

# CHAPTER 8

## Building Mazes

I hope you can start to see the attractiveness of the **GRT Maze** concept mentioned at the beginning of this story. If human beings are just binary creatures, adapting and controlling their environment, you could, with good accuracy, control the development of the athlete along any pathway you pick, as long as you give them some 'cheese.' The reason that *Mazes* are successful is because they are based on evolutionary history that human beings have been following since their existence. All we are doing is taking that inevitable underlying pattern and recreating it in the gym to create successful athletes.

I believe we have given enough background to the GRT Maze concept with our story through evolution and human behaviour so let's simply get to the different examples and applications. As mentioned near the beginning of this story, *Mazes* come in all shapes and forms. Let's look at a few that you may not even think of. We have more *Mazes* available for many different options from different coaches around the world, so please download the **GRT Network App**.

### Mazes in Society

- 1) **Sidewalks** - Increases the chance pedestrians won't walk on the road and get hit by cars by giving them a marked path to walk;
- 2) **Traffic lights or stop signs** - Control flow of cars on the road;
- 3) **Fine print in advertising** - Tells you the truth after you are already emotional about the offer;
- 4) **Airports that force you to walk through Duty Free before getting to your gate** - Increases the chance you will buy something;
- 5) **Pumping nice smells into Casino ventilation systems** - Encourages people to stay awake gamble more;
- 6) **Online registration** - Categorizes human beings for the purpose of gathering data they need so everything remains 'fair;'
- 7) **Marketing schemes** - Try to modify your motivations to buy products;
- 8) **Fences** - prevent people going in unwanted areas;
- 9) **Beeping sounds in cars** - Entices you to buckle up when driving to increase safety;
- 10) **Donation box at McDonalds** - Encourages youth donate while your wallet is already out;
- 11) **Schools** - Create a Maze for children to learn rules of society, not necessarily what they want to learn;

- 12) **Sale discounts** - Falsely makes you think you are getting a discount when in fact it is the 'real' price they know they can charge;
- 13) **Social Security** - You are not getting your investment back out of it if you add it up;
- 14) **Special of the day at a restaurant** - Makes you think it is only available for a limited time so you are more inclined to buy that specific food item, that simply could be an unpopular dish but they need to get rid of it;
- 15) **Vacation websites** - Create false holidays to boost sales that claim to offer their products at a special discount but charge extra additional fees on the side, so you're not really saving;
- 16) **Grocery store positioning** - Positioning popular items on easily reachable shelves at a grocery store;
- 17) **Grocery store music** - Intentionally slow and relaxing to entice you shop at a leisurely pace and stay in the store longer;
- 18) **Radar speed signs** - Reminds you that you are probably going too fast without the government having to spend resources for an officer to sit there;
- 19) **Parking spaces** - Encourages you with painted lines to go where the company wants you to go;
- 20) **Separate in and out doors** - Forces you to go in one side of the building and out another side of the building to not bump into oncoming traffic;
- 21) **Paying to use a public washroom** - In Europe it is very common to have to pay 0.50 euros to go to the washroom at a gas station and they return a 0.50 euro coupon redeemable at the convenience store;
- 22) **Resort fees** - High level tourist areas will not tell you while booking online about a tourist fee that can be quite expensive until you get to the hotel and are already committed;
- 23) **Salty snacks at a bar** - Are usually salty so they make you more thirsty and willing to drink more;
- 24) **Happy Hour** - A fancy sales technique that put the least favourite beverages on sale in hopes that you come in for a sale but then still spend more because you are already there;
- 25) **Sign in for free Wifi** - Companies then get your info and can send you offers forever. Note that you can put in all fake information and it will still work. Not a great Maze but still works for most people;
- 26) **Shot glasses** at a bar that are very large but the glass is so thick it gives an illusion of being bigger than you think.

Mazes exist in so many ways and you might think it is 'foul-play' to have businesses and the governments use these techniques to acquire more out from the consumer. Generally speaking though, these Mazes are not there to hurt people but to help control them in a safe way, or offer a new value such as new technology. As explored with Thomas Hobbs, people need a bit of help in keeping them on track or anarchy could ensue. As mentioned in the Language of Biology chapter, we all play these tricks at some point, so it is not fair to point fingers at people who do it to us. **You do it naturally to everyone you have ever interacted with so you can't really complain without looking silly.**

Speed limits, for example, are not just for your safety, they reduce the federal medical budget. In University I was taught that the Canadian government spends several billion\* dollars a year on what they deem as "unnecessary costs." These are costs we incur to the government through our personal

decisions, such as self inflicted illnesses (*type-2 diabetes*) or car accidents from drinking and driving. If the government can regulate safety measures to help keep their citizens safe, they can reduce their expenses, redirecting funds for other useful projects.

**NOTE:** The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) believes Canada spent approximately \$228 billion on health care in 2016. That's 11.1% of Canada's entire GDP and \$6,299.00 spent for every Canadian resident.

It is not effective to think of the government as some kind of altruistic entity that is there to help you. More selfish motivations with secondary benefits to others are at play. The government acts more like a corporation and can be considered a monopoly as they will leverage social benefits to find new ways to charge the citizens (*their customers*) in different ways. Like most corporations, they will tend to ask for more than they give but find very clever ways to disguise this uneven trade such as a pension plan that takes from you and the employer for many years but never gives out as much as it takes in. This depleting pension fund is part of a larger problem in North America and some reports show that the funds may run out sooner than later. It is better to understand it and move through life with facts so the benefits we receive from our governments greatly outweighs the tactics they may use.



**NOTE:** People like Steve Jobs and Doug McMillon literally make our lives so ridiculously easy that to complain about paying for their services is really an indication of ignorance.

## Creating Mazes in Trampoline Parks:

Mazes exist everywhere you look. If you created a behaviour such as sitting down in a comfortable arm chair in the lobby of a dental practice while more discount offers were streamed in front of your face; you were in a Maze. If the dentist then follows up with a 10% off your next visit based on what was on the TV in the lobby, you are in an even better Maze. If you come back and they repeat the same process but request you bring a friend next time for another 10% off coupon, you are in an even better Maze. The key ingredient you probably didn't even think of? **The comfortable chair!** Trampoline parks use this method. When the public are lounging around on the trampolines which is against the rules, the staff can either tell the jumpers to clear the floor, which creates a negative stimulus they will associate in the future, or they can create an alternative;



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comfortable chairs. This is the Maze parks create to have the customers do the action they are looking for.

### Which sounds better?

- ◆ **Option 1** - Customers are lying on the trampoline on a busy day and a monitor comes over and yells at them to leave the trampolines because it is against the rules.
- ◆ **Option 2** - The trampoline park invests in comfortable arm chairs or sofas on the side of the court, visible from the open court area. When the staff walks by they say: "Hey guys, you feel more comfortable over there on our soft, comfortable chairs."

Notice how Option #1 is all about punishment (*negative stimulus*). Punishment does work, albeit not as effectively as a reward based motivation shown in the above example. In the long term you need a continuous value trade. When people think you are actually trying to help them, they tend to reduce their defences and are more rational; following your directions (*cichlid and buffalo example*). After all, it is better for them if you can help. As discussed earlier, human beings want value or at least have their lives made easier. In Option #2 the staff doesn't have to be negative because they have carefully built a Maze of positivity. They can reward the jumpers with a better place to relax, which accomplishes the same behavioural pattern.

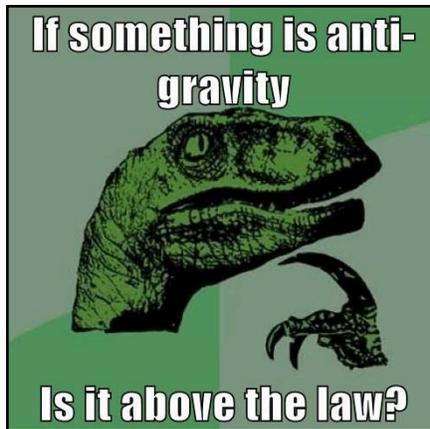


**WOOP! Trampoline Park** in Slovenia creates a nice comfortable area for the jumpers to relax that is not on the trampoline.

By thinking of every behaviour as reward based learning you can keep the other person's defences at a minimum. They actually think you are trying to help them; which you are. Yelling creates a negative stimulus, so if you don't want them to be injured you need to create another value for them; which is to just have fun. By creating a better alternative you prevent the *bad* behaviour and 'look' like a *caring* staff member. **That's the secret to customer service that the Maze allows you to do. Hopefully you actually do care, but even if you don't it will still work.**

However, not all customers may appreciate you trying to keep them be safe. If they did they would have stayed at home. They want to have fun and more often than not, fun is counter-intuitive to safety. Especially when people don't fundamentally know what they are doing. They are there to have an adventure, so lying on the trampoline may be part of that adventure. If you want them to follow the rules you need to first understand what they *actually* want first and not get caught up in your abstraction of what *you* want. Human beings, as we have seen in the previous chapters, tend to avoid negative stimuli. Even when you are helping them stay safe, their brain does not necessarily abstract it that way. It is more defensive (*like the Cichlid fish*) in its thinking and shows us a different thought process:





***"The staff thinks I'm going to get hurt. What does he know? I know what I'm capable of, I don't need him to tell me how to stay safe!"***

Sounds somewhat negative doesn't it? Sadly, out of the many parks we have visited and the vast amounts of research available, this tends to be what is going through the customer's brain when the staff tries to help them. The jumper will usually leave and find something else to do, but before you know it the staff have rotated to a new station and now that same jumper is back trying it again. It is not necessarily because they want to break the rules, they are just more focused on having fun.

Here's another example; at a GRT Certification Training course conducted at a trampoline park recently I asked the staff to tell me what they liked and disliked about the customers. They didn't have much to say that was positive, but their list of dislikes was very long (*remember how we are all loss-averse?*) [laugh]. They mentioned that jumpers would seem to listen to the rules before entering the park but then, just 5 seconds later, would break the rules as soon as they were on the floor. The staff complained about it as a group, as if they were incapable of such forgetfulness, so I had to make an example. I asked them to play a game before our lunch break. We made teams and played a version of European Handball on the trampolines with all the staff. I explicitly told them that they *must follow all of the parks rules*; such as, no double bouncing, no running, one per trampoline, no rough play, etc... I had my business partner, Trish, film the entire game just to be able to prove my theory.

The game started and within the first rush for the ball, 3 or 4 staff members sprinted for the ball running across several trampolines. I didn't say anything yet as I observed them diving into and double bouncing each other, laughing and having fun. I let them play the way customers play for five minutes, then I brought them together and asked them if they had followed the rules. A nervous murmur spread through the group. They saw firsthand that in the midst of a fun activity, safety tends to be a reduced focus if the Hindbrain does not foresee it to be a life threatening issue. A twisted ankle isn't as big of a worry for your brain. You can override that easily with some fun and that's how accidents happen. The point of getting them to act out the exact same rule breaking behaviours that they complained about was my Maze. Again, as we say in the last Chapter, actions speak louder than words. I could have just told them this would happen, but by proving it I drove my point home in a much more effective manner.

The moral of this story is that no one should put themselves above the rules. In the real world people do, and they assume that they will be ok and the rules are for everyone else, but *them*. This is a natural human tendency and probably struggles somewhere between the reward and community circuits.

The take home message here is that you may find it futile to try and have someone really appreciate your safety rules unless they really are motivated to do so. It is much easier to control human behaviour by creating a Maze that offers something you know they want. This will indirectly prevent them from the dangerous behaviour you are trying to avoid. Always try to turn the behaviours you want in your facility into benefits for the customer that encourages them away from that bad behaviour.

