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A qualitative case study approach was used to explore the self-concept of four NCAA Division III head basketball coaches. Following Markus and Wurf's (1987) dynamic self-concept model, the development, components, and relational factors of the coaching self were examined. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the four coaches as well as significant others in the coaches' personal and athletic lives. The cases revealed the coaching self is closely linked with the individual's overall self-concept and develops from a prior association to sport and people within sport. Personal factors such as competitiveness also contribute to the coaching self. The coaching self responds to the context with a move toward isolation, which produces an effect on others close to the coach. These results suggest an adaptation to Markus and Wurf's dynamic self-concept model and closer attention to the influence of the coaching context on the coaching self.

A COACHING SELF MODEL: EXPERIENCES OF SELF  
AMONG COLLEGE BASKETBALL COACHES

by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There is a distinct parallel between the worlds in which we live and the ways in which we understand ourselves in relation to those worlds. The concept of self is a multidimensional construct built upon how we understand ourselves within a dynamic world. Self-formation and understanding link aspects of identity, personality, roles, and societal values. Each individual self is independent yet comprised of overlapping “selves” that interact and impact the overall perception of self (Markus & Wurf, 1987; Oyserman & Markus, 1998). While these “selves” may be situationally unique, they also share many common elements of the complete self.

The self is both an object and subject. Rosenberg writes that when a person explores his or her self, “The individual is standing outside himself and looking at an object, describing it, evaluating it, responding to it; but the object he is perceiving, evaluating, or responding to is himself” (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 6). The self is an object that an individual knows and evaluates, and at the same time it is a subject that acts and responds to the object. As such, the self is both a structure and a process; it is both “known and knower” (Markus & Wurf, 1987, p. 301). This study looks at both the objective and subjective selves. The description and exploration of the self-concept schemata deals with the objective self while the participants’ responses and actions based on that self-concept through descriptions of their individual actions and feelings reveal aspects of the subjective self.

The world of coaching reflects a myriad of roles and influences. Coaches face a particularly daunting list of job demands in order to perform their professional duties successfully (Taylor, 1992; Zitzelsberger & Orlick, 1998). However, part of the complexity surrounding human action is the dynamic nature that surrounds human lives. Each person's world is made up of multidimensional factors. As a result, various facets of life and work converge and interact, forming a complex network that individuals must traverse daily. A person's world may simultaneously consist of vocational, personal, social, and spiritual influences. Given this understanding, coaches' lives do not merely consist of their careers, but are also shaped by personal relationships and influences beyond their jobs. In fact, these multidimensional factors often intersect and impact each other, and like professionals in many vocations, coaches must deal with balancing the multitude of influences that shape their lives (Baltes & Heydens-Gahir, 2003).

While the self may be an individual perception, it is composed of influences beyond the individual (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Likewise, even though the coaching domain includes coaches, it affects people beyond coaches themselves. The world of coaching intersects with other spheres of influence and the people within those areas, affecting their own perceptions of self and resulting behaviors.

When considering the self within a setting where interactions take place it helps to recognize that the self includes both public (revealed) and private (concealed) selves. The public self shows the social exterior of a person and includes physical, demographic, and behavioral characteristics that are outwardly known (Rosenberg, 1979); it is what *others* know about us. The private self consists of thoughts, feelings, and wishes that the

outside world cannot access (Rosenberg, 1979); it is what *we* know about ourselves. The distinction between public and private selves is not always concrete because they are intricately intertwined. In addition, the public may assume private selves that are not revealed and may or may not exist. As a result, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the two as well as the actuality of the private self. This study deals with the public self and what the coaches and other participants chose to reveal regarding the coaching self.

### **Assumptions**

This study is based on an assumption that the coaching situation varies from context to context. The reality of human interaction and the meaning that comes from it are complex and “messy.” However, it is the interface between people and their settings, and the manner in which they negotiate meaning and actions that determines reality and carries significance within a dynamic, changing world. Likewise, knowledge is best understood when it is embedded in a particular context. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the interaction among various factors that shape self-perceptions within the coaching network without giving serious consideration to the setting in which such influences exist and function.

As a result, the study is conducted in a qualitative tradition that recognizes the complexities of a textured social world (Mason, 2002). There is no simple, concrete answer; rather, the reality is embedded in the coaching story and the experience of coaches and others who know and live in that story. Based upon these assumptions, this

study relied on the participants who live and function within a specific setting to articulate the meaning that derives from that context.

