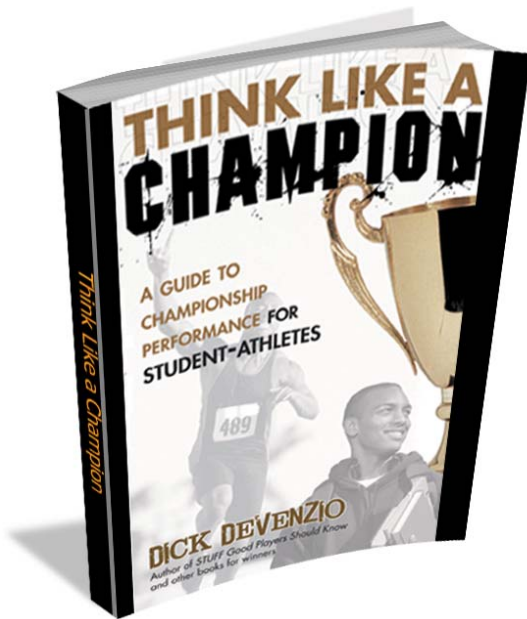


Think Like A Champion

A Guide to
Championship Performance
for Student-Athletes



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Second Edition

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This is Me!

Crack the court, soil the air, hang some gloom, deflate the ball. But you will still see me. Because this is me...

This is me? This is I? Both pronouns should be nominative, shouldn't they? Actually, neither one sounds great grammatically but the concept is good and it seems to me that, although it is incorrect grammar, *this is me* rests better on the brain.

This is me. This—what I am doing right now—is me as a writer. When answering the phone, *this is me* as a phone-talker. When playing a sport *this is me* as an athlete. When sitting in a classroom *this is me* as a student.

Regardless of what you are doing, *you* are doing it. No one else. Good or bad, it's you. I always try to picture myself, throughout the day, whatever I am doing, as though I am being watched. What do they see? This is me. And of course the question always lurking is, what *me* are they seeing? Am I proud of what they are seeing? Did I create that picture or did I let someone else influence what they see?

Hopefully you realize that the way you choose to play a sport is entirely your choice. It doesn't depend on how good your coach is or how well your team plays or how nice the field looks or how well the umpires are calling the game. Those are pictures of coaches, teams, fields, and umpires. They aren't you. Your part is strictly up to you. Although you may lose a game, there are still tremendous efforts and dismal performances within

those losses. The pictures of you can be very different within the same surroundings.

The same applies, of course, to a classroom. So many students are guilty of the following response to a typical question.

“What did you get in Algebra?”

“You should have seen the teacher.”

“Didn’t ask about the teacher. What did *you* get?”

“That teacher was so boring. No one could do well in there.”

“No one? That’s very doubtful. But how well did *you* do?”

It’s amazing how many poor students blame their D’s and F’s on their teachers. There are always possible excuses and outside factors in anything you do. But the question doesn’t change with the circumstances. The question always remains. “What was *your* approach?” What *me* did you present?

Your approach is everything. You can’t always win. *You will hardly ever have ideal conditions.* You can bet on making mistakes. Often the breaks won’t go your way. Frequently the circumstances will work against you. But the one consistent factor is—or can be—you and your approach to whatever it is you are doing.

Therefore, it makes sense, while others are seeking excuses, to let one phrase roll through your mind any time you are doing anything: *This is me.* Am I proud of what I am showing them. It can be a phrase that promotes pride, particularly under adverse circumstances. *This is me.* Watch me. Look closely. You won’t see any change. Nothing here but championship performance. Crack the court, soil the air, hang some gloom, deflate the ball. But you will still see *me.* Because *this is me.* What you see is what you get, over and over, rain or shine. Solid, determined, alert, poised.

A lot of you have already learned to try hard on defense even if you just messed up on offense. A lot of you have already learned to work hard in practice the day after a tough loss. Because you have a picture of yourself. You have become proud of the athlete you are; you are someone who tries hard all the time. Someone who gives his best. Someone who exemplifies the word “champion.”

The athlete who seeks to become a true champion isn't sidetracked by negative conditions and events. The more you pile them on, the more the champion shows off.

It is surprising how many athletes learn to develop this kind of personal pride in their approach to a sport, yet fail to show similar pride in a classroom. Slumping posture, averted eyes, haphazard notes, sloppy homework. The disparity should bother you if you are seeking to see yourself as a champion. How do you explain the pride in *me* in one sphere but the complete lack of it in another? You're the same person in one place as the other. In other words, try to take your pride with you everywhere you go, in everything you do. Because that's you. *This is me!*