

# ***The Psychology of Winning***

An Introduction to Win Therapy

Howard G. Sartin, Ph.D.

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To an aspiring handicapper the most important statistic in horse racing should be the indisputable fact that only two percent of race goers are consistent winners. This is etched in stone just as solidly as the figures showing public favorites winning win between 30 and 33% of all races.

Earlier I quoted from Barry Gifford's excellent book, *A Day at the Races*. "You cannot develop a pattern of success unless you know who the losers are. Once you properly discern the patterns they are using, if you do everything the opposite you will probably be successful." So spoke Buddy Eldorado, a professional handicapper who nets over \$250,000 a year from his wagering.

In June of 1991 New York Daily News racing writer Bill Finley profiled one of this book's co-authors, Michael Pizzolla. In a feature article for *Racing Action*, he followed Pizzolla's action for several days at Belmont Park in New York. He observed that Michael nets a profit of between 38-40 percent on his win bets and considerably more on exotics. He attributed Pizzolla's success to his diligence and dedication; treating handicapping as a full time professional job. The author noted especially that his subject was "In the vast minority among New York pros, many of whom scoff at pace analysis."

The article concluded with the statement that, as a practitioner of the Sartin Methodology, Pizzolla relied on a handicapping method that has "yet to become trendy." What is the single thread woven through the mental tapestry of both Michael Pizzolla and Buddy Eldorado? They each buck the tide of popular opinion. Each eschews the popular myths posing as facts that are so religiously clung to by the 98% of racetrackers who do not win! Each dares to hold minority views about handicapping and thus are among the elite minority of two percent who win consistently.

To my knowledge, none of my clients net a quarter of a million dollars annually from handicapping. A number of them do earn over eighty-five thousand dollars a year, however. The mind set of each of those clients is fiercely independent from virtually all the handicapping maxims that dominate the thinking of the masses.

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Another unique aspect of their personalities is that at one time in their growth they were all non-winners who chose to be winners. This is not to say that they were necessarily losers. Yes, they lost races and money. A loser makes no vow to do otherwise and stays a loser. Non-winners make no pact with themselves to become winners. The day came when each of my winning clients decided to stop losing races and money and to find handicapping tools that would provide them with skills and attitudes not acceptable to the majority. In the course of discovering those new tools and developing their skills, they took one more step. They entered into a clinical contract with me wherein they agreed to forsake all socially imposed notions that their horse race wagering was gambling!

In the practice of psychotherapy, the clinical contract between client and therapist constitutes an essential, almost sacred trust. It imposes upon each a promise to designate and achieve a specific therapeutic goal. In the case of my clients that goal was to become consistent winners. Not to become more knowledgeable handicappers and to master statistical data. Not to learn to classify horses and isolate true contenders; not to pick appropriate pace lines and properly interpret numbers. Not master the art of money management. Those elements are but the trees that often hide the forest.

The problem inherent in most how-to books on handicapping, is that their authors focus on isolating and minutely describing and categorizing those individual trees at the expense of the total forest itself. This is not to say that specific components of the handicapping process are unimportant. But they are not a goal unto themselves and will fall quite naturally into proper perspective once the forest is fully explored. Most author-experts are absorbed by the notion that the whole is made up of the sum of its parts. This is the fallacy that causes most of their readers to remain a part of that 98% who fail to achieve their winning goal.

It is a constant source of amazement and, often, irritation to some of these expert authors that the Sartin Methodology has produced a bevy of consistent winners who know little about the individual trees and frankly, could care less. They are content to gaze over the forest.

Author Mark Cramer, a handicapping expert with rare insight, writes, “Sartin’s work functions with the idea that the answer is LESS than the sum of its parts. Sartin has battled with complexity and thereby acquired the wisdom to reduce things to simplicity.”

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Certainly nothing qualifies for reduction to simplicity more than the procedures detailed in this book. What Cramer refers to as the acquisition of wisdom was gained through working in a therapeutic setting with a total of 36 truck drivers convicted of gambling related felonies or misdemeanors. Mental health professionals diagnosed each as being a “compulsive gambler,” a term later abandoned by the American Psychiatric Association in favor of “pathological gamblers.” Each of the 36 had been given suspended sentences and provisional drivers licenses so they could continue earning a living IF they joined and regularly attended Gamblers Anonymous meetings or some alternative psychological treatment program.

