Self Development

Self-development Resource

This resource applies to all coaching communities.

This resource is designed to provide explanations about some of the terms and concepts needed for understanding self-development. It is important to remember that this module is designed to assist the coach grow as a person. The more functional and productive our lives are as people, the better we are able to relate to others including those we coach. The example that we set comes as much from the way we behave in setting about all we do as it comes from the words that we speak. If we are living out fulfilling lives, the chances are far greater that the example that we set in our day to day living will be the sort of example that we would want others to witness and from which they can derive benefit.

This resource supports the Self Development module that provides a series of activities for the coach to engage in to channel energy towards personal growth. A prime purpose for this growth is to assist the coach live out a life that achieves the coach's desired level of self-realisation. That is, living life to a greater extent as the coach wants to live it and therefore spending more time involved with that which seems core to the person that the coach wants to be.

Self-awareness

Personal development is greatly assisted by working at one's self-awareness. Self-awareness, according to Deidre Anderson (2001), is comprised of a physical dimension (self-image), social dimension (how we think others see us) and a spiritual dimension (how we interpret our intellectual experiences such as learning).

> "**Self-awareness** includes recognition of our personality, our strengths and weaknesses, our likes and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognise when we are stressed or under pressure. It is also often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy for others."
> http://www.vtaide.com/lifeskills/self_awareness.htm

One major value of increased self-awareness is that it enables a person to make a change to his or her behaviour. It is difficult to change a behaviour if one is not aware of one's existing behaviour in the first place. As Whitmore (2006) states, "I am only able to control that of which I am aware. That of which I am unaware controls me. Awareness empowers me" (p.33). Whitmore advocates what he terms the GROW approach to changing the performance of an athlete, a process easily adapted by a coach similarly wishing to change his or her performance in an aspect of his or her life. He does make the point that GROW must be applied within a context of raising an athletes' awareness and his or her assuming responsibility for his or her learning and performance. This approach involves:

G *Goal setting* – setting goals that lead toward ideal long term solutions
R *Reality checking* – ensuring that perceptions of present levels of performance are accurate
O *Options* – checking alternative courses of action to achieve the goal
W *What will be done* – When, by whom and the will to do it.

Whitmore's GROW model, that you may use in the activities for self-coaching, is a sequence of questions that you will find very useful in coaching your athletes or fellow coaches. In this instance, it will assist your awareness of skills which you wish to improve followed by the responsibility of taking action to ensure successful improvement. Questions that are useful in each step in the process include:

Goals
- What is it you would like to discuss today?
- What outcomes would you like to achieve from the session today?
- What would you need to happen for you to walk away feeling that this session was useful?

Reality
- What is currently happening?
- How do you know that this is accurate?
- When does this happen?
- How often does this happen? (be as precise as possible)
- What effect does this have?
- What result would you want ideally?
- How would things be different?
- What have you tried so far?
- What matters most to you about this?

Options
- What could you do to change the situation?
- What approach/actions have you seen used or have used yourself in similar circumstances?
- Would you like some suggestions from me?
- Who else might be able to help?
- What options do you like the most?
- What are the benefits and possible pitfalls of these options?
- Would you like to choose an option to act on?

What will you do
- What specific steps need to be taken?
- When will you take them? (as precisely as possible)
- How will you know if its working? What would you be noticing if things were beginning to change? When will you check this out?
- What's the worst outcome you could live with?
- What outcome could you definitely not live with?

Values

Values provide us with a set of ideals that guide our personal behaviour and the way in which we interact with our families, others socially and within our work environment. Values assist us distinguish right from wrong and provide meaning in the way in which we conduct our lives. Values can be work related, social, personal or cultural. The following table provides some examples of such values.

Personal values	Cultural values	Social values	Work values
Caring	Celebrate diversity	Altruism	Autonomy
Courage	Ethnic roots	Diversity	Competitiveness
Creativity	Faith	Eco-consciousness	Conscientiousness
Friendliness	Linguistic ties	Equality	Dedication
Honesty	National ties	Fairness	Equanimity/Ethics
Honour	Regional ties	Family closeness	Loyalty
Independence	Tradition	Lovingness	Professionalism
Integrity		Morality	Punctuality
Spirituality		Reliability	Remunerative worth
			Team player

http://ilearn.senecac.on.ca/careers/goals/values.html

Guiding principles

These resemble our own set of "commandments" that spell out the ideals that provide our framework for day to day living. For example, if *fairness and equality* are social values that are important to you, a guiding principle in this area of your life might be *"Do unto others as you will have them do unto you."* If *caring* and *friendliness* are important personal values, a guiding principle might be *"Commit a random act of kindness at least once a week"*.

Self-management

Most people have multiple roles that they are required to play on a day to day basis. We have no choice in this matter as we invariably, for example, have families, homes, jobs, children, clubs and other interests or at least a mix of such demands and activities. It means that we must apportion our time carefully in order to get all tasks done and achieve a sense of satisfaction and achievement. This demands of us that we manage ourselves and in doing so, we will focus particularly on the way we manage our **time and stress**.

Time management

According to Deidre Anderson (Pyke, 2001), if we find ourselves running out of time on a consistent basis this can be a result of a number of reasons including:

- Underestimating the time tasks take
- Procrastinating
- Saying yes to new tasks when active tasks have not been completed
- Task "hopping" without clear priorities
- Excessive socialising with others

To improve our time management Anderson points to:

- Planning through the use of planning calendars and diaries
- Setting realistic goals for the short, medium and longer term
- Prioritising tasks day to day and sticking to priorities
- Limiting acceptance of new tasks while current tasks are in progress
- Having good systems to see tasks through to completion
- Reorganising the environment for improved efficiencies e.g. less distractions
- Delegating where appropriate
- Developing a support network including a mentor
- Managing stress through taking stock in stressful times and ensuring some personal time out

According to Kidman and Hanrahan (1997, p.174), if you answer "yes" to one or more of the following questions, you may have trouble managing your time.

