

A Better Place of Business

Episode 6: Transcript

When urgency feels like an emergency

[00:00:00] **Linda Mzamane:** In high-pressure environments, where deadlines loom like giants and obstacles line up to slow you down, there exists a unique skill that can help to get you through it all. The big match temperament. Today, we're revealing the secrets of individuals who not only maintain their composure in the face of pressure, but thrive on it. When every moment feels like a crucial match point, who better to guide you than those who have mastered the art of the big match temperament?

[00:00:33] **Voiceover:** For Gielie Hoffman, a leading mental conditioning coach, the occurrence of BMT in athletes stems from several factors. I think it's developed from a young age and what watching your parents, how they deal with pressure and the way you were coached as a young athlete and the perceptions that were formed at that age does play a role. And then how you handled those situations where BMT was expected. I think for me, it was, uh, it didn't matter where I played, which team I played for. I always wanted to be constant, whether it was a big or small game. where I played in Japan, where I played a World Cup final. But I could always draw on past experiences and, and, uh, before every game, I sort of look back at what I have achieved. I think there was many times in my career where I was sort of, um, had a bad run or was down and out and I could draw on those experiences. I knew I could lift myself up again and, uh, I could draw on all the hard work I've done throughout my career. I think it's not in that moment when it's tough out there on the field that you think, yeah, now you must performance. Then you can think, but how hard did I work to get here? What effort did I put into to get back onto the field after injury? Um, and, and that gives me a lot of confidence. And, uh, um, like I said, whether it was a big or small game, I sort of always try to be that 8 out of 10 game. And, uh, maybe in those massive games, um, Some other players sort of felt the pressure more, and I just, I just loved playing in those big, big games, and I think I enjoyed it. And, uh, I also had an attitude of, um, the reason you play that game is to be the best you can, but you want to play in those finals. And once you get there, you must enjoy it. You mustn't now, now, let the pressure get to you. Now it's actually, you've don't the hard work previously and you just go out and enjoy those big games and ah, backing up that most of the, most of the times it worked out well.

[00:02:40] **Linda Mzamane:** This is a better place of business, and I'm your host, Linda Mzamane. In demanding professions, the spotlight shines on individuals with a unique superpower. The big match temperament. Those who have it are better able to navigate critical moments, make split-second decisions, and thrive in the crucible of high-stakes environments. In this episode, we're going to get a masterclass in maintaining composure, making calculated decisions, and excelling when the stakes are at their peak. Get ready to unlock the secrets of the big match temperament as we delve into a discussion that goes beyond survival and into thriving in the intensity of professional life. I'm joined by Chad Jones, a Life Health Solutions Business

Manager and Qualified Ambulance Emergency Assistant, and Robert Dos Santos, a lawyer turned International Award-winning Director. Welcome to you both and thank you for joining us today.

[00:03:38] **Robert dos Santos:** Thank you so much for having us. Appreciate it.

[00:03:40] **Chad Jones:** Thank you, thank you so much.

[00:03:43] **Linda Mzamane:** So I want to just kick off by asking How each of you would define the concept of big match temperament in your profession and why it's so crucial for success in high-pressure situations? Let's kick it off with you, Rob.

[00:03:58] **Robert dos Santos:** So big match temperament is the ability to be able to make strong, decisive and quick decisions on set. Were constantly put under the knife of pressure and time. and being able to make decisions which are going to impact us down the line. If we shoot something now, we will move off of that location and to be able to bring the circus that is a crew back to a location is an extraordinary undertaking and costs a lot of money. So every single decision you make has a lasting impact, whether it impacts the scenes that you're shooting next that day. The next day or later that week, it's going to have a knock-on impact. So every decision you make has an impact that goes on and then arriving in edit. If you don't have what it is that you need and you don't make the decisions that you need to get there, you're in a lot of trouble. So you are under constant scrutiny and under constant microscope of have you got what you need? Can we move on? You literally have a person called the first AD who says to you, time is ticking. We need to move. Have you got what you need? And if you don't and you move on, you're going to find yourself in a lot of trouble later on. So planning is absolutely key, making sure that you arrive on set. With everything done beforehand and a knowledge of what it is you're there to do. That is very, very important.

