



MIND SURFER

Developing a high-performance mindset for surfing and life

By Kym Bancroft

*"...I was by myself so I got into the flow moment, which I recognised as a **moment in time where nothing could go wrong**. All my timing was absolutely **perfectly in harmony with the wave**, perfectly in harmony with my body movements and my timing and my understanding of what was happening at that time. I couldn't fall off the board even if I tried. That was a really clear moment, and I can feel it now, I can sense it in my body at this point I'm 53 now so it a long time ago. **There was no separation between me, the board and the wave, it was all connected and it was all kind of one thing, not separated at all; I was linked up**"*

TOM CARROLL



Regardless of whether you have experienced this feeling many times before, or you are beginner riding a wave for the first time....surfers are all alike, we will spend our lives in pursuit of that feeling of connection with the energy of the ocean.

The OMBE Accelerated Surf Program is designed to accelerate your surfing progression toward achieving that same flow state that Tom Carroll and so many other surfers describe. And yet many surfers go their whole surfing career without feeling the power zone, just surfing the top of the wave, without learning to surf rail to rail. They keep trying harder and harder but without changing, just repeating their one year of surfing experience, twenty times over. They think they have the feeling, but really it is only a tiny part of what they could be experiencing.

Using ocean, mind, body, equipment – the OMBE Accelerated Surf Program brings together the essential elements of surfing.

OCEAN

MIND

BODY

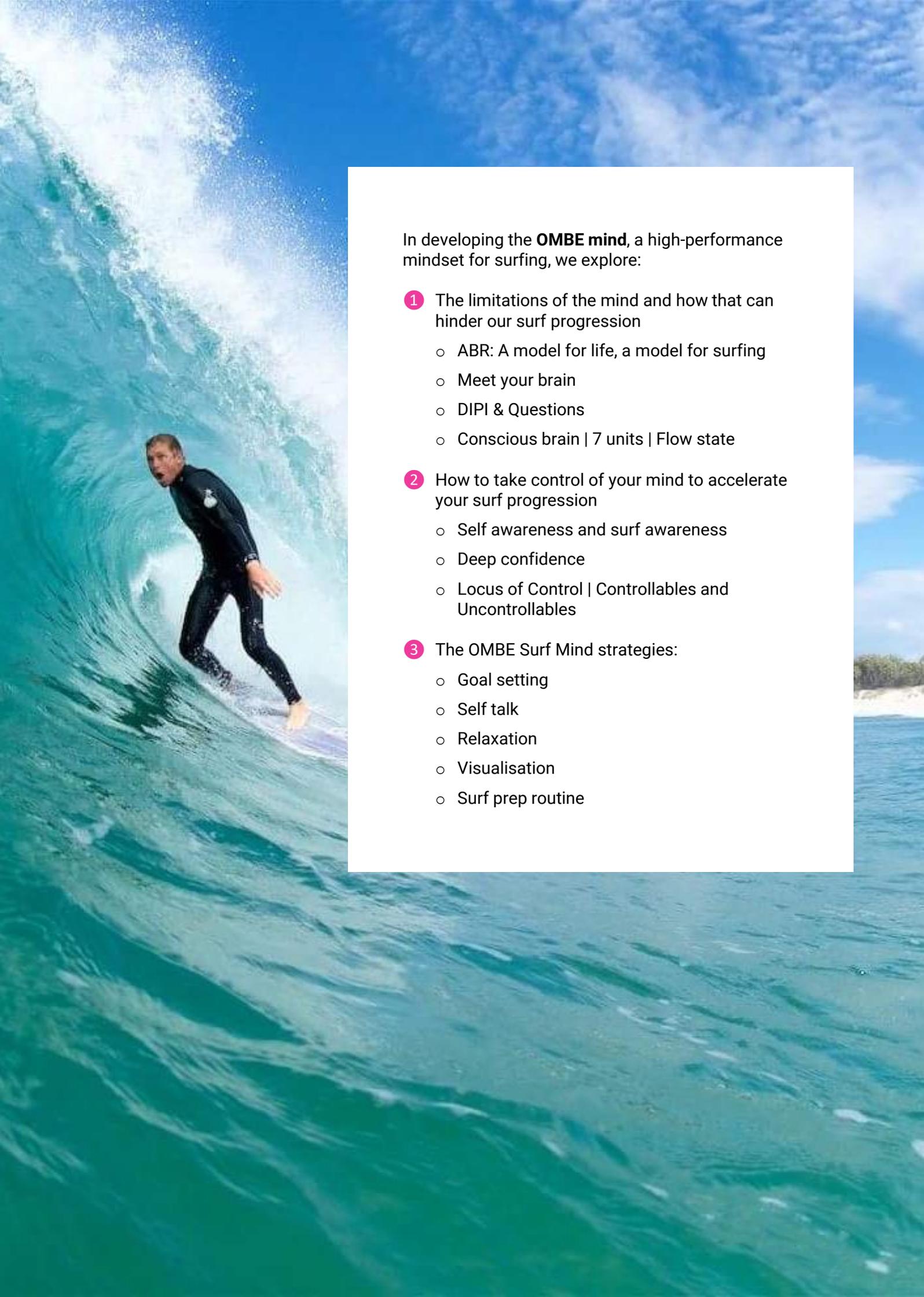
EQUIPMENT

Ocean: Understand the conditions, power zones, reading waves and positioning.

Mind: The OMBE Mind explores the influence of our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour on our surfing performance. By understanding the limitations of the mind and surfing mind hacks we can accelerate our surfing performance and push ourselves to a whole new level of surfing.

Body: Mastering the 3 foundational movements in surfing with land based simulations.

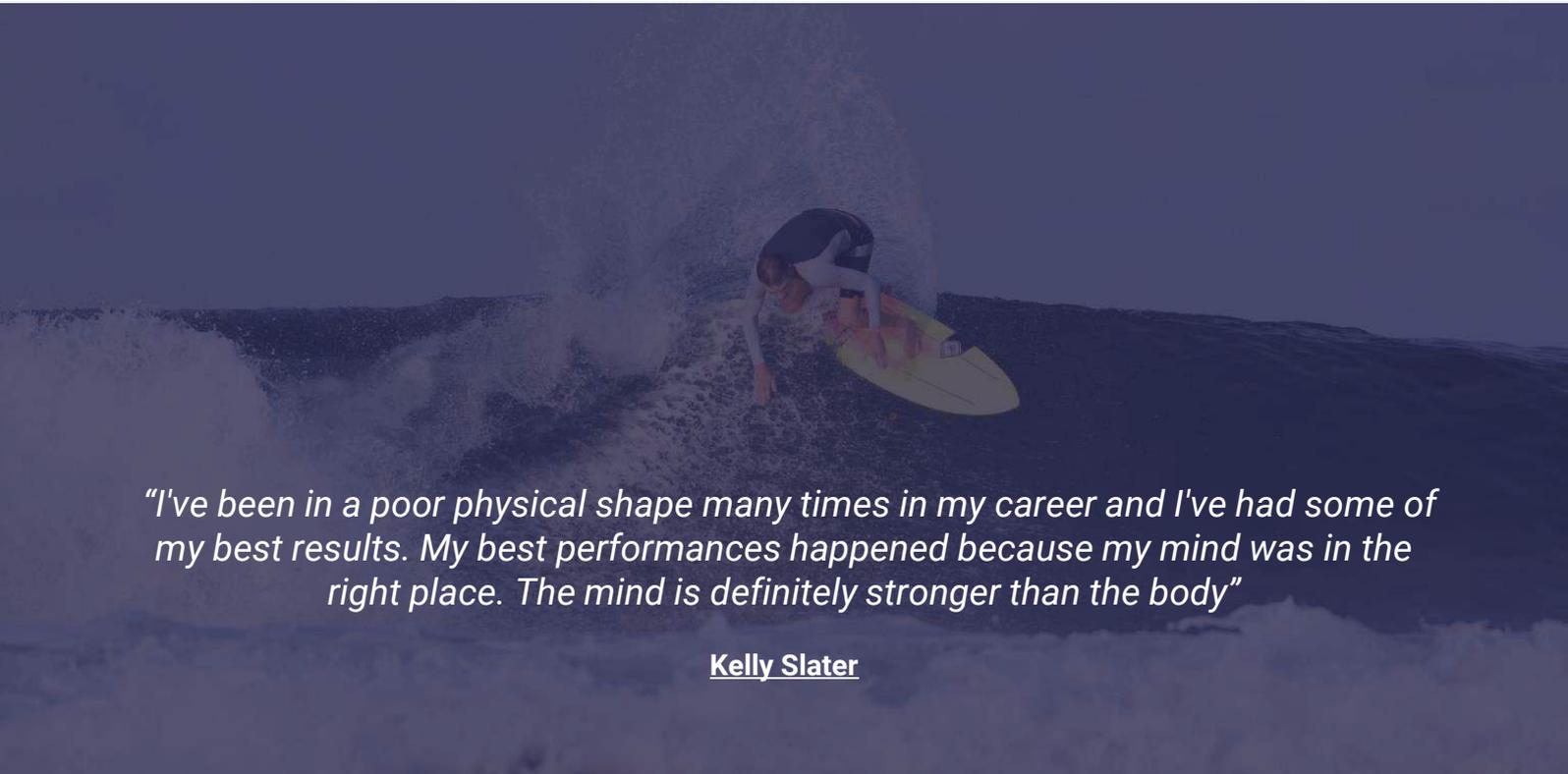
Equipment: Knowing the what, how and why of surfboards design and engineering.



