanently knocked off the bicycle of life.
- It means when your plan is not going exactly the way you planned, you press on.
- It means when others criticize, you refuse to allow someone else to dictate your thoughts or direction.
- It means you know who you are.
- It means you accept 100% responsibility for every action you have ever taken.

Now, if being mentally tough is so crucial to success, how do you become mentally tough?

Some of the most mentally tough people I have ever known are ones that I have served next to in the military. They are mentally tough because the military forces—and I mean forces—you to adopt three behaviors. In the military you will never be allowed to blame someone else, you will be required to be physically fit and you will be given daily goals and you will accomplish them!

The first key to being mentally tough is refusing to be a victim and accepting 100% responsibility for your actions. It is not your parents' fault, your boss's fault, the fault of the government or someone you knew when you were a teenager. How in the world can you be mentally tough when you blame others for your lot in life? It is empowering to accept responsibility for your fate.

When you consciously or subconsciously blame another (government, economy, family, etc.) for the outcome of your life, you are significantly reducing the chances of a happy life. This is true because you have given someone else the power to control your thoughts and actions.

Next, become mentally tough by becoming physically tough. Yes, there is a confidence that you will have when your muscles are toned and a walk on the beach does not exhaust you. Now, when I am 85 years old, do I expect to bench press 225 pounds and run four miles a day? Absolutely not! However, I do expect myself to put forth the maximum effort all the time so when I am 35, 45, 55 or 85 I am in the best possible shape for a 35-, 45-, 55- or 85-year-old.

The confidence that comes from being fit is one that can't be found anywhere else. Watch what you eat and exercise. It is crucial to being mentally tough.

Set goals and then accomplish them! How many times do people make New Year's resolutions only to break them by January 20? This is a much bigger deal than you may think. It is a big deal because subconsciously you are telling your mind, "I can't even keep a New Year's resolution!" When you tell yourself this subconsciously, you then begin to lose confidence in yourself and every aspect of your life is affected. When someone compliments you, it makes you feel awkward because deep down you think, "Gee, if they only knew that I can't even keep a New Year's resolution."

Conversely, if you set a small goal of reading a book a month and you accomplish it, your self-confidence begins to build. Subconsciously you are telling yourself, "I am valuable—I am worth it—I can hit my goals—I am successful." When you see yourself this way, you are well on the way to becoming mentally tough. In military boot camp, you are given a daily goal of folding your underwear in a set pattern and making your bed in a prescribed way. When you accomplish this goal day after day, even though it is so small, it is making a mental deposit into your self-esteem bank account that says you can accomplish goals and are valuable.

Being mentally tough is often the last piece of the puzzle to focus on for success. Yet I know very few successful people who are not mentally tough. It is easier to get there than you think. Become responsible for your life, stay in shape and set and accomplish your goals. When you do, you will exit your own personal boot camp with a confidence to rival that of a Navy SEAL!