Overcoming Performance Barriers

All competitors have barriers that prevent them from reaching their best performances on a consistent basis. What separates the great competitors from the rest is that they deal with them and then move on to the next one so that they can constantly improve.

To begin the process of overcoming your performance barriers, we are going to use story writing as a means of re-training the brain. There are two types of stories that we will write: “What Was” and “What Will Be”.

**What Was - a story about the past**
The What Was Story is a means of facing the truth about your particular performance barrier. It’s an opportunity for you to admit that you have this barrier and to write about how it affects you and your performance in competition. Be sure to include all of the thoughts, feelings, emotions and other consequences that come as a result of this issue, and be brutally honest.

Typically, the What Was Story is not lengthy. It should be just enough to admit what the issue is and provide insight into how it affects you.

**What Will Be - an inspiring story about your future**
The What Will Be Story is meant to represent your future story around this barrier. Now that you’ve admitted the truth in the What Was Story, what are you going to do about it? What does the future look like when you have overcome this barrier? How will overcoming this barrier help you reach your potential and your goals?

The What Will Be Story should answer the following questions:

1. **What is the truth?** - This is similar to the What Was Story, but shorter and more focused on fixing it.
2. **What are the consequences of not changing?** - If you don’t change your behavior, what will happen both in the short term and long term?
3. **Why is this important to you?** - Relate overcoming this barrier to your answer on “Why I compete?” How is overcoming this barrier important to your future?
4. **What does the future look like?** - Describe what you will do to overcome this barrier. Describe what things will be like when you do overcome it. Attempt to make this section inspirational and motivating.

*From The Power of Story, Jim Loehr, Free Press, New York, NY, 2007*