

# INTERVIEW

Personal dialogue between  
PL USA Magazine and the  
Sport's Greatest Names.

## The Mental Approach of a World Record Breaker as told to Tony Kamand by WPC World Champ and WPC Record Holder Doug Heath

If there is one common element in all sports, between being good and being the best, it's the power of the mind over the body. In powerlifting your ability to literally will things to happen is essential if you are going to have any success. I recently conducted an interview with Doug Heath, world record holder in the bench press (405 pounds at 132 pound weight class) and multi-time world champion, on how he mentally approaches the sport and gets his mind ready when attempting to break a world record.

If you have never seen Doug lift before in competition, it's a sight you will probably never forget. His intensity is at much higher level than any other lifter that I have ever seen. Some people say he's crazy or it's all just an act. The bottom line is that Doug is just one of the most intense and mentally prepared lifters that has ever stepped onto the platform. He has been at the top of the sport for close to 20 years and still continues to improve and break world records. His training is sound, but his attitude and mental preparation are the key to his long lasting success. Let's peak into the mind of Doug Heath and see how he mentally approaches the sport.

**Tony:** If you plan on setting a world record when do you start mentally preparing for it?

**Doug:** Immediately after my last meet performance (usually before the awards have been given out) I start to mentally prepare for the next goal - setting numbers based on what just happened at the competition.

**Tony:** Do you have any sort of rituals or habits the few days before the meet or the day of the meet?

**Doug:** I follow the same basic plan for every meet. Lots of self-hypnosis and "mental walk-throughs" of what I want to accomplish at the meet.

**Tony:** On the day of the meet, what is going through your mind?

**Doug:** I'm focusing on what I have to do to properly execute on each of my planned nine attempts at the meet. I try to get totally focused and stay in tune with the task at hand, which is successfully completing each and every attempt at the meet. I try to stay positive and let my nervous energy work for me and not against me.

**Tony:** How do you get psyched up and motivated for a world record

attempts? Now really, is this such a crime? We all can't be Bjorn Borg's, some of us are more like Jimmy Connors.

**Tony:** How do you feel after you have successfully completed a world record lift?

**Doug:** I have the feeling of total satisfaction. After having invested so much time towards this goal it has finally been accomplished.

**Tony:** How do you continue to improve your mental focus?

**Doug:** I try to improve on my "self-hypnosis" skills. I think about my lifting so much that it seems I'm always focusing on one it.

**Tony:** A lot of novice lifters have a fear of the weight or a lack of confidence in their abilities. What do you think they could do to overcome this?

**Doug:** If a novice lifter is having trouble with a certain weight bar-riser I would use a very successful trick on them that always seems to work. Let's say a lifter is trying to crash through his first 400 pound squat. His training partners should load the bar to that weight without him knowing and only tell the lifter that it's 385 pounds. I have used this with several novices and 100% of the time they lift the weight successfully. You have to use little tricks to break barriers. Once the novice starts breaking barriers his

confidence will increase.

**Tony:** You have been at the top of the sport for close to 20 years. How do you stay motivated and continue to break world records?

**Doug:** I just love jumping into the arms of people I don't even know. Only kidding! What really motivates me to break world records is the same thing that has motivated me since the first day of my lifting career. To be the very best that Doug Heath can possibly be.

Powerlifting is such an important part of my life and it has been for close to 20 years. I'm not married and I don't have any children. My job is just that, a job and not a career. Perhaps I devote to much of myself to the sport, but quite frankly I don't know any other way. Just preparing for the Senior National and Worlds every year is my main focus. Just being the best is enough to keep me motivated.

**Tony:** What advice could you give to the other their mental approach in the sport?

**Doug:** You have to believe in yourself about everything else. Don't ever let anyone else decide what you can or cannot do. See it - Believe it - Achieve it!

**Tony:** Doug, thank you for your time. It is obvious that you have found the link between the mind and body. Best of luck in the future.

**Doug:** On a good day, when everything is going well I am totally focused on the proper form and successful execution of my lift. Of course, on a bad day, for the world record (something no one has ever accomplished) should be all the motivation anyone needs. But, looking at it as a personal record and 1/3 of my total for the meet is all the motivation I need.

**Tony:** What are you thinking about right before each attempt?

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Up on the Bench... after a record lift, Doug points out his satisfaction.

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