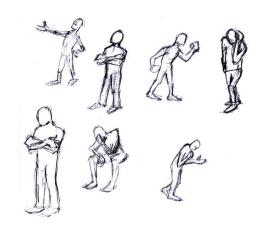
Attachment A

"Body Language in Coaching: A Tool for Effective Communication"



...Coaching at its core is an exercise in trust. Athletes depend on coaches for knowledge, guidance, inspiration, and motivation. They rely on coaches to set the parameters by which athletes can strive for their best... John Dalla Costa on the "value of trust" (Center for Ethical Orientation, Toronto, Canada) ...Body Language is the outward reflection of a person's emotional condition, defined as gestures, postures, and facial expressions by which a person manifests various physical, mental or emotional states and communicates non-verbally with others...

It is easy to make assumptions when we try to 'read' someone's body language based on a single movement or gesture, and when verbal meanings are unclear. Shaking hands, shrugging, nodding, and shaking the head are more apparent behaviors nowadays than in earlier civilizations. Historically, body language is categorized as a form of ''-language' in which nonverbal communication elements hold and convey meaning during personal interaction. <u>True meaning, however, is more likely to come across in groups or clusters of behaviors</u>. If the person is crossing arms in response to something that is/was said they might be just cold. On the other hand, a person crossing arms and looking away clearly communicates a stronger message of displeasure or disagreement. People typically exhibit three types of behavior: touch, body position, and body movement. These come in clusters of signals and/or postures; they happen at the same time and convey a person's feelings very clearly. One has to be aware and sensitive,

however, that people from other cultures are likely to use body language in different ways, depending on their social norms.

- Touch or haptic communication (sense of touch)— is the more intimate of the three, implying friendship or domination or both. It may be used to get someone's attention, express sympathy or intimacy. The way we move within a group or stand-alone can convey the way we actually feel about ourselves.
- *Kinesic communication* is sent by the way we stand or sit, gestures we use, and our facial expressions (i.e., interpretation of body language such as facial expressions, gestures or, more formally, non-verbal behavior related to movement, either of any part of the body or the body as a whole). Generally, the more space we take up, the more comfortable and assertive we feel. Facial expressions relay important information regarding our emotions, and/or ability to understand what's going on around us, whereas gestures add emphasis to the words we say.
- *Proximal communication* has to do with the way we position our body when interacting with others. There are *degrees of personal space*: *Up close or an arm length's away*—indicates the trust we have in the other person or knowing the other person well. The *direction we angle the body in relation to another: face-to-face or at an angle* provides clues as to the level of intimacy or potential confrontation.

Multiple demands by athletes, parents, and club administrators create pressures, which can influence daily coaching behavior unless one has developed specific coping strategies.

According to research, 60-80 % of initial opinion is formed in less than four minutes as athletes make judgments whether or not the coach is approachable (interpreted as easy to talk to, friendly, amicable, sociable, open) or unapproachable for that day (perceived as distant, unfriendly, grumpy, aloof, cold, and/or standoffish). Such interpretation is critical for the coach-athlete interaction and relationship since the "coach is the true agent of change" in any sport environment. Coaches are, however, not always aware of the immediate affect of their body language or emotional signals they send off. Yet, they are on 'display, observed and studied' by athletes before, during and after training; before competition or event; during competition or event; after competition or event; during de-briefing or evaluation; during non-training and/or social situations. "See yourself as a book that interested people read – whether or not you want them to"... And one should always remember, "Pictures are worth a thousand words!"

