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10:00-11:00

WHY THEY MISUNDERSTAND YOUR WORDS

THE STORY OF MISUNDERSTANDING

Desiree is upset...

Desiree, a 10-year-old gymnast gets into the car with her mom after practice. She is crying and mom asks her what is wrong. She doesn't say anything at first and just says, "Nothing. " Mom doesn't press her, but says that she can tell her later when she calms down. The next day, she tells mom that the coach got really angry at practice, yelled at her and called her stupid. He then kicked her off the beam and made her do conditioning for the rest of the night away from the rest of the team.

What Mom heard...

- Coach called her daughter stupid
- Coach screamed at her daughter, scaring her
- Coach humiliated Desiree in front of the entire team
- Mom is angry and wants a meeting with the coach and club owner

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED...

Desiree was working on beam by herself when she attempted a skill that wasn't in her routine and above her current ability. She has done this before.

Coach was working with another athlete on bars and was in the middle of spotting that athlete.

Coach observed Desiree across the gym and it scared him. In a visceral reaction, he screams across the gym, "Desiree stop it!! Get off the beam now!"

He charged toward the beam and said to Desiree, "That was a really stupid thing to do. You could have broken your neck."

Since it was toward the end of practice and because he has had this issue before with her, he told Desiree to go ahead and start her conditioning.

When confronted, coach became defensive blaming the entire situation on the athlete

COACH'S MISTAKE...

Did not inform mom after practice as to what happened

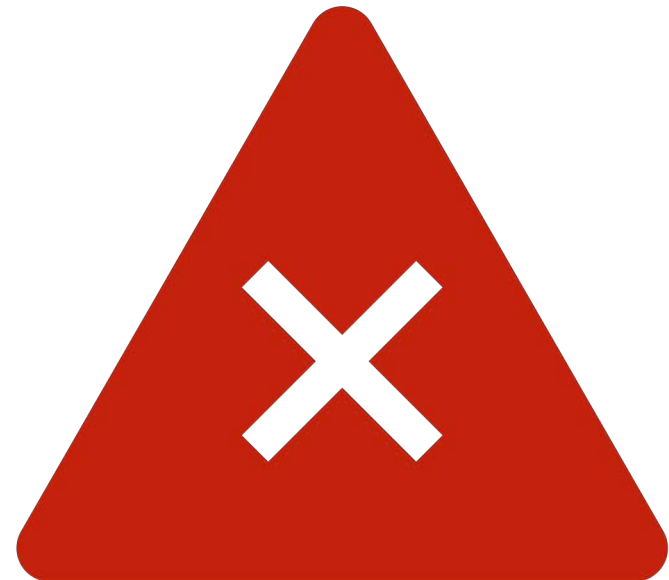
Did not make any other coach in the gym aware of what happened

Used a derogatory word "stupid" in the course of the night when both his emotions and Desiree's emotions were high

Didn't explain to Desiree why it was best she stop training for the night and begin the conditioning

Did not include mom with problems before this situation

Became defensive when confronted by mom



I NEVER SAID YOU WERE **STUPID!**

I never said you were stupid!

I Never said you were stupid!

I never SAID you were stupid!

I never said YOU were stupid!

I never said you WERE stupid!

I never said you were **STUPID!**

POWER MATTERS

Legitimate	Position a person holds based on position or hierarchy
Expert	Possessing knowledge or expertise in a particular area
Coercive Power	Ability to influence others via threats, punishments or sanctions
Reward Power	Ability to influence the allocation of incentives
Referent	Interpersonal relationships that a person cultivates with other people in the organization

BUT FIRST, IT ISN'T ALWAYS THE ATHLETE

Athlete is
treated as a
commodity

Professional
Development
is limited

Refusal to
change

Personal
problems go
untreated

When power is seen as "absolute" then
communication can only be one way.



A QUICK QUIZ

While practicing any sport, what are tweens and young teens most interested in?

1. Perfecting a skill
2. Socializing with the team
3. Teamwork
4. Competing against others
5. Themselves

Between the ages of 11-14 teens crave control. In every aspect of their life they are out of control.



DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

Early 5-8

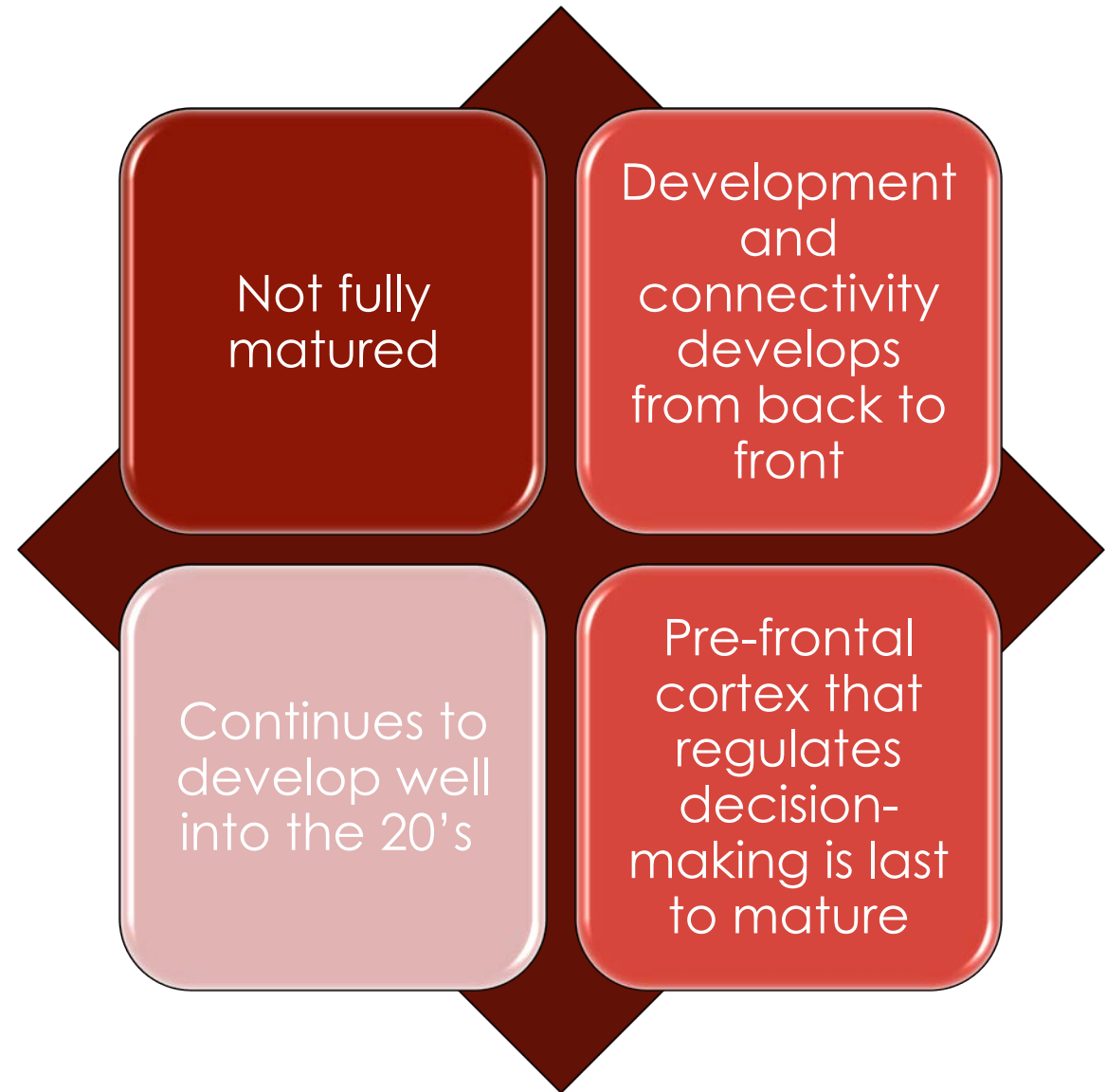
Middle 9-11

Early Adolescence 12-14

Middle Adolescence 15-18

Late Adolescence 19-23

YOUTH BRAIN ARCHITECTURE



PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Makes up only **17 percent** of the brain and is in charge of judging, analysis, organization, connecting the dots, and deciding what is valid information and what isn't

- Plays a huge role in empathy and self-awareness
- It's one of the last parts of the brain to develop and can be influenced
- Hormones and emotions easily manipulate the prefrontal cortex

