

Adler the Heart in Every Athlete

A Paper

Presented to

The Faculty of Adler Graduate School

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree of the Master of Arts in

Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy

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August 2015.

Abstract

The benefits of improving an athlete's mental acuity are seen in training and competition. Mental imagery (Finke, 1980; Callow & Hardy, 2011; Morris, Alfermann, Lintunen & Hall, 2003; Mousavi & Meshkini, 2011), self-talk, (Rogerson & Hrycaiko, 2002; Vealey, 2007), goal setting (Kingston & Hardy, 1997; Lock & Latham, 1990; Vallerand, 2007), under the umbrella of MST (mental skills training), are used with athletes in various sport disciplines. Behavioral Therapy, such as Cognitive Behavior Therapy (Frodi, Nilsson, Palmer, Regner & Gyllensten, 2010; Luiselli & Reed, 2011), and Rational Behaviour Therapy (Turner & Barker, 2014) are also used to enhance an athlete's focus at the point of competition. Exploration into specific areas of an athlete's life such as; work, love, self, social, and spiritual have been done independently (Daniels, 2012; Lamoureux, 2012; Parry, Nesti, Robinson, Watson, 2007; Sagar, Boardley & Kavussanu, 2011). Adlerian Therapy reviews these areas within the spectrum of inferiority to superiority (Bitter, 2007) and intricately strong connection between all such areas (Adler, 1927; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Mosak & Dreikurs, 1967). This holistic perspective provides a comprehensive insight of an athlete's phenomenology, which facilitates the implementation, and procurement of self-supporting devices and practitioner's support (Amirault & Orlick, 1999; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2013). This literature review examines the different forms of support available to athletes, from a mind-set and behavioral perspective, parallel with Adlerian Psychology.

Adler the Heart in Every Athlete

Living beings are in a perpetual state of movement, using previous experiences to identify current movement and to generate change. The point of stillness is the juncture where individuals chose subsequent actions as equivalent, dissimilar or terminated. Conceptualizing immediate experiences provide insight into an athlete's personal goal orientation; desire to strive for superiority and excellence; motivational energy; self-defeating convictions and beliefs. Generating awareness, understanding, and elation founded in encouragement of an action creates instability and change to an athlete's repetitive motion, this new uncertainty then becomes a new motion with repetition. The purpose of this paper is to identify the importance and relationship between Adlerian Psychology and MST (mental skill training) in the mental preparation for athletes independent from sport and during training and competition, leading to overall improvement of performance.

Defining an Athlete

An individual's self-perception is contrived from the pursuit and attainment of personal goals in the world in which they exist, which provides insight into their cognitive and behavioural mindset. Self-definitions are used to classify oneself as an *athlete* or *non-athlete* and to the degree of athleticism. The use of a broad definition of an athlete as one who is training, participating in an exercise that requires strength, stamina and becoming proficient in sport or activity (Merriam-Webster, 2015), expands the domain of sport from a means to achieve wellness to a form of employment.

To fully comprehend the influence of self-perception, Kendzierski and Morganstein explored ways in which individuals define themselves in the areas of sports (2009). Considering an individual's PASD (physical activity self-definition) in the areas of commitment, ability,

wanting and trying, allows for the development of specific training that promotes athletic performance, participation and longevity in the sport (Kendzierski & Morganstein, 2009).

Impact of Measurement

During the first six years of life, children define means to ensure survival. Behavior that is successful in creating a feeling of useful and pro-social belonging, which is a prerequisite to successful survival, will be repeated. Behaviour conjuring a negative or neutral response resulting in antipathic feelings is discounted (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Alder suggests an individual's resourcefulness and a general pattern of moving through life ensuring survival is one's *Lifestyle*. This fundamental concept of Individual Psychology is a set of beliefs a person creates about themselves and the world (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). The acquired behaviour is used throughout life as new things are experienced. Behaviour, which is represented in a *horizontal plane*, embracing social belonging (Mosak & Maniacci, 1999), "develops flexibility, latitude or optimal methods of movement" (Croake, 1975, p.514). Behaviour displayed on a vertical plane, ego-centeredness, "rigidity acts, perceives, thinks, and feels in a fixed mode that supports his lifestyle" (Croake, 1975, p. 514).

