

# Coach Development: Operating in your own Genius

Written by Gerard Jones

## Introduction

At present, we have an increased focus on how we can individualise our coaching, tailored to the needs of the players through individual learning plans and bulls-eyed coaching approaches. This approach is shaped to support the development of self-regulating, inspire self-learners and independent thinking footballers who can solve problems at the highest level of decision making.

A question then is, who supports the coaches with their development if we want to create a generation of self-learners? How do we inspire and support a generation of creative and highly skilled coaches that maintain and advance world-class standards?

## Operate in your own Genius

One easy tool for coaches to use is to design a meaningful plan that is based on maximising one's self (Operating in your own Genius). This means delving deeper into what your strengths, areas of interest and areas of development are, understanding how you are perceived by others and the level of impact you have.

The key to becoming successful as a coach is identifying where you are and setting targets for what you want to achieve and the steps you need to become better. (Woodman, 1993; Schön, 1985;1987).

### Stage 1

- What motivates you?
- Why are you here?
- What is your ultimate goal(s)?
- What is your profile?
- What qualifications and professional development will you need to achieve these goals?

### Stage 2

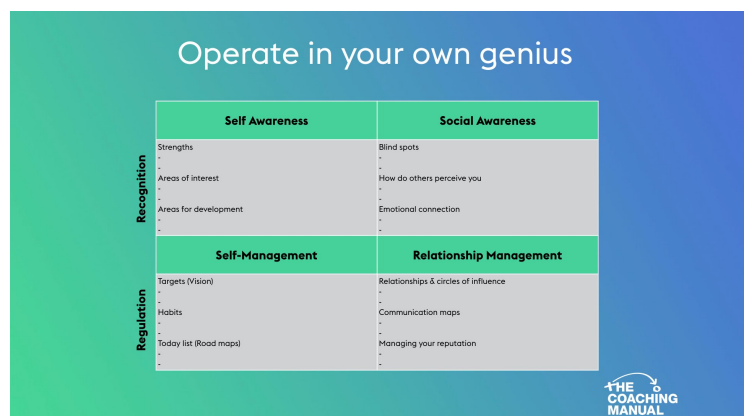
Begin with a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle with one-side (Strengths) and the other (Areas of Interest) – spend 10mins on this. Using the image below, create four boxes where you reflect and construct your plan based on key reflective questions Question Examples:

What are your strengths? What is your competitive advantage? How can you become world-class at what you do? What areas do you need that you don't currently have? The following reflective development model has been developed from the Jahari Windom tool (Luft Ingham, 1955) to enhance your self-awareness:

By having a pre-examined understanding of what your strengths, areas of interest and development points are, you can start to complete the self-awareness corner and grow from there. From here, you can decide to delve deeper into (social-awareness):

- Blind-spots (areas less known to you and behaviours/actions need to check)
- How others perceive you (how you're seen)
- Emotional Connection (what players and coaches you connect with and why, perhaps people you don't)

From this you will be able to explore your communication maps and circles of influence which will enhance your ability to understand which people (players, coaches and significant people



who you work with) you have a great relationship with and which ones you need to do more with to build as this is another pillar in your personal development.

In coaching, there will be some players that will love being coached by you and equally there will be players who won't. This is important to understand as it will influence how you communicate with your players and this is no different to how you interact with other coaches.

## Managing your reputation!

The key information here is understanding how you're perceived as 'Perception' is 'Reality', therefore, there is an increased importance for coaches to understand how they are seen and remarked upon in order to manage their own reputation. Every session you deliver and every action you demonstrate whilst interacting with players, coaches, parents and others is what forms an opinion of you.

### Stage 3

What are your key targets based on the level of self-awareness you've completed. Set yourself targets and add a date you need to complete these by. This can be anything from enhancing your technical knowledge and improving your practice-design to a career goal and areas of interest that will enhance your performance.

What are the small targets you need to complete to achieve your ultimate long-term vision? Having a To Do list and having a 'TODAY LIST' allows you to prioritise your work and what needs doing as well as time spent towards supporting your plan. This will help avoid being unorganised and congested with meaningless tasks that pose a sizeable distraction.

### Stages 4 and 5

Actively reflect after each session (episode), seek out and converse regularly with experienced coaches and practitioners across a range of sports and domains to help and support you in maintaining positive development habits as well as picking brains from multiple sources. Visuals, visuals, visuals! Write down your 'TARGETS' and stick them on the wall or type them in a place you will look at regularly. This will help you to visualise what you're working towards and put thought into 'action'!

## Summary

This is a process that is key to continuous professional development as it involves forming habits and constructing your plan based on self-reflection and regulation (Armour, 2010), which is an area sometimes neglected by coaches who fail to see the investment and value in it (Erickson et al., 2008).

## About the author

Gérard Jones is an FA UEFA 'A' Licensed Coach and FA Advanced Youth Award holder with over 13 years coaching experience having worked across most levels. Currently the Head of Academy Coaching at Bristol Rovers F.C., Jones is responsible for the development of academy coaches as well as players. In addition to being a Qualified Teacher, Jones is a Published Author in Communication Psychology with his book titled: Let's Talk Soccer. You can follow him on Twitter: @Gerard\_Jones

