Coaching Strategies for Enhancing Motivation and Enjoyment

Rebecca A. Zakrajsek, University of Tennessee
E. Earlynn Lauer, University of Tennessee
Thanks for joining us!

• **Motivation**… what is it?

• Self-determination theory – **focus on the athlete**
  – Types of motivation
  – Basic psychological needs

• Self-determination theory – **focus on the coach**
  – 7 types of autonomy-supportive behaviors
  – Structure and Involvement
In small groups (2-3 people), please discuss the following questions:

- What is motivation?

- What behaviors do “motivated” athletes demonstrate?
What is motivation?

- Simply the "**why**" of human behavior

- "An internal state or process that energizes, directs, and maintains goal behavior" (Cahsmore, 2008, p. 287)

- Behaviors associated with motivation:
  - **Choice:** approaching vs. avoiding a challenge
  - **Effort:** quality and quantity of intensity
  - **Persistence:** persist despite obstacles or adversity
The Coach-Athlete Relationship

- Coach’s personal orientation
- Coaching context
- Perceptions of athletes’ behavior & motivation
- Structure instilled by the coach
- Athlete’s perception of competence
- Athlete’s perception of autonomy
- Athlete’s perception of relatedness
- Athlete’s motivation
- Coach’s autonomy-supporting behaviors
- Coach’s involvement

The Continuum of Self-Determination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amotivation</th>
<th>Intrinsic motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of motivation. No perceived reason for participation</td>
<td>Activity is done as an end in itself (learning, accomplishing tasks, and experiencing sensations)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intrinsic motivation: to do an activity for its own sake or the pleasure it provides

1. To learn
   • E.g., “I practice tennis so that I can learn how to hit a kick serve as well as a slice”

2. To accomplish tasks
   • E.g., “I practice juggling the soccer ball to see how many touches I can get before the ball hits the ground”

3. To experience sensations
   • E.g., “I swim because I enjoy the feeling of cool water rushing over my body when I’m moving fast.” “I love feeling strong and powerful when I swim”
## The Continuum of Self-Determination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amotivation</th>
<th>External Pressure</th>
<th>Internal Pressure</th>
<th>Personal Goal Achievement</th>
<th>Aligned w/ Personal Values</th>
<th>Intrinsic motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of motivation. No perceived reason for participation</td>
<td>Activity is done to receive a reward or avoid punishment</td>
<td>Activity is done to avoid negative internalized feelings (guilt, shame)</td>
<td>Activity is freely chosen to help achieve another goal, even w/out enjoyment</td>
<td>Activity is part of a person’s identity and value system</td>
<td>Activity is done as an end in itself (learning, accomplishing tasks, and experiencing sensations)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-self-determined (Have to)</th>
<th>Self-determined (Want to)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The Coach-Athlete Relationship

All people have three **basic psychological needs:**

- **Competence:** the need to perceive my behavior as effective in a given situation
  - E.g., “I can shoot free throws and jump-shots well”

- **Autonomy:** the need to perceive that my actions are aligned with my own values **AND** the freedom to make choices about my behavior
  - E.g., “Being a good soccer player is important to me” **AND** “I have choice in how to design my soccer training plan”

- **Relatedness:** the need to feel securely connected to and understood by others
  - E.g., “My coaches, teammates, and parents support my involvement in tennis”

The more an athlete’s **basic psychological needs** are fulfilled…

the more self-determined **motivation** she/he experiences

AND

the greater her/his **enthusiasm, effort, and persistence** is

**The overall goal:** help each athlete meet her/his needs of **autonomy, relatedness, and competence**

- This will facilitate **intrinsic motivation** and **self-determined extrinsic motivation**?

- The challenge is **HOW**?
An individual in a position of authority [e.g., a coach] taking the other’s [e.g. the athlete’s] perspective, **acknowledging her/his feelings**, and providing her/him with other pertinent information and **opportunities for choice**, while **minimizing the use of pressures and demands**.