### **Role of Researcher**

Creswell notes, “knowledge is laced with personal biases” (1998, p. 19). The case study approach recognizes that knowledge is derived from the meanings people place on their experiences. Therefore, conclusions formed from central themes will be rooted in the words of the participants. The meanings generated from the interviews reflect that they come directly from the people who have experienced and expressed their reality.

However, because human interactions and experience comprise knowledge, the research process itself plays a role in the meaning found within the study. Research procedures are of course the product of researcher decisions; thus, one must reflect upon the values, beliefs, and analytic preferences he or she presents to interactions with literature, methods, participants, and findings. Therefore, as the researcher I must identify my role within the research. Even in conducting the study, I participate in the form of my own perceptions and responses. I used a research journal to identify my experience throughout the research process.

I was not only involved in the process of research, but my personal background also influences this study. Much of my interest related to the coaching profession and its impact on the various aspects of coaches’ lives derives from the influence it has held in my own life. My own perceptions relate to experiences encountered as the daughter of a college basketball coach. Along with witnessing the assorted facets and duties a coach at

this level performs, I could not escape a realization that my father's daily vocation filtered into my own life and the essence of our family. My name was always included in my father's coaching biography, sandwiched between his coaching experience and career coaching records. There were distinct features of this profession that caused it to transfer into the home in which I grew up and shape my own identity. Our dinner conversations included injury and practice reports, we marked the passing of time by "seasons" rather than years, and we got accustomed to replying to hostile fans at basketball games, "Excuse me, but the man you just cussed out is my father." My ties to collegiate coaches extend beyond family connections. As a former collegiate student-athlete, I witnessed the duties and expectations of a coach in professional roles. These varying perspectives and experiences compel me to consider how the various areas that constantly interact in coaches' professional and personal lives form their sense of self. While I can express my own personal experiences and impressions at length, they only account for *my* perceptions. This study seeks to find answers to define experiences that I am a part of, but do not fully know. It attempts to provide meaning and definition to a phenomenon shared by coaches and those who form the elements of their personal lives.

### **Research Questions**

This study will closely examine factors involved in the perceptions and behaviors of the coaching "self." The investigation seeks to identify the influence of the coaching network on individual coaches and how the coaching experience impacts the meaning of one's self as well as its effect in a social world. The main purpose is to characterize the coaching self. Specifically, this study asks the following research questions:

### ***What is the coaching self?***

- *How is the coaching self formed and changed over time?*
- *What are the components (interpersonal processes, intrapersonal processes) of the coaching self and how are they linked?*
- *How do behaviors associated with the coaching self impact others within the coaches' social world?*

Exploring these main research questions will provide insight into how experiences within the world of coaching reflect personal meaning for individuals within that world. This study will also explore the meaning embedded within the coaching self and the behaviors that result from it.

### **Definitions**

#### *Coaching Network*

Term used to encompass people and factors intimately affected by the coaching profession and the sporting community. The coaching network extends beyond those who actively participate or work within sport. It includes not only coaches, but other people involved in the athletic domain such as athletic directors and coaching colleagues, as well as people outside the athletic community like family, friends, and significant people in the coach's life who are directly impacted by the world of coaching.

#### *Coaching Self*

Rosenberg (1979) defines self-concept as all of an individual's thoughts and feelings in reference to himself or herself. Similarly, Markus (1987) suggests a model of the self as an overlapping collection of self-representations that guide one's behavior and social interactions. Given these understandings of the broader "self," the coaching self refers to an individual's self-representation and

understanding that results from interactions with members of the coaching network. The coaching self contains aspects of both the objective and subjective self as well as the public and private self.

### **Scope**

This study is intentionally bounded by a core experience of coaching basketball; while coaches of all sports often encounter similar situations, this study deals specifically with collegiate basketball coaches within at the NCAA Division III level. In an attempt to keep the contexts as consistent as possible, the coaches are four head basketball coaches at institutions within the same conference. Because research indicates coaching to be a gendered practice the study includes both male head coaches of men's basketball teams and female head coaches of women's basketball teams. NCAA Division III athletics are based upon a philosophical framework that seeks to balance collegiate academics and athletics. Given its foundation on a belief that student athletes participate in different interests and domains, NCAA Division III athletics reflect a "greater emphasis on the internal constituency than the general public and its entertainment needs" (NCAA, 1995). As a result of the shared emphasis Division III institutions place on academics and athletics, those who work in NCAA Division III athletics find themselves balancing a variety of roles. While each institution, athletic program, and individual person is unique, several similarities exist within varying contexts.

