

Coaching and Motivating

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses a critical question confronting all coaches: "What can I do to maximize the likelihood that my players will acquire a personal commitment to excellence?" Rejecting the notion that one could somehow "put" a motive into a player that was not already there, the chapter adopts a position arising out of Peter Ossorio's therapeutic policies: To motivate players, one must appeal to what already matters to them. Thus, the general recommendation advanced is that coaches strive to create team communities where the satisfaction of many preexisting, vital human motivations is available to team members who commit themselves to becoming the most excellent individual and team players that they are capable of becoming. Motivations discussed include those for recognition, for belongingness, for love, for personal excellence, for the opportunity to display this excellence before admiring others, and for the chance to make a meaningful contribution to a cause.

"Coaches who can outline plays on a blackboard are a dime a dozen. The ones who win get inside their players and motivate them."

—Vince Lombardi

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In one of my psychotherapy lectures, I inform my students that I am about to impart a profound principle of motivation to them. I instruct them to get their pens ready to record a dictum that I solemnly refer to as "Bergner's First Motivational Principle." Then, after pausing for the proper dramatic effect, I tell them the principle: "Everybody wants something." The effect is usually laughter. I have made a self-evident, seemingly stupid point. Behind the joke, however, lies something that, while simple, is profound in its implications.

Where motivation is concerned, what do coaches want? They want players who are personally dedicated, without need of being continually pushed and prodded, to becoming the best individual and team players that they are capable of being. They want players who are themselves committed to acquiring excellent skills, playing intelligently and unselfishly, and giving their maximum effort.

The fact, however, is that relatively few athletes enter teams with such exemplary motivation. As a consequence, their coaches are repeatedly confronted with an extremely important question: What can I do to maximize the likelihood that my players will acquire a personal commitment to excellence? What can I do, in Lombardi's words, to "get inside (my) players and motivate them?"

The answer to this question lies in the simple motivational truism stated above: "Everybody wants something." All players, when they come to a team for the first time, come with a host of pre-existing motives. The key to developing highly motivated athletes does not lie in trying to put some new motive into them that is not already there. Indeed, contrary to the popular belief that "motivating" someone is more or less analogous to "injecting" something new into them, it is essentially impossible to motivate anyone in this sense. The key, rather, lies in *appealing to what already matters to them—to what already motivates them* (Ossorio, 1976).

Within psychology, this motivational principle of appealing to what already matters to people is a critical ingredient in many prominent contemporary psychotherapeutic approaches. These include Descriptive Psychology (Bergner, 1993; Driscoll, 1984; Ossorio, 1976), Brief Family Therapy (Fisch, Weakland, & Segal, 1982; Segal, 1991), Ericksonian therapies (O'Hanlon, 1987), and Operant Conditioning-based therapies (Spiegler & Guevremont, 1993). In these approaches, clients are motivated to engage in new and more beneficial behavior by making it clear to them that such behavior will enable them to acquire or achieve things that they have wanted all along.

From this perspective, *the coach's fundamental motivational task is to determine what players already want, and to create a team community where they can get these desired things in abundance by striving to become the best individual and team players that they can become*. If coaches can succeed at this task, they create what is sometimes referred to as a "win-win" situation (Covey, 1989). Players win because they become involved in a team community where a tremendous number of their motivations are satisfied, providing a highly involving, rewarding and beneficial experience for them. Coaches win because, in creating this sort of team

community, they are creating a situation where players are highly motivated to give their utmost to achieve individual excellence and team goals.

An excellent example of this approach to motivating others comes, not from athletics, but from education. The nationally noted elementary school teacher, Marva Collins, is famous for taking children who feared and hated school, and had no value for learning, and helping them become children who loved learning and were extraordinarily good at it (Collins & Tamarkin, 1982). Her essential method for achieving such drastic motivational shifts was simply to immerse children in an educational community where their participation and ever-increasing competence led to the satisfaction of many pre-existing needs and wants such as those for love, belongingness, competence, and recognition. In learning for these other reasons, they came to love learning itself (cf. Allport, 1961, on the "functional autonomy" of motives). In many ways, Marva Collins' way is an excellent recipe for coaches.

From the foregoing, then, it should be clear that knowing a great deal about what motives players already possess is a crucial resource for coaches. The purpose of this chapter is to identify and to discuss the most important of these motives. Obviously, not all players are alike and there will be some individual differences in what motivates them. However, as I believe the remainder of this chapter will clearly demonstrate, such differences are small compared to the large number of things that almost all athletes (and for that matter, all people) want. These more universal motives include ones related to relationships with others, to individual achievement, to team discipline, and to a variety of other objectives.

Relationship Motives

Motive: Recognition

A friend of mine has a cartoon on his door at work. It shows a dejected Charlie Brown sitting on a curb and saying to Snoopy: "Doing a good job around here is like wetting your pants in a dark suit. It gives you a warm feeling but nobody notices." Athletes, like people in general, have strong desires for recognition, and find it demoralizing not to receive it (DePree, 1989; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Warren, 1983). When they work hard, or master a new skill, or play unselfishly, and nobody seems to notice or care, it takes something away. They want their coaches to notice them, and to recognize, acknowledge, and appreciate their efforts and achievements.

