

‘Citadels of Excellence’, Matthew Syed, ‘Bounce’ - (extract) 2010

“Every endeavour pursued with passion produces a successful outcome regardless of the result. For it is not about winning or losing – rather, the effort put forth in producing the outcome. The best way to predict the future is to create it – therefore, we believe we have the best training methods to help each athlete achieve their dreams and goals and ultimately reach their ability level in the arena of sports and life.”

– The Creed of Bollettieri’s Tennis Academy... an academy that has produced such illustrious champions Andre Agassi, Jim Courier, Martina Hingis, Maria Sharapova, Anna Kournikova, and Jelena Jankovic.

Bollettieri has become a byword for excellence since his academy was established in 1978 on Florida’s west coast... But it is not the quality of the *coaching* that sets this place apart... rather it’s the quality of the *attitude*.

Here the youngsters train with **devotion**; they undertake physical training as if it is a **privilege**; they eat food like it is fuel... **Why the difference?**

Everything Bollettieri does is perfectly calibrated to evoke the **growth mindset**... He praises effort, never talent; he eulogises about the **transformational power of practice** at every opportunity; he preaches the vital importance of hard work during every interruption in play. And he **does not regard failure in his students as either good or bad**, but as an opportunity to improve.

The only way for **growth mindset** to bed down is for effort-orientated praise to be constantly repeated... The Bollettieri Academy shows how dramatic the results can be when the emphasis on the **growth mindset** is constant, passionate, and relentless...

“You know why this place is successful?” Bollettieri says... ***“Because none of the kids leave here without their **mindset** transformed. They may arrive thinking they can cruise their way to success, but they quickly learn that nobody has got anywhere in life without working hard, by showing tremendous discipline, and by taking **responsibility** for their actions. That is what ultimately separates the best from the rest.”***