

## Do your players "get it"?

Recently, in issue of Sports Illustrated they have the results of a question they polled NFL's players on.

The most recent question was:

"Which current NFL Coach would you least like to play for?"

And the top two answers were? Tom Coughlin of the New York Giants, and Bill Belichick of the New England Patriots.

Now, if you are a football fan, you are probably thinking the same as I did when I first read this, "Huh?!?". Yeah, that one doesn't make much sense does it?

Let me point something out for those that aren't big football fans: The combined record of these two coaches is 242-174 and, they have won four of the last seven Super Bowls!!! And guess who was fifth on the list? Bill Parcells! Geez, all "The Tuna" did was post a career record of 172-130-1 and win 2 Super Bowls, 3 Conference and 8 Division Championships!

So what gives here? Well, if you do follow football, you already know the answer, but, in case you don't:

All three are no-nonsense, stern disciplinarians who demand everything their players have in them, every day-no exceptions.

But, if you polled the NFL players and asked them, "Do you want to win a Super Bowl in your career?", I'd bet you the overwhelming response would be something like, "What? Are you Stupid? Of course I do!" (And that would be the PG version!) :)

So, what these grown men, these incredibly gifted athletes, these very well paid professional athletes, are REALLY saying is:

"Of course I want to win, but not THAT much!"

It really is ridiculous, isn't it? But, on the other hand, if you polled the players who have played for these three coaches, have been through the "wars" with them and have lived the moment of being a part of winning one of the ultimate championships in all of the sports world, they would, to a man, tell you they wouldn't trade that life experience for anything! They would speak of their former coach with the utmost respect, and laugh as they recounted stories of some of those "moments" all these other players who haven't been there cringe at the very thought of, "No way do I want to play for THAT guy-no way do I want to go through THAT!"

The point here is that age, gender, or sport doesn't matter. There are going to be situations where you are really going to have to push to get an athlete out of the comfort zone of effort and attitude they reside in. This is what holds them back from doing what it takes to truly reach their full potential.

That's what Coughlin, Belichick and Parcells, and countless other perennially successful coaches in every sport do-they demand their players best efforts no matter what. They push and push, and then if necessary, they push some more. They reward what they know is necessary when they get it, both on an individual and team basis, and they put in place undesirable consequences for those times when they don't get it.

And players everywhere cringe at the thought of having those demands placed on them. They don't want to be that disciplined, or consistently work that hard.

Why? Because no one has ever forced them to push themselves hard enough to do these things. No one has ever got them to see that they can do these things-or what they can accomplish when they do. They simply don't understand the value, the "rewards" they can achieve. They simply don't "get it".

If you can get your players to want to push as hard as they can, because they want to achieve the possible rewards more than anything else, you've just cleared the biggest hurdle to getting your team to achieve as much as they possibly can.

This goes back to a concept I've spoke about many times before, the good old, "pain and pleasure syndrome". Athletes have to be pushed out of their comfort zone of mediocrity sometimes. They don't value the pleasure of what they COULD accomplish nearly as much as they do avoiding what they PERCEIVE as the pain involved in doing what it takes to accomplish what is possible.

You have to turn that around on them. They have to see that it's much LESS PAINFUL/MUCH MORE PLEASURABLE to give the effort, and have the attitude needed to play at their highest level, than it is to endure the coach's wrath, the extra conditioning, the failure in competition etc. They have to want it, and they have to believe they can do it. They have to "get it".

When working with girls, the whole key is getting them to see how much fun (PLEASURE) it is to play their best. Once they understand this, they will quickly also learn to understand how little fun it is (PAIN) to play poorly.

When girls get this, they will do everything they can to grab that pleasure, and avoid that pain, consistently.