



Tools to create an appropriate coaching cycle.

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a number of tools the coach can use during the “evolution process” to keep himself and his students in a good mental, emotional and physical condition, in order to achieve a continuous development at the highest possible level. It stresses the level that is expected and the order of implementation of the concepts, since the methods are only one form of help. These methods should not condition the freedom of the coach, on the contrary, they should liberate his own potential. They are guidelines to manage the improvement process.

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INTRODUCTION: STAGES OF THE TRAINING CYCLE

The training cycle we propose is the following (Fernández, 2011):

- **Stage I: Analysis:** We try to analyse the problem to be solved. Values and beliefs are reviewed in order to define our targets as clearly as possible. We try to separate desire from real passion.
- **Stage II: Resources:** This stage shows our resources, our strengths and which must be activated and in what order, so as to reach the previously set target.
- **Stage III: Training:** This stage consists of automating behaviour patterns by means of training, so that they can be used quickly and efficiently even under pressure. This is the time to visualize and develop rituals that favour the appropriate behaviour.
- **Stage IV: Action:** During this stage, we test all coaching in a real situation, whether in a championship or another situation for which we have been training or preparing.
- **Stage V: Control:** This stage should not be forgotten, it consists of revising the process and drawing the teachings. It helps to test what worked well, what went wrong, and how to get better.

This is a never ending process as long as we want to improve, expressed in Figure 1.

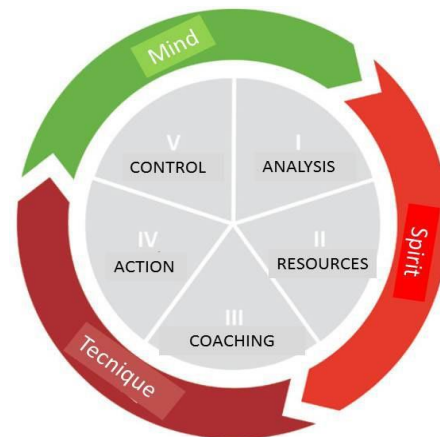


Figure 1. Coaching cycles (Fernández, 2008).

ANALYSIS

During this stage, we can identify the following fundamental aspects:

- **Acknowledge values:** Your values are placed there, where you target your focus of attention. What you observe in the others, in your environment that is what is important for you.
- **Define your target:** It is very important to know exactly where you are heading, and why, in order to move in the right direction. It may take some time, but it is a good investment, it is better to spend some time planning than to wander aimlessly. Once your target is clear, write it down (Table 1).

PURPOSE
My target is:
When shall I reach my target?
What will be my intermediate steps?
How shall I know I have reached it?
Why do I want to reach this target?
Is this my realistic target?

Table 1. Setting targets.

Percentage of targets met.



Figure 2. Percentage of targets met.

It is key to test the percentage of compliance with the objectives (GAP)

RESOURCES

During this resource stage, it is convenient to lay emphasis on the following:

- **Organize your priorities:** Once you know where you are heading, differentiate what is more important from what is not. The most important aspects are all that takes you to your target, the rest can be ignored.
- **Strengths and weaknesses:** It is important to know your own strengths and weaknesses. Analyse them as honestly as you can, reflect on them or look for help along the process.
- **Define your strategy:** Once you already know who you are and what your strongest points are, organize your steps towards the results you intend to achieve.
- **Practice patience and discipline:** Remember nothing is achieved overnight, although sometimes it may appear possible.
- **“Fight for every point”:** Perseverance in fight is one of the virtues of those who reach their targets. The toughest

opponents are not always the most skilled, but they are the ones who do not give up and continue fighting.

TRAINING

During this stage, it is important to remember the following:

- **Visualize:** If you want your ideas or dreams to come true, first you must visualize them. Imagine what you want, as accurately as possible, look at your desire with the eyes of your mind, see your dream fulfilled as really as possible.
- **Rituals:** Create your own rituals to reach favourable physical, mental and emotional states. Remember that mind and body impact each other.
- **Train your body:** Your body is the shrine of your soul that leads you in life, so treat it with care and optimize your capabilities. You will see that after sweating, not only will your body be grateful, also your mind will. There are infinite ways of working your body, tennis is one of them.
- **Train your mind:** Just as you need training to improve your physical conditioning, it is necessary to train to improve your mental capabilities. Nurture your mind with knowledge, read good books, attend cultural events, learn new things.

• **Create your rest island:** It is vital to have a place where to recharge your energy to keep up a top level. Create this place at home, or in a place in nature, or just in your mind, create a place where you can be with yourself, and renew your energy.

ACTION

During action stage we consider the following aspects:

- **Decision making:** Be aware of your emotional state the minute you make your decisions, this will have a great impact on the quality of your decisions.
- **The quality of your experience:** Learn to enjoy your experiences focusing on here and now. If you really want to attain something satisfactory for you, this is the only way out.
- **Load and rest:** Learn to play the pauses properly. You cannot be in constant tension and perform for a long time. Human energy is finite; therefore, we must learn how to use it by means of the recovery stages.

CONTROL

This stage considers the following:

- **Learning from your errors:** This is much easier said than done. It is necessary to have a sound knowledge of oneself in

order to correct past experiences and learn from them. It is also necessary to listen to the constructive criticism that significant others provide.

- **Celebrate your achievements:** Emotions reinforce learning, the greater the emotional element, the stronger the emotional capacity to keep in the memory. A little reward is emotionally encouraging, it will help us to look for and to store successful situations.



CONCLUSIONS

This article presents some tools to compare what is learnt and necessary on a tennis court, with the skills that are necessary in daily life. It is important to reflect on the positive teachings that can be drawn from a life on a tennis court, or learnt on court that can be applied to life. We do hope that the ideas presented here are useful for those coaches and players who are getting ready to learn and are ready to improve to get the best out of themselves.

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