I was one of the alternative programs. After arduous psychological testing I determined that, despite the diagnosis of my professional peers, none of the clients I agreed to work with were either truly compulsive or pathological. Their legal problems arose simply because they were losers without any self-directed goal to become otherwise. They were wallowing in the same rut that is occupied by hundreds of thousands of other losers at gambling and life itself. Only their brush with the law imposed upon them the necessity of either getting out of that rut or going to jail.

They were losers, pure and simple. My thesis was - and is: *the cure for losing is winning!*

Seldom does a psychotherapist get such a captive clientele. Follow my regimen, keep your clinical contract or go to jail. Think what Freud might have done for a group of patients like that!

Since the mid 1970's the healing arts professions have taken an ever increasing interest in “Problem Gamblers.” Financed by federal and state agencies, individual donations and special interest groups, plus substantial fees for those who can afford them, hundred of healing arts professionals are engaged primarily in dealing with the patients so diagnosed. Several organizations, international in scope, dedicate their efforts solely to the subject. Foremost among these is Gamblers Anonymous. Their's is a 12 step program based on the tenets of Alcoholics Anonymous. Others include the National Council of Problem Gambling and The Institute for Study of Gambling Behavior. Dozens of problem gambler treatment centers have been established in the U.S., Canada and throughout the western world. Among them, Taylor Manor Hospital, Ellicott City, Md. South Oaks Hospital, Ainityville, N.Y., The National Center for Pathological Gambling in Baltimore and numerous VA hospital Centers in virtually every state of the union.

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All of these institutions, together with major academic programs extending from The University of Nevada, Reno to St. Johns University in Jamaica, New York, stand firmly on the premise that there is no cure for the problem gambler. The sole treatment prescription is abstinence. All of their collective multi-million dollar efforts are aimed toward a negative goal: abstaining from gambling, a pastime so historically pervasive as to be almost instinctive.

The American Psychiatric Association solidly supports the aims of these organizations, including the goal of abstinence. In 1980, through the auspices of the late Dr. Robert Custer, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSMIII) was revised to include "Pathological Gambling as a Disorder of Impulse Control," thereby categorizing it as a mental disorder, an addictive disease. Hence problem gamblers who commit crimes are no longer subject to the same legal penalties as other citizens, providing such crimes can be attributed to their gambling proclivities.

In a nation built on the principle of free moral agency, problem gamblers, along with those addicted to the abuse of alcohol and illegal substances, can now evade the legal consequences of their behavior. They have the same rights as other citizens but not the obligation to suffer the same fate for the abuse of those rights.

No wonder losing is so popular. Whether it be against the bottle, drugs, at the racetrack or casino, losing is tax and private interest supported. Yet the homeless still go without shelter and the hungry still starve. According to Gamblers Anonymous and the National Council On Problem Gambling, over 12 million Americans are subject to being diagnosed as "Pathological Gamblers." That's up 8 million since 1974. What is the "cure" rate for abstinence based therapy? Figures released by GA only claim 3.5%. Psychiatry in general admits to a dismal 2.8%. It would seem that abstinence only makes the heart grow fonder.

By expanding the diagnostic testing parameters for problem gamblers from the almost puerile standards of GA and various healing arts organizations, I found that only 17% of all persons so diagnosed are truly "pathological gamblers," prone to recidivism and requiring the abstinence alternative. The other 83% can actually be cured thorough varying procedures of re-parenting and therapy based education in the art and science of winning. Of that 83%, about 67% will show some profit, the rest will go along breaking just about even. Breaking even may seem less than optimal, yet if all gamblers

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broke even there would be no gambling pathology and several thousand healing arts professionals would have to look elsewhere for their fees.

Win Therapy does not apply to casino gamblers. Only those pursuing conquest of pari-mutuel events can be cured. The reason is simple. Casino games are not positive expectancy activities. That is how they build the ornate hotels and casinos that dominate the economy of Nevada and Atlantic City, as well as the riverboats now floating the Mississippi. The expectancy of parimutuel wagering on thoroughbred, harness and quarterhorse races is demonstrably positive. It has been documented and proven so by many practitioners since the turn of the century.

