

THE BIG IDEAS

The 10 Pillars of...
Mental performance mastery.

Living in SIN
Strengths + Interests + Needs.

Heroic Goals
Telescope + Microscope + App.

Lights
Flip the switch.

Raise the Basement
And dominate the day.

The 10 Pillars of Mental Performance Mastery

BY BRIAN CAIN · CREATESPACE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING PLATFORM © 2018 · 331 PAGES

“Coach Kenny and Matthew Simonds take you on a journey into the soul of a man, the challenges that we all face and the system of success that has helped create champions in sports, business, and life.

Mental Performance Mastery is the system that helped Coach Kenny and will serve Matthew Simonds in pursuit of becoming more so that he can give more.

It’s the same system that will serve you in your pursuit of becoming the best you that you’ve ever been so you can start living the optimal life that you envision and win more every day.”

~ Brian Cain from *The 10 Pillars of Mental Performance Mastery*

Brian Cain is one of the world’s greatest mental toughness coaches.

His client list includes four Major League Baseball Cy Young Award winners, eight UFC world champion mixed martial artists, World Series and Super Bowl Champions and MVPs, Olympic medalists, and countless other elite athletes and coaches.

To put it in perspective, he’s George St-Pierre’s mental toughness coach. GSP is one of the all-time great UFC fighters. ([Check out our Notes](#) on his great book *The Way of the Fight*.)

He’s also a friend and longtime student of mine who has his clients read PhilosophersNotes to go to the next level.

Brian recently visited me and the Johnson fam out here in the country outside of Austin. The kids and wifey and I had fun learning how to eat fire and break an arrow with our necks and do other fun things we didn’t think we could do.

He’s easily tied for first as the most inspiring, energized human being I know and today I’m excited to chat about one of HIS great little books.

This book is a fable about a guy (Matthew Simonds) who’s going through a rough patch in his life who has the good fortune of sitting next to a guy (Coach Kenny) on a plane who happens to be a former Olympian turned coach who changes his life by teaching him the 10 Pillars of Mental Performance Mastery. (Get a copy of the book [here](#).)

Imagine a fable like [Paulo Coelho’s Alchemist](#) or Robin Sharma’s [The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari](#) or Dan Millman’s [The Way of the Peaceful Warrior](#) (somehow I haven’t done Notes on that book yet but [check out all the Notes](#) on his other books!) only written by one of the world’s best [mental toughness](#) coaches.

It’s PACKED with wisdom. I read it in a day and I’m excited to share some of my favorite Big Ideas. So... Let’s jump straight in!

P.S. Coach Kenny’s full name is Kenneth John Henry Johnson. I knew the “Kenneth” part must be Brian’s beloved mentor Ken Ravizza because I knew that Brian TATTOOED Ken’s silhouette on his chest as a permanent memorial.

“Clarity is key. You must know what you want, why you want it, who you currently are and who you need to become to get what you want.”

~ Brian Cain

I thought the “Johnson” part was interesting but didn’t assume it had any connection to me. I texted Brian as I was creating this Note to check in. He told me that I better believe Coach Kenny’s last name was inspired by me. Goosebumps. Bless you, Cainer. Honored. Lets go.

THE 10 PILLARS OF MENTAL PERFORMANCE MASTERY

“You are like most people,” Coach Kenny said. And we call that average. Like I have said, I hate the word average. It means you are the best of the worst and the worst of the best. It’s a terrible place to live.”

~ Brian Cain

“You know what to do; you just don’t do what you know because you don’t have an elite mindset, you lack leadership, and you have not surrounded yourself with the right culture. You also lack motivation and commitment and don’t have the focus and awareness that you need to achieve. Your process is working great for the outcomes you are getting, and those outcomes you are getting are not the outcomes you are wanting. Your self-control and discipline are weak, you don’t understand delayed gratification and the greatness that comes with putting off what you want in the moment for what you want most and you can’t imagine the future you want because you don’t visualize, meditate or create the quiet space you need in your daily routine to do so. You don’t have an accountability partner or a mentor to help you grow either. You are slowly dying on an island of isolation—merely existing, not living and growing. You are giving the world your B or C game and you don’t even know it because you have never been trained on how to give your A game.”

That passage is almost half-way through the book.

Although it’s the most critically intense Coach Kenny is at any point in the book, it’s also the perfect blurb to capture the 10 Pillars of Mental Performance Mastery.

Let’s start with a quick look at each of the 10 Pillars.

Pillar #1: Elite Mindset. It all starts with our mindset. Make it elite. How? Have a GROWTH mindset ([see Notes](#) on Dweck’s *Mindset*) and, as the Navy SEAL guys Matthew and Coach Kenny hang out with in the book say and Mark Divine says in *Unbeatable Mind*: “SEALs operate at an elite level because they learn to control their minds and establish the win internally before they enter the fight. This is the First Premise.”