Attention
Span

Impulse

Moral
Judgment

Planning

Goal
Setting

The Amygdala

Location

- Deep within temporal lobes
- Part of the limbic system

Functions

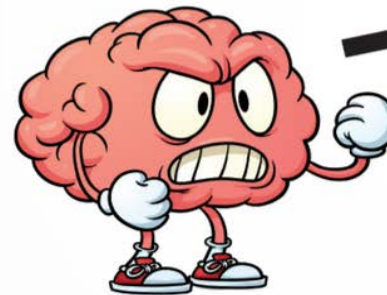
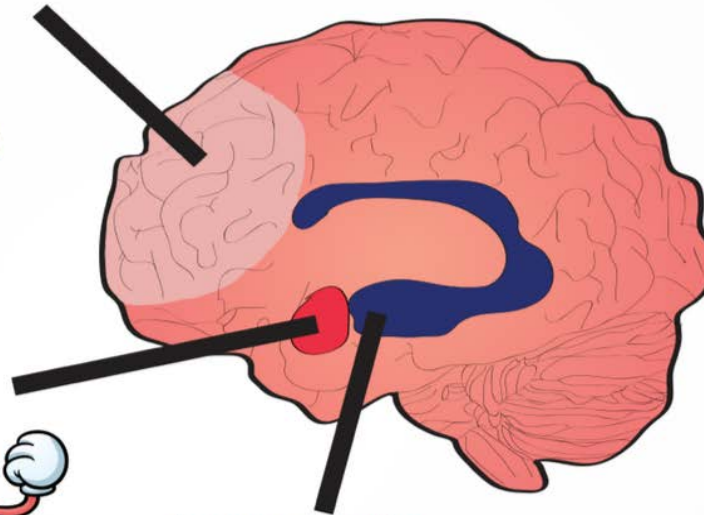
- Autonomic responses associated with fear
- Emotional responses
- Processing and consolidating memory
- Hormonal secretions



Decides, based on the emotion a person feels, where to send information.

- If the person is stressed or freaking out, information gets routed to the reactive brain, avoiding the path to the long-term memory storage.

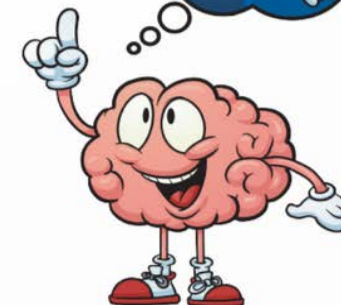
THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX
HELPS US MAKE GOOD CHOICES,
PAY ATTENTION AND LEARN.



THE HIPPOCAMPUS
HELPS US REMEMBER
WHAT WE LEARN AND
STORES OUR MEMORIES.



THE AMYGDALA HELPS
KEEP US SAFE. IT IS
WHERE ALL OF OUR
EMOTIONS COME FROM.
BUT SOMETIMES, IF WE
HAVE STRONG EMOTIONS,
IT KEEPS US FROM
THINKING CLEARLY.



Now consider what happens when a coach yells at a child of 12 years old. How is their brain and body reacting?



I've got a new girlfriend!!