Recognition at its most basic level has to do with simply knowing players. It has to do with such things as addressing them by their names, and not referring to them as "you" or "number 21." It has to do with seeing to it that no player gets lost, in the sense of remaining largely unknown to the coach. It has to do with making personal contact with individual players about various matters—taking this one aside to

suggest something to work on or joking with that one about how he'd better perform a skill correctly because his girlfriend is watching from the sidelines. Overall, it is about having some at least minimal relationship with each individual player.

Recognition means further that the coach notices and explicitly acknowledges players' efforts, achievements, and contributions (DePree, 1989; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Warren, 1983). This can be accomplished in a wide variety of ways, many of them rather simple and straightforward, but nonetheless crucial. For example, coaches can say things like "good hustle, Terry" after an especially intense effort. They can emphatically exclaim "Yes!" when a player executes a skill very skillfully, or say "Ah, that's much better," when a player shows improvement. They can ask a player who has mastered a skill to a very high degree to demonstrate it for the rest of the team. They can publicly recognize the usually unsung contributions of a player in front of the whole team, something that John Wooden did as a matter of policy at UCLA (Wooden, 1972). Most players will work quite hard when they know that a respected coach will notice their efforts and will explicitly acknowledge and appreciate them.

When coaches recognize players and their efforts and achievements, they are doing much more than merely motivating these players for their teams. They are doing something for them as people. They are saying to them: "You as a person, your hard work, and your achievements are all noticed and valued." For some players, who think well of themselves and who receive abundant measures of such affirmation elsewhere in their lives, the coach's recognition may be desirable but not critical. For other players, who may think poorly of themselves and get little of such affirmation elsewhere, the coach's recognition may provide a very vital source of self-esteem in their lives.

Motive: Belongingness

Most people, and perhaps especially young people, want to belong (Warren, 1983). They want to be included, accepted, and respected members of groups of persons whom they personally value. They want to avoid such painful situations as being an outcast or a devalued member of their group—a "nerd," a "weirdo," a "behavior problem," or a racially or religiously devalued person (Goffman, 1963). In relation to an athletic team, most players desire, often even crave, being seen by their teammates as socially and athletically valuable members of the team.

The motivational point here is not that coaches should dangle belongingness in the group as a reward that players receive if they work hard and learn well. The point, rather, is that players who experience acceptance from the group have reasons to behave differently than players who do not experience such acceptance (see Ossorio, 1981, on the "Relationship Formula"). In everyday life, people are more apt to work harder for others who like and include them than for others who reject and degrade them (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). William Warren, an

experienced high school coach and author of a fine book on motivation in athletics, makes the following relevant observation about one of his teams. To win a "coach of the year" award, he states, "...all I had to do was surround myself with girls who would have literally run themselves to death before they'd let down their teammates or me" (Warren, 1983, p. 139). Where there is belongingness, where the team is a community of people who include and like and respect each other, its members are given strong reason to work hard, to learn well, and to play unselfishly—all so that they will not let down their teammates or coaches. In contrast, where players are excluded or devalued, these players lack such reasons to give their best to the team. In fact, they may have reasons to do just the opposite, and thus to harm the team.

It is thus strongly in the interests of coaches to promote belongingness and community on their teams. How can they do this? First of all, belongingness starts with coaches as the leaders of their team communities. They must in their own behavior see to it that they include everybody, that they do not place any player in either a privileged or a devalued position, and that they publicly spread the accolades around by citing the efforts and accomplishments of as many players as possible. Essentially, in all of the ways that they can think to do so, they must communicate the message that "I regard each of you as a valued, respected, included member of this team."

Secondly, coaches may structure team activities, whenever feasible, to promote the inclusion of everyone, and to discourage the formation of cliques. For example, when they select groups to drill together or to play together in practice games, they can keep changing the composition of these groups. In this way, players are continually involved with many other players, and the natural tendency to always link up with the same friend (or fellow social outcast) is discouraged. Further, coaches can personally select the sides for scrimmages, thus avoiding a situation where the same players are embarrassed every day by being chosen last. Finally, Warren (1983) relates a story of how he dealt with an initially very cliquish team of girls. He required them, regardless of how they felt about each other, to "high five" every other team member whenever and wherever they might see her—in the school lunch room, in the shopping mall, or anywhere else. This simple act of solidarity, though resisted at first, resulted in eliminating the cliques and bringing a very high degree of cohesiveness to the team.

Third, explicit rules should be instituted whose function is to promote belongingness and discourage any sort of divisive or excluding behavior on the part of players. Such rules should include: (a) no verbal abuse or harassment of one team member by another, and (b) no physical violence or intimidation toward a teammate. Players should be told that, while at times they may not like certain of their teammates, they must always treat them with respect.