Pillar #2: Motivation and Commitment. What’s your current #1 goal? Is it a mission for you? Are you ALL IN or are you just sorta going through the motions? If we want to show up at an ELITE level, we need to move from kinda-sorta-interested in a goal to ALL IN. We need to hit the Activation Energy point of 212/451 degrees. Then turn up the heat even more.

Pillar #3: Focus and Awareness. How’s your focus? Can you eliminate distractions and put your attention where you want, when you want, for how long you want? Remember that this ability to FOCUS is a hallmark of flourishing human beings.

Pillar #4: Self-Control and Discipline. Can you delay gratification—putting off what you may want in the moment for what you REALLY want to achieve in your life? Elite performers are relentless in their commitment to Self-Mastery.

Pillar #5: Process over Outcome. Where’s your focus? Are you obsessing about the OUTCOMES you hope to achieve or are you relentlessly focused on what you need to do RIGHT NOW? Elite performers are focused on the PROCESS. Are you?

Pillar #6: Mental Imagery and Meditation. Are you training your mind daily with visions of what elite performance looks like?

Pillar #7: Routines and Habits of Excellence. Greatness is (always!) all about consistency on the fundamentals. It’s time to use our willpower wisely to install habits that run on autopilot.

Pillar #8: Time Management and Organization. How’s your time management and architecture of your Masterpiece Days? Brian maps his day down to the minute. It’s astonishing.

Pillar #9: Leadership. Elite performers build trust with their teammates. Do you?

“Here are the three laws of process:

- 1. You must be in control of yourself before you can control your performance.*
- 2. You have very little control over what goes on around you, but total control of how you choose to respond to it.*
- 3. Your goal must be in your control.”*

~ Brian Cain

Pillar #10: Right Culture. Culture matters. A LOT. The fastest way to change our lives is to join (and help create!) a culture with high standards. It's pretty much scientifically true that we are the average of the five people with whom we spend the most time. Let's optimize that math!

"The world needs you at your best. You can't be normal, you must be elite. When you are average you are the best of the worst and the worst of the best, it's a terrible place to live."

~ Brian Cain

LIVING IN SIN: STRENGTHS + INTERESTS + NEEDS

"That's too bad that you don't find what you do to be exciting. You only get one chance at this game called life, and one of the keys to victory is to bring the juice because if you're juiceful, you're useful and if you're juiceless, you're useless. I've found the secret to being fulfilled in life and the best way to bring the juice is to live in SIN.

Now don't get all religious on me, Matthew. What I mean by SIN is to find the intersection of your Strengths, Interests and the world's Needs. If you want to be ultimately successful, you must find your interests so strong that you would pay to do it, find your strengths so good that you could be the best in the world, and find out what the world needs so much that they would pay you for your expertise.

I have found that intersection of my strengths, interests, and the world's needs and I get to live there every day. When you do that, you will never work a day in your life. I use SIN as an acronym so that people will remember; there is a little shock value there—and I am all about shock value because it gets your point across quickly and today, people never feel like they have time so you have to strike quickly and deeply if you want to make a difference,' Coach Kenny said."

Living in "SIN"?

Yep. We need do the hard work to find that place where our greatest STRENGTHS, deepest INTERESTS and the world's greatest NEEDS intersect.

btw: We could say that *not* doing the hard work to find that intersection of how we best use the gifts we've been given is the ultimate "sin." Remember, etymologically, the word *sin* means, essentially, to "miss the mark"—as in an archer who misses his or her target.

When we inevitable "miss" our targets in life, what should we do?

We should figure out what needs a little work and what, specifically, we can do better next time and TAKE ANOTHER SHOT, of course!

Note: That's the essence of Pillar #1—having an Elite/GROWTH Mindset. Those "misses" are ALWAYS great data and antifragile fuel for our actualization when we look at it wisely, folks.

We've talked about this basic idea many times. [Jim Collins](#) calls it the "Hedgehog Principle" while William Damon, one of the world's leading scholars on moral development and purpose puts it this way in his great book [Noble Purpose](#):

"Let me ask you the five magic words. What do you really want?"

~ Brian Cain

"The idea of a 'calling' is an ancient notion with religious roots. Max Weber wrote that a calling is a 'task set by God.' All individuals have their own particular callings, reflecting three realities: (1) their own God-given abilities; (2) the world's need for the services their callings provide; and (3) their enjoyment in serving society and God in their own special ways. Much like any noble purpose, a calling is both meaningful to the self and important to the world beyond the self.

