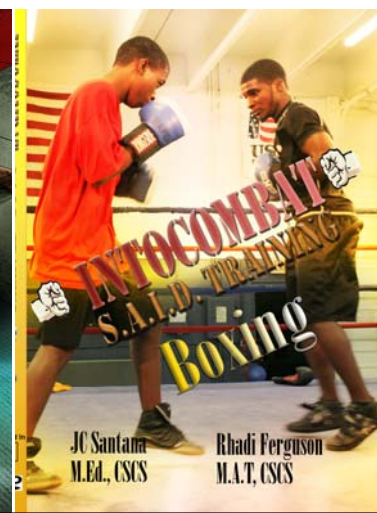
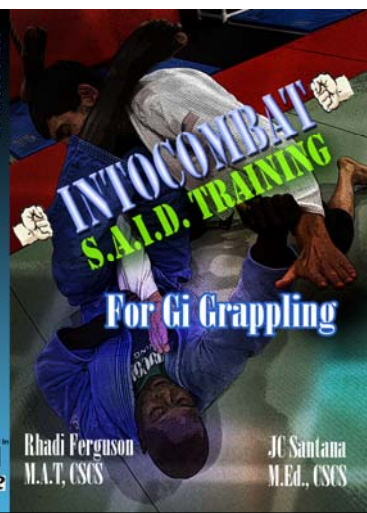
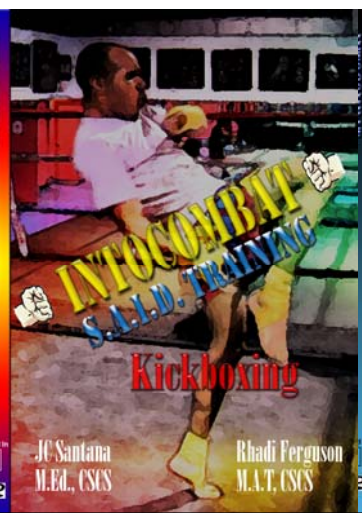
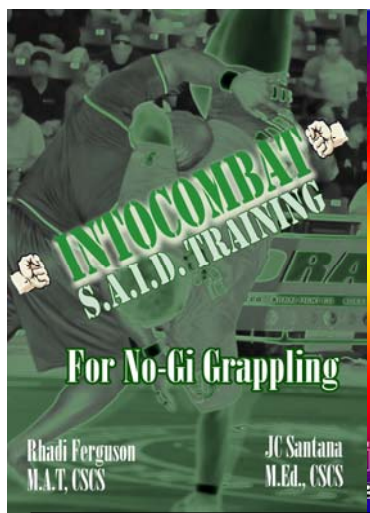
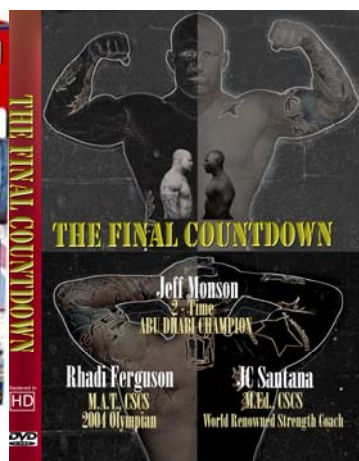
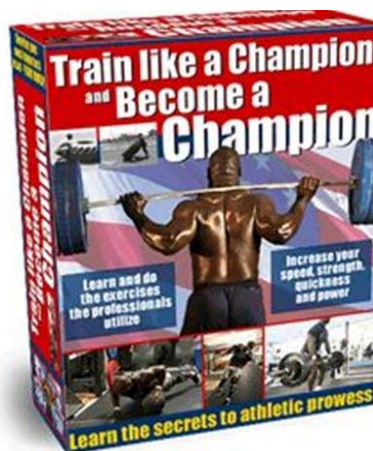
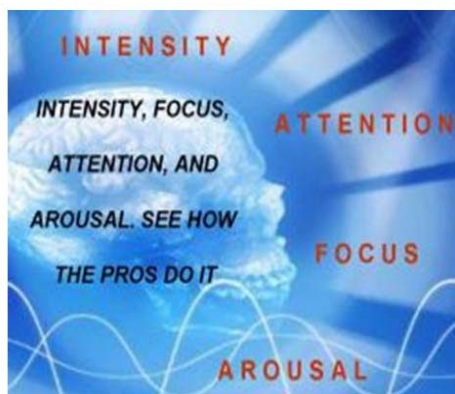
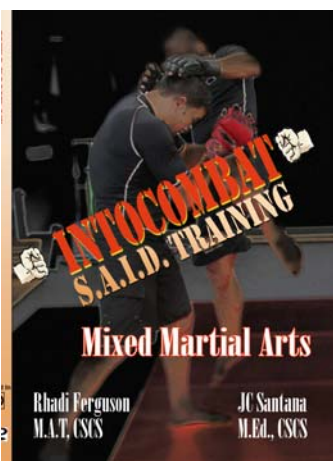
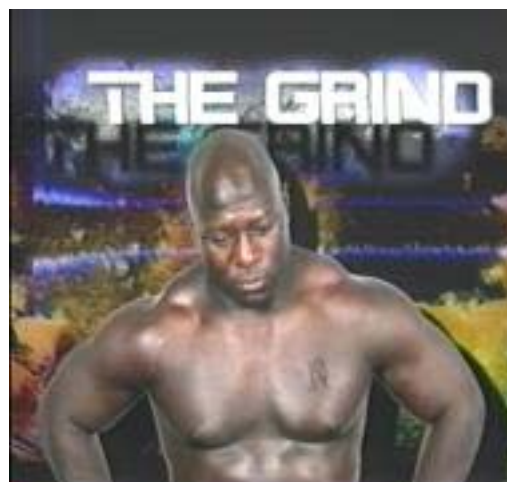


