# DOMINIC ROSSI

# THE DOUBLE OLD MINDSET

What you can learn from the high-performance culture of top teams like the Belgian Cats

Lannoo Campus



# READY TO THINK FROM A DOUBLE-GOLD MINDSET? 9

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QUARTER

DISCIPLINE

I take full responsibility.

I focus on what I can influence.

I think in solutions, not in problems.

# QUARTER

**SELF-CONFIDENCE** 

I clearly and confidently name my strengths.

I express my ambitions and make the necessary sacrifices to reach them.



# THE FEELER

Picks up signals from your body and emotions, sensing tension, excitement, fear, or calm. Without them, you don't really know how you stand in a situation.

PITFALL | STRENGTH

spontaneous, playful, able to enjoy

freeze, fight or flight



# THE FOCUS KEEPER

Builds connection with all the other players, inviting you to slow down, reflect, and recognise (pre)judgements.

PITFALL | STRENGTH

thoughtful, open perspective

distant, passive



Stores memories, experiences, and beliefs, shaping how the present is coloured by your past.

PITFALL | STRENGTH

wisdom

autopilot, falling back into old patterns



# THE COACH

You are the coach of these mental players. You make sure they are trained and learn to play their role at the right moment. A great coach, one who ensures sustainable performance, also guards the connection with the team's values, mission, and vision.



# THE DOER

Drives action and gets things moving; without direction, they may react impulsively or thoughtlessly.

PITFALL | STRENGTH

taking action, speaking, and listening

impulsive, careless

Analyses, weighs options, and makes plans; tries to bring logic into chaos, but can also become paralysed by doubt, worry, and overthinking.

planning, insight, imagination

worrying, prejudice

QUARTER

REFLECTION

I feel and respect my values.

I let information in, take time to reflect, process it, and make a constructive switch.

# QUARTER

CONNECTION

I support others in discovering and developing their potential.

I am open and transparent about what I feel and see.

I adopt a non-judgemental attitude toward myself and others when needed.

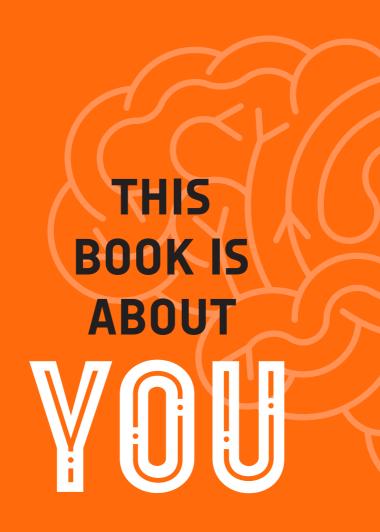


# READY TO THINK FROM A DOUBLE GOLD MINDSET?

Q		Tick your answers below:
(	5	I have to prove that I am the best.
(		I do my very best, and that is what really counts.
(		I feel too much pressure; it paralyses me.
$\langle$		The pressure I feel is a sign that I am performing at a level where I have something to offer.
(	5	I absolutely must win.
		I focus on doing my job as well as possible; the result will follow.
(	5	I must never fail.
(	$\mathcal{L}$	Every mistake is an opportunity to learn.
(		The others are better than me.
		I walk my own path and compare my growth with that of yesterday.
	)	Everyone will see how bad I am.

- 1		
$\langle$	)	What counts is my reaction after I make a mistake.
$\langle$	)	I've ruined everything and I'm worthless.
C	)	Yes, I made a mistake. What can I do now to put it right?
$\langle$	)	I am afraid, and I shouldn't be.
	)	I am afraid. That's not pleasant, but it's okay. It means I am preparing for something that is important to me.
$\downarrow$	)	Receiving feedback means that I'm not good enough.
	)	Feedback is a gift for growth. It says something about my potential, not my worth.
$\langle$	)	When I give feedback, I hurt the other person.
C	)	When I give feedback honestly and respectfully, I show that I believe in the other person.

I will come back to this at the end of this book.





t's an invitation to pause, to reflect on yourself, and to consider what it takes – within your own possibilities – to perform at your best and be successful, even in today's turbulent times of uncertainty and fear. I want to stand by your side, just as I've done over the past years with top athletes and entrepreneurs.

Don't get me wrong: when I say this book is about you, I don't mean that other people are irrelevant to your success. On the contrary. You need colleagues, your team, friends, and family in order to grow and thrive. We are, after all, social beings. What I mean is this:

# YOU ARE GROUND ZERO; IT STARTS WITH YOUR CONSCIOUS CHOICES AND YOUR SELF-AWARENESS.



I've had the privilege of working for more than ten years as a personal coach with Belgian Cats players like Antonia Delaere, Julie Allemand, and Ann Wauters. But let me add right away that this book is not meant to be about top athletes or top entrepreneurs. They are not the only ones who manage to succeed in challenging circumstances. In my work as a coach, I see modest, everyday people surpassing themselves all the time, without ever making the news or the evening broadcast. The media glorify top athletes, top entrepreneurs, top chefs, and top doctors, which creates the false impression that peak performance is reserved for a small elite. Nothing could be further from the truth. Every day, thousands of motivated people are out there delivering top performance, each in their own field and in their own way.

Everyone can do it, no matter your role or function. That's why, throughout this book – just like in basketball – I'll regularly suggest a time-out to coach you with open questions. The idea is to help you become even more aware of your strengths and the actions required to make the most of them. A high-performance mindset starts with looking at what you already have, what you already can do, and what is already working. You don't hand over responsibility to others, hoping things will turn out fine. First and foremost, you look at your own responsibility.

