



THIS CHANGED EVERYTHING

How developing Mental Toughness transformed my life - and how it can do the same for you

I used to think resilience was something you were born with. Some people just had the ability to cope - and others (like me) didn't.

Growing up, my life was chaos. My mum was seriously mentally ill and an alcoholic. My home life was unstable and unpredictable. I didn't feel seen. And I definitely didn't feel in control.

I grew up feeling lost, angry, anxious - and it showed. I made some reckless choices. I pushed people away. I lived in survival mode for years.

Then one day, I picked up a book. Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. It wasn't rocket science - but it was a spark. The idea that I could train my thinking? That I could change how I functioned in the world? It blew my mind.

That's what Mental Toughness is. Not cold. Not aggressive. Not "pushing through" until you burn out. It's about building inner strength. Staying hopeful, optimistic. Looking at life's challenges from new perspectives. Knowing you have options when under pressure. Creating calm in chaos. Choosing how to respond, even when life throws its worst at you.

**The truth is: You don't rise to the level of your goals.
You fall to the level of your mindset.**



THIS CHANGED EVERYTHING

Most people set goals and hope they'll be "ready" when the time comes. But they don't train themselves for the pressure, fear, self-doubt or discomfort that they may experience along the way.

So they give up.

Not because they're weak - but because no one ever showed them how to handle the hard stuff.

Once I understood this, I got serious. I started training my mind like I'd train a muscle - and everything in my life changed.

The foundation of all my work now is a psychological model called the **4C's of Mental Toughness** (*developed by AQR International*).

It explains how we respond to pressure, challenge and uncertainty - and how we can get better at it, every day.

Every one of us can develop Mental Toughness every day, and I hope this inspires you to do just that!

Let's take a closer look.

CONTROL

The first step to getting your power back

For most of my early life, I felt like I was on a runaway train. My home was unpredictable. School was a nightmare. Relationships were unstable. I was constantly reacting - angry, anxious, exhausted. Like life was happening to me, and I had no say in any of it.

Then I discovered something game-changing: I couldn't control what happened around me - but I could control how I responded.

In the context of Mental Toughness, control comes in two forms:

- **Life Control** Believing you can shape your own path. That you're not a passenger in your own life. You make the plan. You steer the direction.
- **Emotional Control** Managing your emotions, so they don't manage you. Staying steady under pressure. Choosing how to behave - instead of reacting on impulse.

Once I started to reclaim control - of my emotions, my habits, my reactions - everything shifted.

mental toughness
TIP

Do a 5-minute “Power Check-In” each morning

Ask yourself:

- What do I want to feel today?
- What can I take control of?
- What am I letting control me - and how can I change that?

You don't need to control everything. But the moment you take ownership of your mindset and behaviour, you change the game.

CHALLENGE

Where growth really happens

I used to think challenge meant danger. It meant humiliation, embarrassment and failure. So I avoided it. Played small. Stuck to what I knew.

But then I learned to see challenges in a different light.

Mentally tough people don't love failure - they just don't fear it. They know discomfort is the doorway to growth. Every time you step into the unknown, you stretch your limits. And that's what makes you better able to manage challenges.

Now, when something feels scary, I see it as a signal: *Go there.*

It's in the challenge that we build resilience, resourcefulness, self-belief. That's where life gets exciting.

mental toughness
TIP

Flip the Fear

Ask yourself:

“What's one good thing that could come from this challenge?”
Then take one tiny action toward it - today.

If you know, deep down, that you constantly resist making a certain change, then now is the time to break that habit.

Challenges, and being challenged, don't need to be things you fear. They are actually the fuel you can use to propel you forward.

COMMITMENT

This is what separates the doers from the dabblers

When it comes to setting goals, anyone can get excited at the start. Most people are brilliant for the first few days. But then tedium sets in. It all starts to get a bit boring. And inconvenient. And, hey, no one is watching...

That's where mental toughness shows up.

Commitment means keeping your promises to yourself. It's doing what you said you'd do - even when the buzz wears off.

That's how I became a rally driver, a boxer, a mountaineer, an ocean rower. Not because I was the best, but because I kept showing up. No matter what.

mental toughness
TIP

Create a "No Matter What List"

Choose one daily action that aligns with your goal.

Something small but something you can repeat consistently.

Then do it. Every day. No matter what.

You don't need motivation. You need momentum.

Setting a task is easy. Completing that task is usually much harder.

Just imagine these of satisfaction when you have completed your task!

CONFIDENCE

It's not loud, But it is unshakeable

Confidence isn't about being the most talented, or the most fearless. It's not something you're born with - it's something you develop.

It's about having trust in yourself, with your inner voice saying *"Whatever happens, I'll figure it out."*

I didn't sit on Rally Stage starts, aim for mountain summits or enter the boxing ring because I felt "ready." I did it because I trained my mind to keep going. I'd faced hard things before - and that gave me confidence I could do it again.

Confidence is the natural result of control, commitment and challenge. It's earned, not gifted.

mental toughness
TIP

Write a "Proof List"

Think of 5 times you did something hard.

Times you were scared... but did it anyway.

Write them down. Put them somewhere visible.

This is your reminder: You've done hard things before.

You can do them again.

Most people will make a judgement about you, based on the confidence you display.

People need to see you are confident, so they can start to trust you, and work with you.

If you appear nervous, it will take a long time to build trust.

Sometimes we have to display confidence even when we're not feeling it!



THIS CHANGED EVERYTHING

So...What About You?

If you feel stuck.

If you know there's more in you, but you're not sure how to get it out.

If you want to stop spiralling when things get hard - and start stepping up...

Start here.

Not with a 5-year plan or a 5am routine.

Just with one decision:

To start training your mindset, like you'd train your body

Work on the 4Cs. Little by little. Every single day.

Because that's what Mental Toughness is.

It's the quiet strength to do the hard things. The right things.
The brave things.

It changed everything for me.

And I'm telling you now - if I can do it, you can too.

*Credit: The 4Cs model of Mental Toughness was developed by
Professor Peter Clough and Doug Strycharczyk of AQR International.*