



1. THE DIRECTORS DESK	PAGE 1
2. FEATURE ARTICLE: THE POWER OF OWNERSHIP	PAGE 3
3. THE DOCTOR'S ROOM: BURNOUT	PAGE 10
4. FIT FOR LIFE: RUNNING THE MARATHON	PAGE 15
5. EAT YOURSELF HOLISTIC: HERBS AND SPICES – FORGOTTEN FOODS PACKING A POWERFUL PUNCH	PAGE 21
6. GOLDEN RULES OF LEADERSHIP	PAGE 25
7. FACE TO FACE WITH RUBEN WIKI	PAGE 30
8. LET'S GO SURFING: www.leadtosucceed.co.nz	PAGE 35
9. PRACTICAL EXERCISE: 360 DEGREE EVALUATION	PAGE 36

September 2006 – The Director’s Desk

Welcome to the (belated) spring edition of the Koru, and please accept my apologies for the lateness of its arrival. As you will possibly know and appreciate, I have a powerful commitment to the New Zealand rugby league team (the Kiwis) throughout its annual tri-series. I have to concede that despite my best intentions, the series can become all-encompassing and for that short window of the calendar year has a tendency to become my prevailing thought. Hence, please accept my apologies for not being able to deliver this publication in its more usual time-slot. In any case (and despite its lateness), I’m certain you’ll find plenty of reading to keep you and your colleagues absorbed and learning within this edition.

Given our strong ties to the Kiwis, it seems only appropriate to take some time to talk leadership (and other things) with the team’s highly respected and inspirational captain, Ruben Wiki. A man who lives very much to the premise of actions speaking louder than words, this succinct interview provides an interesting insight into the workings of the man many believe to be New Zealand’s greatest ever rugby league representative. Moreover, the interview concludes with a strong ethos that encapsulates not only the man himself, but also the culture of the Kiwis that has seen it rise to heights not previously experienced by New Zealand rugby league teams.

Our feature article is dedicated to the instigation of tools and strategies to assist leaders in the promotion of ownership within their organisation. It is an article for and about leaders who sense a need, envision a plan and recognise that most people are capable of delivering far more than they ever believed possible. So take the opportunity to benchmark of some exquisite empowerment programs, and acquire a sequence of tools that can take you on your path to a more positive performance culture.

The Doctor’s Room provides an overview of workplace burnout. This article offers a fundamental definition of burnout that encompasses the characteristics, imparts a brief overview of the stages of burnout and culminates in some well-conceived suggestions for preventing and/or treating burnout. Fit for Life picks up on the recently completed Auckland Marathon, and offers advice and suggestions for any left pondering their own potential to forge the 42 kilometre distance. Including a series of essential considerations prior to embarking on such a training regime, Fir For Life provides a brief overview to get you starting and a generalised plan of how to progress. Readings are urged however to consider the articles constant reference to independent coaching and an individualised training program that includes both

physiological and dietary assistance. And speaking of dietary assistance, Jeni Pearce's Eat Yourself Holistic is dedicated to the forgotten foods that pack a powerful punch, herbs and spices.

The Golden Rules of Leadership swells to a substantial eighteen tips since our inception in June 2005, with our latest three tips focussing in on the critical area of interpersonal communications. In response to the inordinate requests of business leaders to learn more about social competencies such as effective communication, we provide brief advice on becoming a refined listener, working with quality feedback and giving criticism constructively. Our Practical Exercise segment discusses the implementation of 360 degree evaluations, and more particularly case studies a recently implemented Kiwis' values clarification exercise.

Finally, the spring edition of The Koru launches our recently developed Lead to Succeed website, and encourages readers to log onto www.leadtosucceed.co.nz to gain an insight into all that's new in cutting-edge leadership. An evolving process, www.leadtosucceed.co.nz is brought to you as a tool to coincide with both the launch of the Lead to Succeed book as well as to provide insight into Sport Life's ten-part leadership workshop series.

So take the opportunity to thumb through the pages of the Koru. There's bound to be something in there that will assist in the fulfilment of your need for kaizen (continuous improvement), as the Kiwis jointly set about attaining the same.

September 2006 - Feature Article:
The Power of Ownership



By Craig Lewis

Nothing is more compelling than ownership! My two greatest days in international sport are undoubtedly the 1993 World speed skating championship and the 2005 Gillette Tri-Series of rugby league grand final. There have been other victories, but those two are immensely special. They are special for a number of reasons - not the least of which was the magnitude of the stage. But the single-most significant cause for my delight was the manner in which they were accomplished. When it is your nature to earnestly reflect on every experience in your life, you soon become embroiled in identifying commonalities that lead to success as well as to failures. These two occasions, though parted by more than a decade of time, are special because of one very powerful and overriding consideration – both were outstanding examples of times when player ownership was at an absolute premium.

I honestly believe my speed skating team were the first truly empowered team to grace the New Zealand sporting scene, and I'm not certain whether New Zealand sport was ready for it at that time. All throughout a training session – after repeats of a certain training exercise – I'd call the team to the side of the ice rink (my lack of aptitude in skating meant it had to be that way) and I'd facilitate a succinct but compelling "meeting of the minds". By leading the discussion with a series of open-ended questions we'd quickly analyse the occurrences of a short-time ago, set about determining objectives for the up-coming training experience and sign off on what we all believed to be the most appropriate approach going forward. It was an experience that has served me well.

Our form of ownership survives today. The ownership culture pioneered by the speed skaters has now been labelled and formalised through the term "empowerment". But whatever the term, we managed to achieve a most remarkable victory through the pride and fighting spirit generated within our immediate inner sanctum. No matter how formalised empowerment becomes, no team will ever have the extent of power and control given to this team. It ensured we became increasingly self-

aware and absolutely self-sufficient. With myself as a facilitator (clueless in the intricacies of the sport!), the team forged its entire destination – a destination that culminated in world championship status.

And so.....to a more modern time and the 2005 Kiwis. To understand the Kiwis you must first understand the appointment of Brian McClennan and Graeme Norton. Both men are exceptional coaching talents, but the reality is that, until the Kiwis, both were little more than minor league coaches. Whilst Graeme had steered a New Zealand team competing in a World 9's tournament to consecutive victories during the Super League days of the mid-1990's, the fact remains that in the eyes of the players, neither Graeme nor Brian had anything on their curriculum vitae to suggest they were up to the challenge of mixing minds with seasoned veteran coaches such as Wayne Bennett.....the fact that they undeniably were is actually an irrelevance.

Were we to have injected ourselves on the players with a system of play and rules of governance that they were "ordered" to abide by, I'm certain we would not have achieved what this team ultimately achieved. Instead, we carefully conjured the structures we wished to implement and took those structures to a selection of players (those residing in New Zealand in the first instance) for their consideration. It is not by coincidence that every strategy employed by the Kiwis was conjured in an office in Birkenhead prior to any player ever seeing them – it is a tribute to the team's values and the power of communication that they were adopted by the players as their own. The development of important documents such as the team's vision and mission statement, descriptions of role clarity and post-match review forms were either constructed and presented along with other options, or commenced off a blank sheet of paper to evoke the thoughts of the players. Once these thoughts were established, discussion around critical points of consideration became the order of the day. Everything that made its way to finality was ultimately signed off by the player or players. The bottom line is that people don't do their best by being told – they do their best when they have the strength of purpose to do it their way and are motivated from within.

