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Coach-Athlete Communication: Coaching Style, Leadership Characteristics, and Psychological Outcomes

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COACH-ATHLETE COMMUNICATION: COACHING STYLE, LEADERSHIP
CHARACTERISTICS, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTCOMES

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A Major Project

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ABSTRACT

The way communication affects coaches and athletes depends on the content of the message, method of delivery, and the relationship between the sender and receiver(s). This manual addresses the different social agents that should be considered when delivering a message effectively to either a coach, athlete, or teammate. A brief introduction of the relevant theories on leadership and communication, such as Self-Determination Theory and the Multi-dimensional Model of Leadership, is provided. The theories provide a background for understanding the basics of communication, coaching/ leadership styles, and the characteristics of good leadership. The remaining portion of the manual will discuss the select outcomes associated with different coaching and communication styles. Both the coach's and athlete's behavior will influence each other's perceptions and motivation levels. Motivated athletes tend to perform well if they perceive more positive communications with the coach. Practical strategies from improving coaching behaviors and communication among social agents is provided throughout the manual.

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Introduction

Inborn skills do not dictate whether or not athletes will produce great performances, but the combination of their physical abilities and their intense desire to be better will. Coaches can be effective as early as birth, to instruct, communicate and lead its followers. Leaders are in fact made to withstand communication characteristics, give valuable directions, be a role model, and an informative instructor. These are all functions that can be learned with time. This is important because sports represent significant achievement domains for young people, with over 40 million youth participating in organized competitive sports each year (Smith & Smoll, 2002). Sports are taken seriously by both athletes and their fans and are widely valued compared to other non-sport organizations.

It is imperative that coaches provide their athletes with the proper skills, techniques, confidence, motivation, and sport persistence to maintain their highly favored status quo, better known as reputation. With sports playing such a pivotal role in our society, spreading the many attributes that sports can have on a group of people will bring more awareness. Research have supported physically active people having higher levels of perceived competence in regards to greater expectations for success (Biddle, 1997). With sports come physical fitness, character building leadership skills, social involvement and many more attributes. Another trait that can be of some importance regarding sports is the act of communication, which is beneficial for many reasons.

An athlete's performance may improve with effective communication between the athlete and the coach. This is important because a coach's communication with their athlete has an

effect on athletes of any sport, age, gender, and social status. It is suggested that an athlete's performance will increase with the help of the coach. This manual will address and help gain a better understanding of communication between coaches and their athletes and how it will improve their athletic performance. Different coaching styles, expectations, specific sports, age groups, divisions, size of team, self-determination, and motivation incentives are a factor when determining the change in one's performance ability.

Sagar and Jowett (2012) explain that the communication between a coach and athlete increases the likelihood of developing feelings of closeness and improving the athlete's perception of the coach. Communication will also increase the satisfaction of their training and performance, physical self-concept, achievement goals, intrinsic motivation, and sustaining passion for the sport. Clear and precise communication increases better understanding of the role of the player, developing skills, and building a trusting relationship.

Humans have a basic need to feel complete and confirmed (meaning established) regarding their views and perspectives. We want to validate with assurance that we are secure in our knowledge and facts. "The fulfillment of this need is deemed the most significant of all human interactions" (Buber, 1957, p. 194) and is "accomplished through communication, as confirmation results from receiving particular messages via verbal or nonverbal channels" (Ellis, 2000, p. 267). This is where the coach and athlete relationship matters. The coach makes their athlete comfortable and forms an open, but close relationship which they both can uphold. The athletes will feel confirmed (established) once they know their importance and their role is explained and understood. If the message makes them feel special and connected with others, then it would leave them feeling confirmed.

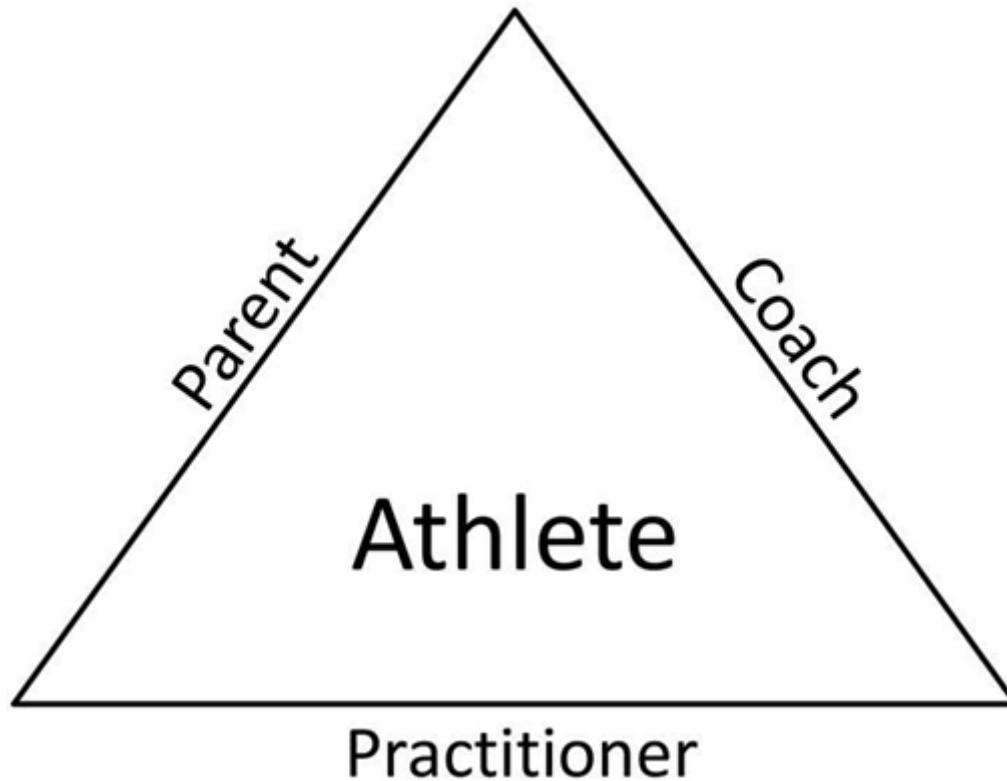
It is the coach's role to communicate with players in a manner that makes them feel acknowledged, recognized, valued, and significant. A coach can confirm messages in more than a few ways. The message can vary in intensity, quality, and quantity. How the message is given and perceived depends on the coach and the athlete. Coaches may find it challenging to connect with and motivate each athlete differently. There are high expectations toward athletes with scholarships compared to those who are playing a sport as a hobby. Problems occur when athletes find it difficult to be motivated and to perform at their optimal level.

Problems regarding motivation may be difficult to identify and discuss between an athlete and coach. Self-determination may help elucidate variables associated with increased motivation in an athlete. "The most central distinction between SDT [self-determination theory] is between autonomous and controlled motivation" (Ewing, 2011, p. 182). This theory suggests that the athlete must have a desire to gain fulfillment and grow. With growth and gaining fulfillment comes being aware of flaws and a willingness to overcome challenges and failures. There must be a desire to make corrections for the development of the athlete (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Intrinsic motivation is another characteristic that the athlete should attain if they are seeking a task-oriented attitude. For an athlete to be intrinsically motivated, he or she must have a task-oriented mind set. They must have the motivation to practice skill mastery and improve in their particular sport. Duda (1989) states that "task orientation is positively related to the beliefs that sports should enhance self-esteem and teach people to try their best, cooperate and be good citizens" (p.22). An athlete who is not self-determined is more extrinsically motivated. Athletes who are more extrinsically motivated also tend to be more ego-oriented and focus on external rewards (Chin, Khoo & Low, 2012). For example, external rewards may include, but are not limited to,

expectations from other individuals, money, awards, prizes, and acclaim.

All things considered, there are numerous influences that help shape a person's morals, character, beliefs and motivation. The youth sport psychology consultation triangle used in youth sport focuses on the dynamics between the parent, coach, and sport practitioner as it concerns the athlete. (Blom, Visek, & Harris, 2013, see Figure 1). Blom and colleagues (2013) developed this model based on child athlete clients who were 6-17 years old. It provided guidelines and materials that are beneficial to sport psychology practitioners when dealing with parents and/or guardians of youth athletes and their coaches. A positive relationship between the parents, coach, and practitioner will help increase the likelihood that a child will have a successful sport season and experience.

Figure1. Youth Sport Psychology Consultation Triangle



Blom, L. C., Visek, A. J., & Harris, B. S. (2013). Triangulation in Youth Sport: Healthy Partnerships among Parents, Coaches, and Practitioners. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action*, 4(2), 86–96. <http://doi.org/10.1080/21520704.2012.763078>. This model is player centered with a focus on the parent, coach and environment's interaction.

The sport psychology practitioner's responsibility is to manage the consultation structure and to put the main focus on the athlete's welfare and well-being including both physical and psychological aspects. The rights of the athlete must also be maintained while keeping the parent and coach informed. Kassing, Billings, Brown, Halone, Harrison, Krizek, Mean, and Turman (2004) reported that interpersonal interactions between teammates, parents and their young athletes, and coaches and athletes often characterizes the context of sport. It is imperative that athletes have that triangulation foundation to encourage development and maintenance throughout the structure. Usually, once the athlete shifts into more competitive play, the triangulation model shifts to include fewer people. Specifically in college, a lot of times parents are no longer included in athlete's daily decisions and it is up to the coach, academic advisors, athletic trainers and other administrators to assume responsibility for the care of the athlete. Sometimes in youth and recreational sport, non-professional coaches may not be aware of the benefits and the overall value that a sport psychology practitioner may have on all athletes (Blom et al., 2013).