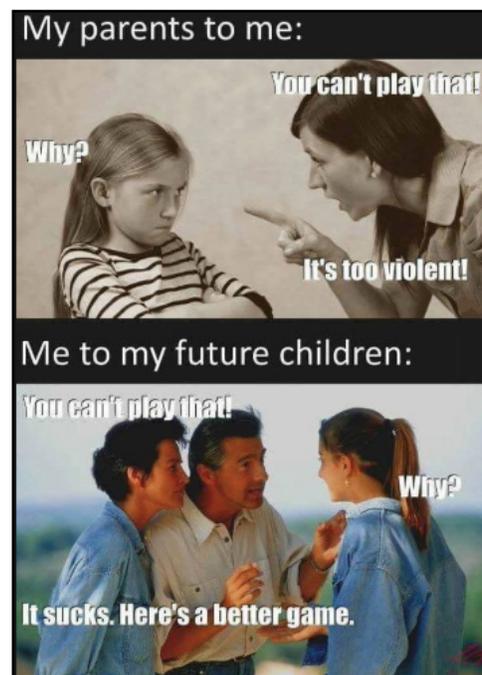
**You are not telling them "NO!" You are distracting them by saying:  
"YES, and I have an even better option for you!"**

If you are a trampoline park owner or manager you can create lots of different Mazes for your park to help reduce injuries:

- ◆ Use airbags so the foam in your pit does not create a “hole.” Majority of neck injuries happen in 3 foot deep pits where most of foam has been pushed to the side creating a hole, or packed down, so customers can exit easier;
- ◆ Put sofas in safe areas that lounging jumpers can rest on instead of trampolines;
- ◆ Have staff interact with customers regularly to increase customer retention which increases the chance they will listen to your staff and the rules;
- ◆ Create contests for memorizing and reciting the rules and following them;
- ◆ Put turnstiles in the entrance to control the flow in and out of the park ;
- ◆ Have staff walk up and down the trampolines getting in the way of jumpers running, instead of them yelling or just blowing a whistle across a busy and noisy open court;
- ◆ Put moveable large padded blocks between trampolines to help slow down jumpers and prevent running;
- ◆ Put young athletes in different areas, separating them from older and bigger jumpers, making the area unique, interesting and child friendly so they want to be there;
- ◆ Offer classes for those who come regularly and put them into a staff scouting program.

**NOTE:** We are currently discussing with leading organizations about the idea of bringing in Traditional coaches to help coach high performance classes in the parks.

Mazes come in all different forms but the key point here is that your staff should not be yelling at the jumpers to prevent them from breaking the rules or simply blowing whistles. It is ineffective compared to actually creating value for the rule breakers. Instead they should be interacting with the jumpers in some way that distracts them from breaking the rules. Dangerous jumpers tend to push the limits because they think the best way to get excitement is by pushing their own limits. This is biologically true and they know it at some level. That is what sports like acrobatics is for. A certain subset of the population love to push their limits to different degrees. Instead of battling with your customers, have your staff be interacting with the clients regularly instead, not standing around in one area just blowing a whistle after the transgression has already happened. Having the staff engage with those “trouble makers” is a much better solution than having to remove the offending jumpers from the park, or yelling at them. Instead, play a game with them and have them connect with your staff on some level, which will distract them from the dangerous behaviour. Again, using



*cheese* as a way to convince the clients to follow the rules, rather than just yelling at them, is a much more effective option. Generally people come to a trampoline park to have fun, so if you engage with the customers more often you will have greater influence over their behaviour. People may not like this concept of *'bribing'* people to behave properly in their belief system but it has been done this way for many years and is called a *"Token System."* Children who repeatedly exhibit bad behaviour at school will be given some form of a *token* for good behaviour. They can redeem the rewards for extra recess time, treats, books, or any form of benefit that is appropriate for their age. It has been shown to be very successful because it addresses human behaviour at a biological level.

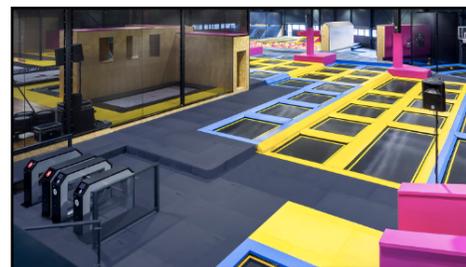
**Assuming people should just do what is "good" without needing value actually makes the person who is claiming this point of view selfish; they are using social guilt to coerce someone to do something for free.**

Think about it. There is no such thing as a "free lunch" in society. Everything has some inherent value and we trade values back and forth. We then claim that the other person we are value trading with should do something for us because we acted like a 'good person.' What this is actually saying is you are trying to get them to discount their value, which is a selfish thing to do. **Everyone needs cheese!**

Certain equipment can also keep the park areas safer; such as airbags. This is a common form of a Maze since foam pits require maintenance and most pits are not maintained as well as they should be. Staff don't really understand how to properly maintain them and the customers don't understand how dangerous they can be. An airbag maintains itself with air; less work for staff, less cleaning and less injuries. Many parks are starting to take out open jump areas and instead put in controllable attractions such as rock climbing walls and rope courses, rather than allowing jumpers freedom of jumping all over the place into each other. Putting in safer attractions is a better Maze than simply trying to hope people will use existing attractions more safely. Mazes are not always there to educate people but to distract them from doing dangerous things without them knowing.



A few parks such as WOOP! Trampoline Park in Slovenia actually put in turnstiles that only allow one person in at a time (*right*). A park in Canada that we went to had three ankle injuries in four minutes because there was no control of how new jumpers got onto the floor. Once the gate was open, the first thing the jumpers would do is run to the trampolines. We suggested they have the new jumpers coming onto the floor do a short fun game, conducted by a fun, energetic staff member, before they were allowed onto the open court areas. Notice how we did not use the word *"Warm Up"* or *"Safety Training"*? That automatically makes people think it is *"work."* By asking a child if they want to play a game for free before their jump time, you are 'seeming' to add in an extra value trade for free, not bore them to death with a warm up. The game does warm them up indirectly by delivering it in a Maze format they are more willing to follow.



This 'game' Maze allows a controlled entrance onto the trampolines rather than a herd of stampeding creatures and is used by many parks we have worked with. It also allows the staff to emotionally connect with the jumpers for a few minutes before they are 'set loose.' This creates an environment where the customer is more likely to form a small attachment to the staff, which in turns means they will tend to be more inclined to listen to them and follow the rules continuously over the hour. Of course it is not perfect, but it does help to create that emotional connection needed for a motivational circuit to form. People make decisions with their emotions and then rationalize it afterwards. This is why we often suggest having the staff bounce with the customers to also create that connection.

At other parks, they instal one to three foot high moveable padded blocks between the trampolines because generally customers want to run across the trampolines; a very dangerous problem creating collisions with other jumpers, as well as sprained ankles from falls or tripping over the trampoline pads. By putting barriers scattered around the open court it is a much more effective way of slowing down running and collisions compared to just yelling across the floor or blowing a whistle. We also tell the staff they must constantly move around the floor area 'accidentally' getting in the way of jumpers. It works like a charm. These are great ways to create a Maze to have customers slow down.



I hope you see that switching the way you modify human behaviour from a negative reinforcement to a more positive reinforcement reward based stimulus can increase the behaviours you want to see from people. On all accounts we have witnessed firsthand this is a much more effective approach.

**The most effective way to have clients at a trampoline park follow your rules is by having a whole list of fun interactive games ready to use to distract anyone breaking the rules. If you can provide them a value that is greater than the value they get from doing the dangerous act, they will take the option with more value of course, based on the biology we have already discussed.**

Traditional gym clubs do this method with structured competition and education. Trampoline parks should do it with games. Maybe Traditional and freestyle aspects of the sport are not so different after all.

Have the staff engage and play games with the jumpers regularly, moving around like 'entertainers' that focus on jumping with the children and distracting them from dangerous behaviours. By providing jumpers with a fun alternative, rather than leaving children up to their own devices, is ultimately much safer.



Trampoline parks are a tourist based industry deemed by the insurance industry as an 'amusement park' so they tend to not have many repeat customers. If you believe you will have a connection with all of your jumpers you are most likely mistaken. You will have the regulars of course and depending on the location you could have a lot of them. But generally we have found that turnover is quite high. People tend to not know about one specific trampoline park compared to another and go to the one that is closest and cheapest. Because of this, park owners do not really have time to build a connection with all

customers and have to rely on distracting new customers from breaking the rules with games and learning fun basic skills, compared to assuming they will establish a long term connection with them.

Parks in Europe will tend to have more of a connection with their regular customers because cities tend to be smaller and there are less parks, so it is more likely that a customer will commit to one park or brand. It is also more common to have educational classes because of the difference in insurance and laws. Traditional gymnastics and trampoline gyms have a close connection with all the members because they sign up for regular classes, and 'dropping in' is not as common.

We have seen a recent trend where parks are starting to create memberships and educational programs that create core group of jumpers who do establish a connection with the staff but the majority of people are there for a novelty experience and simply think they know best. The Garden Trampoline athletes are becoming instrumental in this safety education because they are willing to go to a park and help out.



Cramming rules down people's throats is not as effective in the real world as actually engaging with the customers. Coaches or employees that simply 'wish' others will do what they want just because they ask them are in a dream world and will simply get drained over time. The first parks in North America we attended claimed that the lawyers told them that if they allowed the staff to jump and play with the clients and there was an injury, the park would be liable. This forced the parks to adopt the "stand still" mentality discussed earlier. It is easy to sympathize with this fear and after speaking to lawyers and insurance companies across the world myself, I see it is a common mentality in certain countries that avoids responsibility for park accidents. In Europe however, parks tend to not be as restricted in this manner and allow the staff to jump with the clients; effectively *distracting* them from breaking the rules with games and education.

We hope that the rest of the world will follow suit and take an active role in educating and engaging with jumpers, rather than being *frozen* in fear, sitting still, unable to provide any real client interaction. We saw what happened with Canada recently. Let's learn from that mistake. Either way even if you can't be on the trampoline legally you can still engage and play with the customers off the trampoline by purchasing some fun toys such as these:



These are all inexpensive and safe toys for the trampoline. When a staff member sees a child or even an adult breaking the rules all they need to do so pick up one of these toys and try to engage with them by making a game or giving them a challenge to do.

On the GRT Network App we highlight some of the fun games that parks have come up with using toys and the staff for distracting *rule breakers* with a value proposition. You do not even have to be on the trampoline to distract the jumpers and give them a safer alternative. It is up to the staff to know what level of challenges certain people can do but in reality they will learn these limits as they work at the park through regular staff training.



You can have jumpers play catch with a staff member on or off the trampoline with a beanie bag toy. You can get them to jump over a rope on the group a few times. You can see if they can juggle by standing nice and still on the trampoline maybe on one foot. You can have monthly team building meetings and come up with 40-50 different games to play with the trouble makers and you can even have the staff play the games on themselves as a way to help them feel part of the park community. It is a **Win-Win** because as a manager you are having your staff emotionally connect together and come up with solutions to park issues at the same time without boring them to death.

If your insurance allows it, you do not have to simply stick to games, you can actually teach them how to build small behavioural patterns, such as a front roll or a seat drop. Some gym clubs note that enrolment actually increased when a park was opened near them because younger athletes wanted to learn in their own way, with their friends, so they could use the park with more efficiency. I predict that trampoline parks will tend to start to offer more educational programs as a way to inspire jumpers to spend more money in the park as well as promoting education. **Again you can see that safety education is secondary.**

Franchises in North America have already been discussing this concept with us but we are still trying to find a way to deal with the complicated insurance issues they all face if a staff member inadvertently injures a child. Again, it is the issue with the way the legal structure has been formulated that really prevents brands from helping educate their customers. In the safety chapter we will give specific details about how this issue is not a new development but has been around for a long time which is why I believe a change to the system needs to be made if we truly want the children to be safer.

They don't want to pay huge sums of money for a knowledgeable coach and don't want to take responsibility for injuries that are not always in their control. It is a tough situation but we do see that regulation driven associations, such as the International Trampoline Park Association (IATP), RoSPA and ASTM International, are beginning to make a stance and are starting to increase their focus on customer engagement strategies, rather than solely focusing on manufacturing regulations. As discussed, human behaviour is more of a constant concern compared to the risks of a trampoline bed ripping or the screws will loosen. More injuries happen when people interact with a trampoline compared to when the equipment breaks down.

