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Inside-the-box  
Thinking

**Straight-forward evidence for  
exceptional performance**

# Learn & Win

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# Welcome

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## Why this brief summary?

The Lockdowns and 2020 have given us the experience of reduction. In sport we will have the choice of what to put back. The world will reopen and those who are best prepared will be out front.

I am driven by unlocking the power of the expertise and lived experience from you, your team and your organisation.

## **Moving high potential systems to high performing. And onwards to exceptional.**

Systems win the long game. I use systems that have evolved from over 30 years in high performance sport in innovation, learning, measurement and medallist performance.

In this short booklet, I'll share with you a model to not only create success but sustain it.

Most problems in high performance are addition problems requiring a subtraction solution. Sport is complex enough without adding 'more'. When current activity and current thinking are made visible, solutions appear. The magic for exceptional performance is to have this system humming.

This short summary is an overview for you to explore the model and apply it to your own context, and see what can impact performance in your world.

So by all means, jump in and get as much as you can out of it. If you have any questions about how to implement or improve any of these elements within your performance system, get in contact with me and let's have a chat...

**Richard**

# The Model

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The giant post-event performance review is ineffective. Too big, too slow, too late. No athlete trains that way.

The right evidence and training accumulate over time and lead to exceptional performance. We know a simple effective routine repeated often wins the game.

Finding speed and simplicity along with the right balance of evidence to be able to create exceptional performance can be a challenge.

Having reviewed across four Olympic cycles for one country and uncovered 700 unique questions indicates we are not always clear on the questions or evidence that matter most.

When you need to get clear on the past, many questions are needed. When you want to inform the future, very few questions are needed. Backwards is for understanding, forwards is for action.

High performance is action. What is most important is knowing how to reveal the underlying patterns in this action and the thinking behind it.

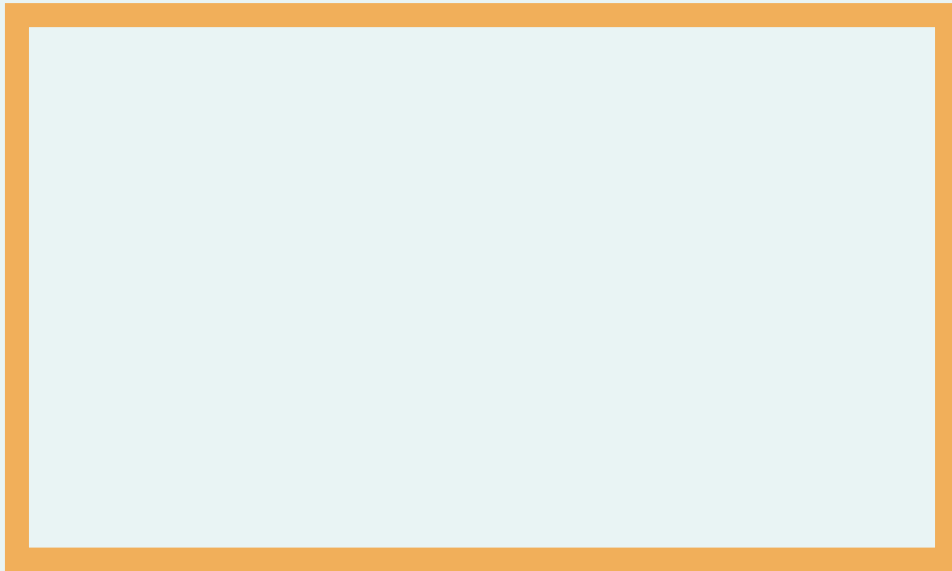
This is where the leverage lives. Insights for fast effective decision making that accelerate performance and reduce wasted energy. That is your leverage.

The evidence that matters comes from in-the-field and lived experience. This is the evidence that matters. The solution requires a lighter touch for deeper thinking. And a routine to build deep insight to inform the decisions for the next event.

The approach can be simpler and lighter than you think!

# Inside-the-box Thinking

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'Think outside the box.' How many times have you heard that? It is often the focus before reaching high performance! What is outside the box? What is new and innovative? What are the competitors doing?