I wish I had friends on the team



I'm not thin enough



Mom and dad are getting a divorce



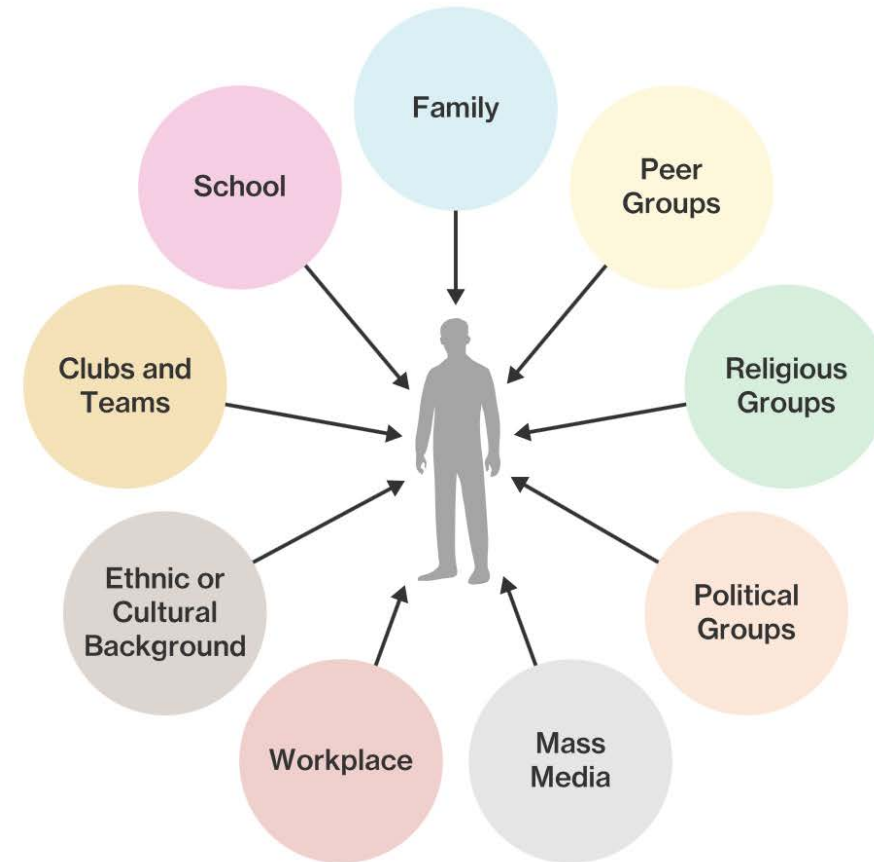
I don't think the coach likes me

AGENTS OF SOCIALIZATION

Socialization is the lifelong process through which people learn the values, norms, beliefs, and expectations of their society.

The Looking Glass = Identity

- Age
- Race
- Nationality
- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Mental health
- Trauma



Agents of socialization impart both positive values and beliefs, such as language and customs, and negative values and beliefs, such as racism and stereotypes.

<p>Race</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“I don't look like anyone else on the team.” •“They are always thinking I should be naturally talented.” •“I'm afraid they will think I'm always an angry black girl.” 	<p>Female Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“I'm afraid of appearing too emotional.” •“I'm afraid of being in a leotard during my cycle.” •“I'm afraid of gaining weight, so I skip meals.”
<p>Sexual Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“I'm afraid of coming out to my team.” •“I've been bullied at school for being gay.” •“I'm afraid of the coach finding out I'm gay.” 	<p>Male Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“I'm constantly told to man up.” •“I don't have the bulk other males on my team have.” •“Men aren't supposed to share our feelings.”
<p>Hidden Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“I don't learn as quickly as everyone else.” •“I sometimes get so anxious I fear daily practices.” •“I'm afraid the rest of the team will find out I have a disability.” 	<p>Transgendered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“I'm not comfortable on a female team, when I was born male.” •“I feel everyone is looking at me.” •“No one understands me.”

A MOMENT IN THEIR SHOES



CONTROLLABLE AND CHANGING INFLUENCES

The Speaker (Coach)

- Voice inflection/tone
- Body language
- Length of Message
- Volume
- Misinterpretation of athlete body language
- Misinterpretation of athlete goals
- Failure to consider environmental factors such as noise level
- Mood/personal life factors

The Receiver (Athlete)

- Self Esteem
- Perfectionism
- Comparison to others
- Sense of safety/trust
- Fear
- Adrenaline
- Wandering mind
- Information Overload
- State of fatigue

WHAT ARE THEY HEARING?

“What’s wrong with you today?”

“You need to fix your face.”

“We already covered that.”

“Don’t eat too much for lunch.”

“You need to take better care of yourself.”

“If you aren’t here to be serious then you can just go home.”

“Why haven’t you achieved this skill yet?”

“You have potential, but you don’t use it.”

DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

1

Express
Care

2

Challenge
Growth

3

Provide
Support

4

Share
Power

5

Expand
Possibilities

ATHLETE'S VIEW OF HARMONY

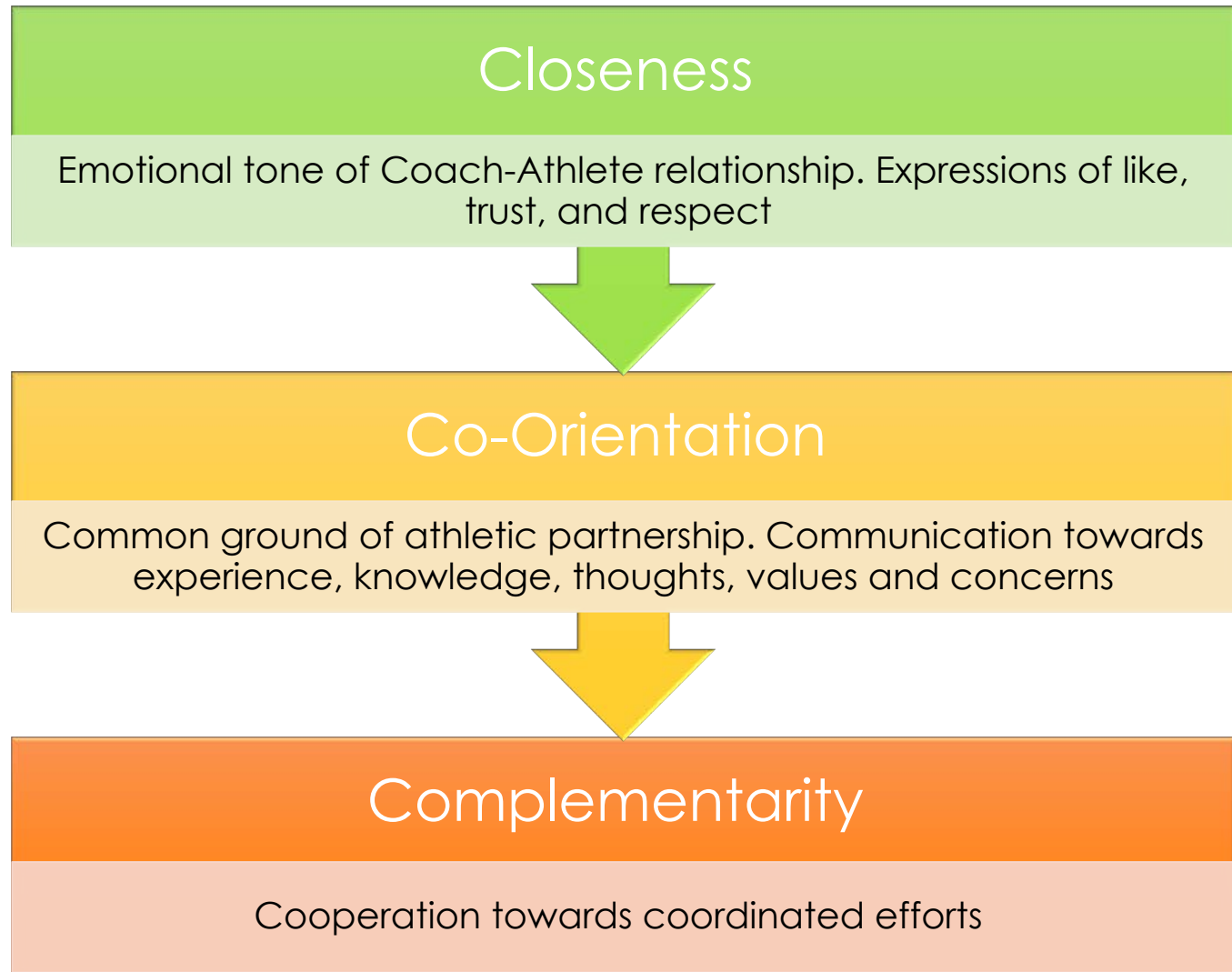
Participation in a high-quality program means that youth report that they:

- Feel safe in the program or setting
- Often learn skills such as teamwork or peaceful conflict resolution.
- Often develop warm and trusting relationships with peers and adults.
- Are often allowed to help make decisions
- Are allowed to develop their passion on their terms



Positive Experiences + Positive Relationships + Positive Environments = Positive Youth Development

HARMONIZED RELATIONSHIP



SETTING UP THE SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- Team building activities that do not include gymnastics
- Written goals
- Daily check-ins
- Interaction with athletes during breaks
- Allowing for autonomy
- Listening to their ideas and concerns
- Creating a relationship with parents





FINAL THOUGHTS

- Align your goals to the athlete
- Align coaching techniques to both the age and ability of the child
- Seek feedback from both the parents and the athletes often
- Give parents feedback when things are going well, not just when things aren't
- Schedule annual meetings with parents and athletes
- Create an open-door reporting policy that includes confidentiality and freedom from retaliation
- Include discussions of athlete concerns at staff meetings
- Give the athlete autonomy and chances to lead



THANK YOU!