

# ***West Indies Cricket History: A Psychological Perspective***

***Lecture by Rudi V. Webster 18/4/2015***

## ***The Forgotten Games***

If you could go back in time and walk through the streets, parks and pastures of Barbados you would see little boys in short pants, sometimes barefooted, without pads or any other bodily protection, batting fearlessly with bats made from bits of wood or coconut branches against bowlers delivering a hard cork ball or a knitted ball at great speed. At the beaches and in the streets you would see them playing a game of “first bounce out” cricket, tip and run, firms or marble cricket.

These unstructured forms of cricket were so enjoyable and competitive that many of the boys preferred them to organized games and net practice. These games contributed enormously to the mental, physical and technical development of many of our great cricketers and formed the foundation on which they built their success. In recent times the teaching of cricket has changed considerably and is now more structured and coach oriented than before. But are we producing better players? Are the students learning any better? There are now more coaches in the game than there have ever been and yet the need for good coaching has never been greater.

## ***Keith Miller and Sir Garfield Sobers***

In the nineteen sixties I read a book by the great Australian all-rounder Keith Miller. In his book, *Keith Miller on Cricket*, Miller said that bright, exciting cricket comes from the minds of the players, and that since the game began, the players who have made the biggest impact did so because of their mental make up, rather than their technical skill. He felt that cricket is as much a test of a man’s character and mental strength as it is about his range of strokes or bowling accuracy.

Miller said, “Of all the nations who play cricket, the West Indians show a bigger desire to play cricket joyfully than any other race. It is in their minds. They also possess a natural ability to relax which is one of the foundations of good batting. They do not get all knotted and twisted mentally, and they are never beaten by reputations of opposing players. They play with dancing feet because they come from a region where the feet are always moving, where people are given to dancing.”

If Miller could return to this Earth today, he would be shocked to see the state of our cricket and would probably go right back to his grave wondering, “What the hell has become of West Indies

cricket? What has happened to all those wonderful things I used to admire and say about the players?"

Sir Garfield Sobers echoed some of Miller's thoughts when he told me many years ago, "The proper use of the mind is the one thing that separates champions from the merely good players. I have come across lots of players who have had more natural ability than some of the great players but they never made it because they couldn't think clearly and sensibly. No matter how good a player you are, you won't make it to the top unless you develop your mind. The top players know how to think, how to concentrate and what to do in tough situations."

Sir Garfield then went on to give one of his formulae for the development of young players. He said, "If I had a free hand in coaching I would initially spend most of my time teaching the basics of the game. I would then spend an equal amount of time teaching the players how to identify and deal with the many different situations they will face during the game. I feel that this combination gives the player the best preparation and the best chance to do well."

Sir Garfield is spot on. I would, however, add a third component to his combination – the improvement of self-belief, self-motivation and self-discipline. Experts tell us that the depth of a player's motivation and self-discipline determines the level of his performance. Some of them even claim that the correlation between self-discipline and success is greater than the correlation between ability and success.

That is why at the old Shell Cricket Academy in Grenada, we gave the top prizes not to the best batsman, bowler or fielder, but to the player with the greatest self-discipline, the player with the highest level of motivation and the player with the best work ethic. I believe that we must now accord the highest priority to these three factors if we truly wish to revive our cricket. I don't think the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) and the regional boards fully understood some of the things we were doing at the Academy. Unfortunately, people only listen to what they can understand.

After one of the Academy terms, I said that I was disappointed and concerned about the work ethic, motivation and the lack of discipline in students from Barbados and the other territories. At the time, I thought that these were three dangerous young cancers that if left untreated could spread and cause serious problems for West Indies cricket later on. The Barbados Cricket Association took offense to my comments and accused me publicly of discriminating against Barbadian players - not the present administration, a previous one.

But, if you look at West Indies cricket over the last decade or so you would notice that the players have been somewhat weak in those three areas. Two of my Australian friends recently complained to me that West Indies teams have no fight in them, give in too easily when things are not going their way, and too often look disinterested on the field. And they said that the team's inconsistency is largely due to a lack of discipline. They gave the team these poor ratings because they were comparing recent players with the players in the Worrell and Lloyd teams. I feel that our current teams have enough talent to be very competitive. If this is true, why isn't the team playing better? That's the question the brains in West Indies cricket must answer. I think the new coach Phil Simmons will make a difference.

