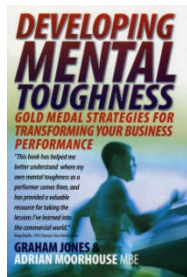


## the one page book review



**Title:** Developing Mental Toughness  
**Authors:** Graham Jones & Adrian Moorhouse  
**Publisher:** Spring Hill  
**Price:** £12.99

Mental Toughness (MT) is one of those attributes that we all recognise when we see it but on closer inspection, is notoriously difficult to define. We can all think of the athlete who perseveres when all physical resources have long been exhausted, the boxer who just won't stay down or the adventurer who endures extreme discomfort and threats to life. But what about the Chief Executive who has to turn around a failing company, or the Marketing Director who has to devise a strategy when the data isn't giving a clear picture? Or the Sales Manager who wants to plot her career while also performing in a highly competitive environment? The literature on MT is vast, but also hotly contested, with one major criticism that it can mean many different things to different researchers.

Graham Jones and colleagues have researched this area extensively by interviewing elite athletes in a range of fields and developed their own version of what constitutes mental toughness. Jones and Adrian Moorhouse, the Olympic Swimmer and head of Lane 4, have taken this model and applied it to the world of business. Their premise is that MT is all about being able to handle pressure and they start by describing differences between internal and external pressures and making a distinction between pressure and stress.

The model they provide in this book is a simplified version of the one that stems from the research with elite athletes, distilling the key attributes down from 12 to 4, making this a highly practical approach for the busy manager. Key to their approach is that MT is not a personality trait and that it can be *learned*. The four pillars of MT are identified as:

- Keeping your head under stress
- Staying strong in your self-belief
- Making your motivation work for you
- Maintaining your focus on the things that matter

Each of these are explored in subsequent chapters, with copious case studies from work and sport, plus personal examples from Adrian's career as swimmer and business man. There are also case studies and examples to work through, to help turn the theory into practice. The book is highly readable with some great examples of making complex theories simple; check out their take on motivation and mechanisms for handling pressure, for instance. The authors also link the notion of MT to other concepts such as self-esteem, confidence and Emotional Intelligence.

The main strength of this book is that for the manager wanting to develop MT (as opposed to wanting to debate what it is/isn't), there is a wealth of hints and tips, which when practised regularly will lead to improvement. It can be read in a couple of hours, but the behaviours it recommends can be practised for a long time afterwards.