



The Psychology of Striving: Why Athletes Need to Set Ambitious Goals, Face Fear, Fumble and Move Forward

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What is Striving?





The act of fighting or struggling against someone or something; competition, opposition, or battle





“The struggle is real!!!”







Struggle is a part of striving, and failure is a part of striving, both of which should produce growth in athletes





Negative emotions are an inevitable part of striving





Athletes must learn that they cannot strive without negative emotions, which must be embraced in order to be successful in sport

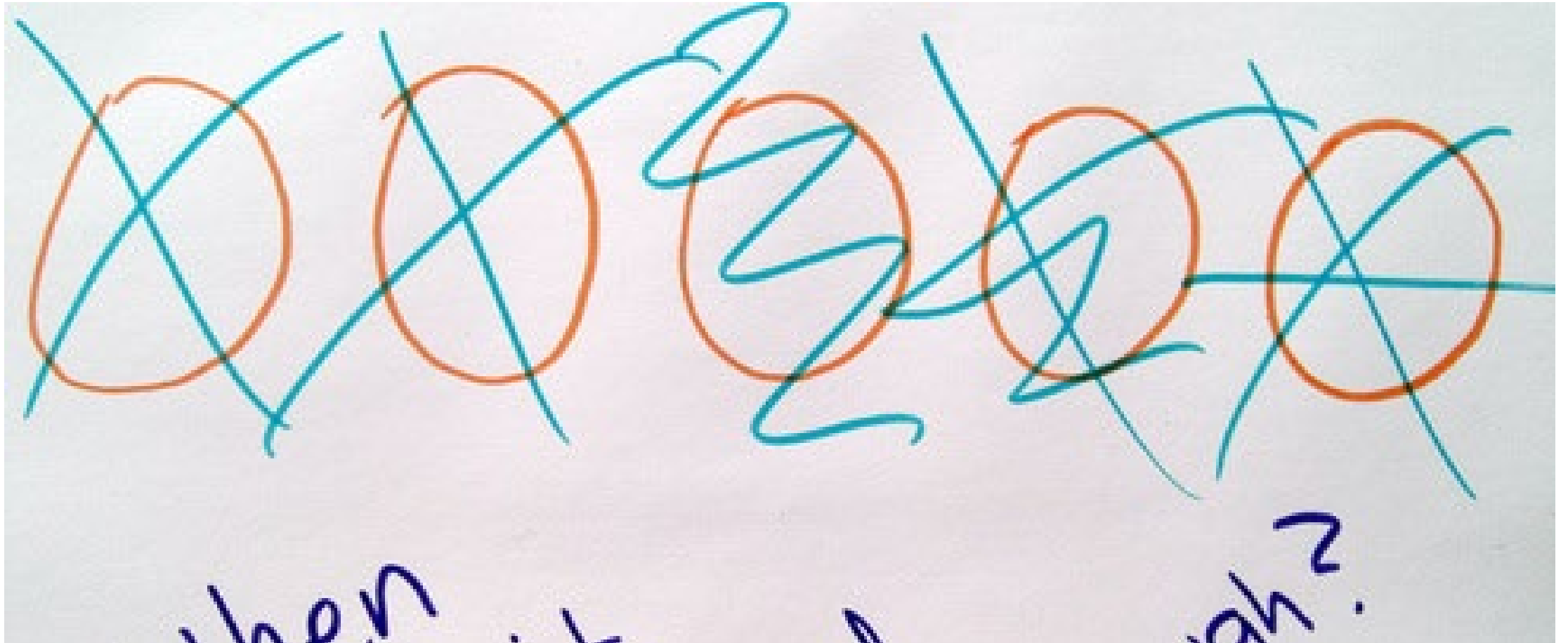


Negative emotions are adaptive and are necessary for learning!





