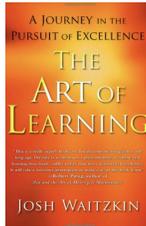


Your Kindle Notes For:



The Art of Learning: An Inner Journey to Optimal Performance

Josh Waitzkin

123 Highlight(s) | 0 Note(s)

Location: 171

What I have realized is that what I am best at is not Tai Chi, and it is not chess—what I am best at is the art of learning.

Page: 10

He didn't present himself as omniscient, and he handled himself as more of a guide in my development than as an authority. If I disagreed with him, we would have a discussion, not a lecture.

Page: 12

Perhaps the most decisive element of my game was the way my style on the board was completely in synch with my personality as a child. I was unhindered by internal conflict—a state of being that I have come to see as fundamental to the learning process.

Page: 17

Confidence is critical for a great competitor, but overconfidence is brittle. We are too smart for ourselves in such moments. We sense our mortality like a cancer beneath the bravado, and when things start to go out of control, there is little real resilience to fall back on.

Page: 18

Times at sea are periods of renewal, coming together with family, being with nature, putting things back in perspective.

Page: 18

A boat is always moving with the sea, lurching beneath your feet, and the only way to survive is to sink into rhythm with the waves and be ready for anything.

Page: 18

I learned at sea that virtually all situations can be handled as long as presence of mind is maintained.

Page: 29

If ambition spells probable disappointment, why pursue excellence? In my opinion, the answer to both questions lies in a well-thought-out approach that inspires resilience, the ability to make connections between diverse pursuits, and day-to-day enjoyment of the process.

Page: 30

Incremental theorists, who have picked up a different modality of learning—let's call them learning theorists—are more prone to describe their results with sentences like "I got it because I worked very hard at it" or "I should have tried harder." A child with a learning theory of intelligence tends to sense that with hard work, difficult material can be grasped—step by step, incrementally, the novice can become the master.

Page: 30

Children who associate success with hard work tend to have a "mastery-oriented response" to challenging situations, while children who see themselves as just plain "smart" or "dumb," or "good" or "bad" at something, have a "learned helplessness orientation."

Page: 32

So Julie learns to associate effort with success and feels that she can become good at anything with some hard work. She also feels as though she is on a journey of learning, and her teacher is a friendly assistant in her growth.

Page: 32

It is clear that parents and teachers have an enormous responsibility in forming the theories of intelligence of their students and children—and it is never too late. It is critical to realize that we can always evolve in our approaches to learning.

Page: 33

The key to pursuing excellence is to embrace an organic, long-term learning process, and not to live in a shell of static, safe mediocrity. Usually, growth comes at the expense of previous comfort or safety.

Page: 35

I was also gradually internalizing a marvelous methodology of learning—the play between knowledge, intuition, and creativity. From both educational and technical perspectives, I learned from the foundation up.

Page: 38

I have used chess to illustrate this entity/incremental dynamic, but the issue is fundamental to the pursuit of excellence in all fields. If a young basketball player is taught that winning is the only thing that winners do, then he will crumble when he misses his first big shot. If a gymnast or ballet dancer is taught that her self-worth is entirely wrapped up in a perfectly skinny body that is always ready for performance, then how can she handle injuries or life after an inevitably short career? If a businessperson cultivates a perfectionist self-image, then how can she learn from her mistakes?

Page: 44

While a fixation on results is certainly unhealthy, short-term goals can be useful developmental tools if they are balanced within a nurturing long-term philosophy.

Page: 45

This real-life dynamic has parallels in virtually every field, although we are often our own parent in the moment. How can we balance long-term process with short-term goals and inevitable setbacks?

Page: 45

First of all, in the spirit of the previous chapter, Danny's mom can help him internalize a process-first approach by making her everyday feedback respond to effort over results. She should praise good concentration, a good day's work, a lesson learned. When he wins a tournament game, the spotlight should be on the road to that moment and beyond as opposed to the glory. On the other hand, it is okay for a child (or an adult for that matter) to enjoy a win.

Page: 46

we should be allowed to smell the roses. The key, in my opinion, is to recognize that the beauty of those roses lies in their transience. It is drifting away even as we inhale. We enjoy the win fully while taking a deep breath, then we exhale, note the lesson learned, and move on to the next adventure.

Page: 46

He put his heart on the line and lost. How should his mom handle this moment? First of all, she shouldn't say that it doesn't matter, because Danny knows better than that and lying about the situation isolates Danny in his pain. If it didn't matter, then why should he try to win? Why should

he study chess and waste their weekends at tournaments? It matters and Danny knows that. So empathy is a good place to start.