My mental health peers disagree. They lump horse racing handicappers and casino gamblers into the same pigeon hole, refusing to acknowledge any basic difference. I am a member of the various problem gambling organizations I've mentioned. I am known as "The Adversary." In 1987 I presented an alternative diagnostic and treatment approach to my psychiatric fellows at a conclave held at Bally's Reno. I suggested that they all analyze the frenetic behavior of the casino patrons and then do the same with the comparatively quiet, contemplative occupants of the race book. I had no takers. I also invited them to one of my handicapping seminars. Even though I was about to conduct one in Albany, New York, close to where several of the abstinence advocates were located, I still got no takers.

Psychiatry's bottom line is that all problem gamblers are losers. Ergo, all losers are problem gamblers. This is in keeping with organized medicine's "sick mode." All sick people are, to some degree, dysfunctional. Therefore all dysfunctional people are sick! In all areas of medicine and psychiatry, dysfunction is researched and treated with an aim toward cure. All, that is, except dysfunctional gambling. Alcohol and narcotics addiction cause tissue damage. Physiological morbidity that can only be suspended through abstinence. There is no tissue damage inherent in gambling. True, prolonged losing can lead to visceral, gastro-intestinal and cardiovascular problems, but so can a prolonged view from a 40th floor executive suite.

Intervention before the emergence of danger from physical or psychological disorder should be the aim of health professionals in all areas. Intervention into the problems of losers must be two-fold. First, an examination of the true nature of the event itself. In this case, thoroughbred handicapping; together with a formula for making that event a positive expectancy one. The body of this book provides a solution for the first. The second phase of intervention is less simple and failure to deal with it

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can render the first impotent. It comes replete with a variety of names: attitude, mind set, frame of reference. Call it what you will, it boils down to personal psychology.

One of my treasured clients and colleagues is psychologist Dr. Robert Anthony, author of nine self-help, psychology of success books. To date his works, like *Think*, *Total Self Confidence*, *Total Success* and *Doing What You Love*, *Loving What You Do*, have sold over five million copies, been translated into a dozen languages and are available on audio tapes. Anthony is an inveterate thoroughbred handicapper. He got into horse racing through one of his readers, a \$125,000 a year race track winner, who told Anthony he would be a successful at picking winners because his writings demonstrated that he had a winning attitude. Never mind that the doctor had never been to the track and could not read a racing form. Winning was all a matter of attitude. The rest could be methodically learned. Robert accepted the challenge. While his race track winnings do not equate to the earnings from five million books, he treats racing as a serious business, taking as much pride and delight from his handicapping profits as he does from his royalties.

Anthony has this to say: “The true essence of winning lies within the psyche of the individual who learns to change his/her self-image to that of a winner! A mediocre handicapper with a winning attitude will be more successful in the long run than an expert handicapper without a winning attitude.”

There is more to be learned about winning from Anthony’s books, especially his latest, *Betting On Yourself*, than in all the handicapping how-to books put together. I do not wish to impart the notion that you can be a successful handicapper just by willing it so. A winning attitude is more than just affirmation and wanting to win. Achieving it requires drastic changes of mental set, frame of reference and the way you perceive and interpolate the written and spoken word.

Statistics show that 25% of all adult Americans, one in four, are functionally illiterate. Judging by some of the questions horseplayers ask about fairly simplistic data, one might conclude that all 25% of our illiterates are aspiring handicappers. This is not the case. Most of them have more than an adequate I.Q. and higher than average educational levels. The problem lies in the fact that the majority of horseplayers share a fixed frame of reference that refuses to budge from mythical misinformation implanted early in the handicapping learning curve by books, magazine articles, system sellers,

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lecturers and word of mouth from losers. Ironic as it may seem, loser axioms dominate the accepted lore of handicapping, while winning concepts are often regarded with varying degrees of scorn.

