

# Beyond the Game: Building Sports Leaders On & Off the Field



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# Opening Questions

**In a fast paced & ever-evolving sporting environment...**

- How satisfied are you with your teams ability to navigate challenges?
- Where can your players be more adaptable when it comes to learning & applying new strategies?
- How effective & intentional is your team at utilising conversational structures to create & maintain fluidity with each other?



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# Transforming Pressure into Performance

With the 2024 season upon us, there's two facets to pre-season training; the physical side & the mental side.

Individually just as important, they both offer their own important set of problems & challenges and we assist by combining the skill, with the will.

Maintaining composure & motivation while in a losing streak takes a different approach to running drills.

Handling in the moment pressure cooker situations takes more than being a great player.

Bringing new players into the fold & have them not only step up, but also buy into the team culture is as much a mental process as it is one based on skill alone.

With our 3-part offering, **Beyond the Game: Building Sports Leaders On & Off the Field**, together we can combine both a young Rugby League players skill with the mental will to not only develop them on the field, but to also turn them into leaders off the field.



# What we offer

Our program is designed around the pivotal areas of: Breakdowns, Learning & Conversations. By exploring these, teams will unlock practical strategies that lead to a higher performing & unified team dynamic.

The offering includes a series of three engaging workshops, each lasting 90 minutes & based on Ontological Leadership principles, designed to enhance self-awareness, communication & emotional intelligence, facilitating a positive, growth-oriented environment that boosts team performance & engagement.

These sessions are designed to provide the team with an immersive & interactive experience, where they will have the opportunity to dive deep into our core topics, engage in productive discussions & participate in hands-on activities. They then apply these immediately on the training field so when the season kicks off they can be integrated.

This format ensures that the Ontological concepts are not only understood but also practically applied, leading to tangible improvements in team dynamics & overall performance, ultimately enhancing their resilience & adaptability, on & off the field.



# The Structure

When you choose to move forward, the process is the following:

- I request a brief chat with the Coach & Team Captain
- Data collection. I will attend 1 or 2 training sessions to simply observe from the edges. To be more effective for the workshops it is important for me to take in the language being used, how players respond to situations, what emotions they get in when under pressure & lastly how they hold themselves throughout the training session
- Have another meeting with the Coach & Team Captain to share my observations & make suggestions
- Hold the first workshop on Breakdowns with the whole team
- Before training, meet with the Captain & Leadership team for a brief discussion regarding current Breakdowns they observe in the team.
- Observe training session & offer suggestions relating to the workshop & what I saw during training, then coaching the team on corrections which could be made
- Hold the second workshop on Learning with the whole team
- Once again meet the Captain & Leaders of the team for a debrief & observe training session. Share my observations with the whole team afterwards
- Hold the third workshop on Conversations
- Follow the same process as workshop 1 & 2
- Offer a detailed report to the Coach following my observations over the 4 weeks
- Make myself available to the team Captain for coaching for 4 competition rounds following the workshops

# The Impact of Ontological Coaching

Ontological based Coaching plays a pivotal role in the development & success of sports teams, offering a spectrum of benefits that enhance team performance, individual skill & overall team dynamics. Drawing on research & findings from various sources, here are some of the various positive impacts we've found.

Coaching significantly boosts the self-confidence of athletes, a key component for success in any sport. According to the Institute of Coaching, **80%** of individuals who undergo coaching experience an increase in self-confidence.

This heightened sense of self-belief is crucial for athletes as it enhances their ability to face challenges, make decisive moves & perform under pressure, ultimately contributing to improved performance both individually & as part of a team.

Leadership style, as identified in studies, is another critical area where coaching can make a significant impact. Leadership behaviours that convey "a clear & positive vision have been shown to reduce the risk of severe injuries in football teams by **29%-40%.**"

This emphasises the role of coaching not just in performance enhancement but also in athlete welfare & injury prevention, underlining the importance of a supportive & visionary coaching approach.

Furthermore, coaching contributes to the development of emotional intelligence (EI) & self-talk strategies among athletes, both of which are linked to improved sports performance.

Athletes with higher EI are better equipped to manage stress, understand team dynamics & maintain performance under pressure. Similarly, positive self-talk has been identified as a strategy that facilitates learning & enhances performance, offering athletes a psychological tool to overcome challenges & maintain focus.

Institute of Coaching. (2009)

Ekstrand, J., Lundqvist, D., Davison, M., D'Hooghe, M., & Pensgaard, A. M. (2021). Leadership styles of football coaches and how they relate to injury rates in professional football teams. *Sports Medicine - Open*, 7(1), 17.

