

Understanding the Coach Athlete Relationship

The coach-athlete relationship plays an integral role in the individual and team sports with research that suggest those relationship between coach and athlete can be viewed as central to effective coaching. (MohdKassim2020) This relationship can be defined as a situation in which a coach and an athlete's cognitions, feelings, and behaviours are mutually and causally interrelated and change over time. (Jowett, Poczwadowski 2007) South Africa's victory over New Zealand in the recent world cup final showed the power of having connection and strong relationship bonds in sport, Springboks captain speaks of his team's emotional connection with Head Coach Jacques Nienaber. **"We appreciate u, love u as a team not as a coach but as a person". Siya Kolisi**

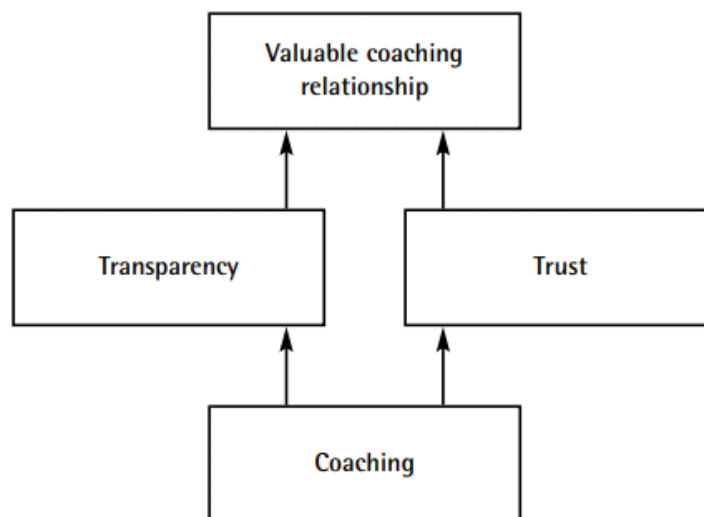
Relational cultural theory posits that all people need to participate in relationships that can foster growth, suggesting "we are wired to flourish in connection" Jordan 2008. Viewing closeness and connection as a major components of coach-athlete relationship, depicting in the sport settings the deep human need to belong and to feel close in relationships with others that can result in personal gains. Proposing People perform better when they are mutually connected to one another in sports. The coach that shows genuine care and emotional support for players creates a bridge to connection in supportive atmosphere where people feel valued and emotionally invest in relationships. **"He Cared about us as people, it become far deeper than just a rugby game". Siya Kolisi.**

It is critical to understand how both the coach and athlete define the quality of their relationship in terms of effectiveness, Jowett attempts to measure relationships in two dimensions. Firstly, Successful prize winning and coaches helpful caring behaviours. Jowett Coaching should enhance both performance and players psychological well-being, proposing "Both lie at the heart of the effective coach athlete relationships. (Jowett& Poczwadowski)

While Kristina Gyllensten and Stephen Palmer 2006 paper on the coaching relationship: An interpretative phenomenological analysis establishes the importance of the coach client relationship. Participants reported that unless a good enough relationship was established in the coaching relationship, relevant achievements would not be made. Transparency in the coaching process and open with the client was seen to be critical in enabling trust.

"Transparency builds trust"

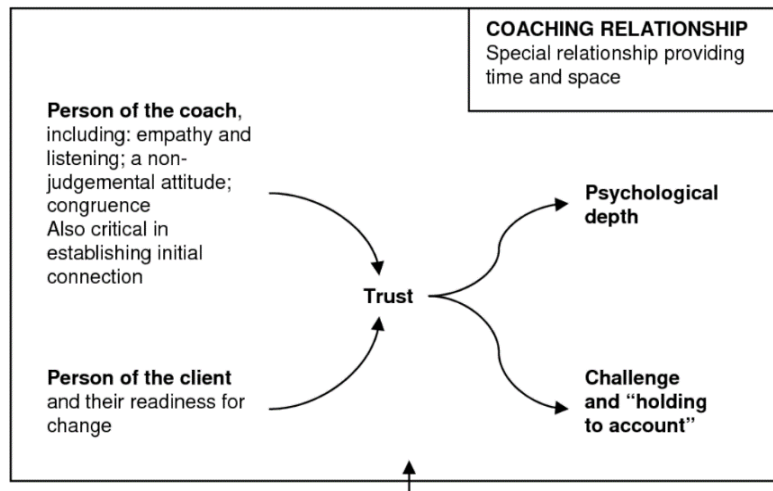
Figure 1: The Coaching Relationship.



Trust happens in stages over time with relationship building being the critical starting point. Setting the initial foundation to build social connections and mutual trust is critical (Jowett and Poczwadowski) enabling reciprocal process of coach and athlete influence each other behaviours of closeness and connection.

Trust transforms a group of people into a team.

