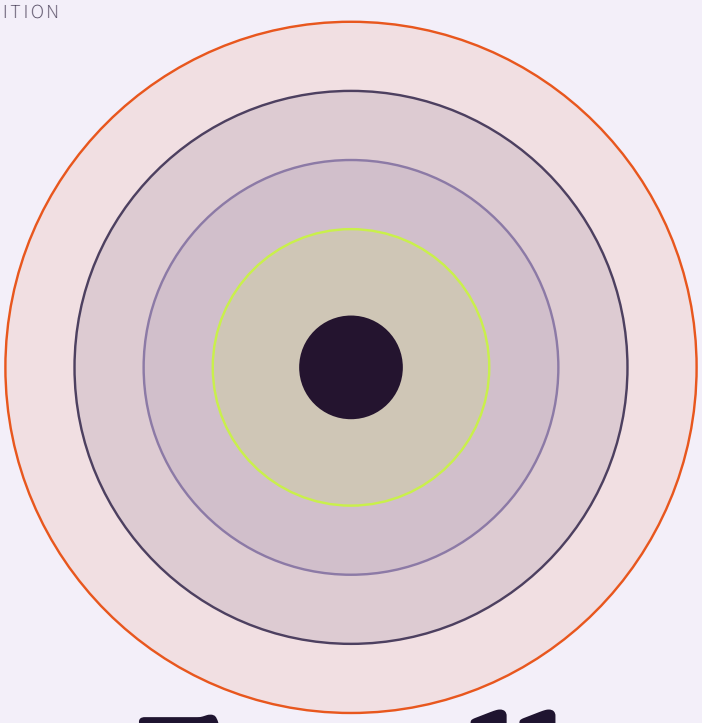
NOVEMBER 6, 2026



# Inner Excellence: Train Your Mind for Extraordinary Performance and the Best Possible Life

A reading of the book by Jim Murphy (2010)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of Inner Excellence: Train Your Mind for Extraordinary Performance and the Best Possible Life, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

# The book in a minute

Jim Murphy is a performance coach who has worked with professional athletes and with people in business. He argues that extraordinary performance comes less from willpower and outcome goals than from inner freedom. In his view the main thing in the way is fear, and fear grows when your sense of worth is tied to results and to other people's approval. The alternative he trains is love, trust and presence in the moment, so that the skill you have built can run without interference. He draws on his coaching work, and the book includes daily exercises and a training programme for building these habits of mind.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

# The takeaways

1

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

### When your worth rides on the result, every result becomes a threat.

Murphy's starting point is identity. If a score, a sale or a review decides whether you are good enough, then each performance puts you on trial, and the body reacts to a trial with fear. Separating who you are from how you did is the first piece of training, not a reward for winning.

2

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

### Fear is the main thing standing between you and the skill you already have.

Most performers who struggle under pressure are not short of ability. Fear tightens the muscles, narrows attention and pulls the mind into the future. Murphy treats removing fear as more useful than adding effort.

3

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

### Needing approval hands your steadiness to other people.

If you play for the crowd, the coach or the boss, their reaction becomes your weather. The book asks you to notice where you perform to be liked, and to let that need go so you can attend to the task in front of you.

4

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

### The only moment you can perform in is this one.

Worry lives in the next shot and regret lives in the last one. Presence is the skill of bringing attention back to what is happening now, again and again. Murphy treats it as something you practise, not a mood you wait for.

5

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

### Trust means letting trained skill run without the thinking mind getting in the way.

Practice is where you analyse and correct. Performance is where you let go and allow what you have built to work. Trying to control every movement in the moment usually makes it worse.

6

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

### Love is a steadier fuel than fear.

Fear of losing can push you hard for a while, but it tightens you and wears you down. Murphy argues that playing from love, for the craft, the people and the chance to compete, lasts longer and frees you to take the right risks.

7

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

## Outcome goals give you a direction; your attention belongs on the process.

Wanting to win is fine. Thinking about winning while you play is not. Choose the few actions you control, put your attention on those, and let the result be what it is.

8

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

## Inner strength is trained like any other strength: daily, in small reps.

The book closes with daily exercises because insight alone fades by the next hard moment. A few minutes of practice each day, kept up, is what makes calm available when it matters.

9

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

## Winning does not make you free, but being free makes good performance more likely.

Many people plan to relax once they have proved themselves. Murphy reverses the order. Work on inner freedom first, and the results tend to take care of more of themselves than you expect.

PUT IT TO WORK

# Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Name what you think is on the line
- [ ] Build one pre-performance routine
- [ ] Swap the outcome goal for process goals
- [ ] Book a daily ten-minute training slot
- [ ] Choose a physical reset for mistakes

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Run your routine before every key moment
- ◯ Review the process, not the scoreboard
- ◯ Catch yourself seeking approval

30 days · Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

# Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

# The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

# The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

## Name what you think is on the line

Pick your next important performance.

Write down the outcome you feel your worth depends on, then write one sentence about who you are that stays true whatever the result.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

## Build one pre-performance routine

Write a routine of three parts: one slow breath pattern, one process cue for what to attend to, and one release phrase for when something goes wrong.

Keep it short enough to run in under a minute.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

## Swap the outcome goal for process goals

For your next game, talk or exam, replace the result you want with two or three actions you fully control.

Write them on a card you can see.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

## Book a daily ten-minute training slot

Choose a fixed time, such as before breakfast, and put ten minutes in your calendar for inner training: a few slow breaths, then a short written reflection.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

## Choose a physical reset for mistakes

Pick one small action, like a long exhale or touching your wrist, that marks a mistake as finished.

Rehearse it this week so it is ready when you need it.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

# Run your routine before every key moment

Before each serve, presentation or exam paper, run the same breath, cue and release.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

## November 2026

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 1 |
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| 9 ○ | 10 ○ | 11 ○ | 12 ○ | 13 ○ | 14 ○ | 15 ○ |
| 16 ○ | 17 ○ | 18 ○ | 19 ○ | 20 ○ | 21 ○ | 22 ○ |
| 23 ○ | 24 ○ | 25 ○ | 26 ○ | 27 ○ | 28 ○ | 29 ○ |
| 30 ○ | | | | | | |

## December 2026

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
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| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

# Review the process, not the scoreboard

Each evening, answer three questions: where was I present, where did fear show up, and what would I have done if nothing had been on the line?

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

## November 2026

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

# Catch yourself seeking approval

Once a day, notice a moment when you performed to be liked or to look good.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

## November 2026

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
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## December 2026

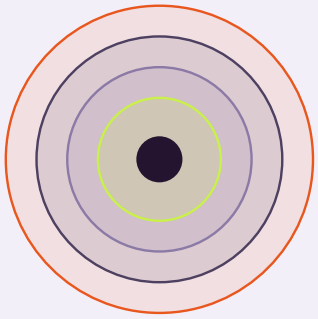
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



# Your worth is not on the line. Only this moment is.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER JIM MURPHY