

# CHARMAS LEE: TRAINER OF CHAMPIONS

“WE ARE DEVELOPING A NEW GENERATION OF STUDENT CHAMPIONS: HIGHLY DISCIPLINED, FOCUSED, AND GOAL-ORIENTED.”

Charmas Lee is the co-owner of Believe and Perform like Champions, a coaching organization that focuses on creating winning individuals, organizations, and cultures. Over the past three decades, Lee has challenged individuals to transform their lives through inspiration, introspection and personal growth.

He believes that the obstacles faced by our youth today are overwhelming; compelling him to bring his brand of dynamic transformation to the academic arena. Lee sees education as a gateway for upward mobility which will effect the change desired in our country. He feels that an equitable educational experience will develop a new generation of student champions.

“I’m a parent of six children,” Lee says, “and a coach, for more than 33 years. I’ve coached thousands of students and student-athletes, developing a keen insight into what it takes to become a champion, on and off the field. I’ve learned that a student’s ability is based on his/her availability.”

Lee feels that many students today struggle to find their sense of self, a debilitating condition that can hamper one’s control of thoughts and feelings. “One of the tragedies of this weakened identity is how it affects their approach to everyday life,” he says. “Many times, students show up to classrooms disengaged and distracted, which increases the potential for crisis and greatly diminishes the chance for academic success.” Lee goes on to describe other catastrophic results, such as low self-esteem, insecurity, self-doubt, fear, and condemnation. That negativity can lead to behavior challenges, lower academic achievement, and an emotional pendulum that swings from an inflated sense of entitlement to a defeatist attitude.

Lee cites the findings of Dr. Caroline Leaf, neuroscientist and author of “Switch on Your Brain,” who states:

- We can learn to use our minds correctly; it is often the hardest step but it is the first and most powerful step.

- We can learn to gain control of thoughts and feelings and, in doing so, change the programming and chemistry in our brains.
- What we are thinking every moment of the day becomes a physical reality in the brain and body, affecting our physical and mental health.
- These thoughts collectively form our attitudes (our state of mind) and it’s our attitude, not our DNA, that determines much of our quality of life.

Armed with the latest neuroscience findings and the skills and abilities of his human performance specialties, Lee created Achieving Competitive Excellence (ACE). ACE is based on a social-emotional model that improves emotional intelligence and the skills of self-efficacy, mental focus, and concentration. “Using our proven coaching models,” Lee explains, “we guide students through novel decision-making approaches to analyze situations in real-time and make the best decision in the moment.”

Lee offers research to show that driving a student’s attention forward through repetition is critical to establishing new neural pathways and connections, which spurs new learning, growth and insights. In more scientific terminology, executive functions are required to achieve any kind of purposeful activity, such as achieving a goal or objective. Brain research shows that attention is a magic key to unlock high brain activity. When we pay attention to something repeatedly, the necessary wiring is formed to make it possible to learn new things, take appropriate actions, and achieve goals.

ACE equips students with adaptive skills essential to social and academic success. Training prioritizes three essential processes of the brain’s executive functions: the ability to focus on relevant stimuli; the ability to not take certain actions; and the ability to retain information for reasoning and decision-making. Lee has recorded data that shows, upon completion of the ACE training, students could better regulate their emotions, were less disruptive, and were more motivated to learn. “I believe we can build a better student experience to help children achieve success in the academic arena,” Lee states.