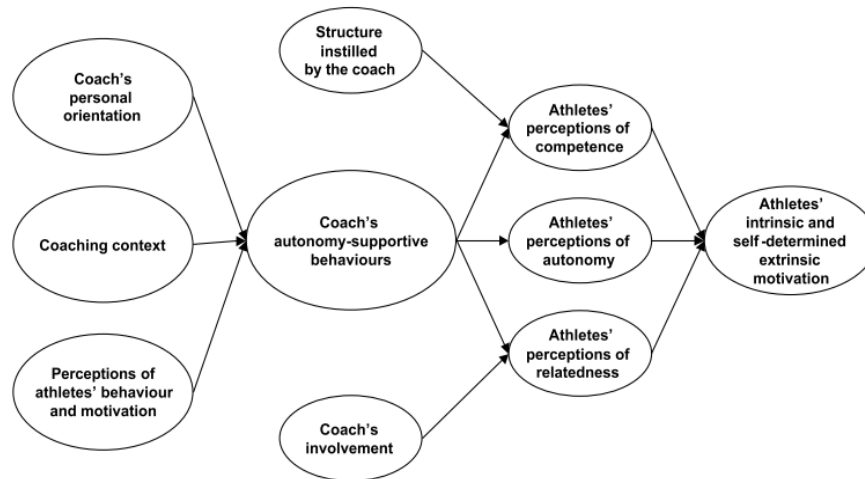
Qualitative analysis research into coach athlete relationships within professional rugby union settings found trust, mutual respect and honesty to be the most important relationship factors if coaching was to be seen as effective (Bennie2012)



Simion Machin 2010 suggest trust in the coach client relationship enables both a level of psychological depth and challenge coaches' behaviours, specifically the level of empathy, listening, non-judgmental attitude, congruence to the athlete' willingness to change. The reasons trusts enabled deep "Psychological depth". Seen to be vital for their success that the coach "holding them to account "most important element of the coaching relationship. Being appreciated and valued was the most important drivers of the outcome as opposed to specific coaching technique. Positive Relationship factors are promoted by a) active listening, b) empathy and c) a consistent attitude of respect for the client (Leibert2011)

Within the context of sport, the coach–athlete relationship has been identified as a critical determinate of athlete motivation., understanding the specific coaching behaviours that produce optimal athlete performance, development, and experiences is an important research pursuit for both researchers and coaches (Pope and Wilson 2014) Psychological mindfulness refers to the coaches willingness to be curious and willing to engage with positive answers to the question of why (Jowet.& Poczwocki 2007) through answers and ongoing observation, understanding what motivational factors influence the athletes potential for successful change.

Self-Determination Theory provides a basic contextual framework explaining how human motivation and behaviours become self-determined when individuals need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy are satisfied. Applying SDT concept in the coaching landscape provides scope to understand athletes' motivation and basic psychological needs. Jowett stressed the importance of the quality of this relationship as being one of the most important elements affecting athletes' satisfaction, motivation and performance. (Jowett and Poczwadowski 2007)



Mageau and Vallerand 2003 theoretical model grounded in STD provides contextual framework that depicts the complex psychological processes through which coach's perception of the athlete's behaviours and motivation influence coaches' autonomous supportive behaviours', structure and involvement that impacts the athletes needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

The satisfaction of these three basic psychological needs determines athletes' intrinsic and self-determined extrinsic motivation. Support for autonomy is an essential ingredient for the internalization of motives and is the basis for people actively transforming values and actions into their own (Deci & Ryan, 2002). "From a developmental perspective coaches should want to transmit their sport's values and not merely induce behaviours" Mageau and Vallerand 2003

Pope and Wilson 2014 Qualitative data study using the Coach-athlete motivation model attempted to validate which specific autonomous supportive coaching and interpersonal styles produces optimal rugby performance. Athletes who perceived their coaches to provide clear instructions and feedback as well as an explanation of how and why to perform an activity reported high levels of competence in rugby. Similarly, athletes who indicated their coaches cared for them and displayed an interest in their well-being were more likely to feel they belonged, and were connected to others in their sporting environment. Ntoumanis and Mallet 2014 paper further proposes that autonomous supportive coaching behaviours that makes the athlete feel valued, appreciated and respected will facilitated greater feelings of relatedness, compared to an authoritarian coaching styles that control and pressure the athlete's behaviours suggesting extrinsic motivation when fully embraced by the athlete will have positive cognitive behaviour changes. At the core of interpersonal coaching style of autonomy support that provides athletes with choices and opportunities to initiate and be in control of their behaviours while minimising the pressure and demands place upon them (Deci and Ryan, 2002).

Coach Athlete Relationships in Practice

Social intelligence" refers to the ability to see people as they are, in their most realistic way by moving past limited opinions, focusing more deeply on the cause-and-effect nature of behaviours, acquiring contextual understanding of athlete's psychological needs and motives

The Disc profile first developed in the 1920 is a contemporary tool that assist interpersonal relationships, self-awareness and communication by improving social intelligence, it helps identify people's strengths and behavioural tendencies that influence interpersonal relationships and interactions in different situational contexts. On personal reflection as a player i was first exposed to profiling at the Melbourne Storm almost 20 years ago. Craig Bellamy was one of the few coaches from my experience that knew how to get the best out of his players. Displaying an ability to know the individual and adapt his communication and interpersonal styles to influence relationships with different players. Interpersonal relationships are dynamic and complex in nature, building and maintaining effective coach athlete relationships is the challenge.