In the domain of sport, the form of training in which one participates, is correlated with the level of completion. The research in Morrison and Weicker (n.d.) suggest a 90:10 (90% training to 10% completion) for assorted sports at the amateur level (Morrison & Weicker, n.d., p. 12). In training or competition the consistent variable is measurement. Athlete's performance in speed, distance, strength, and accuracy are continuously measured and displayed in comparison to others and used in personal development.

Measurement is used as an indicator of improvement, stagnation or regression. It also provides a venue for an athlete to create a plethora of meanings originating from their Life Style.

For an individual who operates on a vertical plane or is discouraged, measurement can be interpreted in various ways such as and not limited to; a value that needs to be maintained in any approach to ensure their superiority; to not perceived incapacity to succeed, or to express a sense of failure (Sagar, Boardley & Kavussanu, 2011). This can also be a sense that others failed an athlete; for example, skier may be unhappy about not having the correct wax. Operating on a horizontal plane, an encouraged individual will perceive measurement as an opportunity to seek new solutions. They welcome input and connection with others. To these individuals outcomes of performance are measurable results, necessary to identify the effects of change and keys in defining where more change is needed versus marks of superiority. To understand an athlete's ability, perception and performance in a specific task, considering their total behaviour patterns and lifestyle under duress and at play is necessary (Adler, 1927). The role of a psychotherapist is to assist athletes in creating possibility around current patterns, which in turn facilitates the creation of new patterns.

Adler cautioned society of the continuous use of unsupported measurement. "Rob a child of his courage and the feeling of his equal chance, and we thwart his development. The fallacy of talent is one of the most effective means of limited the development of a child" (Adler, 2004, p.10). The quote proceeds in specifying how we perceive and express measurement. To continuously measure a talented person to reinforce their talent may lead to change "damage his self-confidence and self-esteem" (Adler, 2004, p.10). To measure an untalented person, who proves to be unskilled for the sole purpose to achieve our own superiority of being right in our conjecture, is equally as damaging (Alder, 2004).

Mental Acuity

The focus of psychological research is supporting and improving athlete performance and

studying both physical and mental ingredients in performance (Krane & Williams, 2006).

Psychologist, Richard Koestner suggests that “at elite levels, mental skills are responsible for between 50% and 90% of the variance in performance during important events or competitions” (Koestner as cited in Barker, 2009, p.1). A research question proposed by VonGuenthner and Hammermeister, 2007 study of coping skills seeks to address the relationship between mental skill and performance and to investigate whether does coping skills impact an athlete’s wellness and performance. They hypothesized that athletes with satisfactory wellness scores should have superior scores in coping skills and would achieve higher performance measures in sports.

Researching physical, emotional, social, intellectual, environmental, and spiritual areas in performance, VonGuenthner and Hammermeister’s, concluded that better overall mental health and wellness are fundamental to mental skills associated with performance. The differences in mental health and wellness strategies were displayed between genders. In their 2007 study, male athletes with high wellness scores reported having high scores in all ACS (athletes coping skills) areas. The areas of ACS include measures of “athletes ability to cope with adversity, peak under pressure, goal setting and mental preparation, concentrations freedom from worry, coachability and confidence and achievement motivation” (Von Guenthner & Hammermeister, 2007, p.1044). Female athletes with a clear perception of wellness showed self-assurance when dealing with changing situations and used less available resources. Although findings illustrated a gender difference in the relationship between wellness and perspective, the overall results indicated that athletes’ success is based on an awareness of balance in all areas of their lives. One may perceive these findings as insight to the holistic nature of athletic performance. Creating harmony and congruency in all areas of life is the key component for athlete in goal achievement (Von Guenthner & Hammermeister, 2007).