[00:05:33] **Linda Mzamane:** Hmm, hmm. I like the idea there of like the preparation weeks and months before that. And for you, Chad, how would you define big match temperament and why it's so important in high-pressure situations?

[00:05:43] **Chad Jones:** You know, just listening to Robert, I just hear the, the preparation is highly, highly important, but I think we live in a time these days that, you know, we're business and the type of work that we do, we kind of under constant extreme pressures. Uh, there's that constant doubt around us and we need to, you know, like Robert said, we should be prepared, days, weeks, months before. And because as we go through the, just the normal days, you know, through our normal day-to-day stuff, if we don't keep that big match temperament, where we know that we can overcome, where we can be more focused, where we, we, we know that we are more confident and stuff like that. If we don't prepare ourselves before that, we kind of lose ourselves in just the normal negativity of the day and so on.

[00:06:31] **Linda Mzamane:** And in terms of your environment, Robert, a law firm is, you know, one of the very high-pressure corporate environments they are. And of course, directing is a different ballgame, but potentially equally as stressful, if not more in different ways. And that intensity can often lead to stress and to burnout. How do you manage stress in these settings and, and what strategies can employees adopt to maintain their composure and well-being when it comes to navigating the stress of their environments?

[00:06:58] **Robert dos Santos:** So I suffered from burnout for a while and it took me a number of years to recover from it and, uh, law can and will do that to you. Working at a law firm, if you leave at half past six, you will get comments from everyone you walk past. Oh, half day today. And that's, that's, that's just the absolute norm. So you end up sometimes even just staying till eight o'clock, even though you're done at half past six and you'll either just scroll mindlessly on the internet or half your contract just for the ability that people don't rag on you and just so that you can put your billables down because you have to meet your amount of hours. So that's mixed with a lot of other things that happened to me resulted in burnout and I had to see a psychologist. I had to go to hospital and I thought there was something wrong with me and I think we treat burnout very well in today's age and I had to take a Complete U-turn in my life. Both with taking on a new profession that brought its own pressures with it. Cause now you go from, Oh, he studied law and he is a high powered lawyer that that's something you asked to tell your parents, but then say, I'm going to go carry a camera all day and suddenly that's not as cool. So it just came with the extreme pressures and. I think that leads back to my earlier answer about being prepared is, is I don't think it's about preparing, say six months of advance, which sometimes it is for a shoot. We will prepare intensely. We will know what camera angles we have, where we want to be, but on the day things go wrong.

The tree that you thought was beautiful or shielding the sun from the particular shot has been cut down, or the leaves have all blown off or something has gone wrong and you have to be able to pivot in those moments. But the way you do that is by looking after yourself and preparing your mind and your body each and every day. What I do is I ensure that I have a proper balance of rest. And doing what I love. And there's something that happens when you do what you love. You have boundless energy. You cannot stop what you're doing. I wake up every morning with an absolute smile on my face, even if I know it's a tough day and I've had some tough days in this last week, we lost footage. We shot some underwater footage last week, Thursday. And if it was four years ago when I had burnouts, I wouldn't have been able to cope. But because I make room for proper rest, proper recuperation, proper sleep, it allows me to have that ability to bounce back from things that go wrong and to be in a relaxed enough state of mind that when something goes wrong, I'm not in a fight and flight. I'm able to sit down, digest what's in front of me and then deal with the situation.

[00:09:48] **Linda Mzamane:** Chad, in your profession, emergency responders are obviously trained to make critical decisions quickly. So how would you say

employees in other industries can cultivate similar decision-making abilities while under pressure?

[00:10:01] **Chad Jones:** Look, we learned different techniques. Uh, you know, obviously when we are, you know, treating and when we're on the road and stuff like that, we work under high pressure all the time, you know, so your critical decisions and quick thinking needs to be top class. So, uh, a good technique, what really helps us as medics is we kind of train to think before we, we even arrive on scene and, and what happens, and I, and I like using this pretty much just in normal business, as well as just as a medic in that, uh, we are taught to stay calm, obviously to, to keep your mind clear and just to relax.