In developing the **OMBE mind**, a high-performance mindset for surfing, we explore:

- 1 The limitations of the mind and how that can hinder our surf progression
 - ABR: A model for life, a model for surfing
 - Meet your brain
 - DIPI & Questions
 - Conscious brain | 7 units | Flow state
- 2 How to take control of your mind to accelerate your surf progression
 - Self awareness and surf awareness
 - Deep confidence
 - Locus of Control | Controllables and Uncontrollables
- 3 The OMBE Surf Mind strategies:
 - Goal setting
 - Self talk
 - Relaxation
 - Visualisation
 - Surf prep routine

OMBE SURF PSYCHOLOGY



"I've been in a poor physical shape many times in my career and I've had some of my best results. My best performances happened because my mind was in the right place. The mind is definitely stronger than the body"

Kelly Slater

How does your mind either help you reach optimal surfing performance or hinder you, stopping you from progressing to the next level of performance, leading to frustration and feeling like you are destined to Kookville?

How can you develop deep confidence in any surf conditions?

How can you overcome frustration with progression, fear of waves, mental distraction, and instead just feel the fear and do it anyway?

Have you experienced surfing in the power zone, have you connected with the energy of a wave or do you surf flat, instead of rail to rail? If so you are probably only experiencing 10% of what surfing has to offer.

The OMBE Accelerated Surf Program explores the 'surfers mind' and includes brain hacks to help all surfers, of all levels, to understand the limitations of the brain and harness their minds potential to reach their surfing goals.

The OMBE Surf Mind program explores how to master your mind for accelerated surf progression.

Learn how to control the mind, push yourself to bigger and more powerful waves, and discover the power of surf simulation. *It is all the mind; it is all there to be unlocked by you.*

Remember: in the same way we repeatedly practise surf and skate skills to improve, your surf mind skills are the same. The more effort you put into applying them, the quicker they will become part of your everyday surf practise. Rewiring neural pathways that have been there for years takes a lot of time and energy to rewire them...the reward is worth it.

THE OMBE SURF ATTITUDE ABR - A MODEL FOR LIFE, A MODEL FOR SURFING

“Surfing is attitude dancing”

Corey Lopez

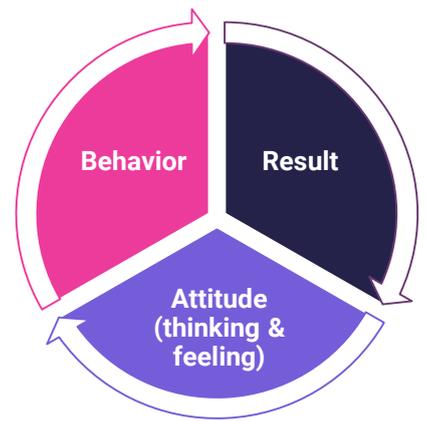
When we talk about ‘attitudes’, we are talking about the combination of thoughts and feelings that we experience in relation to an event, situation or person. Every one of us has been brought up in different environments, has had different opportunities and has been exposed to different experiences.

Each of these experiences has influenced the attitudes we have developed. Our attitudes are formed throughout our lives by making meaning of the events around us. Our attitudes (thoughts and feelings) drive our behaviours, which influence the results we get in life. This becomes very important when we think about why we are, or are not achieving our goals. Our attitudes drive our behaviours and (depending on whether they are helpful or hindering) will ultimately play a part in determining whether we achieve our goals.

Your attitude toward surfing plays a massive part in your success. What is the attitude we need for high performance surfing and accelerated surf progression? *One that is optimistic, positive and moves you toward your surfing goals.*

WHAT I
think and feel,
DRIVES
WHAT I DO

& WHAT I DO
CREATES MY
result



Check yourself, check your attitude. For example, you rock up to the beach and it is small, onshore and cold.

THINK & FEEL: it sucks, its small, its rubbish conditions. Feel unmotivated. Disempowered

BEHAVIOUR: get in your car and drive home. Or paddle out and complain the whole time, cutting your surf short

RESULT: get in the habit of only surfing when its offshore and “good”, reduce surf time, poor surfing performance long term

Or, having your goal to accelerate your surfing in mind, and knowing that your thoughts matter, instead you:

THINK & FEEL: Its always good to get out for a paddle. It will be good fun, good exercise, focussed, energised to get out there

BEHAVIOUR: Assess the waves and look for the opportunity to practise specific skills (e.g. crumbly face = practice floaters)

RESULT: more likely to improve quicker, clock up more surf hour



SURFERS, MEET YOUR BRAIN

Humans have the most complex brain of any animal on earth.

Our brain is 90% fat and water which is why drinking water is so important. Water is to your brain what an exhaust system is to your car.

Your brain generates 25 watts of power while you're awake - enough to illuminate a light bulb.

Like an engine, the brain is an electrochemical machine. If you add a chemical, you will change how it functions.

Your brain is constructed of 100 billion specialised cells known as neurons.

A typical neuron is joined with 1,000 to 10,000 other neurons at specialised connections called synapses.

Synapses are formed through the learning process. Synapses also determine intelligence.

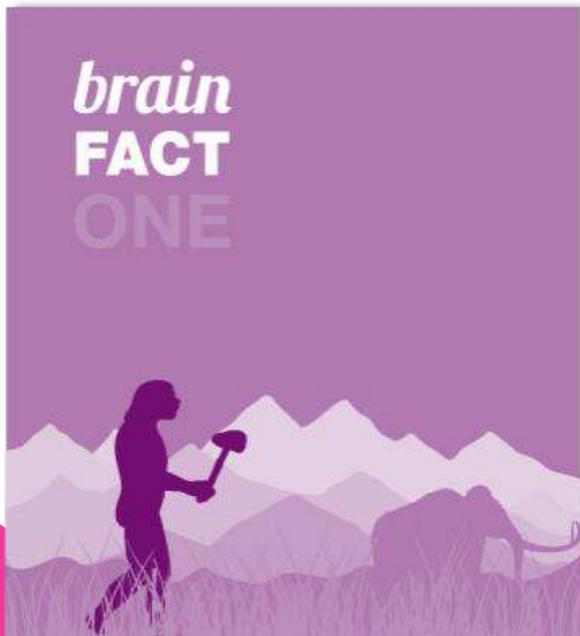
The more synapses you have, the smarter you are.