This manual will provide a brief introduction to relevant theories on leadership and communication. These theories will cover the basics of communication, coaching/leadership styles, and characteristics of good leadership. The remaining portion of the manual will discuss select outcomes associated with different leadership and coaching styles and communication. Finally, practical strategies for improving communication will be integrated throughout this manual.

I.

Theories on Communication in Sport

Self-determination theory (SDT) is the perspective that an athlete can be motivated by different approaches in order to enhance their performance ability or to focus on thinking, learning, and problem solving based on the individual's choice. This in all is solely the individual's choice. According to Aicher and Brenner (2015), Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000) developed SDT so that it “provides a unique framework for understanding the numerous motives individuals possess when deciding to participate in physical activities” (Aicher & Brenner, 2015, p.3). Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000) believed that intrinsically motivated athletes participate based on interest, pleasure, and overall satisfaction. On the other hand, extrinsically motivated athletes engage in physical activity for the hope of some sort of external reward. Deci and Ryan (1985) “when people are intrinsically motivated, they experience interest and enjoyment, they feel competent and self-determining, they perceive the locus of causality for their behavior to be internal, and in some instances they experience flow” (p.43). Vallerand (1997) defined extrinsic motivation as, “engaging in an activity for instrumental reasons” (Horn, 2007, p. 132).

Because of the different levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, Deci and Ryan came up with two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. There are 3 components to SDT: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the athlete's belief that athletes have the choice and endorsement of the activity. Competence refers to the belief that the athlete will feel self-confident about the activity. There is the idea that competence is needed to be effective in regards to our behavior and how we interact within the social environment (Deci, 1975; Harter, 1978, White, 1959). Relatedness refers to the athlete's belief that they will feel the

need to experience social interactions or the desire to feel connected with others (Deci & Ryan, 2008). “People who have anything in common, who share common (even unpleasant) experiences, or who simply are exposed to each other frequently tend to form friendships or other attachments” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 520).

Based on roles of perceived competence and perceived ability, self-determination theory expresses a significant framework. “Deci and Ryan (2002) self-determination theory presents an interesting framework from which [to] address [related] questions pertaining to the interplay between motivational processes and self-development” (Horn, 2008, p. 128). Athletes who experience SDT often times look forward to new challenges and work hard to learn and master new skills (Horn, 2007). For SDT, it is vital that the athlete have a positive approach on improving their skills. “The extent to which these needs are fulfilled or thwarted provides a mechanism by which the social context affects individual outcomes such as personal and social development, motivation, and well-being” (Horn, 2007, p. 129).

A typical positive approach theory (PST) program assists the athlete to have a positive mindset for improving their athletic performance. It is up to the athlete to be self-determined and want to strive to be better, and work on their weaknesses. If this is not the case, then there are chances the athlete will find it hard to be motivated. “Preliminary findings indicate that self-determined motives, regardless of their intrinsic or extrinsic nature, correlate with elevated physical and global self-worth” (Horn, 2008, p. 128). The positive approach work hand and hand with an athlete’s self-determination. With its focus on deficiencies and new skills, it will promote and bring awareness to the flaws they possess that need to be improved.

This theory not only covers motivation, but personality, social development, and

psychological functioning. In particular, SDT integrates theories such as, cognitive evaluation theory, organismic integration theory, causality orientation theory, and basic needs theory. Psychological growth, self-regulation, natural inclination, integration of self, and growth orientation allows athletes to seek new skills.


A way to increase perceived confidence, you must have high competence. How a person defines success varies on ability and fixed performance. “If competence perceptions are high, adaptive or mastery response are predicted: if doubts about competence exist, maladaptive or helpless patterns result” (Horn, 2008, p.168). Implicit theory is related to goal orientation, perceived competence, achieved behavior, and its pattern. Implicit theories are specific individual differences that have variables which lead to the pursuit of different goals. Because every athlete is different, it is important for a coach to assign tasks individually and not by the team as a whole.

Cognitive evaluation theory (CET) was developed to explain how social context affects people's intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985) suggested that, “A critical component of CET is that the influence of intrapersonal or social-contextual events on intrinsic motivation will be a function of the meaning attached to the event by the individual” (Horn, 2007, p. 130). Organismic integration theory (OIT) is the idea that not all physical activity is enjoyable, and often time enjoyment is the reason for sport participation. According to Deci and Ryan (2002) as cited in Horn (2007, p. 132), “when activities are not inherently interesting, optimally challenging, or enjoyable, participation will require extrinsic motivation.” Deci and Ryan argued that causality orientation theory (COT) explains that social-contextual and interpersonal factors are the result of development, motivated behavior, and psychological functioning. COT is the

somewhat stable individual differences in people's motivational orientation, (known as causality orientations) (Horn, 2007). Basic needs theory (BNT) suggests that the need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are universal. "BNT have looked at the direct relationship between need satisfaction and indicators of physical and psychological well-being" (Horn, 2007, p. 136). Table 1 defines the Self-Determination Continuum and its classifications of motivated behaviors. All motivated behaviors fall under extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, locus of causality and the degree to which the behavior is autonomously regulated according to OIT.

Table 1.

Self-Determination Continuum

	Regulatory style	Type of Motivation	Behavior
Amotivation	Nonregulation	Non internal or external motivation. No perceived reason for participation	Non-self-determined
Extrinsic Motivation	External regulation	Athletes are driven by a desire to receive external rewards	
	Introjected regulation	Athlete's internalized reasons for participation are tied to internal rewards and punishments	
	Identified regulation	Participation is self-determined but the activity is not considered fun	
Intrinsic Motivation	Internal motivation	Participation is self-determined and is inspired by the inherent pleasures of the activity	Self-determined

Note: Examples of regulatory styles include: 1) Nonregulation (An athlete tries out for the high school team so he has something to do after school), 2) External regulation (an athlete practices day in and day out because he knows he must get a scholarship in order to go to college), 3) Introjection regulations (an athlete continues to practice because others believe the athlete is good at the sport), 4) Identified regulation (An athlete lifts weights on his own time to stay fit), 5) Internal Motivation (An athlete that plays the game because he enjoys the game). Adapted from Deci & Ryan (1985, 1992).

On the top left of the chart is amotivation, which is the lack of attention and competence

due to the absence of motivated behavior. The most autonomous form is intrinsic motivation. Between amotivation and intrinsic motivation on the self-determination continuum falls extrinsic motivation. There are five specific forms of motivation identified on the self-determination continuum: non-regulation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and internal motivation. In order to understand in depth what these classifications entail (see Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1992).

Communication Basics

Within communication alone, there are numerous types, points, barriers, elements, and ultimately perspectives on how to effectively communicate. Rapp (2010) quoted Aristotle, stating that he once defined communication as the “means of persuasion to influence others so that desired effect is [are] achieved.” There are different styles of communication, including the most common forms: verbal and non-verbal.

Verbal Communication. Verbal communication is the act of speaking, sharing information, expressing ideas, knowledge, feelings, and thoughts with another person or group. This could be done in an aggressive, assertive, positive, or passive manner. When referring to aggressive manner, it is usually looked down upon regarding demotivating an athlete. This is why, throughout the verbal communication section, aggressive and passive communication is discussed frequently. There have been quite a few studies done regarding athlete-coach communication, touching on anti-social communications such as verbal aggression. Turman’s (2005, 2007) studies suggest that anti-social communication decreases the quality of athletes’ social and sport-related experience. Kassing and Pappas (2007) stated, “These studies have demonstrated that coaches are important sources of social support, encouragement, and

instruction that resonate with athletes for years to come” (Cranmer & Brann, 2015, p. 195).

Expressing thoughts and feelings often comes easy to those who communicate in an aggressive manner (“The Characteristics of Passive and Aggressive Assertive Communication”). According to “The Characteristics of Passive and Aggressive Assertive Communication,” “People often feel devastated by an encounter with an aggressive person” (p.2). Various characteristics of verbal aggressive communication includes:

- Speaking sarcastically in a condescending voice
- Talking fast and shouting face to face
- Emphasizing blaming words
- Using threats

Aggressive Verbal Communication

Speaking sarcastically in a condescending voice	
Coach on Athlete	“The way you’re shooting, we will be here all night!”
Athlete on Athlete	“Why can’t you get the plays right?”

Talking fast and face to face shouting	
Coach on Athlete	Coach looking down shouting at athlete.
Athlete on Athlete	“You saw me open. Next time, throw me the ball!”

Emphasizing blaming words	
Coach on Athlete	“Your overall turnovers cost us the game!”
Athlete on Athlete	“If you hadn’t missed all those shots, we would have won!”

Using threats	
Coach on Athlete	“If you don’t win the game, you’re running all practice!”
Athlete on Athlete	“If you don’t take the open shots, I’m not passing you the ball!”

Tone. Connelly and Rotella (1991) explain that tone and words are big parts in verbal communication. The strength of your voice and how the words are delivered will set the tone for how the message is perceived. The saying, “The wrong tone can spoil the message,” is indeed true regarding coach and athlete interaction. Examples of tone include, sarcastic, cold, and harsh responses in a forceful voice (The Characteristics of Passive, Aggressive and Assertive

Communication, p.3). Tone can be adjusted depending on who is receiving the message and the topic being discussed. Usually, authoritative coaches have an aggressive and demanding tone.

Athletes vary based on learning styles and personalities. It is important for a coach and athlete to know one another and how to best communicate in order to see productive results. If someone is trying to express a message, the tone of the message itself can ruin the intentions of the message.

Non-Verbal. Non-verbal communication involves more gestures, facial expressions, and actions. Non-verbal communication is vital and reduces any type of verbal communication that is being expressed (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2010). “People rely heavily on nonverbal cues to express themselves and to interpret others’ communication. Research shows that when verbal messages contradict nonverbal ones, adults usually believe the nonverbal messages over the verbal ones and rely on nonverbal behavior to judge another’s attitudes and feelings” (Burgoon et al., p.3).