You know, uh, stay focused on the job at hand. Also know what the, the desired outcome should be and how are we going to get there before you even arrive on scene. Like I said, once an emergency call comes in, let's just say for instance, it's a motor vehicle accident. And, uh, while we're driving towards the scene, we are taught to prepare our minds, our thinking before we arrive. In other words, to give you an example, we are taught to ask ourselves before we arrive, what potential risks will we face with this type of call? Uh, this prepares us that we think safely, that we will continue to keep ourselves safe. We'll make sure that we're thinking about our partner and our crewmate. Are they going to be safe? We also think about what type of call we are going to. For instance, like I said, we're going to a motor vehicle accident. Uh, what type of skills could be used on the scene? What equipment can be used when we arrive? This will save time so that when we get out of the vehicle, we already know what to grab.

This, you know, just helps us save time when you arrive so that we can focus or, or allow us to think on other things that the scene might bring at that moment in time. The other thing is we also think about, uh, what my treatment will be in the trauma case. What kind of things that I, I might have to do, or, you know, what is going to be first, what's going to be second. What if, uh, this patient is, you know, in trauma, but also it's a med, it has a medical condition. In your mind, you, you kind of push the, the limits for a possible worst case scenario before you arrive. So this just kind of helps you remember things that, that you haven't thought of in a while. And then also, who can you call for backup? What is your next move? I think this critical decisions can be made. It just helps make decisions, uh, when you get on scene quicker, it just helps you to prepare your mind and your setting and everything. So when you arrive on scene, things are a lot easier, more controlled, more relaxed, you know, so when you, you don't have to just think about everything when you get on scene that, you know, and this is what helps me to just focus it. And I think that helps in just any kind of business.

[00:12:52] **Linda Mzamane:** And that's scenario planning ahead of time so that you've already got that plan A and the plan B and the plan C should either of those two plans fail. So I think that's a really good approach that anyone could really apply in their fields as well. So on a set or during an emergency response, you know, Chad, you alluded to teamwork and the importance of communicating with your team

members. And that is obviously really vital. How can organizations foster effective teamwork and communication in these high-pressure workplaces or under a sort of high-pressure situations? How do team members sort of work together or pull together better? In high-pressure situations for better teamwork.

[00:13:33] **Robert dos Santos:** Again, it's preparation. It all comes down to preparation. You need to, practical examples is you go and you recce the location. You have meetings beforehand. You understand what it is that you're doing. Uh, so that when you arrive on set in the day, you know, this is the task that we're going to undertake and this is what we're going to complete. You don't rock up on set, uh, hoping to catch magic because that's, that's how you create a high-pressure situation. So by understanding exactly what it is that you're going to do, what it is that you want, and essentially what success looks like, communicating that effectively to everyone beforehand, making sure that everything that needs to be in place is in place, and then arriving on set. And then if things go wrong, what's nice is, is you've communicated, everyone understands what success looks like, everyone knows what the end goal is, so we're all working towards a common goal and come hell or high water, we know we're going to get that because we know what the end goal is, I think, and where I've seen problems is where I've been forced into a situation where we're not allowed to prepare, and we have to find ourselves and that creates a high-pressure situation and in essence there's almost no way to deal with that but just to survive and that's, that's not where you want to put people. You want to, you want to communicate effectively and prepare.

[00:15:00] **Linda Mzamane:** Chad, would you like to add to that? Teamwork, communication in high-pressure environments?