High Standard vs. Perfectionism





Perfectionism: Having a personally high standard
at the expense of negative emotional
consequences



With high standards, you learn from mistakes
(striving)

With perfectionism, you can't make mistakes!
(emotional dysregulation)



Common Emotions Associated with Failure



Anxiety

Frustration



Disappointment

Embarrassment/Shame

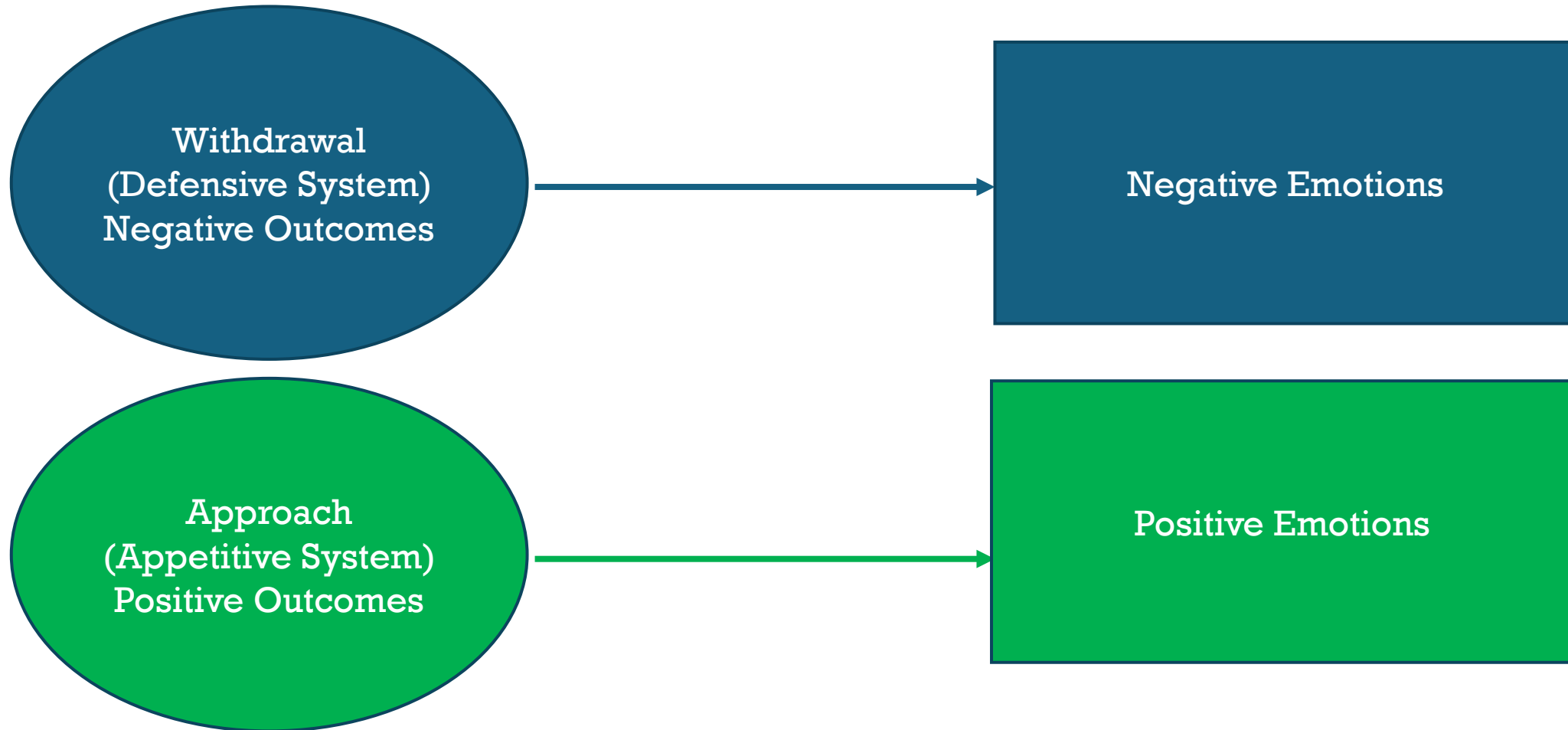


What happens in the brain and body when you learn from failure?





Navigating the world: The power of the two systems





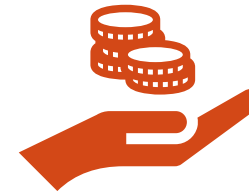
Understanding positive emotions: The reward system



Anticipation



Activation



Acceptance



The Psychology of Striving: How Athletes Can Learn from Failure

The prefrontal cortex is activated and facilitates learning

Responsible for decision making and problem solving

The reward system of the brain is activated

Dopamine released and becomes associated with reward learning

Adjustments are made from errors

The anterior cingulate cortex processes errors so you can “fix”

Neuroplasticity

Reorganization of neural connections which enhances new strategies to counter failure



Commitment, Control, and Challenge