A first step toward a winning attitude would be to take Buddy Eldorado's advice and study losers. This is the easiest kind of research since 98% of all "horseplayers" you'll meet will be your subjects. Observe their opinions, listen to their dialogue and horse racing maxims, understand their mental machinations, handicapping procedures, selection process and how they wager their money. Do you see yourself mirrored? If so, follow the lead of Eldorado and a bevy of other winners I know. Do just the opposite.

When we were kids we were taught the Three R's. Reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. Author Dick Mitchell has offered the Three R's of successful handicapping. "Reality, Responsibility and Record keeping." Reality means exploring the plethora of myths that dominate "horseplayer" thinking. Most prominent among these deal with human manipulation of races. Fixes, jockeys who stiff your horse on purpose, the undue influence of trainers; stewards who misread photo finishes to favor the low odds horse - or the horse you did not bet on. Track maintenance designed to prevent front "speed" horse from winning; or the opposite: to keep closers out of contention.

Such myths flourish because most human egos are so fragile that they will not accept the notion that the outcome of any event is not controllable by man. Except for God, that is. When all other rationalizations for losing a race fail, the loser will lay the blame at heaven's doorstep. Losers refuse to accept the reality that the horse runs the race and that accurate recognition of running patterns, relative to class level and distance, produces the winning horse in the vast majority of races. In fact, our sixteen-year study shows that in races where every contender has at least three north American pace lines, one or more of those lines, properly evaluated, will produce the winning horse 96% of the time.

The information is all there in the Racing Form and much of it now also in The Racing Times. Yet losers, most of whom claim to know how to read the Form, fail to recognize it.

Mitchell's second R is Responsibility He emphasizes that you alone are responsible for your selection and wagering decisions. After every race how often do you hear those mournful cries of, "I knew that horse was going to win!" Or, "I had that horse!" If I had, woulda, coulda, shoulda. Of course the person did not have the horse because

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someone else touted him off it and on to another contender. Insider information direct from a shed row hotwalker, backstretch gossip, the guy in front of the line who laid down a grand on the one horse who came in fourth; a hot tip from an intimate of the trainer or friend of the owner. And then there is always, “The trainer told the jockey to hold back on the horse so it could go off at higher odds next out” Or “every time I bet that jockey, he stiffs my horse” Among the more intellectual losers it is frequently, “If they ran that race again five times, my horse would win four.” Always something or someone else to blame. Never taking responsibility for self.

The third R is record-keeping In surveying thousands of horseplayers, Mitchell determined that very few kept any written record of their selections or wagers. An even more minuscule number kept notes on the why of their selection or wagering decisions. Echoing the words of virtually every professional handicapper, Dick says that he never met a consistent winner who did not maintain copious records.

Losers also have their Three R's. They are Rationalization, Resistance and Remorse. Rationalization is always finding an excuse for failure outside of self. Resistance is erecting a mental barrier between self and the essential realities of successful handicapping. Of the three it is the most difficult to cure. More about that later. Remorse is the inevitable result of the first two. For losers it is a vicious circle, however. They go right back to the first R, rationalization and blame their remorse on something or someone other than self.

When Mitchell and I were on the road together for a year in 1986, I proposed the term “regression” as the winner's third R. He felt record keeping was the more comprehensible term. Being the more forceful personality, he won out. Regression, however, is more than just record keeping. Regression means to go back. Not just over selection and wagering decisions, but to do a thorough analysis and re-evaluation of every race lost. Learn what patterns were displayed by the actual winner that you missed when handicapping the race. Know precisely what you could have changed in your procedural analysis that could have reasonably and logically put you on the winner. If you find nothing, accept the loss and move on.

More often than not, you will find a clear reason for missing the winner through an inappropriate pace line selection or the failure to properly interpret your readouts. Over reliance on the TPRs and not enough attention to the EPR, FFR balance relative to the track's Early-Late Energy bias will be the chief cause for failure.



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Equating successful handicapping to a juggling act is a good analogy. Minimizing the number of objects one tries to juggle is sound. However, relying on just one number alone is not juggling and it is not handicapping. We ask you to juggle but two factors, EPR and FFR. Learn to evaluate and weight their relationship relative to their total, the TPR, and you will be successful.