[00:15:06] **Chad Jones:** When it comes to, to teamwork, uh, you know, the old school thinking or the old school training used to be the, the medics used to be taught that when you get on scene, you treat, you kind of, especially when it came to a recess or, or anything that, you know, CPR and stuff like that. We were, we were kind of taught to be, to treat as an individual and do all the work by ourselves. It's, they actually called it the one-man mega code. And, uh, the, the news, the new school thinking is. No more to do the one man, but to work as a team, have that team approach, you know, um, And that's crucial in the organization. If we don't have that, that team approach, that way of communicating with each other, it kind of makes it tougher for, for the, you know, just, you know, for us as, uh, when we treat in a patient, it makes it harder for us when we you know, just treating the patient. But when we come in as a team approach, when we listen to each other, when there's good communication under extreme high pressure, and I don't think you could get any higher pressure when you're doing CPR. You know, you've got someone's life right there. Uh, that changed new approach off team really makes the outcome better for the patients. You know, one man hero doesn't work anymore. You know, it's all about a team and That communication does make a huge outcome for the patient.

[00:16:34] **Linda Mzamane:** Absolutely. And the clarity of communication, as you said, in those moments, you cannot afford ambiguity and things like that. So that's

really, really important. Chad, can you share a specific example or experience where your big match temperament played a big role in the success of an outcome?

[00:16:55] **Chad Jones:** Yeah. Uh, look, I think there's many, uh, one of the things I don't like the word, and I don't like talking about it, but definitely COVID, you know, COVID times were tough. Uh, we were all, we all know that COVID was a real big concern for all, you know, being in the medical field on the front line of the pandemic, uh, you know, managing the large medical teams to take care of the, you know, our clients, their employees and, uh, we're our key focus. So, so making sure that our teams are safe in order to help others was always the key focus, but fighting together made the difference. We, we really overcame all adversaries we faced just by. But continuously, you know, looking ahead, going through the, the, the, you know, the hard times, but we're knowing that at the end of the day, I know at times are going to be tough for us, but the success and the outcome is going to pivot on, on just the fact that we're going to get through this together. Uh, you know, it was never an easy time during those times, but, uh, obviously, you know, having that, that big match temperament and making sure that we are focused.

[00:18:10] **Linda Mzamane:** I'm sure it made a huge difference. Rob, any anecdotes you can think of to share about a specific experience where big match temperament came into play?

[00:18:20] **Robert dos Santos:** Yeah, I think every single set I've ever been on has an element of chasing the time and time is money and we're constantly running at the clock and I could actually give a million examples, but, uh, we were shooting five days ago and we were on, we were jumping on a yacht and we were going to take the yacht out into the ocean. And shoot a scene and then we're bringing it back and we're going to shoot another scene at the Cape wheel. Um, and we just come from the aquarium. So it was a very full day, constantly moving. And we looked at the schedule and we looked at the time and obviously you can have crew for a certain amount of hours and you can have cast for a certain amount of hours. You can't have them after that, uh, or you run into big trouble. And we looked at the time and where we were at in the day is the sun would be setting while we were out at ocean or the question was get the shots that would look okay or goodish and then. Come back and be in a car while the sun was setting so that we could be at the Cape wheel to get the shots there. And I had to make the call to drop the Cape wheel shots completely because I would rather be catching sunset on a yacht in the ocean than get an extra scene. But for that, you need to be able to make a pretty, not split second, but almost split-second decision of this is where we're going to point the ship because if I'm wrong and we don't have that scene and that scene has a specific shot, a specific emotion that we need to go in. And we don't have it. That falls on me. That's my responsibility. I've made that call, but being calm, being present and being surrounded by a team, which Ted keeps mentioning, and it's absolutely being surrounded by a team who supports you and knows what to do, it makes it easier and it allows you to make that call and to say, look, we're actually going to get the better shot. We're going to get a hundred percent shot on the yacht and a naught percent shot at the Cape. We will rather than get two 50%.

[00:20:35] **Linda Mzamane:** You mentioned being calm and being present. I think those are two very, very important aspects to have in these high-pressure situations. Are there any other rituals that you employ to kind of keep your composure when you are in a stressful situation that will help you make sound decisions when it is an urgent task or an emergency? Is there something tangible that you always kind of move back to whenever you are in those situations?