It is said, "the world's greatest leaders throughout history have been good orators and use great body language to be effective in their delivery. "Similarly, coaches need to display effort, enthusiasm, and passion to motivate their athletes. Statistics imply that without body language up to 50-65% of human communication is lost or at least unreadable. Subconscious gestures with hands, facial expressions and body language can often communicate more clearly the 'true' meaning. Most of us are a reflection of our parents...they taught us that being emotional is acceptable or ... "Men don't cry"... Males and females employ pretty much the same body language although women might use it more than men. However, cultural norms influence body language based on gender, age, status, and specific culture, which can be misinterpreted or elicit unexpected responses. Body language speaks volumes as a form of non-verbal communication involving stylized gestures, postures, body poses, eye movements, and physiological signs, which act as cues to others. Humans send and receive non-verbal signals all the time, and interpret such signals subconsciously. Body language and words have to be absolutely in sync because true meaning comes from gestures, not necessarily from words. Someone stated that, "words are the spaghetti sauce while spaghetti is the expression of the body." Therefore, we need to give off images that make people trust us. Most of us may not know or realize the extent of signals we send. This means, 'the way' we say it – not just 'what' we say, is equally important. For example, we move the face, make visible gestures and exhibit subconscious actions like breathing shifts, sighs, huffs, heaves, puffs, gasps, sulking, changes of voice and skin tone. Body language can denote pleasure and displeasure, happiness and sadness, comfort and discomfort, interest and disinterest, frustration, doubt, confusion, and personal needs. On the other hand, when the feelings of a person are revealed the *underlying reason of such emotion is not*. Interpretation and knowledge of the motive of *that feeling* is necessary for accurate detection.

Micro expressions are facial expressions when people try to repress or suppress an emotion. If they are unable to do so completely, emotions may flash onto the face very rapidly sometimes for as short as $1/125^{th}$ of a second. Micro expressions along with hand gestures and posture send off signals that register almost immediately like a 'silent orchestra with a long-lasting repercussion.' Although many of us use these fleeting expressions, about 85% of people can improve them. There are some misconceptions about the statistics of non-verbal communication. In the 1970s, Albert Mehrabian established the 7% - 38% - 55% rule to denote the amount of communication conferred by words, tone, and body language. The findings of that particular study reveal that the words we speak only convey about 7% of the overall message sent; 38% is

attributed to voice tone or inflection and 55% to body language. His findings, however, have been somewhat generalized to 7% (verbal), 38%, and 55% (total 93%) as a working formula for communication. In fact, these numbers only reflect the results of that particular study; they are more about the importance of visuals and the degree to which we rely on them during communication. Mehrabian was only referring to cases that expressed feelings or attitudes such as a person saying...I do not have a problem with you... whereby the focus is on the tone of voice and body language of the person rather than the actual spoken words. It is therefore a common misconception that these percentages apply to all communication. Disagreement among experts puts the level of non-verbal communication as high as 80% while others propose 60-70%, although it could be around 50-65%, according to some.

Regardless of these differences, "the way something is said" inclusive body language and eye contact is 13 times more important than the information given since body language can undermine the message or information. In essence, words and gestures can say something totally different whereas body language is more reliable than facial expressions. For example, when the face and body in photographs showed conflicting emotions, participants' judgment of facial expression was impeded and became biased toward the emotion expressed by the body. The brain possesses the mechanism sensitive to the agreement between facial expression and body language and can evaluate information quickly. On the other hand, various studies show facial communication to be believed 4.3 times more often than verbal meaning. Other findings denote that verbal communication in a flat tone is 4 times more likely to be understood than pure facial expression. Some experts estimate that human communication consists of 93% body language and 'para-linguistic' cues ('Para-language' refers to the non-verbal elements of communication used to modify meaning and convey emotion; the study of 'para-language' is known as paralinguistics). 'para-language' may be expressed consciously or subconsciously, including voice pitch and volume, in some cases intonation of speech (grammar), and at times the definition is restricted to vocally produced sounds.

Reading' People's Body Language

Physical Expression:

• *Kinesics*— is known as the study of body movement and expressions. Physical expressions such as waving, pointing, touching and slouching are forms of non-verbal communication. *Gestures* can emphasize a point or relay a message; *posture* can reveal boredom or great interest; *touch* can convey encouragement or caution; *mirroring* someone's body language indicates that he/she is understood.

Posture

- *Crossing arms over the chest* sends a basic and powerful body signal, erecting an unconscious barrier between oneself and the other (although the person might be cold, usually clarified by rubbing hands or huddling). In a serious confrontational situation when the person also leans away from the speaker, it means an expression of opposition.
- Looking at the speaker while crossing the arms—indicates the person is bothered but wants to talk.
- Posture or extended eye contact and standing properly while listening—shows interest.
- *Hand gesture at sides* is interpreted as a drop of energy while *bringing the hand closer* to the chest is understood as signs of energy, excitement and motivation.
- Walking up behind a person— is taken as alerting and intimidating or assuming there is a problem.
- *High-pitched or shrill voice* (common in females), *flat or monotonous voice* is difficult for the listener. One should always *a) speak clearly and exercise articulation; b) vary the pitch and pace, and c) insert correct pauses to 'catch' the listener's interest.* Most men in general battle to modulate the voice (change the tone, volume, frequency) while women usually need to pay special attention to resonance (quality, volume, pitch) as a lower voice quality has been found to be more effective.