Fourth and finally, behaviors that promote team solidarity and belongingness should be explicitly encouraged. Those involving players openly celebrating each

others' efforts and accomplishments are especially valuable here. These include behaviors such as players verbally praising each others' efforts ("nice pass," "nice shot", "great save," etc.); pointing to each other to acknowledge an assist, a pick, or a block; and "high-fiving" a teammate after he or she has made a good play.

Motive: Love

It is surprising how often great coaches use the word "love" to describe an important ingredient of team life. Not only "nice guys" like Wooden (1972) and Paterno (1988), but "tough guys" like Lombardi (1973) and Bryant (Bryant & Underwood, 1974) talk about it. Love is important in sports. And, since our present concern is with motivation, it is to the point here to note explicitly what everybody knows: people, including athletic people, want to be loved.

What is love? Fr. Robert Boyle, S.J., a noted Joycean scholar, once defined this term in a way that captures two longstanding traditions, those of Thomistic philosophy and of the traditional notion of "agape" or selfless love (Reese, 1980, p. 316). According to Boyle, love may best be defined as "the unselfish willing of another's good" (personal communication, 1966). It is the willing, the choosing, of the good of another human being independently of what that human being can do for oneself. By this definition, the opposite of love is exploitation: the utilization of another person solely for what that individual can provide for oneself, without regard for the best interests of that person.

Love in this sense is expressed whenever a coach places the best interests of players first. A coach refuses to play an injured player when there is a danger of further injury to that player, placing the physical wellbeing of the player over winning. A coach benches a player to teach him or her a needed personal lesson, placing the need for the lesson over winning. A coach is willing to spend time dealing with the problems of a player even though these do not benefit the team directly. A coach visits a player who has broken an arm and will not be able to contribute further to the team. All of these actions say to players that the coach cares about them, and not just about what they can provide for the coach.

Why should coaches do this? First, of course, is the simple ethical reason: they should do so because it's the right thing to do. But there is a pragmatic dimension here also. Treating people right, as we have been finding out in business organizations over the last decade or so, is good for the organization (DePrec, 1989). As in an earlier example, the idea here is not that the coach should dangle caring as a reward for performance. Obviously, to do so would mean it wasn't caring to begin with, but a case of giving to get. Rather, the idea is that, other things being equal, players are going to be much more motivated, more loyal, and more eager to do their best for a coach who cares about them as persons and does not exploit them (Roberts, 1987). In contrast, players will resent, perhaps even hate, coaches who exploit them. Resentment and hatred, it goes without saying, are not relationships that are conducive to players being motivated to give their all to

a coach. They are more conducive to actions like loafing, not cooperating, and even sabotaging the coach's best interests. The poet Auden puts this point very simply in his poem, "August, 1914": "Those to whom evil is done do evil in return."

Motive: To Strive with Others for a Meaningful Cause.

A friend once told me that her father had always looked upon the years of World War II as the best years of his life. During the war, he had been a partisan in the Italian underground fighting the Fascists. Before the war, and later after the war, he had had a very hard time taking hold anywhere in life. He had drifted from job to job, unable to find anything that was meaningful and satisfying to him, and in the end was rather dissatisfied with his life. What was different about the war years? What made them the best years of his life despite the fact of terrible hardship and the risk of death? The difference, this man had explained to his daughter, was that this was the only time in his life that he had found a cause that he considered truly worthy of his dedication, and the opportunity to join with comrades in contributing to this cause had given tremendous meaning and direction to his life.

Most people want something to which they can dedicate themselves. They do not like, and by and large do not thrive, when they are floating without meaningful goals, when there is nothing worthwhile that they are trying to accomplish (Frankl, 1969; Yalom, 1980). Worthy causes, however, can be hard to come by in everyday life, especially in peacetime in circumstances of abundance and security.

One of the most vital things that participation in athletics can provide is the opportunity to unite with others in the pursuit of meaningful causes (Warren, 1983). In sports, people discover goals and missions for which they are willing to sacrifice—even in some cases to dedicate the primary energies of their lives. They discover, further, that pursuing such causes in the context of a close, mutually supportive group, all of whose members share a fervent desire to achieve the mission and are pulling together to do so, can be extraordinarily meaningful.

Many of the causes that sports provides are built into the structure of the athletic system. Goals like having a winning season, having an undefeated one, winning a championship, or defeating one's archrival are possible simply by virtue of the way the athletic situation is often structured.

However, almost all teams operate within such a structure and yet not all have an equal sense of united dedication to a cause. Typically, it is the coach who makes the difference. Perhaps the most important thing that coaches who wish to mobilize this motive can do is to formulate a mission statement for their teams (Conger, 1988; Deming, 1986; Putman, 1990). Since such statements were discussed at length in the previous chapter of this volume, only a few brief points regarding them will be made here. Mission statements are statements that proclaim to the team, "This is what we are all about; this is what we are striving to accomplish as a team." To be effective, the mission that they set forth must fulfill an essential

condition: it must tap into deep, existing motivations of players. That is to say, it must tap into many of the motives that are discussed in this chapter. Having formulated such a mission, the coach must state it explicitly to the players, and then be utterly faithful to and consistent with it (Deming, 1986; Putman, 1990) throughout the entire season.