The answers provided within the case are rooted in and reflective of one specific situation and may not be generalized to broader contexts. This study is conducted with the understanding that many of the experiences within basketball coaching at this level

are shared within the entire profession, but it also acknowledges that a great deal of the experience is also particular to each individual. The study seeks to reflect this reality while still representing the meaning that comes from exploring the research questions in this context.

Because the coaching network is extensive and differs greatly depending on the sport and level, gaining a meaningful answer to the research question involves a concentrated focus. A case study approach allows for purposeful sampling with in-depth analysis of a specific case and its particular setting (Creswell, 1998). It is important to obtain an understanding of the complete story and all its facets in order to grasp the significance the experience contains. Still, it is important to recognize the limitations of this case. While the case conveys a collective experience differences still remain among the coaches represented in this study. Those differences result from varied life experiences, gender differences, distinctions in households and the contrasts between married life and single life. This study is only based upon the experiences and meaning the participants chose to convey during the interviews.

### **Summary**

Given the context, this study intends to characterize the coaching self based on its formation and development, characteristics, and impact on others. It attempts to allow the experiences of people within the coaching network to express how their personal experiences reveal the coaching self. While the results are bound within this particular case, the findings can provide meaningful insight into the broader context of coaching experience. Moreover, the results of this study should offer a detailed look at experiences



of self for NCAA Division III college head basketball coaches and the impact of those experiences in a social environment.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND LITERATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE

*Although behavior is not exclusively controlled by self-representations, it has become increasingly apparent that the representations of what individuals may think, feel, or believe about themselves are among the most powerful regulators of many important behaviors. (Markus & Wurf, 1987, p. 308)*

While complex, understanding the self has personal importance because it often produces meaningful responses to questions seeking to identify our place in the world. The answers to these inquiries impact the actions and choices people make daily. What develops is a sense of self as individuals assign meaning or significance to themselves as people (Oyserman & Markus, 1998). These responses are highly personalized, dependent on individual interpretation and experience, and developed within social contexts (Oyserman & Markus, 1998). However, the self does not simply consist of an individual's interests and core identity. Rather, it has a critical impact on his or her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as the self exists both cognitively in the individual and on its own in the world (Markus & Wurf, 1987; Rosenberg, 1979).

To speak of the self, however, requires that we define this complex term. One of the difficulties in defining self is that there is no consistent name given to this concept. Some use the word *self* or variations such as *self-concept* or *self-perception*, while others opt for *ego* or *identity* (Markus & Wurf, 1987; Rosenberg, 1979; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). These expressions include personal characteristics, feelings, images, roles, and social statuses. Rosenberg defines the self as the "totality of the individual's thoughts and

feelings with reference to himself as an object” and goes even further to point out that the self-concept is the picture of one’s self (1979, p. 7). The importance of the term, however, is not as important as the framework defining the word choice.

The psychological understanding of self shifted in the last few decades from the view that each person has one static self (Coopersmith, 1967) to the theory that a person can form multiple active selves that function and are represented in different ways depending on the circumstances (Killeya-Jones, 2005; Kleiber & Kirshnit, 1991; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Rosenberg, 1979). Even with an understanding that the self-structure is actively constructed, a number of different models regarding the self-concept exist (Leonard & Schmitt, 1987; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Styker & Serpe, 1982). It may be most helpful to consider the self, not as a single entity but as a system that processes various personal and interactional factors in any given situation.

### **Markus and Wurf’s Dynamic Self Concept**

Markus and Wurf developed a model of the dynamic self-concept based on self representations formed through social experiences (Markus & Wurf, 1987). This model is established with an understanding that a person has several selves (identities or roles) that are each revealed depending on the social context. The process of developing oneself is both interpersonal and collective because it involves both self and social representations: personal characteristics, feelings, and images, as well as roles and social status (Markus & Wurf, 1987; Oyserman & Markus, 1998). Self-representations collectively form the overall sense of self. Therefore, they are important to the process of framing, developing, and maintaining a sense of self (Oyserman & Markus, 1998).