Types of Mental Skills Training

The primary focus for researchers is developing mental acuity in awareness and focus at the time of competitions. Peak performance training (PTT), mental skills training (MST) and mental training programs (MTP) are used to support athletes in their management with and through high-pressure situations without diminishing performance (Weinberg & Williams, 2006).

Mental Training Program (MTP)

Adlerian psychology may view one's performance as movement through life and especially through high-pressure situations while dealing with feelings of inferiority in each task of life. The foundation of these principles is the Adlerian fundamental concept of encouragement and Social Interest. With the vacancy of either one, individual fails to thrive in life and adapts a Lifestyle that operated on a uselessness of life (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). The common element similar in all MTP is the concept that athletes work, create, console and train with others – in a communal way. This Social Interest acts as encouragement for the athlete to create goals, imagery, and self-talk strategies often referred to in MTP as essential mechanisms in advancing performance. However, the reciprocal is also possible. An encouraged athlete has the courage to develop social interest, make mistakes and embrace failure as tools of learning. Which comes first is in continuous discussion; however, Adler often refers to “courage is but one side of social interest” (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 342).

Imagery as a strategy allows the athlete to envision participating in an event from different points of view. Creating a mental image of a preferred movement assists in physically recalling the action. Perhaps from an Adlerian perspective imagery is interpreted as an expression of ‘acting as if’. This concept encourages participants to alter views and doings by

acting in ways that express their strengths, or changes they wish to have in their lives (Carlson & Sperry, 1998). An individual is asked to behave in a way that would express the achievements of a goal. According to Carlson and Sperry, “the rationale for this strategy is that as someone begins to act differently and to feel differently they become a different person” (Carlson & Sperry, 1998, p.73). Research in sport psychology shows that imagery reduces somatic and cognitive symptoms of anxiety, improve performance, self-confidence, and self-perception and enhances arousal before completion (Callow & Hardy, 2011; Finke, 1980; Morris, Alfermann, Lintunen & Hall, 2003; Mousavi & Meshkini, 2011).

Adler makes reference to encouragement as the main constituent in *psychological tolerance* (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). “The amount of threat a person can bear without losing courage may be called psychological tolerance” (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 243). The levels and avenues of encouragement in an athlete’s life are indefinite. During competition or before a competition, athletes are often left to their own devices. It is during such moments that self-talk strategy holds possibility as a form of self-encouragement. Vealey refers to self-talk as a strategy to verbally express; interpret actions and occurrences in a positive and constructive manner (Vealey, 2007). To illustrate this point one can look at most isolating positions in a group sport, such as goaltending. Rogerson and Hrycaiko find that self-talk strategies used by goaltenders prior to and during games resulted in improvements in save percentages (shot on net/final score). Results collected through self-reported social questionnaire showed that athletes enjoyed participating in self-talk and coaches were in agreement and supportive of this strategy (Rogerson & Hrycaik, 2002).

Often not considered as a mental skills strategy, goal-setting, is displayed in various human activities, from to-do list to training schedules. In the domain of sport, goal-setting does

not often improve performance, however when combined with other strategies it provides direction, promotes problem solving and continuous use of strategic planning (Lock & Latham, 1990). Identifying the type of goal (outcome, performance, process) assist in implementing the mental skill, and in isolating motivational focus (Vallerand, 2007) specific to achieving the goal (Kingston & Hardy, 1997).