### ***The Slide of West Indies cricket***

West Indies cricket has been in steady decline for the last 15 years or so and with the advent of every new president and CEO that decline seems to get steeper. Although the team reached the quarterfinals of the just concluded World Cup, its performances hit rock bottom in the matches against Scotland and Ireland, two Associate teams, and against, England, India, South Africa and New Zealand. The custodians of West Indies cricket seem unable to change that trend and start a second growth curve.

Team Australia was in a similar decline a few years ago but unlike the WICB, Cricket Australia acted quickly, refocused on cricket priorities, made some tough but sensible decisions, and implemented most of the recommendations in the Argus Report in 2011. Four years later, Australia won the ICC World Cup and is currently in second place in today's ICC Test rankings. That is some recovery! The slide of West Indies cricket has been going on for almost two decades. It is time for a change.

To some people, the task of reviving West Indies cricket looks impossible. But what sometimes seems impossible and difficult from a particular perspective becomes possible and easy from another perspective, as this story shows:

Three men each with a piece of wood in his hand let go of the wood at the same time. In one case the wood fell, in the other it went upwards and in the third it stayed at the same height. You might say it was impossible because, like most people, you assume that all three men were standing on the ground. But if I told you that one man was standing on the ground, the second was under water and the third was in space, you would automatically come to a different conclusion and recognize that what you thought impossible is in fact possible.

Perhaps the cricket boards in the West Indies should now look at their challenges in different ways and try to find new paths to recovery. Since we make most of our mistakes in the perceptual phase of thinking that is where they will find the answers to their problems. The WICB and regional boards can do this by asking themselves the right questions, by being brutally honest with their answers, and by relisting their order of priorities, particularly the cricket priorities.

### ***Sir Frank Worrell***

In an interview 50 years ago Frank Worrell said, "From the age of six, I was observing and emulating popular players in Barbados and I seemed to have been playing cricket for ages when I arrived at Combermere School at the age of twelve. I had already done a lot of bowling for the Roberts Boys and I bowled at many senior players, even as a young kid of ten or eleven when they ran out of practice bowlers.

We used to prepare our own wickets in the far corner of Empire ground and we played cricket for days and days in the vacation. We had an Eleven we called the Starvation Eleven and we played from nine in the morning to three-thirty in the afternoon when the members of the Empire Club came to practice. These matches were played to an end and at times you found yourself batting for three days and then you had to go back and field for another day or two and it was in this environment I picked up the few strokes that I had.”

These unstructured and innovative games did wonderful things for the development of the young players. They improved the boys’ fitness and technique, sharpened their reflexes and forced them to watch the ball with eagle eyes in ways that no structured games could. More importantly, they taught the players how to think for themselves, to set their own goals and targets, to develop their own tactics and strategies, and to improve concentration, persistence, self-reliance and other important mental skills, in a way that no amount of professional coaching could. The players were learning by experience. They were working things out for themselves and without realising it, were building and strengthening the four pillars on which performance in cricket is built - **fitness, physical and technical skill, tactics and strategy, and the mental skills.**

If you don’t think these things are important, listen to what Jacques Kallis one of the greatest all-round cricketers ever to play the game said in my book about modern teaching and modern players:

In some ways coaching today is like a dictatorship. By that I mean that players are too dependent on their coaches and that coaches don’t encourage them to stand on their own feet, back their own judgment and make up their own minds. The player needs to be more self-reliant, and take responsibility for improving and managing his game.

When you are batting in the middle the coach can’t help you. You are on your own and if you can’t think for yourself, make proper decisions and deal with the different situations you are going to face, you won’t do well. Today when something goes wrong, one of the first things the player does is go to the coach (or analyst) to find out what is wrong and what he needs to do to fix the fault, instead of trying to work it out for himself. The coach can be helpful in these cases but the player must take responsibility for finding the solutions to his own problems.

Let’s get back to Worrell. He said, “I was playing cricket six hours a day and we would practise in the mornings before school in the far corner of the Fourth Eleven field and invariably in the afternoons we would go to the graveyard at St. Michael’s Cathedral and we would play on the concrete in front of a vault. We played there for hours. And if we weren’t there we were on the beach and it seemed as though our lives revolved around the game of cricket that we loved so much.”