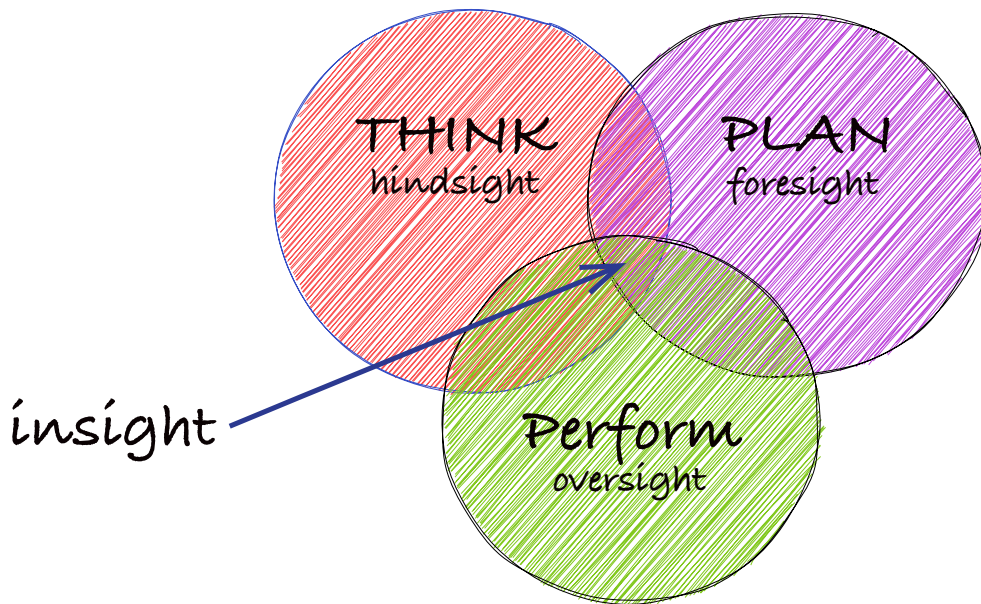
High performers think inside the box. They know that understanding their own performance system matters most.

Without evidence and reflection of the performer and their system, the contrast cannot be seen. The fish cannot see the sea they are in.

When the performance system is made visible, there is deep-seeing and discovery of competitive advantage previously unnoticed.

# Reflection in Balance

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In this model Low performers are often imbalanced, focusing on one or two areas and performance falls or plateaus.

All high performers are balanced in the three areas that combine to produce results: Think. Plan. Perform.

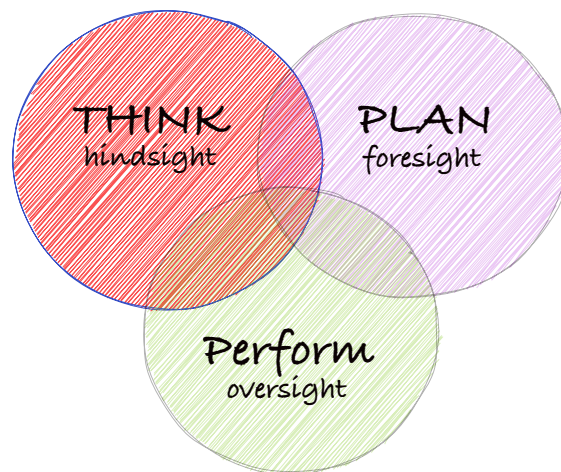
Thinking, in this model, is reflection on the past: hindsight. Are our actions creating progress or just motion?

Planning is the predictive edge we need for creating the future. The foresight to close the gap to a desired future?

Performing requires oversight of both. It is the inter-action of energy and insight.

Insight is seeing the picture simultaneously from the front, from behind and in action. The performance system is made clear and decision-making becomes more accurate.

# Think: Hindsight

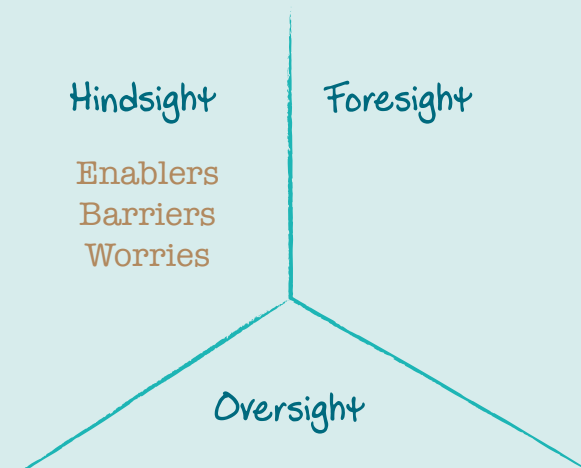


Our brains are belief engines, not truth engines, and seeing our patterns of thinking and behaviour brings truth and exposes unhelpful activities and assumptions. Critical leverage for performance acceleration. Post-event performance reviews are common in sport, but they are often too late, too infrequent and too slow.