None of the Kiwis' 2005 success would ever have been achieved without the support of the "core", that group of players whose very presence created an influence on the remainder of the group. Their ability to fully engage in the structure and strategy of the team and to vigorously represent it was vital to success. It was through their efforts that the Kiwis were able to establish a team culture that nurtured player confidence and responsibility. It is worth noting that over 50% of the players who took the field in the Tri-Series Grand-Final were under the age of twenty-five, and

yet they showed a maturity befitting far more seasoned professionals. It is feasible that this gamble on youth was actually the thing that most enabled us to implement an empowerment approach. The thing that most enabled us to change a culture that had proven not to be successful. And the Kiwis were a team who had to do business differently!

In any business house, productivity is inevitably linked to job satisfaction. This same ethos applied to the Kiwis. In order to promote a stronger sense of ownership the players had to become more self-aware and self-sufficient. And by having previously brought ownership to the entire process, the players had some considerable choice and control over what would and could happen during the campaign.

Effective leaders are visionary by nature. Within the Kiwis we were adamant we knew where the team needed to go – we simply couldn't continue to tolerate failure, particularly given the increasing depth of talent in the New Zealand game. I don't think either Brian McClennan, Graeme Norton or myself were fully aware of how great this depth of talent was until we sat down to consider the broader list of prospects to wear the Kiwi jersey – I know I certainly didn't! But when we decided to send cards of welcome and inspiration to the players, the number soon rose to fifty-five in the NRL, and a further 20 in the English Super League. And that was just the number of players commanding regular selection in their club teams – all quality footballers, and all with something to offer to the cause.

But what was the cause? To us, the cause was to become a team of benchmark players and to achieve sustainable success – and we needed to ensure the players were aware of it. Don't get me wrong, I am a strong advocate of empowerment in sport and business, but I don't believe empowerment relieves coaches of their obligations to articulate where a group is going. Empowerment is the opportunity presented to the players (or staff if you like!) to determine how we as a group can accomplish the coach's articulation of where we are going. It is releasing the creativity of the players or staff to develop the innovation and expression required to achieve success. The role of the players in determining the values was paramount to us achieving Brian McClennan's big picture, because it signalled both ownership to where we were going and pride in what the Kiwis could achieve. Furthermore, the players could readily reason that accomplishment of the values was in their best interests – by achieving the values they would become the great Kiwis referred to in the dream and vision statements.

By having a series of powerful values defined by the players we were able to achieve a clear sense of ownership – and this ownership transcended all the way through to the dream and vision. By having the

players define the values, we could be certain that they were a true and genuine reflection of the people within the organisation. Regardless of whether we are talking sport or business, an organisation's values are the thing closest to its very existence - they are its core and its ambition. As such, they need to be given every opportunity to become a living process – which can only ever be achieved with ownership as their premise. The success of the 2005 Kiwis is as much about the life of its values as anything else, where we worked incessantly to discover new and more creative ways to ensure they became instinctive to us all. This could simply not have happened without absolute ownership on the part of those most affected by them – the players. But I have no hesitation in suggesting the prescription assigned to the dream and the vision (both of which were endorsed by the players) effectively became the “brand” that distinguished this campaign from previous ones – our task was to ensure the players could see how their collective talents and values supported the “brand”.

Whilst prescription of the dream and vision statements may have been adequate in projecting our prophecy for where we thought the Kiwis were going, the dependence on the “core” was anything but prescribed – it had to be if the players were truly to own the campaign! The “core” was a first indication that the coaches would welcome suggestions from anybody who felt they might be able to assist us in doing business better, and enabled players with valuable insights to express their opinions either through the “core” or via personal interaction with the coaches. Much of the team’s on-going planning was done with the assistance of the “core”, and it was their influence that kept morale and motivation high throughout the campaign. In addition, the innovation of the “core” communicated a message that the coaches believed in the players and in their knowledge and ability – which indirectly encouraged all players to maintain a high standard of performance.

I believe that every person in an organisation genuinely wants voice. The problem lies in determining an appropriate method for making this a reality. Within a structure such as the Kiwis (a squad carrying only 22 players at any one time) this would seem a relatively simple task – perhaps it is, but I suspect it isn’t anywhere near as simple as one may think! For a start, many of the players in the squad are very young – some are still teenagers. Several of these players are still in awe of the environment they find themselves in, preferring to exist anonymously until such a time as they can attain a level of seniority. This is neither a good nor a bad thing – it is simply a reality! Of course, coaches and/or senior players can always approach the younger players for comment and often this is effective, but the fact remains that some players will fail to express an opinion for fear of rejection. It’s a very tricky dilemma to be

in, particularly when you value ownership and its basic premise that all have voice.

Personally, I favour strategies that ensure anonymity. In business houses, that can sometimes be as simple as a staff suggestion box. In a sport team, I like a concept of having players record their thoughts for collation with a view to identifying trends. I think it's the best method I know for getting everyone to have a say without anyone feeling uneasy – and unease is an enemy of collaboration! I'm not a fan of occasions where everyone in a room is asked to offer a suggestion on technique or tactic, although on occasion I have seen and used such an approach to great affect when looking for emotive responses.

I certainly believe the potential for getting an opinion from an introverted member of the group is significantly enhanced by building a rapport with that person. Time spent demonstrating a caring nature and building a rapport is never wasted time. Effective leaders understand the importance of having a conversation beyond the periphery, and exploring life circumstances, goals and dreams. It is my experience that these conversations invariably reveal commonalities existing between two people, no matter how unlikely that may have appeared at the outset. These commonalities form the cornerstone of a relationship to come, and this relationship promotes the essence of ownership critical to on-going success.

But of all the emotive responses achieved through the power of ownership – none is greater than the power of love. I have absolutely no hesitation in saying that by promoting ownership within the Kiwis, we became above all else a team who truly loved each other. To put it mildly, victory for the Kiwis came down to a question of love - the kind that means loyalty, teamwork and respecting one another. Brian McClennan understands the power of love like no other coach I know. Achieving love in his teams is a major part of his coaching philosophy, and something he uses to measure the team's progress. After the first Great Britain test, Brian sent me a text message. The message simply read: "boys r truly in love with each other". It didn't mean we were going to be an unbeatable force, but it did mean it would take something very strong to get over the top of us. The power of love really does matter – I know it did for the 2005 Kiwis! It's something worth striving for and cherishing in any organisation - be it a sporting team or a business house – and its born of those very same things that make any family strong. With honesty, caring, collective responsibility and inter-dependence as your drivers, it's inevitable that you're going to achieve something way beyond what any one person can achieve alone.