8 DVDs, 3 Audio CD Series, and 4 Books Later, 2004 Olympian and 4-Time National Judo Champion, Abu Dhabi Veteran, BJJ World Medalist and Strength and Conditioning Expert Rhadi Ferguson is Excited To Announce The Release of His First Solo Project "The Grind"



The Six Mistakes Every Grappler Must Avoid!! Not Knowing These 6 Deadly Sins Could Destroy Your Career And Time On The Mat

A Special Pre- "The Grind" Video Release Report

In my career as an athlete I have found some words, songs, scriptures and saying that have been most inspiring. I can tell you



right now that I have a pre-match and pre-tournament ritual like most competitors. I eat certain things, read certain scriptures and listen to certain songs during,

before and leading up to competition. One of my favorite songs will probably shock you. I'm not a country music fan but one of my favorite pre-competition songs is "The Gambler."

This song, although made famous by Kenny Rogers, was written by a gentleman named Don Schlitz. From Schlitz's lyrics I have gleaned many lessons but there are six that really come to mind

which I would love to share. I’m sure that I could write a theses or at least 10 academic texts on this song and how it relates to sport, but I will just expound on how it relates to the grappling world; it’s athletes, coaches and enthusiasts. So please enjoy:

“Finding An Ace That You Can Keep”: A Literary Exploration and Extraction of Best Practices For Today’s Grappler Based Upon “The Gambler”

We all make mistakes. This is no secret. Some of our mistakes, allow for re-takes and some of our mistakes permanently place us in situations for which there is no possibility to undoing. This usually occurs when we make the same mistake over and over. Aristotle said, You are what you repeatedly do, therefore excellence is not an act but a habit.” Well, I guess the same thing that is said about excellence, can be said about winning, mediocrity, complacency, and stupidity.

If we continue to do the same thing, it is what we are.

But, let’s get back to the matter at hand. The underlying reason for this literary exploration is to provide you, - the reader with the ability to bypass the potholes, hurdles and pitfalls which are usual staples in the path toward success. If I can offer up a “golden

nugget" or two that will make your road a little easier to travel, then I'm satisfied and I will call my work a success.

The first thing that I will do is offer you the lyrics of The Gambler and ask that you read them carefully and take in every line and stanza as if it were a breath of fresh air and glean what you can from the text. I've place it on a page by itself so that you can print is out separately and/or copy it and put it in your locker, on your desk, or in your briefcase for your occasional perusal - as a reminder of the gravity of the choices that you make in life.