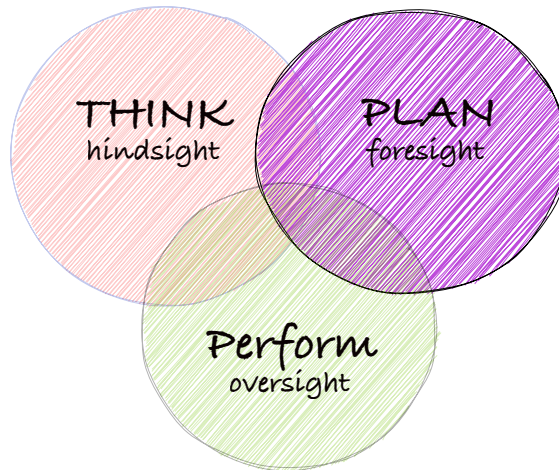
Repetitive simple processes work best to capture important evidence from the past and make decisions for the next event. Knowing what worked, what did not, and what looked to be the deeper unresolved problems are key elements to understanding.

As an example, after reviewing hundreds of performance reviews three hindsight questions delivered the most impact.

- What went well and contributed to performance? (enablers)
- What did not go well and detracted from performance? (barriers)
- What were the unresolved problems that could impact the next event? (worries)



# Plan: Foresight



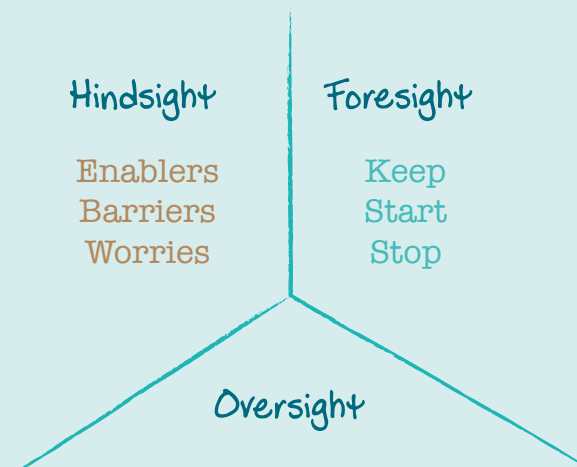
Looking forward in sports typically happens after a big event. When plans begin to form for the next event. For many sports, their high-performance plan is their entire foresight picture. However, the real performance picture is dynamic, not stationary, and requires a futuring, foresight approach that brings an edge.

Performance decisions are made 'in the moment', that is, with no plan or strategy at hand. The objective is to make the evidence for these decisions more visible. A process to uncover patterns in thinking and behaviour that help align the compass.

For example, after working with dozens of high-performance plans across five Olympic Games, three simple foresight questions have proven effective.

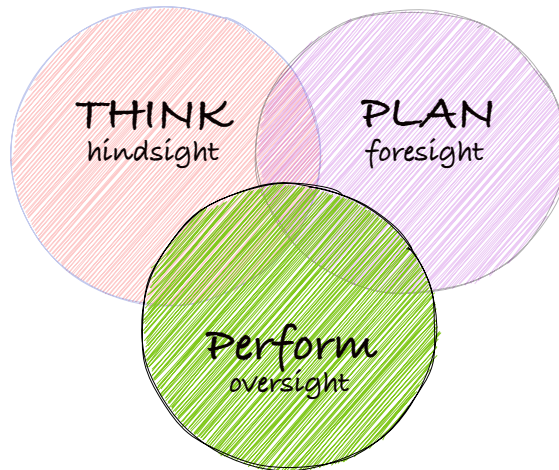
- What should we keep doing?
- What should we start doing?
- What should we stop doing?

Interestingly, when we profiled Olympic medalists and non-medalists. Repeat medalists were 5% of the athlete population and owned 80% of the stops! They understand the leverage in knowing their performance system and consciously avoid adding new layers and distractions.





