



Intrinsic Coach™

Interview

Tim Clark, C Principal,
CFI Training, shares how
the Intrinsic Coaching™
methodology has impacted
his profession as a Certified
Strength and Conditioning
Specialist.



Tim Clark, C.S.C.S. owner of GFI Training in Minneapolis, MN, trains athlete and coaches to bring a greater level of awareness and intentionality to the process of increasing and maintaining athletic performance. Focusing squarely on goals that are important to both the individual team members as well as the team, Tim says, “Given there are always a million ways to play the game and each of these ways can work, the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology not only spoke to my beliefs, it also provided a clear methodology, a good set of principles, and a good framework to build on.”

Jodi Sivon, M.Ed.

Jodi Sivon, M.Ed. in Community Health, BA in Exercise Physiology, CHES, and certified by ACSM, ACE, and through the Cooper Institute, is an Intrinsic Coach™ Mentor for Totally Coached, Inc. and Manager of Health & Wellness for Cuyahoga Community College’s Metropolitan Campus. As an Intrinsic Coach™ Mentor, Ms. Sivon trains new coaches in the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology. As Manager of H&W for Cuyahoga Community College, Ms. Sivon manages the campus H&W Center, designs, promotes, and implements all campus wellness programs, and serves as a resource and coach for healthy lifestyle choices for over 450 full-time employees and 6,000 students.



Q Hi, Tim! Tell us a little bit about your professional background.

A I’m a certified strength and conditioning specialist. I work primarily with high school and college age athletes, both at the individual and team level. I also work with coaches. Our goal is to make participation in their sport or athletic event the most rewarding and enjoyable that it can be. We do this by providing them with good training that prevents injury and improves their performance on the field. We really want the athletes and coaches to understand how their own body works and so part of our training focuses on just that.

We want these young athletes to understand how their body works and to be thoughtful, intentional and creative about their training. We also want them to be better partners with their coaches by understanding what’s going on. We want them to monitor their own health and their own performance so if they’re not doing well they have some insight as to why. Perhaps they need to take more rest or maybe they’re not training in the right way. Helping them get in touch with body

awareness is part of our training, as well as leading them through training sessions and letting them know why we’re doing what we’re doing. The approach we take with the athletes and coaches is also very goal centered. It is based around the individuals and the individual teams. It really does come down to ‘What do you want? What do you want to accomplish or achieve?’ We help them focus on those specific things that are important to them.

Part of our work with coaches is to help coaches coach better. We do that by doing some of the same things we talk about in Intrinsic Coaching™. We help them step back and look at what it is they’re trying to create and what they really want when they step into that arena. Questions like, ‘What do you want for these athletes? For yourself? And what’s really most important to you when you go out there?’ are common questions we have them take a look at because a lot of coaches forget that. Many of them are short on time and resources making it easy for them to get caught up in all the extrinsic things such as the wins and losses and getting practice done and out of the way. They can lose sight of what’s important so we coach coaches to think more intrinsically and ask themselves ‘What’s really important?’

Q Society places so much pressure on young athletes to win or perform well. I'm glad to hear that you are helping them think about what's important to them. By thinking intrinsically it makes it more rewarding for them.

A That's the idea. We want the entire experience to be more rewarding and enjoyable. We want people to stick with what they enjoy for longer in their life and get more out of it while they're participating. Athletics and sports can be a wonderful thing in someone's life, but it can also have a dark side to it. When training coaches and athletes, we want to make sure that we are supporting them and enabling them to get the things they want out of participating in that sport.

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Q It sounds like your ideas and philosophy of being goal focused match the principle elements of the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology. What attracted you to the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology?

A I was attracted to the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology because it provided a framework and a clear set of principles to build on what I was already doing intuitively. Two things really caught my eye when I was looking at the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology--staying goal focused and valuing the uniqueness of each individual. Every individual has something unique to offer, in terms of their strengths, their goals, and life experiences. This philosophy has always made the most sense to me.

When I was in college, the class I enjoyed most was with a professor who was the toughest grader. He didn't grade on a curve, but a percentage. At the beginning of the semester he said to all of us, 'I'm going to tell you what we're going to cover this semester. If you master it then you deserve the highest grade. You deserve the A. If you don't master it, I'm not going to give you one just because of the curve.' There was something about that that stood out to me. He enabled us to create our own way of mastering the material. There were only a few required assignments, tough assignments that let us learn

the materials in a way that was best for us. This way of teaching carried with me. With my experience in sports I find there are always a million ways to play the game, depending on whom you're with and each of these ways can work. So the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology really spoke to my beliefs and provided a clear methodology, a good set of principles, and a good framework to build on. That's what really drew me to it.