The Gambler by, Don Schlitz

About 20 years ago, on a train bound for nowhere,
I met up with the gambler; we were both too tired to sleep.
So we took turns a starin' through the window at the darkness.
Til' boredom overtook us and he commenced to speak.

He said: "Son, I've made a life out of readin' people's faces,
And knowin' what their cards were, by the way they held their eyes.
And if you don't mind my sayin', I would say you're out of aces;
And for one taste of your whiskey, I will give you some advice."

So I handed him my bottle, and he drank down my last swallow.
Then he bummed a cigarette; then he bummed a light.
The night got deathly quiet and his face lost all expression.
He said: "If you're gonna play the game, boy
You better learn to play it right."

"'Cause ev'ry gambler knows that the secret to survival,
Is knowin' what to throw away and knowin' what to keep.
And ev'ry hand's a winner, just like ev'ry hand's a loser.
And the best that you can hope for is to die in your sleep."

"You got to know when to hold 'em; know when to fold 'em.
Know when to walk away; know when to run.
You never count your money while you're sittin' at the table.
There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done."

And when he finished speakin', he turned back toward the window.
Put out his cigarette; faded off to sleep.
And somewhere in the darkness, the gambler he broke even.
But in his final words I found an ace that I could keep.

"You got to know when to hold 'em; know when to fold 'em.
Know when to walk away; know when to run.
You never count your money while you're sittin' at the table.
There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done."

Introduction

Now, make sure that you can picture what’s going on here. There are two people sitting on a train heading toward the destination of “nowhere”. They are looking out the window which means one person has to look across the other person. From the text you know that the Gambler is by the window and the neophyte (which is what the other person will be called during the rest of the text) is probably sitting in the aisle seat. So picture it in your mind and let’s begin to dissect the text.

Explanation 1

Lyrics:

**About 20 years ago, on a train bound for nowhere,
I met up with the gambler; we were both too tired to sleep.
So we took turns a starin' through the window at the
darkness.
Til' boredom overtook us and he commenced to speak.**

Translation:

The amazing thing about this particular story is that it begins from the ending. The Gambler who is supposedly the experienced person is sitting, on a train, next to the supposed amateur or neophyte if you will and the gambler, due to his ability to read the situation begins to speak. But before we move on, please understand that they are "too tired" to sleep. We can infer that they *cannot* sleep. Usually the ability to sleep or not sleep is due to ones comfort level. Therefore one can infer that they are physically, mentally or emotionally uncomfortable and thus they cannot rest due to their state of restlessness. In such a state the Gambler, who is obviously older breaks the silence and here is what he says:

Lyrics:

**He said: "Son, I've made a life out of readin' people's faces,
And knowin' what their cards were, by the way they held their
eyes. And if you don't mind my sayin', I would say you're out
of aces; And for one taste of your whiskey, I will give you
some advice."**

Translation:

Now understand that the Gambler said that he's made his life out of reading people's faces. But the funny thing is this – he doesn't have to read his face. The neophyte is sitting on a train bound for nowhere with a bottle of whiskey. And The Gambler in all of his infinite wisdom has immediately set himself up as an expert by first referring to the neophyte as “son” and then by telling the young man that he can see that he is down on his luck by telling him that he's out of aces. Yet he is on the same train, sitting in the same class (which is coach – I might add) as the person to whom he is giving advice. Now understand that the Gambler has said that he's made his LIFE out of reading peoples facing but he is now begging for a mere taste of the neophyte's whiskey in exchange for the offering of some of his “expert” advice.

So The Gambler is now offering to provide his expert advice for taste of whiskey. Kind of makes you wonder how good the advice is huh?

Mistake #1 All Advice Is Not Good Advice. Be Sure To Check The Source And Credibility of The Advice You Receive. In Short, Be Careful Who

You Follow! *Hint: Listening is never a bad thing – You don't have to heed advice, but if you don't listen you will not know if it is good or bad!*

Explanation 2

Lyrics:

So I handed him my bottle, and he drank down my last swallow. Then he bummed a cigarette; then he bummed a light.