Self-representations form from personal self-assessment and social interaction as people seek to learn about themselves through social comparisons and direct interactions. Some self-representations are more salient than others and construct an individual's core identity while others are more peripheral. Some may be well established and carry standards for behavior under specific conditions while others may be temporarily formed on the spot for a particular social context. Furthermore, self-representations can take many forms. Some self-representations are actual, others are idealized. Some may be past, others are present, and still others may exist in the future. They may be cognitive or affective; they may take verbal, neural, image, or sensorimotor forms (Markus & Wurf, 1987).

Extending beyond simply viewing the self as an active process, Markus and Wurf also present the idea that individuals possess multiple selves to describe a working self-concept. The working self-concept follows the theory that people's actions reflect their attempt to negotiate different social conditions. The working self is the particular arrangement of self-representations that are activated at any given time to determine behavior (Markus & Wurf, 1987). As such, it may change and adapt to fit the individual person and circumstance. This particular model is helpful in considering the self-concept because it depicts the complex interactions among the various facets of the self and how they operate both independently and interdependently as a whole.

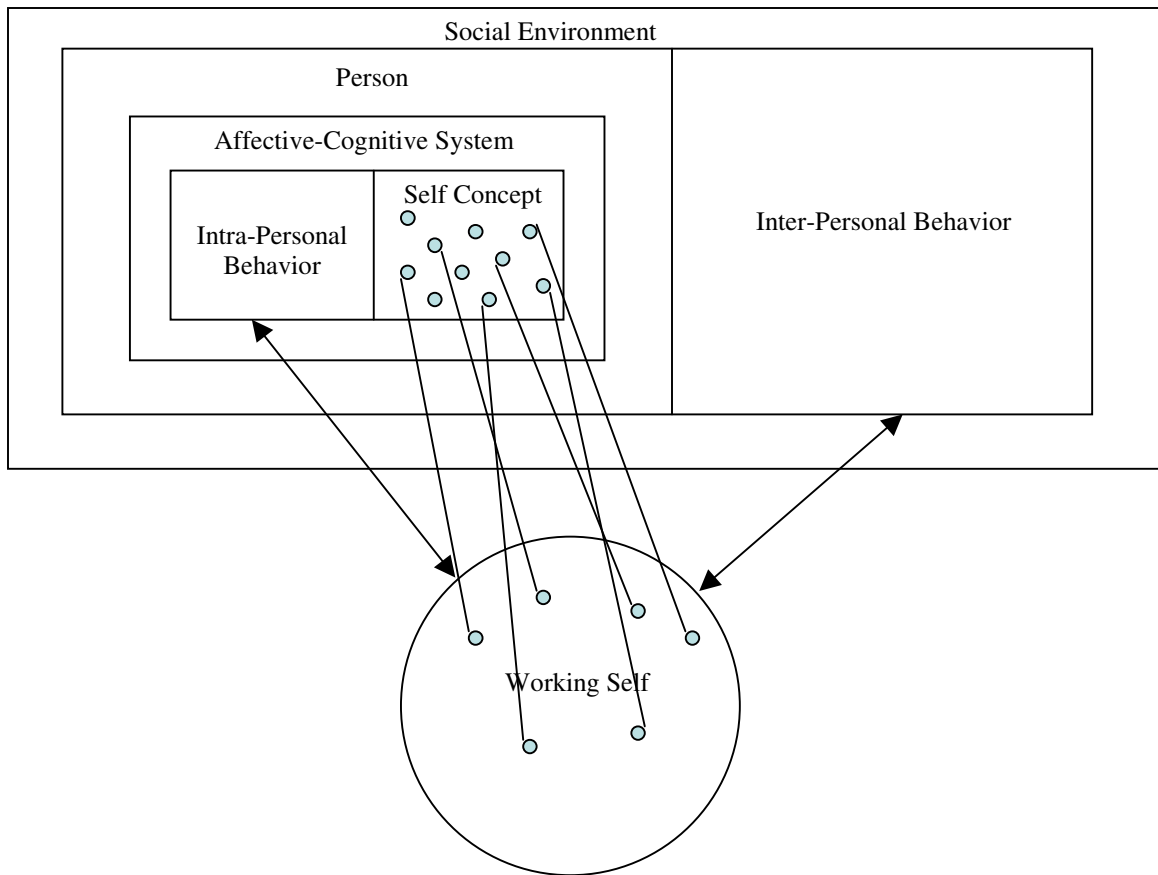


FIGURE 1. Markus and Wurf's Dynamic Self Concept

### Functions of the Self Concept—Intrapersonal Processes

*Most people appear to construct a current autobiography or narrative—a story that makes the most coherent or harmonious integration of one's various experiences. (Markus & Wurf, 1987, p. 316)*