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Q Now that you have completed the Intrinsic Coach™ training, how do you integrate the methodology into your work? Is there a difference in how you interact with your athletes now that you're an Intrinsic Coach™?

A The Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology ingrained in me to intentionally choose to regard people as capable, creative and complete, really listen to people's goals and then try to design a program around those goals. When designing a training program I always work with the coach or the athlete as a partner. I'm working with a young man who is a skier and we constantly remind ourselves of his goals and review where he is. Each week we talk about what it is that we're focused on and at the end of every three week cycle, we sit down and say, 'Here's where we are. Here's where we talked about going. Here's the goal you said you wanted. Is that what you're still thinking and where do you think we are in terms of that? Are we making progress? Do we need to adjust?' I try to involve the athlete or the coach in thinking it through together. The Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology has enabled me to ask questions that elicit people's thinking in order to create results that are important to them.

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Q I like that you said you develop a partnership with the athletes and coaches. By doing so you're entering into a relationship between two valued peers and valuing them for who they are.

A Yes, and that's really important. We make the distinction pretty clear. My associates and I always want to be clear that we're not viewing athletes as performers, which I think a lot of people do. We're seeing them as individuals that are developing and feel their involvement in athletics contributes to their development as a person. One of our core values when working with athletes is that their training is a fun and rewarding experience. One of the ways it's both enjoyable and rewarding is they have the opportunity of making progress towards a goal. When they see themselves making progress towards the things that are important to them, it's energizing. And it's fun. By working with these athletes a little differently, by really enhancing and respecting their individuality, we hope they're able to see the progress that they're making towards the things that they've identified as important to them.

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I'm going to do a speaking engagement with a group of financial advisors, and the branch manager was talking about that very thing in his group. There are some people who are willing to do the drill and touch every line because it contributes to a larger goal. Then there are other people who are only going to touch the line if the coach is looking. And so the manager wants to focus his practice on the people who touch the line because it's important to them and not for the recognition. These are the people who enjoy doing what they're doing. It's the same thing with our athletes. We want them to have fun and compete because they want to. One of the best ways to have fun is to make progress toward the things that are most important to them.

Q Since integrating the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology into your work, have you seen a difference in the outcomes too?

A Yes, and it'll be interesting to watch. This is something we've just started doing over the past year. It'll be interesting to watch some of the teams we've been training this fall when they take the field in the spring. We asked ourselves, 'What would some-

one who was watching an athlete who came through one of our series see when they watched?' Our hope is they'd see somebody who obviously looks very athletic on the field, and someone who is really engaged and focused. They're not distracted by a bad bounce or a bad call or a mistake. They're able to stay focused and really be in the game. We also hope that they'd watch someone that we'd worked with and say, 'You know, they look like they're really having fun!' And so, for us, an athlete's performance is only one of three goals.

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Q I look forward to hearing more about your success in the spring.

A It'll be fun to see. I'm confident that we'll see a difference. You can measure the difference in someone's performance, whether they're stronger, faster, quicker, or can jump higher. Those things are measurable and almost any kind of training can give athletes some of these benefits. And so, how the other things we're looking for—engagement, staying focused and truly enjoying the game—show up; that'll be the fun thing to watch.

Q As a coach and trainer, what impact has the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology had on you?

A I've thought about that question a lot and a couple of things come to mind. First, I tend to ask myself some questions now that I didn't before. For example, just in general conversations, I often ask myself, 'Is what I'm about to say or ask going to move this conversation forward? Or am I just talking to talk?' This has helped me become aware of the times when I'm just making a comment to make a comment. In a lot of personal conversations I find that I listen better and spend more time listening. I am more aware of trying to understand what's important to another person, what it is that matters most to them. I've become aware of how often how much time is spent on unimportant things, as opposed to doing the things that really matter

to us. I've become aware of how much our culture gets focused on problems as opposed to goals. We spend so much time approaching situations as problems, trying to find solutions, rather than asking ourselves what is important and what would we like to create. It makes such a difference when we start with a question about what's important as opposed to what needs to get done, or what's in the way, or what's wrong. These are just a few of the ways the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology has impacted me.

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Q Imagine how productive we would all be if we focused on goals rather than problems!

A Isn't that the truth? I think of things like education and health care where we spend so much time focusing on problems. We haven't really asked, 'What's the big reason we want to do this and do it well?' And questions such as this open up so many possibilities. I've become very aware of the possibilities that open up when we ask ourselves what we want to create, or what we want to see happen, as opposed to what's wrong, what needs to be fixed. It's a very positive approach to take for life. The Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology is very grounded, creative, and positive. It's a "what's possible" kind of approach that builds on strengths.