Goal-setting usually takes place in the coach-athlete relationship, focusing on elements that enhance performance. Such goals are often formed and positioned into an athlete life without the consideration of any individualist goals or self-created goals set in early childhood. Adler's ideas of goal exploration provide different methods to expand understanding of individual perspectives and mind-sets about life (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). As mentioned previously, in a child's early years fictional goals are created that assist in diminishing feelings of inferiority for example; "some day when I grow up ..." (Griffith & Powers, 2007, p. 41). As the child grows these fictional goals become concretized in adulthood, "only when I am..., will I be..." (Griffith & Powers, 2007, p. 41). Through various human interactions, including professional psychotherapy and counseling, individuals gain the skills to verbalize and comprehend their goals. Completing the sentences such as "some day when I grow up I will be the world champion" and later in life "only when I am in control I will be the admired" provides greater understanding an athlete's fictional goals, and how concrete or immediate behaviours may serve these goals. Completing such statements provides perspective on how goal-setting achievements and failures are perceived, assisting in constructing goals and altering athlete-coach relationship used to promote performance. An athlete may hear their coach's input through a filter or discrete them as an attempt to create a boss like position over them. The sentence "only when I am in control I will be admired" may indicate self-value is only present

when the athlete can control everyone around them, leaving little room for possibility, social interest, and belonging.

Each strategy provides its unique method of impacting an athlete performance. As athletes' needs, priorities, and performance goals change, the mental skills strategies may also need to alter. The multimodal model takes a psychobehavioural approach in performance improvement. Combining different techniques assists in altering athlete's attention, focus, self-confidence, motivation, energy management, anger management, productive thinking and, ultimately, performance (Peluso, Ross, Gfeller, LaVoie, 2005; Rogerson & Hrycaiko, 2002).

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy holds some similarities to Adlerian Psychology in the areas of belief and resulting behaviours (Corey, 2013). In sport psychology, the primary focus of CBT would be to change an athlete's belief about an occurrence that may ultimately change their behaviour. It is the interpretation of one's life events that determine the positive or negative nature that one's life has (Corey, 2013). Creating and implementing of new thoughts can be achieved through goal-setting, self-talk and imagery (Luiselli & Reed, 2011; Neenan & Palmer, 2001), changing behaviour (physical) or cognitive (mental) outcomes for an athlete.

In 2010, Frodi and colleagues presented the use of CBT in thought performance. The authors concluded that CBT decreased, performance interfering thought (PITs) and increased performance enhancing thoughts (PETs) and performance enhancing behavior (Frodi et al., 2010). In the similar paradigm, Williams, Palmer and Edgerton (2014) discussed the concept of (HITs) health inhibiting thinking and (HETs) Health enhancing thinking (2014). Both investigations implemented CBT in a distinct framework resulting in participants developing a relationship between their thoughts, feelings and actions, which improved confidence and self-

reliance. Although both studies were not conducted within the field of sport they support, clarify and expand the literature review completed by Marc Jones in 2003, an athletes ability to control and change emotions. During his review Jones speaks to the vastness and versatility of CBT use in athlete preparation for competition (Jones, 2003). The cognitive strategies included and not limited to; self-statement modification (exchanging maladaptive self-statements with positives statements); and Socratic dialogue (revaluating self-defeating ideas) (Jones, 2003).

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)

The cognitive behavioral approach prescribes to beliefs an individual has about failure, rejection and poor treatment intercedes their perception of events, influencing emotional and behaviour reactions (Ellis & Dryden, 1997). Based on CBT and Adlerian concepts, the goal of REBT is to replace irrational beliefs with rational belief through the use of an ABC framework. Research completed by Tuner and Barker (2014) provides evidence of the in-depth implementation of REBT as cost - and time - effective approach, generally accepted by athletes and practitioners of all sport types. The research discusses the implementation of the REBT model and expresses the effects on “irrational beliefs, enhance psychological approaches to performance, and enhance self-reported performance in the athletes” (Turner & Barker, 2014, p.88). The research does not shy away from discussing the limitations and challenges that practitioners and athletes will encounter through the use of REBT. Using REBT in-group settings for educational purposes have only shown short-term effects, lacking longevity in its effectiveness. An athlete’s age also appears to be an influential variable. Turner and Barker suggested that athletes younger than thirteen years of age might require lengthier session up to forty-five minutes in comparison to older athletes who have reported a change in IR after twenty minutes. An additional limitation noted by researcher stems around the element of brief therapy.