Relying completely on a single number to produce a multitude of winners is the loser's favorite dream. Over the past sixteen years I have heard the cry thousands of times. "Just give me one rating number that selects the winner. Number one! America is hung up on firstitis. I call it the Hertz complex. Bet one horse from one number to come in number one. Reduce successful handicapping, one of the toughest avocations there is, to a single number. It's been tried. No one has yet succeeded. Horseplayers, almost paranoid in their suspicion of tracks, stewards, jockeys, trainers and their fellow man, will spend millions of dollars annually on worthless systems that promise winners from easy, one step, one rating number approach. Simple, easy, quick. These are a few of the magical terms holding so much appeal to horseplayers.

Why do I use the term "horseplayer" as a pejorative? Because they play. To them the racetrack is a carnival, a great big playground. Losers play. Handicappers work. To them the track is a place of business. If they work hard enough and use the proper tools, they win.

What is the psychological basis of the horseplayers belief in magic? It lies in our earliest childhood, predating conscious memory. Between birth and about six months, the newborn has no capacity for rational, logical thinking. The infant is nurtured, fed, kept warm and comfortable, soothed when it cries, diapered, changed and cleaned when soiling itself with natural body functions. At this stage of development the brain is not yet ready to reason cognitively. There is no cause-effect explanations of why all this is being done. Hence the infant perceives it as magic.

This period between birth and six months is called the Oral Stage. It is characterized by oral gratification and feeding from nipple-sucking, be it bottle or mother's breast. Since everything is done for it, no effort is required on the part of the infant. As the child grows it is gradually weaned to move on to the next stage of development.

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Those who, for one reason or another, do not advance psychologically beyond this magical oral stage are said to have an “oral fixation.” While manifesting normal physical and intellectual growth, their emotional development is arrested at the oral level. They go through life absorbed by self. Needing, wanting, taking and expecting magical solutions to every problem.

The overwhelming majority of my psychiatric peers postulate that virtually all problem gamblers are orally fixated. They maintain that gambling, like alcohol and drug abuse, together with food and sexual excesses are addictions stemming from oral stage dysfunction.

Psychiatry and medicine in general treats gluttony and anorexia through dietary regimen. Alcohol and drug abuse cause poisonous physical damage. A prescription of total abstinence thus becomes essential. But if total abstinence were offered as the cure for sexual problems, the psychotherapeutic community would be heckled into oblivion. The outcry would be that sex is a natural, even instinctual human function. That repression would be harmful and dangerous.

Social anthropologists, like the late Margaret Meade and a host of others, have found universal evidence of ritualized gambling in almost every culture since the beginning of time. Early man wagered on the tossing of bones and depicted the game on the walls of their caves. Records of mankind’s proclivity to race and bet on horses go back to at least 1350 B.C. and Suppiluliumas, King of Mittani in Asia Minor.

Risk-taking ritualized into games and pastimes is as old as mankind itself and so universally inherent in the species as to qualify for at least one of the definitions of instinct. To propose abstinence as the exclusive alternative for an activity so deeply ingrained in the spirit of man is like putting a water-filled tea kettle with no steam outlet on a lighted burner. Sooner or later it will explode. And so will the minds of men and women when self-denial is offered as the only answer to any normal function, including risk-taking in the form of gambling. Is there any reason to wonder at the minuscule cure rate earned by abstinence based therapy?

If the cure for losing is winning, what are some of the steps necessary to achieve that goal? The first prerogative is to work with that arrested child within our adult until it grows beyond the stage of oral fixation. The process by which this is done is called re-parenting. You might prefer the term reprogramming. It involves wiping clean the psychological slate that is contaminated with negative parental and environmental

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scripting that clutters the losers psyche with distorted perceptions and socially imposed mythology. Then the void must be filled with positive, reality messages.

The technique is not unlike a military de-briefing. It is the direct opposite of what is popularly known as brainwashing. It is the cleansing of a brain already awash in misinformation. The most insidious of negative implantations is that gambling is evil, sinful and morally wrong in accordance with the laws of God. Anyone believing that is destined to lose because part of that same morally imposed injunction is “all gamblers lose.” If you believe in that edict, stop reading now.