The take home message for trampoline park floor staff is that the value trade biology we operate under is the best strategy for reducing injuries in parks. We know that it is a tough battle with 100 - 200,000 jumpers all trying to be adventurous, but rarely take blame for pushing their own limits. The best way is to train the staff to *identify* a dangerous liability that is increasing park risk, then try to distract them with

a few games and challenges that inadvertently puts them in a maze and moves them away from the dangerous behaviour. **It is all about playing games.**

Along with changing the rule breaking behaviour, before an injury occurs, the staff also has fun which keeps them engaged in their job. It also provides more content for your marketing manager to utilize to increase social media engagement which increases your bottom line in the long run. **Investors would like this idea.**

We know it is hard to keep the staff engaged for a long 6+ hour shift and we know they tend to “zone out” after just a few hours, so by having a tool kit of mazes you can help keep everyone on the safety track including your staff. Our motto for park staff is:

**“Get Paid to Play”**



# How to Effectively Train Park Staff with a Maze

We have discussed how the staff need to engage with the clients and 'distract' them from breaking the rules because they only have them in the park for a short amount of time which is an insufficient amount of time to inspire them to really understand 'why' you have rules. Instead you can play with them and distract them with a game.

If someone is running around bumping into other jumpers simply go up to them and ask them if they want to play a game or learn something 'cool' or new. Come up with hundreds of different ways the staff can distract the bad jumpers and provide them a value proposition. ***These are Mazes***. Here are a few examples:

- ◆ Play catch with a foam
- ◆ Learn a Seat-drop
- ◆ Play "Follow The Leader"
- ◆ Film them on Instagram doing "something else" (besides breaking the rules)
- ◆ Have the child show you their favourite skill

How do managers apply the same maze principals to their staff training? If your staff are not doing the job correctly by sitting on the job or encouraging dangerous jumping then you must simply start by asking yourself the same question you should anyone who is not following the belief system you have set out for them: ***Why are they doing this behaviour?***

As discussed, everyone has valid experiences and therefore they will have a 'valid' reason to do the behaviour they are doing (*in their opinion*). To go tell them their opinion is wrong will only make them get territorial like a Cichlid fish and push away from you which will make them even less efficient on the floor.

Instead, just like the jumpers, simply try to provide them a value proposition that they require. **Watch the behaviour, establish a pattern and then estimate an internal motivation that led to the "bad behaviour."** Like all people, they most likely need some attention. A 6 hour shift can be lonely so the job of a staff manager is really more about engaging with the staff, much like the way staff need to engage with customers and not simply bark orders. Try to watch the behaviours of the staff and then identify the value propositions they need to feel good.

Out of the many parks we have visited around the world, a noticeable pattern occurs when they have employees with an increased negative behavioural pattern. If the managers are too busy to give adequate attention to the staff and give them value they will not be able to see a return - no value trade, no return on value. The owners will tend to be absent or dealing with other aspects of the business, so they cannot provide enough attention to the manager. The manager, understandably overburdened, does not give enough time to the staff who then feel neglected. They in turn neglect the jumpers and it all

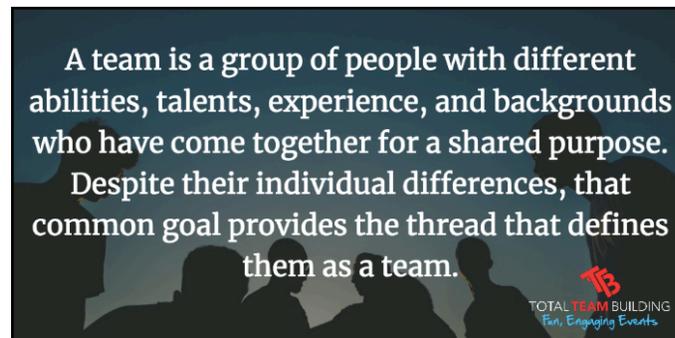


stems from the top. Owners, please keep constant communication with the park managers and staff even if it is just a phone call every few days or you will lose their attention and it is a cascading effect all the way to the customer that ultimately hurts your bottom line and will annoy your investors.

The owners tend to have a personality that is always 'on the go' and looking for new opportunities even outside of their park so they can get distracted from the day to day business operations. In this case, owners need to trust the managers and ensure they get the right ones who can seriously act as an *owner*. You can't micromanage a manager if you are not there all the time so create the Mazes that will allow you to sleep at night knowing your team is doing a good job.

**As said earlier, many times: Simply create a system that allows the employees and managers to feel valued. If they feel they are simply 'working' for someone else's vision they won't be motivated as if they feel it is *their* vision too.**

At the beginning, hire a team and let them decide the roles they wish to . Your core team that probably is helping you build the park are already showing their commitment so allow them to demonstrate to you as the owner why they are valuable and what areas they have strengths or motivations in. Provide them with certain goals and objectives and work together as a team to accomplish them. From the start you will see certain members of your team gravitate towards certain roles and owners should make a note of that.



Here is a typical pattern in a failing business: The owner has some money lying around and picks a business to create. They generally will have this hierarchy mentality and that is understandable because the media and history has depicted this structure so they follow suit. They hire a *Marketing Manager* a *Product Manager* and an *Operations Manager*. They hire them in a series of interviews that are based on the owner trying to discern the validity of their

Person Suit in the interview (*which is usually over inflated*). The Marketing Manager, for example, will have a great resume but will not understand the vision of the owner or the specifics of marketing that particular business generally. Then the owner blows through a years salary and then decides that the marketing manager was 'not good enough' and then they rehire. This happens over and over again with all sectors of the business and very little actual work is done because more time is spent 'finding' the right team.

We work with a company in Finland that was created from a mutual interest in the technology sector. This company functions in more of an ecosystem fashion which has shown to be quite productive because instead of hiring and re hiring, they tend to come together under a common motivation for a product. Then they divide up the roles based on what each team member brings to the table, not so much based on their resume or experience outside of the company.

Of course they all gravitate towards certain roles based on their personal experiences, **but the first step was creating an ecosystem of like minded individuals. As they expand I would recommend this company to keep that ecosystem and create Mazes for new hires that show them their motivation, not their skills.**

Each job requires specific solutions so your resume is always secondary to motivation and connection to that specific business. If you love what that company stands for you will put in a lot more effort overall and will quickly learn what it needs and how to accomplish those goal. Some of the knowledge you bring from the 'outside' world will indeed be required, but that mutual belief system is the bedrock. Many companies do not take sufficient time to build that first and then blame everyone else when it inevitably falls apart.

Constant team building outside of the gym, even if it is just a bowling night, gives you a discount because you can cooperate together due to similar demographics. This would be the job of the owner and the team because money does not grow on trees so coming up with financially efficient team building strategies is very important. Maybe a monthly "Management" Poker game where you can all brainstorm new ideas for the park (or any business) and get to know each other more.

By doing it, outside of the park, the team gets to see what everyone is like in normal day life, outside of the work environment which will help make the team building more authentic. Of course, nothing is perfect but the idea of team development is at the core of any good business so put the emphasis on developing the team before you develop their roles.



From our experience, parks and Traditional gym owners will jump to the point too quickly. What I mean is that they simply look to the employee as a resume and not an individual with their own motivational circuits and personality. They will 'say' they see them as a person but a second later they will demand work from them with no real value proposition.

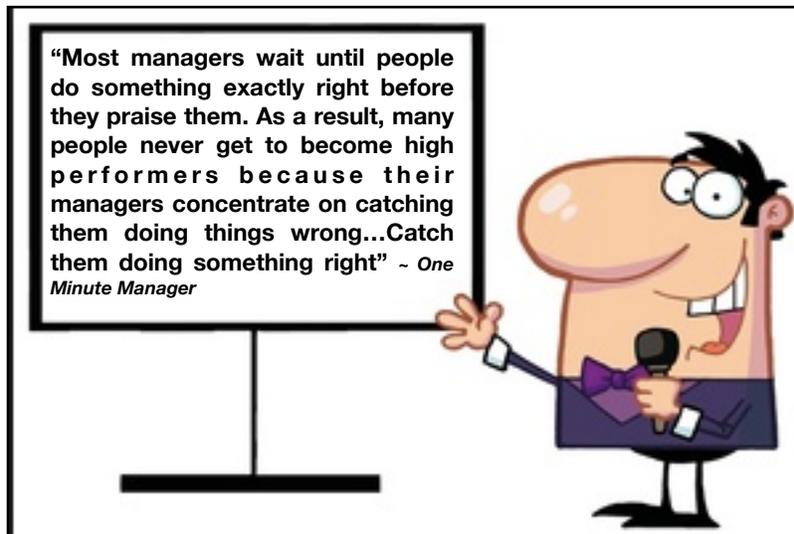
In this day and age with so many jobs available to these millennials, and all demographics, employees need to provide more than a pay cheque. They need to create a team within a common belief system that makes the staff 'feel at home.' In 1999 there was a survey done by The National Research Council and 70% of people said they would work even if they won the lottery. It shows pretty conclusively that there is more to work than money for most people if they find the job they can get passionate about.



Howard Gardner, an Industrial Organizational Psychologist wrote a paper in 2002 discussing that people need to feel that their work somehow has far reaching implications to help other people. It is not just about money, it is about feeling that you are making a difference in the world. **Employers need to create a belief system that stretches out into the community.** Even if you are just a trampoline park, it does not mean you can't involve charities in your business or fight for causes and donate profits to help people on the other side of the world. Your employees will feel a sense of duty when they see the park is really trying to help people, not just make money.

Create that sense of duty with a belief system and community focus with the help of your team and they will feel they are part of that greater cause and be more effective because they feel it is “*their*” cause as well, not just “*your*” program that they built for *you*, making *you* money.

If I had to boil down the #1 issue we see with business management across the board it would be this: Companies tend to be always searching for the “right staff,” but they need to build them instead with proper education. **Please everyone, no more gambling, on the gym floor or in the board room.**



This whole story discusses the process of building behaviours so I will not walk through every step of building an employee. That would take another 300 page story in itself but I hope you can see that you are better off finding the motivated individual and building on that platform compared to shoot three-pointers all day hoping to get a basket.

**Managers, please remember you are more likely to find the behaviour you seek if you reward the good, not just point out the bad. I highly recommend Ken Blanchard’s book “One Minute Manager.” Our editorial board that helped with this story provided that reference to me and it sums up how to apply this story to your employees.**

Establishing an emotional connection through a common belief system with all your managerial staff is equivalent to establishing an emotional connection with your jumpers who will then feel you value them and will reciprocate that value with something you want; a hard working member of your team, not just an “*employee*.” At GRT we never use the word “*employee*” as it sends bad signals to everyone involved. At GRT we actual have hundreds of “*employees*” in a sense. This includes our followers who help our statistics build, to sponsored athletes who help scout new gyms, to parent volunteers who help at the events, business partners who open new opportunities and financial investors. We never label them because they are all part of our *team* that creates value for the trampoline industry, which is their form of payment and their sense of commitment to a greater cause. It is always a team effort in our business, aiming at something much bigger than just one person’s vision. It goes way beyond my vision for this industry.

**It has to be everyone's vision. Freestyle Trampoline is not just the FTA's vision, it's all of our supporters. The FTA plays a role in it but so does everyone else. Thank you to all of our supporters!**

Here is a recent example: In New Zealand for the #GTGamesANZ competition, all the parents of the athletes both on our #GRTCrew as well as athletes not on our crew came together to chip away at the budget and run the event. The kids all helped set up the trampolines, the parents handled registration, Trish coordinated the event and kept the schedule on track, while I engaged with the kids, keeping them 'under control' [laugh]. It is really amazing what can be done when you bring people together under a common goal, not just your personal abstraction.

Business is not about creating a hierarchy of important people and ranking them, but instead gathering supporters to help you accomplish a mutual goal that you all believe in. In our case, it is creating a less restrictive trampoline community for the future and we are extremely grateful for the help the team has provided to the community. We reciprocate that by making sure they are included in the development of this alternative to the Olympics. They also have the opportunity to travel and watch the creation of something amazing. The kids obviously also travel and learn to deal with media attention, as well as belonging to a community of friends who have a common goal. Parents are able to engage with their children on a new level, strengthening the family unit and also meet other parents who are in a similar situation. We know that they will continue building this belief system even if we are no longer around, which means that we have been part of a team, not simply dictating what everyone should do in the name of our own abstractions.