And the ownership was everywhere. There were many unsung heroes whose ownership was abundant – team managers, media managers, masseurs and many others. Their emotional engagement in the strategies that unfolded was evident, and their excitement in victory as real as anyone's! And then there were the wives, whose support and sacrifices frequently go unrecognised. I believe their ownership is most critical because (like Brian!) they truly do understand the power of love as it relates to family (be it their immediate family or one like the Kiwis). More particularly, the wives are critical to any campaign because they appreciate and provide the forces of love as readily in the good times as they do in the bad times – perhaps they understand it even more in the bad times!. They are the most immediate point of support whenever the players are dealing with the setbacks of the game – defeat, non-selection and injury – which makes them those most in tune with the need for love in the bad times. Their love for family never waivers, and is always unconditional – it's the kind of love that drives families and teams to greatness.

Insofar as the Kiwis were concerned, many people contributed to Tri-Series victory – all having a vital role to play in providing the optimal environment from which the players could exercise their skills. But I don't believe Brian McClennan's role can be understated – and the role he played in nurturing a culture of ownership. Brian has an innate ability to synchronise with a sense of what's important and capture the important values of the group when he talks. He has been instrumental in transforming the strong sense of family that prevails in the Kiwis (a sense of family that prevails in many other New Zealand sport teams for that matter) into a strategy from which to gain playing strength. As a consequence, we were rewarded with a powerful loyalty and a sequence of inspired performances. As a team, I believe we learnt to take ownership for our actions and deal with the consequences of those actions. The Kiwis do not have the financial resources of their opposition in Australia and Great Britain, but they do know what it is to play from the heart. By promoting a sense of ownership to our campaign, I genuinely believe we were able to generate a powerful inner force that took us all the way to glory in the Tri-Series final.

I remain adamant that the impact of the player's value system and a culture of ownership were paramount in resurrecting us from a situation whereby we had been unable to experience victory against either Australia or Great Britain in our previous eight attempts. I certainly believe the values and ownership went a long way to explaining our ability to come from behind in the first match against Australia, our final thrust that very nearly secured victory in Auckland and our resilience to a rampaging Great Britain on the first occasion we played them in England. Quite simply, we went from being a team who had led in every

game the previous year without securing victory, to being a team who was managing to win close games. There are probably many factors that contributed to this outcome, but I think if you're looking for the single greatest reason for our success it could be summed up in one word – OWNERSHIP!

September 2006 - The Doctor's Room:

Burnout

Burnout is an exhaustive psycho-physiological response exhibited as a result of frequent – sometimes extreme – but generally ineffective efforts to meet excessive work demands. It is a state when the body and mind are relentlessly strained, and can potentially culminate in the development of emotional and physical fatigue. It is a physical, mental, and emotional response to constant levels of high stress. Burnout produces feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness, cynicism, resentment and failure—as well as stagnation and reduced productivity. These stress reactions can result in levels of depression or unhappiness that eventually threaten your job, your relationships and your health.

The characteristics of burnout are:

- Exhaustion, both physical and emotional, in the form of lost concern, energy, interest and trust;
- A negative response to others, seen as being impersonal and unfeeling, and;
- Feelings of low accomplishment, low self-esteem, failure and depression, culminating in low job productivity or decreased performance.

Burnout is associated with situations in which a person feels:

- Overworked;
- Underappreciated;
- Confused about expectations and priorities;
- Concerned about job security;
- Overcommitted with responsibilities, and;
- Resentful about duties that are not commensurate with pay

Burnout can occur when a person feels unable to meet constant demands, subsequently becoming increasingly overwhelmed and depleted of energy. Debilitating sadness, anger or indifference can set in. The burnout individual can begin to lose the interest or motivation that led them to take on a certain role in the first place.

Knowing the signs of unmanaged stress and burnout can help reduce the risk of burnout. Identifying the causes of a person's stress, recognizing their limited control of any given situation, and taking care of the self emotionally and physically can help in avoiding the onset of burnout. Additionally, learning how to better manage stress will help in finding greater enjoyment in a person's life and career.

To accredit burnout as merely excessive stress would be too simplistic a definition. It is a complex human reaction to ongoing stress, and it relates to feeling that your inner resources are inadequate for managing the tasks and situations presented to you. The signs and symptoms of burnout are similar to those of stress, but burnout includes an emotional exhaustion and an increasingly negative attitude toward your work and even your life, meaning burnout strikes at the very core of a person's existence.

Knowledge of how to treat and prevent burnout is paramount to the long-term sustainability of both the individual and the workplace. Changes in your work environment and a feeling of lack of control over your work are major causes of the unrelieved stress that can easily become job burnout. Victims of burnout need to be encouraged to recognize the causes of any work dissatisfaction and consider whether any of the causes can be addressed. Attending to the controllable facets of a situation is a critical first step in eradicating the onset of burnout.

People with tendencies to place too-high expectations on themselves may be more prone to burnout. When carried too far, compulsiveness, perfectionism, and inflated self-confidence can have detrimental impacts on a person's professional and personal life. Setting unrealistic goals, thinking anything is possible with the right amount of work, and taking on more than they know they can handle will leave individuals striving to maintain an intensity that simply cannot be sustained over time.

The Stages of Burnout

Burnout has been found to proceed in stages that blend into one another so smoothly that you might not realize what is happening until you are in a state of despair and physical and emotional breakdown. Having commenced a new job with boundless energy, some can rapidly find themselves in a state of disillusionment and disappointment. Confused, but unable to accurately determine what's wrong. Burnout symptoms begin to set in. Feelings of frustration and irritability eventually give way to full-scale exhaustion and fatigue.

Since burnout is not an overnight occurrence, it's important to recognize its early signs and to act before the problem becomes severe. In a chronic state of stress, the body will potentially begin to show a number of the following physical signs of stress overload:

- Psychosomatic illnesses (psychological/emotional problems which manifest themselves physically);
- Digestive problems;
- Headaches;

- High blood pressure;
- Heart attacks;
- Strokes;
- Teeth grinding, and;
- Fatigue

Under prolonged conditions of chronic stress, the body begins the downward progression to burnout. When specific psychological responses interact with the body's natural physical responses to stress, burnout occurs. It is the end result of a tired body and mind. Some report an inability to sleep or unable to stay awake, whilst others resort to escapist behaviors such as sex, drinking, drugs, partying, or shopping binges to try to escape from their negative feelings. Relationships both at and outside of work may begin to fall apart. Burnout can impair your job performance as well as your health.

Some people experiencing burnout will feel as if their jobs are no longer interesting or enjoyable. They become indecisive, their productivity drops, and their work deteriorates. They may not even care about doing a good job and often perform tasks by rote. These people feel bored and put-upon, they may dread going to work in the morning, and they may feel envious of others who are happy with their work. Others who see their jobs as intense, highly demanding, and stressful might try to push themselves even harder once they feel the effects of burnout. They will try to balance numerous roles, multitask, and respond to a variety of changing and challenging situations often at the expense of their own well-being.

Preventing and/or Treating Burnout

Familiarity with the symptoms of burnout is a critical first step to preventing and treating burnout. Since burnout is a physical and psychological response that is connected to feelings about a work or life situation, it is important to attend to the mind as well as the body when treating burnout. To prevent and reduce burnout, the following changes to improve your physical, mental and social well-being are recommended:

Physical

Your body's ongoing response to stress wreaks havoc on your physical health. If you think you are experiencing burnout you should:

- See a doctor. Schedule a complete physical check-up with your doctor to discuss your concerns and any symptoms you've noticed;
- Sleep. Make sure you are getting the sleep your body desperately needs;
- Eat appropriately. Develop healthy eating habits, including

having breakfast and high-protein snacks to help sustain your energy throughout the work day, and;

- Exercise. Increase exercise by taking walks during breaks, or beginning a new type of activity, such as yoga, to release tension.