The self-concept intervenes in intrapersonal processes to provide a sense of continuity, aid in information processing, regulate affect and emotion, and provide motivation for the individual (Markus & Wurf, 1987). While the personal narrative constructs a whole story of self, it is often revised and rewritten to support one's working

self view. The facets of information processing also reflect the flexibility of self representation. Individuals tend to have a heightened sensitivity to stimuli that are self-relevant and process this information more efficiently. In contrast, they are resistant to information that does not match their self-structure and often reject versions of their behavior that differ from their own account (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Along these same lines, affect regulation also works to maintain stability and consistency of the self. People want to avoid negative affective states and promote their own sense of self as much as possible; they seek positive information about themselves. As a result, people most often interact with others who support their own sense of self. In order to maintain such stability people choose behaviors and actions that they are best at and personally relevant (Markus & Wurf, 1987). The third function, motivation, seeks to integrate individual goals into the self-concept. These may not be concrete self representations. Instead, they consist of possible selves (images of a person having already achieved a goal) or desired selves (what a person aims to be). These factors influence future behaviors as the individual moves toward reaching his or her goals.

### **Functions of the Self Concept—Interpersonal Processes**

*...people both shape and are shaped by their social interactions. The self-concept provides a framework that guides the interpretation of one's social experiences but that also regulates one's participation in these experiences. (Markus and Wurf, 1987, p. 323)*

In attempting to confirm an individual's desired self, he or she must also navigate the interpersonal processes of social interaction: social perception, situation and partner choice, interaction strategies, and reactions to feedback (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Social

perception involves a process of social evaluation as people tend to judge others on self-relevant factors. Both cognitive and motivational elements are at play because there are certain situations where individuals desire varying degrees of uniqueness or similarity (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Self-conceptions and goals determine who one interacts with and his or her behavior. The combination of understanding the situation, oneself, and individual goals determines situation choice. What is more, relationship satisfaction derives from the situation and others validating one's desired self (Markus & Wurf, 1987). A person may try to shape a particular identity in the mind of his or her audience during an interaction. Within every interaction a conscious or automatic exchange takes place between the individual and the audience to construct or validate the self (Kleiber & Kirshnit, 1991; Markus & Wurf, 1987). Finally, individual self-perceptions and the reactions of others provide feedback to the self system. Reactions that affirm an individual's sense of self produce positive affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Because of this, people seek confirmation of themselves and may project behaviors that ensure this type of feedback (Markus & Wurf, 1987). If a person receives feedback inconsistent to his or her personal perceptions of self the individual may act against it, try to validate it or adjust to a new sense of self. The individual's response to feedback depends on how strongly he or she holds to the current self-perception, the status of others offering feedback, the costs or benefits of a particular reaction, and the opportunities for response (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Such cognitive and social processes impact the stability of and commitment to the self (Kleiber & Kirshnit, 1991).

## **Other Self Frameworks**

Markus and Wurf's model is a psychological approach to understanding the self. However, it may also prove helpful to consider other methods that reach similar conclusions through different systems of thought. Rosenberg considers the self as the result of personal evaluation and response to that assessment (1979). In everything, the individual looks at an object, "describing it, evaluating it, responding to it" (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 6). However, in the case of the self, the object is also the subject. Rosenberg (1979) also identifies three parts to the self-concept: the extant self (how an individual perceives him or herself), the desired self (how an individual would like to see him or herself), and the presenting self (how an individual shows him or herself to others). The presenting self is similar to Markus and Wurf's working self concept in that it differs in various situations but contains some core consistencies.

Another self framework to consider is that of social interactionism. This sociological concept that views the self as a product of society contains several fundamental beliefs within its framework outlined by Stryker and Serpe (1982). First, there is no individual apart from society. Consequently, society is a network of interpersonal communication through which we assign meaning to others and ourselves. We understand and know others based upon meanings that define them for us and through which we understand their behavior through significant symbols. Likewise, the self derives from the same process. We attach symbols that emerge from interaction with others to ourselves and define and know our selves and our behaviors through the meanings that are rooted in that interaction. As a result, all things (including people) find



their meaning through activity. Finally, there is a reciprocal relationship between self and society. Just as society shapes self, so also self shapes society.