You can keep forming new synapses your whole life if you continue to use your brain (you are never too old to learn to surf or progress your surfing)

LIMITATIONS OF THE BRAIN

There are two key facts about the brain that are important to help us understand how it drives human behaviour:

brain
FACT
ONE



**YOUR BRAIN IS
ADAPTED FOR
SIMPLE
ENVIRONMENTS**

brain
FACT
TWO



**THE BRAIN SEEKS
TO CONSERVE
ENERGY WHERE
POSSIBLE**

THE BRAIN SEEKS TO CONSERVE ENERGY WHERE POSSIBLE

Our brain is constantly looking for ways to improve its processes, automate the things we do, save energy, make faster decisions and respond most effectively in any given situation. This is important to understand as, while these efficiencies help us through life, sometimes they can also create challenges for us too, especially when it comes to progressing from one level of surfing to the next.

YOUR BRAIN IS ADAPTED FOR SIMPLE ENVIRONMENTS

Our brain developed thousands and thousands of years ago, when there were a handful of things we needed to be mindful of. Fast forward to today, where we live in an extremely complex world. This means we can easily become overloaded with information and struggle to take in everything that is going on around us.

What does this mean for us as surfers? It means that unlearning poor surfing technique, or learning new surfing manoeuvre takes time, takes effort, and persistence! We are literally breaking neural connections to form new ones.

It also means that to improve at surfing we need to uncomplicate the process. Keep it as simple as you can. Focus on one skill at a time.

Check out how your brain has neuroplasticity, meaning you can rewire it! But it takes energy. How much? Check out the backwards bicycle...

https://ed.ted.com/best_of_web/bf2mRAfC



“Fear - It’s a fine line between that and pushing yourself. You definitely reach new heights when you push. But fear is good. Fear keeps us alive. If we didn’t have it, we’d be doing crazy things and getting in sticky situations”

Stephanie Gilmore

Information floods into your brain 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It never stops. Every moment, millions of bits of data, are coming into your brain via your five senses. Information about your world, your body, and your thoughts and feelings are all being processed by your wonderful brain. Some of this information we are aware of and some of it we are not. Our minds job is to determine what we need to pay attention to in any given moment. It does this according to the following criteria:

-  **DANGEROUS** Things that can harm us
-  **IMPORTANT** Things that we have memories of or biases for.
-  **PLEASURABLE** Things that may offer us rewards or opportunities.
-  **INTERESTING** Unusual things that may be a threat or a reward and we want to know more to make that distinction.

So you can see why surfing can dominate much of our headspace. The risk of surfing has a reward payoff, it is highly pleasurable, and it creates incredible memories leaving us chasing more.

The DIPI function can work for us and against us in the surf. It can lead us away from situations when we are in surf that is too challenging by triggering the danger criteria. Or it can lead us to getting out of the water pretty quick if we think we see a shark. Or maybe the danger is social, and we are too preoccupied worrying about what other surfers will think of us. The fear of surfing a new break on a surf trip, fear of surfing reef or getting barrellled can all be perceived as danger by our brain.

When we get to our destination though, and catch a few waves on the new break successfully, the pleasure criteria kicks in, dampening the danger. Because of this default function, we are literally our own worse enemy.

Good news is that we determine what is DIPI to us. So if your mind is running rampant and working against you and perceiving everything as ‘dangerous’, by focussing on your breathing, your posture and remembering everything you have simulated on land you can reset DIPI. This helps us to remove any perceptions of ‘danger’ and elevate the ‘pleasurable’ criteria...learning, fun, and reward through taking measured risks.

For example, you are out in surf that is bigger than what you are used to. You paddle for a wave but when you look down the drop looks huge. Your brain perceives what you are seeing (big drop) and tells you that is is dangerous. What do you do? You pull back? Your heart rate rises. Instead you know you can trick your brain. Instead when you paddle you look intently down the wave. You don’t see the drop you see the smaller, less threatening section down the line. Your brain perceives this as pleasurable and you go. Once you have successfully caught a few bigger waves, your brain no longer sees them as dangerous.



THE BRAIN & QUESTIONS

"Never stop. Never give up. Even to the last second. It's the only way that you're going to have something that you really want. You gotta stop to think about what you can do better. We wake everyday and we are all our life thinking in the same situation 'How can I improve?' 'How can I go forward' 'What do we need to survive this?' And the only way can do it is working through and working hard"

PERCY PADARATZ JR

The questions we ask in life—of ourselves and of those around us—determine the answers we get. Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy wrote, "There is no such thing as a wrong answer, only good and bad questions". A question triggers an automatic response in our brains: when we hear a question, we feel an urge to answer. Socially, we look down on those who avoid or can't answer questions. Watch how uncomfortable a politician can appear when s/he answers "no comment" to a reporter's question.

ASKING HELPFUL QUESTIONS CAN FOCUS YOUR MIND ON WHAT SHOULD BE DONE, TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS.

"How can I improve my surfing?"

"What are the skills I need to work on to improve?"

"Where is the best spot to sit to 'catch the bus?'"

Humans have been able to achieve incredible things by asking themselves helpful questions.

Surfer Pauline Menczer not only won a world championship, she was suffering from arthritis so crippling and excruciatingly painful at the time, that friends would often push her around in a shopping trolley to save her the agony of trying to walk.

"At the age of 14 at first I didn't know what was going on, I'd wake up and my knees were all swollen, and that rheumatoid arthritis has now turned into osteoarthritis,"

"Even the year I went for the world title I could barely walk," she said.

Unhelpful questions she could have asked herself might have been: "Why did this happen to me?" "What am I being punished for?" "Why is life so unfair?" Instead she asked helpful questions like: "How can I train for the titles when I can't free surf?" "What do I need to do to make my dream a reality?"

Despite her challenges, 1993 was Menczer's world championship year.

Think about what your goals are when it comes to your surfing. Are there better questions you could be asking of yourself?

If you are asking yourself "Why am not getting better?", "Why am I not as good as other surfers?", replace these questions which focus your attention on what you can control and how.

CONSCIOUS MIND

"That's such a common saying: Just be present, live in the moment. But there's actually really something to it when you really start to learn it"

"The best version of surfing is not competing, I think. It's just... it's perfect. You're perfectly present. You're perfectly in the moment. You're perfectly not thinking about anything else in the world. You're just surfing. You're surfing away with your friends or your family, and that's it. You're just there"