Body Posturing or Posing:

- *Pacing while talking with repetitive gestures detract* gestures need to be expressive, emphasizing the message or content but need to be neutral.
- *Harsh or blank facial expression* often denotes outright hostility.
- *Touching one's face during conversation* can sometimes denote deceit or an act of withholding information.
- Tilting the head to one side or eyes looking straight ahead at the speaker but becoming slightly unfocused—indicates boredom. On the other hand, a head tilt may point to a sore neck, amblyopia ('lazy eye'), and/or other ocular problems by the listener. So, correct interpretation is essential.
- *Tilting the head to one side and showing the ear* means the person is actually listening. People may *start to mirror*, causing the other person to tilt the head and listen more.
- *Tensioning and releasing face and scalp muscles* is evidence of emotional changes as are *changes of skin tone and texture*.

Signals of the Eyes:

It is crucial to interpret the eye contact. They eyes are said to be the 'mirror of the soul.' Learning to 'read' and interpret eye movement is crucial. They are powerful tools, very expressive, send many cues and signals, and detect tiny changes in the body language of others.

- *Consistent eye contact*—indicates the person is thinking positively of what the speaker is saying. It can also mean that the other person doesn't trust the speaker enough to take his/her eyes off the speaker.
- *Direct eye contact but 'fiddling' with something* points toward interest or the fact that attention is somewhere else.

- Lack of eye contact—can mean negativity. However, people with anxiety disorders are often unable to make eye contact without some personal discomfort. Also, cultural difference may demand 'lowering of the eyes' due to respect or humility or subservience.
- Looking up to the left- indicates visual thinking and forming mental pictures.
- Lowering the eyes—indicates modesty or submission. This may relate more to a sign of respect for others or could convey a feeling of inferiority.
- *Narrowing the eyes deliberately* conveys anguish and distaste. One has to be very aware of this as it may also be *directed toward the person*, *who is the cause or source* of that displayed feeling.
- Attention invariable wanders and the eyes stare away for an extended period—denotes the person is not convinced by someone's words.
- *Unfocused eyes* the person's 'mind is wandering; they are not paying attention; it may be a sign of boredom. Literally, they are not focused.
- Averted gaze, touching the ear, or scratching the skin- shows disbelief.
- Glistening eyes—signal strong emotion of either distress, short of crying, or excitement such as passion and triumph.
- Glaring eyes— used to intimidate and can illicit hostile reactions or responses.
- *Frequent blinking during conversation* denotes high interest. Some use it to seek attention.
- *Excessive blinking* is a well-known display of someone lying. However, recent evidence shows that the absence of blinking could also be a more reliable factor for lying than excessive blinking.
- A wink with the closed eye directed at the person—implies a 'shared' secret.
- Eye angle changes (even at a distance) shows that attention is diverted away onto something. The precision timing of eye contact indicates interest, disinterest, or intimidation.
- Eye pupil size changes— signals fluctuating emotions as interests peaks and/or wanes

'Three States of Looking':

These represent the different states of being:

- Looking from one eye to the other eye and then to the forehead— is a sign of taking an authoritative position
- Moving from one eye to the other eye and then to the nose— signals that the person is engaging in 'level' conversation with neither party holding superiority.
- Looking from one eye to the other eye and then to the lips— indicates a strong romantic feeling or flirting stage.

Considerations:

- People with certain disabilities or those with autism use and understand body language differently or not at all. Interpreting their gestures and facial expressions (or lack thereof) in the context of normal body language usually leads to misinterpretations and misunderstandings (especially, if body language is given priority over spoken language).
- Signs and body signals tend to vary by cultural era, gender, and among people from various ethnic/racial groups, who could interpret body language in different ways.