Hatzigeorgiadis, A., Zourbanos, N., Galanis, E., & Theodorakis, Y. (2022). Self-talk and sports performance: A meta-analysis. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 17(1), 124-140.

# The Program

## Focus Points

- Identifying breakdowns that disrupt game play or team morale & developing skills to turn these challenges into opportunities for growth
- Sharpen communication on & off the field to minimise misunderstandings & maximise team synergy
- Building an ethos of trust & cooperation over competition, encouraging every player to take ownership & responsibility for their role & actions within the team
- Driving success on the field through improved team dynamics, leadership development & a collective commitment to excellence & continuous improvement



# Breakdowns

## What is a Breakdown?

In Ontological terms, a 'breakdown' is defined as 'an interruption to the normal expected or anticipated flow of life'.

In a sports team context, a 'breakdown' can be described as any unexpected event or challenge that disrupts the team's usual flow & performance.

These moments test a team's resilience, requiring players & coaches to adapt, overcome & learn from these experiences to emerge stronger & more unified.

Success for teams is largely determined by how effectively they can navigate these disruptions. Acknowledging the inevitability of breakdowns extends beyond simply pinpointing challenges—it equips teams with the means to proactively convert them into valuable opportunities.

By doing so, what were once seen as setbacks become powerful engines driving growth, resilience & team performance.

Breakdowns can vary in magnitude, but their impact can be significant if not properly assessed & addressed.

Examples include:

- 1. Injury of a Key Player:** An unexpected injury disrupts team dynamics & performance. Our workshops can help the team explore their responses, adapt strategies & strengthen resilience, turning the situation into an opportunity for other players to step up & for the team to explore new game plans.
- 2. Loss of Form:** A player or the team as a whole going through a rough patch, underperforming expectations. Our workshops can assist in understanding the underlying emotions & reactions, developing a growth mindset & identifying learning opportunities to regain form & confidence.
- 3. Communication Breakdowns:** Misunderstandings or conflicts between players or coaching staff can hinder team unity. Our focus on effective communication & conversational structures can help address & resolve these issues, improving team cohesion & effectiveness.

4. **Adapting to New Strategies:** Resistance to changes in strategy or gameplay introduced by coaching staff. Our workshop can facilitate a better understanding of resistance as a natural part of the learning process, helping the team to embrace change & innovation more openly.

5. **Handling External Pressures:** Dealing with expectations from fans, social media scrutiny, or personal pressures outside of the sport. We can provide strategies for managing stress & anxiety, enabling players to maintain focus & performance under pressure.

If these issues are not approached from a powerful, collaborative stance, they can lead to a rapid decline in team morale & performance. Without a unified approach, teams may find themselves struggling with internal conflicts & a lack of motivation, ultimately affecting their ability to compete at their highest level.

By navigating breakdowns with agility & insight it distinguishes good teams from the great ones, at the same time developing the individuals capability. As individuals & teams learn to transform challenges into opportunities, they develop a competitive advantage.

This approach ensures that teams not only recover from setbacks but emerge stronger & more unified.

#### **Focus Points**

- The Different Magnitudes
- Positive & Negative
- Archer Tension
- Assessments VS Assertions
- Concerns



# Learning

By understanding their learning styles, team members can significantly improve their personal & athletic development. This knowledge leads to greater creativity in strategy & problem-solving, enhancing the team's overall performance.

The perceptions they have of themselves as learners, alongside the areas they consider weaknesses, are often based on subjective assessments. By recognising & addressing these beliefs, they can unlock potential growth areas, preparing them to effectively handle both current challenges & unexpected obstacles that are inherent in competitive sports.

Here are five examples where understanding the learning aspects can benefit players in a Rugby League team.

1. **Adapting to new Coaching Strategies:** Understanding different learning stages helps players adapt more efficiently to new coaching strategies, enhancing team performance.
2. **Recovery from Performance Slumps:** By recognising their position on the Ladder of Learning, players can identify strategies to overcome slumps & improve performance.
3. **Enhancing Teamwork & Communication:** By gaining knowledge of their Allies of Learning players can develop better teamwork & communication among players.
4. **Personal Development & Skill Enhancement:** Players can leverage their understanding of learning processes to focus on personal skill development, becoming more versatile & valuable to the team, ultimately creating better leaders of themselves.
5. **Leadership & Mentorship:** Senior players can use insights from the Learning Workshop to mentor younger teammates, enhancing the team's overall knowledge & cohesion.

## Focus Points

- Importance of Learning & Questions
- The Space of Nothingness
- Allies & Enemies of Learning
- Learning Ways of Being
- Ladder of Learning



# Conversations

Teams thrive on effective communication; it's through conversations that strategies are formed & victories are secured. The nature of these interactions, whether they effective or not, significantly influences outcomes on the field.