Page: 46

Disappointment is a part of the road to greatness. When a few moments pass, in a quiet voice, she can ask Danny if he knows what happened in the game.

Page: 47

introspective thinking of this nature can be a very healthy coping mechanism. Through these dialogues, Danny will learn that every loss is an opportunity for growth.

Page: 47

We need to put ourselves out there, give it our all, and reap the lesson, win or lose. The fact of the matter is that there will be nothing learned from any challenge in which we don't try our hardest. Growth comes at the point of resistance. We learn by pushing ourselves and finding what really lies at the outer reaches of our abilities.

Page: 54

In performance training, first we learn to flow with whatever comes. Then we learn to use whatever comes to our advantage. Finally, we learn to be completely self-sufficient and create our own earthquakes, so our mental process feeds itself explosive inspirations without the need for outside stimulus.

Page: 55

A man wants to walk across the land, but the earth is covered with thorns. He has two options—one is to pave his road, to tame all of nature into compliance. The other is to make sandals. Making sandals is the internal solution. Like the Soft Zone, it does not base success on a submissive world or overpowering force, but on intelligent preparation and cultivated resilience.

Page: 59

I have come to believe that the solution to this type of situation does not lie in denying our emotions, but in learning to use them to our advantage.

Page: 60

Mental resilience is arguably the most critical trait of a world-class performer, and it should be nurtured continuously.

Page: 61

The first mistake rarely proves disastrous, but the downward spiral of the second, third, and fourth error creates a devastating chain reaction. Any sports fan has seen professional football, basketball, and baseball games won and lost because of a shift in psychological advantage.

Page: 63

Musicians, actors, athletes, philosophers, scientists, writers understand that brilliant creations are often born of small errors.

Page: 65

The biker lurched away at the last second and gave her a solid but harmless bump. In my memory, time stops right here. This was the critical moment in the woman's life. She could have walked away unscathed if she had just stepped back onto the pavement, but instead she turned and cursed the fast-pedaling bicyclist. I can see her now, standing with her back to the traffic on 33rd and Broadway, screaming at the now-distant biker who had just performed a miracle to avoid smashing into her. The image is frozen in my mind. A taxicab was the next to speed around the corner. The woman was struck from behind and sent reeling ten feet into the air. She smashed into a lamppost and was knocked out and bleeding badly. The ambulance and police came and eventually I moved on to P.S. 116, hoping that she would survive.

Page: 65

this tragedy needn't have happened. I explained how this woman's first mistake was looking the wrong way and stepping into the street in front of traffic. Maybe wearing headphones put her in her own world, a little removed from the immediacy of the moment. Then the biker should have been a wake-up call. She wasn't hurt, but instead of reacting with alertness, she was spooked into anger, irritated that her quiet had been shattered. Her reaction was a perfect parallel to the chess player's downward spiral—after making an error, it is so easy to cling to the emotional comfort zone of what was, but there is also that unsettling sense that things have changed for the worse. The clear thinker is suddenly at war with himself and flow is lost.

Page: 76

homesick. When I finally noticed this connection, I tackled transitions in both chess and life. In chess games, I would take some deep breaths and clear my mind when the character of the struggle shifted. In life, I worked on embracing change instead of fighting it. With awareness and action, in both life and chess my weakness was transformed into a strength.

Page: 76

When I finally noticed this connection, I tackled transitions in both chess and life. In chess games, I would take some deep breaths and clear my mind when the character of the struggle shifted. In life, I worked on embracing change instead of fighting it. With awareness and action, in both life and chess my weakness was transformed into a strength.

Page: 79

I think a life of ambition is like existing on a balance beam. As a child, there is no fear, no sense for the danger of falling. The beam feels wide and stable, and natural playfulness allows for creative leaps and fast learning. You can run around doing somersaults and flips, always testing yourself with a love for discovery and new challenges. If you happen to fall off—no problem, you just get back on. But then, as you get older, you become more aware of the risk of injury. You might crack your head or twist your knee. The beam is narrow and you have to stay up there. Plunging off would be humiliating.

Page: 79

A key component of high-level learning is cultivating a resilient awareness that is the older, conscious embodiment of a child's playful obliviousness.

Page: 80

This journey, from child back to child again, is at the very core of my understanding of success.

