



They Lied To You.

They told you that success brings happiness. To achieve, to perform, to grind it out... and then you'll be happy. How's that working out? That "happiness," if it comes at all, is always short-lived. So you just start the "rinse & repeat" cycle all over again. The truth is, they had it completely backward. Peak performance doesn't create happiness. **Happiness creates peak performance.**

True happiness is possible when we choose to experience positive emotions over negative. The problem is that ancient, "Saboteur" conditioning is driving your stress and under-performance. The first step to taking back your power is to unmask your primary enemy.

Unmasking "The Victim"

You've downloaded this profile because you suspect your performance is being undermined by the Saboteur known as The Victim. The Victim is that insidious inner voice that leaves you feeling powerless and at the mercy of your circumstances. It's the mindset that defaults to "playing not to lose" rather than "playing to win". Does this sound like you?

- * You attribute failures to external factors like bad luck, unfair conditions, or other competitors.
- * You find yourself making excuses for shortcomings instead of taking ownership.
- * You have a nagging "poor me" internal monologue and a feeling that the world is against you.

If you're nodding along, don't worry. Awareness is the first step to freedom. If we could 'dial back' the intensity of the Victim's behaviours you would discover truly valuable "superpowers". Athletes with a Victim saboteur typically have great emotional depth & sensitivity. They possess a unique radar for human emotion and an introspective nature. This empathy can enable them to connect deeply with others and understand their pain or struggles. They don't just go through the motions; they feel the full spectrum of the experience and have an ability to find deep meaning.

The Silent Dream Killer.

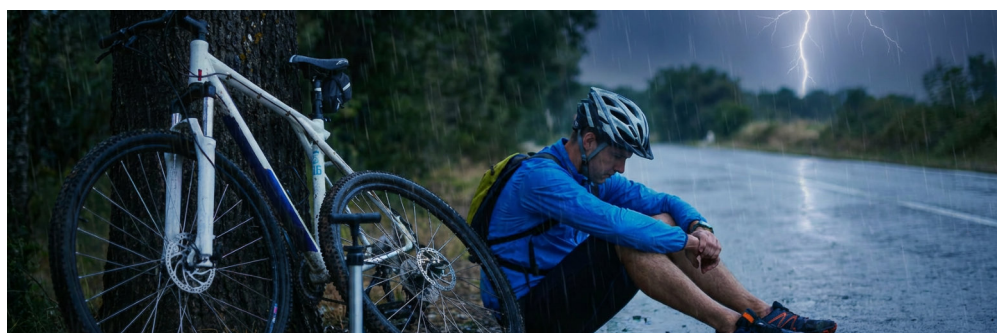
You know that nagging feeling that something is holding you back? It's not your physical training. It's the Victim saboteur. It's a quiet poison that seeps into three key areas of your athletic life, slowly killing the competitor you're meant to be. Let's unmask the true cost.

The Victim saboteur's lie is that we are powerless and at the mercy of circumstance or external factors. The Victim encourages us to blame others for our problems and make excuses for our own shortcomings. It tells us the world is against us and we are constantly being treated unfairly. The lie is self-fulfilling to the extent that, when we believe it, we do give away our power by attributing our problems or challenges to factors outside of our control. Things like other people's actions, unfair systems, or bad luck.

If you are hijacked by the Victim you may feel helpless and believe that you have little agency to change your situation. You'd typically focus on the negative aspects of your experience, magnify hardships, and downplay your own role in shaping your life. The Victim encourages us to seek validation and sympathy from others, constantly seeking external reassurance or support - without actually taking the proactive steps towards creating a solution. Allowing a victim mentality can limit our personal growth, resilience, and sense of personal responsibility.

As an athlete the Victim saboteur leaves us feeling powerless in the face of adversity or challenges. We might be reluctant to choose a demanding training plan, to try a hard interval session or we might start a match or race with the assumption that we just won't be competitive. Our mindset is too often "playing not to lose" rather than "playing to win". We might not aspire to the goals of which we are capable. We might focus on the negative aspects of our situation and struggle to take ownership of our own performance. We lack the motivation to take the proactive steps necessary to improve. A Victim saboteur will erode our motivation, encourage passivity, lower resilience, and limit our ability to fully engage in the sport. Ultimately this impacts our overall performance and enjoyment.

There's an interesting "twist" I see here. For most Saboteurs (like the Hyper-Achiever or Controller), the Judge focuses heavily on *Self* and *Others* ("I need to be better," "**You** need to work harder"). But for the Victim, the Judge of Circumstances is the primary fuel source. The Victim survives by feeling helpless. To feel helpless, the external world *must* be overwhelmingly powerful and unfair. Therefore, the Judge *must* interpret every event (rain, a flat tire, a referee's call, a genetic disadvantage) as a personal attack by the universe. The Judge yells, "*This headwind is unfair! Why does this always happen to me?*" The Victim responds, "*I know, I guess I'm just unlucky/cursed. There's no point in pushing.*"



Impacts - see if any of these resonate.

