



## Debriefing

This document is designed to assist coaches in the various forms of debriefs that can be used with players, assistant coaches and the coach. It is recognized that one of the best ways we learn is through experiential learning. We learn by doing. To truly benefit from the experience it is crucial that we debrief this experience. If we don't we are often doomed to repeat the mistakes we made in the past.

1. "I" debrief – take time to think for yourself
  - a) What did I do well?
  - b) What do I need to improve?
  - c) What did I learn to do again?
  - d) What did I learn to not do again?
  - e) What next?

An "I" debrief is when you are debriefing yourself. You are critically reflecting on your actions and what you can do to make a difference in the future. I can only change me. Have you tried to "fix" anybody lately?

***Grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can change, and the wisdom to know ... it is me!***

2. "You" debrief – tell someone else (be a camera)
  - a) What you did well?
  - b) What you can do to improve? How?

A "you" debrief is when you are debriefing another person. You are making comments about strengths and areas to grow. The debriefer must be careful that it is taken in the spirit of helping the person grow, not as blaming. "She is the reason that we didn't win."

3. "We" debrief – what the group did collectively
  - a) What did we do well?
  - b) What do we need to improve? How?
  - c) What did we learn of a positive or negative nature?
  - d) What next?

A "we" debrief is when you are debriefing a group or organization. You are again using this as a means to promote growth, not as a means to establish excuses. "Because CB didn't fund us properly we could not be successful."

***A teammate is someone who can look right through you and still enjoy the view. Appreciate people's gifts and strengths just as they are. That is the***

***function of teamwork. Be careful that people end up substituting the language of teams (we and us) for the language of personal accountability. We can hide behind the team with thoughts that become excuses.***

Too many coaches start with the “you” debrief which isolates the players and very often puts them in a defensive posture. If a ‘we’ debrief is done before the players have a chance to do an “I” debrief the “I” debrief is tainted by the coaches comments. The players will say what the coach wants to hear or will not speak to the contrary. Little personal growth and reflection will takes place.

#### Practice debriefing

1. Have players discuss with teammates “I” debrief. Part of cool down. Each player makes I statements about the practice. The teammate can make “you” statements if something is obviously missing from the “I” debrief. Switch up so both players have a chance.
2. Small group do a ‘you” debrief. For example; the guards meet with a coach to discuss guard play.
3. “We” debrief the whole team at the end.
4. Debriefs work best when you use what and how questions. Why questions can lead to excuses. Who questions can lead to blame. Draw from the athletes don't tell them.

**"Don't ask *what* are questions, ask *what do* questions, don't ask *why* questions, ask *how* questions” Sir Karl Popper**

5. Conclude with what next actions. A good way to do this is to do a “**One thing**” question. Ask each player what is **one thing** they can do before the next practice or game. It should be something measurable and within their control.

Reference:

**QBQ! The Question Behind the Question; John G Miller**