(Black & Deci, 2000)
The 7 Autonomy-Supportive Behaviors

1) Provide *choice* within specific rules and limits

E.g. “We can wear these 3 uniforms… which one would you prefer?” Or “Which one of these 3 drills would you like to do today?”
# The 7 Autonomy-Supportive Behaviors

1) **Provide choice** within specific rules and limits

| E.g. “We can wear these 3 uniforms… which one would you prefer?” Or “Which one of these 3 drills would you like to do today?” |

2) **Provide a rationale** for tasks and limits

| • Truthful and valid rationale promotes internalization |

| E.g., “We condition at the end of practice when you’re tired so that in the game, you’ll feel stronger than the athletes on the other team.” |
### The 7 Autonomy-Supportive Behaviors

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Provide <strong>choice</strong> within specific rules and limits</td>
<td>E.g. “We can wear these 3 uniforms… which one would you prefer?” Or “Which one of these 3 drills would you like to do today?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>Provide a <strong>rationale</strong> for tasks and limits</td>
<td>E.g., “We condition at the end of practice when you’re tired so that in the game, you’ll feel stronger than the athletes on the other team.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>Acknowledge the player’s <strong>feelings</strong> and <strong>perspectives</strong></td>
<td>E.g., “I understand that you have a lot on your plate with tennis and school, and it can be very challenging to stay focused on tennis during practice. Staying focused on the present and what you can control will help you balance all of your demands and perform better in them.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The 7 Autonomy-Supportive Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) Provide <strong>choice</strong> within specific rules and limits</th>
<th>E.g. “We can wear these 3 uniforms… which one would you prefer?” Or “Which one of these 3 drills would you like to do today?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2) Provide a <strong>rationale</strong> for tasks and limits</td>
<td>E.g., “We condition at the end of practice when you’re tired so that in the game, you’ll feel stronger than the athletes on the other team.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Acknowledge the player’s <strong>feelings</strong> and <strong>perspectives</strong></td>
<td>E.g., “I understand that you have a lot on your plate with tennis and school, and it can be very challenging to stay focused on tennis during practice. Staying focused on the present and what you can control will help you balance all of your demands and perform better in them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Provide athletes with opportunities for <strong>initiative-taking</strong> and <strong>independent work</strong></td>
<td>E.g., “I am going to leave 10 minutes at the end of practice for you to work on whatever skills you need or want to improve during that time.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5) Provide non-controlling competence feedback

- Avoid “should” or “ought to” statements that can induce feelings of guilt. Avoid “tough love” statements (“What were you thinking?”)
- Reinforce behavior that is under an athlete’s control
- Convey high but realistic expectations
The 7 Autonomy-Supportive Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5) Provide non-controlling competence feedback</th>
<th>6) Avoid controlling behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Avoid “should” or “ought to” statements that can induce feelings of guilt. Avoid “tough love” statements (“What were you thinking?”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reinforce behavior that is under an athlete’s control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Convey high but realistic expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Includes overt control and provision or removal of tangible rewards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The 7 Autonomy-Supportive Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5) Provide non-controlling competence feedback</th>
<th>6) Avoid controlling behaviors</th>
<th>7) Prevent ego-involvement in athletes by focusing on the task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Avoid “should” or “ought to” statements that can induce feelings of guilt. Avoid “tough love” statements (“What were you thinking?”)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reinforce behavior that is under an athlete’s control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Convey high but realistic expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Includes overt control and provision or removal of tangible rewards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Ego-involvement</strong>: competence is based on normative improvement, beating an opponent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Task-involvement</strong>: competence is based on self-referent improvement, mastery, and effort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In small groups (2-3 people), please discuss the following questions:

• What are 2-3 ways that you already support autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the athletes you work with?

• What are 2-3 new ways you can provide further support autonomy, competence, and relatedness to the athletes you work with?
The Coach-Athlete Relationship

Providing Structure = Enhancing Competency

Some suggestions:

“Without coaches’ instructions and structure, athletes lack the necessary information and experience to progress in their discipline.”

(Mageau & Vallerand, 2003, p. 893)

End every practice with an informative and motivational review

Plan something unstructured each week

• Builds excitement, “what will happen next?” feeling into routine
Being Involved = Enhancing Readiness

Some suggestions:

“Without their coaches’ support and involvement, athletes cannot feel connected.”

(Mageau & Vallerand, 2003, p. 893)

— Enjoyment and creativity facilitate excellence
To Summarize

• An athlete’s needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competency can be fostered through the coach-athlete relationship.

• Maximize the ways that you engage in autonomy-supporting behaviors.

• Structure the environment to help build competency.

• Demonstrate a “person first, athlete second” approach to help build relatedness.
Questions?

Rebecca Zakrajsek, Ph.D., CC-AASP
University of Tennessee
865-974-9253
raz@utk.edu

E. Earlynn Lauer, M.S.
University of Tennessee
865-974-0967
elauer1@vols.utk.edu
References


