

COACHING INTANGIBLES

A WORKBOOK FOR COACHES LOOKING TO ELEVATE TEAM DYNAMICS

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EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT BUILDING A STRONG CULTURE, WINNING CULTURE, CHAMPIONSHIP CULTURE, BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

CULTURE IS A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR PERSONAL, COACHING AND TRAINING PHILOSOPHY AND HOW THAT INTERPLAYS WITH THE ATHLETES YOU HAVE. CULTURE IS A LIVING AND BREATHING ORGANISM THAT CHANGES YEAR TO YEAR WITH NEW ATHLETES, NEW ENVIRONMENTS AND NEW STAFF.

SO HOW DO YOU BUILD A CULTURE THAT WILL DRIVE SUCCESS AND HELP YOU AND YOUR TEAM ACHIEVE A COMMON GOAL?

BEFORE WE CAN UNDERSTAND HOW TO BUILD A CULTURE LETS DEFINE IT.

WHAT IS GOOD TEAM CULTURE?

CULTURE IS THE ENVIRONMENT CREATED TO HELP ATHLETES THRIVE PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.

CULTURE IS...

WHAT YOU WANT OTHERS TO SEE AND HEAR ABOUT YOUR TEAM.

WHAT BEHAVIORS YOU WANT YOUR ATHLETES TO EMBODY.

WHAT TRADITIONS YOU WANT PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION (SILLY OR SERIOUS).

LEAVE ROOM FOR ATHLETES TO CREATE THESE ELEMENTS AND LET THEM BE GENUINE. CULTURAL ELEMENTS ARE PASSED ON, CHALLENGED, AND ENCOURAGED BY THE COACH

HERE ARE SOME KEY INGREDIENTS TO BUILDING TEAM CULTURE:

- DEFINING A COACHING PHILOSOPHY
- STRONG RELATIONSHIPS
- GOOD COMMUNICATION
- SETTING EFFORT-BASED EXPECTATIONS

THESE INGREDIENTS HELP TO SHAPE TEAM CULTURE. DEVELOPING EACH WILL HELP YOU, YOUR STAFF AND YOUR ATHLETES SUCCEED IN ACHIEVING A COMMON GOAL. NOW THAT DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN WINNING CHAMPIONSHIPS BUT IT WILL LEAD TOWARDS YOUR ATHLETES HAVING THE BEST POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE. IF YOUR ATHLETES HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE YOU WILL START TO ATTRACT THE ATHLETES THAT WILL INVEST EVERYTHING INTO YOU AND YOUR PHILOSOPHIES. WHEN THAT HAPPENS THEN YOU CAN START TO STRIVE FOR METRICS LIKE WINS AND CHAMPIONSHIPS.

“YOU CANNOT COMMAND CULTURE, YOU CAN ONLY NUDGE IT ALONG AND SHARE IT”
-ANDREW SIMMONS

COACHING PHILOSOPHY

DEVELOPING A COACHING PHILOSOPHY IS DEFINITELY NOT ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MOST NEW (OR MANY OLD) COACHES GET EXCITED ABOUT MAYBE DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT. THE FUN OF COACHING IS IN WORKING ON THE TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL POINTS OF YOUR SPORT, BUT THE ART OF COACHING IS SPENDING TIME DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHY.

WHAT IS IT?

IT IS A SET OF VALUES, BELIEFS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES THAT DETERMINE YOUR COACHING PURPOSE, STYLE AND PRACTICE.

IT OUTLINES YOUR MAJOR OBJECTIVES AS A COACH AND THE PRINCIPLES YOU FOLLOW IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE YOUR OBJECTIVES.

IT SHOULD GUIDE YOUR BEHAVIORS AS A COACH AND DIRECTS YOUR INTERACTION WITH ATHLETES.

IT SHOULD REFLECT BOTH WHO YOU ARE NOW, AND WHO YOU WANT TO BE.

IS IT WORTH SPENDING THE TIME?

WE BELIEVE A WELL DEVELOPED PHILOSOPHY WILL HELP CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS.

HAVING A STRONG AND DEFINED PHILOSOPHY WILL HELP YOUR ATHLETES UNDERSTAND WHERE YOU ARE COMING FROM AND WHAT THINGS MEAN TO YOU.

WHEN WE GET DEEP INTO THE GRITTY PARTS OF COACHING, WE FIND THAT WE OFTEN ENCOUNTER CHAOS AND THE NEED TO MAKE QUICK DECISIONS IN SUB-OPTIMAL STATES OF MIND. THOSE MOMENTS ARE THE ONES THAT OFTEN DEFINE US. THOSE MOMENTS ARE EXACTLY THE ONES THAT BENEFIT FROM HAVING A DEVELOPED AND THOUGHT-OUT COACHING PHILOSOPHY.

HOW DO I WRITE IT?

