



You've been playing an incredible match and it's time to close it out. Up to this point you've been moving well and swinging freely. You're serving, up double match point and start considering what's about to happen. All of a sudden, you start feeling a little tight. Sound familiar?

The big question to consider during moments like this is, "Are you willing to miss?"

Your first instinct might be to say "No, I'm not willing to miss any serves, shots or lose the match...I just want to win it NOW".

*Of course* you want to make shots and win the match, however, take a deeper look at the *willing* to miss part. If a bystander starts saying, "Don't miss this one" or "you have to finish it now or you'll lose", would that make you feel more confident, secure and ready to play your best tennis? Probably not. Being *UNwilling* to miss actually adds unnecessary pressure, tension and acts as a distraction to the performance. It's not that you want to miss; yet a willingness to do so actually normalizes the situation. It helps take the enormity out of the moment, allowing you to feel a bit more relaxed. A willingness to miss frees the body and mind to perform the task assertively, to the best of one's ability.

Next time you find yourself in a "clutch" situation and you want your best tennis to emerge, be a little more willing to miss and enjoy what unfolds as a result.

***Written by Matt Cuccaro, Ed.M.***

***Smith Stearns Mental Conditioning***

***Instagram/Twitter: @MentalCoachMatt***

***E-mail: matt@telos-spc.com***