

FRAME OF MIND:
LIFE ON AND BEYOND THE
FOOTBALL FIELD

FOR ELITE AND ASPIRING ATHLETES

SEIZE
THE
DAY

PLAYER EDUCATION, WELLBEING & LIFE SKILLS

EDUCATION HANDBOOK



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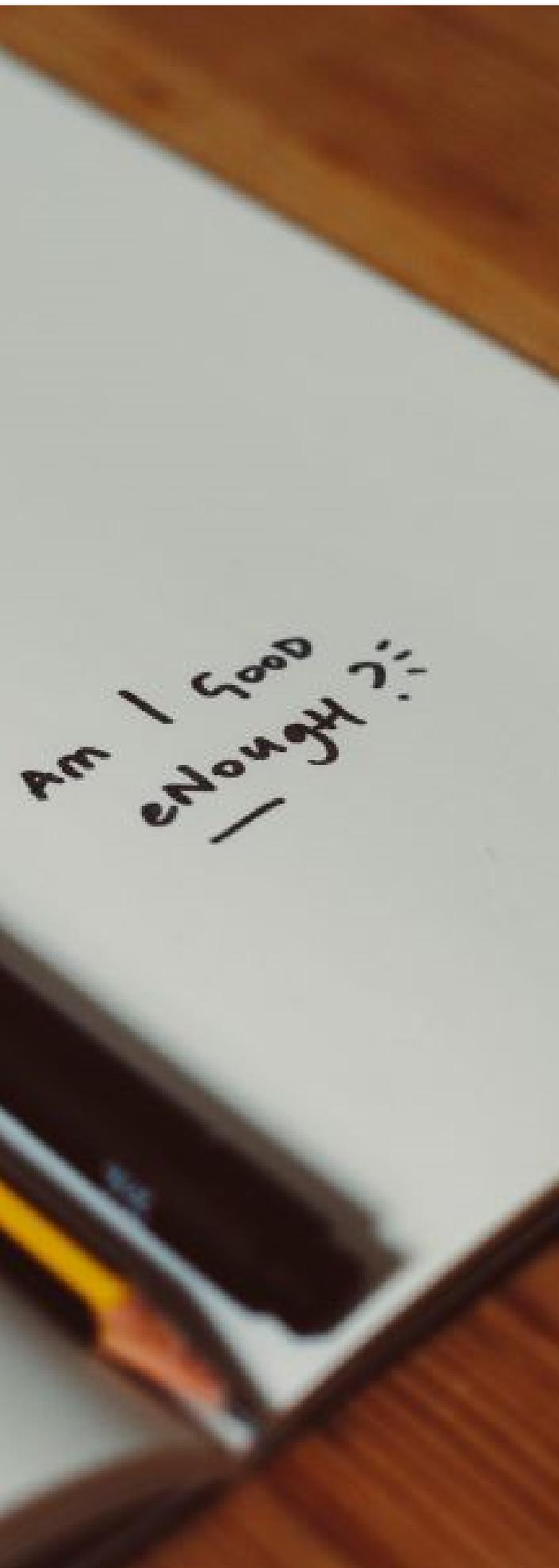
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This education handbook and journal has been written as a result of a comment (that resonated with me) made by a group of current and ex-NRL and representative rugby league players, "I wish we had this resource and education available when we were junior rugby league players moving through the NRL system". This handbook and journal captures the importance of becoming an outstanding young person as well as a talented sportsperson (and potential professional athlete) through the following key domains:

- **Personal Development:** develop the physical and psychological (mental) capabilities, growth/development, attitude, nutrition, communication skills.
- **Education:** building on and developing knowledge and skills through the establishment of lifelong networks and relationships (access to a mentor), the impacts of social media and its usage, becoming an elite sportsperson, playing in a team, accountability, coachability.

Mind Challenge's collaboration over the past few years with a number of Penrith Panthers NRL players enables us to provide you all with great insight into the world of becoming and being an 'elite/professional sportsperson'; the highs and lows, challenges and achievements, strengths and weaknesses and other key components within this profession. You have signed up for this education opportunity and experience to further develop your rugby league knowledge, to learn about and further develop yourself, to test and challenge yourself and expand your existing network, to develop key communication skills and overall become a better YOU!



EDUCATION:

Why is education important to elite/aspiring athletes?

Working towards selection at representative levels

***Tips for improving your game:** Focus on becoming a Representative player; identify and implement strategies to push motivation into activation*

Motivation levels fluctuate in everyone; even elite/professional athletes find it hard to get motivated from time to time. So, before you start, accept that there will be brief setbacks or times when you do not feel like exercising. If this occurs, remind yourself that this is not failure – it is simply life getting in the way. Be ready for these 'slips'. Think about some strategies to overcome those hurdles and how you can pick up where you left off. Don't be discouraged. It happens to all of us.

Your turn - refer to the Participant Journal page X

Motivation is an internal energy force that determines all aspects of our behaviour; it also impacts on how we think, feel and interact with others. In sport, high motivation is widely accepted as an essential prerequisite in getting athletes to fulfil their potential.