Examples of Gestures and Interpretations:

• Legs point in a particular direction—

• Crossed arms— Submissiveness or defensiveness

Into the direction of interest

Body Language and Space:

Interpersonal space refers to the imaginary 'psychological bubble' when someone is standing way too close (people in elevator!). Research reveals "four different zones of interpersonal space" in North America:

- *Intimate distance* ranges from touching to about 18" apart; it is the space around us that we reserve for close and intimate members.
- *Personal distance* begins about an arm length away, starting around 18" proximity and ending about 4' away; it is used in conversation with friends and to chat with others during group discussion.
- **Social distance** ranges from 4-8 feet away; it applies to strangers, newly formed groups and new acquaintances.
- **Public distance** includes anything more that 8' away; it is used for speeches, lectures, and theater; essentially, it is reserved for larger audiences.

Unintentional Gestures and Body Cues:

Recently, new interest has centered on 'unintentional cues' such as:

- Rubbing the eyes
- Resting the chin
- Touching the lips
- Nose etching
- Head scratching
- Finger locking
- Narrowing the eyes, 'bulges' in the cheeks and nose— is interpreted as a "cue of pain" (2010 research on facial recognition on mice to study human reaction of pain and subsequent expression). This is important to determine if an athlete is hurting, in pain, or using 'discomfort' as an excuse.

Sexual Interest and Body Language:

It is important for any coach interacting especially with females, mixed gender, youth, and growing adolescent to understand signals that may indicate special personal or sexual interest on

part of the athlete. Our role is to be aware, sensitive, and in control to avoid potential misleading or miss-interpretations, which in some instances lead to allegations and potential loss of the occupation!

'Special Interest' Indicators:

- Exaggerated gestures and body movements
- Echoing and mirroring the speaker
- Room encompassing glances
- Leg crossing
- Pointing the knee at the speaker
- Hair tossing or touching
- Head tilting
- Pelvic rotation
- Showing wrists
- Playing with ear rings wristbands, or other jewelry
- Adjusting clothes
- Laughing, giggling, and smiling for no reason
- Eye contact
- Touching the speaker
- Playfulness
- Seeking close proximity

Since verbal communication accounts between 7-10% of the overall means to convey a message one can never determine the truthfulness or sincerity of people by their words alone (Haynes, 2009). In fact, words transmitted verbally often do not reflect peoples' thoughts or feelings.

We need to 'see through' the emotions to determine:

- Interest
- Boredom
- Signals of excitement frustration or dismay anger nervousness tension reassurance
- Signals of authority or power
- Ways person is thinking
- Ways person acts to convey pride
- If person is more open to agree
- If actions to make someone trust you
- Ways to build rapport
- Ways to open conversations
- Ways action-oriented people act or move
- Ways confident people act or move
- Ways to read and counteract potential objections
- Ways to make lasting impressions

- If person is keeping a secret
- If another person is suspicious
- Ways to detect a liar

Guide Lines to 'Reading' Body Language:

- Women tend to be more perceptive than men in this aspect.
- Each movement or gesture is a <u>valuable key</u> to specific emotion a person may be feeling or is displaying. Remember that body language is more honest than spoken words!
- The key to 'reading' someone's body language is the understanding of the person's emotional condition while listening to what they are saying, <u>and</u> the circumstances they are in while saying it (i.e., understand the emotional condition and/or context)
- Think of specific coaching situations where this can be valuable!

Rules for Accurate Interpretation:

- Read Gestures in Clusters!
 - o Recognizing whole cluster is far more reliable than an isolated gesture.
- Look for Congruence!
 - o Non-verbal signals have 5 times more impact than verbal ones. When the two do not match, people tend to relay on the non-verbal and disregard the verbal.
- Read Gestures in Context!
 - Interpret gestures based on the circumstance, environment or climate (tightly crossed arms)!

Awareness of Potential Communication Barriers:

- Be aware of potential social communication barriers
- Gender, age, status and cultural norms influence BL
- Different cultures use and express BL language in different ways
- Autistic athletes use different BL
- Athlete's perception is different from the coach
- Athlete may not be willing to work through the process
- Athlete may lack the knowledge needed to understand fully the discussion
- Athlete may be too emotional to grasp the communication
- Athlete may lack the motivation to listen
- Coach may have difficulty to express him/herself clearly
- Emotions of both parties may interfere with the communication process

Open' Body Language:

• There are several key behaviors, which enhance the so-called 'Open' body language, interpreted as an action that the other person is not 'crossing,' covering up, or hiding something.

