

Astronaut's Guide For Bowls: Mental Models

I was going to write separate articles from selected 12 dot points from the original article, but I chose to give you readers credit and allow you to translate / transfer the content of the dot points into related bowls practices be it for coaching, training, learning by repetition, intensity and purpose, elite bowls attitudes, game planning, team factors, etc.

The points are from an article by Chris Hadfield 'an astronaut's guide to mental skills' based on his experiences as a Canadian astronaut.

Thanks to Joanne Hedgespeth from California, USA and a member of our pBus squad, who retrieved and shared the article.

Here are those 12 points from Hadfield:

- Over time, I learned how to anticipate problems in order to prevent them, and how to respond effectively in critical situations.
- Success is feeling good about the work you do throughout the long, unheralded journey that may or may not wind up at the launch pad. You can't view training solely as a stepping stone to something loftier. It's got to be an end in itself.
- A lot of our training is like this: We learn how to do things that contribute in a very small way to a much larger mission, but do absolutely nothing for our own career prospects.
- Truly being ready means understanding what could go wrong - and having a plan to deal with it.
- A simulation is an opportunity to practice, but frequently it's also a wake up call: we really don't know exactly what we are doing and we'd better figure it out before we're facing this situation in space.
- In any field, it's a plus if you view criticism as potentially helpful advice rather than a personal attack.
- At NASA we're not just expected to respond positively to criticism, but to go one step further and draw attention to our own missteps and miscalculations. It's not easy for hyper competitive people to talk openly about screw ups that make them look foolish or incompetent. Management has to create a climate where owning up to mistakes is

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- permissible and colleagues have to agree, collectively, to cut each other some slack.
- If you're thinking about yourself, you can't see the whole picture.
 - Over the years I've learned that investing in other people's success doesn't just make them more likely to enjoy working with me; it also improves my own chances of survival and success.
 - The best way to contribute to a brand new environment is not by trying to prove what a wonderful addition you are, it's by trying to have a neutral impact, to observe and learn from those who are already there, and to pitch in with grunt work wherever possible.
 - Ultimately leadership is not about glorious crowning acts, it is about keeping your team focused on a goal and motivated to do their best to achieve it.
 - If you start thinking that only your biggest and shiniest moments count, you're setting yourself up to feel like failure most of the time.

I got to the end typing the points and I thought of three things:
First that bowls teams, clubs, associations and players are so so far away from the approach spelt out by Hadfield;

Secondly why, oh why in the world of bowls don't we learn from all these insights, this knowledge, from other fields of endeavour, all these books on enhancing performance, all these videos and webinars out and about from various sports psychologists;

Third, that our pBus bowls squad is on track in accessing, adopting and applying the principles and knowledge espoused by Hadfield even if we are only just beyond the starting line on our path to our destination.

I feel sky high in that knowledge.

Lachlan Tighe, 2020