

CHECK UP FROM THE NECK UP

How Insightful conversation is changing how Dr. P approaches the mental game

BY PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGIST, DR. RICK PEREA

Last publication, I told you a little about me and what I do as a Performance Psychologist. As stated then, I am not a Clinical Psychologist which most often deal with pathology; in other words, what's wrong with someone. In my practice, ThinkOne4you.org, I teach techniques and protocols (Performance Coaching) that are evidence and research based. I help everyone from pro athletes (I was the former psychologist of the 2015 World Champion Denver Broncos, Denver Nuggets and Colorado Rockies, to name a few) to executives to everyday laypeople. We also train the brain in Neurofeedback, Alpha-Stim for regulating brain waves, and have a float tank (sensory deprivation tank) that also regulates brain waves. At ThinkOne, we are a full-service behavior design facility.

The Power of Conversation

That being said, the American Psychological Association (APA), the governing body of psychology in the United States, is now beginning to recognize the "Power of Conversation" in helping people regulate anxiety (the number one performance killer), connect with others, change minds, save lives and prevent disaster on a global scale. Traditionally, all forms of psychology have offered elements of therapy, psychotherapy, counseling and life and performance coaching. Today, psychology is now realizing that not all people vibe or connect with therapy and/or counseling. In fact, at ThinkOne, I do not offer therapy and/or counseling because I find it grossly ineffective at really reaching people at a process and outcome level. In other words, teaching my clients techniques and tools to put in their toolboxes in the game of life and sport is invaluable and proactive, as opposed to the reactive-oriented therapy/counseling base.

Doctoral Candidate Julius Thomas: Experience with Conversation

Since winning Super Bowl 50 with the Broncos, I have now begun to realize there are many ways to reach people - including athletes at all levels, executives, and everyday people who live in a performance-oriented society like the United States. As such, the APA is timely in their effort to address the power and art of conversation. According to Julius Thomas, former Denver Bronco, Jacksonville Jaguar and Miami Dolphin, and now a doctoral student in neuropsychology, my ability to connect with people from all socio-economic backgrounds is what made our sessions impactful.

"Dr. P. immediately stood out to me because of his ability to connect with so many kinds of people. He is funny, charismatic, smart as shit, and perhaps most importantly, empathic," Thomas said. "Dr. P told me that

the most important thing that a team, company or family can possess is love. At first, I thought that was kind of crazy, but when he explained how vital love is, it made total sense. To this day, I simply love that dude; he is my guy and always will be."

Without a doubt, my connection with Julius is based on the spoken word - or *conversation* - otherwise known as "chopping it up." Further, although self-assessment is one of the least objective ways to analyze behavior and/or communication skills, I think my ability to converse verbally with clients, teams, organizations and individuals is what sets me apart as a speaker and psychologist in general.

Scientists are unlocking exciting insights about how simple conversation can be a game changer

According to the APA, conversations hold immense power and help us form new connections and deepen existing ones. However, psychological research is just now beginning to examine the impact of this ancient art of communication. Michael Kardas, PhD, an assistant professor of management at Oklahoma State University who now studies human conversations says, "People's well-being is determined in large part by the quality of their social relationships, which rely heavily on conversations that they have with each other."

Although conversation with friends, colleagues and other associates is fundamentally different from conversations with a psychological practitioner, informal chats like walk-and-talk, and ride-and-vibe (often used in equine therapy) have been main staples among the more progressive practitioners in the last 20 years. In fact, at ThinkOne we have partnered with West Wind Stables to offer our clients a way of communicating and interacting with the animals. However, we have found that many of our clients want to go up to the stables in Morrison, Colorado to "chat" and "talk" about their challenges and be around the



From left to right: Brandon Marshall, Danny Trevathan, Chris Harris Jr., T.J. Ward, Dr. P, and Malik Jackson. Super Bowl 50 defense at DeMarcus Ware's Hall of Fame Party.

animals. Heidi Hughes, the proprietor, says that her mini-donkeys and horses sense our bio-fields of energy and attach to our energy fields. This may explain why so many feel comfortable or connected while around her horses, mini-donkeys, chickens and working barn cats. Hughes says that people can generally relax at a deeper level when getting counseling or coaching around or riding her animals. Kardas, supports her supposition: "...going a little deeper in conversation, as well as learning to navigate challenges in one's life, can create the kinds of connections that leave people feeling happier."

Emotional and Psychological Support: More accessible and safer than ever before

Several years ago, I learned one of the most powerful lessons I ever have in my career: One of my clients came in one day and started talking to me about her life and relationships in earnest. Typically, I take five to 10 minutes to "warm-up" and then we "get to work." However, on this day, we didn't get to work and just kept discussing her life. This discussion had tears, laughter - deep belly laughter - and lots of compassion. After she left my office, I intellectually said to myself, "We didn't get much done," because I had not taught her a technique or protocol. In fact, she came out of that session with more insight, clarity and determination than any session we had ever engaged in.

Dr. P. and his team of wellness professionals are available to "chop-it-up;" but be forewarned, you may not "get much done." Set up an appointment with Dr. P. and his team by emailing drp@thinkone4you.org!

Dr. Rick Perea, PhD is one of the most energetic and dynamic Performance Psychologists in the nation and is available to change your life today. Listen to Dr. P and Sandy Clough every Wednesday from 5:30-6:00 pm. To get your "Check-Up from the Neck-Up."



Teammates for life George Washington High School Hall of Fame Members (L) Chris Brewer, (M) Dr. P, (R) Vaughn Williams



Dr. P connecting with audience members during a recent presentation.