(tick the box if it does)



1. Performance.

The "Pre-Race" Defeatist

"Look at the start list. These guys are all faster than me. It's going to be a disaster today. I just know something will go wrong." You lose the race before the gun goes off. By assuming you won't be competitive, you subconsciously throttle your effort to match your low expectation. You are "playing not to lose" rather than playing to win. You validate your own lie. You perform poorly, and then say: "See? I knew I didn't have it today."

The Blame Thrower

"I would have PB'd, but the aid station handed me the wrong bottle. And the referee made a terrible call. The universe is conspiring against me." You outsource your results. If success depends on perfect external conditions (which never exist), you are powerless. You refuse to look at the one variable you can control: your own execution. You stagnate. You never fix your technical errors because you are too busy fixing the blame on the environment.

The Fragile Finisher

"Why does this always happen to me? A flat tire? That's it, my race is over. There's no point in fighting back now." You lack "Bounce-Back" ability. The moment adversity hits (the puncture, the cramp, the rain), you collapse emotionally. You view a hurdle as a stop sign. The Result: A DNF (Did Not Finish) resume. You quit races that could have been salvaged because you are addicted to the narrative of being "unlucky."

Playing Small

"I won't aim for the podium. That's too risky. I'll just aim to 'get round'. If I set a big goal, I'll just embarrass myself." You remove the "Stretch." Growth only happens at the edge of your capacity. By setting "safe" goals to avoid the pain of failure, you guarantee mediocrity. You finish with plenty of gas left in the tank, never knowing how good you actually are. A career of "what ifs."

The Uncoachable Martyr

"The coach is picking on me. Why is he giving me the hardest lane? He just doesn't understand my unique physiology. It's not fair." You treat feedback as an attack. Because you feel vulnerable, you put up a wall to block any criticism. You want sympathy, not correction. So the coach stops trying to push you. You are left alone in your "comfort zone," while your teammates (who accept the feedback) surpass you.

The Morale Killer

"You guys don't understand how tired I am. My legs hurt more than yours. It's alright for you, you have better genetics." In a team sport or a club group training session mood is contagious. The Victim sucks the oxygen out of the room with constant complaining and neediness. This inevitably creates isolation. Teammates and friends distance themselves to protect their own energy. You lose the "pack power" that lifts performance in group environments.

The "What's The Point?" Trainer

"I'm not going to improve anyway. I'm just not built for this. I'll skip the last set; it won't make a difference." Apathy. The Victim mindset erodes the link between Effort and Reward. If you believe the game is rigged, why train hard? The Result: "Junk Volume." You go through the motions without the intensity required for physiological adaptation.

The Anxious System

"I feel a tickle in my throat. I bet I'm getting sick before the big race. I'm so stressed about this." Constant helplessness spikes cortisol and cortisol suppresses the immune system. The Victim literally worries themselves sick. The Result: Frequent illness and injury. Your body manifests the weakness your mind is obsessing over.

The Inner Bully - allowing negative self talk.

"You're useless. You always choke. You don't belong here with these real athletes." You are running with a heavy backpack of shame. This internal monologue is exhausting. It distracts you from the "Process cues" (technique, pacing) you need to focus on. The Result: Mental Fatigue. You "bonk" mentally at mile 10, not because you ran out of glycogen, but because you ran out of self-belief.



The Opportunity Dodger

"That new technical course in Nice looks too dangerous. I'm not going to try to qualify. I'll stick to the flat, easy course I know." This is the Victim's avoidance of challenge. You actively steer away from scenarios that would force you to level up your skills. So your skill's atrophy. You become a "one-trick pony" who can only race in perfect conditions. You miss the adventure and range of your sport.



2. Wellbeing

The Anxiety Spiral

"I'm terrified of the start line. What if the weather is bad? What if I panic? I can't handle the pressure." You experience performance anxiety, social anxiety and heightened levels of stress. This isn't just "nerves"; it is a systemic nervous system overload. Living in constant anticipation of failure is physically exhausting.



The Immunity Crash

"I always get sick right before the big race. It's just my bad luck. Everyone else stays healthy, but I catch every bug." Heightened stress and anxiety make you "vulnerable to illness". By living in a state of "poor me," you suppress your immune system. You catch the cold not because of bad luck, but because your stress hormones have disarmed your body's defences.



The "Why Me?" Insomnia

"I can't sleep because I'm worrying about how unfair that referee was. My mind won't stop replaying the moment I was wronged." The Victim mindset decreases your quality of sleep. Instead of restorative rest, you spend the night ruminating on external slights. You wake up exhausted, not from training load, but from the emotional load of resentment. You start the day in a deficit.