Coaches who are aware of the human desire to join with others in pursuing worthy causes can utilize this knowledge to generate motivation in other ways, many of which will be familiar to most sports fans. Coaches may, for example, urge players to dedicate a game or a season to an ill or a deceased team member (as in the famous Rockne exhortation to his team to "Win one for the Gipper"). Alternatively, they might exhort players to "teach a lesson" to another team that has publicly belittled them. Or, by way of final example, they might issue specific goals or challenges to individual players (e.g. to a goalie to hold the opposition under one goal per game) or to the entire team (e.g., to yield fewer points than any other team in the league).

Finally, one of the most important advantages of players having a strong sense of cause or mission is that they become more willing to endure the hardships that are necessary in order to succeed. As the existential psychologist Viktor Frankl learned from his Nazi prison camp experiences, few people are willing to endure prolonged pain and hardship when they believe that there is no point in doing so (Frankl, 1963). However, he also observed, they will endure such hardship when they have a strong and meaningful purpose for doing so. Consistent with Frankl's observations, players with a burning sense of mission, of really wanting to accomplish something very badly, will willingly assume more hard work, fatigue, and sacrifice than others who lack such purpose.

Motive: Social Status

Many people, and perhaps especially young people, want to be associated with things that will give them high social standing. They pay a lot of extra money to obtain the "right" clothing with the currently fashionable manufacturer's logo. They listen to music, attend events, read books, and go to eating establishments that are "in." They try to associate themselves with other persons of high status. In general, they go to a lot of effort, time, and expense to do and have things that will give them a favorable social standing.

Most often, coaches have this social status motive working for them in very powerful ways without even having to think about it. Generally, such things as making a sports team, being first string, winning a letter, being a member of a superior team, and being a star player all convey high social standing. Since they are simply built into most social systems, the coach taps these powerful motivations without having to do anything special. They are just there for the taking.

It is also the case, however, that coaches are in positions to tap the social status motive in further ways. An example may serve to illustrate this. On my youth

soccer team one year, it was important to me that the players acquire excellent ball handling skills. One day, I announced to the team that it was probably not a good thing that they were all practicing the same skills. Some of them, I explained, were very proficient at them and needed to move on to other skills, while some of them needed further improvement on these basic skills. With this in mind, I said, I would be watching them that week to see who was ready to go on to the "advanced skills group" the following week. Now, while I was sincere about my intention to adopt this plan, it was not lost on me that I was appealing to a motive that all of them shared—a motive to belong to the high status "advanced skills group." And indeed, it was quite clear that players worked extra hard that week in order to get into this group.

When coaches are aware of it, they can see many ways in which they can structure things so that players win by achieving social status, while the team is helped in the bargain. Players may be informed that what they are doing (e.g., when they work hard to acquire perfect skills) might help them to achieve high status positions in the future such as making teams at more advanced levels. Players might be given awards for outstanding accomplishments that are highly visible to fans, parents, and other team members (the "buckeye" decals on Ohio State football helmets are perhaps the most famous example of this). Finally, players might receive special distinctions within the team group for effort and performance (e.g., Bear Bryant's highly exclusive "100% Club," comprised of players whom he believed had given maximum effort).

Motives Related to Individual Achievement

Motive: To Achieve Individual Excellence

Indiana University basketball coach Bobby Knight once challenged a new recruit in the following way: "If all you're looking for is an easy four years of loafing on defense and grabbing all the glory on offense, you're better off somewhere else. But if you want to work harder than you've ever worked in your life, become a better basketball player than you've ever thought possible, and be in the thick of a championship race, then maybe Indiana is for you" (Warren, 1983, p. 44).

When he says, "...become a better basketball player than you've ever thought possible," Coach Knight is appealing to something that he knows is in virtually every player already, the desire to achieve excellence. Virtually all athletes want to be excellent—even the best—at the sport(s) that they have chosen to pursue. They want superior skills and understandings that will enable them to prevail over their opponents.

Like Coach Knight in this example, coaches need to try to harness this pre-existing motive for excellence in the service of getting players to work very hard to achieve it. The most basic strategy of all in this regard is to see to it that their training programs are constructed in such a way that excellence can indeed be acquired by cooperating with them (see the following chapter in this volume for an in-depth discussion of how to construct such programs). Further, coaches must find ways to ensure that players know that this is the case. For them to be motivated to work hard within the program, they must strongly believe that doing so will bring them the excellence that they desire. While some coaches will have established a reputation for having great training programs, others who have not yet developed such a reputation might engage in such activities as sharing with players some of their more compelling training principles, relating how these have been used by established great players and coaches, and telling stories about former players who have developed tremendously in their programs. The most compelling move, however, is simply to conduct very sound, efficient practice sessions where it quickly becomes apparent to players that, by working hard in these sessions, they can become highly skillful.