### **Culture of Interaction**

The current theories relating to self are often closely associated with a culture of interaction. The self is not isolated and internal, but active in social processes. Indeed, the self drives a person's actions and behavior (Kleiber & Kirshnit, 1991) while at the same time social representations are the building blocks of self (Oyserman & Markus, 1998). This involvement may carry certain objectives. First, it may serve an evaluative role. Rosenberg (1979) provides the example that while a woman may see herself as a doctor, a Catholic, and a mother, she is more concerned that she is "good" in each of those selves. It is more important that she matches a socially relevant role ideal.

However, using social comparisons to assign significance to one's selves may result in conflict. Each self brings with it one set of assumptions. For example, being a woman carries specific social representations regarding gender and femaleness. These representations may overlap or be in significant conflict with the social representations associated with being a mother, a doctor, or a Catholic. Each individual then has to negotiate his or her various selves in different roles and contexts in order to define who he or she is and is not. In this study, the female head coaches encountered similar experiences as they sought to perform roles as both head basketball coaches and females at the same time. Social representations provide the process through which individuals attach meaning to themselves and to their reality (Oyserman & Markus, 1998).

### **Sport Involvement vs. Sport Identity**

The world of sport is not exempt from the various facets and workings of the self. In fact, the sport domain is a place for self development and activity (Kleiber & Kirshnit, 1991). In addition, Gerber (1979) argues that sport is a medium for self-definition because when people participate in sport they take part in a dialogue between themselves, the others participating, and the sport itself. Much like Rosenberg's stance, within sport, an individual is both an object and the subject—understood in relation to him or herself and the sport or activity.

Even if one does not actively participate in the sport, an association with someone involved in the sport may greatly affect one's self as well. Studies done with the spouses, parents, and children of those who participate in sport as both athletes and coaches report the influence of the sport on these family members as they adopted the sport identity (McKenzie, 1999; Thompson, S., 1999; Thompson, W., 1999). Not only were their identities incorporated into the sport participation of others, but they were intertwined with the identities of the sport participants as well.

On the other hand, even if one participates in sport, the salience of that activity on the self-construct may vary. The processes of self and manners in which they are executed pertain to those within the sport domain (Leonard & Schmitt, 1987). The greater one's involvement in sport, the greater his or her commitment and importance of the self in the sport role (Curry, 1987). For example, college athletes experience role conflict when they possess divergent student and athlete roles while they experience greater satisfaction in both areas when their student and athlete roles converge (Killeya-

Jones, 2005). Role conflict may be especially pertinent to NCAA Division III head coaches because they are often called upon to hold a number of academic, administrative, and coaching roles as their job descriptions often reflect the philosophy of balancing both academics and athletics.

### **Coaching Factors**

Coaches are another category of people who experience the impact of sport and athletics. Although coaches do not physically participate on the playing field or court, their identities are deeply intertwined in sport. In fact, their participation in sport goes beyond physical investment and can often be a more complete mental and emotional commitment. When considering the coaching context and what coaches experience within that context, research suggests that the coaching situation is one of tremendous stress. It is this stressful environment that shapes and informs the self construct for coaches.

It may be helpful to consider the environment of stress in coaching within the framework of Taylor's (1992) applied model of stress management. Taylor delineates five stages in his model: perceptions of coaching, stressors, exhibition of stress, coping skills, and social support. The first stage, perceptions of coaching, identifies how an individual's personal and work values may affect his or her perceptions of events. This fits into the concept that stress is defined by a cognitive appraisal process that centers on the demands, resources, consequences and meaning of the consequences in any situation (Kelley & Gill, 1993; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In addition to defining various stressors in coaching, this first stage also seeks to identify factors relating to why a person

is coaching and the coach's personal goals. This first phase is based upon the understanding that if individuals examine these elements for themselves they can possibly change how certain events are perceived and reduce stress. By recognizing the reasons for coaching, an individual can see how personal values, quality of life issues, and financial expectations play a role in the coaching situation. Likewise, identifying personal goals provides direction and motivation for continued development within coaching, increases a sense of control in one's work, and offers measurable standards for achievement, which tempers the effects of stress on coaches (Taylor, 1992).

