

GROWTH MINDSET

Your belief that your ability can be developed through dedication and hard work.

WHAT WILL YOUR COACHING CHALLENGE BE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS?

LOW

Athletes at low levels will:

- Give up quickly if things don't come easy or go their way.
- Tend to rely on natural talent and see extra effort as not useful.
- Feel threatened by the success of others.
- Feel embarrassed by failure and think they are not good enough to do better.

HIGH

Athletes at high levels will:

- Focus on continual learning.
- Embrace challenges and push on in the face of setbacks.
- See their effort as key to success.
- Find inspiration in others' success & work to be like them.
- Believe the best way to improve is through hard work and learning from mistakes.

HOW CAN YOU MOVE YOUR ATHLETES TO HIGH LEVELS?

Coaching Tips

- **Reward Effort and the Process:**
 - ✓ Praise athletes for their effort first before focusing on the outcome.
 - ✓ Continually drive home the message that your athletes control their effort, but not necessarily the outcomes.
 - ✓ Set challenging, but realistic effort expectations and provide clear feedback on the process.
 - ✓ Create a team scoreboard or tracker for strong effort and progress.
- **Words Matter:**
 - ✓ Stop athletes in their tracks when they say things that imply they have a fixed mindset (e.g., "I suck at this, I'm not good enough", or "I'm jealous because he/she is so great at this.")
 - ✓ Embrace the word "YET". When athletes say, "I can't do this," correct them by adding, "yet" to their statement.
 - ✓ Use feedback language that fosters a growth mindset (e.g. I believe I can improve. Today's effort is worth tomorrow's reward. Minor setback, major comeback. I will learn how the best do it. Let's find a new way.).
 - ✓ Use slogans on banners, walls, or t-shirts that emphasize effort and a growth mindset over outcomes.
- **Treat Failures as Learning Opportunities:**
 - ✓ Create a team culture that values feedback. Encourage athletes to ask for feedback.
 - ✓ Train your athletes to understand that making mistakes is fine since it is a fast way to learn and get better.
 - ✓ Share personal examples of how you overcame setbacks and improved. This will help your athletes relate to you on a deeper level.
 - ✓ Quickly correct bad form or missed assignments so that they don't become bad habits.

Talking Points

- Have regular pulse checks on where your athletes are focused – their efforts and ability vs. their natural talent. Then discuss how developing a growth mindset is continual process.
- Discuss how the team can collectively create new strategies to be overcome challenges.
- Share examples of how the greats in your sport have failed but learned from those moments.
- Discuss your athletes' self-talk and uncover fixed vs. growth mindset thoughts.

Tools

- APP Lessons: What's Your Mindset, Bad Wins/Good Losses, Play to Win, Getting in The Zone, Mental Imagery
- CORE Elements: Coachable, Competitive Drive, Mental Toughness
- PRESSURE Elements: Self-Doubting, Stubborn, Impatient

"I've always been a firm believer in mind over matter. If you don't believe you can achieve, your body will start to believe this and you'll be stuck." – Sheryl Swoopes, WNBA Great –