John John Florence

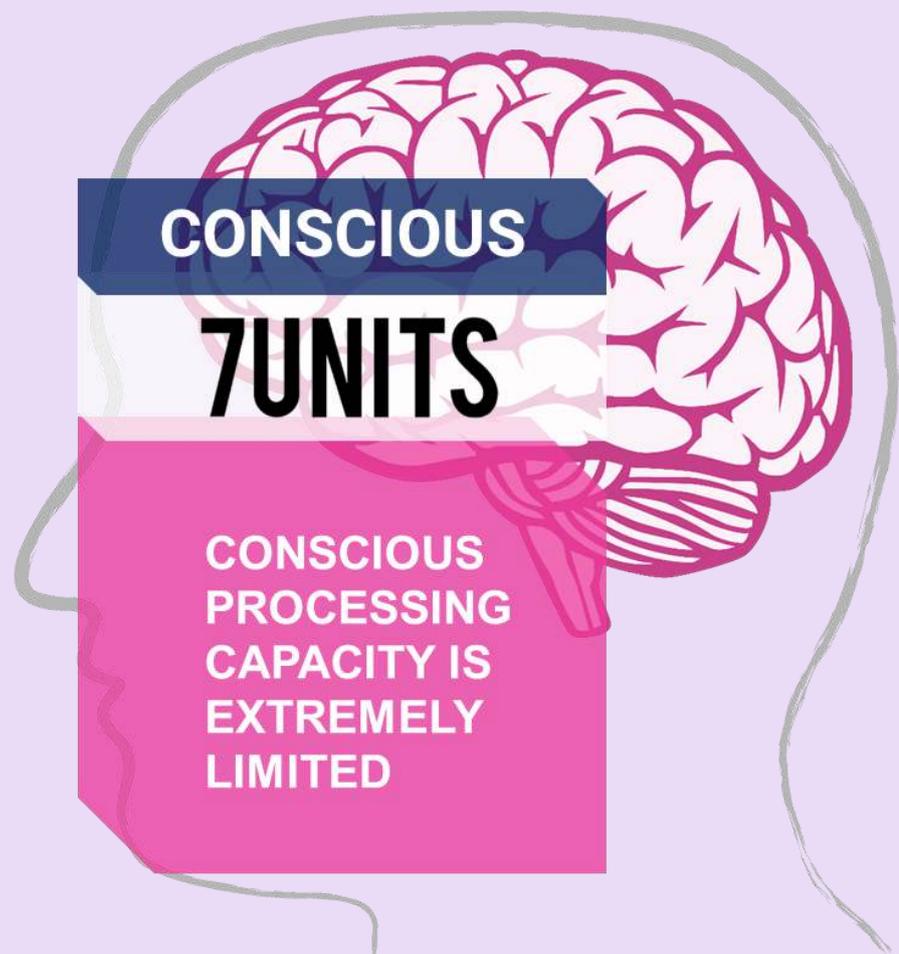
In the quote above, John John is referring to what sports psychologists call 'flow state'. That feeling when we are fully present in the moment, being in the zone, where we are fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity.

The part of our brain that creates 'flow state' is our Conscious part of our brain that interacts with the world around us. You can think of your conscious awareness as being your attention or your focus. If we are trying to simultaneously pay attention to too many competing priorities, we can drop the ball. Or in surfing, if we are trying to remember too many things to try it stunts our surfing and we lose the feeling of flow.

LIMITATIONS OF OUR CONSCIOUS

**WE MISS A LOT
OF INCOMING
INFORMATION.**

**WE MAY
NOT DETECT
CHANGES IN OUR
ENVIRONMENT.**



CONSCIOUS

7

**CONSCIOUS
PROCESSING
CAPACITY IS
EXTREMELY
LIMITED**

Our brains have a limited processing capacity of around 4 to 7 units of information at any one time. This may seem like a lot, but to process just the words in a conversation, our Conscious mind uses between 4 and 7 units. Add in tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions, sarcasm and humour, and your units are used up very quickly. This is why we can generally only focus on one person speaking at a time or do one complex task at a time.

Other incoming information may fall within our “blindspots” and may not come to our attention. A common blindspot for beginner and intermediate surfers is being unaware of the energy they bring into the lineup. When they are distracted, and in their head, they exude a nervous energy. This puts us out of tune with the ocean and the goal at hand.

Additionally, given our limited Conscious capacity, any sources of stress, depression or frustration can represent information which - along with other distractions - rapidly consume the brains attention and limit an individual’s awareness of their environment.

The good news is we can direct our limited attention and sift through the information in our environment to focus on that which is consistent with our goals. We can do this by using tools such as asking ourselves:

WHAT’S IMPORTANT NOW?

The WIN question can be used to make our surfing more DIPI to us and helps train our mind to be fully present in the moment. If we are operating a machine or driving and are distracted, we can ask ourselves...“What’s important now?” to re-focus on the task at hand.



BRAIN HACK

How aware are you of your conscious attention and what occupies it?

"A high level of self-awareness and surf awareness is the key to all positive change and progress in your surfing"

"If self awareness isn't quite there you won't optimise your surfing awareness, and then therefore you won't optimise your surfing performance"

TOM CARROLL

SURFING AWARENESS AND SELF AWARENESS

The Conscious brain, our 7 units of conscious attention, is what creates both our self-awareness and our surf awareness. Awareness is the first building block to accelerating your surf performance. Simply, because if you are not aware of something you cannot change it. The brain, in its efforts to conserving energy, is very good at creating blindspots. So while we might think we are ripping in the surf and picking up good habits, in actual fact we might only be experiencing a small part of what surfing has to offer.

SELF AWARENESS includes all of your thoughts, feelings and actions in how you approach and respond to particular experiences, physical state and the feedback you receive from your body and board while surfing (ref)

SURFING AWARENESS includes all features of equipment and ocean. The performance qualities of your board, ocean conditions, the manoeuvre potential of the waves as well as the performance feedback you receive from equipment and ocean as you ride each wave (ref).

Waves have an amazing amount of energy, and where the lift throws is where we need to be interacting, a yet lot of people get intimidated by the feeling so they surf flat. Instead they need to interact with the wave, step into a complicated dance with the wave, and link them together.

The purest surfing is body surfing. It is where your body is totally connected to the waves energy. At the other end of the spectrum is surfing a really thick foamy surfboard. The feeling and connection you have with the energy of the wave is completely reduced. You are in the safe zone.

A good analogy is learning to ride a bike. Imagine you learnt to ride a bike with training wheels, you loved it, but you were too scared to take the training wheels off. Your friends ride without training wheels and they start doing hill riding and get lots of speed flying down hills, they can do radical turns around sharp corners, and they have so much fun. You stick to riding slow, on the flat, still enjoying yourself, but envious and oblivious to the fact that the training wheels are holding you back.

Where do you play in surfing (and in life)? Are you happy to stick in safe zone, riding flat, with lots of volume of board between you and the waves energy? Or do you have the courage to connect with the vast energy Mother Nature has to offer you? This is also a metaphor for life....do you go after your passions and dreams wholeheartedly or do you play it safe?

"I began to realise how important it was to be an enthusiast in life. If you are interested in something, no matter what it is, go at it full speed. Embrace it with both arms, hug it, love it, and above all become passionate about it. Lukewarm is no good"

Roald Dahl



Use the checklist below to identify if you have low self-awareness in the surf:

- Feeling tense in the surf
- Being distracted in the surf worrying about how you look in front of others
- Feeling out of your depth
- Low levels of flexibility and fitness to deal with the majority of surf situations at your local break
- Continuing to practise poor and incorrect technique repeatedly
- Making simple or avoidable mistakes in the surf (e.g. over paddling)
- Becoming stuck at a certain level of surfing, regressing, unable to progress
- High and unrealistic expectations
- Negative self-talk and talking yourself out of good surf
- Self-sabotaging and making excuses for poor surfing
- Low awareness of the energy you bring into the lineup

What else influences your surf performance? Distractions, stress, fatigue, poor body conditioning, lack of simulation? How aware are you of influences on your surfing performance when you are out in the ocean?

