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COURT REPORTERS – SLUMP AT WORK? WHAT WOULD YOUR FAVORITE ATHLETE DO?

I have said it before, and I will say it again – court reporters are like athletes. So are legal secretaries, attorneys, and anyone in the service profession. Sometimes you are incredibly strong, and knock it out of the park every time you swing, and other times you go through a slump and it seems no matter what you do, things are not going well at work.

I was reading another great article in the Wall Street Journal, “*Slumping at Work? What would Jack Do?*” written by Sue Shellenbarger. The article talks about how business people, such as Mr. Di Cio, an account executive, was aiming for a “breakout season” selling high-tech equipment. But even after working longer hours, every weekend, he was falling short of his goals. Mr. Di Cio also happens to be a big baseball fan, and likened his “slump” with Major League baseball players. Mr. Di Cio remembered that pitcher John Smoltz was in a huge slump in 1991 and used a sports psychologist to get him out. So Mr. Di Cio called in a sports psychologist, Gregg Steinberg. Steinberg prescribed the same remedy many pro athletes embrace: “*Stop overworking and allow yourself to relax.*”

Mr. Di Cio’s 2010 sales doubled over a year earlier after he took Steinberg’s advice.

As the article states, “*Even when the world isn’t watching, the same psychological hurdles trip up the rest of us, executives who aren’t making their numbers or producing enough on the job. At the office, people lose confidence, dwell on past mistakes, become anxious about every move and struggle to perform tasks they once enjoyed.*”

“*The principles that lead to slumps are the same in both realms,*” says Dr. Steinberg. “*Signaling a slump,*” he says, “*are a loss of confidence, over-thinking every move, dwelling on past failures or working too much.*”

Smoltz, who now is a MLB analyst for television network TBS says, “*I was trying to break out of the slump with hard work, but I was rushing myself on the mound and overanalyzing every bad pitch.*” To get out of the slump, Smoltz created a two-minute video of a half dozen of his perfect pitches. Smoltz repeatedly watched the video, and then when he was back up on the mound, “*I literally would not step back on the mound until I had pulled up that positive file in my mind evoking what it felt like to throw well.*”

Court reporters, students, attorneys – everyone is in a slump every now and then. Know that it is normal, not just you. My takeaway from reading this article is a person needs to focus on the good things you have done. Write down on a card or cards



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about your great successes. If you are trying to get out of court reporting school, write down the speed you were last at and passed with flying colors. If you are a business person who does presentations, do not linger on the mistake you might have made, but write down the details of your best presentation ever. Baseball players write down their specialty, for instance, throwing a fast ball or hitting a grand slam. They carry the cards in their back pockets during a game, pull one out before making a play, look at it, and remember their greatness.

I believe everything in life is about being in the moment and knowing what you know for sure. It is easy to get into a negative mindset sometimes. We all do it. It takes energy and practice to be positive.

My advice: Work less, enjoy life, and be great – because you are great. Take my word for it.



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