

# It's a Matter of Perception

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In my work as a sports psychotherapist, I find that an athlete's self-perception can hinder their ability to reach full potential in life and sport. According to Wikipedia, "A person's knowledge creates his or her reality as much as the truth, because the human mind can only contemplate that to which it has been exposed." Take for example, the case of a woman who was unable to follow through with her fitness program. It turns out, that in her youth she was ridiculed for being overweight by her peers and told she was lazy by her parents. As a result, she developed a negative self-perception and mindset which caused her to fail each time she attempted to implement a fitness program. Her lack of follow through reinforced her negative self-perception that she was lazy and destined to be overweight, and thus created a mental block to achieving fitness.

An athlete can reach their full potential and peak performance by first recognizing the source of their negative self-perception (s) and then developing evidence to the contrary. Creating an action plan that exposes the human mind to a new truth will cause a shift in one's paradigm. In terms of the example above, the woman was shown how her self-perception was creating a negative outcome, and given a fitness program with specific, short term and measurable goals to promote success. As she experienced meeting each objective, her self-efficacy grew which resulted in the positive view of seeing herself as motivated and capable of success.