- Have you ever put off something important until later?
- Do you have trouble saying "NO" when people ask you to do things for them?
- Do you do your best work under pressure?
- Do you ever start new projects before finishing current projects?
- Do you find that you rarely have time to do the things you want to do?

We are all capable of *wasting time* in many different ways. While the activities are not bad in themselves they result in stress due to our not making the intended progress in the time that we have had available for a series of tasks. Relaxation should be scheduled into our day, however, participating in relaxation activities when we should be doing other tasks should be considered as a waste of time. It is important that we identify ways in which we waste time so that we can implement strategies to change that behaviour.

Procrastination is a time waster that results in our feeling negative about putting the task off, often a sense of guilt. If we decide not to complete a test in a given timeframe we may feel guilty or even lose the opportunity to complete, resulting in our not acquiring the credit for it. This would be an example of procrastination due to the negative effects that have arisen. A good way of avoiding procrastination is through setting goals that you follow through on.

Stress management

The most commonly accepted definition of stress (mainly attributed to Richard S Lazarus) is that *stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that "demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize."*

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_00.htm

When stress enhances functioning it is regarded as good or adaptive stress. When stress persists to an excessive degree it needs to be resolved or it may lead to anxious or even depressive behaviour. Stress includes therefore both a mental and physical response to the relationship between our experience and our expectations.

Poor management of time is one way of creating an experience that does not match up to expectations thus resulting in our feeling stressed. Good time management therefore reduces or assists in the management of stress. Other strategies that can be used to manage stress include:

- Ensuring that there are "quiet times" during a day and that commitments are not following each other without a break.
- Eating lunch away from your desk or at least taking time out for a 10-minute walk after eating.
- Either centring yourself or doing deep breathing exercises for a few minutes, roughly every hour.
- Choosing to respond positively to a possible stressful situation such as being caught in heavy traffic (e.g. listen to music).
- Dealing positively with anger (don't let it build) through applying strategies such as: being quietly assertive at the outset and not letting it build; expressing yourself early rather than repressing the problem; using exercise or meditation; and writing down all of your anger and expressing it fully.
- Having a definite cut-off point between work and leisure time (e.g. taking a shower, going for a run, or working in the garden).
- Identifying your key stressors and examine practical ways of reducing them (e.g. positive attitude towards difficult people; assertive, quiet, firm exchanges about the situation).
- Compiling lists, plans and goals that logically assist progress through prioritised tasks
- Looking after your physical, emotional, intellectual, financial and spiritual needs on a day to day basis – again, balanced priorities is the key.
- Rewarding yourself on completion of a specific task.
- Striving for effective open communication.
- Making use of stress reduction techniques as in Yoga, relaxation or exercise for example.

According to Saunders (1997, p.17), research has revealed that there are ten standard events in human life that are regarded as key stress events. The only possible surprise in this list is the fact that joyful occasions can provide their own experience of stress. A common factor in the ten identified events is change. All change is stressful whether it is planned for or not and equally, if it is either desirable or undesirable. Key life stress events that have been identified include:

- Moving house
- Marriage
- A major lottery win or bankruptcy
- Change of job
- Loss of income/job
- Death in family
- Relationship break-up
- Major geographical move
- Major illness
- Major accident/injury

Saunders advises that experts suggest that if a person experiences more than three of these events during a twelve month period this would constitute a potential stress overload.

Mentoring

Albert Schweitzer reportedly said that modelling was not one way of teaching, it was the only way. Brian Douge (2001) points out that many effective coaches have had the good fortune of being coached, as athletes, by a good coach. Some authors believe that the role of mentoring focuses on longer term skills developed through advice and counselling. Whitmore (2004) believes that mentoring can impact both on short term performance and long term skills. Essentially, mentoring has to do with the facilitation of knowledge, performance and attitudes through a process of interaction with another person. The mentor will hold the belief that the mentee (person being mentored) has untapped potential that is still to be realised. Importantly, some of the potential that is realised is achieved through the mentee observing the behaviour of the mentor and adopting that behaviour. The mentoring that we will focus on will therefore be informal mentoring which excludes any formal mentoring contract. While the mentor may be in a position of power (e.g. teacher or coach), the relationship is founded and developed on trust and honesty resulting in the willingness of the mentee to share openly and in confidence with the mentor.

Mentoring is a process that can be used to the advantage of all people across many stages and facets of life. Qualities and skills associated with the process of mentoring include:

- Approachable
- Trustworthy
- Strong interpersonal communication skills
- Wise counsel and ability to listen
- Ability to understanding and have empathy
- Experienced and knowledgable
- Share information and experience openly
- Motivated and able to encourage
- Will challenge and analyse
- Is realistic and discreet
- Identifies opportunities
- Shares networks
- Builds self-esteem in others
- Empowers and instils confidence
- Serves as a good role model

(New Zealand Academy of Sport, n.d.)

There are little eyes upon you
And they are watching night and day;
There are little ears that quickly
Take in every word you say;
There are little hands all eager
To do anything you do;
And a little boy or girl who's dreaming
Of the day he'll be like you.
You're the little fellow's idol;
You're the wisest of the wise,
In his little mind about you,
No suspicions ever rise;
He believes in you devoutly,
Holds that all you can do,
He will say and do in your way
When he's grown-up like you.
There's a wide-eyed little fellow,
Who believes you're always right,
And his ears are always open,
And he watches day and night;
You are setting an example,
Every day in all you do,
For the little boy who's waiting
To grow up to be like you.

Source: Unknown   (Martens,2001, p.32)

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