The second stage in Taylor's (1992) model is the identification of primary stressors. These are the rare major circumstances or chronic daily events that are most evident in categorizing a situation as creating stress. The broad term 'stress' can be broken into three categories based upon the types of stressors in an event. *Personal stressors* are based upon factors inherent in an individual that create stress. For coaches, these may be dependent upon experience, personal needs, self-doubts, physical health, and coaching skills. *Social stressors* refer to elements that are due to interactions with others. Examples of social stressors within the coaching profession include athlete/staff conflicts, pressure from the media, fans, parents and administration, as well as lack of support. Finally, *organizational stressors* concern circumstances within the athletic superstructure. These include long hours, travel, lack of organizational support, administrative demands, budgetary and financial concerns, team performance issues, and an overload of responsibilities (Taylor, 1992).

The unique situational factors that contribute to the development of stress in the coaching profession vary and can be quite lengthy. Each falls into one of the categories defined above. Examples of aspects of coaching that may be perceived as stressful include: excessive workloads, pressure for promotion, personal and professional expectations, interactions with players, producing a winning team, handling defeat, long hours spent planning, practicing, traveling and recruiting, dealing with the details of scholarships and recruiting, pressure from the media, dealing with the expectations of boosters, administrations, and parents, inequalities between men's and women's programs, and lack of administrative support (Kelley, 1994; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Taylor, 1992).

Role ambiguity and conflict also contribute to the perception of stress as coaches are often called upon to fulfill multiple roles while sometimes lacking the skills or training to perform the demands of all these roles (Taylor, 1992). Taylor highlights three different forms of role conflict coaches may encounter that can be classified as stressors to coaching. *Interrole conflict* regards holding several roles that require conflicting behaviors. For example, coaches may have to balance a friendly, democratic relationship with athletes with having to occasionally discipline them at the same time. *Intrarole conflict* involves a person possessing a role where different people expect opposing behaviors. This may be encountered when some people expect a coach to place emphasis on fun in sport while others think winning should have greater importance. Finally, *person-role conflict* regards having a role where the expected behaviors conflict with one's beliefs, values or skills. A coach may experience this form of conflict by receiving

pressure from a booster to use recruiting tactics that may be unethical in order to sign a high caliber athlete. Various factors moderate how these different stressors are perceived and contribute to the appraisal of stress in a situation. Perceptions may be affected by gender, coaching experience, marital status, level of competition, type of sport, leadership style, coping and task behaviors, hardiness, trait anxiety, and social support (Kelley & Gill, 1993). As a result, stress is based upon these personal and situational factors found within the coaching environment

### **Effects of Stress: Burnout**

The third stage in Taylor's (1992) model involves identifying the symptoms of stress. This phase considers the way in which stressors affect coaches' behaviors. The "symptoms" Taylor refers to can involve cognitive effects such as loss of confidence or negative thoughts; emotional consequences including anger, anxiety, fatigue, and depression; physiological outcomes like increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, and cardiac problems; or negative performance results.

One of the major symptoms that may result from stress that demonstrates all four of the categories Taylor denotes is the condition known as "burnout." Maslach defines burnout as "a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment" (2003, p. 2). It is a reaction to chronic stress (Smith, 1986) where one is exposed to distressing situations for a prolonged period of time (Kelley & Gill, 1993). It is important to distinguish that burnout is not a state but a process that works in relation with stress (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993; Vealey, et al., 1992). Stress and burnout show several similarities. Like

stress, burnout is revealed as a function of personal characteristics and environmental conditions that may be considered excessive (Maslach, 2003). The conditions relating to burnout do not exist in a vacuum, but are shaped by the context and the individual.

Burnout may also be described as the state of fatigue or frustration that results from extreme commitment to a cause or way of life (Pastore & Judd, 1993).

Commitments are linked with identifying what is important and have meaning in an individual's life. Research indicates that increased commitment causes increased vulnerability to stress in the area of commitment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). On the other hand, commitment can also help to sustain positive coping efforts.