And low surf awareness is characterised by the below....check to see how you rate:

- Getting out of the water to change boards, fins, wetsuits because of frustration
- Surfing boards that don't match your ability
- Over paddling
- Sitting on the shoulder
- Being unaware of where you are in the relation to the peak
- Feeling lost in the lineup, drifting into areas where waves are not breaking, rips

Regardless of how long you have been surfing...learning, practising and refining your surf skills, critiquing your skills on a regular basis and setting goals to advance them is key. The more you self-reflect, the more you develop your surf awareness, and then the more you can hone your areas of opportunities.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR AWARENESS

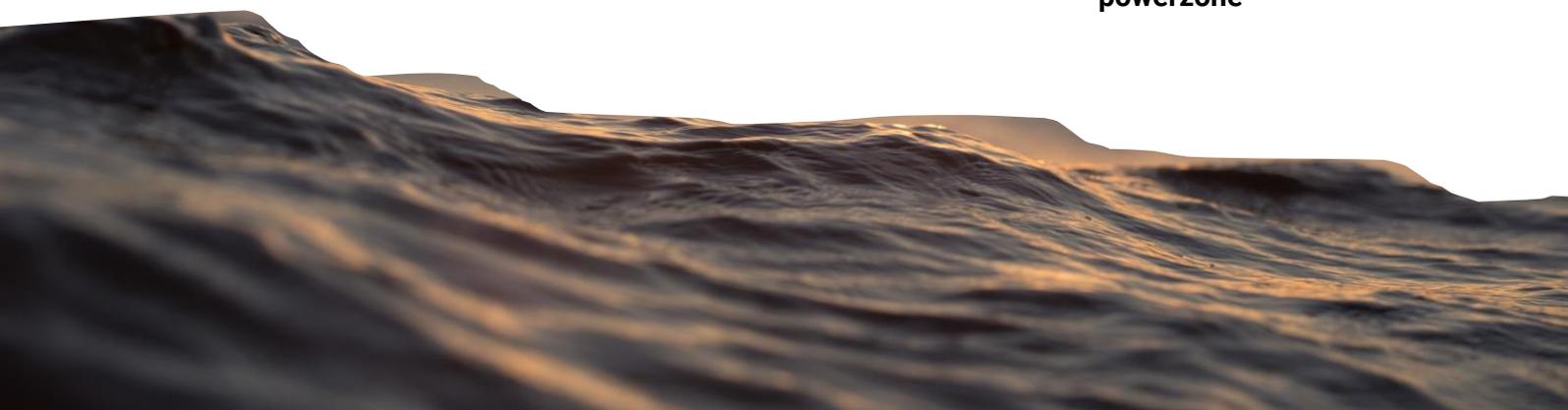
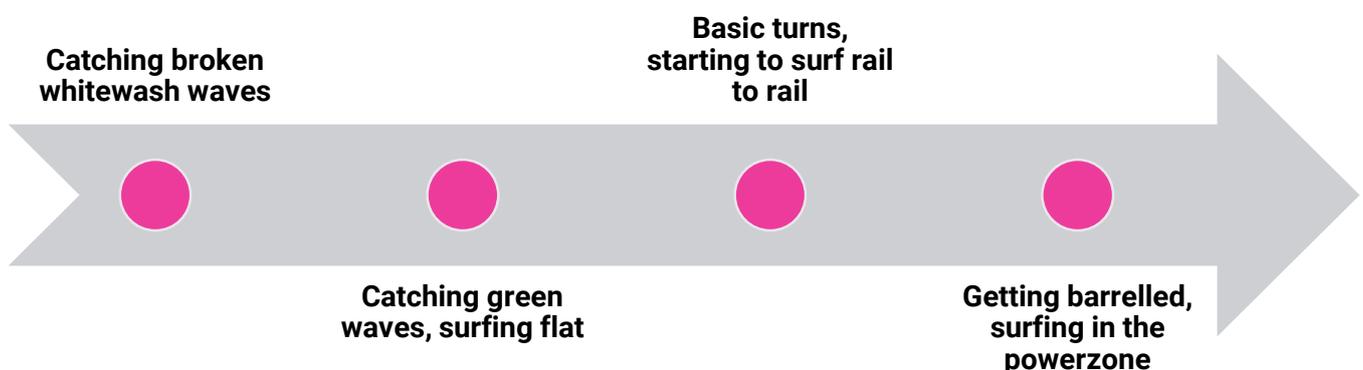
- Fill in the OMBE self-reflection assessment each month and check your progress
- Film yourself
- Post your skating/surfing in the OMBE community and get some instant feedback
- Set goals for your surf progression and review them regularly
- When you are in the surf, choose to be fully present to the ocean, the waves, the conditions, your body, your mind, and your equipment
- Take specific notice of the thoughts that come into your mind when you are surfing...do you beat yourself up when you wipe out/repeatedly miss waves? Or are you relaxed and achieving flow state

Use your conscious '7 units' to create accurate awareness of your current surfing ability and how you interact with the four elements – mind, body, ocean, equipment.

YOUR SURF POTENTIAL AWARENESS

Imagine if what you have learnt about surfing was actually wrong? Other surfers yelling at you to "PADDLE" when in actual fact you should be paddling less. OMBE Accelerated Surf has broken down all aspects of surfing, so that we can learn the correct techniques straight up (or retrain our brain from the poor technique to the good technique). Either way, prepare for your mind to be blown and your surfing to be accelerated to the next level. OMBE breaks down coordinated movements into simple metaphors, easy to remember and apply.

Before you start to put these skills into practice, rate your level of surf potential. If you are unsure about where you sit, when you go surfing next, paddle out with an open mind, keep your 7 units free to absorb all the information coming to you from your body, ocean and mind.



YOU ARE YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS

The Subconscious is the part of the brain that carries out the functioning over which we have little control. It is the so-called 'irrational' function of the mind. However, it does play a major role in our surfing, as for the most of the day we are running off our Subconscious.

Building up knowledge of the ocean, waves and your equipment and body in your mind, all goes toward building instinct. That is why going surfing in any conditions is helpful when learning, as it optimises your chance of success long term. And the mind plays the crucial role in bringing together body, equipment and ocean to create your surfing performance. It stores all the information you learn about your body, your equipment and the ocean which you can draw on at any time. However the trick is to make sure we are drawing on 'good' information.

PROGRAMMING YOUR BRAIN

One of the key functions of the Subconscious is to record and store our interpretation of reality, just like the files and folders in a computer hard drive. This automatic sensory, subjective and emotional recorder has been operating even before birth and has recorded all our experiences. The Subconscious is like a 'hard drive' of stored information. It has also recorded what we think about those experiences, what we say to ourselves about them, what we imagine about ourselves in those experiences and our emotional reaction to them.

We might think of the Subconscious starting life as a blank canvas and each experience as a brush stroke on our picture of reality which we then call 'the truth'. A second key function of the Subconscious is to handle automatic functions (heartbeat, breathing, circulation, digestion, blinking) and learned automatic functions (tying shoes, walking, driving, playing a guitar, multiplication tables). All of these learned functions begin on the Conscious level then, through repetition, are turned over to the Subconscious and become habits.

Given the Subconscious runs 95% of our day-to-day behaviour, these habits greatly impact the person we are. Most of the time our habits are helpful to us and assist us to be efficient. Sometimes, however, habits stored on the Subconscious level can also be barriers to our need to change and adjust to new situations and to our leadership style. This is why changing our habits and doing new things may cause anxiety and stress

We store vast amounts of information as pictures and words in our memory. Our brain is always trying to understand what we are seeing by scanning through our memories to find a match. Even if it doesn't find an exact match, it will find something similar to help understand as much as possible. We call the meaning or explanation we put around something our "Frame". Every Frame has three components:

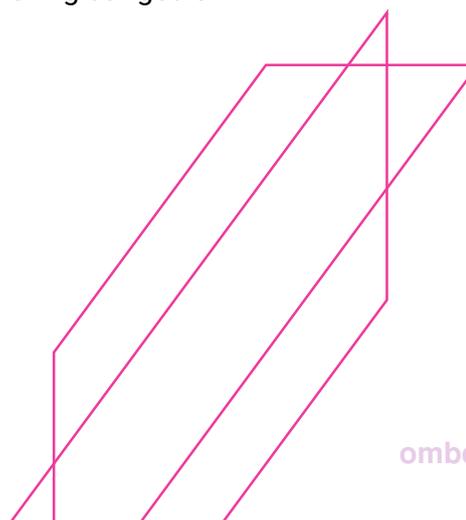
// **What I think about this (Think)**

// **How that thought makes me feel (Feel) and**

// **What behaviours that feeling will drive (Do)**

It is our Frames that drive our responses and reactions to situations, people and experiences.