Display of Positive Body Language:

• Be like the 'solar system' – 'stand out!'

- Remove any existing barriers with an easy smile and portray a feeling of being comfortable!
- The other person is attracted more easily because the behavior denotes warmth, acceptance, and friendliness.
- 'Feel grounded!' This builds up posture!
- Be aware of posture (head, shoulders, back, abdominals and buttock muscles)!
- Stand-tall with good posture, maintain eye contact at all times, keep the palms open and legs uncrossed, and turn the body toward the other party!
- Posture and emotions need to be congruent.
- The voice is calm, firm, and in a measured tone, which denotes authority and confidence.
- Look confident and exude a sense of self-esteem!
- Seek an opportunity to create a field of force and energy and be 'present' with the other person!
- Make it an environment of attraction rather resentment!

Active Listening Skills:

The ability to listen is one of the most important communication skills and it is a <u>fundamental leadership skill</u>. It is vital because it makes the coach more effective and productive, creates the opportunity to build rapport and show support. It produces a better teaching/coaching environment, facilitates the process when trying to resolve problems, helps to answer questions, and assists in finding underlying meanings in what others have to say. The ability to listen is a <u>learned skill</u>. It is NOT easy! As some one said in jest... "We were given two ears but only one mouth. This is because God knew that listening was twice as hard as talking"...

Listening Effectively:

We can divide listening skills into several stages:

- Hear the words
- Focus on the message
- Understand and interpret the message
- Analyze and evaluate the message
- Respond to the message
- Remember the message

Five Levels of Listening:

"Seek first to understand before being understood (Covey, 1998, p. 124). This emphasizes the importance of listening at a level that goes beyond "just hearing word." There are <u>five</u> levels of listening, according to Covey:

- Ignoring
 - o Not trying to listen!

- Pretending
 - o Listening even though you are NOT!
- Listening Selectively
 - o To only what interests you!
- Attentive Listening***
 - Use this level most of the time
 - o Involves listening to understand the speaker... And ... comparing what they say with your point of view

Guide Lines to "Attentive" Listening:

- Maintain eye contact
- Can look into the eyes or focus on the face
- Can look away because constant eye contact may distract the speaker
- Use body language that shows interest
- Lean toward the speaker
- Nod or shake the head to show you are listening
- Hand or arm on the shoulder can signal reassurance or understanding
- Affirm you are listening
- Acknowledge that you are listening with responses such as: mh, uh-uh, oh my, okay, and I see
- Listen to the full thought avoid interrupting
- Restate the speaker's words
- Ask questions to clarify or learn more

Listening with "Empathy":

Listening with empathy** involves "both the heart and mind to understand the speaker's words, intent, and feelings" (Covey, 2007).

- Restating what the speaker says in his/her words shows you heard the words
- To begin to understand the underlying meaning of the words <u>rephrase what the speaker</u> is saying in your own words
- To get the real message in the conversation, <u>reflect the feelings you are hearing in your</u> own words
- Until you address the feelings, you won't understand what is being communicated

Guide Lines to Listening with "Empathy":

- Check your defensive reactions
- If a topic is emotional for the speaker you may react strongly
- Instead of listening, you want to respond or defend
- If you don't check this reaction, you will most likely 'shut down' any further real communication
- If you feel yourself 'getting defensive" try to stay 'curious' ask questions, or make a Non-judgmental comment…like 'hmm'

Barriers to Listening:

Many kinds of distractions interfere with our ability to hear, listen to, and understand athletes or others. Some distractions are easier identified as so-called barriers:

• Environmental:

- Noise others talking nearby public address system announcements music traffic – iPods
- Too hot-cold too windy
- Weather conditions
- Being hungry tired headache upset stomach getting chilled other ailments
- Chairs are uncomfortable as are bleachers (!) desk or table between the parties involved
- o If one has a physical advantage such as height
- o Height is artificially created y the setting chairs, bleachers, viewing area
- Wearing wet clothes (swimmer)