[00:21:03] **Robert dos Santos:** I made the very conscious decision to move to Cape Town to look after my well-being. My drive now is about, it's two songs. That's how I measure my drive. It's two songs. I put on two songs. I get you. It's not even long enough for a podcast. It's almost annoying because I don't get to fully get into my podcast. So, so I get two songs. Um, I go and I do cold water immersion, I go to the ocean, I go hang in the water there. I sit, I meditate. While driving, I don't listen to, I won't mention the radio stations, but the radio stations that just talk about the problems and the issues. I consciously feed my mind things that are good. I don't watch films that are scary or aggressive. I make sure that my mind is filled with poetry, enjoyable, lovable things, which I know will cultivate a healthy mindset. I go and I sit at the ocean and I watch the sunset. I do breathing, I drink smoothies and, uh, uh, make sure that I'm a happy, happy human being and talk to people. I'm, I'm almost obnoxiously happy because of how, how happy I am. I just, I love every moment because I'm doing what I was born to do and I love every second.

[00:22:14] **Linda Mzamane:** And for you, Chad, do you have any practices or rituals that you return to in those moments of, of high stress or emergency?

[00:22:23] **Chad Jones:** You know, just, just listening to Robert, uh, I think it's, it's critical that we, we, we do what we love. It's important, uh, you know, you know, working on the road and, uh, uh, obviously I don't work too much on the road anymore, but when we, when I was on the road and stuff like that, you know, you constantly working with pain, hurt, negative, you know, you've got all these things and to say you love that, it's got quite a, a thing behind it to say, you know, I love, going to accidents and I love trauma and I love medical, but that means people got hurt and I don't love that, but I love being able to help that. And, uh, that separates a, going to work and doing a job versus doing a passion. And when you're doing a passion, like they say, if you, if you, if you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life. And that's what I love. And, uh, for me, crucial for this kind of work, uh, it's always kept me strong as my faith and my belief. I always got to stand strong in that area. You know, that keeps, that's like a pillar for me. That's my strength. And then obviously, you know, just, just stay in focus on what you're trained to do, you know, those kinds of things, uh, know who you are, know what you can do. And I know I keep going back to team. But, uh, it's one of the things about life health solutions that I truly, truly love is that, that my true confidence is not that I am alone, but I've always got my business behind me. We've got some of the greatest minds in the business in every medical field. So I can always pull from it. I can always lean on that and, uh, I'm never alone, so I do what I love, but I'm also never alone.

[00:24:11] **Linda Mzamane:** You know, when you think about organizations, a lot of cultural habits and practices in a workplace tend to come from the top down. So when we think about leaders, how can leaders kind of create and nurture the environment where big match temperament sort of becomes part of the culture within themselves and their teams?

[00:24:34] **Robert dos Santos:** So I'm in full agreement with Chad is, the team is, everything is you are nothing without your team. The team is the whole, and it's everyone from the person carrying the light to the person in front of the screen. Everyone is important, and it's important that everybody knows how important they are and that they are seen. They not only feel seen, but they are seen, and you let them know that they're part of the whole. And I think it comes from a place of collaboration. I think there's some places where collaboration is important and it is a top down approach. But I think the most important thing in life and the way to ensure that you get the best out of everyone and that people take responsibility is through collaboration. And there's probably two things with that. It's probably first of all is a choice is you need to choose the right team. You need to surround yourself with a team that is going to work together and that's going to fit together. Sometimes some people aren't right for a situation or a place. And if you put them in, not only is that bad for your team and you're doing your team at a service, you're actually doing that person at a disservice.

And you need to be conscious of that and just have the people skills to say, this isn't the right job for them. They need to go to someone else. So it's, it's building that team. And once you've built that team and said, these are the people who are together going to be able to do it is individually speaking to each of one of them and letting them know that they have the freedom to achieve what that ultimate, that end goal is. What we spoke about earlier is what does success look like? And you let them know this is what success looks like. And you're on this team because you have this block, which slots in over here. And if you bring the best of you, that's going to happen. But if you bring someone who is it connection or you think it's going to maybe get you somewhere or is recommended and you want to make someone happy or you trying to make them do something that's not their natural thing. Say they're a wardrobe stylist and they do very preppy stuff, but you want them to do something rock and roll. You, it's not going to work. So you're putting yourself in a way to make a problem. So knowing what people's strengths are and then letting them go and saying, you do your strength.

