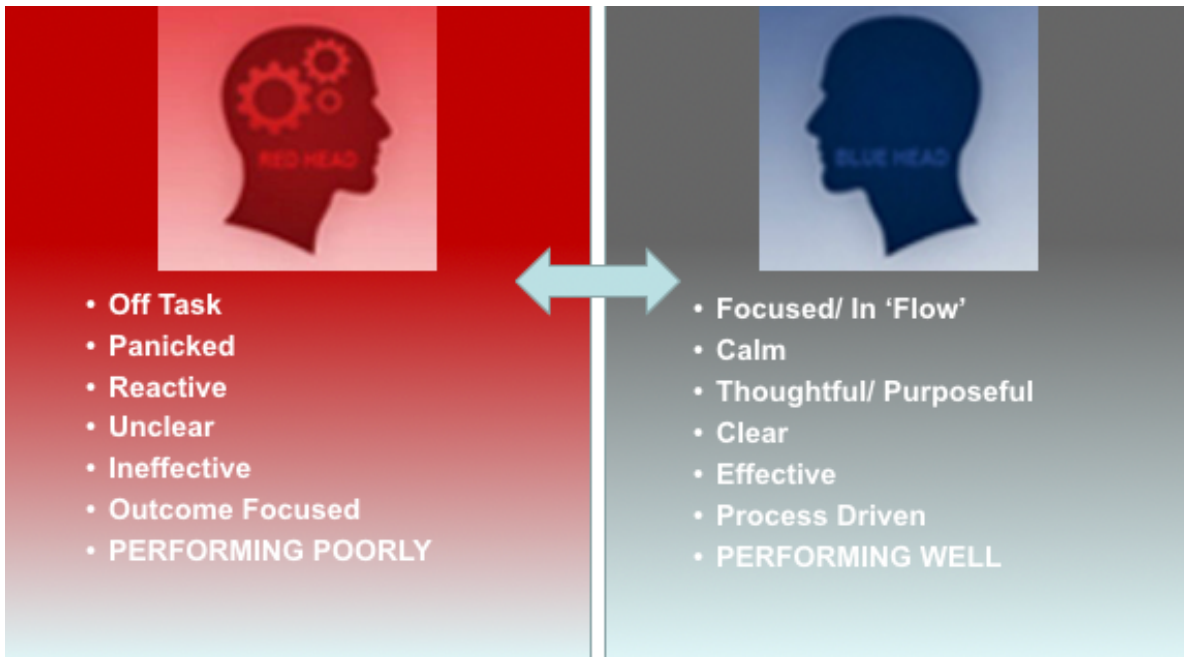


# Sport BoP

## Women & Girls In Sport: Lessons from Psychology

All of us are hard-wired to respond to our environment. What triggers us into Red Head will depend upon our threshold for stress and what we perceive as demands and challenges - these may be sex related.



The Coach is the leader of the team. The Coach sets the climate of the team, and influences the training and competition environment. Do not under-estimate the level of influence that you have on your athletes.

How do you influence and control your team environment?

What do you do that supports a Blue Head environment?

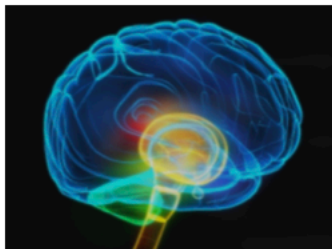
What can you...

STOP	START	CHANGE

The Coach influences and sets the coaching environment, and you influence if this is an environment of Fear and Survival, or Courage and Thriving.

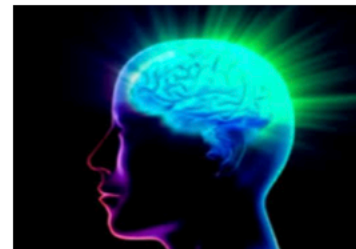
## Survive

Inward Focus  
 Narrow Brain - Mammalian  
 Response  
 Focus on Past & Future  
 Conflicted, distracted, flustered  
 Excess Physical Tension  
 Fight, Flight, Freeze Behaviour  
 Avoidance of 'bad' stuff  
 Shame & Vulnerability  
**SURVIVING**