Your Frames govern your whole experience of life, and the great thing is that you can take conscious control of them if you want to. Frames can be helpful (Green Zone) or unhelpful (Red Zone) in achieving our goals at work and in life in general. Green Zone Frames are helpful Frames that move us closer towards our goals, while Red Zone Frames are unhelpful Frames that prevent us from achieving our goals.



The GIGO principle originates from the computer industry and stands for 'Garbage In, Garbage Out'. That's what computer experts refer to when a computer is programmed with the wrong information and hence gives the wrong result. The computer is an incredible machine, but can only work with the information you give it.

GIGO is true of the human mind too. Your mind is the most powerful computer ever created and it too depends on what you put into it. For example, if you are constantly talking yourself out of good waves, then this will be reflected in your behaviour and you seek the safety of the shoulder rather than positioning yourself in the lineup.

Either consciously or subconsciously, surfers have stored either garbage or good frames towards their abilities, their progression and their right to be in lineup. This often drives – either intentionally or unintentionally - the surfers body language and determines their rate of progression. The ultimate goal is to create frames that are helpful to achieving our goal of accelerating our surf progression.

However, the frames we have around ourselves, our surfing ability etc are often not established by Conscious choice. More often than not they are borne out of repeated frustrating experiences in the water.

Frames guide our Subconscious under the GIGO mechanism: either 'Garbage In' or 'Good In'. Frames not only influence our day-to-day behaviours, they also influence what we will pay conscious attention to in our interactions with them. Not surprisingly, if we have a Frame around a surf skill that says: "difficult", "really hard to learn", "I'll never be that good", then our brain tends to find us more and more evidence to support this Frame.

However, unless we consciously focus on this information, our brain's default is to look for confirmation of the existing attitudes. This process is known as GIGO IN ACTION.

There are a number of ways we can use GIGO to our advantage, and literally rewire any unhelpful frames we have about ourselves as surfers, our ability and achieving our surfing goals:

- 1 **Positive Self Talk**
- 2 **Mental Visualisation**
- 3 **Skate Simulation**



1. GETTING GOOD IN THROUGH POSITIVE SELF TALK

To better program our subconscious with 'good in' (to then get 'good out'), we can become really intentional and aware of our self-talk. Pro surfers are incredibly aware of their self-talk and use it as a highly effective way of tuning their mind.

However, because the brain has a default mechanism to conserve energy, it can easily slip back into old and familiar patterns of thinking. Your brain isn't your mum; it doesn't care whether your thoughts and self-talk hinder you.... it's just working to its default functions.

Becoming aware of your self-talk (either the thoughts you have or what you say out loud) in and out of the surf is the first step to changing it. What do you say to yourself or others in and out of the surf? What do you say when you wipe out? What do you say when your wave count is high? For example, when you are paddling out in challenging surf do you say *"there is no way I can surf these waves"*. Rather than accepting this thought, simply take note of it and then learn to spot your pattern of negative self-talk. In what situations do you start to beat yourself up or be highly negative?

Once you have this self-awareness you can start to challenge negative self-talk and change it. Instead of saying *"I can't make these waves"*, say to yourself *"I have trained hard to surf these waves"*, *"I am going to commit and go"*. The second way to overcome negative self talk is to replace it with the OMBE surf hacks.

Check out the other surf psychology tools below such as Reframing and Visualisation for other ways to challenge negative self-talk.

2. MENTAL VISUALISATION

"I used to simulate wave situations in my training and visualise doing particular manoeuvres and new manoeuvres and technique and just the whole approach in hot dog surfing"

RABBIT

Mental visualisation builds new neural pathways, essentially creating 'good in'. Just because you're in the lineup waiting for a wave doesn't mean you have to sit there patiently.

Visualise a wave, your take off, observing all your movements, your turns, the energy of the wave, or:

- Relive your worst wipeout and change the outcome
- Relive your best wave and so its entrenched
- Take your skate skills and visual them on the waves

[Click here to watch Clayton talking through how to practise mental visualisation.](#)

3. SIMULATION

If you have years of poor surf skills, it is crucial to break down the neural pathways, and create new ones with the correct surf skills. To accelerate this, skate simulation...



Now that we have an understanding of the brain and its limitations, we are going to explore strategies and tools to develop the mental skills needed for surf acceleration.

Fundamentally, a lot of what we currently do and how we do it has been formed throughout our lives. Despite the fact that some of our attitudes, beliefs and habits may have been formed many years ago, we are not stuck with them; we can change the wiring in our brain for more helpful outcomes.

The tools we are going to explore are:

/ LOCUS OF CONTROL

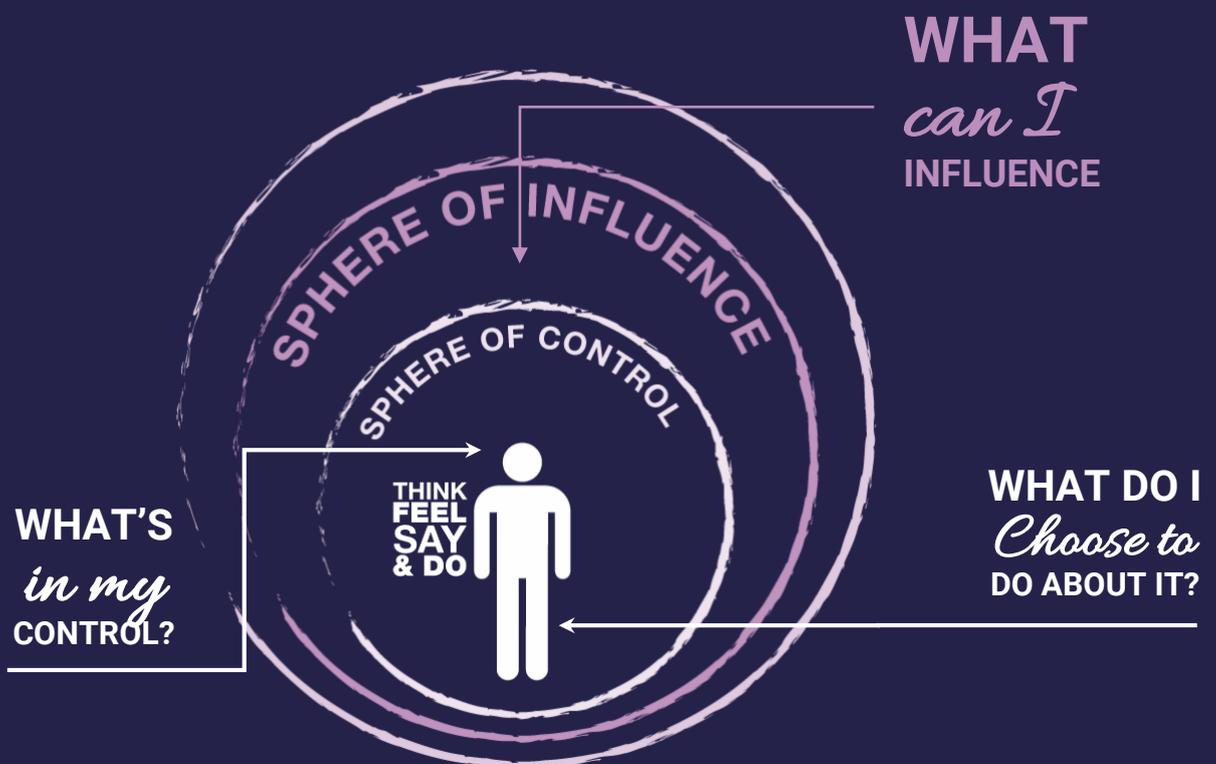
/ REFRAMING

LOCUS OF CONTROL: CONTROLLABLES & UNCONTROLLABLES

The ability to create comfort in the uncomfortable is a core skill for sound mental health and fulfilling our potential in the surf.