Christian theologian Frederick Buechner writes, "The kind of work God usually calls you to do is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. ... The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

Looking to get more clarity on YOUR purpose?

Check out [Purpose 101](#) and [Purpose 102](#) where I share my Top 10 favorite ideas plus 25 of my all-time favorite journaling exercises to help you hit the Heroic mark by giving your greatest gifts in greatest service to the world while enjoying the process.

GOALS: TELESCOPE + MICROSCOPE (+ HEROIC APP!)

"The most important thing anyone can do is have a rage for mastery, a passion for getting better, for learning and applying what you learn."

~ Brian Cain

"Setting big goals is great, but they have to be the right goals or they become traps. Financial goals must be secondary to family goals or you won't have any family to set goals with. You also need to have telescope and microscope goals. Telescope goals that you can see off into the future, and then you must reverse engineer a process back to your microscope and execute on your microscopic daily goals. Telescope goals are 1, 3, 5+ years into the future and the microscope goals are what you will do in the next 24 hours to move towards your telescope goals. Remember, inch by inch, goal setting is a cinch and yard by yard, it's hard."

As you may recall, Pillar #2 of Mental Performance Mastery is all about our Motivation and Commitment. One of the most important things we can do to get (and sustain!) elite levels of motivation is to set clear goals. And... I just LOVE the way Brian helps us do that.

Let's bust out our Telescopes AND our Microscopes then the Heroic app and do some work.

First, the Telescope.

What are your most inspiring 1, 3, and 5+ year goals? (Seriously. What are they?)

If you feel so inspired, let's do a quick inventory of your 1, 3, and 5+ year goals in your Big 3: Energy + Work + Love.

Remember: If we don't prioritize our Love alongside our Work we may not have the opportunity to set and celebrate the achievement of our Work goals with the people in our lives who matter most. And... If our Energy isn't where it needs to be, there's no way we'll show up powerfully in either our Work or our Love so... Big 3 for the win!

	Energy	Work	Love
1-Year Goals:			
3-Year Goals:			
5-Year Goals:			

Now, it's time to bust out the Microscope.

I'm biased but... I think one of the easiest ways to get clarity on what you should DO TODAY to be in integrity with the best version of yourself that's capable of ACHIEVING those goals is simple... Do some Target Practice on [the Heroic app](#) as we move from Theory to Practice to Mastery Together TODAY.

Step 0. Set up your Big 3 protocol by getting clarity on who you are at your best in your Energy + Work + Love, the virtues that version of you embodies and what, SPECIFICALLY, you will actually DO TODAY to be in integrity with that best version of yourself.

Step 1. Commit to being that best version of yourself and doing those things TODAY.

Note: New Year's Resolutions are nice and warm and fuzzy. New DAY's Resolutions are where it's at if you actually want to consistently perform at the highest possible levels.

Step 2. Hit your targets. ALL DAY. EVERY DAY. **ESPECIALLY TODAY!** And even more importantly on those days when you don't (insert whiney voice) *feel* like it.

Step 3. Repeat. Forever.

See your moonshot goals with your Telescope. See the steps in your Microscopic. Dominate the day with your Heroic app. And give us all you've got, Hero.

"Don't get me wrong; I love to win. I just love to learn more."

~ Brian Cain

"Success is to purely be measured by the individual and how that individual lives compared to the vision he or she holds of his best self."

~ Brian Cain

"Remember, depression is obsession with the past, anxiety is obsession about the future, and optimal performance is obsession about the present."

~ Brian Cain

RED -> YELLOW -> GREEN LIGHTS

"I felt as if I understood the difference between a red-light and green-light state. I wanted to learn how to get into a green-light state and stay there.

'You recognize that if you are in a red-light state or a yellow-light state, you must have a release routine to get you back to green and back in control of yourself. That release routine follows a three-step process,' Coach Kenny said. 'You need to have (#1) a physical action that you make with an association that serves as a trigger for releasing the past and moving on to the next play or the next part of your day. You then (#2) take a deep releasing breath that you take while looking at a fixed point we call a focal point to oxygenate your brain and get back in control of yourself. And then you (#3) have a verbal trigger you say that cuts off the past and cements your commitment to the present.'

Coach Kenny then stood up, clapped his hands, took a deep breath, wiped his chest down with his hands as if he were wiping dirt off himself and said, "GOOD. What's important now?"

That's from a chapter on Pillar #4: Self-Control and Discipline.

It's kinda like our "Flip the Switch" protocol in our Mastery Series.

Feeling disconnected from your best self? PERFECT. Awareness is always the first, most important step. Now, flip the switch and go from red lights to green lights as you invite the best, most Heroic version of yourself back to the party.