More recently, we have been told this new community has helped them deal with their own anxiety, bullying and depression issues and they wouldn't give up their community for anything. We have children asking us to help them write papers for school about the community and what it means to them. We have parents spending their hard earned money to have send their children to volunteer at one of our events so that they can learn from each us and from each other. We have YouTube vloggers that create documentaries about the community, all under their own free will. When you have really established a community around a business, people will take control of it under their own terms and if the owner of the business has truly passed on their vision and education they can simply be a one minute manager and achieve great results by the power of the community. Once the community aspect is in place, the manager simply needs to keep everyone on track with weekly and monthly goals. The manager simply needs to track the progress and give constant encouragement as they go through the Maze.

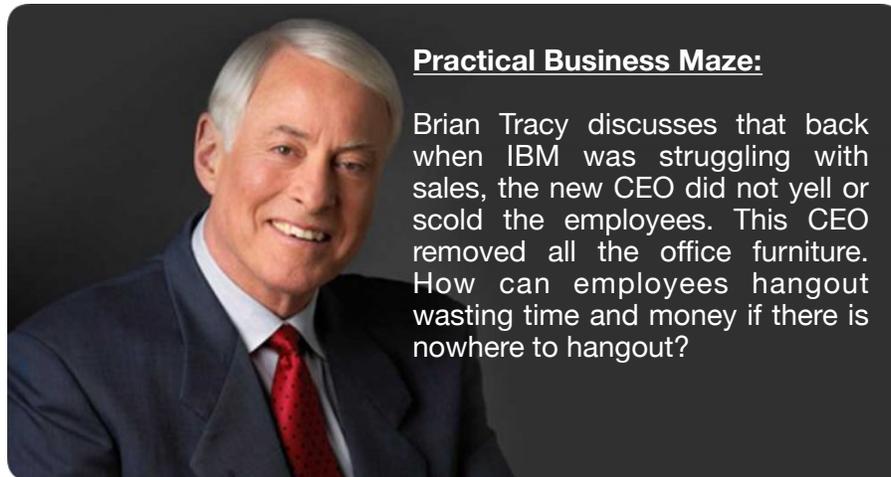
I really cannot stress this point enough. People as a group will be able to accomplish amazing things beyond what anyone can imagine by working together like cells working together to eventually create a human being. If you are an owner of a company and believe people should listen to you simply because you pay them, you are mistaken and will inevitably fail. If your team sees you genuinely care about what you claim to stand for they will follow you to the ends of the Earth if they in fact care about the same belief system.

Find those who care about your belief system by living it yourself first then those who have a similar vision will join afterwards once you show them how. They need to see that even without them you will do it and then they will know you are really authentic in your beliefs and will probably want to join your belief system, if they get a value out of it. I tend to see that many people really do not see how valuable the community aspect is for the



customers, managers and owners. **Start there and build. Don't just look at the resume.**

Even with a real genuine belief system that your team can get behind, you also need to utilize Mazes to help keep them on track on a day to day basis. Brian Tracy, the sales expert mentioned earlier discussed how a few studies done in the early 1900s and again at the turn of the century have indicated worker productivity is not what we think it is. In one of his lecture series he describes how the average salesman will only effectively sell products a few hours a day even though they are getting paid for an 8 hour shift. From my experience, this is very accurate and the managers tend to spend a lot of time running around between sales but not actually doing the selling.



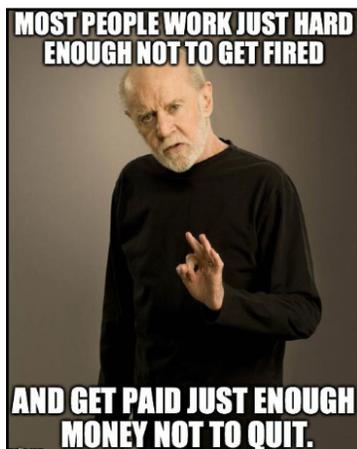
My suggestion is to make a goal-oriented atmosphere in your park or gym. If you have a marketing manager, do not micro-manage them and give them a "list" of duties; instead, give them a list of goals to accomplish. Make challenges for the managers such as increase the social media followers by 2,000 by next month. Let them show you they can figure out how to do that. It is not the job of the owner to play the instrument for them, but to ensure they have the environment that encourages them and educates them in order to be at the top of their game so they can contribute to the orchestra as a whole in an effective manner.

It is much more effective to make your team responsible to each other than to the owner. If there is a big event but the social media is so low that they don't get enough people to hear about it, the whole team will apply pressure to the social media director. The social media director will naturally put pressure on themselves if they're not contributing their fair share of the work. They won't internalize this pressure as fear if they believe in the cause and have been already going Step-By-Step with their 'ship.' It will be a positive sort of pressure that they will want to accomplish to give themselves more confidence and to feel good about themselves by showing everyone else they are a competent human being.



The owner or head manager simply needs to run round the office helping everyone, not demanding they be better at their duties. A real leader is more like an assistant for everyone. The best way to give them assistance is to make sure you get them on the right 'pathway' Step-By-Step as described in the biomechanics chapter. Then you simply keep them goal oriented and the ship will *steer itself*. Some managers may look at their role as a nice easy job after years of hard work, so *now* they can relax. *Wrong!*

In the 1930s Elton Mayo, (1880 – 1949) an Australian psychologist, industrial researcher and organizational theorist, noticed that when he tried different ways to increase worker productivity, such as changing the lights and other structures of the office, only one thing really made a noticeable difference. When he walked around and personally asked the employees how they were doing and interacted with them, they would actually increase their performance. **They simply wanted to be reminded that they were important. If these concepts are applied before the business even opens you can keep everyone in a goal-oriented environment under a cloud of positivity.** We will discuss the “*Cloud of Positivity*” in a later chapter.



Now, if you find someone who is not productive, no matter how much you engage with them, you may have to let them go. However, if you create a good Maze and they behave in a way that indicates they don't see the value of your system, you can help them find a better system. Biology says there are no such things as good or bad employees or athletes, simply ones who get value from your belief system and ones who don't. If they do not, work with them in a friendly way and help them find another community that they can get value out of.

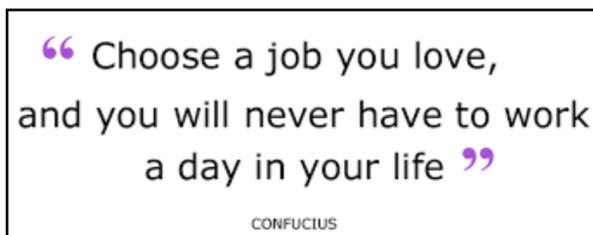
As you can see, the common theme of providing value is apparent at every level. The staff need to provide value to the jumpers by engaging with them by playing games or teaching them some fun safe tricks. The floor manager needs to engage the staff and encourage them and provide *cheese* for them to keep moving around the park and engaging with the jumpers. The managers need to encourage each other and

work as a team with simply a set of group goals, not tasks, and come up with a way everyone can contribute to the orchestra that can affect the greater good outside of the company and not just line the owner's pockets with money. If you are a passive investor you then you just need to continuously remind them you value their team work and their efforts are valuable to the greater community and not just you.

There are many ways to do this such as joining and partnering with charities or having sponsored athletes who are traveling the world spreading the word of education and acrobatics to impoverished countries. The bottom line is that your employees need to feel they are part of something bigger and more worth while than just making the owner money. **If the job of an employee is to build the business, the managers job is to make them want to.**

**Remember how I said at the start of the book that a coach is really a salesman?...**

At our clinics we discuss these topics in more details and work with your team to come up with your personal goals. We work with your team to create steps towards those goals from the managerial side



of things to the public jumping side of things. We also help create different examples of games and class structures that will allow for proper education of your jumpers.

**For complete staff training or Freestyle Trampoline events for promotional purposes please contact us at: [www.FreestyleTrampolineAssociation.com](http://www.FreestyleTrampolineAssociation.com)**

## Creating Mazes for Gymnastics & Trampoline Athletes:

I hope I have made it clear that without understanding the psychology of people we can't move forward in any real direction, whether it is in business or in acrobatic coaching. We can't increase ticket sales to World Championships without knowing what people want from the Championships. We can't increase safety and we can't improve coaching strategies without a firm understanding of the one dimensional gears that create human behaviour. The Maze concept in this story is mostly about the psychology of why it works, not the actual Mazes themselves. Here are the underpinnings of why it is a valid theory.

In Traditional gymnastics you need to actually teach skills more often than at a park, so how can we make Mazes in a Traditional gymnastics /trampoline club? It is similar to what we discussed in the previous section on trampoline parks. We simply try to focus on providing the athlete with a positive stimulus, that moves them closer to their goals. Behaviour is not as much of a problem in most Traditional gyms due to the history of strict rules and protocol. The Traditional side has a reputation of rules and education compared to a trampoline park that is unfortunately classified as an *"Amusement Park."*

So how do we actually teach an athlete a skill with the Maze concept? It's actually quite easy and simply requires some brainstorming. You build the Maze with blocks and mats and have the athlete go through the Maze. The athlete tries the Maze for the first time and probably won't get too far. They will look at the coach and the coach will have a big smile and say something along the lines of, *"Awesome! OK, now the NEXT step is to do 'X.'"*



You didn't say anything negative or imply the athlete did the wrong behaviour. Even if they didn't complete the Maze, it doesn't mean they did the wrong behaviour. **This is crucial for the Maze concept. Falling down in a controlled environment is the only way to learn.** So when an athlete goes through a Maze they either learned a piece of the pathway or they get closer to learning a piece of the pathway. **Failure and success are actually the same thing with this mentality.** Get rid of all those ideas of *good* and *bad* that we are all trained to rely on. **There is no failure.** There are only different sized steps along the underlying pathway that we discussed in both the biomechanics and biology chapters. Remember that an athlete who even goes one more degree has technically learned a skill in the biological sense and we need to acknowledge these small 'skills.'



Let's walk through a real example of how I put athlete's in a training Maze.

Human beings can learn anything if we allow them to take small enough steps without judgment. If I want the athlete to do a *longer* Roundoff, by putting her hands in the red hoop and her feet on the beat-board, she will need to get one hand in the hoop first but not the other hand or the feet. I don't tell her she made a mistake if she misses. I

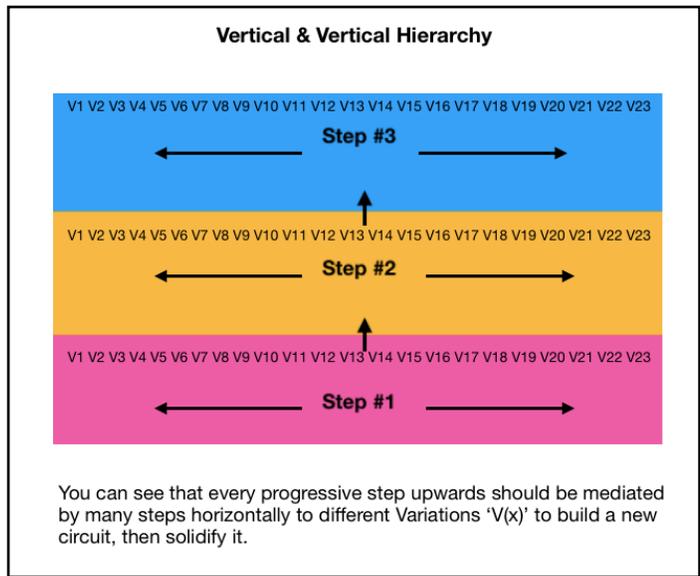
enthusiastically tell her she was slightly closer to the end result of that Maze. I tell her the next step, which is to get the other hand in the hoop and don't worry about the feet yet. When she manages to get the other hand but still fails to get the feet in I don't highlight that fact. Instead, I get excited and *sell* her my delight that she was able to get to the next step, which was to get both hands in the hoop.