In 2013, there was controversy in New Brunswick, New Jersey, regarding Rutgers University Basketball Head Coach Mike Rice and his abusive coaching tactics. Rice used verbal and non-verbal aggression which led to physical abuse in order to coach and discipline his athletes. He was later reported, fined, and fired due to his inappropriate behavior being caught on tape by officials (Goldman, 2013). According to the “*Centre for Clinical Intervention’s series on Assertiveness,*” various characteristics of non- verbal aggressive communication include:

- Intruding into the other person’s space
- Gestures such as pointing, fist clenching
- Crossing arms (unapproachable)
- Scowling when angry

Aggressive Non- Verbal Communication

Intruding into the other person's space	
Coach on Athlete	Physically spitting or pushing the athlete.
Athlete on Athlete	Not passing the ball to a teammate.

Gestures such as pointing, fist clenching	
Coach on Athlete	Coach slamming the clipboard on the ground.
Athlete on Athlete	Directing a teammate to their appropriate spot in an aggressive manner.

Crossing arms (unapproachable)	
Coach on Athlete	After an athlete makes an error, the coach refuses to look at the athlete.
Athlete on Athlete	Placing towel over head while looking downward.

Scowling when angry	
Coach on Athlete	The coach frowns at his athlete's performance.

Athlete on Athlete	Team mate aggressively throwing the ball to each other.
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***As an athlete, if you are a victim of verbal, non-verbal, or physical abuse, you should contact your school's athletic director or administration.**

Influence on communication. The way someone communicates with another person or group may have an influence on the person mentally and personally (Felton & Jowett, 2012). It can also take away from the meaning or purpose of the message that is being conveyed. Sagar and Jowett (2012), reported that coaches who provide instruction in a verbal, physical, and aggressive manner are more likely to be perceived by their athletes as having undesirable communication styles (e.g., hostile, unresponsive). They are noted as being less credible in terms of expertise, character, and competence (Kassing & Infante, 1999).

Precise messages. The way a person receives the message is important and depends sometimes on the delivery. It is important for the coach to deliver the message to an athlete in a precise and clear manner. Cote and Gilbert (2009) stated, “The nature and the quality of their interpersonal interactions have important implications for the athlete’s well-being, skill development, and sporting performance” (p.11). Interpersonal interactions among the coach and athlete will encourage communication, improve the relationship, and allow instruction.

Coaches are supposed to be able to deliver roles, goals, and standards clearly, and it should be both reachable and reasonable expectations. An athlete should be able to share feelings and concerns while getting back effective messages that include encouraging words, positive

instruction, discipline, and feedback. Cranmer and Brann (2015) examined to how coaches are perceived by their athletes and how their actions affect the player's feelings and mentality.

“What coaches say or do to foster positive self-evaluations by athletes could begin to provide insight regarding this dearth of knowledge and provide coaches with practical suggestions for cultivating these prosocial outcomes in the athletes they coach” (p. 195). Coaches are looked at as influential leaders who influence the development and experience of the athlete (p. 194).

Cranmer and Brann explain how a coach's actions can dictate an athlete's thoughts and mindset.

Coach and athlete's open communication enhances the relationship and makes it imperative for the coach to push the quality of enhancement in order to foster prosocial outcomes in the athlete's life and while performing (p.195). Clear communication reflects effective instruction or coaching and promotes more effective learning regarding skill development in sport as well as a sense of confidence, motivation, and satisfaction in the athlete. A coach's messages and interpersonal interactions have been shown to affect an athlete's psychological and emotional well-being, motivation, and sport persistence (Martin, Rocca, Cayanus, & Weber, 2009; Smith, Smoll, & Barnett, 1995; Turman & Schrodts, 2004).

According to Martens (1987) there are six elements of the communication process, which are considered basics. In this section, a verbal communication process will be described. These six elements are functions of a dialogue where messages are sent back and forth to another individual or group. The communication process starts first when the sender makes the decision to relay a message. Second, the sender must encode the message and translate it to the person of choice. This is done by informing the person about the message. The third element is to send an effective message to the receiver. In the fourth element, the message goes through the channel

and is transmitted. The words spoken produce sound waves and are heard by the reader, which then the message can be delivered over the phone, video recorder, or by other audio variations. These are defined as different channels. The person receiving the message is then to interpret the message in the fifth step. At last, the receiver then forms an opinion and responds based on the interpretation of the message.

Taking the *Communication Skills Test in Appendix A* at the end of the manual will be beneficial to both the athlete and coach. This test should be implemented as a guide which will reflect your behavior and allow you to assess your communication skills thus far. This test should bring awareness to the various barriers that occur throughout communication. Barriers that explain reflective listening requires that the listener reflect the content of communication, reflect feeling, and ask open-ended questions. Major barriers in the communication process are the tendency to judge, evaluate, or approve/disapprove statements that the athlete is making (Nakamura, 1996).

For example, a coach would like to tell one of his not so skilled players (Bryana) that she did not make the travel team. **Example in figure 2, the six elements of the communication process** have been used. If the coach was successful in communicating the message, then most likely, the receiver responded positively. If receiving the message was not successful, the receiver may not have heard the message clearly and noise may have occurred. Noise may occur for various reasons depending on the communication basics. Noise also occurs when the sender does not fully deliver the entire message or give a reason behind the message which causes miscommunication.

Figure 2. Effective ways of Communicating

Encoding the message: steps 1 and 2.

The coach decides to tell Bryana she will not be traveling.

- The coach decided to use verbal communications to relay the message to Bryana in a one-on-one discussion.

Sending the message to the receiver: steps 3 and 4.

The coach decides on the following as a concise and effective message, "Bryana you will not be traveling for the game."

- The words are spoken to Bryana

Receiving the message: steps 5 and 6.

Bryana hears the message and thinks about the message.

- Informs the coach that she hears and understands the message and accepts the decision.

Note: In figure 2, effective ways of communicating are described through sender and receiver dialogues. Within this figure, there are 6 steps to sending effective messages (Martens, 1987).

There are effective ways of sending messages and also ways for both the sender and receiver to be on the same page. As a coach, it is your job to send effective messages. Coaches are a lot like teachers. It is their job to instruct, lead, plan, discipline, encourage and support their athletes. In order for all of these characteristics that were previously listed to be effective, a coach must send a message. Sending an effective message is imperative when attempting to connect with your athlete. If your message is not clear, then your athlete will find it hard to understand the message.

According to *Coaches Guide to Sport Psychology*, there are five steps to follow in order to improve communication skill:

1. Becoming aware of the need to improve a certain skill
2. Identifying the behaviors involved in improving your communication skills
3. Practicing the behaviors
4. Receiving feedback concerning how well you are performing the behaviors
5. Integrating the new or improved communication skill into your day to day communication patterns (Martens, 1997).

There have also been guidelines suggested to improve the accuracy of coaches sending effective messages to individuals. In the appendix, section E, there is a guideline for sending effective messages as a communication guide.

A part of receiving the message effectively in communication is listening effectively. Like many skills, listening skills can be taught, but may take longer to use. In order to be successful at the art of listening, the coach must be willing to listen attentively. It must be a desire to want to listen to what another individual has to say. If the coach practices the art of

listening and becomes successful at this skill, then the coach may be able to teach their athlete with the hope of building strong relationships, solving problems, and raising awareness on the effects of communication. There are 4 steps to master the art of listening according to Nakamura (1996).

The Art of Listening	
1) Stop	Do not fidget, but make eye contact, face the speaker, and sit up.
2) Look	Be aware of the feelings, movements, tone and the meaning behind the words.
3) Listen	Don't make judgments or partially listen. Focus on your player's feelings and not what you plan to say in response. Let them own their feelings for reassurance.
4) Caution	Don't interrupt their thought process. Make subtle gestures to show that you are listening.

Coaching Styles


There are several different types of coaching styles. Chelladurai's multidimensional model proposes five coach leadership behavioral styles (Chelladurai's, 2007). The democratic style includes behaviors that encourage athlete's participation in decision making. The autocratic style is more of the coach employing behavior to establish authority. Training and instruction style refers to coaching behaviors that aim to develop the athlete's knowledge and skill. Positive feedback behaviors aim to communicate the coach's appreciation and encouragement for their athletes. Finally, social support behaviors provide for the athlete's psychosocial needs (Sagar & Jowett, 2012).

Although the two most common styles that are used are autocratic and democratic, coaches often combine various leadership styles depending on the specific situation and how it can be beneficial to them (Sagar & Jowett, 2012). Autocratic coaching puts full control in the hands of the coach. Autocratic coaches believe in giving instructions and allowing the athlete to fulfill the requirements. Also, it allows the coach to occasionally make decisions without directly consulting the athlete. This coaching style encourages discipline and increase organizational skills.

Democratic coaching is similar, but are open to ideas and suggestions from the athlete. This style of coaching in particular allows the athlete to be included in the decision making process. The objective to the approach is to allow the athlete to feel like they have a voice and are making decisions. The style allows the athlete to help decide on individual roles, personal and team-related goals, and strategies on how to succeed. The coach still has control, but it gives the athlete responsibility and freedom to base certain decisions on their feelings and wants. The athlete will learn accountability, self-control, freedom, and improve everyday decision making skills.

Practical Strategy: What Kind of Coach Are You?

This exercise lists phrases that are sometimes said. The situations and the words used may not be exactly the same, but the message may be similar. Circle those phrases that you think you say often. If you find that you are using a lot of the phrases in your everyday life, you will probably be using them when you become a coach. You may also want to think about a former or current coach you may know and circle the phrases that apply to him or her. If you are willing to hear what your athletes think, then have your athletes rate you with this list. Compare their list with yours and you may be surprised (Nakamura, 1996).