"There's things that you can do as a person to make things better, but you can't really change until your accept responsibility"

KELLY SLATER



MASTER OF MY DESTINY, OR VICTIM OF LIFE?

Locus of control, in the context of the OMBE Mind, is the extent to which you believe your surfing success is in your hands (and your life in general). To fully reach your surfing goals, and even go beyond what you believe to be possible, will be in part determined by how much you take responsibility for your thoughts, feelings, words and actions.

Locus of Control (LoC) refers to the extent to which individuals believe that they are in control of their lives. This theory describes a set of Frames that play an important role in determining the results we achieve in life: the Internal Locus of Control Frame, and the External Locus of Control Frame. It is important to note that everybody has both Internal and External Locus of Control Frames and that we choose with our thinking processes which one will run us and influence the results we get in life.



From a surf progression perspective, locus of control describes how much energy we put into what we can control (helpful and positive) or what we can't control (unhelpful and leads to a spiral back down the S curve).

People with dominant Internal Locus of Control (ILoC) Frames believe they are the master of their destiny. They believe that they can control their thoughts, feelings, words and actions and so control the results they get in life. They believe that if they are happy, healthy, wealthy or able to progress in surfing, it is due to their choices and actions. Similarly they take full responsibility for their lives and so if they are unhappy, unhealthy, poor or not progressing in their surfing, it is also due to their choices and actions.

ILoCs choose to take control of their Frames and focus on working out, what can be done, then they go and do it. They seek solutions or ideas and take action proactively. As a result, they are happier, healthier, and wealthier, less likely to be injured, less likely to give up when faced with a challenge, complain less and have higher levels of self-esteem. In the surf....you can spot a surfer who has a strong ILOC...they are confident, calm, happy and focussed.

In surfing (and in life) there is a lot we cannot control. The waves, the tide, the wind, the break, other surfers. Some surfers get very frustrated at these things.

People with dominant External Locus of Control (ELOC) Frames believe they are the victim of people or circumstances and believe that how their thinking, behaviour, actions and performance is outside their control. They believe how they do in life is a result of what others do, fate, luck or chance. By not taking responsibility for their world, they do not take ownership of it and as a result, are powerless to change it.

ELOCs rarely take accountability for their results. They spend a lot of time worrying about a situation, but not a lot of time doing anything about it! They blame and accuse other people for the problems in their life. As a result, they are unhappier and unhealthier; they are more likely to give up when faced with a challenge, complain more and have lower levels of self-esteem than ILoCs. You can spot a surfer who has strong ELOC frames....they are the ones complaining about the crowd, the conditions, other surfers getting in their way, or swearing loudly when they don't make a frame. Their frustration levels are evident, and they bring a negative energy into the lineup.

Sign of ELOC surfer:

- Blaming the conditions for a bad surf
- Blaming the crowds
- Using fitness or board as an excuse for poor performance
- Making the same mistakes over and over, and not taking the steps to create self-awareness
- Blaming your surf coach
- Blaming your mates for being wave hogs
- Paddling out where other surfers are rather than assessing the conditions accurately
- Not identifying hindering thought patterns, and seeking out others to reaffirm your inaccurate thinking
- Attributing success or failure to 'luck'
- Feeling overwhelmed, frustrated or unsure how to progress

So how do we strengthen our Internal Locus of Control Frames in our surfing progression? We focus on controlling the things we can control in surfing and we choose to influence those things in life we can influence. Being an ILoC means choosing what to think and how to respond to any given situation. The more responsible and in control you are over your surfing, the quicker you will identify your skill gaps and then progress.

To strengthen our ILoC position, we can identify and focus on what we can control, which is:

- Our paddling technique
- Our paddling fitness
- Choosing the right board for your experience and skill,
- Wave selection
- Where I sit in the line up
- What I think about the surf
- Time spent simulating skate skills

When you do achieve a certain skill in surfing, be clear on why and how you achieved it. Linking it back to all your efforts spent simulating skills on the skateboard and ramp, time spent investing in fitness, and working hard in the water is key.

WHAT'S IN MY CONTROL?

In life we operate within two spheres – our Sphere of Control and our Sphere of Influence. We only have complete control over those things that fall within our Sphere of Control – what we think, feel, say and do.

There are not many things within this sphere, but it is the most important because control of yourself lies within it. We can't always choose what happens to us, what other people think or feel, say or do, but we can choose our response to these experiences.

Within your Sphere of Influence are those things in your life that you can influence but cannot control. Things in your Sphere of Influence include other people, your relationships, your health, your appearance, your financial status and so on. While you cannot control the things in your Sphere of Influence, you can control your response to them. For example, while you cannot control how other surfers behave at your local break, but you can control whether or not you use that as an excuse for a low wave count.

When we accept responsibility for what we can control, then we can leave behind being distracted by things we cannot control, and focus on improving on what we can (e.g. paddling power, speed, choosing the best board).

LOCUS OF CONTROL ACTIVITY

When it comes to your surfing, list all the things that you can control and you can't control:

CONTROLLABLES	UNCONTROLLABLES

Rate yourself as a percentage....how much time and energy do you spend focussing on the things you can control in relation to your mind, body, equipment and ocean?

Do you consciously work on developing these things/skills?