**It requires at least 10.000 hours of disciplined effort and practice to master the fundamentals of your game and to acquire the expertise of a top player. That works out to**

**three hours practice every day for ten years.** Even then you must practise regularly to maintain that expertise.

How many hours do our young cricketers spend at practice or play during the course of a week? Do they come close to the figures I just mentioned? If they don't, they will struggle to realise their true potential.

We did wonderful things with our cricket in the past and produced some of the world's greatest teams and cricketers. Let's not discard the old and proven methods for the new but unproven ones. Let's try to find the right balance between structured and unstructured activities and between the old and the new.

Of Lancashire League cricket, Frank Worrell said, "One can learn more in three years of League cricket than in twelve years of cricket outside the United Kingdom, even at the international level. One learns to cope with the swerving ball, the turning ball, the cutter, and the stopping ball. One has to be brave enough to ignore the cold, dark and blustery weather, the running noses, cold hands and cold feet, faulty umpiring decisions, dropped catches and traditional needle matches.

League cricket is a must for any youngster who hopes to make the grade. One of the greatest assets one gets from league **cricket is a tremendous sense of responsibility** and a feeling of belonging."

Between the sixties and nineties most of our good cricketers played league or county cricket. Why have the numbers decreased so drastically in recent years? Has this decrease contributed in any way to the decline of our cricket at the international level?

Frank Worrell was one of our best cricket leaders. What he achieved in Australia in 1960/61 with his young team was truly remarkable. Few on his team had any kind of reputation before they arrived in Australia but when they left they were all superstars. The team was a happy unit, team spirit was high, team unity was strong, and the team played with purpose and confidence. Under Worrell's leadership the team became a cheerful, disciplined and tightly knit unit with powerful self-belief and a strong will to win.

Worrell's team so strongly captured the hearts and minds of the Australian public that half a million fans lined Collins Street in Melbourne to give the players a ticker tape farewell and an invitation to come back soon. This was an unprecedented send off; it had never happened before, nor has it happened since. West Indies narrowly lost the series to Australia, but cricket was the real winner.

Perhaps some of you here can tell me why our cricket leaders and administrators behave as though we never had a cricket history of any significance. West Indies dominated world cricket for more than fifteen years and the Lloyd/Richards team is still considered to be one of the best teams in the history of sport. Have we lost our cricket memory?

Let's remember our great achievements. But we must now look ahead and create a new vision for our cricket by rewriting its future. This is what good leaders do. They learn from the past, are drawn to the future by their vision, and act in the present to make that vision a reality. It is time for the Board and the players to bury their hatchets, transcend their current problems, and work together to revive West Indies cricket.

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### **Clive Lloyd's Leadership**

In the seventies and eighties Clive Lloyd accomplished what Worrell had achieved in the sixties. He brought together a diverse collection of talented individuals who lacked, direction, focus, discipline and common purpose and transformed them into a highly professional and all-conquering unit that dominated world cricket for fifteen consecutive years, and became one of the most successful teams in the history of sport.

I was the manager of Clive Lloyd's team during Kerry Packer's World Series of Cricket in Australia and saw first hand the birth, growth and development of that champion team.

There was a lot of ability and skill in that team but Clive knew that talent alone would not be enough to transform it into a champion team. Other things would be needed - a clear vision, strategic thinking, good preparation, mastery of the basics, first-class leadership, great teamwork, good motivation, strong self-discipline, good mental control and high standards of execution on the field.

Clive built his leadership and his champion team on three strong pillars; an agenda for change; a group of highly motivated and competent players committed to implementing his agenda; and the eradication of insularity, local prejudices, distrust and bad habits from the team.

He revealed his agenda for change to me over a few drinks in a Melbourne pub in 1976 soon after our disappointing Test series against Australia. He showed me his vision for the team – the best team in the world for the next ten years - and he explained his strategic plan for achieving that vision. He then told me that he would search the Caribbean for players with the 'right stuff' and would mould them into a highly motivated and disciplined unit to conquer all before them.

He wanted his side to be the fittest team physically and mentally, the best fielding team, the best bowling team, and the best batting team. And he wanted to become the most successful West Indies captain. He would favour players who were hardworking, enthusiastic and professional and would make self-discipline and mental toughness top priorities. Once these things were in place he would execute his plan in a forceful manner, using a quartet of aggressive fast bowlers to "hunt in a pack" against opposing batsmen.

