

## **The power of the mind**

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While we were watching a tournament, my friend made the astute observation that one athlete kept giving herself negative reinforcements throughout the qualifying round. She was telling herself, "Don't pull the ball," and "I have to make this ten pin." Each time, she did what she was trying to avoid. She would pull the ball or miss her target and the results were not pretty. Her self-doubt caused the negative thoughts to become reality.

Has this ever happened to you? How many times have you thought, "Don't swing this ball," or "Don't pull the ball," and yet you did exactly what you told yourself not to. We plant the seeds of doubt by not having a confident approach. We literally talk ourselves into doing what we are trying to avoid.

So what do you do? Have a plan. Be confident in that plan. Tell yourself you've done this many times before. Then execute that plan with confidence. Act like a champion to be a champion.

Sound simple – maybe even too simple? Good! It's supposed to be that way. The key is keeping a simple, positive, non-cluttered mind and leaving the doubt way behind. The freer the mind is of doubt the more the body is able to perform the task at hand.

This will take practice because human nature is to focus on what not to do as opposed to focusing on what needs to be done. In coaching, we are taught to give positive affirmations of habits to change. Instead of saying, "don't do" something, we are trained to give the definitive "let's do this." Two entirely different approaches, but which one do you think is more effective in changing behavior? The positive, definitive approach wins hands down.

Next time on the lanes, approach the game from a positive perspective and the results may make you a true believer in the power of the mind.