The Joy Thief

The Victim Lie is "Sport is just another burden. I have to train, but it's going to be hard and miserable." Sport becomes just another source of grief & stress for you. "It's just no fun". You lose the dopamine and serotonin benefits of exercise. Instead of being a release, training becomes a source of "emotional distress", adding to your life's friction rather than reducing it.



The "Venting" Trap

"I just need to complain about this to feel better. I need to let it all out." You use "Emotional Release" as a crutch—venting frustration and anger without necessarily seeking constructive solutions. Venting without action doesn't clear the poison; it circulates it. You reinforce the neural pathways of anger and bitterness, keeping your blood pressure and heart rate elevated unnecessarily.



The Worthiness Wound

"I'm not good enough. I'm an imposter. I'll never be a 'real' athlete." This lie leads to diminished self-confidence; you constantly feel inadequate. Low self-worth is correlated with poor self-care. If you don't value the machine (your body), you stop maintaining it. You might skip the physio or eat poorly because, deep down, you don't think you deserve to feel good.



The Bitterness Pill

"It's not fair that they got the sponsorship/slot/win. They cheated/got lucky/have it easy." The Victim is harboring toxic negative emotions: resentment, anger, and bitterness. Holding onto resentment is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. It creates a chronic, low-level tension in the body that stiffens muscles and sours the stomach.



The Helplessness Atrophy

"There's nothing I can do about my fitness. It is what it is." You feel "powerless" and lack personal agency. When you believe you have no control, you stop trying to improve your health. You become passive. You ignore the small, controllable habits (hydration, stretching, sleep hygiene) that actually create wellbeing.



3. Relationships

The Blame Game

"We lost because Dave missed that pass. If the referee hadn't been biased, we would have won." You create wary relationships through a focus on blame, lack of trust, and poor communication. Your teammates see that you are willing to "shift the blame and responsibility" to protect yourself. If you blame "Dave" today to avoid taking ownership, the rest of the team implicitly knows they are not safe from being your next excuse. This creates a "negative and tense environment" where everyone is guarding their back rather than focusing on the game.



The Sympathy Trap

"If I tell them how hard I have it, they will comfort me, and then I'll feel loved." You trade competence for pity. Receiving attention and sympathy can be gratifying, as it can make the Victim feel cared about. This is a trap. You learn to perform "helplessness" to get love. This creates an unbalanced dynamic where your partners feel like your parents or rescuers, not your equals.



The "Drama Magnet"

"I'm not causing drama; drama just follows me!" You might create a negative and defensive environment. Because you view the world through a lens of unfairness, your interactions are prickly and defensive. This tension affects the "overall enjoyment of the sport" for everyone around you.





The Energy Vampire

"I just need a little support. Why is everyone so distant? They should care more about my struggle." You risk becoming an emotional black hole. Introspective, gloomy, needy and negative colleagues are just hard work. This demeanour sucks the energy out of teams. Your constant need for validation exhausts your teammates. Eventually, they stop asking "How are you?" because they don't have the energy for the answer.



Lonely in a Crowd

"I'm all alone in this. No one else is suffering like I am." The Victim might generate a profound sense of isolation or loneliness - even when in company. By insisting on the uniqueness of your suffering ("You don't understand"), you separate yourself from the herd. You reject the shared humanity of the sport, leaving you isolated even in a crowded locker room.



The "Resentment" Balance Sheet

"I do so much, and I get treated so poorly. I'll remember this." The Victim wants to hold onto emotions like resentment, anger, and bitterness. It keeps a mental scorecard of every slight and injustice. This invisible wall of resentment prevents genuine vulnerability or joy with your training partners. You are physically present, but emotionally armoured.



Looking back: how many boxes did you tick?

In sport, the athlete with a Victim saboteur appears as the one who is always "unlucky." The weather is always against them, the referee is always biased, and the training plan is always "too hard." It is a defence mechanism designed to lower expectations so that failure doesn't hurt as much. But by lowering expectations, you lower the ceiling of what is possible. The Victim Saboteur asks: "Why is this happening **TO** me?" The Sage Athlete asks: "What is this doing **FOR** me?" The Victim sees a headwind as a personal insult. The Sage sees a headwind as a resistance training tool provided by nature for free.

The Power to Choose: From Victim to Victor.



.The Victim voice feels powerful because it's an old, automatic program that runs without your permission. But you can choose to run a new program. The shift from under-performance to peak performance—from stress to joy—happens the moment you realise you are not your thoughts; you are the one who gets to **choose** your thoughts. This is the ultimate "Aha!" moment that takes you from being a victim of your circumstances to the creator of your experience.

