



BRING YOUR MIND TO THE GAME
SPORT PSYCHOLOGY
&
MENTAL TRAINING

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The Survival Mode Reset Protocol

How to Feel Your Wins Again — and Stop Treating Competition Like a Threat

Purpose

This protocol helps performers who feel devastated after losses but strangely empty after wins.

Many athletes replay mistakes for days after losing, yet when they win, the feeling fades within minutes. Instead of joy, they feel relief.

This pattern usually means the brain is operating in **survival mode rather than performance mode**.

In survival mode, the nervous system treats competition like danger.

Loss feels like failure or threat.

Winning does not register as joy. It only registers as “**I survived.**”


This protocol helps reset the nervous system and re-examine the beliefs that may be preventing you from experiencing satisfaction, pride, or joy after success.

What's Happening in Your Brain?

When competition feels like a threat, the brain prioritizes protection over celebration.

Your threat detection system becomes more active, keeping your body alert and tense. When this happens:

- Losses feel intense and personal
- Mistakes replay repeatedly in the mind
- Sleep becomes difficult after competition



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- Wins bring relief rather than happiness

The brain is not trying to ruin your experience.

It is trying to keep you safe.

But when the nervous system stays in this mode too long, it blocks access to emotional states like joy, pride, and satisfaction.

It's like driving a car with the handbrake on.

You can still move forward, but everything feels harder than it should.

The good news is that the nervous system can be reset.

And once it settles, your brain becomes capable of experiencing success differently.

Step 1 — Physiological Reset (2 Minutes)

Before reflecting on anything mentally, calm the body first.

Emotions become easier to process when the nervous system is regulated.

Breathing Exercise

For 2 minutes:

Inhale slowly through your nose — **4 seconds**


Hold — **4 seconds**

Exhale slowly — **8 seconds**

Keep the exhale longer than the inhale.

A longer exhale signals to your nervous system that the threat has passed.

Let your shoulders soften.



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Let your jaw relax.

Allow the body to settle.

You are reminding your brain:

“The competition is over. I am safe now.”

Only after the body is calmer should you move to the journaling section.

Step 2 — Reflection

Write your answers honestly.

Do not rush.

Writing helps organize thoughts and reduce emotional loops, which is why journaling is often used to clear mental clutter and restore mental clarity.

Start with these questions:


1. How am I feeling right now?
2. How do I feel about my recent win?

If your answers sound like:

“Okay”, “Fine”, “Nothing special”, “Happy but not really”, “Relieved it’s over” or “It still wasn’t good enough” then your brain may not be allowing you to fully experience the win.

If so, continue.

3. Why do I feel that way about my recent win?
4. What does winning mean to me?



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5. What are my standards of excellence?
 6. What would make me happy?
 7. When am I allowed to feel happy?
 8. What do I have to achieve before I allow myself to be happy?
 9. What would make a win “good enough” for me?
 10. If someone else achieved what I just achieved, how would I view their performance?
 11. What expectations do I place on myself that others may not even notice?
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What This Reflection Is Doing

These questions help you identify your **hidden conditions of worth**.

Many performers unknowingly create strict internal rules such as:

“I can only feel happy if I perform perfectly.”

or

“This win doesn’t count unless I dominate.”

When these rules exist, the brain never allows itself to experience success.


Every performance becomes a survival test instead of a meaningful achievement.

By writing your answers, you bring these conditions into awareness.

And once they become visible, they become adjustable.

What You May Discover

During this exercise, many performers realize:



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- Their standards may be unrealistically high
- Their definition of success keeps moving
- They allow themselves relief but not pride
- They are measuring themselves more harshly than they would measure others

This awareness is important.

Because a brain that never allows itself to acknowledge success eventually becomes exhausted.

And exhaustion reduces performance.

Final Reminder

If losses stay with you for days but wins disappear in minutes, something in your nervous system is stuck in protection mode.

That is not weakness. It is dysregulation. And dysregulation can be corrected.

Calm the body.

Question your conditions for worth.

Allow your brain to experience all emotions, not just survive through it.

You then stop competing just to avoid failure.

And start competing to express your ability.

And that is when the mind becomes fast, free, and dangerous in the best possible way.

Keep going! :)
