



How to Tame the Monkey Mind!

The monkey mind defined: Automatic thoughts that attack your optimal performance mindset and shift your attention to victory or defeat.

The physiology of the monkey mind

The mid-brain is the home of the monkey mind. Every good and bad musical, physical, social and emotional experience we have ever had was processed first by the "monkey mind" or mid-brain and screened for pain or pleasure.

The pre-frontal cortex is the home of your **Optimal Performance Mindset**. When you have the right focus, the right attitude, the right physical and emotional energy and the right actions, RIGHT NOW, everything flows in the direction of a great performance.

The psychology of the monkey mind

When a previously-tagged trigger is recognized there is an immediate neuro-chemical response and the monkey mind starts to chatter. The monkey mind is automatic and it is more likely to move you away from your performance goals than towards them.

To tame the monkey mind you need to:

1. Know the physiological and psychological mechanics the monkey mind
2. Design an optimal performance mindset
3. Recognize that the chatter from the monkey mind is a first response.
4. Identify potential triggers that cause "the shift" from the frontal cortex to your monkey mind.
4. Have the skills to challenge the chatter.
5. Design and strengthen your optimal performance mindset.

Techniques for challenging the chatter

1. Oh, that is just my first response and my first response can't be trusted.
2. Avoid using words like: always, never, every time, should and personalized labels.
3. Calm down your mind and body. Learn to relax and meditate.
4. Questions that challenge the monkey mind.
 - Is this really true or false?
 - Is it in my best interest to think this?
 - What would be a different way of thinking about this?
 - Could this be coming from my monkey mind?
5. Look out for exaggerations and extremes in language and reactions. The monkeys are back!
6. Identify the monkey chatter as monkey chatter, focus on your breathing, tell yourself to drop it or let go (yes, you can sing the song), replace it! Reconnect with your optimal performance mindset.
7. Mindset by default or by design?
 - Write down three words that describe your optimal performance mindset.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - Write down three words that come from your monkey mind.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.



Looking for the Monkey Mind

Complete the following sentences. Just put down whatever comes to mind.

- ___ Performing is...
- ___ I know I am ready to perform when...
- ___ The audience...
- ___ Criticism is...
- ___ What I like most about performing is...
- ___ Mistakes are...
- ___ I'd have more confidence if...
- ___ I get stressed out when...

The Performance Profile Questionnaire (Short Form)

The **Performance Profile Questionnaire** explores different aspects of your experience as a performer. Read each question and reflect on your personal experience.

Answer each sentence as **TTrue, FFalse or SSometimes.**

1. _____ I usually feel anxious before I perform.
2. _____ I am easily distracted when I perform.
3. _____ I usually feel confident about my performance preparation.
4. _____ I critique my performance while I am playing.
5. _____ I am afraid of mistakes.
6. _____ I often think about past "bad" or embarrassing performances.
7. _____ I am critical of myself.
8. _____ I have confidence in my ability to perform well.
9. _____ I often wonder what others think of my playing.
10. _____ I enjoy performing.

The Five Stages of Peak Performance©

Stage I. The foundation

What is your goal or intention?

Why are you pursuing this goal? What is your motivation?

How are you committed to being as you pursue this goal?

Write down three words that describe how you are committed to being as you perform.

Trigger words: _____

Stage II. Ready!

Skill acquisition and mastery – Practice, Practice, Practice!

Constant self-awareness: evaluate, critique, experiment, observe, adjust.

Mental preparation/visualization.

How are you being as you pursue your goal?

What is incomplete? What is your plan to complete it?

When you plan your work and work your plan, your plan works!

Important: Declaring your preparation complete allows you to perform with freedom. Declare complete what is incomplete!

Stage III. Set!

Get yourself mentally and physically set to perform.

Physical preparation includes your, costume, props, transportation, food, and grooming, etc.

Being mentally set: attention control and positive self-talk.

Pre-performance routines (warm-up routines) to access motor programs. No Rituals!!

Trigger words to access the desired mental states for the performance.

How are you being? Confident, Expressive, Bold!

Stage IV. Go!

The performance.

Step into the sandbox, stay in the sandbox! Go Play!

Limited self-awareness, a present focus of awareness, ease, flow, in the zone.

No thoughts of victory, no thoughts of defeat!

Stage V. The post performance debriefing

Each performance is a practice in performing.

What worked?

What didn't work?

What will you do next time?

No post performance bashing!