He thought that eradicating local prejudices or insularity, the curse of West Indies cricket, and getting the players to trust, respect and care for each other were his most difficult challenges. He wanted to make things as simple as possible and ensure that every team member knew his role

and responsibilities, and understood the importance of good preparation and high standards. Getting each player to be a leader on the field was another important priority.

Those objectives became the building blocks of his team's amazing success. The magnitude of his achievements has not yet been fully appreciated by Caribbean people.

Clive was a quiet achiever and was often underrated because of what people perceived as an easy-going and laid-back style of captaincy. His greatest asset was his knowledge and understanding of his players and his ability to press the right buttons to get the best out of them.

For example, in a Test match in Perth, Western Australia, Joel Garner was bowling a series of no balls and became quite agitated because he realized that he was not in control of his bowling. After a while, Clive went up to him and asked him what on earth was going on. Joel started to make excuses when Clive stopped him and asked, "What size boots do you wear?" "Size fifteen," replied Joel. Clive then said to him, "You are wearing size 15 boots and you can't get a piece of your boot behind the line? C'mon man!" Joel went back to his mark and started to bowl again. He didn't bowl another no ball in the game.

At the start of the Kerry Packer World Series in Australia, Clive and I felt that two things were holding back the West Indies team. The first was lack of a clear vision and the second was lack of self-discipline. Early in the series we put a few simple initiatives in place to correct those deficiencies and soon after we saw a turn around in the discipline of the team.

One night the team had to go to a party in Sydney. I went ahead of the team and spoke with Richie Benaud, the former Australian captain for about half an hour before Richie asked, "Where are your guys?" I looked at my watch and told him that they would arrive in five minutes, at eight fifteen. He smiled and said, "You're joking. Your guys are never on time." At eight fifteen the team walked into the room. Richie's jaw fell open and he said, "If your players show this kind of discipline on the cricket field nobody will beat you." "We are working on it Richie."

As discipline improved the team trained and played better and went on to win the series. That victory was the first step along the path that led to the team's dominance of world cricket for fifteen consecutive years. Not many people know how disciplined that team was. The players had their fun off the field, but on the field it was all business.

Our team had a very important team meeting in Melbourne before the first Super Test against Australia in which Albert Padmore had us all in fits of laughter. After that meeting, I went to Kerry Packer and said to him. "We are going to beat the hell out of you." He laughed at me and replied, "That's a joke. You don't know how to win. You are weak mentally and you will cower and crumble under pressure."

I then said to Kerry, "Something took place in our last team meeting that will change all that. The players went through a process of self-acceptance and have come to terms with something that has been bugging them for a long time. I now expect them to go through a mental transformation. They are not even aware of the significance of what really happened in that meeting and probably never will, but soon, their self-image will change and they will become

different players. The team will be tougher mentally and will win the mental battle with the Australians.” Kerry gave me one of his famous looks and told me I was talking garbage and a lot of psychological rubbish.

We won the first game and eventually the series. After our first win Kerry said to me, “This is very dangerous for us. You buggers have just learned how to win against us. It will now be very difficult to beat you.” How right he was. It took Australia more than sixteen years to beat us again.

One other story is worth telling. The team flew from West Indies to Australia and when we arrived in Melbourne we had a press conference around midnight. We were dog-tired after some very long flights and when the press conference ended we all went to our rooms at about 1.30 in the morning and collapsed from sheer fatigue. Three hours later at 4.30 AM there was loud knocking on my door. When I opened the door there were Collis King and Joel Garner who said to me, “C’mon Doc. Let’s go for a run.” I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. “You’re crazy,” I said. “It is half past four in the morning.” “We know Doc,” said Collis, ‘But let’s go.’ I got myself ready and we went to a nearby park and did a bit of running. I mention this story to illustrate to you the level of motivation and discipline that there was in some of the players. As you know, Joel and Collis were creatures of the night and were extremely disciplined and motivated in other ways, which I do not care to discuss here.

On another occasion, Joel and Collis had a night out and got back to the hotel just as the bus was about to leave for the cricket ground. They got on to the bus and nothing was said to them. We were fielding that morning and Clive threw the ball to Joel who bowled unchanged throughout the first session, and continued after lunch. He never complained or showed any signs of tiredness. When I asked him how he managed to cope with that pressure, he said, “I couldn’t let the skipper get the better of me. I couldn’t let him break our spirit. Besides I wanted to go out the next night.”