• Physiological:

- Our ability to think is 5 x faster than we speak
- Creates a natural lapse where we fill in the time with our thoughts instead of staying focused on the speaker
- o 'Jumping ahead' with our thoughts
- o Colds and ear infections may interfere
- o Speech problems may interfere (some stutter when nervous)
- o Pronunciation, accent, errors or misuse of words may interfere

• Psychological barriers (more difficult to identify):

- o If someone criticizes you, you may fixate on that and hear very little else or hear it through the 'filter' of being criticized (selective hearing)
- o Athletes (others) may shut down attempts to communicate with you if your verbal and Non-verbal indicates you are not interested
- o Body language indicates that you rather be somewhere else
- o Body language indicates you think your ideas have more merit
- We all have 'hot button' words that may trigger our reactions.
- We get 'lost' in the emotions to respond to those words
- We can compound the barrier with the assumptions we make about the people who use those words
- If you are not sure of the reason you are listening you will be poorly motivated to do so!

• Social barriers (See previous)

Guidelines to Effective Listening:

- STOP! Whatever you are doing!
- LOOK! Make eye contact and face the other party squarely!
- LISTEN! Listen carefully to words and emotions combined!
- USE non-verbal cues like nodding to show compassion, sympathy or understanding!

- PATIENCE! Always allow the other party to finish, especially when emotions are involved!
- RESPOND! Re-state or rephrase to ensure both parties understand clearly!
- QUESTION! Ask questions for more information or clarity!

Sabotaging the Intention to Understand:

If you want to understand the other person, you need to keep focus on him/her...

If you turn the focus on yourself by interjecting and/or trying to fit what he/she is saying into your perspective, it becomes difficult to truly understand what is being said.

- Judging the other person
- Deciding whether the other's viewpoint is right or wrong
- Explaining to other person what you think underlies their ideas or opinions
- Turning the conversation around to your viewpoint
- Giving advice (unless specifically asked)

Coaches should become familiar with the rules for accurate interpretation and increase their understanding of potential communication barriers. It is critical for the coach-athlete interaction to develop special awareness, sensitivity, and techniques to 'read' body language effectively [females are found to be more perceptive, according to research]. This includes body gestures, unintentional signs, body posturing and poses, physical and emotional indicators, eye signals, body language and space (proximity), etc. Foremost, coaches should become skilled at presenting themselves with 'open' and positive body language and improve listening skills. Repeated video observation is one tool to identify respective personal communication skills and/or behavior, followed by <u>practicing effective body language</u> during daily interaction. Ultimately, the way we communicate plays a large role when making a good impression. Upright posture, eye, contact, handshake, the way we dress, and the ability to 'read' the body language of others is significant for personal interaction and successful human relationships.

Practicing Effective Body Language and Awareness:

- Consider the respective sport culture, cultural/ethnic, and gender differences!
- Consider any language barrier and English as a second language!
- Match voice and pace!
- Match body language [mirror] with the other party!
- Write down key points for better communication!
- Become aware of personal tendencies under stress!
- Use video taping to analyze personal gesture habits and communication skills!
- Attempt to coach a portion of the daily training without using words (!).

The Coach should:

- Realize that body language is more honest than spoken words!
- Become sensitive to the signals being transmitted by athletes at all times!
- Pay special attention to 'reading' athletes' emotional signals in competition!
- Learn to identify the differential signals by athletes under stress, nervousness, and confidence!

Communication is Most Successful WHEN...

- Both sender and receiver understand the same message!
- It is a 2-Way Communication Process and Coaches
 - o Listen to the 'pulse' of athletes and watch for Non-verbal cues
 - Ask a lot of questions to engage the athlete(s)
 - Avoid the "WHY" question format (Why did you do this? ... Why do you think or feel that way?) This type of questioning puts the other party on the defensive! The communication becomes reactionary or negative.
 - Instead say ... you did this, say this, believe this, and feel that way because...? The process becomes one of 'thinking' than an emotional and defensive response.
 - o Realize that 50% of coaching is 'listening
 - o *Practice* to improve listening skills!
 - o Possess and *demonstrate* 'great' listening skills!
 - o <u>Practice</u> effective BL during training
 - o *Videotape* their BL to improve the process

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