Motive: To Display Excellence Before Admiring Others

Athletes desire, not only to achieve excellence, but to display what they have achieved before admiring others. Very few people wish to be excellent in a closet. They want to shine in front of their parents, their friends, their teammates, their fellow students, and the general public.

The motive to display excellence is one whose satisfaction, to a large degree, is simply built into the athletic situation. Obviously, games are played before audiences, and players know this. However, there are some coaches who seem to know how to draw on this motive to an added degree. Perhaps the all-time master of this was Vince Lombardi who, throughout his career, conveyed messages to his athletes that played heavily upon their desires to shine before others. For example, while still a high school coach, he would say things such as the following to his players before a game: "Your mother and father are out there. They're looking at *you*. Five thousand people will be looking at *you*. They'll be watching *you* block...and *you* run...etc" (O'Brien, 1987, p. 72). Later, with the Green Bay Packers, a standard pep talk that he would deliver to individual players was this: "Keep this in mind, that each time you go on the field, you say to yourself, 'I want these people when they leave to say to themselves that they saw the best cornerback (fullback, guard, etc.) they have ever seen'." "It worked," said one player, "it rang in players' ears" (p. 244). Thus, following Lombardi's lead, coaches may enlist players' desires to shine before others to motivate them better to contribute to the team.

Motive: To Be Pushed

In a television show on weight training, a world class lifter was discussing his search for a training partner. He had finally selected someone, and stated that he had chosen this individual with one criterion uppermost in his mind. This criterion was that the partner had to be someone who would push him beyond where he would go by himself. He reported with undisguised admiration how, when he wanted to quit, his new partner would make him do five more repetitions of a given lift.

Many players who desire excellence realize that, left to their own initiative, they will not push themselves hard enough to get there. Recognizing this, they want someone else to push them to their best effort. This motive is often obscured by the fact that athletes are ambivalent about it: they want to be pushed but they also do not want to be pushed. Part of them, one might say, wants to do those five extra repetitions or that extra drill when they are tired, hot, and thirsty; but another part of them wants to stop and be left alone. Thus, what the coach who pushes might see on a day-to-day basis is some resistance and grumbling. However, if he or she is careful to ensure that the pushing is clearly in the players' best interests, and is never physically dangerous or abusive, what the coach will usually see in the long run is gratitude on the part of players.

Motive: To Obtain Feedback About How They Are Doing

Further related to the motive to acquire excellence is a desire on the part of most athletes to know how they are doing. Are they doing well? Are they making progress? Are they doing poorly? If so, what do they need to do to improve? What they want here is simply honest and accurate feedback about their performance.

When discussing the desire for feedback, organizational experts Blanchard and Johnson (1981) use the analogy of an individual who is bowling under very strange conditions. In this analogy, someone has placed a sheet across the alley in front of the pins. The bowler's ball passes under the sheet, he hears the sound of the impact, but he has no way to determine how many pins he has knocked down. The lack of feedback here, depriving the bowler of essential information about how he is doing, creates a situation that both frustrates him and prevents him from improving his game.

Withholding honest information about *superior* performance ignores players' desires for feedback to the detriment of the player and the team. Players, particularly those who are prone to be self-critical, sometimes do not recognize that they are making progress or are doing something very well, and need such facts confirmed by the coach. Without it, they may feel needlessly discouraged or incompetent.

Withholding honest feedback about *inferior* effort and performance also ignores this motivation and has multiple negative consequences. Told nothing about their

subpar efforts, players may not realize that they need to improve (much less how to go about doing so). Told misleadingly that they are doing fine when they are not, players who believe the coach settle unknowingly for inferiority. Those who do not believe the coach's false reassurances may cease to trust and respect him or her ("He's afraid to tell me the truth; why does he seem to feel he has to appease me?"). Finally, such players may get the extremely unfortunate message that the coach is willing to settle for inferior skills and efforts, and that they can therefore relax and take it easy.

Motive: To Become a Better Person

Most people want to become better persons. They want to improve themselves—to be the best that they can be. They want to acquire personal characteristics that they view as correct and desirable ones, and that they believe will be valuable to them in leading their lives in the best way.

In order to engage this motive, it is helpful for coaches to continually bring to players' attention the many ways in which doing the right thing as a team member is linked to acquiring highly valuable personal qualities for life. Such "right things" include working very long and hard to acquire personal excellence, getting oneself back up after defeats, treating all of ones' teammates with respect, celebrating the efforts and achievements of others, playing unselfishly, and in general working together with others to accomplish the team mission. It is not too difficult to bring home to players that, when they do these kinds of things, they are acquiring valuable traits, attitudes, and personal strengths for life. In behaving these ways—indeed, in immersing themselves in ways of life where the point of being these ways is unusually clear—they are acquiring such invaluable qualities as a value for excellence, resiliency in the face of life's inevitable failures, unselfishness, supportiveness toward others, cooperativeness, respect, racial and religious tolerance, and the ability to work long and hard in the faith that one can achieve personally cherished goals.