REBT does not provide the ‘quick fix’ some athletes may be seeking. Although known as brief therapy other relaxation techniques may be more suitable for athletes in short-term. Further research is necessary to explore ABC strategies closer to competition and its effect on the somatic nervous system and anxiety (Turner & Barker, 2014).

Tasks of Life

Creating a lifestyle in our early years can be contrived as the tools we acquire to answer the problems in life we all experience (Ansbacher, 2011). Adler refers to such problems as tasks of life (Dreikurs & Mosak, 1967). In Adler’s earlier lectures he refers to three tasks of life; work, social/friendship and sex/intimacy (Dreikurs & Mosak, 1966). In later discussions, Adler makes reference to self and spirituality, although not formally stating them as *life tasks* (Dreikurs & Mosak, 1967). One may conclude that life tasks are domains in which individuals create the meaning of life.

The holistic approach of Adlerian Psychology suggests that all areas of an individual’s life are connected. The broader concept speaks to the whole that is “different than the sum of its parts” (Mosak & Maniacchi, 1999). More specifically, although unique, tasks of life are operationally connected, as “none of these problems can be solved separately; each of them demand the successful approach to the other two” (Adler, 1932, p.239).

From birth, we are exposed to different problems in each task. Our constant movement between *felt minus to perceived plus* in one task is influenced by the movement within other tasks. Having gained perceived superiority in certain tasks and feeling inferior in others creates an imbalance in an individual life. Full self-expression, self-exploration, and perceived superiority in one task may be impeded by the perceived inferiority in other tasks (Dreikurs & Mosak, 1966).

In the field of sport, the primary focus of traditional research is at the point of completion, and not at the whole athlete in every aspect of their lives (Amirault & Orlick, 1999). Literature review completed by Sarkar and Fletcher in 2013, assists in identifying explicit areas in an athlete's life where adversity is impactful. Common areas were identified as relationships problem, inadequate preparation, and logistical issues (Thelwell, Weston & Greenlees, 2007). Other researchers ascertain sports related adversities such as injury, excessive expectations, inadequate self-preparation and rivalry (Mellalieu, Neil, Hanton, & Fletcher, 2009). Assisting athletes in identifying specific areas or stressors Arnold and Fletcher (2012) devised four categories of investigation; "leadership and personal issues; cultural and team issues; logistical and environmental issues; performance and personal issues" (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2013, p. 266). The authors concluded, "Accordingly, when assessing adversity in athletic performers, it is imperative that sport psychology researchers consider the inclusion of both significant life events and ongoing daily stressors" (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2013, p. 266).

Research by Amirault and Orlick in 1999 investigated the importance of balance in an athlete's life. They report that athletes perceive balance in life "primarily as having a vision or flow and striving towards it"; and others see balance as "respecting different parts of their lives" (Amirault & Orlick, 1999, p. 37). In order to obtain balance, athletes identify six pre-requests such as "making a conscious decision to have balance; have a strong self-discipline; enjoy what you are doing; have a supportive network; have leisure time; and be in the moment" (Amirault & Orlick, 1999, p. 37).

Taking adversities and pre-request of balance that athletes have identified into each of Adler's life task, creates a possibility of a comprehensive support for athletes. Self-perception is a strategic component that Adlerian therapists use in supporting an individual in their life

pursuits (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Therefore developing a greater understanding of an athlete's Lifestyle provides further insight into means of creating movement.

Work Task

Adler refers to the *work task* as how we find ways to contribute to and participate in the care and functioning of the Earth and how humans survive. Wolf in 1932 makes reference to the work task, as a choice individual's have to contribute to the commonwealth of all. Under the umbrella of work task questions of occupational choice and preparation, satisfaction, leadership and leisure can all be explored (Mosak & Maniacci, 1999). Work for an athlete is their sport encompassing training and competition, and a profession within or outside of sport that provides a monetary gain (Gaing & Cortez, 2012). In younger athletes, the splinter exists between school (work) and sport (work) (Pelley, 2014). Achieving a balance between two splinters assists in the movement toward perceived plus or superiority in this task.