Next, I ask her to put one foot on the beat-board and then two feet. **You can see how the GRT Maze technique is more about highlighting the positive steps they did make, not just remind them of what they still need to do in the future.** This is hugely important! If you remember the motivation section, the true joy for this athlete is to feel they are getting closer to the end result, so by being able to highlight her baby steps every few repetitions I can keep her enjoying the journey and she won't become frustrated about not being at the end. After all, in the deep circuits we do not actually enjoy the end, we enjoy getting there.

After several repetitions of each baby step, highlighting the steps she did take, I can help her to stay positive and finish the skill. The "*cheese*" is my happiness about each step she does take. It tells her she is a worthwhile competent human being and that I value the progression she is making. I crack jokes and smile and offer a *high five* as much as necessary at the younger levels.

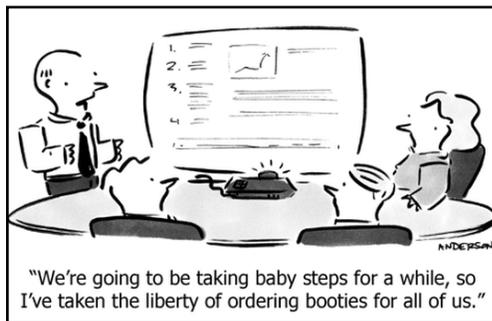
After she learns the skill, Step #1 is complete. I have successfully guided her ship through a set of marker boys and have taught her why it is important and what the underlying mechanism are. I tell her all the other skills that use the same concept and show her the long term path of why the skill works in any way I can. She has effectively moved vertically 'upwards' the hierarchy with this new skill.

Now I need her to solidify this skill by moving 'horizontally' in my athletic development hierarchy. I then come up with many different variations of the Roundoff. I may just have her do it from one colourful mat to another one. I may have her do it from a block into the pit, trying to go as far as she can. I may try to get her to have a really short Roundoff just to demonstrate the difference between long and short. This is what I mean when I say I go 'horizontally' after I go 'upwards.'



This is why I play a lot of games on the trampoline. **They are not actually games, I just disguise them as games to increase learning...** It is not dangerous if you pick the right games for the skill level of the athlete. Too many times I hear coaches assume that the word “Game” implies danger or absence of learning but this is not the case; not even close. In fact, I haven’t had a single injury at any of my clinics when we *play games* that people deem ‘dangerous.’ The only reason some think it is dangerous is because they do not realize the biology of learning as well as they may think. It is all about knowing your crowd and how to give them fun Mazes to help solidify previously built circuits. The athlete has now learned the path to the next marker boy and now I am giving her a context by making fun variations and games. That is what Freestyle is really about. It creates a context for the desired skill by making many variations that all require slightly different pathways in the brain. This allows her to play with the new schema in her brain to better understand it and modify it. **That is Step #2.**

Then I simply add in the next ‘upwards’ baby step and in this case it is probably a Back Handspring preparing for a ‘Yurchenko’ (*Back Handspring on Vault*). In this case I do not always teach the Back Handspring separately. I may actually teach her Back Handspring on a trampoline but at the same time have her doing this Roundoff Drill with a back roll as a second Maze. I have her add on to the previous skill; simply adding to the previous pathway, not changing it.



When I coach I am always thinking about adding to the previous steps of the path, not creating different Mazes that are not in some form taught as a continuation of the previous Maze. I do not teach “*drop the arm.*” I simply keep adding to my Maze and making the Maze bigger, not necessarily making a whole new Maze for every single skill. This will help get the athlete to look at acrobatic rotations as a pathway they can simply follow rather than a series of unsolved problems that they will look to me to solve every time.

I never want my athletes to look to me to *tell* them the next step. If they do not know it then I have not properly shown them the path. As discussed earlier this can create dependency and can lead to injuries when invariably I can’t be there holding their hand every step of the way.



Practically speaking you will not be able to stick to the perfect *Step-By-Step* model every time because so many other factors contribute to the athlete’s success. They may go to a friends gym and discover a new variation that contradicts the teachings of their coach. In this case I ask the athlete to teach me what they learned and we play with it together. I do not tell them it was a bad ‘technique. **If I think it is, then I devise Mazes that they CAN NOT go through.** I simply show them the error of that technique by

giving them a safe, but impossible challenge by being creative and then they will realize that in fact, the technique we had previously been working on is actually the best solution. Create a Maze that lets them figure out their mistakes on their own when you can. **Mazes do not simply build behaviours, they also tear them down.**

**For example:** One athlete came to me and said she learned a new skill in cheerleading class. It had to do with throwing her head back like a “*Swan Jump*” during a back flip. In competitive trampoline, I needed



her to keep her head in. I gave her a challenge later that day so she wouldn't cross-associate her 'new' skill and my Maze: *"Do a back flip and hold your shirt in both hands. Sweep your legs through the shirt as you hold it during your back flip. Do it into the pit so you have an easier landing."*

This is a drill I learned from TNT Diving after a week of filming their athletes for our App and I appreciate their continued support (@TNTdiving).

If you try this drill even a few times you can see that there is no way to do it and have your head "out" like a Swan Jump. We all joined in and had a lot of fun. I would ask questions like: *"What body shape could you do to accomplish this goal?"* As well as having her try to teach another gymnast this drill. In this way I had her in my Maze and everyone else as well learning from the Maze.



I did not tell her, *"A Swan Jump is bad technique."* I simply constructed a Maze where everyone in the group could learn that depending on the skill, certain body positions will be required. I end it off by making the point clear that when doing competitive trampoline, she will need to keep her head in but outside of that small world, Swan Jumps are fun and I had her teach me her 'new' move.

There are no 'good' and 'bad' skills. There are only skills that work well in different environments. I keep my coaching very positive and have the athletes figure this out on their own, through the challenge. This is how you educate athletes on technique but also allow them to be free at the same time to build the way they want. Just let them know which skills work in which environments and let them choose which environments to 'play' in. Don't just tell them what to do and what not to do. Instead create a Maze that shows how biology can make them do it either directly or indirectly. It is much more effective than hand-spotting every single athlete or describing progressions and putting limits on human behaviours. Let the Mazes do the heavy lifting. You keep that Maze pointed in the right direction and your athlete will figure it out with some *cheese*.

### A Few Examples:

- ◆ Skill #1 - **Jumping** with feet together; and the Maze is putting foam between the legs to inspire the athlete to focus on those levers/muscles.
- ◆ Skill #2 - **Hurdle Step**; and the Maze is placing visual markers on the ground to accomplish this.
- ◆ Skill #3 - **Bar Swings**; and once you explain the technique of initiating and continuing swing the Maze is the fact you can put visuals or blocks around them they must *"kick."*
- ◆ Skill #4 - **Split Stretch**; and you just give them a timing schedule that acts as a Maze. My coaches would test our flexibility and that was the 'Maze'.

- ◆ Skill #5 - **Parallel Bar Support Swings**; and the Maze is to put mats across the bars at farther distances every few days and the swing will get higher and the athlete will have a mat to fall on if they do not do the right momentum or angle of axis/lever. No need to spot parallel bar swings unless its for a tight body reminder. Even then, you can use a foam as a Maze between the legs to help encourage a tight body.
- ◆ Skill #10 - **Back Roll**; so your Maze is a large slanted mat and then decrease the angle over time.
- ◆ Skill #15 - **Full Turn on Beam**; so your Maze is to build the mats up around the beam and let the athlete work around degree-by-degree marking off with chalk the further they get. Make it even a contest to increase workload motivation.
- ◆ Skill #20 - **Back Flip on trampoline**; so your Maze is to build up mats and have them learn to do back roll on the mat and then slowly modify the mats so they start flipping on their own onto the lower mats and eventually they will learn on their own as you slowly take the mats away. Again you can use a “foam block in the chin” Maze to encourage proper head alignment. Use multiple Mazes at once if you need to.
- ◆ Skill #25 - **Take-off on Double Mini**; and the Maze is to create a proper distance on the take-off by putting a block a certain distance from the end of the Double Mini and force the athlete to have to jump the gap and that will force the legs more in front more so then they would naturally do with verbal cues.
- ◆ Skill #50 - **Back Pull Over**; and the Maze is to lock their hands together behind their legs and fall off a 4 inch mat onto the trampoline and the gravitational force will naturally make them go over; no hand-spotting.
- ◆ Skill #100 - **1 1/4 onto a High Mat off the trampoline**; or 1 - 1/2 Forward Dive into water. The mats or the water are the Maze.

As you can see there are tons of examples and each Maze can be made differently depending on the equipment available, coaches individual preferences and athlete motivations. Some Mazes work better than others for millions of reasons so it will take some experimenting on the coaches part to start constructing Mazes conceptually and trying them yourself before running athletes through them.

You can create Mazes for every skill with very minimal hand spotting from the coach. Some Mazes may require the coach to stand by for a step of the skill that it extremely hard to build. Blocks can't move as easily as a coach's arm. **You should not be resorting to hand spotting for every skill or you will become burnt out and your athlete will learn to rely on you for every skill.**

Technique is important to teach but it is taught by having athletes simply go through a Maze, not by the coach most of the time. Some key points can only be explained with verbal cues but try to keep it simple and let the athlete focus on one thing at a time along the pathway. Too many coaches focus primarily on verbal cues which are not that effective. Going through the motion is much more effective if the athlete can focus on one thing at a time being led by 'cheese.'

Give them a focal point on each Maze. Do not expect them to just go blindly through a huge long Maze. Try to keep the Mazes simple and effective that focus on one thing at a time. With all the other things that athlete is focusing on, giving them 10 things to focus on during the Maze is useless as they will be overwhelmed and most likely will forget everything you asked. **One thing at a time for all athletes is very crucial.**



It is very hard to always guide athletes with positivity. It would be nice to think but in reality a bit of social pressure is key for a balanced equation as the athletes get older. Try to keep the coercion very minimal and keep the positivity cycle going as long as possible. Practically speaking taking away value propositions does affect behaviour but if you do that more than creating value, then you are going to create an underlying coercive environment that will break over time.

Mazes are a theoretical concept based on the human behaviour literature that basically indicate that human beings behave positively to those who show value. Life is never always positive but you can use Mazes to help keep them away from negativity as well as in the diving example above. Find a Maze they enjoy that can help directly or indirectly build circuits *Step-By-Step*. Use your staff to help create different options. The GRT Network is full of these Mazes you can try.

Mazes come in all shapes and sizes and as you can see it is based more on your creativity more than your hand spotting skills or technical skill. Sure you need those as well but the primary focus of the GRT Maze method is that by removing yourself from over-influencing the athlete by babying them through all movements you can make your life easier and create an environment that actually is more stimulating for learning. Simply put, if coaches have to tell all the answers, they did not coach effectively. **Learning is about knowing the path.**

Studies repeatedly show that by encouraging your athlete to go *Step-By-Step* on their own, without too much adult supervision, they can learn easier and retain information longer; assuming they are not overwhelmed. For this reason it is important that you keep the steps between skills as small as possible and try to make a Maze systematic for every skill and every movement possible.

Sometimes Mazes will be about positive rewards I call "*cheese*" to get the athlete to perform better. Other times it will be about inducing friendly competition between other athletes or even yourself to spark that competitive nature we have to climb the competency hierarchy. In extreme circumstances it may be social pressure by bringing the parents out onto the gym floor to directly sit in front of athletes who are misbehaving; negative reinforcement. Other times it will be funny jokes made between the athletes or the coach. It can be anything that modifies the behaviour. The difference between a positive stimulus and a negative stimulus is on the delivery of the Maze, not the actual instructions from the coach. Because of the fact fear and motivation are the same thing in biology, I can always turn a negative into a positive by being creative. People learn based on positivity, not criticism. Find them doing something right and encourage it and ignore the bad whenever possible. **It is always possible!**

Some coaches work on this principal that if you yell enough or hit them hard enough they will listen. They believe the millennial should just automatically respect them without them really earning it. If you yell at them, yes they will listen in that moment because they can't escape but then they will avoid your negative stimulus in the future and look for a positive one, as they continue doing exactly what you don't

want them to do. This could lead to many destructive behaviours that hurt everyone involved and can even lead to injuries.