Mental

Burnout often occurs when life feels out of balance—you feel you are giving too much of yourself to your jobs or others and are constantly in a state of stress and anxiety without any time to relax and enjoy life. To address the psychological effects of burnout you can:

- Develop coping skills for dealing with stress including using muscle relaxation techniques, mental imagery and positive self-talk.
- Become more self-aware. Understanding your strengths and areas in need of further development can help you learn better ways to deal with day-to-day stress. For example, if you know you are the kind of person who has difficulty saying “no” without guilt, recognize how this pattern affects.
- Learn effective time management. To help you develop control over your work and home life, you might consider taking more time off, scheduling more frequent breaks while at work, or delegating tasks. Identify what lifts your spirits and devote scheduled time to the attainment of this activity on a weekly basis. Schedule “me time” into your day or week, and;
- Set realistic goals. This will add direction, clarity and focus to your life. Establish personally meaningful goals, divide them into short- and long-term, and establish a plan for action. Striving, learning and reaching for new accomplishments will give you a real sense of purpose;

Social

Although time alone is important, maintaining a balanced life also means spending time cultivating your relationships with family and friends. Poor relationships can contribute to burnout, but positive relationships can help prevent or reduce it. Steps you can take to improve your work and home relationships include:

- Nurturing your relationships with your partner, children or friends;
- Connect with a cause or a community group that is personally meaningful to you. Joining a support group can give you a place to talk to like-minded others about how to deal with daily stress;
- Address your dissatisfaction at work. Talk to a supervisor to explore options that may alleviate your stress;
- Practice healthy communication. Express your feelings to others who will listen, understand and not judge. Burnout

involves feelings that fester and grow, so be sure to let your emotions out in healthy, productive ways.

In summary, to prevent or recover from burnout, learn to cultivate methods of self-awareness and connection with others. Think of your personal energy in terms of not only energy expenditure, but also energy renewal, and focus on creating a balance in your life. To enjoy a healthy, sustainable life, let your mind, body, and spirit be continuously renewed. Immerse in your personal magnificent obsession and manage time to ensure you are always feeding off those things that lift your spirits and to which you are passionate about.

Article adapted from the Helpguide: Mental Health Issues website, www.helpguide.org

September 2006 - Fit For Life:

Running The Marathon

Congratulations to all those who recently completed the Auckland marathon. And for those who were left at the starting gate....well, there's always next year. To best enable those who fall into the latter category to make the journey next year, here's our guidelines for commencing a running program that might just culminate in the completion of your first marathon. Remembering that only 5 to 7% of goals are ever achieved, and that the main reason for such a substantial failure rate is the lack of a designated commencement point, this article is dedicated to the first few weeks of engagement. Training for a marathon is pure science in its own right, and way beyond the scope of The Koru. But in the interests of wetting the thirst for knowledge on this topic, here are a few suggestions to get you up and moving.

Even if you've never run a step in your life, what follows will see you pounding the pavement in only a few short weeks. But even before you take to the roads, here are a few important tips to consider in your preparation.

1. Equipment

Ensure you purchase a new pair of running shoes prior to embarking, and ensure you purchase these shoes from a reputable store specialising in running shoes and serviced by knowledgeable staff capable of matching the right shoe to both your objectives and biomechanics.

2. Become a Student of Marathon Running

Whilst the intention of this article is to provide a stimulus for turning your hand to marathon running, it can never be a be-all-and-end-all of marathon running. Marathon running is simply too advanced a science to be covered off within the confines of one article. Read broadly on the topic prior to commencing your training program, and even more ideally seek the advice of a qualified coach who can guide you all the way. Sport Life would be pleased to offer the services of our personal trainers to you, and alternatively recommend the services of John Ackland at Performance Lab. John has an extensive background in coaching marathon, ultra-marathon and triathletes, is extremely well-researched and has published heavily on the topic. If you're looking to make your marathon experience as complete and effective as it possibly can be, I'd look no further than John to take you there.

3. Keep Accurate Records

In accordance with the Sport Life approach to reflective dairying, we'd earnestly suggest that you ensure you maintain strong and accurate records of your involvement from the first day of engagement. Set goals along the way and constantly consider your daily achievements. Marathon training can be a lonely experience, and any source of motivation you can derive is well worth the effort. With goals to guide and inspire you we believe you can take away much of the despair you're likely to experience. More significantly however, by keeping records of your training efforts you'll be in the best position to identify flat spots and give reason to setbacks (including injury). As should be the habit of daily life, accurate dairying and reflection is a must when it comes to your marathon running career.

4. Nutrition

Running a marathon places demands on your body like no other recreational pursuit. Maintaining your levels of hydration is critical, and so too is the importance of constantly fuelling your body for the demands to come. Emphasising healthy foods in your diet is an absolute must, and limiting fried and high fat foods is equally as important. Whilst debate continues to rage on the mixture of carbohydrates, proteins and fats in the diet, the general train of thought still seems to centre round an emphasis on carbohydrates. Within your life as a marathon runner, your body is your machine and no expense should be spared in keeping it in first-class condition. Once again, we'd recommend reading broadly on the topic, but more ideally would advocate a few visits to Sport Life's dietician, Jeni Pearce. With a few invaluable tips from Jeni to aid you on your journey we'd be confident of getting you to the start line adequately fuelled for your peak performance.

Making a Start

If you are starting from a nil base, we'd strongly recommend commencing your training with a sequence of brisk walks and incorporate regular rest days in between. Moreover, we'd encourage you to consult a doctor prior to commencing if you have any doubts about your suitability, or at the very least complete the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q) prior to making any sort of start. The PAR-Q can be easily downloaded off the internet, but should not be seen as a license to commence intense training.

Rather, it is an indicator as to whether it is safe to commence an exercise program unmonitored or unassisted.

Start by attempting to walk for approximately 25 kilometres in your first week, made up of a sequence of 5 to 6 ½ kilometre stints, but ensure you take a full rest day off in between each day. Gradually incorporate jogging into your schedule, so that you are now starting to engage in walk/jog sessions. Remember, the purpose of the exercise in completing your first marathon should have very little to do with a targeted time, so devote your time and energies to the cumulation of minutes you are able to run without stopping and not to the speed of your completion. Always maintain you are running at an aerobic level, which can best be defined by an intensity that enables you to breathe easily and without pushing yourself to a limit. If you find yourself unable to talk in complete sentences and without gasping for air, we'd suggest you are probably pushing yourself beyond what we'd recommend as safe.