- 1. I told you to do it now.
- 2. I don't know. That's not my area of expertise.
- 3. I'm really proud of you.
- 4. Because I said so.
- 5. What do you think I should do?

- 6. I like the way you did that.
- 7. I can't believe you did that again.
- 8. Remind me again and I'll try to help you tomorrow.
- 9. Thanks for helping me out.
- 10. Get over here now!

- 11. I can't communicate with him. Maybe you can speak to him.
- 12. You've put a lot of work into getting better.
- 13. I make the rules around here.
- 14. I can't deal with this anymore.
- 15. You have really stayed in great shape.

Scoring Analysis

Questions: 1, 4, 7, 10 & 13 are statements that an autocratic or controlling coach would say.

Questions: 2, 5, 8, 11 & 14 are statements that a permissive coach would say.

Questions: 3, 6, 9, 12 & 15 are statements that a democratic or empowering coach would say.

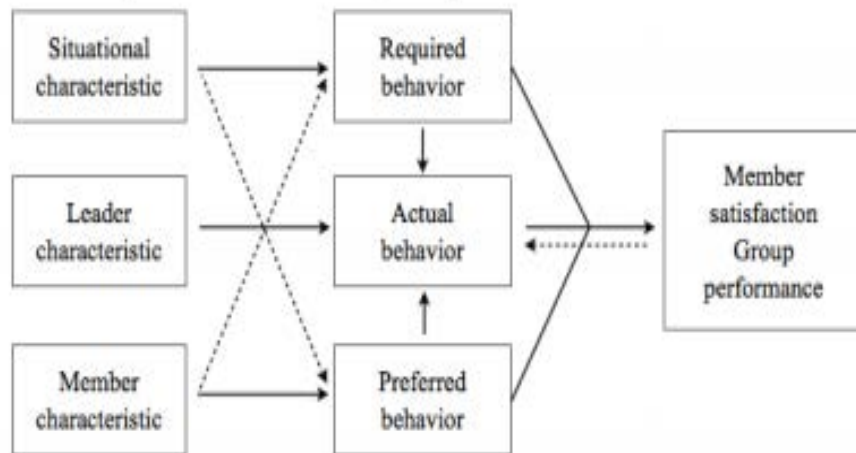
Check your answers based on the three categories. If more than four statements are circled in one category, then you have a coaching tendency. Knowing the effects the messages you are sending have on an athlete is important. If you scored high in the empowering coach category, then you are doing a good job helping your athletes reach their potential. If you are not an empowering coach, but would like to learn more about that coaching style, read the rest of the manual and do extra research.

Characteristics of a Good Leader

Chelladurai (2007) developed the working model of coaching effectiveness based on factors that could possibly affect or determine the coach's behavior and how it affects performance, growth, and the development of the athletes. Transformational leadership is at the top of Chelladurai's Multidimensional Model of leadership. "The leader's personal characteristics are the focus of leadership training and development intended to optimize the impact of leader behavior....Transformational leadership focuses mainly on the relationship dynamic between the coach and athlete. It is intended for the leader to push their participants to seek higher levels of performance to better the organization as a whole" (Doherty, 1997, p. 275-276). The coach must also consider the characteristics of the athlete (e.g., skill level, age) and the preferred behaviors the athletes would like to see demonstrated by the coach. The coach's

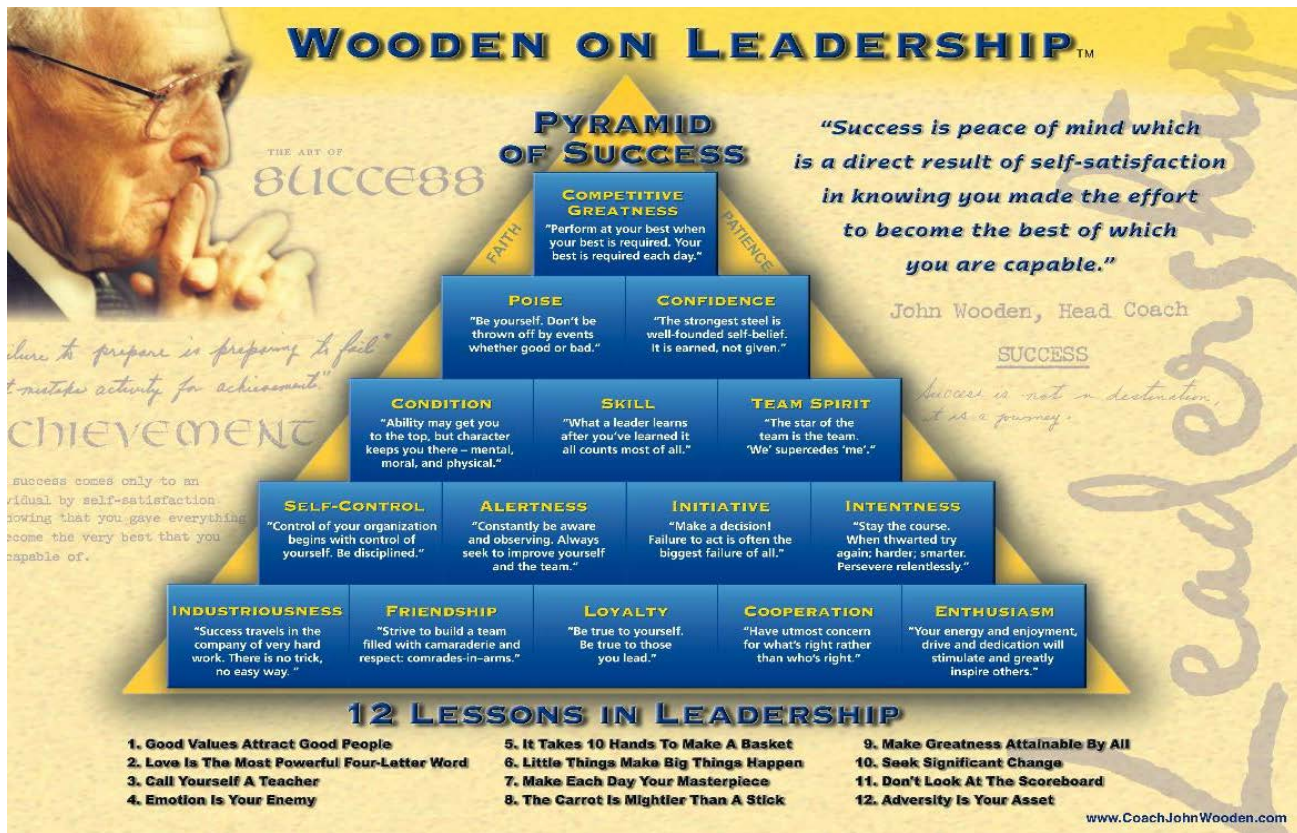
behaviors will also be influenced by the situational demand, and what is required by the organization that the coach and athletes are participating. If the coach is consistent with the preferred and required behaviors, then athletes will tend to be more satisfied and perform better. If it is not consistent, then athletes will be less satisfied and less likely to perform well.

Figure 3. Chelladurai's Multidimensional Model



Note: The coach's behavior, along with social impacts, and the environment, can influence the actual behavior of the athlete. Chelladurai, P. (2007). Leadership in Sports, in Handbook of Sport Psychology, Third Edition (eds G. Tenenbaum and R. C. Eklund), John Wiley & Sons, Inc.,

Figure 4. Leadership Pyramid



Note: John Wooden’s pyramid of success describes his ideas and philosophy on how to achieve success. The pyramid consisted of 15 blocks grounded behind faith and patience. Outside of his pyramid of success are also 12 lessons in leadership. This explains various characteristics that will accompany good leadership qualities. Wooden on Leadership can be found at <http://www.coachwooden.com/pyramid-of-success>.

John Wooden directed UCLA to ten NCAA Men's Basketball championships in a span of 12 years. He also won 88 consecutive games during his tenure and has been considered a master coach by some. His philosophy worked for him and his program. Although he has had much success, his coaching style does not mean it is the only successful way. One may argue, what does success in fact entail and how do you measure it? John Wooden describes success as, "A peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best you are capable of becoming" (Wooden, 2016, p.1). He is indeed an icon for his remarkable records, his 38 straight NCAA tournament games, and his continuous contribution or emphasizing a college education. He valued relationships with his athletes and their overall development. He defined success as a journey and pinpointed 14 specific building blocks of competitive greatness in order to complete his pyramid of success. (See Figure 4). These blocks include: poise, confidence, condition, skill, team spirit, self-control, alertness, initiative, intentness, industriousness, friendship, loyalty, cooperation and enthusiasm.

With the skills mentioned previously, a coach can develop leadership that starts with hard work and the four components that should be considered when trying to display leadership. The four components are: leader's qualities, leadership styles, follower's qualities, and situational factors (see Figure 5). The first component, leadership qualities mean that a leader must be able to seek self-improvement, while being responsible for their actions and being proficient. The leader must too, be able to direct and make firm decisions and keep their followers (athletes) informed and organized. The second component, leadership styles are the different types of leadership positions that a coach may decide to take upon, for instance, authoritarian, democratic, holistic, and etc. The third component followers, in this case are the athletes. The

leader must know the athlete's needs and what it takes to motivate and instruct the athlete. Not all athletes are the same and they may require a different approach. Finally, the fourth component is situational factors and that is the idea of how leaders will perform depending on the situation they are in at the time. The leader must be capable to perform given the situation.

“Leaders are made, they are not born; and they are made just like anything else in this country-by hard effort” (Dowling, 1970, p.31). The four components of effective leadership should help teach the coach there are different variations in coaching. Not every coach leads and instruct alike, nor does every follower have the same personality and needs. Followers usually respond to leadership in different ways. There is no set way on how to coach, but realizing some styles are more effective for certain task is important. Coaches should understand that not all athletes who are being led will respond in the same way.