Page: 81

When you meet Yuri Razuvaev, you feel calmed. He has the humble, peaceful air of a Buddhist monk

Page: 81

Mark Dvoretsky is a very different type of personality. I believe he is the most important author for chess professionals in the world. His books are extensive training programs for world-class players and are studied religiously by strong International Masters and Grandmasters. "Reading" a Dvoretsky book takes many months of hard work, because they are so densely packed with ideas about some of the more esoteric elements of serious chess thinking. It's amazing how many hundreds of hours I spent laboring my way through Dvoretsky's chapters, my brain pushed to the limit, emerging from every study session utterly exhausted, but infused with a slightly more nuanced understanding of the outer reaches of chessic potential. On the page, the man is a genius.

Page: 84

In most everyday life experiences, there seems to be a tangible connection between opposites.

Pink highlight | Page: 84

heartbreak can give the greatest insight into the value of love. Think about how good a healthy leg feels after an extended time on crutches—sickness is the most potent ambassador for healthy living. Who knows water like a man dying of thirst? The human mind defines things in relation to one another—without light the notion of darkness would be unintelligible

Page: 85

Just as the yin-yang symbol possesses a kernel of light in the dark, and of dark in the light, creative leaps are grounded in a technical foundation.

Pink highlight | Page: 88

To my mind, the fields of learning and performance are an exploration of greyness—of the in-between. There is the careful balance of pushing yourself relentlessly, but not so hard that you melt down. Muscles and minds need to stretch to grow, but if stretched too thin, they will snap. A competitor needs to be process-oriented, always looking for stronger opponents to spur growth, but it is also important to keep on winning enough to maintain confidence. We have to release our current ideas to soak in new material, but not so much that we lose touch with our unique natural talents. Vibrant, creative idealism needs to be tempered by a practical, technical awareness.

Page: 95

Laotse's focus was inward, on the underlying essence as opposed to the external manifestations. The Tao Te Ching's wisdom centers on releasing obstructions to our natural insight, seeing false constructs for what they are and leaving them behind. This made sense to me aesthetically, as I was already involved with my study of numbers to leave numbers.

Page: 96

His grace was simplicity itself.

Page: 98

From my first days at the school, my interactions with William Chen were stirring. His teaching style was understated, his body a well of information. He seemed to exist on another wavelength, tapped into a sublime reality that he shared through osmosis. He spoke softly, moved deeply, taught those who were ready to learn. Gems were afterthoughts, hidden beneath the breath, and you could pick them up or not—he hardly seemed to care. I was amazed how much of his subtle instruction went unnoticed.

Page: 98

He was very mortal. No fancy words. No spiritual claims. He didn't expect the bowing and scraping usually associated with Chinese martial arts—"If I can do it, you can do it," was his humble message.

Page: 99

A huge element of Tai Chi is releasing obstructions so the body and mind can flow smoothly together. If there is tension in one place, the mind stops there, and the fluidity is broken.

Page: 99

It took full concentration to pick up each valuable lesson, so on many levels Tai Chi class was an exercise in awareness.

Page: 100

The idea is that a particular art has created a superior method of breath control and this method should be followed religiously. William Chen's humble vision of this issue is that breathing should be natural. Or, more accurately, breathing should be a return to what was natural before we got stressed out by years of running around a hectic world and internalizing bad habits. I certainly had plenty of those.

Pink highlight | Page: 100

For a glimmer of this experience, hold your palms in front of you, forefingers a few inches apart, shoulders relaxed. Now breathe in while gently expanding your fingers, putting your mind on your middle fingers, forefingers, and thumbs. Your breath and mind should both softly shoot to the very tips of your fingers. This inhalation is slow, gently pulling oxygen into your dan tien (a spot believed to be the energetic center—located two and a half inches below the navel) and then moving that energy from your dan tien to your fingers. Once your inhalation is complete, gently exhale. Release your fingers, let your mind fall asleep, relax your hip joints, let everything sag into soft, quiet awareness. Once exhalation is complete, you reenergize. Try that exercise for a few minutes and see how you feel.

Page: 101

Tai Chi meditation is, among other things, a haven of unimpaired oxygenation.

Page: 103

Also, from what I had read, the essence of Tai Chi Chuan as a martial art is not to clash with the opponent but to blend with his energy, yield to it, and overcome with softness.

Page: 106

nonresistance. Give it a try. Try to maintain your stance without resisting at all and without moving faster than your opponent. Odds are that unless you are a trained martial artist, this notion feels unnatural.

Page: 107

Investment in loss is giving yourself to the learning process.

