

Coaching Nugget #1:

High Performance Mysteries: The Mind Or The Body?

This is the first of a series of coaching nuggets suggested by USATF – Masters Track (MT) Communications Chair Sandy Triolo.

I'm a professor and coach – a professor of high performance in Boston College's Graduate Sports Administration Masters Program and a coach in private practice for 25 years in Brookline, MA. My practice, *M.O.V.E.!* - Motivate, Organize, Visualize, and Excel (www.movegoals.com) helps runners and swimmers identify priority goals and then train for them.

This first topic is mind or body: which presents the greater mystery in achieving running goals? It's a topic that's inspired many books including Peak Performance by Magness and Stulberg (2017) and Endure (2018) by Alex Hutchinson.

This nugget doesn't provide the absolute answer - just thoughts.

They come today from a survey of 53 coaches -- college coaches mainly, but also high school, masters, and professional coaches. This week I tabulated results from a survey of their interests in coaching courses that may be offered at Boston College.

Would coaches be more interested in variations in exercise science, anatomy and physiology, nutrition, sports psychology, or team building?

Responses showed that courses in sports psychology – including new strategies for motivating athletes and setting goals – were the most desired.

Two masters runners offered explanations this morning.

“You can have the body and the physical talent, but if you don’t use it wisely, you have nothing.” – Allison Hastings

“You think of the physicist Steve Hawking. A motor neurone disease left him in a wheelchair - unable to speak except through a voice synthesizer. There was nothing left of him and he kept going anyway. That’s the power of the mind.” – Sue Gustafson

Bottom line: The mind presents the greater mystery than the body.