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Executive Search & Board Advisory

5 TRAITS OF MENTAL TOUGHNESS A LEADER NEEDS TO SUCCEED



"It always seems impossible until it is done" Nelson Mandela

To be a leader, to be the number one in sport, to be elite in whatever your profession, no matter how gifted you are as an individual, those gifts can only take you so far.

One area that defines exceptional people is mental toughness. That is, those that can take disappointment, who can somehow keep moving forward in times of adversity when those around them have faltered or given up.

If you want to be the very best you can be, you need mental toughness, you need to block out what holds everyone else back. You need to hold your own.

Mentally tough people are:

1. Not walking around with a sign above their head saying 'mentally tough.'

They aren't built with superb bodies, they don't look like demi-gods, they have belief in themselves and don't need to display any signs.

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2. They don't allow negative clutter to fill their head. They process it and park it.

They are optimistic in their outlook and are confident in their ability to overcome problems. In a crisis, they are looking for solutions, a plan, they remain focused and can look ahead to consider current and future solutions.

3. You can't keep them down.

They are resilient, they move forward. If they are knocked down they get up, they acknowledge and respond to adversity and challenges. They accept responsibility and don't blame others, they are determined to not waiver from their objectives and life's circumstances are not used as excuses to hold them back. Their mindset is positive and always looking forward.

4. They understand their emotions.

They are connected to their emotions and are self-aware, which does not mean they are not also experiencing highs and lows like everyone else, but they deal with them and this allows them to remain in the zone.

5. They have high ambiguity tolerance and therefore, they don't have to know or be in control of everything.

They come to terms with the circumstances; they aren't concerned if they don't know every detail of what is happening in the future because they trust in their ability to adjust. They focus on what they can focus on, that is, their behaviour, emotions and attitude.

Mental toughness is developed by believing in yourself in being willing to accept that you can deal with the challenges that lay ahead, that you cannot control everything, but you can control the controllables.

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- External Succession Planning; and
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