Page: 108

I have long believed that if a student of virtually any discipline could avoid ever repeating the same mistake twice—both technical and psychological—he or she would skyrocket to the top of their field. Of course such a feat is impossible—we are bound to repeat thematic errors, if only because many themes are elusive and difficult to pinpoint.

Page: 108

So the aim is to minimize repetition as much as possible, by having an eye for consistent psychological and technical themes of error.

Page: 109

The key is relaxed hip joints and spring-like body mechanics, so you can easily receive force by coiling it down through your structure. Working on my root, I began to feel like a tree, swaying in the wind up top, but deeply planted down low.

Page: 109

I have mentioned how a large part of Tai Chi is releasing tension from your body through the practice of the meditative form. This is effectively a clearing of interference. Now, add in the coordination of breathing with the movements of the form, and what you have is body and mind energizing into action out of stillness. With practice, the stillness is increasingly profound and the transition into motion can be quite explosive—this is where the dynamic pushing or striking power of Tai Chi emerges: the radical change from emptiness into fullness.

Page: 111

Reflecting on our relationship, I don't think there was ever any malice in Evan's actions. Truth be told, I think he is a good guy whose no-nonsense, smashmouth approach to martial arts training presented me with a priceless learning opportunity.

Page: 112

In all disciplines, there are times when a performer is ready for action, and times when he or she is soft, in flux, broken-down or in a period of growth. Learners in this phase are inevitably vulnerable. It is important to have perspective on this and allow yourself protected periods for cultivation.

Page: 114

My response is that it is essential to have a liberating incremental approach that allows for times when you are not in a peak performance state.

Blue highlight | Page: 114

We must take responsibility for ourselves, and not expect the rest of the world to understand what it takes to become the best that we can become.

Page: 114

Great ones are willing to get burned time and again as they sharpen their swords in the fire. Consider Michael Jordan. It is common knowledge that Jordan made more last-minute shots to win the game for his team than any other player in the history of the NBA. What is not so well known, is that Jordan also missed more last-minute shots to lose the game for his team than any other player in the history of the game.

Page: 114

What made him the greatest was not perfection, but a willingness to put himself on the line as a way of life.

Pink highlight | Page: 115

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance.

Page: 115

I believe this little anecdote has the potential to distinguish success from failure in the pursuit of excellence. The theme is depth over breadth. The learning principle is to plunge into the detailed mystery of the micro in order to understand what makes the macro tick.

Page: 120

Over time, I'm not thinking about the path from foot to fist, I'm just feeling the ground connecting to my fingertips, as if my body is a conduit for the electrical impulse of a punch. Then I start speeding things up, winding up and delivering, over and over.

Page: 124

Depth beats breadth any day of the week, because it opens a channel for the intangible, unconscious, creative components of our hidden potential.

Page: 127

I don't want to have to break a bone whenever I want my mind to kick in to its full potential. So a deep mastery of performance psychology involves the internal creation of inspiring conditions.

Page: 129

The importance of undulating between external and internal (or concrete and abstract; technical and intuitive) training applies to all disciplines, and unfortunately the internal tends to be neglected.

Page: 129

In all athletic disciplines, it is the internal work that makes the physical mat time click, but it is easy to lose touch with this reality in the middle of the grind.

Page: 134

When aiming for the top, your path requires an engaged, searching mind. You have to make obstacles spur you to creative new angles in the learning process. Let setbacks deepen your resolve. You should always come off an injury or a loss better than when you went down.

Page: 134

I call this tool the internal solution—we can notice external events that trigger helpful growth or performance opportunities, and then internalize the effects of those events without their actually happening. In this way, adversity becomes a tremendous source of creative inspiration.

Page: 136

Clearly, there is a survival mechanism that allows human beings to channel their physical and mental capacities to an astonishing degree of intensity in life-or-death moments. But can we do this at will?

Page: 137

My grandmother, Stella Waitzkin, a boldly creative Abstract Expressionist painter and sculptor, used to tell me that intuition was the hand of God. Artists often refer to intuition as a muse.

Pink highlight | Page: 137

In my opinion, intuition is our most valuable compass in this world. It is the bridge between the unconscious and the conscious mind, and it is hugely important to keep in touch with what makes it tick. If we get so caught up in narcissistic academic literalism that we dismiss intuition as nonexistent because we don't fully understand it, or if we blithely consider the unconscious to be a piece of machinery that operates mystically in a realm that we have no connection to, then we lose the rich opportunity to have open communication with the wellspring of our creativity.

