

Workshop: How to Motivate Your Team On and Off the Mat

Objective:

- Teach wrestlers, captains, and coaches how to **motivate their teammates** both in **competition and in life**.
 - Show how **psychology, leadership techniques, and team culture** impact performance.
 - Equip participants with **actionable motivation strategies** they can use **before, during, and after** a match.
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Workshop Breakdown (90-120 minutes)

1. Introduction: Why Motivation Matters (10 min)

- **Discussion:**
 - “What motivates you?” (Individual responses)
 - “What makes you give up?” (Group discussion)
 - “How does motivation affect your performance on the mat?”
- **Key Takeaways:**
 - **Motivation is contagious.** A single wrestler's **attitude can lift or lower an entire team**.
 - **Motivation is trainable.** You don't have to be born a leader—you can **learn** how to motivate others.

Psychology Tie-In:

Studies show that **intrinsic motivation** (love for the sport, personal growth) leads to **greater long-term success** than **extrinsic motivation** (medals, rewards) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). **Good leaders create both.**

2. The Power of Leadership and Team Culture (15 min)

- **Exercise: Leadership Ranking**
 - On a scale of 1-10, **rate yourself** as a **team motivator** (1 = “I stay quiet,” 10 = “I constantly lift my teammates”).
 - Write one **example** of when you **inspired someone** and one example of when **someone inspired you**.
- **Discussion:**
 - “What makes a great leader in wrestling?”
 - “What happens to a team when **leadership is missing**?”

Psychology Tie-In:

Teams with **strong leadership and positive culture** perform better under stress **because they trust and support each other** (Zaccaro et al., 2001).

3. Motivating During Tough Matches (20 min)

- **Exercise: The Comeback Scenario**
 - **Coach sets up a scenario:**
 - “You’re down 6-2 going into the third period. What do you tell yourself?”
 - “What do you tell your teammate in the same situation?”
 - **Each wrestler writes a one-sentence motivation speech.**
- **Live Practice:**
 - Pair up: One wrestler pretends to be **struggling mid-match**.
 - Their partner gives them a **30-second pep talk**.
 - Switch roles.
- **Debrief:**
 - “What words made the biggest impact?”
 - “Did tone and energy matter as much as words?”

Key Insight:

The best motivators are short, loud, and specific. Example: “Dig deep! 30 seconds—leave it all here!” **Not** “You can do this.”

4. Motivating Your Teammates Off the Mat (20 min)

- **Exercise: The Encouragement Jar**
 - Each wrestler **writes down one motivation note** for a teammate.
 - These notes go into a **team encouragement jar** to be read before practice.
- **Discussion:**
 - “What are ways to keep a teammate motivated after a loss?”
 - “How can we encourage each other when we’re **not competing?**”
 - Examples:
 - **Text a teammate** before match day (“We’ve got this!”).
 - **Lift someone up** after a bad practice (“One bad day doesn’t define you.”).
 - **Recognize effort, not just wins.**

Psychology Tie-In:

People who feel **socially supported** push through tough moments **better than those who don’t** (Dweck, 2012). **A great wrestling team is a family.**

5. Creating a Motivational Team Culture (15 min)

- **Exercise: Team Standards**
 - As a group, define:
 1. **How we show up to practice.**
 2. **How we support each other after losses.**
 3. **What our pre-match mindset is.**
- **Example Team Standard:**
 - “We always hype each other up before matches—no one warms up alone.”
 - “After a loss, we shake it off together and move forward.”

Key Insight:

The **strongest teams** set **expectations** for **how they treat each other.**

6. The Ultimate Motivation Challenge (15 min)

- **Exercise: The "Unbreakable Chain" Drill**
 - Each wrestler **grabs a partner**.
 - **One partner does push-ups until failure.**
 - Their teammate **must keep them going for 10 extra seconds** using motivation tactics.
 - **Switch roles.**
- **Debrief:**
 - "What kept you pushing?"
 - "What made you want to quit?"

Final Message:

In wrestling, your body fails before your mind does. Motivation helps override exhaustion.

Workshop Takeaways

- **Motivation is a skill you can train.**
- **Encouragement is most powerful when it's specific, short, and high-energy**
- **Leaders don't just inspire during matches—they build team culture every day.**
- **Great teams support each other after losses, not just after wins.**

Post-Workshop Challenge:

- Each wrestler **texts a teammate encouragement** before the next practice.
- Captains & seniors **write team standards** for motivation.
- Coaches reinforce **pre-match motivation rituals**.