The night got deathly quiet and his face lost all expression. He said: "If you're gonna play the game, boy You better learn to play it right."

Translation:

Now at this particular point the neophyte has handed over his bottle to The Gambler. This same Gambler who has asked for a mere taste, has now drank what was left in the bottle leaving the neophyte with nothing. (Now, picture what it looks like to drink something until it's gone. Just imagine if I were to ask you for a sip of your beverage and then you were to offer it to me. And then imagine that I would hand it back to you empty!) Thus validating the position that he is in and his namesake - he is a Gambler, he doesn't know when to stop. He bypasses all sense, reason, gumption and couth and he drinks until it's gone. He goes until he has reached the highest of highs to the point where he is now - wallowing in his lowliness – headed nowhere. But after the liquor has scorched his throat and warmed his body, he does offer a self-reflective statement that has merit, "If

you are gonna play the game boy, you better learn to play it right.”

**Mistake #2: Not Understanding
That There Is A High Level of
Gamesmanship In Sport and Life!**

Hint: Play the sport, but understand “the game”. The best athlete doesn’t always win. Tactics, strategy and technique play a huge role in ones success or lack thereof.

Explanation 3

Lyrics:

**"'Cause ev'ry gambler knows that the secret to survival,
Is knowin' what to throw away and knowin' what to keep.
And ev'ry hand's a winner, just like ev'ry hand's a loser.
And the best that you can hope for is to die in your sleep."**

Translation:

Now this is the particular part of the story that is very perplexing. So let me translate it literally. *Every competitor knows that the secret to winning is knowing what to throw away and knowing what to keep. Because you have a chance to win every match and you have a chance to lose as well, but the best that you can hope for is to walk off the mat!!* THIS LADIES AND GENTLEMEN IS 100% BULLSMITH!! Now please understand that the statement does have merit based upon the life experience of the Gambler. But as a competitor or a practitioner, you cannot show up to practice or meets with a defeatist attitude. Every hand **has** to be a "winner" and your ability to see the "winning" lies in your attitude and perception of the circumstances. Your moves cannot be looked at as "gambles" but as calculated actions.

Mistake #3 Accepting The Possibility of Defeat Before You Even Try!

I wish that I could tell you that I've walked on the mat every time believing that I could win, but that would be a lie. Now ever since 1999 I've walked on the mat believing that I could win because of some things that happened to me in 1998.

I quickly found out that most of the time you lose when you "agree" to lose. I've seen it! I've seen people in the middle of matches just "agree to lose". They just give up. I've seen people look at the brackets or the draw before a tournament and beat themselves before the match has even started or the tournament has commenced. They've already lost. **The ability to win begins with the belief that you can win and the elimination of the belief that there is an opportunity that you can lose.**

I think Bruce Lee said it best when he said, "Remember my friend, everything goes to those who aim to get. Low aim is the biggest crime a man has."

"There is no muscle that compares with the power of your mind and no weapon like words. There's nothing so intimidating or embarrassing as having someone kick your ass with their mind."

– The Ultimate Warrior

Explanation 4

Lyrics:

"You got to know when to hold 'em; know when to fold 'em. Know when to walk away; know when to run. You never count your money while you're sittin' at the table. There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done."

Translation:

This is the most important piece of the song, -so important that it is the only part that is repeated twice!! This is the most profound piece of literary prose for the up and coming athlete, the current athlete or the athlete that is in the twilight of his career. Now you can go back to the previous sentence and interchange athlete with teacher, coach, parent, business person, etc.,. and it will fit.

In sport and in life you have to know when it is "time". This is very difficult. The Gambler knew that this was his weakness. It was the main reason why he was in the position and disposition that he was in. He didn't know when to quit, when to stop, when to say "no more, that's it!". We have all been there in practice. You know, that time when we say that we're done and then we get that question that we know that we should say "no" to. That question is, "Do you wanna go one more round?" It has happened to all of us! We know that we should say "no". We've been in this position before and we already know that this is when people get hurt. When they have

mentally ended practice and then they try to go one more round. When we get hurt in these situations it is because we “gamble” we take an unnecessary risk that outweighs the possible reward. Don’t do it. Exert something that Gamblers don’t have – self discipline!

