

Making the most of Coaching

The first Premise of Coaching

Old style education relied on the learner following the learning program laid out by the teacher. In a school context that meant hard punishments were handed out time and time again with little or no consideration towards either the barriers the learner may be experiencing or their specific personal education needs.

What has that got to do with being coached? In traditional education models like the one mentioned above you are reliant on someone to educate you and that is the problem that at least partially propagates the model. When you hand over ownership and responsibility for your own growth to someone else then you have made an error as ultimately the person who should and must care the most is the learner. That is where coaching needs to be different as **the first premise of coaching is that the learner must drive the learning towards their goal.**

Coaching is different to the education model as it starts with the learner knowing and understanding a destination they desire. Because they know that then they can interact with the coach who ultimately needs a destination before they can do anything useful for the learner. Before you get any coaching, you and the coach need to ask the question, 'What do I want from this?' To which a coach ought to ask, 'If you get that, what will it do for you?'

1. **The learner must drive the learning towards their goal**

Fair and equitable exchange of energy

Relationships in coaching need to be fair and equitable from both sides.

If you employ a good coach, they will buy into your goal with everything they have. That does not mean they assume your goal as their own, but it does mean they recognise what is needed and provide a route to get there. They need to help you find your special and once found, activate it.

My personal goal with coaching is 'To constantly evolve, always bringing the best of myself so that my athletes surpass current excellence and go out into their worlds as shining lights of possibility'. Every athlete a coach works with should know the coach's goal and recognise how the coach's goal fits with their own.

Fair and Equitable in a coaching relationship means that both parties have a firm understanding of their responsibilities. At the highest level that means the coach should be helping the athlete find a route of growth and the athlete should be taking that route. When either of these obligations are not met the relationship is failing and that needs addressing with immediacy.

If discussions around obligations are not possible or difficult then the relationship is not working, and value is not be taken. At that point either party must note that fairness and equity are not being met.

In my own coaching I have this presupposition where I believe **the quality of my attention is the greatest gift I can give**. I listen, I think, I respond. That makes it sound simple but hopefully you have noticed how I listen, how much I think and how I respond. Every answer I give goes back to both the athletes and my goal so that I am always aligned with goals/ purposes. As Jimi Hendrix said **‘Knowledge speaks but Wisdom listens.**

My intention is to always bring the best of myself so that my athletes surpass current excellence in their worlds. With multiple champions coming from my work it is a way of life that I try and wrap into everything I do.

‘I invest all of me, everything I have, and my expectation is that the athlete must expect that of me. If they are to get to where they want to get to then that is what is needed, if I do not need all I have, then they are not asking enough.

My expectation is that the athlete invests all that they have, that they continue to grow and have more through continued effort. They should expect that is my expectation.’

- 2. The athlete should expect everything possible from the coach and the coach should expect everything possible from the athlete.**

Being a C*nt to Yourself.

All my life my father has been a pillar of a man for me, my family and everyone around him. Always principled, trying his best to do good.

He left boarding school at 15. Instead of turning left heading back to the little Wiltshire town of Clane and his mother’s chicken farm he turned right and headed for the sea. There he signed up for the Merchant Navy and the first my grandmother knew of it was a postcard from some far-flung place, I think it was Argentina or maybe Chile. By the time he was 20 he had been around the world several times and had the stories and experiences to go with it.

When he was in his mid-twenties having met my mother, he left the Merchant Navy and joined the Fire Brigade. There he did very well eventually holding a senior role before retiring. From there he went into Health and Safety working with building sites so that they cut accident rates and improved safety.

I am proud of my dad and take much of what he has given into everything I do and believe. You know what though? I have never heard him swear, not once. I try to be the same as it's something I admire.

Yet there are times when swearing makes a sense of things that cannot otherwise eloquently be made a sense of. Take the poet Phillip Larkin who famously declined the Poet Laureate position offered by the Queen in 1984. He wrote 'This be the Verse'. The swearing in the poem conjures such an image that I am unsure any other linguistic could achieve.

Naming this section then with the worst word in the English language is designed to create the same preciseness of language. It needs to be heavy as this is a heavy matter and one that needs saying with a level of seriousness and directness.

Often the case is that everything the athlete needs to achieve the goal is there yet there is an innate human characteristic that seems to step up and construe some new meaning that shouts out reasons why not. It has got a huge bolshie voice and looms over with a dark black casting shadow. Its words are doubts, negatives, reasons why not and it is a c*nt.

It happens when unguarded and is all about giving yourself reasons why not instead of using tools and capabilities to make it happen. Below I go into another personal story to emphasise this point.

3. The athlete must use the tools and skills they have grown with the coach – there is NO REVERSION and there are no excuses.

Don't be a C*** to yourself – EVER!