[00:27:04] **Linda Mzamane:** Chad, what advice would you give to aspiring leaders, whether in the emergency medical services sphere or in business on developing and honing their Big Match temperament?

[00:27:17] **Chad Jones:** Don't lose who you are. You know, stay grounded in your faith, uh, know where you're going. Don't leave your team behind. Take them with you. That's crucial. And you know, I think one of the things that are kind of lost in our day is mentoring. Mentor as much as you can. Teach the next, the next up and coming, uh, if I could say, team, generation, whatever you want to call it. Keep mentoring

them, they need it. Um, you know, what you've experienced, what you've learned for the now, it's not fair to say you go and learn your own experience, go do it and get to where I am. Teach them what you've learned, help them to get to where they need to get to. And uh, the benefit is what they go through is an additional learning for them.

[00:28:07] **Linda Mzamane:** Sure. I love that. I love that. And I think it just perfectly summarizes the sort of overriding themes for the discussion we had today. Life Health Solutions offers 24-hour support for employees and their families. This holistic service includes not only emergency medical services and primary health care, but also counselling, financial wellness, legal services, and executive coaching. Thank you for such an inspiring discussion, Chad and Robert. Some of the key points that really resonated for me are that firstly, preparation looks different in every profession, but as working professionals, we need to take care of ourselves. This comes down to getting enough high-quality rest, eating intentionally, exercising and feeling physically fit so that we're able to perform at our best under high pressure. We talk more about this in our episode on executive wellness. So be sure to check it out. Secondly, communicating what success looks like is key. This empowers all team members with the understanding of what that is and how the role they play contributes to the collective performance. And lastly, while not everyone might have a job that they're completely passionate about, purpose-driven leadership in a job you enjoy provides fuel to meet the moments that require a big match temperament.

Chad and Robert, I'd like to thank you both so much for participating with us in this discussion. Before we go though, I do want to have some rapid-fire, quick answer, fun, just to lighten up the mood a bit, questions that I'd like to ask to get to know you guys a little bit better. Which song do you play to amp yourself up for the day? Robert?

[00:29:54] **Robert dos Santos:** Uh, Spice Girls, Spice Up Your Life. Let's

[00:29:57] **Linda Mzamane:** go. Oh, wow. Did not see that one coming. Chad?

[00:30:02] **Chad Jones:** Uh, the new song that's out now called Take It All Back by Torren Wells. That's very inspiring.

[00:30:09] **Linda Mzamane:** Nice. Okay. Okay. If your life were an ice-cream flavour, what would it be?

[00:30:16] **Robert dos Santos:** Uh, Mori gelato. One-half peanut paradiso and one-half chocolate sorbetto.

[00:30:24] **Linda Mzamane:** Okay, excuse us. Very bougie ice cream there. Chad?

[00:30:26] **Chad Jones:** So, I don't think I've heard of that kind of ice cream. But I would go with chocolate. Apparently, everyone likes chocolate.

[00:30:36] **Linda Mzamane:** Such a privilege, such a privilege to have you both on the show. Thank you so much.

[00:30:41] **Robert dos Santos:** Awesome. Thanks guys. We really appreciate it.

[00:30:43] **Chad Jones:** Thank you.

[00:30:44] **Linda Mzamane:** With more than 30 years of experience, Life Health Solutions helps businesses make a meaningful, measurable difference by putting employees at the heart of what we do. Our services span primary health care, occupational health and safety, wellness and emergency medical services. For more information, visit lifehealthsolutions.org. If this conversation resonated with you, subscribe to this podcast so you don't miss out on upcoming episodes. This podcast was created by Two Stories. It's written by Merwe and Celeste Jacobs, and produced by Carol Williams, with audio editing, engineering, and sound design by Ntokozo Mzimela. Thanks to CGTN Africa and Stories That Inspire for the audio clips used in this episode. For more information, please refer to the show notes.