Let's install your new decision-making process.

Your 3-Step Method for Making a New Choice

This isn't just theory; this is a practical, repeatable skill. This is how you interrupt the default program and deliberately choose a more powerful, positive response.

1. CATCH THE SABOTEUR (Awareness)

The second you feel that "poor me" internal monologue or the urge to blame, recognise it for what it is: the default program running. Mentally label it: "Victim thinking." This is the critical first step of noticing that a choice is even available

2. CREATE A PAUSE (Self-Command)

You cannot make a new choice while the old program is screaming at you. You must create a moment of quiet. For just 10 seconds bring yourself into the present moment by focusing 100% on a physical sensation (like rubbing your fingertips together or connecting with your breath). This quiets the Saboteur noise and **creates the space for a new choice.**

3. CHOOSE A POSITIVE RESPONSE (The "Sage" Choice)

In the quiet space you've created, you now have the power to choose a response that serves you instead of sabotaging you. This is where your Sage—the wisest part of you—takes over. The foundational Sage response is to know that **any circumstance can be turned into a gift or opportunity.** But this is just the beginning. The Sage has a whole toolkit of proven mental skills to handle any situation—skills to empathize, explore, innovate, navigate, and activate.

This 3-step choice can become your new superpower. It can be automatic. It can simply be the way you live your life. **For that to happen ... you need to train.**

Become a MindFit Athlete.

Learn to thrive in sport and life.



Being here proves you're ready for change. You've seen how the Victim Saboteur hijacks your mind, and you've discovered the toolkit to fight back. As an athlete, you know that building physical fitness takes commitment and a proven training plan. So what if you had a system **for your mind**? A proven system that takes less than 15 minutes a day and comes with the coach support to make it stick?

This is your formal invitation to install that system.

The MindFit Foundation Programme

This is our year-long mental fitness programme where we take these concepts and apply them until they become your new default. This isn't about simply gaining knowledge; it's an experiential, app-based course combined with ongoing coaching designed to transform how you think by building new neural pathways. We focus on three core principles:



1. Saboteur Interception

You'll gain the power to intercept and discredit the Saboteurs that generate stress, self-doubt, and discontent. You'll become aware of negative thoughts and feelings as they happen.



2. Self-Command

You'll learn to quiet the Saboteurs and activate the Sage part of your brain in seconds. This allows you to handle challenges with a clear, calm mind instead of stressing over what you can't control



3. Apply the "Sage" Skillset

Your Sage is how you handle challenges with positive emotions. You will learn to boost all 5 of its primary powers: Empathize, Explore, Innovate, Navigate, and Activate, and know exactly which skill to apply to any problem.

Now is your moment to choose. Go back to the "same old same old"? Or start your MindFit journey by taking our free 4 video introductory course series where you'll discover the mental edge that unlocks success in endurance sport and richness in life.



I WANT TO LEARN MORE. SHOW ME THE FREE COURSE!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & IMPORTANT CONTEXT



Bridging the Gap Between Physical & Mental Performance

ABOUT THE COACH

This profile was created by **John Rea**.

I am a **Certified British Triathlon Personal Coach**, a **Certified Positive Intelligence (PQ) Coach** and a **Member of the International Coaching Federation**.

In the world of endurance sport, we spend hours training the body—measuring watts, pace, and heart rate—yet we often neglect the operating system that drives it all: the mind. My work exists at the intersection of these two disciplines. By combining the physiological discipline of British Triathlon coaching with the neurological framework of Positive Intelligence, I help athletes build the “Mental Fitness” required to not just endure their sport, but to thrive in it.

A NOTE ON MENTAL HEALTH & TRAUMA

While the Positive Intelligence® framework is a powerful tool for explaining performance anxiety and mental blocks in sport, it is vital to distinguish between habituated mindset patterns and clinical mental illness or trauma.

Words used in these profiles—such as “Victim,” “Hyper-Vigilant,” “Avoider,” or “Pleaser”—are used strictly in a coaching context to describe universal, everyday cognitive habits that limit athletic potential. They do not refer to, nor do they diminish, the real experience of being a survivor of abuse, trauma, or systemic injustice.

Important Disclaimer: This content is offered strictly for educational and athletic coaching purposes. It is **not** a substitute for medical or psychological diagnosis, counselling, or treatment. If you are navigating past trauma, clinical depression, severe anxiety, suicidal ideation, or any other physical, emotional, or mental health challenges, **this coaching material is not the appropriate intervention**. I strongly advise you to seek the immediate or timely support of a qualified physician (GP), psychologist, or psychotherapist.

I am a certified performance coach, not a licensed medical or mental health professional. I do not diagnose, prescribe, or treat medical or psychological conditions. My focus is exclusively on helping healthy athletes optimize their mental fitness for peak performance.

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