**SEVEN TIPS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR MENTAL APPROACH TO THE GAME**

**1. Become Self-Determined.**

Winning players tend to operate from a self-determined viewpoint. Meaning YOU determine your thoughts, feelings, emotions, actions, and behaviors, not someone or something else. A self-determined player chooses their response to what happens or develops in the game. Acting upset doesn’t serve them well, so you will rarely see a self-determined player act upset or have something that happens in the game *make them* upset.

**2. Put desire behind your consideration for greater motivation.**

Many players who play poker, struggle with boredom or their desire to play, or they get worn down as the game goes on. They look for desire outside themselves, as if waiting for something or someone to inspire them. They’ve forgotten that they can create it by merely shifting their way of thinking and self-talk. i.g. “Poker is a tough game to play.” This type of consideration may not be very motivating. Let’s shift and put desire behind the same consideration. For example, “I just love the challenge of poker. It can be a tough game to play, but I can’t wait to get back out to the felt and meet the challenge.”

**3. Put the power of intention behind your actions.**

Whatever you intend to do, and then do, is powerful. Power has to do with one’s ability to influence something. You’ll produce better results when you are clear and have conscious intention before you act. “I’m going to make a standard c-bet bluff to elicit either a marginal call or fold from my opponent.” This is done *before* you act, not as a justification afterwards. Some players act without clear intention and thus produce unintended results.

**4. Manage your mind.**

In the mind are mostly thoughts. So mental power then has to do with the ability to manage and influence one’s thoughts. Learn to manage your mind or it will manage you. Don’t get trapped into overthinking plays, hands or situations. Always remember that the way out of the mind is through effort.

**5. Manage your attachments.**

It’s a healthy thing to connect and attach to things in poker like our hand, chips, opponent, etc. The key is to not get overly-attached to where those things compromise our technique. It’s okay to connect to your pocket kings, but if you get overly-attached you’ll hold onto them too long when catching a bad flop or turn card. If you get overly-attached to your chips you won’t be able to move them freely in and out of pots. Consequently, you will play not to lose instead of playing to win.

**6. Develop courage by facing your fears.**

Most players avoid or resist or going into their fears. As such they waste a good opportunity to develop courage. Courage is not the absence of fear but moving into the space or situation *in spite* of the fear. A discussion I had with a student went something like this; “I was afraid to 3bet bluff my opponent with 85s pre-flop but I did it anyway and it felt great.” Why did you feel great? “Because I faced my fear of needing to have a good hand in order to play. I felt like I was determining my actions instead of being determined by the cards!” That is what we call courage.

**7. Decide to decide.**

Decide means to make a choice. Deciding to decide means you begin the decision-making process with a choice to reach a decision. By choosing to make a choice you won’t get trapped into thinking. When you decide to decide, you are consciously taking on the responsibility for making a choice, and not letting yourself get trapped in the fear of its consequences. People who don’t like to make decisions tend to have to live with the decisions that are made for them.