Social/Friendship Task

Adler describes the second life task, social, as "there are others around us, and we are living in association with them, and that we would perish if we were alone" (Alder, 1932, p.6). *Social task* speaks to an individual's willingness to develop Social Interest and belonging. In the field of sport belonging or Social Interest encompasses teammanship, sportsmanship and socialization outside of sport. Schinke, Gauthier, Dubuc and Crowder (2007) discussed the importance of social task with a team in the study, on adaptation of athletes of various ethnic cultures to the National Hockey League. The research illustrated the positive effect of belonging and other associated factors such as understanding, trust, and control. In sport, a challenge in achieving a state of belonging is competition, which can decrease social interest, create and maintain a sense of isolation (Paradis, Carron & Martin, 2014), and promote what Adlerians call

vertical striving. Perceived social status for some athletes is dependent upon the level of sport participation, performance, and meeting expectations of parents, coaches, and teammates (Marx, Huffman & Doyle, 2008). Athletes achieving perceived superiority in the social task can be disillusioned by the affirmation of others and not as a state of healthy self-identity. Individual's experiencing inferiority in the social task may lack connection in participating and experience fracture in other social settings such as school or work. The training demand placed on young athletes may pose challenges until a balance is created; superiority is achieved within the social task (Miller & Kerr, 2002).

Sex/Intimacy Task

The sex/intimacy task requires the greatest amount of co-operation, and the most difficult one to solve (Mosak & Maniaci, 1999). To further understand the sex/intimacy task, athlete's perspective of the four sub-categories provided by Mosak and Maniaci in 1999 will be explored. Sexual role is defined as what an individual understands as being female or male. Sexual role identification is the way an individual relates to the positions set by their environments. Female athletes may be perceived as more masculine; do not see themselves as fitting in with the norm displayed in the media. They maybe encouraged to take on more stereotypical feminine roles, especially when their femininity, and not their abilities, become focal point in media coverage (Daniels, 2012; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, Kauer, 2004; Lamoureux, 2012). Sexual development the third sub-task is a milestone faced by all can contribute to a physical impact athletic performance (Drinkwater, 2000; Ford, Shapiro, Myer, Van de Bogert & Hewett, 2010). For some athletes, sexual development can be delayed due to the physical demands placed on the body (Greydanus & Patel, 2004). The fourth sub-task, sexual behaviour can be discussed in a series of questions. What is appropriate in sporting

societies? Does it conflict with belief and value help by an athlete? To promote athletes and athletic events media often choose to display athletes' attractiveness and sexuality (Daniels, 2012; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar & Kauer, 2004; Lamoureux, 2012;). The impact of media on an athlete's sexual behaviour requires further inquiry (Greydanus & Patel, 2004), however, limited research has investigated the effects of sexual active on performance (McGlone & Shrier, 2000). The literature review completed by McGlone and Shrier concluded that no scientific research supports the hypothesis that sexual intercourse before completion has a negative physiological affect on performance. However the review also suggests that psychological influence has not been measured and exogenous variables "sexual activity, behaviour of subjects between data collection, diet, fatigue, stress and individual response to sexual activity" (McGlone & Shrier, 2000, p. 234) are difficult to control.

Self Task

Adler did not formally refer to self under the umbrella of life tasks, but various writings made reference to *I in the world, and how I see myself and see the world relating to me*. At different periods of time Dreikurs, Mosak and Shulman discussed the *self-task* as a task of survival (Mosak & Maniacchi, 1999).

The discussion about survival may provide greater insight to an individual's perception of themselves; biology self (how strong and healthy I am); psychological self (how happy and confident I am about myself); social self (how, and if, I belong or is there something about myself that needs to change) (Sagar, Boardley & Kavussanu, 2011). Self-task can be explored through one's perception of body image, such as questioning if there is a discrepancy between the body I have and the body I want. Positive body image due to athletic participation is seen in young female athletes and older male athletes (Kuga & Douctre, 1994). Exploration of self, such

as “What do I think of me?” and “How do I relate to me?” (Mosak & Maniaci, 1999 p. 107), provides awareness into individuals’ Lifestyle, their level of encouragement (Griffith & Powers, 2007), and the impact on measurable sport performance.