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Q And just think, by taking an Intrinsic Coaching™ approach to all of the people you are working with, you are passing that on to them too.

A I hope so. I've been doing a little speaking now on the outside to different groups and asking questions that are goal focused frames the time I spend with them differently. I think it makes all of us more creative.

Q Can you share how you integrate the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology in a group setting?

A A particular example that comes to mind is a workshop I facilitated for a work team that wanted to create some goals for themselves. I decided to take a coaching approach to the day rather than listing how much ground needed to be covered and sticking to that. I wanted to turn it into a conversation-- a conversation that would elicit their best thinking making the outcomes of the meeting theirs. I wanted them to have ownership over the ideas and be more likely to succeed. I started the day asking, 'Fill in the blank for me. Today will be helpful if ____.' As people responded I got a sense of what was really important to them, what they really had come for and what they really wanted to focus on during our time together.

There was some content that the leader wanted me to cover and so I integrated that with what their goals were. I used a couple of stories including a story we used in the Intrinsic Coach™ training about the difference between serving, helping and fixing. We laid out the overarching goals of the organization before telling the stories. After hearing the stories I asked the group, 'Given your overarching goals, what does this story bring up for you?' The participants took some time to write about that and talk about their reflections. As we gathered their wisdom they began to share their thinking about what was important and where they should go. Then I added a few pieces of information that crystallized all of the things they had already said.

I used an Intrinsic Coaching™ approach throughout the entire day to get them to think better about their goals and possibilities. It was very affirming for them because they really already knew what was important. They already knew where they wanted to go, what they needed to get at first. But by doing it this way, we laid all of that out on the table and had a direction to go that was important to the group. At the end of the meeting I said to the group, 'You've listed a lot of information that you think is important, that you want to achieve. Of these things, which one do you think would be most helpful to work on now?' By the end of the day they walked out of a meeting identifying the things that were important to them, which ones they wanted to start with and the first couple steps to take in dealing with it. And the amazing thing was after all was said and done I felt like I hadn't worked very hard. I was energized.

Q That is amazing! It sounds like you had a more productive meeting involving less effort because you used an Intrinsic Coaching™ approach.

A It really was. The group was really excited because the goals and outcomes were theirs. It was their goals, their strategies, their steps, and their commitment. There were a couple of times during the day when I was tempted to facilitate or mediate, but I kept remembering one of the things I learned during the Intrinsic Coach™ training—to give people a little more time to show that they are capable, creative and complete. And so I chose to step back and give them another two minutes and almost every time they figured it out themselves. By applying the principles of the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology, the meeting turned into a productive conversation that I facilitated rather than an exercise that I was leading. The work was on their shoulders because they came up with the ideas. I think they were happier when they walked out because they knew what they wanted to do. And that was what they said. They said, ‘This is great! We loved this. Now we know what we need to do.’ It was a fun and exciting day.

Q That’s a great example of using an Intrinsic Coaching™ approach in a group setting! You can take an Intrinsic Coaching™ approach to almost any situation.

A We can work with individuals in one-to-one settings, but we can also coach groups that have a shared vision or goal, and take the same approach to eliciting their best thinking. I think that’s important and that’s one of the things that drew me to the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology as opposed to others. The Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology is not about providing somebody with a toolbox of techniques that you apply to everyone in the same way. This approach to coaching is about respecting the unique individualities of a person and eliciting people’s best thinking. It’s about helping people create the things that are most important to them. That’s an important distinction between the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology and other forms of coaching. There’s something unique about this method-

ology because people acquire skills and beliefs and ways of thinking that really transform individuals, groups and communities.

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Q You mentioned that the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology values the uniqueness of every person. Could you talk a little more about that?

A Yes. There’s a golf pro that talks about how golf is a very simple game. You need to understand how the laws of physics apply to golf, but basically it’s pretty simple. It’s the angle and the speed of the club head as it strikes the ball that determines where the ball goes. If you understand that, you understand golf. Where it gets interesting is that every individual is unique and so while the laws of physics apply to all of us, our individualities make the difference. I might be taller or shorter than you and my arms might be different lengths and my legs might be different lengths and the angle of my swing is different, and so everyone has to find the swing that works best for them. If I spend my time trying to copy what Ernie Ells does, I might get very good at swinging his swing, but I’ll never be able to do what I can do. In everything we do there’s a systemic piece which is just, here’s some things about the way the world works, but then there’s an unlimited variety of uniqueness in each person and that means everybody has to find their own swing or own way of doing things.