Figure 5. The four components of effective leadership are:



Note: Figure 5 the components of effective leadership. Martens, R. (1987). *Coaches guide to sport psychology: A publication for the American Coaching Effectiveness Program: Level 2 sport science curriculum*. Champaign, IL. Human Kinetics Books.

Coaches as Leaders. To assist in being a great coach, a coach must plan, organize, lead and coordinate. Candace Goode Vick (1985) summarized the differences in an instructor and leader. A good coach makes it their goal to be both.

Practical Strategy: Which are you: An instructor or a leader?

INSTRUCTOR	LEADER
1. An instructor's job is to teach a skill, a technique, an activity, a game, or a subject.	1. A Leader's job is to influence the growth of the followers to better citizenship.
2. An instructor's main aim is to improve the skill of the individual.	2. A leader's main aim is to improve character and life.
3. An instructor is primarily activity-centered.	3. A leader is person-centered as well as activity-centered.
4. Instructors are mainly concerned with how well a person can perform now in the activity or game.	4. A leader is mainly concerned with how well people will perform in adulthood, what ideals what values, what goals they will reach for.
5. Instructors watch what is happening to the ball and its effect on the scoreboard.	5. A leader is concerned with what is happening to the followers.
6. Instructors want results now.	6. A leader aims for results in the future.
7. An instructor stresses and uses position rank and authority to get compliance.	7. A leader uses influences to create the desire to follow the advice being given.

II.

Outcomes from Coach-Athlete Interactions

Motivation. When deciding whether or not a person is motivated, it can be an uncertainty. Motivation may be oriented internally and/or externally. Being intrinsically motivated occurs when an individual is self-determined. As a coach, it is important to be intrinsically motivated in order to instruct and lead athletes. If a coach is not committed, neither will their players. According to Harwood and Swain (2001) and Krane, Greenleaf, and Snow (1997), “Coaches’ involvement in mental training to some degree is crucial to the effectiveness of the consultation as they can influence the achievement environment” (Blom, Visek & Harris, 2013, p. 90). As an athlete, your coach is suppose to be able to motivate you to want to be a better athlete. Being a better athlete consist of skill development, goal achievement, being a more effective thinker on and off the court, being a team player and being a leader. “There is considerable empirical evidence that both parents and coaches influence psychosocial well-being of children and youth in sport” (Cumming, 2014, p. 2).

Related, children listen and emulate many things that coaches do and say.

“Youth observations of coaches, parents, and spectators can influence the moral development of youth and further illustrates the importance of positive modeling by social agents” (Martin, Ewing, & Gould, 2014, p. 112). That is why it is always important for coaches to have good character, leave a good impression, and be a role model. Verbal messages directed toward performance must be realistic and the extent of the influence will depend on the credibility, and trustworthiness of the person providing the message” (Chase, Lirgg, & Feltz, 1997, p.11). The

feedback that coaches communicate to their athletes after poor performances or mistakes should be expressed in a manner easy for a child to understand.

Modeling can be an effective way of learning social norms and consequences. “In fact, Bandura argued that nearly all that can be learned from direct experience can also be acquired through vicarious learning, [social learning theory]” (Martin, Ewing & Gould, 2014, p. 112). The way that coaches choose to correct mistakes alters the athletes optimal motivation and well-being. Giving negative feedback and shouting at the players when they do not meet the coaches standards causes the athlete to become disappointed, frustrated, and less motivated.

The evidence suggests that the athlete’s perception of the coach’s behavior may influence motivation which may then affect performance. In order to continue motivation, one should provide corrective feedback, when appropriate. Not all feedback is good, and if there are instructions guided to fix mistakes, then it should enhance improvement of the athlete’s skills. “Performance feedback is often the end result of an individual's extended encounter with a task, however, and it is important to consider the situational contingencies, personality variables, and motivational processes that influence an individual's ongoing experience with a task” (Harackiewicz, Abrahams, Wageman, 1987, p. 1). Corrective feedback focuses on “one’s performance that one fails to enact well or the aspects of one’s performance that need remediation during achievement strivings, negative feedback focuses on the end result and, particularly, on one’s failure to achieve a certain outcome” (Amorose & Weiss, 1998, p. 2).

Table 2.

Descriptions of Negative and Positive feedback includes:

Descriptions of negative feedback includes:

(Criticism)	“That was awful”
(Information)	“You’re not moving fast enough”
(Neutral Feedback)	“That was wrong”

Descriptions of positive feedback includes:

(Criticism)	“Good job, but, here is a better way”
(Information)	“That was great defense. Way to move your feet”.
(Neutral Feedback)	“Good job on staying low”

Note: Examples of negative and positive feedback. Martens, R. (1987). *Coaches guide to sport psychology: A publication for the American Coaching Effectiveness Program: Level 2 sport science curriculum*. Human Kinetics Books.

“The controlling aspect leads to a decrease in intrinsic motivation by changing the perceived locus of causality, while the feedback aspect leads to an increase in intrinsic motivation by increasing the person's sense of competence and self-determination” (Deci, 1972, p. 6). The chances of a coach getting an athlete who is flexible and does not mind various coaching styles is rare because not all athletes can function under difficult or strenuous conditions. Athletes who are unable to perform well with an autocratic coaching style that may be lacking in effective communication must have self-determination to uplift and motivate them to want to perform at their optimal level.

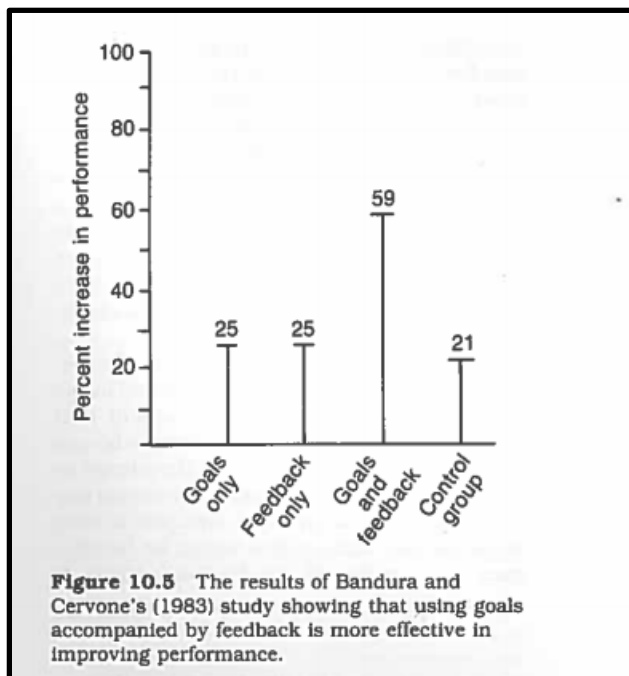
Self-Confidence and Goal Setting. Self-determination theory (SDT) is an individual’s intrinsic approach based on what motivates them and accommodates their psychological and personal needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Positive reinforcements, such as rewards, scholarships, stipends, endorsements, and continuous praise, are external reinforcements of motivation. The reinforcements are provided by the coach, parents, administration, and fans. Although these are external rewards, they are also a source of communication, because the rewards inform athletes if they are performing well or not. Rewards can build confidence, change character, and encourage a success driven attitude and set higher goals of performance (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Martin, Rocca, Cayanus, and Weber (2009), Smith, Smoll and Barnett (1995), Turman and Schrodt (2004) noted that “clear communication reflects effective instruction (or coaching) and promotes better learning (e.g., skill development)” this may be beneficial in the sport, the athlete’s confidence, motivation and the satisfaction within the learner. “Coaches’ messages and communicative acts of interactions have been shown to affect athletes’ psychological and emotional well-being, motivation, and sport persistence” (Sagar & Jowett, 2012, p. 151).

This graph shows the increase in performance based on goals and feedback that was given.

Table 3

Self-Mechanism



The results of Bandura and Cervone's (1983) study showing that using goals accompanied by feedback is more effective in improving performance.

Foucault (1983) argued that coaches who focus on the development of ethical and innovative practices have a greater chance of not following an ordered process and form their own routine. If a coach creates their own philosophy based on knowledge, willingness of power, ethical practices, social conditions, and power relations, then they are forming their own perceptions based on learned practices.

There are four perspectives that contribute to a coach's problem regarding the power, knowledge, and self. The first perspective is altering the way a coach views the athlete's body in regards to functioning mechanically in an anatomical understanding. It is better to adopt a more holistic view and a somatic understanding where we can be aware mentally while using various physical senses. Second, most coaches take on an authoritarian coaching style. Instead of this style, a coach could have more of a relational style that shares power. This style will ensure that the coach is not the only one that can express ideas, but the coach looks for everyone to contribute in hopes for success. Third, being able to adjust or change a particular coaching style that may not be as successful or liked will ultimately enhance the coach and team chemistry. Lastly, coaches' should consider multiple sources regarding philosophy, practices, and training regimens. Rather than focus solely on scientific research or past experiences, there are other ways that may be effective and integrated with existing sources in finding new creative ways to train athletes.

According to Denison (2011), "New perspectives regarding the body, power, the self and knowledge, believe to enable coaches to grow and develop in ways that would make their practices more effective and ethical by providing them with a framework to challenge their assumptions of how they coach" (p. 14). For example, a coach may not see a problem being serious unless the athlete can show some proof of its importance. An athlete may feel that a coach who is not approachable may not be trustworthy. This should never be the case when an athlete is approaching coaches with any problem or concern.

