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The Tools for Success

Life is full of challenges. Whether it be a lost job, a broken relationship, or a failed venture, life's challenges has a way of causing many people to re-adjust, re-focus, or in the worst of cases, just quit altogether. Fortunately, many people do not allow the challenges of their lives stop them from doing the things they want. These individuals find a way to overcome their struggles, finding success in places that seemed bleak and obsolete just moments before. Andre Agassi, the international tennis sensation and author of the award-winning memoir *Open*, is one such individual. Agassi's memoir shows that although life can be very difficult at times, it is still possible to overcome such adversity. He finds a way to not only use physical and psychological pain as a source of motivation, but he also surrounds himself with quality relationships that strengthen his spirit. These motivators—pain and people in his life—fuel his desire to be successful both on and off the court. Ultimately, *Open* depicts how the pain and the relationships he encountered throughout his life enabled him to find success and contentment.

Agassi's pursuit of success initially began with his own pain. As a young adult, he was desperate for success and, to him, losing meant he was "imperfect" (Agassi 38), "blemished" (Agassi 38) and "fallible" (Agassi 38). Yet, this pain actually drives him forward. For example, after losing in the semi finals of the French Open because of cramping, he realizes that he must confront his physical weaknesses on the tennis court. Therefore, Agassi "hurries back to the US... to find... a better trainer" (Agassi 119), reflecting how his physical pain experienced during tennis

games drove him to seek out a better trainer. The search for a better trainer eventually resulted in Andre's discovery of Gil Reyes, whose approach to fitness enabled Andre to push his opponents so far past their limits that he virtually "maim[ed] guys" (Agassi 295). His dedication to physical strength allowed Agassi, as a 33 year old, to win the Australian Open. It is a well-shared fact that "an athlete's ability to tolerate pain is essential to success" (O'Connor, Pain Tolerance) because undergoing the most strenuous pain provides one with "valuable information about [one's] body and how it performs" (O'Connor, Pain Tolerance). Thus, Agassi took full note of his physical weaknesses, which allowed him to express himself clearly to Gil. His ability to clearly express his weaknesses allowed Gil to understand exactly how to "rebuild [Agassi] from the ground up" (Agassi 144), so that Agassi was able to take control of his body. The newfound control of his body allowed him to win his first Slam. Here, although Agassi suffered because of his physical weakness, he uses this as an opportunity to grow; this gives him a great joy in "seeing the many years with Gil pay dividends" (Agassi 295). Clearly, the physical pain that Agassi experienced as a young adult enabled him to pursue a high level of fitness, which inadvertently resulted in success on the tennis court.

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Works Cited

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