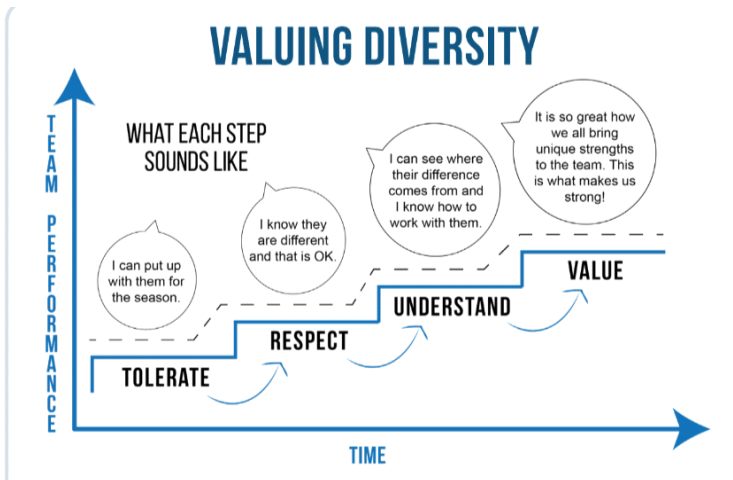
Relationships skills makes Sense

The coach Disc Profile has been insightful and has created self-awareness of my own natural and adapted behavioural tendencies under stress and in my recent coaching relationships. Understanding Disc enables better communication and connection with my players and staff. As a Disc Profile C's Style communicating more effectively with team members make sense. In Society Relationship focused people who are predominately S's and I's make up to 52% and 27% of the general population compared to goal and task focused C's and D's' who only make up 12% and 9% respectively. So, if your coaches Disc profile is a C or D style it makes logical sense that you need to improve or fine tune your interpersonal skills with S, and I Disc profiles to be more effective in coaching relationships to connect better with players who value social relationships. For example, coaches with high D or C profile should look to take more time to build relations with S and I Styles. It also means adjusting your Communication style closer to other person style by changing your pace, openness and priority of speech.

Behavioural Adaptability is Key

Coaching is about human Growth and Change (Stober Grant 2006)

Adaptability is your willingness and ability to adjust your approach or strategy depending on the needs of the situation or relationship at a particular point in time (variation of personal behavioural patterns and habits) means being able to communicate and treated other according to their own behavioural style. by modifying your pace and priority in tense situations is essential to managing conflict While generally communicating in the direction of the other person preference builds massive rapport Being "adaptable in your relationships while maintaining your identity" is key Effectively adaptable coaches know the right time and place depending on the context requirement of the situation and relationship type. The Golden Rule is coaches know how to negotiate relationships in a way that allows everyone to win and can meet the other persons needs as well as their own. Managing different personalities is the need to activate all coaching styles "Eddie Jones"



Diversity through Inclusivity and Collaboration increases creativity

Traditionally people have been put into two categories as either introvert or extrovert Sylvia Lochlen book the power of personality identifies the three key factors to create better synergy between Introvert and extroverts' personality types so they can increase creativity and Performance

1. Knowing and identifying tendencies and introducing strategies to reduce conflict
2. Understanding and challenging our own initiate tendency to be "self-hugging "only seeing our own behaviours as good and natural, while seeing others different characteristics as negative or bad.
3. Realizing and recognizing other strengths and valuing what they can bring to the relationships unlock the true potential of collaboration through synergy. Rationalization increases Sympathetic behaviours and actions.

Relational concept theory suggests there is "Good conflict" that is necessary for change and growth that promote mutual connection, collaboration and creativity. (Jordan 2008) The collaboration Report is an awareness tool that helps team members identify potential areas of conflict and alignment by coming up with strategies to unlock the power of their relationships. Most people have differences in their behavioural styles. Therefore, it is natural to experience both stressful and harmonious situations when people work with others in any environment. By improving self-awareness, understanding and valuing other people's strengths you can then start to develop effective strategies to create greater synergy and alignment of people that produce more productive and rewarding relationships. Having recently completed a collaboration report with Michaels Magriplis (Attached) with a Plan and strategies of behaviours to meet Michaels(our) needs better, knowing his tendencies under stressed and reduce possible areas of conflict with action plan to take to facilitate a more productive and harmonious working relationship to utilizes each of our areas of strength.

Conclusion

The motivation for writing this essay was to enhance my knowledge of interpersonal relationships from both a coaching and behavioural context in the hope of gaining a diverse understanding of the nature of coaching relationships. Using both Relational Cultural and Self-determination Theories to provide a more complete and holistic perspectives of the coach–athlete relationship and the coaching behaviours that produce optimal athlete performance and development.

Referenced best practices with empirical evidence-based research, Literature and Papers from a variety of sources ranging from the sports settings to fields of executive coaching relationship and hoped to provide a more comprehensive analysis of effective coaching relationship practices.

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