

WHO ARE YOU AS A COACH?

Have you ever taken the time to stop and ask yourself what kind of coach you are, or what kind of coach you aspire to be? I'm sure if you reflect back on your previous coaching experiences there will be some coaches who have inspired, and perhaps some who have not; there will be some you try to emulate and others you try not to. It is these past experiences that will have shaped what you believe to constitute a 'good' coach, and no doubt from this evolved the kind of coach you are, or want to be. You will have some clear beliefs of what coaching should be, and from this how you should be when coaching – these are your underpinning values as a coach. These values and beliefs underpin everything you do and in turn everything your learners experience, it works a bit like this:



Coaching is a complex and difficult process, many would say that having a clear understanding of who you and what you want to be as a coach is a fundamental part of helping us to develop as a coach. Knowing this helps us understand what works and what doesn't, but more importantly why things work or don't.

'When you have clarity about what you are all about, decisions and what actions to take become clear and are consistent. Your values and beliefs provide the scaffolding to your actions'

SO WHAT ARE YOUR VALUES AND BELIEFS?

Knowledge and experience that has already been gained as well as is still being developed evolves our values and beliefs. Impacting moments are key to developing our values, this often through interaction with others. Answering some key questions can help start unpicking what you really value and believe in as a coach:

- What made 'impacting moments/experiences' positive or negative?
- What behaviours did you like/dislike?
- What were your reactions, thoughts or feelings?
- How have these events/people shaped your life?
- How have they influenced your values?

VALUES AND BELIEFS OF OTHER EXPERIENCED PADDLESPORT COACHES:

Research is starting to identify that experienced adventure sports coaches (including paddlesport coaches) have some common values and beliefs when it comes to their coaching. Here's what they are – how do these fit with who you are as a coach and what you believe in?

- Coaching is an individualised process.
- It is about developing independence.
- It should be a two way process.
- It should be learner focused.
- It is a constant journey of discovery.
- It should involve active experimentation.

WHO WE ARE INFLUENCES WHAT OUR LEARNERS LEARN...

Don't forget the importance of what you believe in as a coach, because as we have already seen it has direct impact on the experience our learners will have and most importantly what they will learn from us. Take some time to consider what you value and believe in, from this reflect on the way it influences how you go about your coaching. How does this match with what the learners learn? How does this match with how the learners want to learn?



SUMMARY

To recognise who we are as a coach and how we want to behave as a coach is key to support us in our development, and to help us understand how to become the best coach we can be. We have all had days coaching when we are just not quite seeing eye to eye with either our learners, our fellow coaches, our employer or our club. Chances are the reason behind this will be because our values and beliefs of why we are doing what we are doing are being challenged, understanding this is essential to overcoming the challenge, learning from it and developing beyond it. It is these values and beliefs that guide all we do; embrace them, nurture them and understand them – they are known as our ‘coaching philosophy’. They are what we are and understanding them will enable us to become all we want to be!

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