Achieving top performance hinges on the quality of communication within the team. We delve into various types of conversations & methods to enhance coordination & achieve exceptional outcomes.

By equipping coaches & players with the tools to express themselves clearly, listen actively & engage in constructive dialogue, we ensure that communication goes beyond mere information exchange. This elevation of communication to a strategic level then becomes the driving force behind every play & decision.

Here are 5 examples showing some of our *8 Conversational structures* which highlight common scenarios that every team faces during a season.

1. **Resolving Conflicts:** Let's face it, not all members of a team get along & often this can impact a team. By enhancing skills in *Conversations for Clarity & Understanding*, it enables players to address & resolve interpersonal conflicts more effectively.
2. **Improving Team Dynamics:** Utilising *Conversations for Relationships* to create effective connections among team members, leading to a supportive & unified team environment.
3. **Enhancing Performance:** Applying *Conversations for Accomplishment* to acknowledge individual team achievements, boosting morale & motivation.
4. **Creating Strategies:** Leveraging *Speculative Conversations* to explore new strategies & approaches to gameplay, encouraging innovation & adaptability.
5. **Dealing with Pressure:** Mastering *Self/Private Conversations* to manage internal pressures & anxieties, leading to better focus & performance under stress.

- [Already Listening](#)
- [Effective Action](#)
- [Negative Breakdown Loop](#)
- [The Eight Conversational Proficiencies](#)

## Outcomes

From participating in the workshop focused on Breakdowns, Learning & Conversations, your team would gain:

- Better team talk through streamlined communication
- Tougher spirit & the ability to navigate challenges & setbacks with adaptability
- Ability to lead, motivate & Inspire by enhancing dedication & leadership skills
- Solve & Evolve with elevated standards of performance & sharper problem-solving tactics
- A culture of accountability, unity & growth which offers a strengthened team cohesion & camaraderie
- Enhanced learning agility, making players better leaders equipped to perform on & off the field

## The Ripple Effect

- Setting higher benchmarks for individual & team achievements through Sustained High Performance
- Improved resilience & confidence leading to more assertive & decisive play
- Foundation of trust, cooperation & ownership which will attract future talent to the club & professional opportunities for the players
- A stronger team Identity & ethos, which has leaders within the team who step up, take ownership & drive success on the field
- A team culture that thrives on overcoming setbacks, is adaptable to change & is committed to self-improvement, on & off the field
- Legacy of Excellence - the culture of leadership & unity creates a lasting legacy, inspiring & attracting future team members



# The Methodology

Our methodology merges Ontology – the study of *being*, with Constructivism – a learning theory. We then integrate these into team environments to drive culture & performance.

This approach helps individuals & teams understand their personal nature & how they perceive & construct their reality.

It encourages active learning & personal growth, leading to deeper insights & more effective problem-solving. This blend of self-discovery & interactive learning is ideal for facilitating personal, sports & professional development in a straightforward, impactful way.

# The Next Steps

**1****Review**

Review our offering & reach out with any queries

**2****Planning Meeting**

Schedule a meeting dedicated to discussing a starting point & how we can engage the program

**3****Leadership Session**

Arrange a meeting involving the team coach & leadership figures to formally initiate the program

**4****Reporting Rhythm**

Establish a tailored reporting process that aligns with your specific needs & preferences, focusing on the ideal frequency & format.

# Filimon Filippou

## About the Facilitator

My journey in business & personal development is both extensive & unique. Born into the world of business, I've been immersed in this environment from the start. Setting goals & planning from early high school, I charted a path that ensured I would carve my own way, without ever settling for a conventional job.

My fascination with human behaviour, psychology & self-development has been a lifelong pursuit. In my early 20s, I launched my first business, quickly building a dedicated team & achieving a six-figure turnover within the first year. This was just the beginning.

By my late 20s, I had established my first major company, scaling it to an eight-figure business, employing nearly 1,500 people over the time & expanding operations across three cities. Following this, I successfully opened & managed three additional companies, each operating autonomously, allowing me to focus on broader strategic goals as I explored the tonality of different industries.

In 2021, I made the decision to retire from it all because I wanted a bigger change, & a bigger challenge that was aligned with a core part of myself. This pivotal moment allowed me two years to dive deeper into the study of human potential & behaviour, culminating in my certification as an Ontological Coach, specialising in Personal Leadership & Performance.

Today, I lead the *Built Better Project*. This venture is a testament to my evolution – from building structures to *Building People*. It's here that I leverage my extensive experience & insights to guide others in realising their fullest potential.



# Get in touch

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