The truth is quite the opposite of society’s indictment. The parimutuel system guarantees the most utopian of all economic or social orders. It rewards only those making correct decisions and wagers. It does not allow for the kind of manipulations and influence peddling that goes on in bedrooms and boardrooms, where stock, commodity and real estate transactions are conducted. A teller cannot be bribed into exchanging a losing ticket for a winning one after the race is over. A winning ticket is honored, in the hands of anyone, regardless of physical stature, race, creed or color. The parimutuel system is ideal democracy in action.

To eradicate the orally fixated notion that winning is magical or the result of luck, the stars, fate, soothsayer advice or an easy step-by-step system, one must have a clear definition of the word “gambling.” You are gambling when you wager on something where you do not know almost precisely the probability of your success. Not the success of any single wager, but your positive proficiency over a given cycle of no less than 20 instances. In random events such as roulette and craps, this is impossible. Therefore these are non-positive expectancy games. At blackjack, when card counting was allowed in the legal casinos, a skilled expert could enjoy a small positive expectancy. Today a long term advantage at 21 is less probable.

Only in pari-mutuel events, especially thoroughbred racing, and sports betting do skill oriented positive probabilities exceed the expectancy produced by the odds themselves. Therefore, to the skilled, horserace wagering is a positive expectancy event. Hence, it is not gambling.

The caveat here is that it is not gambling only to those who meet the first criterion: knowing almost precisely their cyclic probability of success and degree of positive odds expectancy. Establishing one’s probability requires record keeping over a protracted series of races handicapped without deviation from an established procedure.

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A 1976 survey by Huey Mahi when he was editor of *Systems & Methods*, showed that the average lifetime of a handicapping system was 2.8 days. This means that most horseplayers give up on any given approach after the first few losses, moving on to some other pie in the sky source of "magic." More evidence of why 98% do not win.

This brings us to the area of an individual's belief system. One who believes, even for 2.8 days, that handicapping success can come from an easy to understand mail order system offered to thousands, believes in magic. Believing in such magic precludes belief in self! Belief in self, possessing a high degree of positive self-image, is the prime key to handicapping success! Without it one should remain a recreational horseplayer wagering no more than two dollars a race.

Self-esteem encompasses the first of Dick Mitchell's three R's: Responsibility. Having once validated and embraced a given handicapping procedure, the responsible person listens to no voice about its implementation other than his/her own. Any other course evidences self-doubt and will lead to remorse. Every successful handicapper in history has been a maverick. All march to a different drummer; one the crowd never hears. If you march to the drummer the masses hear you will surely become a part of the mass statistic: the one showing that 98% do not win.

Many totally reject my Win Therapy message. They loudly and violently proclaim that their adaptation to those contaminated parental and social messages in their early development has no bearing on whether they win or lose. To them what I've been saying is all a bunch of gobbly gook, or to use their favorite expletives: b.s., psychology crap. They maintain that they could pick winners with the best if only they had a better system, more information. To them, information, not inspiration, is the ultimate solution.

This attitude personifies the most insidious of the loser's Three R's. Resistance. Fixed ideas, narrow frames of reference and prejudices have always been most of difficult of human foibles to deal with. Ironically, it is far easier to implant negative, contaminated messages over positive ones than the reverse. The reason lies in mankind's natural inclination toward group approval; to cluster toward the mean in the area of attitudes and opinions. This proclivity has been evidenced throughout history and is responsible for group hysteria and the kind of furor Hitler evoked in Germany's masses.

Resisting new thought is especially easy when the old has been as firmly implanted as it has in the field of thoroughbred handicapping. Most of the myths subscribed to so firmly by non-winners have been virtually institutionalized since the turn of the century.

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If you share the resistance of my non-winning adversaries you are certainly entitled to your opinion. We live in a nation governed by lip service dedication to the principle of free moral agency. We cling to the belief that the majority is always right. That's the democratic way, isn't it? It is an unfortunate blow to democratic ideology that the majority do not win at the races or in life. 90% of America's wealth rests in the hands of 2% of the population. Joining the majority in any matter is easier than the easiest of systems. Simply do as they do.