THE PHILOSOPHY YOU WRITE CAN OFTEN ACT AS AN ANCHOR IN TEMPESTUOUS MOMENTS TO ENSURE THAT YOU ARE MAKING DECISIONS, WITHIN A FRAMEWORK, THAT YOU WILL BE PROUD OF AFTER THE FACT.

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL COACHING PHILOSOPHY IS NOT JUST PLAYING A GAME OF COACHING MAD-LIBS WHERE YOU PLUG YOUR OWN WORDS INTO AN ALREADY EXISTING STATEMENT. IT IS A STATEMENT BUILT FROM YOUR CORE BELIEFS AND VALUES.

USE THE AREA ON THE NEXT PAGE AS A GUIDE TO HELP YOU DEVELOP THAT STATEMENT

THIS IS A LIVING DOCUMENT, IT CAN BE UPDATED AS OFTEN AS IS NECESSARY. AS YOU MOVE THROUGH DIFFERENT PHASES OF YOUR COACHING CAREER, YOU WILL ENCOUNTER UNIQUE COACHING ENVIRONMENTS, UNIQUE MAKEUPS OF TEAMS, AND YOU WILL ALSO ENCOUNTER CHANGE WITHIN YOURSELF. YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY AS OFTEN AS IS NECESSARY TO REFLECT THE CURRENT STATUS OF YOU AS A COACH.

WRITE DOWN YOUR PERSONAL OPINIONS, VALUES AND BELIEFS ABOUT YOUR SPORT

WHY DID YOU STARTED COACHING?

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT COACHING?

WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST MOMENT IN COACHING AND YOUR LOWEST

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU HOPE YOUR COACHING LOOKS LIKE IN THE FUTURE

DEVELOPING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

DEVELOPING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP REQUIRES CONSISTENT EFFORT WITH THE GOAL IN MIND OF FORMING A BOND. TO MOST OF US, BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP COMES THROUGH TIME SPENT WITH THE ATHLETES AND QUITE FRANKLY THE MORE INVESTED ATHLETES USUALLY GET MORE ATTENTION. HOW DO WE GET THROUGH TO THOSE ATHLETES WHO AREN'T AS INVESTED OR DON'T HAVE ALL THE TIME?

INGREDIENTS IN A GOOD RELATIONSHIP?

USING THE 3+1 C MODEL CAN HELP GIVE YOU A FRAMEWORK FOR WHAT IS NEEDED TO DEVELOP A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH ALL YOUR ATHLETES

- **CLOSENESS** - THE STRENGTH OF THE EMOTIONAL BOND BETWEEN COACH AND ATHLETE
- **COMMITMENT** - THE INTENTION OF THE COACH AND ATHLETE TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE SHORT AND LONG TERM
- **COMPLEMENTARY** - EXTENT TO WHICH COACH AND ATHLETE ARE COMFORTABLE IN EACH OTHER'S PRESENCE AND ADOPT A FRIENDLY (RATHER THAN HOSTILE) ATTITUDE
- **CO-ORIENTATION** - THIS REFLECTS THE DEGREE TO WHICH COACHES AND ATHLETES HAVE SIMILAR PERCEPTIONS

COMPLETE THE COACH SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET THEN REVIEW WHAT EACH CATEGORY MEANS

COMPLETE COACH SELF ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET (SEE PAGE 6)

HOW DO WE DEVELOP THESE INGREDIENTS?

AFTER TAKING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT LOOK THROUGH WHAT YOU FEEL NEEDS DEVELOPING AND USE THE GRAPHIC ON THE RIGHT AS A FRAMEWORK TO HELP GUIDE YOUR ACTIONS

DEBRIEFING

NOW YOU HAVE PUT IN ALL THE WORK TO BUILD THESE RELATIONSHIPS ITS TIME TO DEBRIEF AND SEE IF ALL YOUR HARD WORK HAS PAID OFF. AT THE END OF THIS WORKBOOK YOU WILL FIND A ATHLETE ASSESSMENT AND TEAM ASSESSMENT SURVEY THAT IS RECOMMENDED TO SEND TO YOUR ATHLETES TO GIVE YOU FEEDBACK

Closeness

- Take time to provide praise, encouragement, support, and constructive feedback to each other during training, competition, and non-sport-related contexts.
- Engage in small talk: remember each others' birthdays, show interest in activities that take place outside of sport.
- Engage in team building and social activities that involve others (athletes, assistant coaches, parents).