Also this piece talks about “walking away” and “running” it only speaks to leaving and leaving faster. It doesn’t speak to hanging around. When practice is over – leave. When the tournament is over –leave. When the concert is over leave! The only thing that I’ve seen happen from “hanging around” is trouble.

Mistake #4 Not Knowing When To Stop!

Explanation 5

Also when you are still in the “game” reading newspaper articles of yourself, counting your medals, accolades and proverbial “chips”, if you will, spells trouble every time. You will have time to count your medals and accolades when you retire or when the “night” is over.

Furthermore, when you are in a match or a bout you cannot think that you are going to win just because you are winning on the scoreboard or the scorecards. Do NOT COUNT THE POINTS – fight until the fight is over!! Keep you head in the game!! I've seen many-a-combatant lose because of this. **"There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done."**

**Mistake #5 Not
Understanding That It Ain't
Over Until It's Over. Don't
Count Your Chickens Before
They Hatch!**

Explanation 6

Lyrics:

And when he finished speakin', he turned back toward the window. Put out his cigarette; faded off to sleep. And somewhere in the darkness, the gambler he broke even. But in his final words I found an ace that I could keep.

Translation:

This part is very pregnant but terse so I don't want you to miss it. Now understand that the neophyte NEVER spoke – he listened. And he was able to glean something positive from all of the BS that the Gambler issued. He found an "ace" in the conversation. The Gambler broke even. The Gambler started with nothing, begged for a cigarette, begged for whiskey and then returned to the "darkness" from the first stanza – with nothing. But the neophyte got the lesson. Don't leave without the lesson.

When panning for gold, you have to sift through the rocks, the dirt, the little fish and a bunch of other worthless items. But after things clear up (through patience and thinking) and you separate the BS, sometimes there's a golden nugget in there. Then the hours spent panning for the gold are all worth it!

There is something to be gleaned from every experience, every match, every conversation, but you cannot get it if you are talking!

**Mistake #6 Not Understanding
The Value of an Open Mind
And A Closed-Mouth**

Conclusion

I hate to quote Bruce again, but he said it best, "The usefulness of a cup is in its emptiness." If the neophyte was "full" and not "empty" to receive – he could have never received that "ace that he could keep."

So in closing:

Now that we have finished it is fair to say that the neophyte wasn't stupid, aloof, nor taken by The Gambler. He offered what he could spare and got what he could get and he knew from the beginning not to expect much from the conversation. The first line already tells you that the train was bound for "nowhere". And at the time of the writing the neophyte is 20 years older than what he was when the conversation took place. And in his youth he knew enough to sit "tight", be quiet and listen. In his youth he understood that you have to give a little in order to get a little and through time and maturation he was able to see the benefit in his "trip".

***"You got to know when to hold 'em; know when to fold 'em.
Know when to walk away; know when to run.
You never count your money while you're sittin' at the table.
There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done."***

There are times to take calculated risks. There are times when you should "go for it all", there are times when you should "step out on a

limb", but whatever you do – don't gamble. Don't gamble with your career, your life, your family, your sport, or your money. If you are going to hop on a plane, travel across the United States or out of the country to compete. You better damn well pack your bags with the intent to win, otherwise – you're Gambling! And if you've ever been



to Las Vegas – you already know that nobody wins in Vegas!! 😊

Let me share a short story with you. For those who don't know who is standing with me in this picture, this is the one and only James "Buster" Douglas. In 1990 James Douglas made boxing history when he knocked

out Mike Tyson in the 10th round of a fight that they had in Japan.

James Douglas was a 42-1 underdog in that fight and nobody thought he was going to win. Well, nobody except for James. James had gone through The Grind, he trained, he believed, and when he stepped in the ring – he wasn't gambling. He knew that he could

become the undisputed heavyweight champion of the World and that's just what he did.

The Final Note:

The essence of this story really lies in your ability to make a quality decision. I hope that you are able to use what you have read in a positive way. Take care and it was a pleasure sharing with you. I certainly hope that you enjoy "The Grind" when it is released!



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