Spiritual Task

Similar to the self-task, Adler did not formally identify a fifth task, however, he made remarks suggesting the possibility of a cosmic relationship. “Human beings, as products of this earth, could subsist and develop in their cosmic relationship only by union with the community, by making both material and spiritual provisions for it” (Adler, 1964, p. 43). In 1967, Mosak and Dreikurs discuss how we relate to and see our relationship with a God or the universe, through the use of five subtasks (Mosak & Dreikurs, 1976).

The first sub-task, relationship to God investigates the presence and type of connection. The second subtask speaks to what individuals do with religion. Do they embrace it or reject it? Is religion used as a connection with God only, or with others and society in general? The third sub-task speaks to an individual’s relationship with the universe that transpires in various ways. Are humans perceived as good or predominately bad; are we another animal on this planet or a principle of God’s creations. Some individual distinguish the future as being created through distinct choices and others rely on fate or destiny shaped by the higher power (Mosak & Dreikurs, 1967). The investigation into the meaning of life is the fifth sub-task, including metaphysical issues, as well as focus on an individual’s view of life death, and an ongoing life (Mosak & Dreikurs, 1967). This inquiry can take various perspective influenced by culture, religion and individual’s Lifestyle.

The spiritual task discussed by Adler and other Adlerian view a relationship between an individual and an entity beyond or outside an individual. In sport spirituality is contrived as an

experience, achievement of an experience or as a personal characteristic (Taylor, 2002; Parry, Nesti, Robinson, & Watson, 2007). For example, during competitions, athletes often refer to being in the zone as a spiritual experience (Taylor, 2002). The integration of mind, body and spirit often results in feelings of calmness, strong relaxation, having no fear of failure, complete control, being energized, and having high level of concentration. According to the authors, it is within these conscious experiences that the unimaginable is possible and becomes the reality (Parry, Nesti, Robinson, Watson, 2007).

The term *team spirit* or the reference to person's spirit speaks to an alternate spirituality. The difference between former and latter is belonging. The former considers the ever-growing strong belonging within a team. Unbiased perseverance in the eye of defeat is often referred to as team spirit and the internal drive or sprite of an athlete, personal spirit (Parry, Nesti, Robinson, Watson, 2007). To further understand spiritual in the context of sport, subcategories such as courage, character, sacrifice, and personality are used.

Professional coaches often speak to the importance of two characteristics of an athlete beyond their ability. Spirit and character are the most importance qualities used when selecting teammates in connective sports such as hockey and soccer and also in more individual sports such as running, figure skating, or equestrian. Belonging is one of the fundamental feelings for an athlete to acquire.

Conclusion

A common goal among athletes is betterment - better one's strength, timing, distance, speed, focus, well-being, and other measurable categories. One cannot ignore the unspoken aspect of betterment, which has no formal measurement but equally as impactful is the feeling of belonging and social interest. The unique paths used in achieving this goal are as diverse as the

number of athletes in the world. The goal for coaches and practitioners is to support athletes during their journey towards betterment. The appearance and process of support changed from a physical focus to including mental acuity and emotional readiness. In this goal, various instruments are have used: from mental skills training such as imagery and self-talk to cognitive behavior approaches, such as CBT and REBT. All these approaches provide a greater understanding and of how an athlete operates within and beyond their sport environment and the creation of personalized support for athletes' performance and psychological well-being. Coalescing all three components of performance - physical, mental acuity and Lifestyle – athlete improve collaboration between mental and physical processes and facilitate greater betterment. The capacities in which coaches and practitioners support athletes expand as an athlete increases his or her personal inclusivity. As a famous New Zealand Track and Field coach explains, “The better an athlete knows him/herself, the better I am as a coach” (Smith, 2009, p. 2).

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