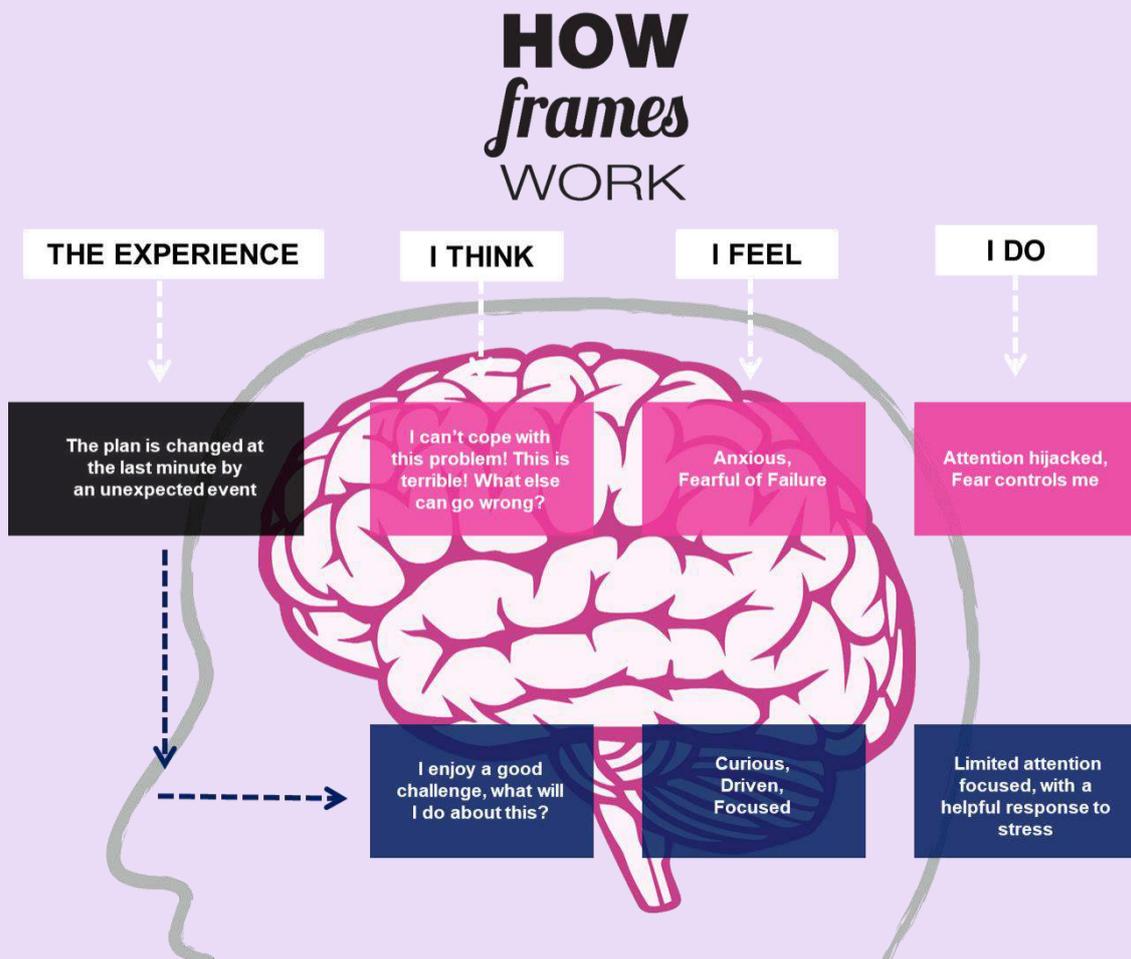
How much time do you spend focussing on, thinking about, ruminating on the things in the uncontrollable list?

Going forward, what changes can you make to ensure you are mostly focussed on the things you can control?

[Click here to listen to Clayton, the founder of OMBE Surf and Kym, the OMBE Surf Psychologist talking about what it means to be an ILOC in surfing.](#)



REFRAMING



What do you believe about yourself? What do you believe about your surfing ability? Your right and place in the lineup? When people start surfing for themselves their surfing changes; when they surf for others, it looks like they are trying really hard. Driving these core beliefs are the Frames people have (what they think, feel and do).

What we know (and what most other people do not know) about Frames, is that Frames are simply made up. They are not necessarily THE truth. They are just our truth. We made them up in the first place so we can change them if we want to. **This is called Reframing.** We reframe all the time. Every time we 'change our mind' about something, shift how we think about something or look at something from a different perspective, we are Reframing. Reframing creates new Frames and so brings new ways of looking at things into existence. By choosing to think differently about a topic, we create new emotions and thus drive different behaviours. This frees us because we chose the Frame in the first place.

Choosing Frames is the ultimate ILoC activity and skill. One common example of a reframe used by professional surfers is reframing a 'failure' into a 'learning' Frame.

What are the hindering frames that pop up in your mind, see if you can identify them and write them in the table below? The aim is to then reframe them into a frame that helps achieve your surfing goals, instead of hindering.

Hindering frame	Helpful frame
I've been surfing for ages, I should be better than I am	Surfing is a personal journey, what can I do differently to accelerate my learning?
The waves are big and closing out, I am going to get smashed	This is a good opportunity to practise my commitment, my pop up and getting around the section
I'm not good enough	Mistakes help me learn and accelerate my progression
This is a problem	This is a challenge
Weaknesses	Opportunities

Reframing helps us to embrace all experiences, positive and negative, so we can develop the super frame 'deep confidence'.





YOUR DEEP CONFIDENCE FRAME

"Courage doesn't mean you don't get afraid. Courage means you don't let fear stop you"

BETHANY HAMILTON

The ultimate 'good in, good out', helpful frame is what we call your deep confidence frame. It is the mindset that you need to be able to accelerate your surfing, and charge, regardless of the conditions.

Confidence refers to your belief in the worthiness of your personal abilities and surfing abilities.

Building deep confidence is essential for all aspects of surfing performance, from how you perform your turns to stepping up to bigger waves. It is what we draw on when we are ready to accelerate our surfing.

Strategies to build deep confidence:

- ① Skate Simulation
- ① Goal Setting
- ① Celebrating success
- ① Improve concentration and focus
 - Develop a pre-surf routine to set your mindset, focus on controllables, what's important now and your surf hacks

FRUSTRATION

Frustration is a cause of stress and is usually experienced when we perceive that something is getting in the way of achieving our surfing goals.

In the surf, frustration can be expressed in behaviours such as swearing, over paddling, or an uneasy feeling in the stomach. At its extreme, this energy can be expressed as verbal or physical aggression towards others.

Or frustration can drive us back down the S curve.

What triggers your frustration Frame in your surf progression?

Psychological techniques improving excitement levels

Before heading to shred on waves, different arousal states will be experienced. Determining factors are height of waves (small or big), amount of people (uncrowded or crowded) and breaks you are surfing (beach or reef). Psychology techniques can help improve your arousal state and surf performance.

It is important to combine other psychological techniques in order to improve your arousal level. Example is the surf being big, crowded and is a reef break. State of anxiety will become reduced as a state of relaxation becomes achieved.

At this stage it is important to assess the conditions and discover where the ideal paddling route is. Once assessed it will become easy to locate the best takeoff spot.

Now arousal levels will have eased off from a state of anxiety towards a state of confidence and relaxation due to introducing a plan of attack.

In the lineup with arousal levels improved, other psychological influences will be introduced including mind surfing and positive self talk.

While in the lineup mind surfing unridden waves will give you a great pathway to master the take off. You will be now boosting in confidence and positive self talk starts to become natural as you pull into the best ride of the session.



SURF PREPARATION ROUTINE

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN TO STAY AND PLAY

KNOW YOUR STRESSORS & STRESS MARKERS

Do you know what triggers your stress response?

Do you know when you are 'stressed' in the surf?

How does your body respond and tell you that you are going into your version of Fight or Flight?

The 5x5 is a breathing technique where we breathe in for a count of 5, hold that breath for a count of 5, exhale for a count of 5, hold for a count of 5, then repeat 5 times. It is designed to slow the system down and to allow us to regain control of our attention through the counting.

Once we have control of our attention again, we ask a very important question...

ASK: "WHAT'S IMPORTANT NOW?"

We call this the W.I.N? question.

This involves our ability to focus our attention on the our surf hacks.

ASSESS & REFRAME

Stress almost always arises because the Frames we have around ourselves and the Frames we have around the task are out of balance. To 'Stay and Play' we may need to reframe one or both of these Frames. To reframe a situation means to look at what is happening with a different, more proactive Frame. We can also reframe our stress response and see it as helpful towards achieving our goals.

PLAN & ACT (MOVE)

Now we make a plan and put that plan into action. Use the OMBE self assessment to get your plan going.



WHY IS SURFING SO DAMN DIPI

"Dancing is the same as surfing...surfers move to waves, got to understand the beat of the wave, crescendos, know what you are dancing to...it's a different song everyday"

Clayton Nienaber

Emotions

Shallow confidence: unreasonable goals, don't have confidence, want to show off to their mates, frustrated, wrong energy because of expectations

Have to make the mistake, don't have the deep confidence

Body surf, body board, magic at every step, You can tell them where to go and how to position it, but if a negative headspace, you will run from it.

MIND SURFER - ACCELERATED SURFING PROGRAM

Author – Kym Bancroft

Photography - Shayne Nienaber

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