The reason we are able to rally the Freestyle Trampoline community around our events is because we give them what they are looking for, then teach them in a manner that is not negative to them. If you actually want to create a change in behaviour don't fight the athletes; be creative, and

guide them with positive reinforcement through the Mazes you create for them. There isn't one behaviour on this planet conducted by any living creature that is not a value trade. It seems that some of the older generations will forget that or simply try to ignore it.

One thing that has changed however that I believe is responsible for this 'blame game' of the millennials is that they have a new environment that is not nearly as restrictive as the older populations. Before the industrial revolution many families and children lived on farms so they would be many kilometres away from other people. When a child misbehaved they literally had nowhere to go. Then, during the mid 50's the world was still recovering from the World Wars and crime rates were actually increasing across North America. Everyone was still in a negative environment that did not allow much freedom in some sense.

Now children are free to come and go as they please because of all the technology and globalization that has happened in the last 70 years. Travel is easier, communication is easier and most importantly, information is easier to obtain. A child goes online and 'Googles' a topic, suddenly there is a long list of options of information and top ranked responses at the click of a button. How can parents or coaches compete with that? When you tell your child or athlete they need to listen to you because "you said so," it means you have no answer as to *why* or that you do not care enough about them to take the time to explain it. The only exception is in extreme circumstances where it is more important to get a quick appropriate reaction. However, since circumstances like this are very rare in today's world, you need to create a strong connection with the athlete or child beforehand. Then they will tend to follow your instructions in the moment and you can have a discussion about it afterwards, once the negative stimulus is dealt with. There is no place for the, "Because I told you so" mentality in an educational facility in the 21st century.



Here is an example: At one of the Freestyle events an athlete was trying a skill that was out of their comfort zone and had a rough landing. I held down the microphone, walked onto the trampoline to physically stop him from jumping, whispered in his ear "as your coach you need to do another skill. I don't care what it is, pick something else." At first he looked a bit upset but knowing I was scared for his safety he said, "ok" and then successfully did another skill, receiving a huge applause. About 20 minutes later in the middle of the event, he asked if he could talk on the microphone to the crowd. I didn't know what he wanted to say but in the spirit openness, I obviously allowed it. To my surprise he publicly thanked Trish (*my business partner*) and I for all that we do for the community and said we truly care about their safety and he was grateful for our support. It was a defining moment for us and for the community. The crowd went wild because they could *feel* the genuine emotion in his words.

If you truly care about the belief system you are in, even in those dire situations, you will listen and you will care, without resentment for your seemingly negative response in the moment.

**"I told you so" is a dangerous statement with no basis in reality these days, as opportunities for this generation increases.**

Over and over again we see that by creating a value trade, we can show the youth of today why we feel the way we do and why we care about safety. By befriending them and offering them a fair value trade,

they are more likely to listen to us as we have earned their trust and respect. That value trade has been offering them a platform to showcase their talents, the events. The value back to us is it helps us indirectly teach them about a safer way to learn and bounce, while increasing our reach to new clients.

The youth of today are more self-educated with at least some *theory* (*not much practical experience...yet*). They can do the research and then apply it to find a real tangible plan that works in the real world based on their experience. Sounds to me like they are increasing their value and we need to encourage it and harness it.

**The GRT Maze theory is all about harnessing the enthusiasm of the athletes and building it as a team, not as a dictator. The children want to be involved in their growth so let's create a belief system that allows them to be more involved.**



## The Positivity Cycle:

Being completely positive all the time is impractical. However, it is a good practice to try and be more positive as much as possible and create an aura of positivity in your gym, despite the individual negative occurrences that are bound to happen. The “*Positivity Cycle*” is the cycle of creating a Maze, having the athlete go through it a bit farther than the previous time (*even if it is only an inch*) and then rewarding them with the “*cheese*.” The athlete who receives the *cheese* reward feels good enough to try again, hoping to obtain more *cheese*. If you do this for all athletes, during all of their trainings, you will effectively have a “*Cloud of Positivity*” that hangs over your entire gym.

The *cheese* is gratification or rewards. When the athlete goes through the Maze they will naturally look to you to try and read your body language and verbal cues to see if you approve of their attempt. If the Maze you have created works well, then you will find the athlete improves a bit every few



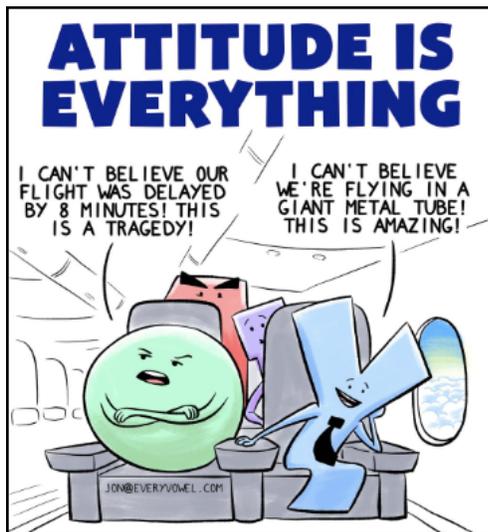
attempts. Keep encouraging them to try again because when they look at you they should see a coach who is genuinely very happy for what they have accomplished, not just comparing them to others.

**This is important!** Coaches may say the athlete's previous skill was better than the next one, but they never appear truly excited about that athlete's small incremental improvements. They are still focusing on the end result too much. You can't look at it this way. Every baby step that an athlete takes through your Maze has to be congratulated and used as fuel to give the athlete self-confidence for the next step. They will keep seeking that gratification from the coach as they keep going *Step-By-Step*.

Saying something like, "**Great work Sally! But, you still need to run faster**" in their brain sounds more like: "**Its better but not good enough.**"

An athlete will ignore the part where you congratulate them and just focus on the negative thing you said, because as I said before, we are loss adverse and only look at what others can give us, not what we can give them. Try and eliminate any negative sentences and keep it short and positive.

The below statement is a Maze within a Positivity Cycle:



**"Wow Sally, you ran much faster this time. I bet if I chase you, you would run even faster!" [laugh]**

By changing the wording to a "Approval + Motivation" you remain in the **Positivity Cycle**. Coaches often do not even think about it, so listen to yourself and count how many times you may have seemed more critical than positive. As a coach you are basically guiding the athlete through the Maze with the "cheese." The Maze is the drill or psychological leverage you utilize to shape behaviour and the "cheese" is the gratification and positivity the athlete gets after every few attempts by looking at the coach and seeing, hearing and actually noticing themselves that they did better. This cycle shows the athlete that the coach has confidence in them to do better next time, which in turn gives the athlete confidence; a huge aspect of motivation.

As long as they consistently receive a positive feeling, even for the smallest steps, they will have the mental energy to go through the Maze again. We discussed in previous chapters that the gym is a support system or a belief system, so the athlete should believe each time they go for an attempt at a new skill the maze will help them get a bit closer. If they *believe* each time they go for an attempt at a new skill, with encouragement from the coach, they will be more likely to keep trying. However, studies show that if you *constantly* provide a **Positivity Cycle** after every single turn, the athlete will tend to ignore the stimulus after a while because they become desensitized. The brain learns to recognize the same stimulus and will use less energy to analyze it. For this reason it is best to coordinate the Positivity Cycle as a group where you give 'intermittent' positivity explicitly to

**Your positive action  
combined with positive  
thinking results in success.**

Shiv Khera

individuals but the whole group operates under the *Cloud of Positivity* as a general rule. Keep them in that cycle of 'doing a bit better than last time' by receiving some *cheese* (like a high five or a smile) they will go through your Mazes forever.

## Athlete Independence:

We can give examples of Mazes all day long but the aim of this story is to keep the concepts relatively short. Be able to tie these examples all together into a story that you as a coach can understand and apply. We keep coming back to the idea of value creation and how in so many different aspects of day to day life, we can use this concept to help ourselves and others. The final chapters will discuss how coaches can encourage athletes to create that value for themselves, not only with the aid of a coach but by going *Step-By-Step* through every Maze.

We want athletes to grow up independent and self reliant rather than needy and insecure. The security is comforting for both the coach and the athlete, which is why some coaches find it hard to give the athlete more control, but please be careful as it hinders learning. Again, a happy balance is key for most things in life.

Coaches come and go, athletes come and go and even gym clubs come and go. By creating a dependant athlete you are increasing the odds that when something happens and either they have to leave or you have to leave, they will not be self sufficient in continuing their pathway under new environments. Coaches should be creating athletes who think for themselves and who operate independently, but with the guidance of a coach.

At GRT we say: ***"Everyone can learn on their own, but they need a spotter."***



It means that people will do what they do and you have very little influence over it generally speaking. You are better off enjoying the journey with them and helping them where you can but not dictating what they should do.

The earliest things I teach my athletes are ways to be self-confident and it does not necessarily take unique special mental drills. It takes something much simpler. All it takes is for the athlete to *actually* feel they are in control of their development. Parents sometimes think that by doing everything for their children, they are "helping" them get through life and therefore they are increasing their self-confidence because they are helping them.

The reality is that by helping them you are indirectly taking away the credit they want to give themselves for the accomplished behaviour. If you tie for first place you didn't really win. So when a parent does more and more for their child, the child starts to think, "I guess I



need help with everything.” As explicitly mentioned by Dan Olweus’ in his bullying research: Over protective parents can indirectly create the personality profile of someone who is a target for bullying.

You want the child to learn that you as a parent or coach are there to help but ultimately it is up to them how it all turns out. If you give them small enough baby steps in a Positive Cycle you will guarantee constant results like the ship navigating through the marker boys. As well you will allowing them to give themselves credit for learning the skill and build confidence for developing future skills because they already see the path. **That’s how real confidence is made for the developing athlete.**

We see this all the time with spotting. The coach is saying that the last attempt was “Great!” But the athlete knows that they needed the coach’s help so they don’t necessarily build self-confidence. They may build confidence of their coach to not drop them on their head during hand-spotting but that is a different story from real self-confidence of the athlete. You need to let the athlete fall down and get back up in controlled circumstances. You can’t be hovering around them all the time barking orders. Research about hand-spotting claims it decreases injuries, so that is why many coaches are trained to do it.



In some instances yes, it is safer and warranted. I believe that overall it is misused and overused assuming that the coach is the only answer to education. Hand spotting is a band-aid for the moment with long term detrimental results if overused consistently. **I am not saying do not hand-spot, but don't over do it or you may actually be doing more gymnastics than your athlete.**

Real long term development and safety is based on creating a real competent and confident human being, not just solving all their problems for them each step of the way. Create a system that harvests their long term motivations compared to simply resorting to hand-spotting all the time to keep them safer in the moment. Mazes are generally more effective with different blocks and mats than a coach overall, but not in every circumstance of course.

Break the athletes into groups and then give each sub-group a Maze to run through and explain it but let them run through it as you monitor the entire group, not individual athletes all the time. You should be walking around offering motivational encouragement, stress reducing jokes, educational tips, reminders, high-fives, big smiles and anything else that keeps everyone as a group on track on their Maze but does not give direct one-on-one attention to anyone more then once in a while when needed for a particularly complex behavioural pattern.

It is often helpful to isolate an above average turn from one of the athletes and get 'super excited' about it to give them that confidence boost but make sure you do it only periodically. Keep the athletes in a general Positivity Cycle cloud that stretches to all corners of the gym the way gravitational field stretch to the corners of the Universe. Leave the individual compliments a bit more scattered and random with bouts of independent work time where you set them up with a Maze and tell them you will look forward to seeing how far they can get in the next 15 minutes.

When doing this you need to be careful with the Maze you pick but having one that is self sufficient and built by increments. Adding twists to a Back Full work well and you show that athlete you trust them to get farther on their own without you helping. If you have built all your previous Mazes correctly they will

be able to accomplish this Maze and will be excited to show you what they learned while you were gone or working with someone else.