Motives Regarding Team Discipline

Motive: To Have a Framework of Fair Rules

While supervising a beginning psychotherapist one day, I observed an interesting interchange. My supervisee was seeing a single mother who had brought her nine year old son in because he was having temper tantrums. The therapist suggested that the two of them show her a typical exchange that might occur at home between them. The mother selected a situation that occurred in late afternoon on many days. The child would ask for cookies and, when told that he could not have any, escalate his demands and his angry insistence upon them to the point

where he would have a temper tantrum. In a somewhat unorthodox maneuver, the student therapist suggested that the mother play her son, and the son play the mother. The following dialogue ensued:

Mother (playing son): "I want a cookie."

Son (playing mother): "I'm sorry. It's too close to dinner and you'll ruin your appetite."

Mother (louder and more demanding): "I want a cookie."

Son: "I told you I'm sorry, it's too close to dinner."

Mother (very loud, angry, and demanding): "I want a cookie! I want three cookies! I don't want to wait til dinner!"

Son (firmly and patiently): "I'm sorry, but I told you it's too close to dinner. (Breaks role here and goes on) Mommy, don't you know that's what you're supposed to tell me—that it's too close to dinner and I shouldn't have cookies because they'll ruin my appetite."

Here was a nine year old child telling his mother in the clearest possible way that he wanted limits—that he didn't really want her to cave in to him when he knew he was over the line, but wanted her to take firm stands with him about what he could and could not do. Indeed, his temper tantrums, seen from this vantage point, were escalations designed to find his mother's limits. In the ensuing weeks, further, as the mother got the message and set some firm, reasonable limits and stood by them, her son's tantrums disappeared.

What is true of this nine year old child is true of most young people. They want limits but they do not want limits. On the one hand, they want to do just as they please even when they know it is wrong or self-defeating, and rail against attempts to have limits imposed. On the other hand, not trusting in their own self-governing abilities to keep them on correct paths, they want others in positions of authority to impose boundaries beyond which they cannot go (Paterno, 1988; Warren, 1983). They want recognizably fair limits or rules, and want them consistently enforced. In this connection, Joe Paterno quotes a former Penn State halfback, Charlie Pittman, who once informed him which was the stronger side of this conflict: "Deep down," Pittman stated, "all athletes yearn for discipline" (Paterno, 1988, p.218).

Most players also want fair, strictly enforced rules because they realize that such rules bind not only themselves, but all members of the team. They recognize that without such guidelines binding everyone, there are no safeguards against other players doing things that hurt the team such as missing or being late for practices, loafing their way through them, using harmful substances, or mistreating their teammates. Without strictly enforced rules, such things almost certainly will occur and will damage the team's ability to achieve its mission.

Thus, coaches who wish to utilize this motivation must impose rules. Further, they must make it very clear that these rules are not the outgrowths of the coach's

arbitrary desire to exercise authority, but are fair, just rules that exist for the good of each player and the team as a whole. Rules which seem arbitrary, unfair, and pointless (e.g., ones about hair length) will not be regarded as good limits by most players.

Finally, and very importantly, coaches must be willing to enforce these rules with meaningful consequences even when the costs of doing so may be very high (Paterno, 1988; Warren, 1983). For example, the cost of benching a player for a rules infraction may be that it will be very difficult to win without him or her. But limits must be just what the name implies—boundaries beyond which players may not go. If they may be compromised by the intense pressure of players or the desire to win games, then they are not really limits. They are just things the coach would like from players, but which players know they don't really have to do, especially if they are gifted athletes.

Examples of such rules have already been mentioned in other contexts. Rules which prohibit any physical or psychological abuse of teammates are extremely important. Rules about attendance at practice, about compliance with coaches' directives, about giving silent attention when coaches are instructing, about not doing things outside of practice that hurt the individual's performance and thus the team (e.g., getting insufficient sleep, smoking, drinking, using drugs), and about giving maximum effort at practice are also very good rules. Most players will recognize the fair, constructive quality of such rules and their necessity for team success, and will regard them as within the coach's rights to impose. Rules about hair and the like may easily be seen as unfair infringements on the player's right to self-expression, and may set the coach up for dissension, non-compliance, and a less than cooperative relationship with his or her players.

Other Motives

Motive: To Compete and To Win

Most people enjoy participating in contests, and love to win them. For most school children, spelling is boring, but spelling bees are involving. Geography is boring, but geography bees are not. Students come alive, and become much more motivated to work on the same material, when the teacher announces, "We're going to play a game this hour." The teacher has effectively harnessed their existing motivations to compete and to win in the service of learning.

