

How Champions Think, In Sports and In Life
Dr. Bob Rotella

Review by Andre Marafon
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As the year-end approaches, it is time to look back at all that was accomplished and learn the lessons from all the mistakes that were made this year. I just read a book full of aspirational messages and I decided to share this review only with those that were an important part in making 2017 a wonderful year!!

The book, *How Champions Think, In Sports and In Life*, was written by Dr. Bob Rotella, who is one of the most prominent psychologists in sport and has a client list that includes several Golf players who add more than 70 major championships; star athletes in all major sports, including tennis, baseball, basketball, and football; rock stars, and other artistic performers; and business leaders ranging from Ford to Coca Cola.

The book says "what sets merely talented people apart from exceptional people can't be measured by vertical leap, or time for the forty-yard dash, or length off the tee, or IQ. It's something internal. Great performers share a way of thinking, a set of attitudes and attributes like optimism, confidence, persistence, and strong will. They all want to push themselves to see how great they can become. These attributes and attitudes cause champions to work harder and smarter than other people as they prepare for competition. They help them stay focuses under pressure and to produce their best performances when the stakes are highest".

And they understand, of course, that nothing can be accomplished alone. They need the help of others, family, friends, teammates, coaches. And they measure themselves, in part, by how much they contribute to the lives of these people and others.

And, I can say that all of you, my exceptional friends, mentors and colleagues have contributed so much this year!! And, I am very grateful. So, thank you.

Here it goes... The 5-most-important-habits of Champions:

Learning to be optimistic: *"People are not born either optimistic or pessimistic. Optimism is an attitude that people can choose to have".* Dr. Rotella was lucky. He grew up in a family that thought him that *"we can do anything we wanted if we got an education, set our minds to it, and did our best. He learned to believe that with hard work, you could do your best. That's optimism".* It is about the *"ideas people choose to have about themselves largely determine the quality of the lives they lead. We can choose to believe in ourselves, and thus to strive, to risk, to persevere, and to achieve. Or we can choose to cling to security and mediocrity. We can choose to set no limits to ourselves, to set high goals and dream big dreams. We can use those dreams to fuel our spirits with passion. Or we can become philosophers of the worst kind, inventing ways to rationalize our failures, inventing excuses for mediocrity (forfeiting extreme ownership on what we do, on who we are). We can fall in love with our own abilities and our own potential, then choose to maximize those abilities. Or we can decide that we have no special talents or abilities and try to be happy being safe and comfortable".* Henceforth, the advice he gives us is the following: we must shake off our doubts and know in our heads and in our hearts that in the long run, we are going to be successful, we are going to have a great career, everything will fall in place and wonderful things will happen – if we keep doing the right stuff.

Commitment, Perseverance, and habit: Do what you love or love what you do – Sticking with something you love is biking downhill. Sticking with something you don't love is like biking uphill – That's the first and most important step to be committed. Moreover, be persistent and be patient by taking a big goal and breaking it into small steps (Jim Collin's 20-mile march). *"Doing it this way has several advantages. It gives you a process to follow. It gives you a series of intermediate goals. And it gives you the satisfaction of meeting these smaller challenges along the way. If your goal is to get a little stronger and a little fitter every day, it's easier to see the sort of progress that helps sustain a commitment, because pride is one of the rewards that reinforces a good habit".* A good mantra was conveyed by basketball coach John Calipari (University of Massachusetts): Refuse to lose. *"Refusing to lose, though, doesn't mean you're never going to come out on the short end of a particular game. It doesn't mean your commitments will never be broken. It doesn't mean your perseverance won't occasionally waver. It doesn't mean bad habits won't occasionally reemerge. It means that you never give up. You never give in to doubt, fear, or fatigue. Giving up is the only true loss".*

Being single-minded: Focus. Focus. Focus. *"And given the choice between being single-minded and casual in your commitments, I'd take single-minded every time".* *"Exceptional people tend not to care much about what most people would consider "balance" on their lives. They don't allocate time equally to each aspect of their lives. Like most people, they would say their priorities are health, happiness, and success. Under the heading of happiness, like most people, they would put the quality of their relationships with family and friends. But they devote what most people would consider a disproportionate amount of time to their work".* They only have a different definition for balance...

Evaluating yourself: Self-awareness is a potent defense weapon, but it can also be an offense weapon. *"People who are trying to be the best get used to tough evaluations. They get used to high standards. Sometimes the evaluations come from coaches or bosses. More often they come from within. But it's important that the evaluation come at the right time and are directed at the right stuff".* A good way to find motivation is to think there is always someone watching. Still, *"exceptional people in Dr. Rotella's experience are almost always very good at monitoring and evaluating their adherence to a good process and catching themselves when they slip slightly – when they're just half an inch away from where they should be. Average people let themselves get a lot further off track before they catch themselves. Likewise, exceptional people don't delude themselves. They compare their performance to the process standards they've set for themselves. The outcome is of secondary importance; they're process oriented not because they don't care about outcomes, but because they know his attitude leads to the best outcomes".*

Surrounding yourself with the right people: Dr. Rotella holds true the phrase 'tell me who you walk with, and I'll tell you who you are' and he has noticed that *"exceptional people select their friends based on shared values. Exceptional people also have a sense of the sort of friends who work with/for them. He doesn't mean that they employ their friends. He means that they surround themselves with people who have the same sort of optimistic, confident attitude that exceptional people strive to cultivate within themselves."*

So, let's hit the road!

Have a great 2018! Full of optimism, I will do my best to help us reach more goals and dreams together!