### ***The Secret of success already lies within you***

Today, success in top class sport is no longer possible with just talent and ability. Success must first be created in the mind, then planned and pursued diligently over time. It does not happen all at once or in a straight line. It is a journey that takes time and energy, patience and persistence, discipline and motivation and is punctuated by ups and downs, successes and failures. Enjoyment of that journey is a key to good performance. This formula for success has been around West Indies cricket since the very early days.

When I was a young man, I received that advice from Tiger Smith an old Warwickshire player who represented England from 1911 to 1914, and he had learned these things from his predecessors who played cricket in the late eighteen hundreds. Today’s sports psychologists have cleverly repackaged these ideas but they have been around for a very long time.

Don't waste your time looking for the secret to success. This secret already lies within you. Work instead to develop your own system of success. You change your path and trajectory in life and in sport when you change the way you think and the things you believe, value and picture in your mind. The thoughts, and pictures that you imprint in your mind today determine what you become tomorrow.

Too often in the Caribbean we believe that we are not good enough; something is not working and needs to be fixed; something is missing and something needs to be added to make us worthwhile. These limiting beliefs often hide the wealth within us and compromise our self-confidence and self-belief. Perhaps this is a skeleton of our colonial past.

Here is a story that fits that bill:

A young man had a clay statue that was in his family for generations and he always wished that it were gold instead. When he earned some money he had the statue covered with gold and it looked just the way he wanted it. But after a while the gold plating started to flake off in spots so he had it gold-plated again. As time went by he spent his resources maintaining the gold façade of the statue.

One day his grandfather visited and he showed him the statue but he was a bit embarrassed because clay was showing through in some places.

The old man who knew the statue well then took a moist cloth and started to rub it. Gradually he removed some of the clay and said, "Many years ago the statue must have fallen into mud and got covered with it. You wouldn't have known that. But look here."

As he continued to remove the clay a bright yellow color shone through. "Underneath the clay your statue has been solid gold from the beginning. You didn't have to put more gold on it. From now on all you have to do to show the gold is remove any clay or dirt that settles on the statue."

Like the clay on the gold statue, limiting beliefs, negative thoughts, self doubts, poor excuses and bad habits hide the wealth within us and undermine our desire and ability to play well and achieve success. Removing these obstacles frees up inner resources and brings them to life. Playing better is often more about unlearning or removing bad habits and fears than about learning or adding new ones.

These are the things that Worrell and Lloyd did so effectively with their players. They removed the 'dirt' from their players' minds, cleared up their thinking and self-talk, and showed them the gold that they had inside them.

***The Power of Beliefs***

Roger Bannister the English athlete created history years ago by breaking the four-minute barrier for the mile. Until then everyone believed that it was impossible to run the mile in less than four minutes. Once Bannister smashed that limiting belief, the task became easier because everyone knew that it could be done. Within a year, the race was run under four minutes at least 40 times and within ten years, 296 times!

Your beliefs determine the limits of what you can achieve. What you achieve is largely a matter of what you believe. Here is a story to illustrate this point.

Just before the great West Indies fast bowler Malcolm Marshall died, Desmond Haynes and I played a game of golf with him in England. At that time he was extremely ill, was very weak and was in excruciating pain each time he swung the golf club. His cancer and the chemotherapy he was receiving were destroying his body. As expected he played very poorly, became terribly dejected and felt that he was making a fool of himself.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> tee Desmond started to tease him about his game and told him not to make excuses because he was never any good at golf anyway. Those remarks irritated Malcolm and his attitude and demeanor suddenly changed. He then threw out a challenge to both of us and told us that he was going to win the five remaining holes. Desmond who is very competitive on the golf course laughed at him and told him to stop dreaming and to prevent his imagination from getting out of hand. Instantly, Malcolm's swing improved and he started to play really well, so well that he proceeded to win the next four holes. Only a lucky chip-in by Desmond on the last green prevented him from winning that hole.

I was dumfounded. I had seen some amazing things in sport but nothing to match what I had just witnessed. "How the hell did you do that?" I asked. "It was simple," said Malcolm. "You see I believe in myself and in my game and I knew I could beat the two of you. I never even considered losing to you. In my mind I saw myself winning those holes. Once I saw those images I knew you were gone. All I had to do then was talk to myself positively, relax and let it happen."