Gradually increase your distances until you are completing five sessions per week adding up to a combined kilometre total of approximately 55-60 kilometres per week. At this stage of your development, you should be able to jog a distance of roughly 15 kilometres, and ideally with little if any stoppages. Moreover, you are probably now able to train 5 days of the 7-day week, with 2 rest days intermixed within the formula. The golden rule here is to always ensure you are at ease with your training and yourself, meaning you are never feeling over-burdened or exhausted throughout your sessions. That is to say, gradual increments are a good thing when it comes to building a base, so don't feel rushed to get your mileage up to the designated 50-60 kilometres per week mark. Depending on where you start (commencing with those who are virtually sedentary at the beginning) advancing to a comfortable 60 kilometres per week may take as long as 4 to 5 months. You shouldn't be in any rush to get to this point. There is a generally accepted rule that you should not increase either your weekly mileage or the length of any one run by more than 10 percent from one week to another. Moreover, it is important to intertwine "easy weeks" along the way, where you drop back your current mileage with a view to enhancing leg rest and recovery. The key to succeeding and achieving the prescribed weekly mileage is as much about sustaining enjoyment and avoiding injury as it is about completing mileage.

At this point in time however, you are now ready to immerse in a more formal marathon-training program. And we would strongly advocate consulting a qualified coach (if you haven't already done so) who can individualise a program for your specific abilities and

needs. Remember though, the better base you build the stronger is the foundation for your life as a marathoner.

Your Life as a Marathoner

Your life as a marathoner should commence with an enhanced knowledge of basic training principles and injury prevention strategies (e.g. weight training, stretching, cross-training, apparel, etc), both of which need to be fully understood prior to a full engagement. Listed below is a selection of well-received training principles for consideration.

Principle of Specificity The specificity principle states that training must go from highly general training to highly specific training, and implies that to become better at a certain skill you must perform that skill. That is to say, in order to enhance your ability to run, the principle of specificity advocates running over all other forms of cardiovascular exercise

Principle of Progressive Overload The principle of overload states that a greater than normal stress or load on the body is required for training adaptation to take place. That is to say, once the body has adapted to a certain stimulus, then a different stimulus is required to continue the change. That is to say, to increase endurance, muscles must work for a longer period of time than they are used to.

Principle of Reversibility The principle of reversibility simply states that when training stops the gains made will be lost over time. That is to say, the muscles hypertrophy with use and atrophy with disuse, placing a great emphasis on the need to find balance between stress and rest and periods of low intensity and high intensity. The principle of reversibility highlights the potential need for cross-training, as well as indicating the damaging effects of injury.

Principle of Individuality Abilities and attitudes are influenced by factors such as hereditary, maturity, diet, sleep and previous experience in sport. Every athlete is different and responses to exercise will vary (hence, the need for individualised programming). In general terms however: women need more recovery time than men; older athletes need more recovery time than younger athletes, and; the heavier the load, the longer it will take for the muscles to recover.

Principle of Variation	Variation provides on-going stimulus to the athlete and aids in avoiding boredom. Variation of training arenas and training methods (e.g. speed sessions, etc) offers the athlete a chance to adapt and learn more
Principle of Adaptation	Adaptation is the way the body programs muscles to remember particular activities, movements or skills. By repeating the skill or activity, the body adapts to the stress and the skill becomes easier to perform. Adaptation explains why a beginning exerciser is often sore after starting a new routine, but after doing the same exercise for weeks or months the athlete has little muscle soreness.

Specifying a generic training program for marathon running is a flawed exercise – there are simply too many variations that need to be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, in general terms the following guidelines can probably be applied. Training should be designed to culminate in a long run of somewhere between 35 and 40 kilometres and a training week of roughly 75 kilometres. This particular training week should probably be attained approximately one month out from competing in the targeted marathon, although some marathoners have been known to attempt the distance as the only session of their training week the week prior to competing. Astute trainers are conscious of the need to include low intensity weeks in which they drop the mileage back considerably, and will tend to incorporate a low intensity week every third to fourth week depending on their individual preference and recovery. Throughout high intensity weeks it is recommended that trainers train 5 out of 7 days, whilst low intensity weeks should drop that figure back to 4 out of every 7 days.

The greatest mistake made by many would be marathoners is the tendency to train too much. These trainers adopt a more is better philosophy, which often culminates in injury and periods of time on the sidelines. Retaining a consistency over the duration of the training period is critical to arriving at the start line fresh and ready to go. Moreover, many would be marathoners miss training sessions and then attempt to resume where they were prior to their missed sessions. This is a recipe for injury and should be avoided at all times. Other would be marathoners try to build their mileage too rapidly, ignoring the 10 percent rule and putting their entire program in jeopardy. Other would be marathoners fail to listen to their bodies and attempt to push through the signs of fatigue, whilst others

engage in hard work outs (long run, speed work, hill repeats, etc) back to back. All are major mistakes made by would be marathoners, and all almost always culminate in injury and an unfulfilled dream.

More accomplished marathoners may like to consider the implementation of training sessions such as speed work and hill repeats, although we would strongly advocate incorporating such sessions under the careful supervision of a qualified coach. Whilst speed work is of immense value to the competitive marathoner looking to achieve a desired time, for those engaging in their first marathon the goal should always be in the completion. It is a simple fact that the faster paced training runs you engage in, the greater is the probability of injury occurring, although speed workouts in your training do culminate in greater arm drive, stride, speed and stamina and enable you to run faster with less effort. Nevertheless, it is an advanced training technique and not really for the true beginner, and should only ever be considered in conjunction with a supervising coach. Such a qualified coach is best positioned to implement speed work outs such as pacing runs, mile repeats and interval training.

Running a marathon can be a rewarding experience for all who engage in it. Challenging the self to achieve what initially seems impossible is one of life's great pleasures, but those who attempt it should be wary of the consequences. Without the proper consideration of planning and the injection of appropriate expertise, taking on your first marathon can be a trying and disappointing experience. So if you watched the Auckland Marathon and concluded by saying, "If only", we'd suggest you start researching, source experts such as Sport Life's personal trainers, John Ackland or Jeni Pearce, and cautiously take to the roads. You may just be on the path to one of life's defining moments.

September 2006 – Eat Yourself Holistic
Herbs and Spices: Forgotten Foods Packing a Powerful Punch



By Jeni Pearce



Herbs and spices have a long history in food and health in many cultures and may have been forgotten in the 21st Century modern cooking. For many cultures the addition of herbs (Mediterranean) and spices (Indian and Asian) is a way of life. Herbs are typically the whole leaves from plants used fresh or dried while spices are the buds (cloves), bark (cinnamon), roots (ginger), berries (peppercorns), aromatic seeds (cumin), bulb (garlic) and stigma of flowers (saffron).

What we eat does make a difference to our health and well being and some foods may offer protection for the body as well an enjoyment. Herbs and spices are regularly being added to new and traditional food in New Zealand (spices to chick peas and hummus, herb and chilli flavoured dips and spreads). Adding a range of herbs and spices, in very small amounts (as little as 1g a day) may be all that is needed. Advances in research science can tell us more about the how and why herbs and spices benefit the diet.

Herbs and spices could be classified as the first and most widely used functional foods due to the various roles they provide in health. Herbs and spices may have anti nausea and anti inflammatory roles, aid digestion, anti microbial activity, and possibly reduce the risk for developing heart disease and some forms of cancer. Antioxidants and phytochemicals are found in food we normally eat (vegetables and fruit) acting to protect body processes. Herbs and spices with a rich source of antioxidants include oregano, cloves, cinnamon, thyme, mint and rosemary.

