DELIBERATE PRACTICE

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For the Coaches

- The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy, Not Time, Is the Key to High Performance and Personal Renewal by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz

- Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance by Angela Duckworth

- make it stick: The Science of Successful Learning by Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel

- Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D.
For Gymnasts
EFFECTIVE/DELIBERATE PRACTICES
Deliberate practice refers to a special type of practice that is purposeful and systematic. While regular practice might include mindless repetitions, deliberate practice requires focused attention and is conducted with the specific goal of improving performance.
Deliberate practice is not a comfortable activity. It requires **sustained effort and concentration**. The people who master the art of deliberate practice are committed to being lifelong learners—always exploring and experimenting and refining.
The graph illustrates the relationship between performance and level of pressure. It shows four stages:

1. **Boredom** - Low pressure with low performance.
2. **Comfort** - A moderate level of pressure leading to optimal performance.
3. **Stretch** - Slightly higher pressure than comfort, still maintaining high performance.
4. **Strain** - Further increase in pressure reducing performance.

Beyond strain, the graph indicates:

- **Fatigue**
- **Poor performance**
- **Panic**
- **Ill health**

The dotted line suggests a trend towards fantasy, indicating a break from reality or ideal scenario.
Who do you think will improve more after this practice?

Gymnast A practices doing her skill 10 times. Sometimes she stops to watch the other gymnasts but completes all 10 reps.

Gymnast B practices doing her skill 10 times. A friend films her and she stops to watch the attempts before starting the next one, but completes all 10 reps.
The biggest difference between Repetition and Deliberate Practice is FEEDBACK
Quality Practice

- Not all experience leads to excellence. Determinants are:
  - The QUALITY and AMOUNT of practice
  - The QUALITY of the FEEDBACK
  - The KNOWLEDGE of the COACH
  - The MOTIVATION of the ATHLETE

QUALITY vs. QUANTITY
Types of Feedback

**Motivational feedback** (Encouragement):
- develops **confidence** – timing: immediately after an event
  (Conveys to the gymnast: You are capable of doing this)

**Developmental feedback** (Advice):
- develops **competence** – timing: looking forward to the next time
  (Conveys to the gymnast specifically What she needs to do to improve)
Giving Feedback

**Clean**
- Specific
- Focus on behaviors
- Descriptive
- Benefit of receiver

**Dirty**
- General
- Focus on motive
- Prescriptive
- Benefit of giver
FEEDBACK II

• **Amount**: For new learnings correct *one error at a time*. Prioritize

• **Solution Oriented** Feedback: What to do - not what to avoid!

• Feedback that is accurate AND protects the feeling of competence
  • “You do not know it now, but you will get it soon” or “Use the XYZ technique we practiced”
  • Give also feedback about *what the gymnast is doing right*
  • Check for understanding: Have them repeat what they will do different

Too much information, regardless of accuracy, confuses the learner: **Simplify** and Repeat
FEEDBACK AND LEARNING

• The more feedback we give the less the gymnast has to reflect and actively think about it.

• Less feedback = increases opportunities for reflection and problem solving. How much is enough? Differences by level and learning style of gymnast.

• Usable feedback: Has to fit in the players knowledge (e.g: arm at 2 O’Clock more helpful than a verbal description)
Teaching Effectiveness

• Active learning, not passive listeners.
  • Make watching video of routines more active
• Clear learning goals for each session. Use keywords
• Test for understanding and learning
• Variety of ways of presenting information
• Have gymnasts summarize the main points at the end
• Elicit feedback about your teaching! How do they learn better?
• More is not better: Match gymnasts attention span with learnable “bites”: Shorter segments of focused attention followed by short breaks, change of activity.
MAKING BODY AND BRAIN WORK

• It’s better to solve a problem than to memorize a solution
• Importance of the role of sleep in consolidation of learning
• Role of Reflection in learning: “What happened? What did I do? How did it work out? What would I do different next time?
• Beware of the Familiarity trap! (“I know this “ does not mean “I can do it well” !)
PRACTICES AS MINI-COMPETITIONS

• Routinely replicate competition conditions:
  • Refrain from coaching during a routine in practice
  • Create situations where gymnasts have to make decisions like in competitions (wrong music, equipment out of bounds…)
  • Review routines on video with them. Ask for their opinion before you say what you see
  • Speed and amplitude like in competition as much as possible.
Receiving Feedback

**Clean**
- Listen
- Ask Questions
- Internalise
- See as an opportunity to learn

**Dirty**
- Don’t listen
- Criticise
- Deflect / apportion blame
- Make excuses
- Learn nothing
Goal Definitions

OUTCOME GOAL

• To reference against a 3rd party
• Highly motivational

PERFORMANCE GOALS

• Referenced against yourself
• Can achieve without achieving outcome goal

PROCESS GOALS

• Provides focus on day-to-day
• May not be easily measurable
Different Types of Goals

The big picture
“Why”

Outcome

Measurable
“What”

Controllable
“How”

Greater Control

Increasing Motivation

From Miller (1997)
Different Types of Goals

Greater Control

Routine Difficulty
- Train with Intensity

Artistry, expression
- Try New Things

Consistency in Competition
- Effective Practices
- Continued Coach Development

Make national Team
- Action?

Top 8 at Nationals
- Increasing Motivation

From Miller (1997)
WHAT WILL YOU INCORPORATE?

• Examples of how to apply these ideas to your coaching?
“ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE; TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH.”

- Helen Keller