Desmond and I walked off the course trying to come to terms with what we had just seen. We soon realized that Malcolm, who was then at the lowest point in his life – he died two months later - turned his game around because of his powerful belief in himself and in his golf game. No wonder he was such an outstanding champion in cricket.

### ***Build your Game on Four Pillars***

Success in sport is built on four interconnected pillars – fitness, physical skill, tactics and strategy, and mental skills. If any one of these pillars is weak performance will suffer. During the last fifteen years this has been a problem with the West Indies cricket team. Although the players have been fit, athletic and talented they still performed poorly because of inadequate strategies and a weak mental pillar.

Fitness and technique are extremely important and are vital for success, but they should be the servants not the master. Excellence in physical skills does not guarantee that the right ones will be chosen and executed or that common sense will prevail under pressure.

Some coaches are so obsessed with physical technique, body movements and body positions that they focus mainly on how things should be done – the how. And in the process, they ignore what is to be done and why it is to be done – the what and the why. Cricket is not just about how you move or how you look, it is also about scoring runs, taking wickets, fielding well, out-planning, out-thinking and out-performing the opposition, and so on. In life, if you know what you want and why you want it you will invariably work out how you will get it.

Imagine what it would be like for a baby if he understood language before he learned to walk. His parents would spend a lot of time teaching him how to do so, with instructions like look straight ahead, keep your balance, swing your left arm with your right foot and your right arm with your left foot and so on. The poor child would become overloaded with information, get confused, lose confidence, fall repeatedly and take much longer to walk. The good Lord knows why he did not arrange things that way.

***When I asked some of the past players what advice they would give to an aspiring young player they said they would tell him.***

1. ***You must have a strong desire to succeed.*** There is no substitute for this and if you don't possess it, don't even bother trying because it is very difficult to be among the best players. No matter how much talent and ability you have, you will never make it to the top unless you are hungry for success.
2. ***You must know yourself well and be honest with yourself.*** In order to become a good player you must be painfully honest with yourself. Mastery of self is key but you only achieve it when you are totally honest with yourself.
3. ***You must practise sensibly, work hard, develop your concentration and other mental skills, and prepare well.*** There is no substitute for these things. The value of preparation is often underestimated. Good preparation can at times make up for lack of ability but no amount of ability can make up for a lack of preparation.
4. ***Mastery of the basics.*** Identify the basics of your game, learn them well, practice them religiously under the same conditions you will face in the game, apply them sensibly during the game, and never ignore or forget them because the moment you do so you will make mistakes and your game might fall apart. The teams that execute the basics best win most of the time.
5. ***Observe, study and emulate the best players.*** You will learn a lot from observing and listening to good players. You must try to find out the secret of their success and work out what you can learn from them to improve your game.
6. ***Pay attention to your motivation and self-discipline.*** The depth of your motivation and self-discipline determine the level of your success.
7. ***Love and enjoy the game.*** Keep things simple, be patient and persistent and focus on the process.

### *Five Important Questions*

Today's players should ask themselves five sets of questions and answer them as honestly as they can.

- 1. Who am I? What do I want to achieve? What do I want to become?*
- 2. Why do I want to achieve these things?*
- 3. What do I stand for? What are my beliefs, values and priorities? Beliefs and values provide the energy and enthusiasm that drive you towards your goals. Beliefs and values are to athletes what roots are to trees. Without strong roots trees fall when they are shaken by strong winds. Without beliefs and values players' performance falls apart in the strong winds of pressure and competition.*
- 4. What is my action plan? How will I implement it, monitor it, and improve it?*
- 5. What can I do to overcome or unlearn the things that are holding me back - bad habits, petty jealousies, negative thinking, limiting beliefs and fears, and self-doubts?*

Today's world is very exciting and is full of amazing opportunities. Search for them, find them, and capitalize on them.

**You must rewrite your future; create powerful and detailed pictures of what you want to achieve; replay them often in your mind; and let your brain do the rest. Remember that the thoughts and pictures that you put into your mind today determine what you become tomorrow.**

**Whoever you are, you were not born a victim or a loser. You have immense potential and you can build a better life and a better world for yourself and others.**