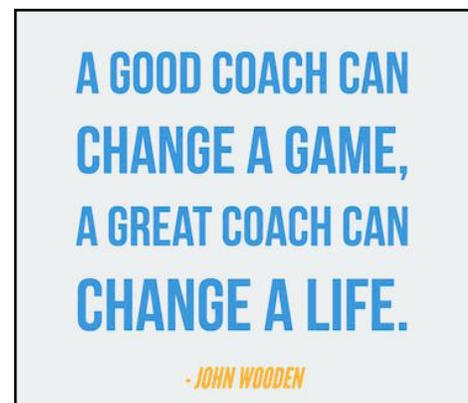
Some coaches like to think that not all athletes are capable of independence and that may be true but you can train it. Nothing is perfect of course as all athletes who come into your gym will have different experiences and motivations and that it is part of your job to identify. You can read the athletes to see what motivations they have and try to play to that as much as possible. It is better to try and get them to go into 'your' Maze compared to you running through all your athlete's personal Mazes.



**The independence you teach the athletes will stay with them forever.** This is a key element of coaching that I do not think gets enough acknowledgment. Some coaches look at training as if it is about getting medals and moving athletes around like chess pieces to get personal recognition. It is about developing a human being that is able to move the levers of their body in ways that they enjoy and feel good about. **For most athletes there is no "light at the end of the tunnel" and coaches should be honest with themselves and their athletes about it.**

As a coach you are here to develop a human, not a robot. Think about the values you are teaching the athletes that will be required in the real world once they leave the gymnastics world, which they will inevitably do one day. Coaches should focus on long term human development compared to short term medals. Medals are great and can help build long term human success but they are just one form of *cheese*, so the coach needs to bridge that gap with the athletes.

**Has your coaching methods taught them what they will need to know to be successful in the real world, once gymnastics is over?**



## Obedience vs Cooperation:

Now we will explore how a coach can get their athletes to listen to them. First of all, the coach needs to keep a healthy balance between the *Positivity Cycle* and the stern *Person Suit*. You may think you are either really hard on the athletes or really soft, but its more about adapting your *Person Suit* with each new situation effectively and showing the athletes that you are on their side. **The trick to obedience is having the athletes actually believe what you want is what's best for them and you do this through a value trade of cooperation.** Life works only one way so as a 'team' you need to conquer it. When I coach, the athletes love the Positivity Cycle but they also know that the real world is a big place with

both positive and negative consequences. Make sure the athlete's know you are on the same side and obedience is generally really easy.

**Athletes need to be reminded in clever ways that even though many people give them more praise than a child who is not an athlete; that does not mean they are any different.** Planting a seed of superiority at an early age can push an athlete towards a narcissistic personality complex.

Keeping the athletes grounded to reality is absolutely necessary. They may be glorified in the sport above their peers but there is always someone higher on the ladder, so make sure you “*keep it real*” with the athletes. Some parents will try and take credit for their children's accomplishments, which just fuels the fire. Talk to the parents and tell them your beliefs for a well balanced team environment and make sure everyone is on the same page.

**NEVER** use abusive techniques with your athletes to gain the desired behaviour you are looking for. **You should not have to!** If you are abusive you are in the wrong profession because you have not learned about human behaviour, or don't care to. If you are an educated, caring and well-rounded coach, athletes will listen to you and respect you, the same way you should respect them even if they don't agree with everything you say or do. My old Russian coaches would slap my legs and arms when I was sloppy but it had a purpose and I could see that, so I never held it against them. I believe a few more smacks might have done me some good [laugh].

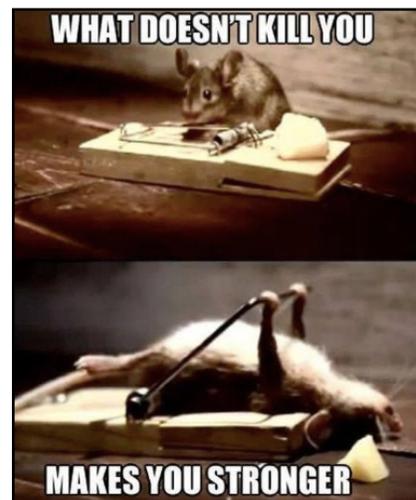


My point, however, is that creating the “*Team*” atmosphere in your gym is the best way to ensure co-operation. They will feel that it is you and them against the world and as long as you are open to their perspectives and openly trade value back and forth, for the better of the athlete and coach, you won't have many behavioural problems. Coaches seem to believe that obedient behaviour stems from either bribing the athlete or punishing the athlete. With words like “*Positive Reinforcement*” and “*Negative Reinforcement*” it is easy to see why people tend to pick one or another but forget about the third option.

When I coach I use my reputation for “*Big Skills*” and my clear motivation to be successful as the Negative Reinforcement. I know that doesn't seem to make sense, so let me explain. People who know me, clearly know that I am very hard on myself, even harder than my critics; much harder. They see that I want to learn and that I tend to be negative towards myself. It fundamentally gets projected onto them in such a way that makes the athletes know I ‘could’ be hard on them the way I am hard on myself but I don't. Instead I simply use positivity *with them*, while I absorb the more negative side of training *for them*.

**This demonstrates to them that I am a tough guy and can be harsh if I need to be, but I never have to be harsh with them in order for them to see that side. This effectively allows me to be the ‘tough coach’ and the fun coach at the same time.**

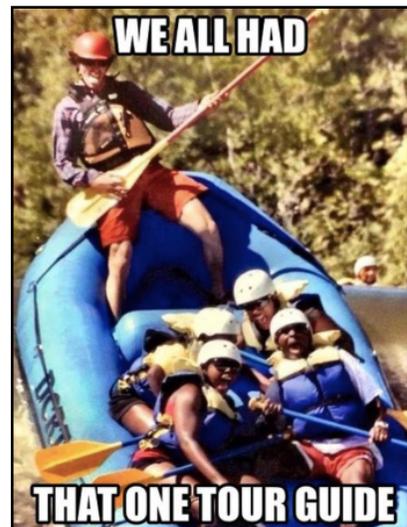
I also can be ‘tough’ on the athletes by using conditioning to toughen them up, not my hands. They don't just do push-ups or L-sits for 1 minute. They do partner exercises trying to force each



others legs down in an L-Sit as a competition. They do push-ups with a soft 5lb sandbag on their lower back to make sure it's strong. They do stomach drops on the rod floor and seat drops on beat-boards. The list goes on, but you can see the common theme that at least 30% of my monthly conditioning program is *toughening* exercises. Along with that we even playing toughening games like "King of the Hill" in the pit or even cross training with professional wrestlers once a month, which I actually did as an athlete with my coaches. You can create a Maze for toughening up an athlete without having to abuse them. It should be noted that you always start without 'extra' toughening when they are younger or still novice. **Build up the toughness the same way you build up a strength and conditioning program like compounding interest; Step-By-Step.**

The athlete learns that life is not all soft and friendly even though the coach is always so positive and works with them as part of their team. They learn that the mats can't become softer when they have a bad day. They can't believe that the coach will 'give in' when the athlete makes an excuse. **Instead, if they want to be an athlete they will have to do it because the world requires them to do it, not the coach.**

The coach didn't invent the sport, the coach is simply passing on the information they have about the sport to the athlete. Do not over-protect your athletes or beat them down, simply show them reality of training and competing and be the coach who helps them deal with it or finds them an alternative community. There is no other options if you truly care about the athletes and want the best results for them. **In the 21st century you are more of a teammate and a tour guide, not a coach.**



As a 'tour guide' you need to keep them on track with Mazes. Sometimes the athletes will have a bad day and you can't let them know you are changing the requirements for them because they are having a bad day. If you wait for them to tell you they are having a bad day and then make the decision to make the Mazes easier, you are then empowering that athlete to start thinking that all they need to do is complain and you will make it easier for them every time they have a bad day. They can't know you observed their behaviour patterns and adjusted or they will learn to do that more often and then you have a downward spiral. Study your athletes and learn to identify the days that need a slightly easier Maze but make sure they do not know.

On these days you may line up your athletes at the start of training noticing they are a bit sluggish and instead of sticking to your original plan of 10 routines on each piece of equipment, you may instead start them off with a fun game that you "saw on the GRT Network App." Just make sure they do not know that you made a quick alteration based on their behaviour. The world does not bend when you are having a bad day so you as a coach can't seem to bend for your athletes even if you know you have to sometimes. This requires stealth but once you get the hang of watching behaviour patterns by simply observing and drawing connections it is not that



difficult and you will start seeing very obvious patterns.

**Do not try to sell training with discounts.** You are more of a 'tour guide' of the sport that helps them guide their ship. No matter how much money the 'tourist' pays, the mountain will not move out of the way for them. Simply guide them through the maze and educate them about all the different parts of the pathway, as best as you can. Then wish them a good day when they go off to try another path.

When you see a coach acting harshly towards their athletes claiming it is because they care for them, it could be a sign of over attachment. The athletes poor results could be sparking a negative behaviour from the coach, which means there is a fear deep in that behaviour. From a psychological lens this could indicate that if the athletes does not perform well the coach will feel that it reflects badly on them. This could lead to an emotional outburst or negativity in the gym. If that's you, get control of yourself and start putting your athletes in a Positivity Cycle. Try to create a small campaign or event(s) to encourage group team building in the entire gym where you can start scouting from other programs. There are always athletes leaving one program to another in the same gym, if the gym has a good community theme. From there, have a fresh start with your athletes.



If you are a new gym owner, look through the GRT lens to recognize people just come and go. Instead of focusing on the emotion, focus on the structure that keeps the emotion in the facility that ultimately puts a roof over your head for the future. Otherwise you will be pulled in all directions from the personal motivations of all your athletes and coaches.

Again you can see how different motivations in coaching require different strategies to deal with. Gym owners tend to get this backlash from the staff simply because the staff have not appreciated what risks and sacrifice a gym owner makes to provide them with a job and that service to the community. The coaches work hard as well because coaching can be mentally tough. I think more communication between management staff and coaches would improve the community theme. **Create a team with your athletes and your staff.**

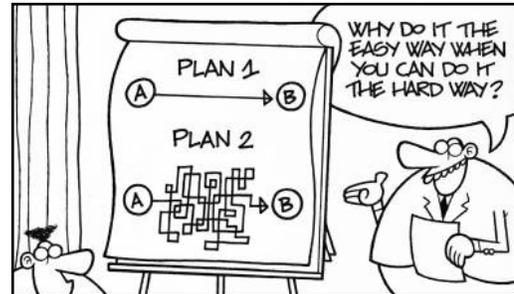


Once in a while you should remind them the world is sometimes a big scary place, so they need to be ready. The coach can't save them from everything, especially when it comes time to compete. This way you can mitigate many behavioural problems before they even exist by creating a theme around the positivity cycle and team work as you guide them down the path of acrobatics.

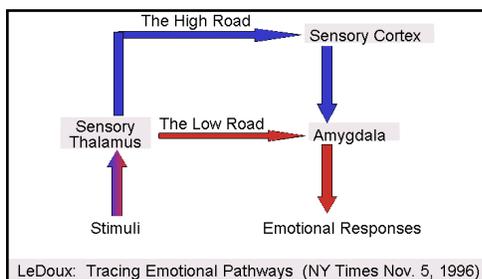
## Practical Examples:

We have now discussed in detail the concept that human beings tend to live by creating value for themselves and trading value with others. We do this in many ways, from social norms to offering resources. Many of these value trades go unnoticed and operate through our biology, only rationalized by our brain after the fact, giving meaning to behaviours we were never really in control of. If you want to teach a creature how to do a behaviour you need to know what it fears or needs and then give *cheese* every time they step away from the fear and closer to their need. **All creatures are this easy to understand.**

There are many sport specific Mazes that help athletes get through the skills in the gym but I want to show you that the really intricate Mazes are the ones involving human interactions, not acrobatics. The GRT Network App shows many different Mazes you can use in the gym club but getting athletes in the gym and staying in the gym is not as easy. As I stated at the beginning: **The real trick to coaching is the human interaction aspect, not the math.**



As a coach you will not be able to create a perfect career of Mazes. Only being human, your brain will have a certain capacity and won't be able to address all possibilities, but by utilizing the concept of the Mazes outlined in this story, you can dramatically increase your effectiveness as a coach and a member of society. This is also why we suggest all coaches, should brainstorm Mazes with their staff and athletes, whether they are in a trampoline park or a traditional gym. The art of creating Mazes is a trial and error process, just like training, so start off by simply observing your surroundings through a value creation mentality but do **not** actually apply it yet. Start by simply observing people.



