

Brutally Honest

### **“Brutally honest is still brutal.”**

I don't recall where I heard or read this quote, but it is one that I have been wrestling with for some time. How many times have I been guilty of justifying my comments with the statement, “I am just being honest”? How many times have I used that justification to later realize my comments were neither well received, nor acted upon. I doubt I am the only one who has thought they were doing the right thing by being brutally honest.

This realization became crystal clear to me this winter as I was given the opportunity to be the assistant coach on our son, Ben's, 8<sup>th</sup> grade basketball team. While I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity, I saw firsthand how ineffective my coaching was when I was just “being honest.”

- “You didn't run the offense correctly!”
- “You were out of position on defense!”
- “You aren't playing hard!”

While all the above were completely **honest** assessments at certain points in the season, without a balance of encouragement, the statements were simply **brutal**.

**What is the appropriate balance?** Dr. Barbara Fredrickson, author, and positivity researcher at the University of North Carolina states in her 2009 book, *Positivity*, “For every heart-wrenching negative emotional experience you endure, you need to experience at least three heartfelt positive emotional experiences to uplift you.” Based on her research, a 3:1 ratio is the target.

**Why is this so important?** Author Dr. Rick Hanson, in his 2021 article in the Journal of Positive Psychology, states, “The brain is like Velcro for negative experiences but Teflon for positive ones.” Positive experiences don't stick like negative. Therefore, we need more positive ones to find a healthy balance.

I should have known better. I learned many years ago the **2/1/1 Coaching Method** from Dr. Jason Selk - a method Jason had developed after spending one-on-one time with the legendary UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden. Coach Wooden shared how he followed this approach in giving his players feedback, and Jason taught me the same technique for my interactions with others

#### **2/1/1 Coaching Method:**

- **Compliment** two things they are doing well. Ex. “I really love your effort on that last play.”
- **Teach** what you want to see improve. Ex. “When your man is overplaying you, the way to get open is to cut backdoor to the basket.”
- **Challenge** to take action. Ex. “Next time down the floor, cut backdoor to the basket and see if you can get a layup!”

**Compliment** twice, **Teach**, and **Challenge**. That was the formula for Coach Wooden's success. Don't be like me and wait until the end of the season to apply it.

**INTENTIONAL LIVING CALL TO ACTION:** This week, before you share how someone needs to improve, consider using the 2/1/1 Coaching Method. Your message will be better received, AND you just might get the result you were looking for!