It is the same with coaching. While a certain amount of basic, repetitive drilling is unavoidable, many extremely valuable training activities can be designed as competitive games. In soccer, for example, there is a traditional basic drill where players lob the ball to the head of a partner, who then heads it back to them. This drill is not very interesting to most players. In contrast, a very simple game can be

utilized in which the two partners head the ball back and forth to each other without touching it with their hands; the winners are the pair who keep the ball in the air for the greatest consecutive number of headers. This game usually proves quite involving. In fact, players' response to stopping it is almost always, "Aw, c'mon, coach, just two more minutes."

What is true for this example is true in general. Players will tend to work longer, harder, more diligently, and with greater enjoyment when the training activity is some sort of game or competition.

Motive: To Be Active

During a soccer clinic several years ago, the two college coaches who led it were instructing my colleagues and me in some core skills. One of these coaches would demonstrate a skill, and then direct us to practice it. We would begin to do so, but within one minute, he would cut in and say something like, "Okay, let me point out a mistake a lot of you are making," and then spend ten minutes correcting us. We would begin to practice the skill again, but he would quickly interrupt again with further suggestions. This became the pattern: very short bursts of activity followed by long speeches and demonstrations. The result was extreme frustration for myself and for other learners at the clinic. In contrast, the second coach, while employing essentially the same teaching format, would simply let us practice the skill for far longer periods of time before offering further instruction, or would correct us while we continued to practice. The results were infinitely more satisfying, both from an emotional and from a learning standpoint.

Young people want *action*. When they come to practice, they are seeking activity and find it very frustrating not to get enough of it. They do not like, and do not profit greatly from, long periods of inactivity spent waiting in lines for their turn, listening to long lectures, or standing on the sidelines waiting to get into a game. We therefore would do well to harness this already existing motive for activity by channeling it into practice drills and exercises involving high levels of useful training activities.

If we fail to channel the activity motive into beneficial training exercises, players are likely to channel it into less beneficial ones. Depending on their age, players who are getting no action will often create their own. Some of their favorite pastimes in my experience include getting into all sorts of fights (from grass fights to play fights to real fights), engaging in distracting side conversations, and perpetrating an amazing array of nuisance activities on each other. Valuable practice time is wasted on unproductive or counterproductive behavior. Further, discipline problems are created where none might have occurred if the coach had chosen a more active, involving drill, and kept things moving.

Motive: To Play The Game

When players sign up for a team, they are saying in effect, "I want to play *this* game." Their signing on is testimony to the fact that at this time they choose to play baseball or basketball or football from among the available alternatives. If further testimony were needed, most coaches know exactly how their players would respond if asked how they would like to spend practice time. "Let's scrimmage!," they would say. Let's play the game itself.

This is one of those motivations that is so present before our very eyes that we scarcely notice it—or think to use it to our players' and team's benefit beyond the obvious. Many coaches will make the amount of an athlete's playing time dependent upon the satisfaction of requirements for effort, skill acquisition, and conformance with team rules. Implemented carefully and fairly, this is a very effective use of this motivation. However, other, less obvious applications are possible.

The general suggestion here is that, whenever conditions are appropriate, thought be given to making practice activities as close to game conditions as possible. For example, rather than running laps or wind sprints for conditioning, a practice which most players dislike, the soccer coach might employ a ball dribbling exercise which simulates game conditions and requires prolonged running. Or, a baseball coach might hit a large number of fly balls to the outfielders that require them to run fast just to get to the ball. Excellent conditioning can be acquired in such ways, but with the added bonuses that the player is enjoying himself or herself far more, and is gaining greater skills in the bargain.

Somewhat paradoxically, it is often a good idea for coaches to harness players' motivations to play the game by *not* playing it in its customary form. Baseball players love to play baseball. However, this does not mean that they love to stand in right field for half an hour with nothing to do; generally, they love to hit and catch and throw and run bases. Soccer players love to play soccer. However, this does not mean that they love to stand back on defense, never touching the ball, while their offense controls the ball in front of the opponents' goal. Rather, they love to dribble, to pass, and to shoot on goal. Utilizing their motive to play the game, therefore, would suggest that we find or devise condensed versions of the normal game for our practices which enable players to actually play the game much more than they might in a regular scrimmage or game. Three versus three soccer, a game promoted by the Canadian Olympic and World Cup coach Tony Waiters (1990), is an excellent example of such a condensed game. Because there are only three players to a side, each player gets to play soccer—to dribble, pass, shoot, etc.—about three or four times as much as he or she would in a regular 11 versus 11 game.

Motive: To Gain Extrinsic Rewards

Over the years, I have taken my own children numerous times to a local pizza parlor which has a game room in the back. In this room is a game called "Skill-ball" in which participants get eight wooden balls and can accumulate points by bowling them down an alley into holes with different point values. The more points they get, the more little tickets come out of the machine. These tickets are then redeemable for prizes, mostly little cups, pens, pencils, toys and bumper stickers of very little monetary value. While this game taps many of the motivations already discussed (e.g., activity, competition, winning), it adds something else—an extrinsic reward or prize for performing up to certain levels. What has always struck me is the fervor with which children, adolescents, and even adults strive to get a certain number of prize tickets even though most of the prizes have a monetary value less than the cost of even one game. These young people could go out, for example, and buy a better pencil for a quarter than the one they just spent two dollars to win!