If you prefer being in the minority; a part of the elite 2% who win consistently, here is a short excerpt from a very long list of popular and poisonous loser myths.

## **Cherished Handicapping Myth vs. Winner Reality**

**Myth:** There is such a thing as a Universal Class Structure.

**Reality:** Only in heaven.

**Myth:** There is such a thing as a Universal Par Time Chart.

**Reality:** Not even in heaven.

**Myth:** Claiming levels are the same at every track.

**Reality:** Only those with identical purse structures.

**Myth:** The fastest horse always wins because it crosses the finish line first; speed, not pace is the answer.

**Reality:** Yes, when you can handicap from the results charts. Not so when using the past, performance charts.

**Myth:** Betting two horses to win per race is betting against yourself because one of your bets is always lost.

**Reality:** Except in a dead heat. Betting only one horse and losing is also betting against yourself. You still lose one bet.

**Myth:** Any method that does not incorporate par times cannot succeed.

**Reality:** Horses run against each other, not pars. Horses do not subscribe to par time services.

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**Myth:** Trainer stats are an essential factor in good handicapping.

**Reality:** Poorly trained horses seldom produce pace lines worthy of considering. Trainers are like coaches in athletic games. But in horse racing they cannot call plays or make substitutions after the gate opens.

**Myth:** All the experts agree that the 3rd fraction is virtually meaningless. Early speed is where it's at.

**Reality:** All the experts don't agree on anything. Every increment in a race has meaning; but only in relationship to the other increments. If early speed is truly where it's at, why do so many front runners die on the lead?

**Myth:** It's common knowledge that today's high track take makes winning less and less possible.

**Reality:** What is common knowledge is that many so-called experts are employing outdated handicapping methods that provide them with little edge over the crowd. The odds you see on the tote board are the odds you get. It behooves the handicapper to be armed with tools that meet today's reality instead of wallowing in the nostalgia of a yesteryear never to return.

**Myth:** Track bias is the product of the individual track surface, daily surface variation caused by weather and inside-outside speed factors.

**Reality:** Long research says that these factors are responsible for only 20% of what is known as bias. The other 80% is a direct result of the match-up of contenders in a race. The physical and behavioral interrelationship between horses is the major cause of perceived bias. Knowing this will give you a pronounced edge over your competitors at the track.

**Myth:** Knowledge of wind chill factor and hoof confirmation are essential handicapping factors.

**Reality:** If you believe this, only go to the track on warm, still days & bet only on horses who will let you look at their feet.

**Myth:** Everyone knows that you have to expect streaks, win and lose.

**Reality:** If you believe it you're bound to have them. Wagering on two horses, and keeping a current track profile will eliminate long losing streaks and enhance win streaks.

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**Myth:** Keeping daily variants is an absolute necessity.

**Reality:** About 20% of daily speed variations are caused by weather and vagaries of loam and tide. The other 80% is attributable to the inter-related energies and chemistry of the horses in today's matchup.

**Myth:** Everyone knows that pace figures won't work because the chart callers make so many mistakes in their appraisal of beaten lengths.

**Reality:** Chart callers are human. Their inconsistencies affect all horses equally. By equating their errors precisely we achieve the same effect that would result from them being absolutely precise.

**Myth:** You just can't win 'em all.

**Reality:** True. But you can win between 12 to 14 out of 20.

**Myth:** The game is crooked. Nobody can beat the races in the long run.

**Reality:** Those who beat them consistently are relying on your attitude. It is your money that they're winning.

**Myth:** Never bet a horse going up in class. They don't win a fair share of races.

**Reality:** What is a fair share? 78% of all longshots, horses paying in double digit figures, are going up in class.

**Myth:** Betting to place is folly. Everyone knows that in the long run you're better off and make more money betting to win only.

**Reality:** How long is your long run? If you bet horses to win only and they keep coming in 2nd, it will get mighty short. Mutuels pay off in three positions, plus exotics. The true handicapper should be able to profit from ALL opportunities.

**Myth:** Pace handicapping is too hard. Just give me an easy system.

**Reality:** Tell us what tracks you "play" so we can go there and take some of that money you're leaving behind.