Your turn - refer to the Participant Journal page X

Different types of motivation

Amotivation:

- Represents a lack of intention to engage in a behaviour. It is accompanied by feelings of incompetence
- A lack of connection between one's behaviour and the expected outcome
- Exhibit a sense of helplessness
- 'I just don't get a buzz out of competition whatsoever.'

External and introjected regulations:

- Experience psychological pressure
- Participating in sport to receive prize money, win a trophy or a gold medal typifies external regulation
- Participating to avoid punishment or negative evaluation is also external
- Introjection is an internal pressure under which athletes might participate out of feelings of guilt or to achieve recognition.

Identified and integrated regulations:

- Behaviour is initiated out of choice, although it is not necessarily perceived to be enjoyable
- These types of regulation account for why some athletes devote hundreds of hours to repeating mundane drills; they realise that such activity will ultimately help them to improve.

Intrinsic motivation:

- Is fully self-determined and characterised by interest in, and enjoyment derived from, sports participation
- Considered to be the healthiest type of motivation
- Reflects an athlete's motivation to perform an activity simply for the reward inherent in their participation.

Flow:

- Ultimate motivational state - athlete becomes one with the activity
- Characterised by complete immersion in an activity, to the degree that nothing else matters.

Your Turn - refer to the Participant Journal page X



Motivational techniques for coaches and athletes

1. Goal setting

- Set a few ambitious but achievable long-term goals
- By setting your own goals, you are more likely to accept the challenges that lie ahead and pursue the goals with enthusiasm
- Important to also set appropriate medium-term goals
- The most important goals in practical terms are those for the short-term, as it is these that keep you focused on the benchmarks which are necessary to achieving superior performance
- The goal setting process is flexible and you need to take ownership of each goal.

2. Using extrinsic rewards

- The key aspect in using extrinsic rewards effectively is that they reinforce your sense of competence and self-worth
- A reward should be informational in nature rather than controlling
- For a reward to be informational, it is advisable that it has relatively little monetary worth (i.e it is a token reward), such as a 'player of the match' or 'best forward of the season' title. The reward should be presented to a player in front of all potential recipients with some emphasis placed on the prestige associated with it.

3. Motivational music

- A particularly good way to motivate athletes in training and prior to competition is through the use of music they perceive to be inspirational
- Work and recovery times are regulated by music
- Research shows that this approach increases work output, reduces perceived exertion and improves in-task affect – the pleasure experienced during the activity.

4. Positive self-talk

- It makes use of our powerful inner voice to reinforce self-esteem or important aspects of our performance
- With appropriate repetition, self-talk can positively alter your belief system.
- Example: 'I figured that, if I said it enough, I would convince the world that I really was the greatest.' Mohammed Ali

Your Turn - refer to the Participant Journal page X

Each and every one of us has an untapped energy source that can be drawn upon to bring about superior results.

Enhancing motivation is fundamentally about a change of attitude, developing a positive 'can do' mindset and engaging in systematic behaviours – the short-term process goals – that facilitate improvement.

**“I WAS A TROUBLED TEEN AND I WAS
CONSTANTLY LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO
THROW ME A ROPE. THOSE ROPES ARE
CONNECTIONS. THEY ALLOW US TO SEE THAT
LIFE EXISTS BEYOND THE LITTLE WORLDS WE
ARE CURRENTLY A PART OF.”**

LAUREN OLIVER

Coachability

Characteristics of a Coachable Athlete:

- Coachability means being grateful that someone cares enough about you to push you.
- It means being vulnerable enough to know you're not perfect and you need their expertise.
- It means learning to put your ego aside to be open to honest feedback and being willing to make changes.

Your Turn - refer to the Participant Journal page X



These are some common behaviour and attitudes that will turn coaches away:

- Talking back, becoming defensive
- Eye rolling, talking while the coach is talking, and other disrespectful behaviours
- Placing blame on other teammates or circumstances
- General negativity or pessimism
- Inability to implement changes discussed by the coach
- General slacking off, cutting corners.

Openness or open-mindedness is one of the most important traits for coachability. Developing in a sport, or learning in any aspect of life, is all about evolving and making changes that lead to growth and improvement.

A coach's job is to help their players improve by pointing out the changes that they need to make as they continue in their journey to success. That being said, for players to improve, they must be willing to experiment with their coach's new ideas and implement changes.

Coachability

Here are some steps to being a 'coachable athlete'.

- Respect in the Workplace (on the field)
- Being a coachable athlete means that you respect yourself and others.
- This extends to referee, opponents and other team-mates.
- Letting the side down, often isn't a reflection of physical performance, of even winning or losing a game - it's often down to attitude.
- Being respectful and considerate of those around you means that there's no room for ego getting in the way.
- Treat everyone with respect, if for no other reason that common courtesy.



Communication is key

- When communication is weak, relationships break down.
- As part of your athletic performance training give consideration to how you communicate with others, and how this affects your performance.
- Being a successful athlete means being able to articulate your emotions in an eloquent (decent) manner.
- Just look at the respect that athletes like David Beckham have, from the way they effectively communicate with others.

Listen and learn

Being a coachable athlete means that you acknowledge room for improvement.

It's an understanding that the journey is as important as the destination.

Key to this is really listening to feedback and making sure you learn from it.

Think about the actions you will take following your sports coach giving you constructive feedback.