**Focusing our thoughts when Batting**

***Concentration*** is a very important part of our game and you would have probably heard someone say that the mental part of the game makes up for 90% of the game. It doesn’t really matter how good your technical game is if you are not in the right headspace. Thinking ahead of the game or thinking about something that has already happened will eventually cut short your time at the crease.

***The premium time to be focusing your concentration*** should be refined down to the time it takes the bowler to deliver a ball. From the time he turns on his mark to the time you react to that delivery is the most important period in the game for a batsman. This can even be refined down to the split second you make your decision of how you are going to react to that delivery. This focus and the things going through your mind can be simplified to keep your head & thoughts as clear as possible. If our line of thought is focused to this short period and it is totally about such things as keeping your wicket intact, not letting that bowler get you out, staying in the middle all day, watch the ball out of his hand etc etc then we are likely to make less mistakes in judgement due to having less things interfering with our thought process.

***My way of concentrating*** was to have a mantra that was the only thing I was thinking about. “He’s not getting me out” and “I’m staying here all day” was the things that I repeated to myself starting each time the bowler turned to run in.

***The reaction to the shot you play*** happens automatically, your reaction happening without consciously thinking about it. You don’t have time to even say anything to yourself, you just play the shot that you have decided to play.

Back to the reasons for not thinking ahead or back! The ***only ball that counts in the game is the one that you are about to face.*** No other ball can get you out. The ball after or the ball that was bowled before cannot get you out. The one you are about to face can.

***Future Balls*** – if you are deciding what shot you want to play before the next ball is bowled then you are probably setting yourself up to play a particular shot wherever the ball is pitched. Disaster!!! Clear your mind & let your automatic judgement kick in.

***Past Balls*** – You just got dropped at second slip playing at a wide ball too early in your dig. You didn’t get your foot across far enough & got the edge! As long as you are aware enough not to make the same mistake again that ball is over. That ball can no longer have any bearing on the game from a batting point of view. If you let the experience of being dropped get to you & you are still thinking about that last ball then you have not cleared your mind and will not be in the right headspace for the next ball, the only ball that matters.

***Desire & hunger to score runs*** are imperative if you are to succeed in an innings or a season. If you want to work hard and apply yourself & your mind to scoring runs for a reason you will be in a better position to do so. These reasons may differ with the individual. Personal goals to achieve, club pride, a desire to win, a hatred of loss, teammates to help out are all examples of motivations to do well.

***The Ebb & Flows of a game -*** The game nearly always happens whereby periods of the game are harder than others. I found batting was a matter of toughing out the hard periods to cash in on the easier periods. To get impatient in the harder periods almost always meant disaster!!!! To be level headed, clear minded in the easier periods meant that you could tap into a fresh supply of runs to boost your booty. Also being aware through the hard times that if you don’t make mistakes and discard the thoughts of how hard it is to score easily will be worth it when the game frees up. You need to always be aware of when these periods kick in, both hard and easy.

***Cashing in Big time –***  When you start to get results from your increased application to your game the secret is not to be satisfied with what you feel is enough. Invariably when you throw your dig away because you feel satisfied personally will put your team back in danger of a mini collapse and possibly your team total may not be the score that was expected. Regroup your thoughts as soon as you start to think this way. Things to think about when you are in this haze are;

1. How hard it was to get where you are!
2. If you get out how hard it will be to get back to that position in the next game
3. How close you are to reaching a ton....the only real score in cricket!
4. If I get out now what position will that put my team in!
5. If I get out all I will be doing is sitting around watching.

These are only a few aspects of trying to help organise your mental capacity to help your game.