Role in the diet

Herbs and spices are foods classified as belonging to the fruit and vegetable group. Adding herbs and spices to salad, sauces, drinks, desserts and dressings are an excellent ways to boost daily antioxidant intake. A surprisingly small serving of herbs and spices has an intense concentration of antioxidants (1-5g of the fresh varieties). The levels of antioxidants may even be higher than some fruits and vegetables even when small amounts (1-10g) are consumed (cloves, cinnamon, turmeric, oregano, thyme, rosemary, sage and ginger). Eating herbs and spices by colour in the same fashion as we eat a rainbow for fruit and vegetables, ensures a range of antioxidants are consumed. Using herbs and spices to flavour foods has an essential role in lowering the intake of saturated fat, sugar and sodium (salt) in the diet. When salt and fat are removed from dishes the flavour profile often changes and dishes can be bland. Adding herbs and spices actually enhances the flavour. Desserts and sweet sauces retain their flavour when the sugar content is lowered by adding a range of spices such as cinnamon and even cardamom.

Antioxidants are the body's internal body guards or nutrient police involving complex reactions that stamp out (or counter act) the damaging effect of the vandals in body (free radicals). The damage occurs inside the body through a process called oxidation (like the rusting of a car) that can't been seen. These vandals are created as part of daily life and workings of the body (growth, aging, exercise) and pollutants (especially smoking). The antioxidant content of herbs and spices compares favourably with foods such as fruits and vegetables well recognised for their abundant and diverse content of antioxidants.

Food bundling

Placing a focus the whole food and meal appears to have more benefits than consuming herbs and spices individually. The combination of food, herbs and spices eaten together enhances the overall antioxidant capacity. Some research suggests combinations of the bioactive compounds may be more potent. Adding the herb marjoram increased the antioxidant capacity of a salad by 200%. There is still a substantial amount of research that needs to be done in this area.

Role in Cancer

A range of spices (garlic, cloves, turmeric) and herbs (lemongrass, basil, parsley, rosemary and mint) are thought to have anti cancer activity. Some of the phytochemicals found in herbs and spices may posses a role in inhibiting one or more of the various stages of cancer and have a possible role in reducing inflammation in animal and some human studies.

Role in Heart Disease

Herbs and spices can easily be used to replace salt and fat (especially saturated fat) in recipes providing benefit towards reducing the risk for cardiovascular disease. Garlic has the most convincing research and some studies indicated a reduction in blood cholesterol with garlic (1-1.5 gloves a day were shown to lower total cholesterol by 9%) and studies using garlic supplements did not show the same results. Garlic is also known for its anti clotting role and reducing blood pressure (5.5% decrease in systolic blood pressure). The effect on lowering hypertension may be related to herbs and spices as traditional flavouring alternatives by replacing salt in food and meals. The high antioxidant levels (especially the flavonoids) in some herbs have the potential to inhibit the oxidation of damaging LDL-cholesterol providing further benefit. Lowering saturated fat intake is a key health message for reducing the risk for heart disease. When fat is removed from food the flavour is often reduced or altered. Adding herbs and spices replaces the lost flavour and also enhances the intensity of flavour (cloves and rosemary).

Ginger is a spice that is well known for the role it plays in managing nausea and has an additional role as an anti-inflammatory. Nausea and vomiting during pregnancy were reduced with the use of ginger. Further research is needed in these areas. In terms of food safety including herbs and spices may help reduce the risk of undesirable bacteria in food due to their antimicrobial role.

Herbs and spices provide flavour, aroma, colour, antioxidants, lower sodium levels, reduce total fat (especially saturated fat), increase variety, limit flavour fatigue, make food more interesting, fun and palatable. They are rich in vitamins, minerals and other bioactive and make a contribution through their regular use, even though the intake is small. We need to be more spontaneous in the addition of herbs and spices to meals – dressing, dips, salads, vegetables, soups, casseroles, stews, drinks and desserts. Children can eat herbs and spices. Start by offering younger people small amounts (mild flavours first) and use in a variety of dishes – salads, baking, drinks, desserts and meat dishes. Begin with a teaspoon, experiment and meals become a more interesting and adventurous experience. Today we can take the best from other cultures, such as Mediterranean cuisine, to make healthier diets in New Zealand and the addition of herbs and spices should become an everyday occurrence.

There is a wide variety of herbs and spices providing benefits to the diet in many ways. They are inexpensive and taste great. The potential health benefit of including herbs and spices is long term and their use is definitely not a quick fix. Any possible benefits will take time to be

realised and the aim is about providing protection from regular inclusion as part of the usual eating pattern (despite the small amount consumed) rather than as a medicine. Herbs and spices provide variety, flavour, colour and make food smell wonderful as well as providing active compounds (antioxidants) and nutrients. It may be what we are not eating that turns out to be more of a concern in our diet. Start now by throw in some fresh herbs and spices into everyday cooking and dishes. A little bit goes a long way everyday and if fresh is not available then pastes are the next best choice.

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For further information on Jeni Pearce and dietary considerations, please log onto www.healthydiet.co.nz.

September 2006 – Golden Rules of Leadership



In recognition of the continuing emphasis on leadership and the acquisition of leadership skills, we continue our Golden Rules of Leadership by adding a further three fundamental and critical considerations for business leaders. With our list of rules now expanding to eighteen, we first invite an opportunity to revisit and reflect on the previous fifteen rules espoused throughout this segment of The Koru:

1. Show Respect For Everyone
2. The Power of Love
3. Recruit People Who Can Work in a Team Environment
4. The Power of WOW
5. When the Right People Become the Wrong People
6. Recognise Your Key Stakeholders
7. Define Your Values and Constantly Reinforce Them
8. Benchmark Off #1
9. Regularly Look to Develop Your Sense of Self-Awareness
10. Lead By Example
11. Understand the Importance of Emotion
12. Smile and Laugh
13. Think Big
14. Become a Process Oriented Thinker, and
15. Convey Positivism

In this edition of the Golden Rules of Leadership, we devote our time and attention to the development and implementation of enhanced communication skills, in recognition of the ever-increasing emphasis by business leaders craving advanced knowledge in this area

16. Become a Refined Listener

Effective communicators have mastered the skill of refined listening. They always use effective attending skills (i.e. eye contact, body alignment, etc), paraphrase to clarify messages, and appreciate the role of acknowledgement phrases. Refined listening is a practice of emotional intelligence that brings a high degree of self-awareness into the process of understanding, demonstrating sensitivity, acknowledging and responding to another person. Listening well is the key to empathy,

and because they work diligently to retain their involvement in the process, effective listeners are able to ask astute questions. In addition, by becoming good listeners, effective communicators are able to sense what the other person is going through, leaving every opportunity for them to derive an appropriate and reasonable response.

In the first instance, effective listeners send out a clear message that they received the content of what the speaker is saying. Through simple techniques such as paraphrasing to clarify a received message, listeners are able to get the message straight, and provide good feedback regarding how clearly his message had been delivered. For example, saying something to the affect of: “Am I correct in thinking that you are feeling a lack of confidence in my ability to.....”, the listener not only conveys receipt of the message but also indicates an intent of interest in its source. Furthermore, I advise listeners to utilise phrases such as “I see” and “Oh, really” throughout the course of the conversation, both of which ultimately convey a message of, “I’d like to hear more”.