Page: 138

Chunking relates to the mind's ability to assimilate large amounts of information into a cluster that is bound together by certain patterns or principles particular to a given discipline.

Page: 141

Soon enough, learning becomes unlearning. The stronger chess player is often the one who is less attached to a dogmatic interpretation of the principles.

Page: 142

Everyone at a high level has a huge amount of chess understanding, and much of what separates the great from the very good is deep presence, relaxation of the conscious mind, which allows the unconscious to flow unhindered. This is a nuanced and largely misunderstood state of mind that when refined involves a subtle reintegration of the conscious mind into a free-flowing unconscious process. The idea is to shift the primary role from the conscious to the unconscious without blissing out and losing the precision the conscious can provide.

Page: 143

That said, the chunks of information that have been put together in his mind allow him to see much more with much less conscious thought. So he is looking at very little and seeing quite a lot. This is the critical idea.

Page: 147

This is why profoundly refined martial artists can sometimes appear mystical to less skilled practitioners—they have trained themselves to perceive and operate within segments of time that are too small to be perceived by untrained minds.

Page: 149

If the opponent's movement is quick, then quickly respond; if his movement is slow, then follow slowly. Then the 19th century sage Wu Yu-hsiang built on Tsung-yueh's words with a typically abstract Chinese instructional conundrum: If the opponent does not move, then I do not move. At the opponent's slightest move, I move first. The first stanza is rather straightforward. It is about listening, being sensitive to the adversary's slightest tremble, and sticking to him. Adherence is at the center of Tai Chi's martial applicability. Basically those four lines are about becoming a shadow. But the last idea stumped me. A shadow is an effect, not a cause. How do you move before someone you are following?

Page: 150

In time, I have come to understand those words, At the opponent's slightest move, I move first, as pertaining to intention—reading and ultimately controlling intention.

Page: 151

But as with all skills, the most sophisticated techniques tend to have their foundation in the simplest of principles.

Page: 153

It's amazing how much you can learn about someone when they get caught in the rain! Some will run with their hands over their heads, others will smile and take a deep breath while enjoying the wind. What does this say about one's relationship to discomfort? The reaction to surprise? The need for control?

Page: 157

When working with highly skilled and mentally tough opponents, the psychological game gets increasingly subtle.

Page: 161

I read his intention to blink and then controlled his intention by determining when he would unconsciously place his weight into his forward leg. If I did this well, my movements—the one-two combination—should barely have been visible. They served the lone purpose of manipulating weight distribution.

Page: 164

Contrary to the ego-enforcing descriptions of some “kung fu masters,” there is nothing mystical about controlling intention or entering the mind of the opponent.

Page: 171

Grandmasters know how to make the subtlest cracks decisive.

Page: 171

I spent years working on this issue, learning how to maintain the tension—becoming at peace with mounting pressure. Then, as a martial artist, I turned this training to my advantage, making my opponents explode from mental combustion because of my higher threshold for discomfort.

Pink highlight | Page: 172

In every discipline, the ability to be clearheaded, present, cool under fire is much of what separates the best from the mediocre. In competition, the dynamic is often painfully transparent.

Pink highlight | Page: 172

We cannot expect to touch excellence if “going through the motions” is the norm of our lives.

Page: 172

The secret is that everything is always on the line. The more present we are at practice, the more present we will be in competition, in the boardroom, at the exam, the operating table, the big stage. If we have any hope of attaining excellence, let alone of showing what we've got under pressure, we have to be prepared by a lifestyle of reinforcement. Presence must be like breathing.

Page: 177

I think that this conversation in the LGE gym was my first real inkling of how universal the arts of learning and performance really are.

Page: 180

At LGE, they made a science of the gathering and release of intensity, and found that, regardless of the discipline, the better we are at recovering, the greater potential we have to endure and perform under stress. That realization is a good starting point. But how do we learn to let go?

Page: 181

cardiovascular interval training can have a profound effect on your ability to quickly release tension and recover from mental exhaustion. What is more, physical flushing and mental clarity are very much intertwined.

Page: 181

To this day, virtually every element of my physical training revolves around one form or another of stress and recovery.

Page: 183

If you are interested in really improving as a performer, I would suggest incorporating the rhythm of stress and recovery into all aspects of your life.

Page: 184

Interval work is a critical building block to becoming a consistent long-term performer.

Page: 185

Teachers and parents would make kids analyze their games extensively between rounds, trying to wring a chess lesson out of every moment, while I would be outside having a catch with my dad or taking a nap. Maybe it is no accident that I tended to surge at the end of tournaments. My pop is a clever guy.