It is imperative to listen to the athletes concerns and take their feelings into consideration. Communicating thoughts with the athletes will show them the coach sympathizes with them. If

the coach brush off their concerns, they are going to feel like the coach is unapproachable. For example, an athlete may complain about the extensive conditioning that the coach is putting the team through. They may be stating that they are unable to keep up because they are short of breath and the coach may still hesitate to excuse the athlete from conditioning without a doctor's note. Coaches should know their athlete's personality, capabilities, body constraints, and feelings in order to be productive.

Practical Strategy: Behavioral characteristics of a good coach

Time: 20 to 25 minutes

Objective: So, participants can understand that good coaching requires a coach to be respectful, trusting and accepting.

Materials: Two large sheets of butcher paper for each group
Different color pens
(A blackboard and chalk can be used if butcher paper and pens cannot be obtained)
Masking tape for each group
A pair of scissors for each group

Procedure: Divide the class into groups of four to six participants.

1. Distribute two large sheets of butcher paper and pens to each group.
2. Using one sheet of butcher paper, each group is to brainstorm a list of adjectives that they think best describes the positive behavioral characteristics or traits that they think are required for good coaching.
3. After each group brainstorms the list, they are to prioritize the list by choosing what they believe are the six most important traits.
4. On the other sheet of butcher paper, each group is to draw a coach's shield and divide it into six parts. Express creativity in the art work.
5. After the six traits have been chosen, the group is to write on trait in each of the six sections on the coach's shield.
6. The coach's shields should be taped on a wall in the room.
7. The groups join together for the discussion

(Nakamura, 1996)

Practical Strategy: Goal Setting Plan

Time: 15 minutes

Objective: This will help participants set goals for themselves.

Procedure:

1. Ask participants to refer to their beginning of the season goals.
2. Explain the difference between short-term (measurable) and long-term (general) goals.

Explain that the short-term goal is going to help them get to the long-term goal.

In Appendix B, there is a goal setting plan that can be effective for both the coach and the athlete.

(Nakamura, 1996)

Practical Strategy: Encouraging Personal growth

Time: 20 minutes

Objective: For participants to understand how encouragement affects an athlete's feelings about himself or herself.

Materials: None

Procedure:

1. Ask the participants to complete an encouraging personal growth log.
2. Participant's share their response.

Suggested discussion questions:

1. What is meant by encouragement?
2. What is the difference between praise and encouragement?
3. When can praise be encouraging and discouraging?
4. Which one do you believe is more effective?
5. Why is it important to recognize effort and improvement as well as accomplishment?

In Appendix C, there is an encouraging personal growth log available to jot down thought and share ideas.

Expectations in Coaching. Psychologist Robert Rosenthal reported on the Pygmalion Effect which explains that expecting a particular behavior from someone can influence their behavior. Rosenthal stated, “The bottom line is that if we expect certain behaviors from people, we treat them differently — and that treatment is likely to affect their behavior” (Ellison, 2015, p.44).

Along with a coach sending messages to their athlete, they must also be able to receive messages. Listen attentively to their athlete, and be able to receive feedback, if necessary. Coaches must be able to control frustrations, identify and fulfill various roles, and stay composed during player’s emotional situations. Within the coach interaction comes different approaches. A coach’s expectations can go very far. This can vary from what is expected out of an athlete and what the coach plans to implement throughout the program. The coach’s philosophy and their beliefs accommodate the player’s needs and the game. A coach’s expectations and implementations work hand and hand with relationships, goal setting, and the amount of success a team can have. As long as goals and roles are discussed and are communicated with the athlete, they will know what is expected of them.

The next step would be implementing the conversations, so that they can be beneficial in progressing performance. As noted by Macquet (2013):

Findings showed that communication allowed coach and athlete to know how the partner understood the situation. Communication was mainly initiated by the coach, raising questions about the direction of communication between the coach and athlete.

Information distribution seemed to be shaped by the social framework of the coach-athlete interaction. (p. 195)

As suggested by Lorimer and Jowett (2009), “the power of coaches linked to their role to help the athlete to perform well in competition might allow them to induce behaviors in the athlete without needing to accede to the athlete’s understanding” (Lorimer and Jowett, 2009, p. 150).

However, the athlete and coach must also take into consideration the unique situations that can occur throughout a season and adjust goals, if necessary. According to Mouratidis, Lens, and Vansteenkiste (2010):

As in every human activity, mistakes or poor performance are inescapable during training or competition and the corrective information in response to such mistakes or poor performance may inherently convey messages of low competence that may endanger athletes’ motivation and affect-based adjustment. Aligned with SDT, however, we showed that if such feedback is communicated in an autonomy supporting way it is associated with optimal forms of motivation and emotional regulation. (p. 634)

Therefore, a coach and athlete must have continued interactions regarding expectations and goals in order to have a successful relationship.

A coach must be able to lead, teach, give feedback, give direction, and be authoritative, when necessary, in a number of instances. The coach must guide athletes in successful and unsuccessful performances. If the athlete is not receptive to instruction, then it causes a hostile unresponsive interaction. With the lack of cooperation from both parties, the athlete’s performance will neither enhance nor will it encourage future success.

Choosing effective reinforcement strategies to increase the chance of positive interactions will improve various outcomes. It is important to, “1) find the right reinforcer to work for the specific athlete, 2) make the reinforcer frequent and connected to the desired behavior, and 3)

have a clear communication with the athlete so they know why the reinforcer is being given” (Smith & Smoll, 2004, p. 24). It is important for the coach to identify the effective reinforcer for each individual athlete. What one athlete may need to boost self-confidence, another may dislike. To do so, it is important for the coach to foster an individual relationship with each athlete, to identify the athlete’s likes and dislikes. Once the coach understands the athlete’s likes and dislikes, the coach must assess whether or not the reinforcement strategy produces the behavior that the coach is trying to elicit in the athlete.

An effective way to reinforce certain behaviors from the athlete is by giving them an instructional hint, such as verbal reinforcement. This allows the coach to give the athlete an instructional reminder, while giving a description of the desired behavior that occurred. This will help both the coach and the athlete with being clear on what was done and what was or is expected. For example, a coach may say to the athlete, “Good shot!” and “You had great form.” Along with reinforcements comes selecting and reinforcing targeted behaviors. A coach must be clear with their athletes on which behaviors they want to reinforce and those they do not. A great way to improve behaviors would be a strategy called shaping. First, the coach has the athlete start at a fundamental skill level where the athlete is successful. Then, the coach gradually integrates additional components of the skill so that the athlete progresses to a more advanced skill level.

Figuring out how to get an athlete to be motivated and want to enhance their performance level may be difficult. As cited in Catania and Randall (2013),

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation need to be measured separately in order to get a more complete picture of motivation, as they seem to be measuring different aspects of the construct”

(p. 24). Different age groups take different motivation incentives, and what can be done to control, manage, or alter them to fit different genders, races, social statuses, skill levels, and divisions may vary (Horn, 2007). This variable may also contribute to the self-fulfilling prophecy theory where an athlete's expectations and performance eventually conforms to the coach's expectations. Although this may be positive for some athletes, this may not be the case for all.

The four steps of self-fulfilling prophecy suggest: 1) developing expectations in the beginning of the season will allow the coach to predict overall performance for the seasons, 2) the coaches' expectations will alter the teams chemistry and how they behave towards each other, 3) coaches treat individual athletes differently which affect the athlete's perception and performance, and 4) the athlete's performance conforming to the coaches original expectations (Horn, 2007, p. 249).

In regards to socio-cultural context, Horn (2000) stated that several researchers investigated cross-cultural variations in the athlete's perceptions and interpretations of selected achievement goal perspectives. At least to a certain extent, the athlete's perceptions depend on the function of their socio-cultural background and their overall goal achievement. There are links between coaches' social-cultural and economic background and their expectations of the athlete. Ram, Starek, and Johnson (2004) noted, "our field still lacks sufficient understanding of the degree to which race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation affects the experiences and behaviors of individuals who participate in sport and physical activity" (p.3).

Parents are expected to provide, support, and encourage their child's dreams. Coaches and parents should work together to help ensure that the athlete will have a positive experience.

The athlete's structural environment, meaning their background and how they were raised, will determine how much of a support system they will have. A child notices their support system at an early age which is supported by the triangulation model discussed earlier (Blom et al., 2013, p. 88). Typically, athletes who come from low economic statuses are unable to get the same resources as those who are at an economic advantage. They may not be able to afford trainers, camps, exposure showcases, travel team associations, or local recreation sport clubs. Thus, the child may not get the experience needed to be a better player. This indeed puts those who are economically challenged at a disadvantage in regards to skill development and exposure. There is much more needed research to be done on the link between social-cultural context and the coach and athlete relationship.

Self-Determination Theory includes socio-contextual factors as important aspects for understanding motivation. "The social environment can nurture or impede one's active, integrating human natures" (Horn, 2008, p. 29). An athlete's social environment is looked at as an individual difference for various reasons. "Key findings from phase 1 of the study stated that Americans acknowledged the significant role sport plays in society, recognized sport's potential for building character and promoting success" (Martin, Ewing, & Gould, 2014, p. 113).

Depending on where and how an athlete was raised growing up, helps dictate how an athlete may think to approach and handle various situations.

Expectancies, values & beliefs. As a coach, it may not be easy to begin to explain to athletes their flaws or weaknesses, but it is vital to give corrective feedback. Negative approaches may identify weaknesses but typically do not explain how to correct them. In other words, instead of always telling athletes what they do wrong, try explaining to them what they should do right.

This will help detect the problem and correct it. The importance on what not to do is stressed through instructional methods for many coaches. There is the assumption that the athletes know the correct response, but the only time they receive assistance is when they are doing it wrong. What athletes need is not only assistance in eliminating incorrect responses, but informational feedback (Martens, 1987).