# Perform: Oversight



High performance is know-how in action. It requires exceptional oversight of what is most important to deliver exactly what is needed at the right time.

Every action reveals a high-performance intension. It shows what a performer believes high performance is in any given instant. Learning in action means informing while performing—a learned high-performance skill.

For example, having had experience with hundreds of performance plans, three questions deliver effective in-action evidence.

- What did I expect?
- What happened?
- What did I learn?

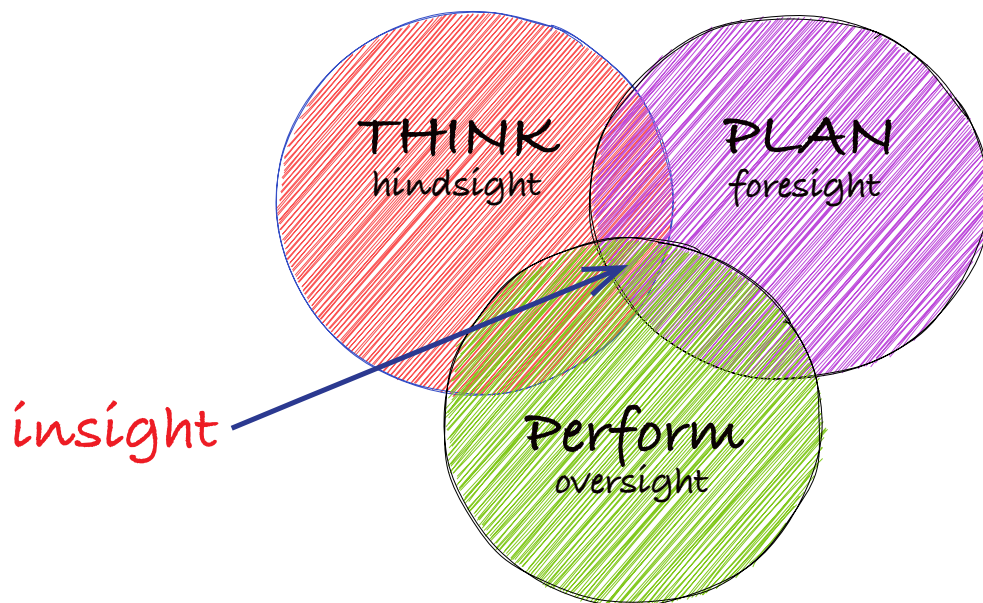
Sports with weak processes in their thinking and planning have the greatest gap between what they expect and what happens. They are surprised by unanticipated events more often than others.

High performers who have balance across think, plan, and perform are more aligned and make more accurate decisions more often than others.



# Insight

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High performance requires deep thinking but also simplicity. Some ask the wrong questions or too many of the right questions. Simple insight systems work best. The key is gathering just enough evidence to inform decisions—no more than that.

This means decluttering the review process to make it more meaningful, forward facing and easier to implement. High performers pick the shortest path to the right evidence to make decisions that matter.

No time or learning is wasted. Gold-medal systems are more important for the real game than the medal! As James Clear wrote; 'we don't rise to our goals, we fall to the level of our systems'.

The evidence and learning system in many sports is over complicated and infrequent, hiding untapped competitive advantage. Victory is within the system you are in!



## Whats next?

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Whenever you are ready and need support with uncovering and aligning what matters most, I can help. I have a range of programmes to help you unlock, unblock and simplify, for higher performance.

There are individual mentoring/coaching programmes, 1/2 day workshops, 90min masterclasses, and a tailored performance programme to help you solve your main challenges.

To harness this expertise and become faster and clearer in what matters most reach out [richard@simplify2perform.com](mailto:richard@simplify2perform.com)



## Why Richard?

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I have been involved with preparation for nine Olympics across most roles.

I have won international gold medals, coached world champions, created programmes in innovation and learning that have contributed to Olympic medals for three countries, and researched the differences between medallists and non-medallists.

My obsession is converting high potential into high performance by unlocking the power of you and your team's experience and expertise. I work internationally helping high performance leaders and sport experts in all levels.

I understand how busy and complex high performance is and that speed matters. I will help you subtract, align and accelerate.

## While you are thinking...

Join the [mail-list](#) for performance insights  
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