Commitment

- Listen and learn from each other and set together individual (and team) goals
- Ensure that you do not miss important competitions and training
- Be on time to training.
- Be mentally and physically prepared for training/competition (first to arrive, last to leave and have a plan).
- Be prepared to give up your time to your athlete.
- Be available to make schedule adjustments when an athlete needs to, rather than missing training if they are willing to come at a different time.
- Give instruction or feedback, and schedule/attend extra sessions (shows you care about their success)

Complementary

- Establish clear team rules and expectations
- Create a code of conduct that coaches and athletes know and understand, as well as the consequences if codes are not followed
- Ensure that both coaches and athletes provide input and actively participate in the training sessions.
- Achieve a balance between order and freedom (autonomy but also allowing them to be themselves, joking around and having fun)
- Provide a clear training or competition structure (allows for autonomy during competition)

Co-Orientation

- Ensure the goals are agreed upon by coaches and athletes, goals should be built around efforts and not metrics.
- Outcome related goals have limits and pressures that can cause unnecessary stress
- Outcome goals for certain athletes with high level capabilities can be effective but should not be the focal point of training. Day in and out, the focus on short term effort based goals will lead to more effective competition focus and outcomes

COACH SELF ASSESSMENT SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS:

Developing a strong relationship requires consistent effort with the goal in mind of forming a bond. The 3+1 C Model can help give you a framework for what is needed to develop a strong relationship with all your athletes; Commitment, Closeness, Complementary and Co-Orientation.

Take a moment and reflect back on the last team you coached, be honest with yourself. The idea here is to think through your best and worst relationships and see where you can improve.

QUESTIONS:

RATING SCALE:

COMMITMENT

Do you feel your athlete(s) respects you?

Do you feel your athlete(s) trust?

Do you feel your athlete(s) is/are committed to you?

CLOSENESS

Do you like your athlete?

Do you feel close to your athlete?

Do you appreciate the sacrifices your athlete has made in order to meet shared expectations

COMPLEMENTARY

Do you think that both of you work well in achieving the goals set?

When I coach my athlete, I recognize and acknowledge his/her efforts

When I coach my athlete, I feel competent.

When I coach my athlete, I adopt a friendly stance

When I coach my athlete, I am understood.

CO-ORIENTATION

Do you communicate enough with your athlete about training?

Do you know your athlete's strengths/weaknesses?

Do you communicate well with your athlete?

Do you strive to achieve similar goals with your athlete?

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

GOOD COMMUNICATION

UNDERSTANDING AN ATHLETE'S STYLE OF COMMUNICATION IS ABOVE ALL THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF COMMUNICATION WITH YOUTH ATHLETES. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A COACH IS TO BUILD A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ATHLETE SO THAT YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THEIR COMMUNICATION STYLE AND CONVEY TO THEM WHAT YOUR COMMUNICATION STYLE IS.

THERE ARE FOUR STYLES OF COMMUNICATION

- PASSIVE
- AGGRESSIVE
- PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE
- ASSERTIVE

(SEE FIGURE 2 FOR EXAMPLES OF EACH TYPE OF COMMUNICATOR)

Passive Communication

- Often looks like not communicating
- Fear of speaking up
- Avoids conflict
- Defers to others to make decisions

The coach that is afraid to tell an athlete the truth for fear of hurting the relationship, hurting their feelings, ego, hoping problems will go away. This can lead to misunderstandings

Aggressive Communication

- Driven by anger and judgment
- Inflexibility/Rigidity
- Can create a hostile environment
- Defensive and Hostile - will hate the athlete that questions things
- Often alienate athletes they do not like

The "my way or the highway" coach that will not allow athlete to ask questions or feel as if a question is an insult to their coaching.

Passive-Aggressive Communication

- Doesn't directly communicate their feelings
- Hold on to negative emotions
- The petty coach
- I told you so coach
- You should have listened to me

The coach that will not give athletes opportunities but won't explain why. The coach that will not give honest truth about how they feel or what they think. This can cause confusion and resentment.

Assertive Communication

- Confident but also respectful of others' thoughts and feelings.
- Has earned and built trust with his athletes
- Willing to tell the athlete the hard truth
- Creates space for honest conversations
- Promotes healthy connections between individuals.

This is the coach that has spent time building trust with their athletes, they allow athletes to express their concerns and help them see the process. Open communication back and forth

WE ARE NOT IN THE BUSINESS OF SAYING WHAT IS RIGHT OR WRONG BUT WE HAVE FOUND THE MOST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS ARE ONES THAT HAVE ESTABLISHED A STRONG RELATIONSHIP AND ARE ASSERTIVE IN THEIR COMMUNICATION, NOT TO BE MISTAKEN WITH AGGRESSIVE.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOU COMMUNICATE AND HOW YOUR ATHLETES RECEIVE THE INFORMATION YOU ARE DELIVERING.

"IT IS ABOUT THE IMPACT NOT THE INTENTION OF YOUR WORDS"

-NIKO KARAVOLOS

SETTING EFFORT-BASED EXPECTATIONS

EVERYONE AT THE START LINE OF THE RACE HAS THE SAME GOAL, IT'S TO WIN.