WITH THIS BOOK, I WANT TO MAKE YOU AWARE OF THE FACT THAT YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A TOP ATHLETE OR A TOP ENTREPRENEUR TO ADOPT THE DOUBLE-GOLD MINDSET.



I'm reminded of a story I once heard from Arnoud Raskin, the driving force behind Mobile School. During one of his overseas scouting trips to set up a new mobile school, he visited – accompanied by a UN official who was probably well paid and successful – a massive landfill on the edge of a large city. The UN official painted a picture of misery and hopelessness: people rummaging through the waste, searching for anything of use. After that tour, Arnoud felt truly down. But the next day, he decided to go back alone. At the enormous landfill, he struck up a conversation with a young man upholstering chairs with newspaper. The man explained that he focused only on the part of the landfill where rubbish from expat neighbourhoods was dumped. The newspapers from those areas had better-quality paper. Where the UN official had seen only misery, this so-called "nobody" had spotted an opportunity!

This story illustrates exactly what I mean when I say: it begins with you.

# AND YOU? DO YOU THINK IN TERMS OF PROBLEMS, OR IN TERMS OF SOLUTIONS?



In my view, there are three basic principles that help you get the best out of yourself, within your own possibilities.

# Personal growth means becoming more and more who you already are

Personal growth is like climbing a mountain: the higher you go, the closer you get to yourself. Along the way, circumstances, dreams, values, and skills may shift, but the core of your personality - the part that has been there since childhood – doesn't really change. As you grow older, you gradually become more of who you truly are. Look for your own nuggets of gold. If you're naturally good at building social connections, chances are you'll be even better at it twenty years from now. If you enjoy taking initiative, you'll still be doing that at forty. Bernard Moerman writes in his book Break Out of the Golden Cage that his talent for being a fast talker was seen as a disadvantage during his school years. Only later in life did he discover that this very "weakness" allowed him to give inspiring keynote talks.

Train yourself to recognise what you're genuinely good at and what you genuinely enjoy (later in this book I'll call these your "eights"). A simple exercise is to spend a week writing down, each day, the things you enjoyed doing, were good at, and that made you lose track of time while giving you a warm sense of satisfaction. Keep the focus on yourself – don't write down what others said to you (for instance: "I felt proud when my boss gave me a compliment"). Instead, note the things you did yourself.



# You grow the most when you do what you're good at and love to do

You improve yourself most, you learn the most, you're at your most creative and curious, and you recover fastest in those areas where you already have a natural head start over others. That doesn't mean you should ignore your weaker points (later in this book I'll call these your "fours"). But it does mean that you can grow much faster in the things you're already good at and truly enjoy. People who manage to get the very best out of themselves, within their own possibilities, spend their time very deliberately and consistently on the things that give them energy and satisfaction.

3

A good team player shares their strengths with the team and works purposefully with people whose strengths are complementary

The strongest teams are made up of people who know their own strengths and surround themselves with others who excel in the areas where they themselves are weaker. That's how you build a versatile team. You're a good team player when you work with people who are different from you. Make sure your team also knows what you're strong at, and where they can rely on you. The Belgian Cats, a successful women's basketball team, are a striking example of this principle – something I'll explain further on.

IN A GOOD TEAM, AND IN A GOOD RELATIONSHIP –
PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL – EVERYONE IS WILLING TO
TURN THEIR EIGHTS INTO A TEN AND TO HELP SOMEONE
ELSE LIFT THEIR FOURS UP TO A FIVE.

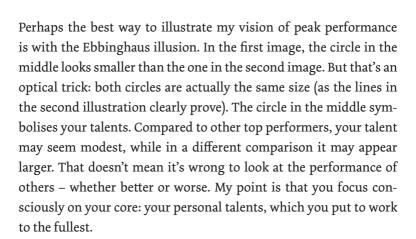


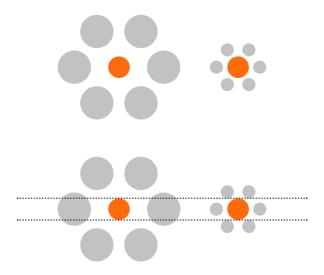
# PERFORMANCE WITHIN YOUR OWN CAPABILITIES



n this book I want to encourage you to deliver peak performance within your own possibilities. For that, I'm using a slightly different definition than what we usually mean by "peak performance". While I'll occasionally refer to top performers in sports or business, it's mainly to use their mindset and behaviour as a source of inspiration – not to compare you with their achievements as such.

IN MY VIEW, A PEAK PERFORMER IS SOMEONE WHO,
BASED ON CONSCIOUS CHOICES, MANAGES TO BE
THE BEST VERSION OF THEMSELVES BY MAKING THE MOST
OF THEIR OWN POSSIBILITIES – WHILE KEEPING THEIR
AMBITIONS IN BALANCE WITH THEIR VALUES.





Someone who consciously chooses a nine-to-five job because their talents come out better there – and because it gives them more time for family, hobbies, or social activities – is, in my view, perhaps more successful than someone who blindly follows ambition without aligning it with their values.

Take, for example, Professor Stefaan Haspeslagh, lecturer in Artificial Intelligence at Vives University College in Belgium. He knows that, given the severe shortage of people with knowledge and experience in his field, he could earn a higher salary in the private sector. Yet the freedom he has in his current job fits his values better. Or I think back to a walk I once took with my neighbour, a down-to-earth, intelligent man who worked for years as an ice-cream vendor. We passed the home of one of the wealthy heirs of a family that had made its fortune through the sand quarries in Mol – a small Belgian town known for its glass industry. My neighbour remarked: "Who do