Similarly, I would highlight the use of effective attending skills. By becoming aware to things such as eye contact, posture, body alignment (leaning into the speaker) and facial expressions (including things like head nods), listeners can express a greater interest in the conversation and – more importantly – convey a sense that they understood the message. Similarly, I am eager for listeners to become more aware of the deliverer’s non-verbal cues. These non-verbal cues give hints about the deliverer’s involvement in the conversation - how much emotion is involved, how much what they are saying means to them, how angry or happy they might be at the time, and a host of other possibilities.

The combination of paraphrasing, appreciating non-verbal cues in receiving the message and acknowledgement statements – “I understand you’re concerned about....” – can all be used to indicate you have picked up on feelings being expressed. Establishing good listening skills is paramount to effective communication, and an imperative to anybody who interacts with people on a face-to-face basis. People in positions of leadership are invariably engaged in conversation with others - including clients, customers and employees. These people are looking for a consistency in their interactions. By being attuned to signs and inner signals (both their own and those of others) effective leaders are able to ensure interpersonal communications are positive and productive.

17. Working With Quality Feedback

Quite simply, the ability to converse in a respectful and dignified manner is not only critical to group harmony – it is critical to the very existence of any organisation! For all those in pursuit of improved performance, internal and external analysis has a significant role to play in the attainment of group goals. Feedback on performance is a necessary and valued commodity. People need to know where they are at, what they are doing right or wrong, and what they need to do to rectify a situation.

Feedback is the lifeblood of any organisation – it is the exchange of information that lets people know if the job they are doing is achieving its objective, needs modifying or needs to be entirely redirected. Effective communicators understand the value and importance of quality feedback in reinforcing appropriate behaviour and heightening the motivational level of the recipient. Effective communicators are constantly aware of the need to improve their feedback statements, and recognise the importance of value content in all feedback. They recognise that effective feedback serves three very definite and crucial purposes:

1. Informing the recipient by providing a source of information concerning their performance;
2. Reinforcing the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the action, and;
3. Motivating the recipient to repeat the behaviour or adapt it accordingly.

QUALITY FEEDBACK

Should be:

- SPECIFIC not GENERAL
- CONSTRUCTIVE not DESTRUCTIVE
- Directed at behaviour which is changeable
- SOONER not LATER
- CHECKED FOR CLARITY not LEFT MISUNDERSTOOD
- POSITIVE AND INFORMATIVE not NEGATIVE AND USELESS

18. Provide Constructive Criticism

How criticisms are given and received goes a long way to determining how satisfied people are with their work, with those they work with and with those to whom they are responsible. Criticisms are more often delivered and/or construed as personal attacks rather than complaints that have the potential to be rectified and resolved. Because they are frequently delivered with contempt and sarcasm, criticisms invariably culminate in defensiveness and a passive resistance to remain contributory. Significantly, research consistently pinpoints inept criticism as being ahead of mistrust, personality struggles and disputes over power and pay as a reason for conflict on the job. Conversely, criticism delivered in a constructive way holds out hope for doing better and suggests the beginning of a plan for achieving this.



Within the confines of the various sporting teams I've been involved with, we've identified a number of guidelines critical to ensuring criticism is always delivered effectively. In the first instance, it is always made apparent that those offering criticism should criticise only the actions of the performance (or behaviour) and not the person, whilst clearly identifying why this behaviour is inappropriate. Furthermore, I am adamant that those offering criticism should be able to give specific examples that can be used to substantiate the problem. Within my various teams we have had a diverse range of personalities – some personalities are more assertive and stubborn than others. Some are

impulsive and spontaneous. Others are reflective and measured in their approach. Some naturally demonstrate great caring for others whilst others appear relatively indifferent. What my teams have always shared is a united common goal. A goal we can only accomplish if each of these varying personalities feel a sense of belonging to our campaign, and a harmony within its inner sanctum.

Communicating a criticism is a definite two-way process. Those offering criticism should always invite a response from the receiver, and set about clarifying how the receiver felt about the criticism. They should aim to always be relaxed in their communications, and ensure nobody leaves the workplace under the misconception that they aren't a valued and valuable member of the team. Alternatively, there are some specific principles to adhere to when receiving criticism. First and foremost, all criticism should be seen as potentially valuable information that has the capacity to change the way we do things for the entire betterment of the group. Receivers of criticism are encouraged to not see the criticism as a personal attack – a task made easier by a more empathetic deliverer – and to avoid the temptation to act defensively.

September 2006 – Face to Face With Ruben Wiki



With the Kiwis in the midst of their 2005 Gillette Tri-Series of rugby league defence, it seems only appropriate that we take time to discuss the significance of the accomplishment and the future plans of their inspirational leader, Ruben Wiki. With the world record for international rugby league test match appearances, Ruben is immensely respected by both supporters of the game and team-mates alike. A NRL hard man, the quietly spoken Ruben reveals his softer side and contemplates the leadership style so closely aligned to the passion and determination that has become the hallmark of this country's over-achieving rugby league team.

The Koru: When did you first start playing rugby league?

Ruben: When I was 8 years old.

The Koru: Who did you play for?

Ruben: The Otara Scorpions. Mum kind of grabbed me and took me down there.

The Koru: Did you enjoy it from the start?

Ruben: No. Not from the start. Didn't want to play. But mum forced me. She told me to run so I ran.

The Koru: So what's your first memory of the game?

Ruben: Probably my mum waiting at the try line telling me to run to her. I scored a few tries – she told me to run to her so I just ran to her.

The Koru: Who was your greatest influence as a young player?

Ruben: Probably mum. Dad left when I was about two so mum raised three kids on her own. She got me down

there to play – she forced me to go down. If it wasn't for her I wouldn't be talking to you right now.

The Koru: What about coaches?

Ruben: My first coach at Otara was a lady. I had a couple of women coaches in my younger years as a player.

The Koru: What about professionally. When did you start playing professionally?

Ruben: It was in 1993. I went over to Canberra and played in the younger grades. In my first game which was as an Under 21 I got sent off. So that was my first introduction to the judiciary and I've been to see them ever since.

The Koru: How did you find going to Canberra as a young player?

Ruben: The year previous I was playing in the Pacific Cup and a scout from Canberra picked me up. The whole experience of leaving New Zealand was huge. Going over there and meeting my idol Mel Meninga was a big bonus. I took the opportunity to learn over there and took all the advice I could get.

The Koru: You were there a long time. Did you enjoy it?

Ruben: Yeah, I really enjoyed it. Every year I got the opportunity to play with some of the games great players, like Laurie Daley and Ricky Stuart. I was able to take bits and pieces from all the great players, and try to put it all into one package.

The Koru: What's your greatest moment in the sport?

Ruben: Being picked for the Kiwis in 1995. My first year in premier grade with Canberra was in 1994 – winning the Grand Final. But putting the black and white jersey on was probably my greatest achievement. And now I've been round for a long time.

