

when faced with what for others would be an unacceptable level of risk.

The use of mental training, and in particular imagery, has been highlighted as the single most important characteristic that separates sporting champions from their less successful competitors. This is something the recreational climbing world is beginning to embrace. In our role as instructors, coaches and guides developing a better awareness of the coping strategies being used in mainstream sport and adapting these to meet the needs of our clients could pay huge dividends, with regards to their development. A number of texts are available that provide an insight to these processes and their use in the climbing environment. A good starting point would be *The Rock Warriors Way & Espresso Lessons* by Arno Ilgner and *Maximum Climbing* by Eric Horst.

The process of achieving the optimal mental state for climbing is a very personal one and will be dependent on the individual's ability to focus on a positive outcome in a calm state. There is no quick fix to enable us to develop these skills in our students, but we don't expect them to develop the physical skills immediately either. We possibly focus more of our attention on the physical side at present, to the detriment of our students' psychological development. It may be that we need to revisit the skills we provide to our students to better equip them as safe, competent and focused climbers.

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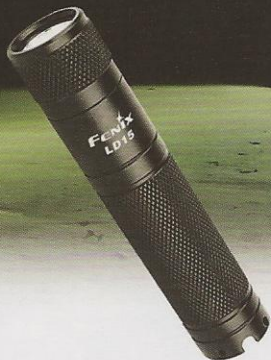
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