The type of sport is an important aspect when deciding what coaching style should be used. Usually for sports that are more team-oriented, the style may depend on the structure of group effort and the level of coordination among the active participants. Sport-related teams require a more directive approach compared to individual sports. Certain sports require more directions and guidance from the instructor so that the game will be effective. In this case a democratic approach may be more beneficial (Martens, 1987). “Team sport athletes typically prefer more autocratic leaders than do individual-sports athletes, when little time is available a task-oriented leader is more desirable” (Weinberg & Gould, 2015, p.217).

Another situational factor would be the age and levels of the athletes. At a young age, sport may be seen as a strategy to build character, foster a task oriented mindset, develop leadership skills, and improve social relationships and basic skills (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). As the athlete gets older, higher skill levels are required for more competitive levels. It is not necessary to build social relationships, but to advance in skill level to reach desired performance goals. Scientist proposed that younger athletes have a low level of competence and sport skills, but are highly involved in sports. Younger athletes may not looking for the same rewards as older athletes because their personal development of sportsmanship is at a lower level (Lee et al., 2000; MacLean & Hamm, 2008). In this case autocratic coaching style would be more

beneficial. These goals vary in sports, age level, and within each individual. The level of play requires an advancement of skill level and commitment from the athlete. Coaches begin to hold older athletes more accountable and expect for them to be able to perform under a more democratic and directional approach. “Older athletes value their coach more critically because of their athletic experience, but the study’s data did not confirm this assumption on the basis of athletic experience” (Stupuris, Sukys, & Tilindien, 2013, p.44).

Coaches should be focused on helping athletes learn proper techniques and more advanced strategies. This is where athletes begin to make the distinction of whether or not they are involved for the love of the game or just for an extracurricular activity. Once the athlete is at the high school level, the game is still intended to be fun, but the goal typically, is to play at the varsity level. Higher skill levels are required and more commitment is expected. Extra time is needed for skill development, and obtaining a college scholarship is usually the end goal for most athletes. At this point, parents may support their child’s involvement in youth sports for years in hope that they would be good enough to play at the college level. An athlete can be task oriented and still be driven by the reward of obtaining a scholarship which will categorize them as being both task and ego-oriented.

As a coach, it is important to remember that positive approaches are effective and have a successful result when determining performance enhancement. In sports, athletes are coached on ways to improve their skills and achieve optimal performance which will bring success. Coaching is a type of instructional communication regarding interpersonal situations with the athlete (Turman & Schrod, 2004).

Cohesion. The 3 C’s +1 (Jowett, 2007, 2009) is a theoretical model which was created to

enhance the relationship between a coach and the athlete. The focus is on the coach's and athlete's interdependent feelings. These four words describe the model, pertaining to closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation. Closeness is the feeling of mutual respect between the coach and the athlete. Commitment is the agreement that both the coach and the athlete will stick together. Complementary views the behavior aspect in which the coach and athlete work together to achieve common goals. Co-orientation is the idea that the coach and athlete share mutual feelings. This gives both individuals faith within the relationship as time goes on. There are three factors to this model: 1) coach's personal orientation, 2) the coaching context, and 3) the coach's perception of the athlete's behavior and motivation.

The factors listed determine the degree to which the coach decide to support the behaviors (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). These factors dictate the level of involvement with the athlete's views of competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Horn, 2008). The factors that were listed, competence, autonomy, and relatedness, determines the athlete's level of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and overall self-determination. To be an effective coach there must be understanding that supports the behavior of the athlete while adding structure to the foundation. There must be guidelines put in place along with active and positive involvement and the willingness of the athlete to ensure emotional support.

This model allows the coach and athlete to decide the quality of the relationship and base the function of its needs and goals in ways that either encourage or discourage both the athlete and the coach. Findings have shown that the coach-athlete relationship is based upon the athlete's physical self-concept and their perceptions of satisfaction with training and performance (Jowett & Cramer, 2010).

Coach and athlete interaction may be used as an act of communicating and receiving information regarding ways to train effectively and improve performance. In order to receive information, an athlete must be attentive to the coach and be willing to ask questions, when necessary, to understand the message. Poor communication can affect many different aspects, such as miscommunication on the floor, not knowing what plays to run, and a decrease in coach to athlete and athlete to athlete interaction. There are other roles that play an important part in bad communication.

Relationship building between athlete and coach, coach and team, and athlete to athlete must be relevant in order to make progress. Not everyone involved will agree with everyone's beliefs, outlook on sport, or choices being made. Different personalities may cause a crash in communication and cause it to not be effective. Overall, being clear, concise, correct, complete, courteous, and constructive will allow better communication and a tight knit relationship. If the goal is for one to make actions to effect change, the message should be positive. Needs in the Coach-Player Relationship is a practical strategy that can used to bring awareness in the coach-player relationship.

Practical Strategy: Needs in the Coach-Player Relationship

Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Objective: To help the participants recognize that relationships are based on trust, acceptance, respect, and dignity.

Materials: None

Procedure:

1. Ask the participants to refer to the Needs in the Coach-Player Relationship checklist, and allow participants a few minutes to complete it.
2. Have participants share their thoughts and answers on the survey.

You can find the full exercise in appendix D in the appendix section.

Athlete to athlete. Turman and Schrodts (2004) findings show that “although all five coaching leadership behaviors are associated with athletes’ affective learning (i.e., positive attitude and motivation toward learning and the instructor) positive feedback, social support, training and instruction behaviors were more closely associated with athletes’ affective learning and autocratic or democratic behaviors” (p.133). A coach has many responsibilities regarding the sporting context. These jobs range from leading, teaching, supporting, and listening to the athlete. Athletes also have responsibilities. In particular, an athlete must integrate information that has been learned from the coach to perform to the best of the individual athletes or team’s abilities in competition. This is where effective learning comes in.

Up to this point, much of the discussion has focused on the outcomes associated with one-to-one interactions between coach and athletes as with individual sports; however, team sports also depends on team members to perform together at their optimal level. Success of the team is not dependent on one person, but relies on all members of the team. Consequently, affective communication among team members is crucial, and athletes must understand their roles. A study by Smith et al. (1984) found that, “team demography is a critical determinant of organizational outcomes because of its effects on more fine-grained team process variables, such as social integration and communication” (p.21).

Interaction between team members will allow them to share common objectives and goals. “Knowledge is crucial for team effectiveness because it allows team members to tailor their behavior in accordance with what they expect their teammates to do. The more knowledge team members have about one another (and the more accurate that information is), the more efficient and automatic this process can be” (Cannon-Bowers et al., 1995, p.335). Throughout a

team dynamic, there is structure that may be associated with overall team roles.

This structure is shaped by team roles and its norms. According to Day, Gronn, and Salas (2004), there must be team roles which include formal and informal roles. These roles are either given by the coach, teammates, or within themselves. An example would be team captains. This is usually assigned by the coach and are formal roles. Informal roles are not typically assigned by the coach or athletes, but tend to emerge and are often no less important than formal roles for effective team functioning. For example, an individual may assume the role of always communicating during the game or at practices to keep everyone focused on the task at hand. Another example would be seniors that shape the culture of the team to help younger players assimilate. Roles that are given to individual members are inquired to monitor behaviors within group settings due to them holding a particular position (Bray & Brawley, 2002).

Role clarity is the clear expectation given to the athlete by the coach regarding a particular role. The expectations for these roles should be agreed upon, so that communication is clear between both parties. “In an interdependent team environment, task ambiguity—a lack of clear understanding of the task—has a parallel in role ambiguity” (Bandura, 1997, p. 64). Role acceptance is important because a player may understand the expectations but not agree to fulfill them. Looking at member roles and efficacy perceptions, Bandura (1999) noted, “If people are to work together successfully, the members of a group have to perform their roles with a high sense of efficacy” (p. 227). The coach must explain how various roles are integral for successful team performance to help ensure role acceptance. Conflict may appear, when an athlete occupies social roles on a team. For example, a team captain may struggle when a coach solicits help from the captain because the coach thinks the team is not putting forth enough effort, but the

team thinks that the coach is being too hard with practice and wants the captain to talk to the coach. Not knowing when to be a team captain and when to be a teammate is often a struggle. Managing roles and expectations are important. When possible, try to keep roles clearly defined and separate. Also, building trust among all parties involved will help ensure that conflicts may be resolved satisfactorily as long as open communication is maintained. This will help build trust with both parties.

Below is a strategy that could be implemented to help athlete to athlete interaction. This activity will allow the athletes to get to know each other on a more personal basis.

Practical Strategy: “Tell Me” Questions

Time: 10 minutes

Objective: To help athletes get to know each other on a more personal basis.

Materials: None

Procedure:

1. Divide the team into groups of four.
2. The participants refer to the “Tell Me” Questions. Remind the participants that the “Tell me” questions should relate to their feelings and there are no right or wrong answers.
3. Tell the athletes that they are to designate a person to be the starting point for the activity.
4. That person directs the first statement to each individual in the group.
5. After each person has completed the first statement, the next person to the right directs the next statement to each of the individuals in the group.
6. This process continues until all statements have been read and answered.
7. Gather all athletes into one group.

Suggested Discussion questions:

1. What did you like about the activity?
2. What did you learn about others?
3. How did you feel during this activity?
4. Did you learn anything about yourself through this activity?

“Tell Me” Questions

1. Tell me something about your most memorable athletic moment.

2. Tell me something that frightens you.
3. Tell me something that really makes you happy.
4. Tell me something that irritates you.
5. Tell me something about a favorite childhood memory.
6. Tell me something about your first love.
7. Tell me something that makes you laugh.
8. Tell me something that _____.