I know it sounds very simple and it is but from my experience the only reason this does not happen every time there is even a small conflict of interest is because the reactions to our environment are largely unconscious and fear based. We do not stop and simply focus on helping the other person first by studying them, because we are running from our fear so often we don't approach situations with a logical mind state.

When the Amygdala is active, it will naturally 'reroute' the signals intended for the logical parts of your brain that would make people want to observe, and you will skip that process all together going straight to fear based primitive reactions. Instead, like a *'bull in a china shop,'* we are narrowly focused on getting our goals met first because they are more important to us and for the most part many seem to be not very well educated on how to truly accomplish their goals. This prevents many from accomplishing their true goals simply due to a lack of education. Only when we do not fear something can we look at it logically and formulate a solution. Otherwise you are just running away from fear as fast as you can and have no time to plan out the pathway. **Who knows where you will end up.**

This could be a general rule for life that no matter how you feel about something, simply offer help first and then get something in return afterwards that makes it worth it to you. People say they do this but the

evidence is very clear that the majority of us are consumed about what value we get and we forget (*due to fear*) that others have every right to obtain value from us as well.

**Here are a few examples of how the biology can be interpreted to see the underlying reality:**

1. I was discussing human psychology with Trish, my business partner, in an elevator in Norway. We were having a fun discussion about the truth of what parents think about their children and why they love their children. A man gets on the elevator and overhears the conversation and interjects. "I love my children" and I asked him "why?" He said; "Because they are my children", which obviously is not an answer. Trish encouraged me not to go farther but being the researcher I am I couldn't refuse the open invitation to ask questions. I told Trish I would meet her later and I continued talking to this gentleman. I asked what value the children provide him and listed a bunch of values that he easily could have agreed to but he refused to. He simply said "I love my children because they are my children and I do not need a reason." Of course after reading this story you should see what a fallacy this is but he couldn't get himself to admit he had a value trade with his children. He was unable to give an alternative viewpoint of any coherent substance which indicates he has no idea why he does not have a good answer, but still couldn't bring himself to admit it out loud. Human beings are much more controlled by their social groups than they will admit, even to themselves when the opportunity is right there. I saw that my research opportunity was over and he was getting into fear state so I bid him a good night and left him to calm down. The value he received by not answering my question was he didn't have to actually formulate an opinion that he would have to live with.
2. I was sitting on a beach with a friend and was day dreaming about science. My friend, who isn't really interested in science, commented it was a nice day out. I was trying to figure out the value in such a statement. My research indicates that no behaviour is valueless or it would not have happened. I asked him why he said that and what the value was for it. He seemed taken aback by my question. No one questions the existence of "small-talk." It turns out that after a bit of digging he was trying to validate that it was a nice day and that he wanted to go surfing today and was trying to find a way to plant the seed in my head. He knew I was in a psychology dream state and did not want to disturb me but also wanted a value from me that day. His value was having a friend to surf with and he felt that he could only get to the value proposition by starting with a 'seemingly' generic statement. All human statements have a value proposition in it. It could be simply looking for a response which acknowledges their existence, or it could be a planted seed for a value trade in the future. Even small talk has a value proposition inherent in the idea. I have seen this work out over and over again in many contexts and you can try this yourself with your friends the same way I did. Just do a bit of digging and you will eventually find a value proposition somewhere.
3. I was working with a new business and the client openly admitted to me he had borderline personality disorder, on our drive from the airport to the hotel. I thought this was a weird way to first introduce yourself to someone, especially in business, but I figured there was a reason behind it. I started digging for reasons and tried to figure out why he was the way he was. He then projected his fears onto me, basically saying I was in a box and that I needed to open my mind. I made the argument that he in fact was in a box and the reason he ran to this country after certain unsavoury activities (he openly admitted to) was why he was actually in a box; trapped. He refused to believe that and said he was here because he cared about children. I blatantly said he wasn't and that he was lying. He got very aggressive and started pointing out all my flaws (If you know me that's not hard to do). However he still failed to openly admit he was running away from his bad decisions. His philanthropy was his disguise and everyone else fell for it but I knew what to look for now having the data under my belt. I would go help the children and spent my own money to do so. This individual sat in the shade after taking my money and did absolutely nothing to help the children. Actions speak louder than words and by

the time I had been fed up with his lack of action under his fancy philanthropic words it was time to go and he was more than happy to get rid of me.[laugh] There are lots of individuals like this that say lots of nice things, but in reality you should watch the behaviours. If they are sitting around while you work consistently make a mental note of that.

4. I had a meeting with one of our GRTCrew athletes who is a great guy and who we have been supporting in his business. Trish and I were teaching him about some of the concepts in this story and how they related to his business and what he was going through. He tried to explain to us how he knew some seriously extravagant social media numbers and we told him we did not believe him. He argued at first, but we could see the micro-expressions filling in one by one, so we started calling him out on each one. It was all in good fun and he admitted he was lying about the numbers afterwards, so it taught him what we had been talking about. He is much more aware now of these kinds of biological signals and can apply them to his own business and human interactions. It becomes that easy once you train it! When you really know what you are looking for you will begin to see chains of patterns (*please refer to the list of micro expressions*).

These are simple examples of exactly how people play tricks on each other and how in fact there is a value forever single behaviour you can imagine. I can understand these stories may be alarming in some ways but that's reality! To purposefully ignore reality means you are not actually helping people the way you think you are. As we saw with the Canadian insurance issue as well as my earlier issues it can have big negative effects down the road.

Dig for their value if you care to. If someone even has an argument with you in any form, they are looking for value whether they like you or not. Observe their behaviour, identify a value that you think they want and then brainstorm with them on how to get that value. **Show them you are trying to see their point of view and don't force them into your Maze.** Mazes are not meant to hurt people or coercively force them to do what you want. They are there to guide and help create a behavioural pattern that you both want.

Do not micromanage your Mazes or become too focused on every single human behaviour. Identify the behaviour pattern you see throughout the entire interaction and determine what the value that individual is getting out of it. Then identify what your value is for having an alternative action happen. Then you can create a Maze metaphorically for it that helps both of you equally.

**I will give a few other examples of Mazes we have created in different ways so you can see a few Mazes inside and outside of the gym that we use to be more effective in coaching and in business:**

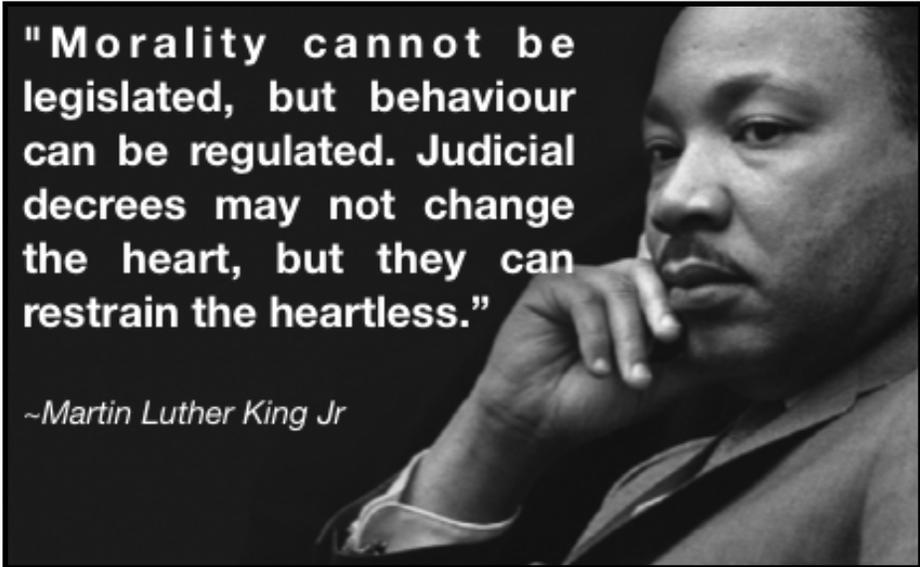
- ◆ At our first Freestyle Trampoline event we had table set-up for registration which everyone ran to and bombarded the poor registration volunteers. At the next event we created a Maze for them with signs and barriers, funnelling them through a Maze that was only wide enough for one person. This forced them to line up single file. The volunteers loved it and it helped them.
- ◆ As a coach I would commonly be 'busy' when the athletes arrived so it forced them to set-up their own equipment, making them more self-reliant. I never set-up equipment for them as a general rule. My coaches taught me that! I may sometimes help after they already started, but I never carry their mats over or initiate the building process of any Maze.

- ◆ I never told athletes how to warm up at competition. I was silent and just waited for them to tell me what they wanted me to help them with to show them independent thinking was key to their success. I was just their assistant.
- ◆ Athletes can't register for FTA events unless they sign the documents when they buy their ticket and enter their email, so we can build up a database of members.
- ◆ I would hold mock-meets with my athletes before a competition and have them make a lot of distracting noises, hitting the trampoline and yelling funny comments at the athlete doing their routine to try and distract them. This helped them to learn to focus. They loved it.
- ◆ When in a foreign country we look up the price of a taxi ride and tell the driver we just used a taxi the other day so they do not try to take the "long way."
- ◆ I put all hashtags for social media posts on my 'notes' on my phone so I do not have to rewrite them all the time. Same with common tags.
- ◆ I make the athletes and parents sign a contract to be in my program even at the recreation level so I have it in writing what I am going to do and what I expect from them so no one can try and change the story in the future.
- ◆ When any athlete tries to tell me they are ready for a skill that I know they are not, I will ask them to perform the prerequisite in front of other coaches to see how the nerves affect them.
- ◆ If an athlete comes late regularly I will play a fun game the next few days right at the beginning of training so they keep missing it by being late.
- ◆ When an athlete has bad form with their shoulder technique I will use a shirt or sweater to make a closed loop that will force their arms in the right position on take-off.
- ◆ When a judgmental parent from an event decides to complain about frivolous things I c.c them on an email to the organizing committee and tell the organizing committee "We have an eager parent who has lots of great ways to solve certain issues." The parent never responds and never tends to complain again because now they are on the 'chopping block.'
- ◆ My athletes have to write down goals for the season they think they can "achieve if they work hard" and by doing so they lock themselves into a commitment of work output while in an emotional state.
- ◆ When having a parent meeting with our sponsored crew we voice record it or video tape it as evidence for what was said for the parents who were not there. I will not have people change the story. Major TV Networks make you video tape your 'waiver' before a stunt so I just follow their lead.
- ◆ One client had a reputation for not paying commission for sales. We got them a sale and instead of asking for the money, knowing we would just make them defensive out of fear for not wanting to pay, we simply asked to put that discount in the hands of our partner who was the buyer. This way we give the buyer a discount and get to cash that value in at some later date.

As you can see there are many ways to make Mazes and many of them are all about brainstorming different ways to keep people in check and make them responsible for their behaviours. My experience has shown that unless you carefully find ways to keep people honest they tend to change their story when it suits them best.



There are lots of other Mazes we can use in the gym club and in business but I think I have demonstrated with many examples in all aspects of the industry how unique some of these Mazes can be. Some are rather simple like waivers and all business use them, but others are a bit tricky and were developed based on a real necessity. Some are protection-based and help keep me secure from getting taken advantage of. You will learn to watch human behaviours and start piecing together the behaviour patterns and start to really speak the language of biology. I hope that you will be able to utilize this story to inspire you to look deeper at yourself and those around you so you do not make the mistakes I made when simply believing what certain individuals told me.



**"Morality cannot be legislated, but behaviour can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless."**

*~Martin Luther King Jr*