Here's one way to approach it: #1. Stand up strong—chest up, chin down. Smile. #2. Take a deep breath. #3. Say to yourself: "Close the Gap. Arete = Heroic." Or... "What do I want? What's important now? LET'S GO!" Or... "Calm Confidence. I've got this!"

In his story, Brian has his main character hang out with Kenny and a bunch of his Navy SEAL buddies to share their wisdom. With that in mind, let's invite a couple SEALs to our discussion.

In [Unbeatable Mind](#), Mark Divine gives us a four-step process to flip the switch and go from red to green as he tells us: "*Negativity destroys performance, so it is crucial to train to move from witnessing negative thoughts to starving them and feeding the positive. This is the specific process: I. Witness negativity. II. Interdict, or stop, the negative thoughts with a power statement. III. Redirect your mind with self-talk and imagery to something positive and productive for your current goal. IV. Maintain your new mental state with a jingle or mantra.*"

Jocko Willink has his own take we discuss in our Notes on [Discipline Equals Freedom](#) where he tells us: "*When things are going bad: Don't get all bummed out, don't get startled, don't get frustrated. No. Just look at the issue and say: 'Good.'*"

Now, I don't mean to say something trite; I'm not trying to sound like Mr. Smiley Positive Guy. That guy ignores the hard truth. That guy thinks a positive attitude will solve problems. It won't. But neither will dwelling on the problem. No. Accept reality, but focus on the solution. Take that issue, take that setback, take that problem, and turn it into something good. Go forward. And, if you are part of a team, that attitude will spread throughout.

Finally: If you can say the word 'good,' then guess what? It means you're still alive. It means you're still breathing, that means you've still got some fight left in you. So get up, dust off, reload, recalibrate, re-engage—and go out on the attack."

The VERY NEXT TIME you feel a little wobbly today, how about you flip the switch and go from red to green lights and have fun seeing just how fast you can do it?

#1. Stand up strong—chest up, chin down. Smile.

#2. Take a deep breath.

#3. Say to yourself: "Arete = Heroic. What's important now? LET'S GO!"

"Things that are built fast are not to last. Do work that is legendary, not temporary."

~ Brian Cain

RAISE THE BASEMENT

"You become what you do on a daily basis. You don't rise to the occasion, you sink to your levels of training and habits."

~ Brian Cain

"The key is to make your habits so strong and your training so good that when you sink to your worst day, you sink to a level higher than anyone else on their best day," Coach Kenny said. 'It's easy to say, hard to do, and only possible if you follow the 10 pillars of mental performance mastery.' ...

'Everyone talks about raising the roof. In reality, it's about raising your basement so that you have good bad days and are better on your bad days than most people are on their good days—because you can focus better and have better habits and a more elite mindset. It's really about being the best version of you that you have ever been. It's also about not comparing yourself to anyone else but to where you were yesterday. If you can see progress—be better today than you were yesterday and better tomorrow than you are today—and just keep going baby step by baby step, you will get where you want to be.'"

That's from a great chapter called "You Don't Rise to the Occasion; You Sink to Your Training and Habits." There's a LOT of wisdom in there that we could talk about for an entire weekend workshop. For now, let's focus on a few highlights.

First, I think of [this +1 on Good Bad Days](#) in which we talk about some wisdom from Jim Afremow's *The Champion's Mind*. Big Idea? Golfers like Jack Nicklaus and Rory McIlroy know it's all about "playing poorly well." You can only do that when you have an elite mind.

Then I think of Lanny Bassham and his son Troy who wrote *With Winning in Mind* and *Attainment*. They tell us that AVERAGE performers practice something until they can get it right. ELITE performers, on the other hand, practice until they CAN'T GET IT WRONG.

Then there's Josh Waitzkin, the chess prodigy turned martial artist champion. In *The Art of Learning*, he tells us that we need to [make our prior best our new baseline](#).

What happens when we do that? We raise the basement. Our highs are higher AND (!) our LOWS are HIGHER. On our worst days, we're often better than we used to be on our best days. And that's an incredibly powerful thing.

Here's to practicing the 10 pillars of mental mastery as we DOMINATE THE DAY and give the world all we've got, Hero. Day 1. Let's go!

B

Brian Johnson,
Heroic Philosopher CEO

About the Author of This Note

BRIAN JOHNSON



Brian Johnson is the Founder + CEO of Heroic. He's spent half of the last 25 years as a Founder/CEO and the other half as a Philosopher. Brian loves integrating ancient wisdom and modern science to help YOU become the best, most heroic version of yourself so we can create a world in which 51% of humanity is flourishing by 2051. Learn more at heroic.us.

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