Many people love extrinsic rewards and will work hard to achieve them. This fact may be employed for the betterment of our players and our teams. For example, players on my younger soccer teams over the years have liked little prizes like soccer-related key chains, sports bag name tags, and stickers. These prizes could be won by players for various achievements such as dribbling through slalom courses with no mistakes in the fastest time, hitting targets placed in the corners of the goal, or displaying the most perfect kicking or passing form. By way of further example, awards certificates (available in many sporting goods stores) may be given out at the end of the season to players who have achieved various things (e.g., 100% effort, leading scorer, most assists, or fewest runs allowed).

Some interesting psychological research suggests that coaches must be careful in how they employ extrinsic rewards, or the results could be detrimental (Berk, 1989, p. 268). Specifically, coaches should never reward players for the mere doing of something that they already love to do. The effect of such a practice can be to interfere with players' intrinsic interest in that activity. Thus, for example, it would be unwise to reward players for merely practicing their skills at home since the result might be a diminished enjoyment of those activities. In contrast, it will be more beneficial to offer prizes, not for merely doing something, but for the attainment of some standard or achievement (e.g., running a slalom course in a certain time or hitting a certain percentage of three point shots). The additional benefit of linking rewards with achievements is that the player who is practicing his or her skills is less likely to do so with an aim merely to get through a set number of repetitions, and more likely to be concerned with getting the skill right.

Motive: To Have Fun

Though obvious, no listing of motives would be complete without the motive simply to have fun (Warren, 1983). Undoubtedly one of the foremost reasons why

young people enter athletics is simply because athletic participation is enjoyable. And one of the foremost reasons why they quit athletics is because it does not turn out to be enjoyable, or ceases to be so. "It wasn't any fun" or "It just got so it wasn't any fun anymore" are frequent reasons that people report for terminating their participation.

The motive to have fun is an extremely important one for coaches to harness for their teams' betterment. The basic question coaches may repeatedly raise when planning practice sessions is this: "Is there any drill or practice game that I can find or create that will get me what I want—high involvement, high effort, conditioning, the necessity for good decision making, and/or the rewarding of perfect technique—that will be fun for them to engage in?" There is no necessary incompatibility between enjoyment and good, hard productive practice activities.

To a great extent, if coaches successfully create team and practice situations that address all of the motives that have been listed in this chapter, the motive for fun will automatically be satisfied. Consider, for example, a player who said the following: "On this team, I feel appreciated, included, and cared for by my coach and teammates. I feel it gives me something worthwhile to strive for, that I am being challenged to be the best that I can be, and that I am acquiring excellence. Practices are full of active, competitive drills and games where I get to play my chosen sport, and execute its various skills, to a very high degree." It is extremely unlikely that such a player would then go on to say, "But, I'm not having any fun."

Idiosyncratic Motives

In the lore of coaching, there is an old aphorism about the coach having to find out about how "this guy responds to a push and that guy to a pat on the back." Some coaches, such as Red Auerbach (1985), even go so far as to say that each player is motivated differently and that coaches must therefore study each individual team member and learn what matters to him or her. What Auerbach fails to recognize is that, in his coaching situation, many of the relatively universal motivators listed above were already in place and he did not even have to think about them. Players were all in the public eye, striving for championships, on a closely knit team, with enormous financial and public recognition incentives in place, doing the thing they most loved doing, and very much not wanting to lose their hard-won position as a player for the world champion Boston Celtics.

While it is certainly true that there are enormous commonalities between individuals with respect to what motivates them, it is also true that there are important individual differences. Therefore, coaches desiring to appeal to what matters to their players must be aware, not only of the more universal motives cited above, but also of the idiosyncratic motives of the individuals on their teams. There may be a few general guidelines here. For example, Warren (1983) suggests that

confident, aggressive players often respond better to being pushed, while their shy, less confident counterparts respond better to being encouraged. For the most part, however, the determination of individual motivations is a matter of observation. Coaches must look and see what does seem to motivate a particular player and then test this out by appealing to it and seeing what happens. In this way, he or she finds out that some players want a more parental, hand-on-the-shoulder approach, others a more laid-back one, and yet others a continually challenging one.

Conclusion

The overall recommendation of this chapter has been that coaches strive to create team communities where the satisfaction of many vital human motivations is available to members. These include motivations for recognition, for belongingness, for love, for personal excellence, for the opportunity to display this excellence before admiring others, and for the chance to make a meaningful contribution to a cause that they find worthy. In these communities, the satisfaction of these motives is available especially to those who participate most fully—that is, to those who work very, very hard on behalf of the community by becoming the most excellent individual and team players they are capable of being. The overall goal of creating such team communities is an ideal, and will always be imperfectly realized. Like most unattainable ideals, however, it conveys the invaluable benefit of providing a direction for our efforts.

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