

# NATURAL PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT

## HEALTH COACHING VERSUS HEALTH CARE

### Defining Terms:

Health – A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Coaching – A method of directing, instructing and training a person or group of people, with the aim to achieve some goal or develop specific skills.

Health care or healthcare – The prevention, treatment, and management of illness and the preservation of mental and physical well-being through the services offered by the medical and allied health professions.

### You pick the sport

Unless you were born behind the iron curtain – you probably picked the sport that you most like to play, and that you have spent most of your spare time participating in. There could have been a number of reasons why you chose to start playing a sport, but guaranteed you would only continue to play the sport if you fell in love with it. Similarly, health coaching allows you to pick the game you want to play – weight loss, increased fitness, less allergies, digestive system that works better, greater flexibility, improved concentration, control over a habit or compulsion...

If you did live behind the iron curtain then they would have put you through a bunch of physiology tests and told you what sport you were going to play – based on their expert opinion. This is a bit like modern health care – if you have a health issue that you want help with you will consult an expert who will run a bunch of tests, tell you what they will do to fix it, and you will do as you are told. And it might not be the game you expected to play: You want to run up a flight of stairs, your doctor wants to reduce your blood cholesterol...

### You have the aspirations

What is the highest high you want to attain in your sporting life? Under-16 grand final, or the Olympics; Getting to the shops without becoming breathless, or climbing to the peak of Mount Everest; To make daily living more comfortable, or to discover the limits of your human potential?

With health coaching you get the privilege of setting the height of the bar. With health care you will be given the goal – it is called a normal value – Blood pressure, heart rate, breathing capacity, blood cell count, liver function, cholesterol reading, aerobic capacity, sitting reach, Xray reading...

### You turn up to training

Training was banned from the original Olympics – it was supposed to be a test of natural ability. Somewhere between then and now, we worked out that you could develop and maximise your innate potential by training and practising. And if you do the right quantity and quality of training – you can transform from a loser to a winner.

Health coaching says “now is the time to start training for a healthy future – to prevent injuries and to enhance your performance in the heat of the big game”. Health care says “get in there, just play, we’ll patch you up if you tear or break something, and then we’ll rehabilitate you back into the shape you were in immediately before the game”.

### **You do the work**

The coach can’t do your training for you, your team mates can’t compensate for your lack of fitness. In health coaching, the coach designs and schedules your program, but at some point you have to follow the program to get the benefits and the rewards. In health care we hope that there is someone out there who can make us feel the way we would like to feel, “is there a pill that can make this go away?” “Can you put my back in for me?” “The doctor said that they will find the cure for this in a few years.” “I’m on the waiting list for some surgery to fix this problem once and for all!”

### **It’s all fun**

Even the most professional athletes need to have fun to keep them in the game. When the joy has gone, the heart has left, and the motivation will quickly wane. With health coaching you get to participate, and you get to express your personality and you can factor in serious amounts of silliness. Health care is a serious business – you should be impressed by the years of training, the amount of technology, and the visible signs of wealth and authority. And please don’t laugh too loud – you might disturb the other patients!

### **Playing the game is as important as the results**

When I was an athlete, I used to enjoy training as much as I did competing. And the moments of sheer joy and reward weren’t standing on some medal dais; they were the actual microseconds of absolute focus, coordination and motion that constituted each component of the performance itself.

Health coaching offers the opportunity to be in the now – and to discover the healing that comes from becoming more conscious and reconnected with your inner self. Health care will be satisfied when you achieve that negative test result, a normal reading, or the ablation of that pain or discomfort without the need for any form of awareness or awakening.

### **It’s up to you on game day**

You’ve done the training, followed the advice, mastered the rules of the game and now you are faced with the ultimate challenge – will you respond or choke? Health coaching prepares you for the challenges of the real world, and assists you to develop the coping mechanisms, visualisations and affirmations that will equip you for the battles of life. Health care sits on the sidelines and waits for you to fail – it will be there to help you pick up the pieces and maybe come back to fight again another day.

### **You get the credit**

What is the name of Tiger Woods’ coach? How about the guy who taught Michael Jordan how to dribble a basketball? Who gets paid more – the best player in the best team – or the fitness coach? In health coaching you are at the centre of attention – when you achieve your goals you will be the one that everyone notices – how good you look, how much stamina you have, how much energy you

exude. In health care the good doctor gets the credit – he’s the one who cured your cancer, removed your pain, knew what to do to save your life, told you which pill would do the job.

### **You get the blame**

Coaches might get sacked, but the players are the ones that bear the brunt of the blame. With health coaching you might dismiss the coach if you aren’t happy with the results, but at some point you have to take responsibility for the fact that it is your body, and you are in control – or should be. In health care you are absolved from your personal responsibility – “that doctor didn’t know what he was doing”, “that chiropractor couldn’t get my neck back in”, “the cure was worse than the disease”. This might sound attractive but it excludes you from the benefits of growth and true healing.

### **You get the medals**

The coach doesn’t get to keep your medals, certificates, endorsements, awards – he just gets a photo of him standing next to you holding your rewards. In health coaching we love to stand alongside you and bathe in your glory. In health care there are no awards for the contestants – the practitioner gets the awards and certificates and the guest spot on Oprah Winfrey...

### **Who won?**

Using a sporting metaphor might lead the reader to take on a competitive mindset: “So is health coaching better than health care?” “Should I choose which team I am going to follow and swear to never cross camps?” “If I see a health coach and still get sick does that mean if I’d been smarter and chosen health care – I wouldn’t have got sick – did I pick the wrong team?”

Now let’s take our competitive hats off – A coach who doesn’t want to work with a team of trainers and therapists in a cooperative effort, will have a short resume’. And health care that only responds to illness crises and lacks a bigger picture of prevention and wellbeing is a sick model.

The name “coach” allegedly originates from the multitasking skills associated with controlling the team of a horse-drawn stage-coach. The ability to get two, four or six horses all going in the same direction at the same time and at the same speed is one to be admired.

Make sure that your health care relationships integrate a balanced and symbiotic mix of COACHING and CARE...

Who’s your health coach?