The Koru: Do you still get a buzz when you wear it now?

- Ruben: Yeah, I still get a buzz hearing the national anthem and doing the haka. Just representing your country.
- The Koru: Let's talk about Laurie Daley, Ricky Stuart and Mel Meninga. What do you think made them so great?
- Ruben: They each had different attributes to bring to the team. They were all leaders – there was probably a bit of a clash of egos. Somehow they gelled in a game. In the early 90's they were so dominant in the NRL. I'd just watch what they'd do and learn off them. What I did in 94 was to just run off them. Playing outside Bradley Clyde – it was just a fantastic learning opportunity. When you get yelled at from those guys you just wanted to do something positive.
- The Koru: Other than their skills, what do you think made them great players?
- Ruben: The will to win. They'd really take it upon themselves to do something. That's the way they played for Australia as well. That's the way they played – they had that attitude.
- The Koru: So what's been their influence on you in regard to your role as a senior player with Both the Warriors and the Kiwis?
- Ruben: It's kind of different the way I approach it and the way I play footy – more action than words. Few words, but I get to the point.
- The Koru: And the game itself. What have been the main changes you've seen in the game?
- Ruben: It's a lot faster now. It gets faster every year. Mentally you've got to be focussed. You have your ups and downs. You can't relax for one second.
- The Koru: And this year with the Warriors. You started a bit slow but played very well near the end of the season. What do you think brought about that transition?
- Ruben: I think starting with minus four – even though we don't really talk about it much. I think starting with

minus four was hard. I mean, we won a game and we didn't get any points for it. It took us until about round six before we hit zero, and then we started going up and down a bit and then we started gelling. We started hitting some form, and by the end of the year we found something that worked. We started doing anything for each other – anything for the team and each other. A great example was the end of year trip – 18 guys went on the end of year trip. That's pretty massive. That's huge – everyone just enjoyed each others company. That's what brings a team together – enjoying each others company.

The Koru: And what about in regard to leadership. What are your thoughts on leadership and the leadership of the Kiwis?

Ruben: Don't try to be someone you're not. One thing my mum always taught me was that if you treat people with respect and you'll get it back.

The Koru: How do you think the players perceive you as a leader?

Ruben: I think they see me not as a captain or a leader, but as an older brother. I want to show them the way. A lot of captains can be arrogant, and I don't think they get the respect of the players. I just try to be myself. Show them what I grew up with - the values and the morals that my mum taught me. A lot of the boys have got the same attributes, from the Island background. My mum's Samoan, and it's all about respect.

The Koru: And is that how you'd want them to perceive you?

Ruben: I hope so.

The Koru: And so just in finishing, who's your most admired and respected coach?

Ruben: I've had a lot of coaches and I respect them all. Every coach is different. They have different attributes. But they've all given me something to aspire to.

The Koru: So what do you expect in a coach?

Ruben: Just to be straight up. And the values. And what they're all about. Improving my game – I want to improve everyday, and if coaches can do that I think they've done their job.

The Koru: And your aspirations now. What are your aspirations right now?

Ruben: Improve on what we did last year. Improve every day. Get better and what I can do to help the team. I was watching this Barnyard – a kids television show – and there was a little quote on there: "A strong man looks after himself, but a stronger man looks after others." That's me.

September 2006 – Let's Go Surfing

www.leadtosucceed.co.nz

In this addition of Let's Go Surfing, we can't think of a more fitting website to refer you back to than our very own (and very new) Lead to Succeed site. The Lead to Succeed website was introduced to ultimately coincide with the launch of my first book, Lead to Succeed: What it Takes To Be the Best. Due for publication by Harper Collins in June 2007, the book forms the cornerstone of our comprehensive ten-part leadership workshop series. The website itself contains pertinent information related to the ten (10) part workshop series offered by Sport Life New Zealand, but its predominant feature is the inclusion of four hundred quotes and daily thoughts that constantly revolve through the site. Our hope is that the inclusion of the quotes may in some small way inspire you to your ultimate performance in the workplace. Other features of the site include a general overview of each of the workshops, a series of largely unsolicited testimonials and an insight into our recently launched three module leadership series for school-age students. Of course, you'll also find every edition of The Koru contained within the website, presented in pdf format for your copying and duplication ease.

The Lead to Succeed website is an evolving process and a work in progress, so be sure to log onto www.leadtosucceed.co.nz on a regular basis, so that you may keep up to date with all that's cutting edge in the world of leadership.

September 2006 – Practical Exercise:

360 Degree Evaluation

Much has been written (and said) about the relative merits of 360 degree evaluations within the workplace. 360 degree evaluations rely on an individual's personal performance evaluation being completed concurrent to an evaluation conducted by their peers. It is probably the ultimate in honest assessment, because it contains not only the perspective of the target person but also the considerations of those closest to that person, their peers.

We strongly advocate the use of 360 degree evaluations, but emphasize the need for them to be carefully monitored and facilitated. We also strongly endorse the need for such evaluations to be carried through to a finite conclusion in which appropriate calls for action are installed and supervised. Because 360 degree evaluations are so heavily immersed in honesty, the impact of them can be detrimental if they fail to include advice and assistance in rectifying any perceived discrepancies in the individual's ability to complete their designated tasks (both personal and behavioral). 360 degree evaluations are most of use in enabling people to develop a greater awareness to their own characteristics and traits, and to enable those people to better appreciate how these characteristics are interpreted by those around them.

It has been my experience that 360 degree evaluations work best in values-based organizations, where the group's values are well-articulated and constantly reaffirmed. In such a group I like to relate the 360 degree evaluation back to the existing values, and promote an objective to measure each person against the group's existing values. Within the Kiwis (where we very much run a values-based program) we look to complete a very simple but highly effective evaluation (although if the truth be known it probably doesn't fall explicitly into the category of 360 degree evaluation). By referring back to our existing definitions of the team's values, each player receives a piece of paper containing the names of all squad members.

After crossing out their own name, players then rank order the five players who best represent the values of the team (in a more longitudinal campaign I'd be inclined to have all twenty-three players ranked, meaning we'd not only end up with our benchmark players but also our least adherent member/s). Once completed, individual players are asked to provide reason for nominating the various players as the players they perceive to best represent the team's values: "Steve, you've nominated Ruben as the player who best represents the team's values. What is it about Ruben that you most admire regarding the

values?” The exercise is very powerful for two reasons: 1) it celebrates the efforts of those who best represent what we stand for as a group, and: 2) it invariably sets up a benchmarking situation for the least experienced players within our group.

Of course, many would argue that the true purpose of 360 degree evaluations is that they enable the honest and accurate appraisal of colleagues, including the areas of most concern. I am certainly an advocate of this objective, but cannot emphasize enough how critical it is that formally documented and supervised action plans are devised based on the outcomes. I also believe there is real merit in having a clearly defined focus point (for the Kiwis, it is our values) which avoids the potential for the exercise to become so broad that it simply loses any workable direction. 360 degree evaluations are not for everyone, and require an active facilitation to ensure they remain controlled and productive. But efficiently completed, 360 degree evaluations become a vital tool to the further promotion of self-awareness within the personal development of group members.