

Are You Wasting Your Time

Are you a coach, an athlete or maybe even an involved and concerned parent who just wants to perform far better than you are currently? If so, then you really must read this article. It will change the way you behave both in and out of the competitive arena, in the gym, in the pool and even on the pitch. It will change your personal perspective forever as you see things far more clearly and objectively. And just through the understanding of what makes you as an individual perform, it will allow you to see things from a new and exciting angle. Are you performing as well as you know you can? Are you getting the results others around you are expecting from you? Moreover, do you have the key to your sporting glory? My guess is - probably not! Well, not yet anyway. And why is that, do you think? Is it your physical condition, or maybe your internal and external stress levels at competition? Feeling more and more like your mind is being spun in a washing machine each and every time you perform. This sounds familiar to you, doesn't it? The questions to ask yourself are: what have you tried thus far to correct these concerning trends? And has it worked for you? In a recent study amongst some elite athletes and their coaches at a sporting high performance centre, it was estimated that only 22% of the coaches' information and direction was being effectively retained and acted upon by the athlete at any given moment. That's a whopping 78% inefficiency on behalf of the coach and 78% unproductive effort by the athlete. When translated into actual physical hours, for every 10 hours of face to face training only 2 hours and 12 minutes of effective learning is achieved. Not very efficient use of time and resources, is it? Furthermore, out of that 22% effective learning it is estimated that only 65% was specifically targeted towards the individual athlete. What this is telling us is the vital information the coach is relaying isn't being given and received in an effective manner. And this is from one of our more elite programs. So what do you think the absorption and retention rate is at our club level? Being heavily involved within many sports on many different levels myself, I often observe the goings on at both training and competition, and do this covertly to ensure no effect on the results. What I do observe is countless coaches around the world pebble-dashing their athletes with verbal information, not stopping to see if the information they have given has been taken on board by the athlete, let alone if it is actually relevant to their specific learning style. This is compounded by the athlete not taking the initiative to seek the answer within the message. Collectively a recipe for long-term disaster. As a former elite athlete and coach I used to spend countless hours learning the most up to date coaching techniques from around the world. I would spend hours bio-mechanically dissecting moves, watching performance after performance of both athlete and coaches trying to pinpoint the magic bullet, seeking the one thing that would make the performance outstanding. Little did I know however it was staring me in the face all the time. You see as a child I would often annoy the living bejeebies out of my coach by constantly asking what he meant by something he had said. With the benefit of modern scientific understanding, I can now see it wasn't totally because I wanted to annoy him rather, I was unconsciously searching for clarity, to digest the information in my individual internal language. I needed to make sense of his message before I could effectively put it into action. It's quite logical if you think about it. It wasn't until I began studying other people's behaviour that I realised what I was doing. And this is exactly what is happening in millions of situations each and every week on fields, in gyms, on courts, across all levels of competency, in all sports all around the world. Athletes are lost and bewildered as to what they are specifically being asked to do because they are not always hearing the same information or message the coach is sending. It may as well be in a foreign language as it is definitely being lost in the internal translation. The coach is an unbelievable wealth of technical knowledge we all know that, yet not all are so skillful in conveying their wisdom in an effective and efficient manner. Some choosing to pebble-dash their athletes with masses of verbal information in the hope some will actually stick, sink in and be effectively converted into desired action. Now, just stop and think about someone close to you, maybe a brother or sister. Do they think, speak, act or even perform exactly as you do? Of course not. Even if they have been exposed to exactly the same forces of influence whilst growing up they will have their own triggers, motivators and stimulators. What stimulates you is totally unique to you, and so it should be as its our unique neurological fingerprint, our own personal internal language and identity that is being communicated with. However, from a performance perspective, understanding a person's individual neurological fingerprint does allow a coach to be more effective, rather to effectively target teach that individual athlete, converting the paltry 22% to a far more impressive and efficient 90%+. Think what you could achieve with an increase of 68%+ effectiveness in your performance. So where do we obtain this vital and highly sought after personal information? Well, your first step is understanding the different individual contributing psycho-dynamics that go into making our personal blueprints. The neurological jigsaw puzzle, the individual pieces that go into making a whole. This can be achieved by either studying your athletes theoretical and physical behavioural psychology and its impact on their learning and performance. Alternatively by reading specific target books on the subject, attending the many quality training courses, seminars on high performance psychology. Also one of today's more innovative and effective psychological tools is having your athlete cognitively assessed and a detailed Behavioural profile compiled. This will give you a complete operator's manual to your athlete's mind. The phrase MIND GAME is thrown around a lot these days and has become a trendy tag line used by presenters and commentators the world over. However its true underlying significance cannot be overlooked and should be a big consideration in your preparation. As the science of competitive sport evolves far beyond that of the humble gym and we move towards what can only be described as almost cloning of our athletes physiology, how we obtain those results will soon become the only significant difference between two athletes. And I believe this will be within the realms of mind management. This is a clear indication that the elite competitor of tomorrow will have a far more strategic grip on the power of their neurology. It will be common place to have a mind coach, it will also be part and parcel of your training regime to include mental conditioning, left and right hemisphere stimulation for improved learning and retention rates. With so much at stake both financially and through personal achievement, mind management is the performance enhancer of the future. And don't be fooled it is here today! So honestly are you and your athletes being left behind? If so take the first steps to better sporting performance by understanding what is going on inside your athlete's mind and how we can now better utilize this next generation science into your coaching.

About the Author

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