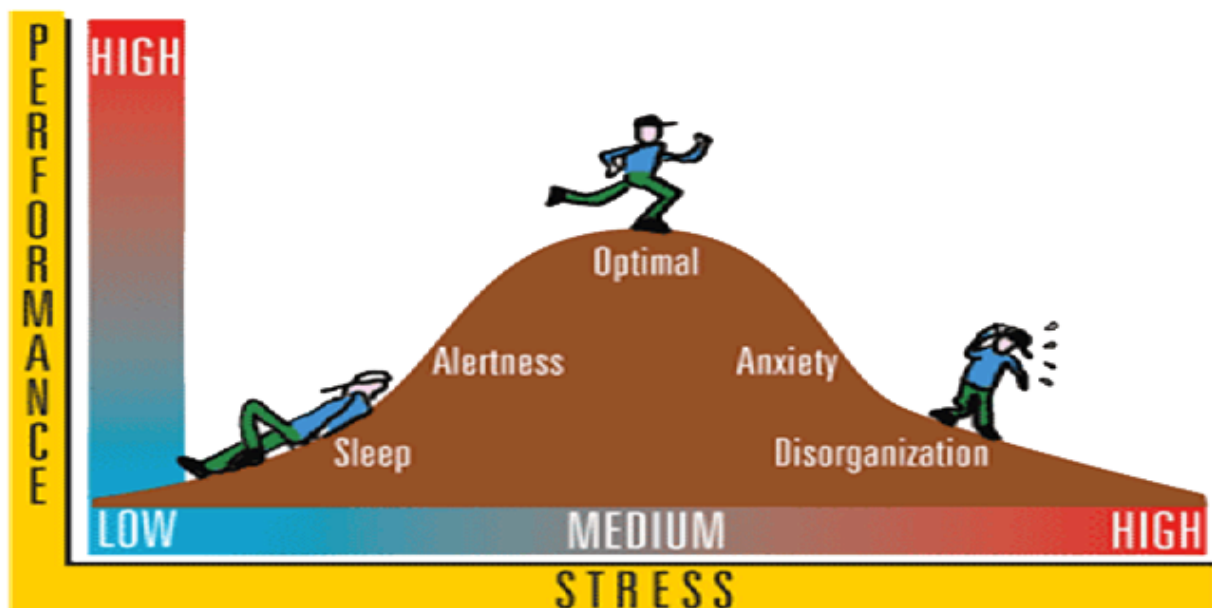


## Thrive

Outward Looking  
 Big Picture Thinking  
 Whole Brain activation  
 High present moment focus  
 Clear, Concentrated, Poised  
 Right Physical Tension  
 Performing  
 Vulnerability & Authenticity  
**THRIVING**



It's not about getting rid of stress, it's about manipulating it in a manner which the athlete can control. Optimal stress aids optimal performance.



## Red Head vs. Blue Head Activity:

You may want to use this activity with your team. I suggest you do it yourself first, and also ask your team to identify your Red Head triggers, and Blue Head performance - you might learn something about yourself!

### Identifying 'Red Head' Triggers:

Think of a recent time when you did not perform as well as you would have liked, a time when you were in 'Red Head' mode.

- *What was the situation?*
- *How did you know you were in Red Head?:*
- *What were the triggers that sent you into Red Head?*
- *How did you get back to Blue Head?*

### Practice Returning to Blue Head Quickly:

Think of a recent time when you performed really well, a time when you felt focused, attentive and in control, a time when you were operating in 'Blue Head' mode.

- *What was it about this performance that made you feel like you were doing really well?*
- *What did you do to prepare for this activity?*
- *How did you feel during the activity?*
- *What were your thoughts before and during this performance?*
- *What was the outcome? (success, praise, satisfaction, etc).*
- *How can you replicate this success every time you perform?*

## Responding to a 'Survive' Environment:

Response	Men	Women
Fight	Greater verbal & physical aggression Greater dominance	Greater Relational Aggression
Flight	Higher Emotional Stability	Greater Apprehension
Freeze	Higher Emotional Stability	Greater Apprehension
Fix	Greater rule-consciousness & vigilance Greater heroic or chivalrous help	Higher sensitivity & warmth Higher nurturing behaviour
Fake	Higher Emotional Stability	Greater Apprehension

## Motivation:

**Self Determination Theory** suggests up to 70% of our behaviour is influenced by our environment. This theory identifies three motivational profiles that differentiate people with regard to their motivation in any context.

Intrinsic Motivation	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most desirable</li> <li>• Self-Determined</li> <li>• Under control of individual</li> <li>• Inherent pleasure or satisfaction</li> <li>• Growth Oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less desirable</li> <li>• Absence of any motivation</li> <li>• No reason to engage in desired behaviour</li> <li>• No personal growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited, short term benefit</li> <li>• Rewards &amp; Benefits</li> <li>• Fear Based or Compromised Environments</li> <li>• Limited growth</li> <li>• Limited learning</li> </ul>