Page: 186

Let the kid rest! Fueling up is much more important than last-minute cramming—and at a higher level, the ability to recover will be pivotal.

Page: 186

So how do we step up when our moment suddenly arises? My answer is to redefine the question. Not only do we have to be good at waiting, we have to love it. Because waiting is not waiting, it is life. Too many of us live without fully engaging our minds, waiting for that moment

when our real lives begin. Years pass in boredom, but that is okay because when our true love comes around, or we discover our real calling, we will begin.

Pink highlight | Page: 187

I believe an appreciation for simplicity, the everyday—the ability to dive deeply into the banal and discover life’s hidden richness—is where success, let alone happiness, emerges.

Page: 187

The real power of incremental growth comes to bear when we truly are like water, steadily carving stone. We just keep on flowing when everything is on the line.

Page: 190

The point to this system of creating your own trigger is that a physiological connection is formed between the routine and the activity it precedes. Dennis was always present when playing ball with his son, so all we had to do was set up a routine that became linked to that state of mind (clearly it would have been impractical for Dennis to tow Jack around everywhere he went). Once the routine is internalized, it can be used before any activity and a similar state of mind will emerge.

Page: 193

Groppe at LGE to eat five almonds every forty-five minutes during a long chess game, to stay in a steady state of alertness and strength.

Page: 194

This process is systematic, straightforward, and rooted in the most stable of all principles: incremental growth.

Page: 198

All experiences become richly intertwined by our new vision, and then new connections begin to emerge. Rainwater streaming on a city pavement will teach a pianist how to flow. A leaf gliding easily with the wind will teach a controller how to let go. A housecat will teach me how to move. All moments become each moment. This book is about learning and performance, but it is also about my life. Presence has taught me how to live.

Page: 205

There were two components to this work. One related to my approach to learning, the other to performance. On the learning side, I had to get comfortable dealing with guys playing outside the rules and targeting my neck, eyes, groin, etc. This involved some technical growth, and in order to make those steps I had to recognize the relationship between anger, ego, and fear.

Page: 206

If someone got into my head, they were doing me a favor, exposing a weakness. They were giving me a valuable opportunity to expand my threshold for turbulence. Dirty players were my best teachers.

Page: 207

The only way to succeed is to acknowledge reality and funnel it, take the nerves and use them. We must be prepared for imperfection. If we rely on having no nerves, on not being thrown off by a big miss, or on the exact replication of a certain mindset, then when the pressure is high enough, or when the pain is too piercing to ignore, our ideal state will shatter.

Page: 211

Instead of running from our emotions or being swept away by their initial gusts, we should learn to sit with them, become at peace with their unique flavors, and ultimately discover deep pools of inspiration. I have found that this is a natural process.

Page: 213

my father asked Garry how he would handle his lack of confidence in the next game. Garry responded that he would try to play the chess moves that he would have played if he were feeling confident. He would pretend to feel confident, and hopefully trigger the state.

Page: 214

Once you are no longer swept away by your emotions and can sit with them even when under pressure, you will probably notice that certain states of mind inspire you more than others.

Page: 217

I have found that in the intricate endeavors of competition, learning, and performance, there is more than one solution to virtually every meaningful problem.

Page: 218

The real art in learning takes place as we move beyond proficiency, when our work becomes an expression of our essence.

Page: 226

At the highest levels of any kind of competitive discipline, everyone is great. At this point the decisive factor is rarely who knows more, but who dictates the tone of the battle.

Page: 229

The only times points were scored were in moments of creative inspiration, when one of us did something that transcended our current level of ability. These were the moments I focused on in the videos.

Page: 231

When I think about creativity, it is always in relation to a foundation. We have our knowledge. It becomes deeply internalized until we can access it without thinking about it. Then we have a leap that uses what we know to go one or two steps further. We make a discovery.

Page: 232

We have created a body of theory around a fleeting moment of inspiration. Now there are techniques and principles that make this weapon accessible all the time.

Page: 236

At the highest level of the sport, you are living inside your opponent's head and directing what he comes at you with.

Page: 238

When hit with such surprises, if you have a solid foundation, you should be fine. Tactics come easy once principles are in the blood.

Page: 262

If I have learned anything over my first twenty-nine years, it is that we cannot calculate our important contests, adventures, and great loves to the end. The only thing we can really count on is getting surprised. No matter how much preparation we do, in the real tests of our lives, we'll be in unfamiliar terrain.