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How to Handle the **STRESS** of a Big-Time Tourney

Big Pots, Big Fields and Long Hours Could Kill Your Chances if You Can't Cope



Financial Counselor Chellie Campbell believes if you think like a winner you have a fighting chance to win the WSOP.

WHO WILL BE the one player out of the thousands in the World Series to take home the \$10 million prize? Financial stress-reduction and money-management counselor Chellie Campbell says there is one quality that can separate you from the field and give you a fighting chance to win: How you think.

"You can be a winner regardless of your final position—you

just need to reframe your thoughts," she says. "I was playing poker and a guy came over and said to his friend sitting next to me: 'Hey Fred, how ya doing? Last time I saw you, you were in that tournament and you had a mountain of chips in front of you.' Fred said: 'Yeah, I did pretty good until I got to the final table and busted out seventh. I didn't get any cards. That's the story of my life.'

"Did you ever hear anyone say that and mean something good?" Campbell asks. "Contrast that story with this one: The Texas hold'em jackpot had just been raised to \$100,000. George told everyone: 'I'm winning that today.' He repeated it over and over, and he won. People couldn't believe how lucky he was, but that was actually the fourth jackpot George had won. That was the story of his life. You've heard people say things

like: 'I can't believe I got this far,' or 'This can't be happening to me' or 'I hope my luck doesn't run out.' The minute you think that, you're dead. Replace negative thoughts with positive affirmations such as: 'People want to give me their chips. I win a lot and I win big.'"

Do you have to believe what you're saying for it to work? "No," Campbell says. "You just have to keep saying it. You can act your way into right thinking. There are winning strategies in life and in poker. If you act according to a winning strategy, you'll be a winner. I teach people in my workshops about practicing positive affirmations around money. If they aren't used to this kind of thing, they think it's silly. Do it consistently and you'll see it start to work, even if you don't believe it."

For the cynics and skeptics in the crowd, Campbell has this declaration: "I believe my affirmations work for me whether I believe they will or not."

An avid tournament player, Campbell practices what she preaches. "They were having a ladies' tournament and the winner got a seat at the World Series ladies' event. I said: 'I'm going to win that seat. It's my turn. I haven't won in awhile so this is my equity.' My root belief is that if I have a run of bad luck, I'm due. I kept telling myself the whole time: 'I'm here to win this, I'm winning it and I am getting great cards and I am playing perfectly.'

"Phil Hellmuth has an affirmation on his wall that says: 'I am the best poker player in the world.' I'm not gonna say

that because I know I'm not, but I can say I'm the luckiest player in the universe."

Welcome to Stress World

Whether you're a first-time player or a seasoned pro, Campbell says that when you sign up for the World Series, you're signing up for stress—but that can be a good thing.

"Positive stress makes you step out of your comfort zone into a set of unknown quantities. If you stay in your comfort zone all the time, you don't progress in life. It's stressful to change or try something new; it brings up the butterflies and shortness of breath. Most people call it nervousness—I call it energy. The World Series stretches over 12 days and people will be playing 12 or more hours per day. When they get tired, that's when they stop believing. They push all-in on the wrong hand at the wrong moment. They know it's wrong, but they're doing it to relieve the stress."

What can you do to relieve stress when you're card-dead or have taken a bad beat? Her advice is simple: Get up and walk away. You can leave for a few hands and all you'll lose is your blinds. Even if you're down to a chip and a chair, the most important thing is to change your energy. Change your thinking from "I'm dying here" to "I'm the luckiest player in the room."

When the money counselor herself starts traveling down a losing road, she flips her thinking to these positive affirmations: People love to give me money.



Chellie Campbell used her own techniques to win a seat for the WSOP ladies' event in this tournament at Pechanga Casino in Temecula, California.



'When people get tired, they push all-in on the wrong hand at the wrong moment. They know it's wrong, but they're doing it to relieve the stress'

PHOTO: STARLA FORTUNATO
PHOTO: PECHANGA CASINO

People love to give me their poker chips. People are enjoying the process of making me rich.

Millions at Stake

Some of the stress of the WSOP comes from the richness of the prize pool. Campbell suggests you examine some of your basic beliefs about wealth. Have you heard that money is the root of all evil or that a fool and his money are soon parted? If you think having money is bad or makes you look like a fool, you're not going to let it into your life. Do you think, "If I had money, all my worries would be over?"

If your unconscious pattern is to spend more than you make, it won't matter how much you win. Some people have a habit of struggle. They can dou-

ble their income, but keep struggling because they buy a bigger house or a new car. Others subconsciously don't create money because they're afraid to lose it. All of these thoughts can stop you from winning.

"My downfall was the story how it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven. I believed if you were rich you couldn't go to heaven. I was broke for years over that one."

So how can you make it through the WSOP with your stress level in check and a winning attitude? Campbell has some good advice for every poker player: "Have fun every step of the way. Even if you bust out on the first hand, tell yourself: 'I'm here for the best experience I can have

in life—look how far I've made it!'

"Tell yourself: 'I'm going to play with determination and the universe will be working with me.' Who knows, it may just be your turn. Remember, losing doesn't make you a loser. The most important message I share with everyone is that if you have the right spirit and the right attitude, you're a winner every day of your life."

Chellie Campbell has daily affirmations in her book *The Wealthy Spirit*. Her new book is *Zero to Zillionaire: 8 Foolproof Steps to Financial Peace of Mind*. She conducts regular workshops and gives one-on-one sessions. Check her out at www.chellie.com. ♠

— Reparata Mazzola