

Not long ago I was laying on my son's floor throwing one of his toy balls back and forth in the air to myself and I had a strange revelation. I noticed that as I threw the ball up in the air my left arm automatically started to move to where the ball was going to come down. At the time I was pretty amazed at the fact and decided to experiment a little.

I wasn't sure if it was really moving automatically or if I was just reacting consciously very fast and it only appeared like a seamless act. I continued the act a while longer and then I started consciously *trying* to move my arm to where the ball would go. I was still able to catch the ball but it was a completely different feeling. I wasn't *sure* if I would catch it where as before I just knew I would so much that I didn't even think about it. When I thought about catching the ball I experienced a psychological shift. Just to be sure I went back to my regular method of just throwing and catching and again it felt automatic.

Next I tried to throw the ball and close my eyes and see if my hand knew where to go. It did. I didn't catch it very much but the ball always hit my hand. I tried the whole thing with my eyes closed next and I didn't touch the ball very often at all that way.

Now I know you must be itching for the unsubscribe button thinking what does any of this have to do with trading. Well, ...uh.....everything! Sure, you do need a system that works and capital and time and desire and effort but beyond that lies the mental state of being a trader. Not just a trader but a consistently successful trader.

How did my mind learn to know exactly where the ball was going? I suppose after many years of throwing or catching a ball as a kid my subconscious adapted the process in a second nature sort of way. As I throw the ball the synaptic messages it sends to my arm direct it to where the ball will be even when my eyes are closed.

In trading we watch the markets for hours a day. Some of us all day every day. The successful among us probably hours after that while practicing. I spend at least an hour a day after the market just going through trades using my system. My system is second nature to me now as a result just like the ball throwing. I still use a system and follow rules but if I am not thinking about the process too much and just flow in a zone I usually know what the market is going to do.

So how do we develop this skill or trait? I believe there are two ways and they both involve practice. One way is to work really hard at your craft and put yourself through an intensive regime of study, practice and work. If you work hard every day and try to get a little bit better every day over time it will happen if your account holds out and you don't burn out mentally. There are mental tricks you can use to make this way more effective such as building a reward system for milestones reached or keeping a daily log of your trading related activities. This method may sound tiring and for many people it would be.

The other way to gain that second nature insight is to direct your focus to having fun with your craft. Where the first method focused on laboriously going through the motions this method is more light hearted. By no means am I suggesting that trading should be taken

lightly. I am talking about approach here. If you turn the homework you should be doing every day into a kind of mental game you will be much more likely to do it and more importantly draw upon your experiences in your real-time trading. You should keep the pace fast if that helps and maybe talk to yourself about what you are seeing along the way. Make a funny sound or something as you enter trades and again as you exit. Maybe upbeat sound effects for winning trades and light hearted crashing sounds for losing trades. Do whatever works for you but keep it fun.

There is no getting around this. If your goal is to have the automatic reflexes that kick into gear when your subconscious mind sees an opportunity then you need to practice. Every day I run through the prior two trading days step-by-step and using the Pivot Trend difference model from my [NQ Scalping System](#) I pick a trading day from the past that directly follows trading days that resemble the recent activity. I bet if you ask any professional or Olympic athlete if they could reflect on what it is that makes them so consistent that the answer would be practice. I can say for sure that the extra time I put in after the markets close is the key to my success.

Good luck to you all. Trade well!