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Q I like that analogy you just gave. It reminds me that people aren’t predictable and you can’t replicate them, and so everyone is not going to

have that same golf swing.

A Exactly! That's another thing I like about the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology. Because people aren't predictable and replicable, it has opened up possibilities that I could never imagine. When I work with people I begin to wonder how they are going to surprise me this time. When working with individual coachees, almost every time, there's so much more there than I initially see. And through eliciting their best thinking it becomes apparent. You could never build on these things unless you are willing to work with those three central elements of the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology.

Q Has the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology expanded your vision of what's possible for people?

A Definitely. And that's why it's such a positive thing and so creative. Albert Einstein has said some wonderful quotes and a couple of them, to me, apply to the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology. He said, 'Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything we count, counts.' There are those invisible, unseen things that can't be measured that are there and are significant. These "invisible" things that people bring to relationships are really important. Another thing Albert Einstein said was something about how at some point in life, we all have to make the most important decision we'll ever make which is to decide whether or not we think the universe is friendly. The decisions you make tend to lead you to wherever you're going to go. I think the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology speaks to that. It shows you that there are a ton of possibilities in each person.

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Q The Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology does yield powerful results. What is most rewarding for you as Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist who integrates the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology into his work?

A When I was starting to create this business that I do now, it started with the idea that I want to help people do great things. I knew that was what I wanted, but I didn't quite know what that meant until I took the Intrinsic Coaching™ development series. What the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology has helped me understand is that those great things are really those things that matter most to people. It's inspiring when you see people accomplish outcomes that are important to them. It's exciting. I've become so excited about the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology because it provides the framework to help people create results that are important to them. It provides a philosophy and a language to help me be able to do that in an intentional way. It enables me to help people do great things, which now I understand are the things that matter the most to them. Whenever I see somebody identify what they want, to be clear about what they want and then be able to take steps and enjoy progress in that direction, that's the reward for me.

Q I really like what you said about helping people do great things. Not great as defined by you, but great as defined by what is most important to them.

A The Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology has helped me to be clear about what we mean by great things. Again, it goes back to the uniqueness of the individual. Not everyone I work with is going to be a conference champion or win a national championship or get to try out for the pros. But that's not what is important. It's being able to see someone be energized when they're taking steps toward doing things that really matter the most to them.

Q And those great things vary from person to person.

A Exactly. By identifying what is important, everybody can be successful. Everybody has the opportunity to succeed and then it's fun.

Q

Tim, thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. I applaud the work you do with young athletes and the approach you take to helping them do great things.

A

You're welcome. Thanks for the conversation. I appreciate it.

Bottom line: To get better results for the competitive athlete...

- Train the whole athlete by working with the whole athlete; without the intrinsic, you're working with pieces and parts no matter how hard you try.
- Work with the biggest, most important part of the athlete – the part you can't see - the intrinsic.
- Leverage all other resources and do so exponentially; working with the intrinsic is the only way to get to those resources.
- Expect your partnership with the athlete to be much more productive; tapping into the intrinsic elicits and builds on resources typically overlooked.
- Intend to expand the positive results of your training to every aspect of the athlete's life; working with the intrinsic enables the athlete to think better about choices in living, working, and performing.
- Keep in mind who really has the primary responsibility for good choices; increasing intrinsic focus makes the athlete's accountability obvious without any additional push.
- Commit to getting better results without you having to try even harder; when you find yourself trying harder, you know you're working without the intrinsic.
- Spend more time coaching and less time trying to motivate; the intrinsic gives you a power tool extrinsic strategies can't even touch.
- Be someone more and more people want as their trainer; the intrinsic will give you something the athlete will recognize, even if he or she can't explain it.
- Develop smarter, more disciplined, healthier, and more productive athletes; the only way to do this is to develop the athlete's intrinsic capacity.
- Raise the bar on everything related to training and program design without disrupting anyone or anything; you'll know how once you can think and build with the intrinsic.
- Send your athletes into competition with the increased intrinsic capacity they got from working with you; increased strength, quickness, metabolic capacity, and all the physical attributes of the athlete are maximized when the athlete also brings a mind that can focus on what's important from moment to moment.

Who is Totally Coached, Inc.?

Totally Coached, Inc. is a Scottsdale, AZ based company that founded the proprietary and uniquely effective Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology. Reaching internationally, the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology enables “Thinking better. Together.™” for benefits that extend across the workplace and beyond the organization’s walls to create healthier lives, healthier organizations, and a healthier world.

To be an Intrinsic Coach™ like Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist Tim Clark, contact 480-515-5220 or totallycoached@totallycoached.com.

Make a better life.
Live a better world.™