**Intrinsic Motivation:** The most desirable profile.

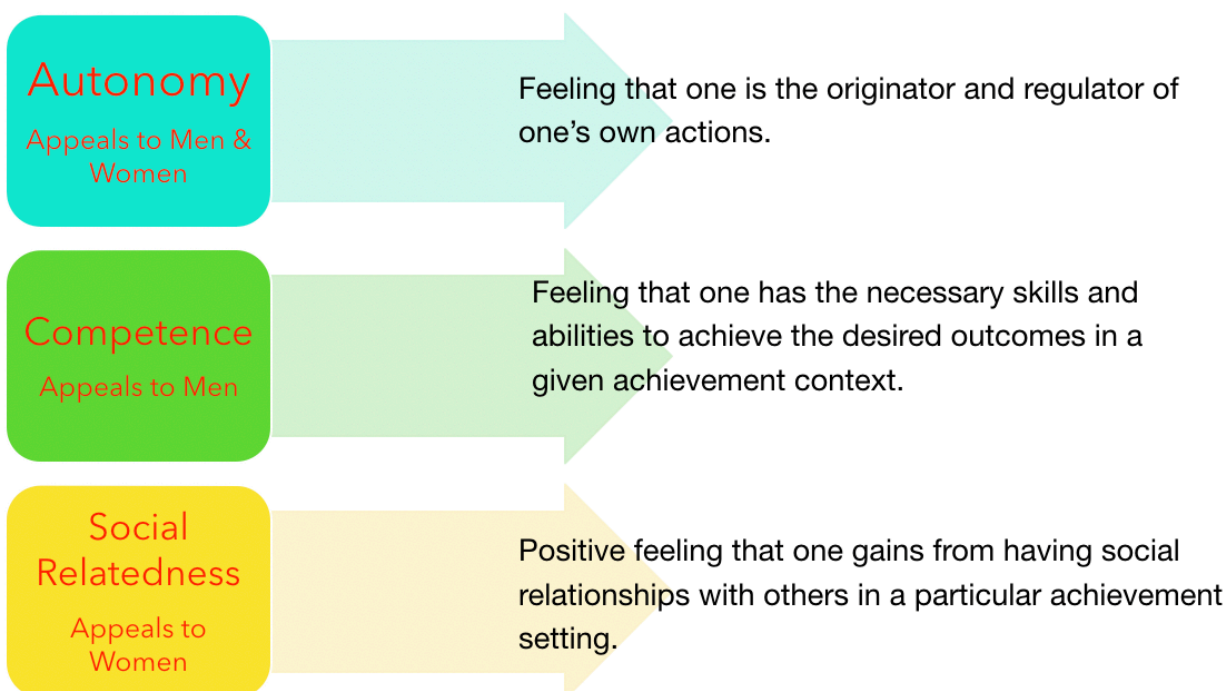
Intrinsic motivation comes from within the individual, and so they are self-determined. This means that the motivation to achieve something or consistently behave in a certain way is controlled by the individual - they are motivated to complete the behaviours required to meet the outcome, and can be relied upon to perform in the manner required without prompting. With Intrinsic Motivation, the individual feels inherently motivated to do something because of the feeling of inherent satisfaction or pleasure they gain from the behaviour.

This is true even when the task is unpleasant, but is a stepping stone to achievement. This form of motivation results in personal growth and development.

Because we expect this from our athletes, we often forget to acknowledge this behaviour. As Coaches, we must remember to acknowledge those who perform consistently from an intrinsically motivated space.

### **Influencing Intrinsically Motivated Athletes:**

The Coach creates the environment or climate of the team, which determines the type of motivation the athletes hold. The interpersonal style of the Coach is important in determining this, and the values emphasised by the Coach (think winning at all costs vs. helping each other succeed) will influence the athlete's motivation and behaviour.





Creating an environment based upon autonomy, competence and social relatedness has been found to be associated with athletes reporting greater performance improvements, greater satisfaction with own and team performance, and a reduction in the athletes perceptions of distress, which means they can move better into the Optimal Performance Zone.

Coaches can achieve this using some of the techniques below;

Coaching Behaviours	Positive & Timely Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow athlete's to prioritise the order of tasks and resources required to achieve training objectives</li> </ul> <i>Autonomy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Praise given for task or activity completion, and a 'job well done' comment provided</li> </ul> <i>Social Relatedness</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving athletes the appropriate freedom to complete tasks and drills</li> </ul> <i>Autonomy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving constructive feedback in areas where Athlete's need to develop</li> </ul> <i>Competence</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How a task delegated is completed is determined by the Athlete, not the Coach</li> </ul> <i>Autonomy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Saying thank you for the effort put into the task or activity, where it is noted that effort was made, regardless of outcome</li> </ul> <i>Social Relatedness</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Coach's language is calm, soothing, and reassuring</li> </ul> <i>Social Relatedness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Coach provides suggestions for improvement, such as "how about we try it this way next time"?, rather than telling Athlete's what they should do</li> </ul> <i>Competence</i>

### Focus on the Positive:

**“Positive Psychology promotes a focus on developing the strengths of players, rather than ruminating on the individual’s weaknesses”.**

When environments focus on the positives of the players and the team, improvements in the strengths of players is noted, as is overall improvement in the strengths of the entire team, and a reduction in both individual and team weakness. This contributes to a sense of autonomy, competence and social relatedness, which builds intrinsic motivation in athletes.