"ITS NOT THE PERSON WITH THE BEST GOALS BUT ITS THE PERSON WITH THE BEST SYSTEM AND PREPARATION. YOU DO NOT RAISE TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR GOALS BUT FALL TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR SYSTEM AND PREPARATION"

-JAMES CLEAR

OUTCOME EXPECTATIONS

OUTCOME EXPECTATIONS ARE IMPOSED ONTO THE ATHLETE, THE COACH IS TELLING THEM WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN

"I EXPECT YOU TO WIN THE RACE"

OUTCOME GOALS

OUTCOME GOALS ARE EFFORT BASED AND BUILT AROUND THE ATHLETE EXECUTING CERTAIN ASPECTS AND GIVING EFFORT TO EXECUTE THOSE ASPECTS

"I EXPECT YOU TO COMPETE, GIVE YOUR BEST EFFORTS TO WIN"

EXPECTATIONS NEED TO BE BUILT AROUND THE SYSTEMS AND PREPARATION THAT YOU ESTABLISH IN PRACTICE AND TRAINING.

SETTING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS AROUND WHAT YOUR TRAINING AND COACHING PHILOSOPHY IS HELPS YOU COLLABORATE YOUR ATHLETES. THIS GIVES YOUR ATHLETES AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THEM AND WHAT YOU NEED FROM THEM.

HOW TO SET EXCEPTIONS:

- **KEEP IT SIMPLE** - FOCUS ON A FEW THINGS EACH DAY TO BUILD SUCCESS
- **CELEBRATE THE PROCESS** - UNDERSTANDING YOU CAN NOT ALWAYS PERFORM YOUR BEST BUT IF YOUR EFFORT IS THERE THEN YOU NEED TO CELEBRATE THAT
- **BE PROACTIVE** - DEALING WITH THE DOWNS WHEN THEY HAPPEN
- **BE COLLABORATIVE** - WORK TOGETHER WITH YOUR ATHLETE TO ESTABLISH INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM EXPECTATIONS

EXPECTATIONS SET AROUND CULTURE, SPORTSMANSHIP, PERSONAL SUCCESS AND EFFORT CAN HELP CREATE A TEAM DYNAMIC THAT IS FOCUSED ON WHAT AN ATHLETE CONTROL RATHER THAN AN OUTCOME THAT IS TIED TO OTHER ATHLETES.

THINGS TO AVOID

ABILITY AND OUTCOME EXPECTATIONS
EXPECTATIONS BASED ON BEING THE FASTEST/MOST ATHLETIC (NATURAL ABILITY)
HYPER-ACHIEVEMENT CULTURE - "I EXPECT YOU TO WIN"

THESE EXPECTATIONS OFTEN CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ATHLETES CAN NOT CONTROL OR LIVE UP TO.

ATHLETE ASSESSMENT SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS:

The Athlete assessment survey is an anonymous survey that should be distributed to your athletes to allow them a platform to give honest feedback to you and your staff.

It is important to allow them to feel confident that the feedback they give will be met with open arms. You have to be willing to accept what they say and build from there.

QUESTIONS:

RATING SCALE:

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

COMMITMENT

Do you respect your coach?

Do you trust your coach?

Do you feel committed to your coach?

CLOSENESS

Do you like your coach?

Do you feel close to your coach?

Do you feel your coach is a good listener?

I can easily approach my coach with personal problems?

COMPLEMENTARY

Do you think that both of you work well in achieving the goals set?

Do you feel confident in your coaches ability to help you achieve your goals

My coach is approachable?

My coach spends time helping me understand what he expects of me?

CO-ORIENTATION

Does your coach communicate enough with you about training?

Does your coach show confidence in your abilities?

Does your coach provide you with feedback during training/practice?

Do you strive to achieve similar goals with your coach?

TEAM ASSESSMENT SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS:

The team assessment survey is an anonymous survey that allows the athletes to survey the team collectively.

This will give you and your staff a feeling of how much of your athletes view the team dynamics. This gives insight into team culture and the things you are not seeing or hearing about.

QUESTIONS:

RATING SCALE:

COMMITMENT

Do you respect your team?

Do you trust your team?

Do you feel committed to your team?

CLOSENESS

Do you like your teammates?

Do you feel close to your teammates?

Do you feel your teammates listen to you?

I can easily approach my teammates with personal problems?

COMPLEMENTARY

Do you think that your teammates work well in achieving the goals set as a team?

Do you feel confident in your teammates ability to help you achieve goals set as a team?

My teammates are approachable?

My teammates spends time helping me understand what is expected of me?

CO-ORIENTATION

Do your teammate communicate enough with you about training?

Do your teammates show confidence in your abilities?

Do your teammates provide advice on how to stay positive about myself and my abilities?

Do you and your teammates strive to achieve similar goals?

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always