Coach to Team. When discussing coach to team, it should be recognized that coaches effectively lead teams in order to pursue the team's goals. Leading a team effectively encourages the development and management of the team's values. Coaching is a profession that can be learned. It requires an exceeding amount of skills that are demanded from the coach. Many believe that because they were proficient in their sport, that they are more than qualified to coach a team. An athlete's skills and knowledge doesn't necessarily make them experts of the game. Coaches must understand proper techniques, game strategy, psychological skills training, energy management, stress management, leadership qualities, and last but not least, communication skills. In order to coach a team, you must have athlete's trust in your vision and your capabilities to lead. "The most important leadership skill is the ability to communicate effectively" (Martens, 1997, p. 31).

Summary. This manual provides information and guidelines that coaches and athletes may find helpful in order to improve communication and achieve success. This success can be in sport and in life. From an athlete's perspective, a coach who obtains this knowledge from the manual will gain insight on the way athletes interpret situations, act, compete, and most importantly, think. The manual also include mental tools, such practical strategies to implement as a coach. Leadership, motivation, coach and athlete expectations, and other factors are discussed while deciding how to bring about success. Self-determination theory, outcomes from coach and athlete interaction, motivation, self-efficacy, and cohesion will contribute to the improvement on skills and performance enhancement. The categories that all of these depend on is coach and athlete interaction, athlete to athlete interaction, and coach and team interaction. With each one of the steps and practices implemented, there should be a positive result in the advancement of a

mental skills training program. This will encourage and influence the advancement of skill performance from both the athlete and the coach.

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Appendix A

Practical Strategy: Communication Skills Test (Referenced pg. 19)

Below is a communication skills test that could be beneficial to both the athlete and coach. This test should be implemented as a guide which will reflect your behavior.

Directions: Respond to each of the following items by circling the number that corresponds to the description that most accurately reflects your behavior. **Treat the results as a guide only.**

There is a margin of uncertainty in all questionnaires of this kind.

Rating Scale

Never

2. Seldom

3. Usually

4. Always

I like to listen to others	1 2 3 4
I state one thought at a time.	1 2 3 4
I pretend that I am paying attention.	1 2 3 4
I use sarcasm.	1 2 3 4
I report key points.	1 2 3 4
I respect others' right to express themselves.	1 2 3 4
I am easily distracted by other noises.	1 2 3 4
I listen to all of the other person's message.	1 2 3 4

I finish thoughts for the speaker.	1 2 3 4
I listen by nodding my head or verbally agreeing with what others are saying.	1 2 3 4
I keep the pitch of my voice level and in tense situations	1 2 3 4
I shake hands firmly.	1 2 3 4
I look directly at people when talking to them.	1 2 3 4
I walk slowly and hunch my shoulders.	1 2 3 4
I use my hands to augment my words.	1 2 3 4

Scoring the test: Add the numbers circled for items 1,2,5,6,8,10,11,12,13, and 15. For items 3,4,7,9, and 14 reverse the order of the numbering system. For example, if 4 was circled for the thirds item, it would now be scored as 1. Add the 5 reverse-scored items to the total for the first ten items summed to get your total communication score.

Total Score	Your Communication Style
51 and up	Clear Connection
40-50	Mixed Messages
39 and below	Tongue-tied

Appendix B

Practical Strategy: Goal Setting Plan (referenced pg.41)

Name:

Date:

Date of beginning action plan (s):

Date long-term goal will be accomplished:

Witnessed by:

Goal Setting Plan

A. Long-term goal:

B. List one or two short-term goals (action plan) to help achieve the long term goal:

1. :

2. :

C. Keep your goals reasonable and flexible. Think about potential barriers.

Barriers	Strategies for overcoming barriers

Appendix C.

Practical Strategy: Encouraging Personal Growth (referenced pg. 42)

The following situations require encouragement what might each of the individuals believe about himself or herself? How would you respond?

1. Maria complains that workouts are too difficult.
2. Alicia teaches Margaret a new gymnastics skill.
3. Andre plays his best golf but still loses his match.
4. Jess is discouraged because he was not elected as next year's captain.
5. Carl is worried that he will not do well in the next race.

Appendix D

Practical Strategy: Needs in the Coach-Player Relationship (Referenced pg. 53)

Suggested Discussion Question:

- 1. What did you learn about yourself?*
- 2. What did you learn about others?*
- 3. How do you feel when others treat you in respectful ways?*
- 4. What were you feeling or thinking as you were filling out the survey?*
- 5. How can you apply what you learned from this activity to your coaching philosophy?*
- 6. How can you apply what you learned from this activity to your everyday life situations (for example, between boyfriend and girlfriend, husband and wife, parents and child)?*

Needs in the Coach-Player Relationship

For this activity, think about your present or a past athletic experience. Please check any of the following statements that apply or applied to you in your athletic experience, and prioritize them according to the needs you felt most strongly about.

I want(ed) my coach to:

- 1. _____ Treat me in a warmer and friendlier manner.*
- 2. _____ Allow me to make more decisions.*
- 3. _____ Allow me more freedom.*

4. _____ *Expect Less accomplishment from me.*
5. _____ *Have more confidence in my abilities.*
6. _____ *Feel more strongly that I am an important member of the team.*
7. _____ *Have more respect for my judgment.*
8. _____ *Be more interested in me rather than in my athletic abilities.*
9. _____ *Give me more praise for my accomplishments.*
10. _____ *Have more respect for my ability to solve problems.*
11. _____ *Criticize me less.*
12. _____ *Be more confident that I can be trusted with responsibilities.*

Appendix E

Guidelines for Sending Effective Messages Excerpt from Sport Psychology for Coaches

American Sport Education Program 2008 ISBN 978-0-7360-3986-4.

1. Messages should be direct. Coaches who are weak on this quality avoid straightforward, direct communication. Their athletes may not know where they stand. These coaches assume others know what they expect, want, or feel. Rather than expressing their message directly, they hint at what they have in mind or they expect others to be mind readers. In other cases, they may tell someone else, hoping the message will get to the intended recipient indirectly. The problem is that indirect messages are often distorted and misperceived.

How strong are you in sending direct messages?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

2. Own your messages. Use “I” and “my,” not “the team,” or “we” when referencing your messages. You disown your messages when you say, “The team feels...,” or “Most people think you are...,” when it is really what you believe. Using others to bolster what you have to say implies cowardice in expressing your own messages and a failure to take ownership.

How strong are you in owning your messages?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

3. Messages should be complete and specific. Tell the whole story without leaving out important information. Provide the person with whom you are speaking all the information he or she needs in order to fully understand your message. Watch for leaps in logic, unknown assumptions, and unstated intentions.

How strong are you in making your messages complete and specific?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

4. Messages should be clear and consistent. Avoid double messages. Coaches who say one thing one day and then something else on another violate this principle as do coaches who send contradictory messages. “I really want to play you, but I don’t think this is a good matchup for you.” “I think you’re a fine athlete, but you’ll just have to be patient.” This example of a double message (acceptance and rejection) leaves the athlete confused and probably hurt. Double message have contradictory meanings, and usually are sent when you are afraid to tell the person directly something that may offend him or her.

How strong are you in sending clear and consistent messages?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

5. Messages should clearly state needs and feelings. Because our society frowns on those who wear their emotions on their sleeves, we tend not to reveal our feelings and needs to others. Yet revealing our needs and feelings is a foundation for developing close relationships and opening the communication channels. Sharing needs and feelings opens the door for the other person to do the same. Unexpressed needs and hidden feelings result in unfilled expectations.

How strong are you in clearly stating your needs and feelings?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

7. Messages should be focused on one thing at a time. Focus your message on one topic or issue at a time. Jumping from topic to topic only confuses the listener. Are your messages frequently disjointed thoughts because you don't take the time to organize your thinking?

How strong are you in focusing your messages on one thing at a time?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

8. Messages should be delivered immediately. When you observe something that upsets you or that needs to be changed, don't delay sending a message. Sometimes holding back can result in your exploding later about a little thing. Responding immediately also is a sound principle for giving effective feedback. However, if your emotions are clouding your judgment, it is sometimes better to wait until a better time to deliver your message.

How strong are you in delivering messages immediately when you see the need to do so?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

9. Messages should be supportive. If you want the other person to listen to your messages over time, you cannot deliver them with threats, sarcasm, negative comparisons, or any type of judgment. Eventually the person will avoid communicating with you or will simply tune you out whenever you speak. Your cumulative messages need to demonstrate support for the person.

How strong are you in sending supportive messages?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

10. Verbal and nonverbal messages should be congruent. You tell your player it was OK to make the error, but your negative body gestures and facial expressions contradict your words. The two conflicting messages confuse your player and hurt your credibility in future communication.

How strong are you in making your verbal and nonverbal messages congruent?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

11. Messages should be checked for understanding. Look for verbal and nonverbal evidence that the person with whom you are speaking is receiving the message as you intended. If you are unsure of the person's understanding, ask him or her to summarize the main points of the message or ask questions to assess comprehension. Athletes may be hesitant to ask questions if they do not understand for fear of appearing stupid in front of others.

How strong are you in obtaining feedback to make certain the person understands your messages?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

15. Messages should be attention grabbing. You need to hook people into listening. Grab their attention by using their names or by explaining why it is important for them to understand the information you are communicating.

How strong are you in sending attention grabbing messages?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

16. Messages should consider each athlete's learning style. Some athletes are visual learners, others are auditory learners, while yet others learn through doing (i.e., kinesthetic learners). Messages will be more easily comprehended if they accommodate an athlete's learning style. How strong are you in considering each listener's learning style in sending messages?

1 Weak 2 3 4 5 Strong

**Total your ratings and see where you fall in the following subjective scale:
67 – 80 Excellent 55 – 66 Good 43 – 54 Average 31 – 42 Weak 30 or less Help**