The demands and requirements of coaching are such that stressors coaches face in their job are more likely to lead to characteristics of burnout. Burnout is especially pervasive in professions that involve daily interpersonal interactions that can cause stress (Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayan, & Schwartz, 2002; Kelley, 1994; Lee & Iverson, 2003; Peeters & LeBlanc, 2001; Vealey et al., 1992; Zitzelsberger & Orlick, 1998). Maslach (2003) developed a measure for burnout known as the Maslach Burnout Inventory that identifies four components of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, decreased personal accomplishment, and frequency patterns. All of these elements can be seen as factors of burnout within coaching. One of the most notable characteristics of burnout is a psychological, emotional, and physical withdrawal from an activity as a response to stress. In fact, burnout makes an activity that had been enjoyed and pursued a *cause* of negative stress (Smith, 1986). It can be characterized by feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced sense of personal

accomplishment in one's work, absenteeism, insomnia, fatigue, aggressive or passive feelings, and at higher levels by substance abuse, psychosomatic illness, negative self-concept, poor work performance, and even leaving one's profession altogether (Kelley & Gill, 1993). The effects and severity of burnout may not appear all at once, but may develop in stages. Initial feelings of depersonalization may continue with time and lead to a greater decline in personal accomplishment. This may then advance to emotional exhaustion. In addition, a study analyzing the relationships among social support and burnout and job satisfaction found a significant negative relationship between burnout and job satisfaction (Baruch-Felman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayana, & Schwartz, 2002).

Smith's (1986) cognitive-affective model of burnout and Weiss and Stevens' (1993) social exchange theory use similar approaches that can be applied to understand the factors involving burnout as it relates to coaching. Smith's (1986) model is based upon the premise that humans attempt to increase positive experiences and decrease negative experiences. Persistence and motivation in coaching (as opposed to burnout and withdrawal from coaching) is the response when one considers the benefits of coaching to outweigh the costs of the job. In a similar way, according to social exchange theory, behavior reflects the balance of potential costs and benefits of experiences (Weiss & Stevens, 1993). Experiences may be deemed 'positive' based on financial rewards, personal satisfaction, development of self-esteem, or elevated social status that may result. In contrast, 'negative experiences' may come as a consequence of feelings of anxiety and failure, the amount of time commitment required, and the amount of time removed from other desired activities. Burnout can be significantly and negatively



related to job satisfaction (Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayana, & Schwartz, 2002). Weiss and Stevens (1993) identify two levels of satisfaction involved when one weighs the costs and rewards of coaching. Comparison level is how one judges whether or not an activity meets the standard desired, while comparison level for alternatives is the lowest level one sets to stay in the current situation rather than turning to available alternatives. Participation or withdrawal from an activity or relationship is then based on these assessments.

The factors affecting costs and benefits as they relate to burnout in coaching depend on situational and personal aspects including gender and time of season (Kelley, 1994; Pastore & Judd, 1993; Smith, 1986; Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, & Soliday, 1992; Weiss & Stevens, 1993). The benefits of coaching may include: enjoyment in seeing athletes achieve their goals, enjoyment in working with athletes, the challenge of encouraging teamwork, feelings of success, and enjoyment in teaching new skills (Weiss & Stevens, 1993). However, excessive job demands are linked with burnout (Peeters & LeBlanc, 2001). The costs may include workload, limited time for family, lack of personal time, anxiety and stress, inadequate program support, and lack of commitment by athletes (Weiss & Stevens, 1993).

Much like stress, the effect of burnout is not dependent simply upon these factors, but is the result of how such factors are perceived by the individual (Kelley, Eklund, & Ritter-Taylor, 1999). Situational, demographic and dispositional factors influence cognitions, which determine burnout and the effects of stress (Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, & Soliday, 1992).

## **Coping and Social Support**

As a result of this understanding, it is critical to search for ways to address perceptions of stressful situations. Kelley points out, “Coaches who see change rather than stability as the norm in life, who believe they have the ability to influence the course of events, and who approach life with a sense of purpose and a healthy curiosity are less likely to perceive situations as threatening and are less prone to burnout” (1994, p. 56). This leads to the fourth stage in Taylor’s (1992) stress management model: development of coping skills. Coping skills may be palliative and temporarily relieve the symptoms of stress (including relaxation training or exercise) or instrumental and address the stressor(s) directly (such as time management, assertiveness training, and delegating responsibilities) (Taylor, 1992). Maslach (2003) suggests a number of coping techniques in limiting the negative effects of stress on an individual. They include: setting realistic goals, allowing for rest periods and breaks, keeping a daily stress and tension log, taking things less personally (as opposed to emotional over-involvement), and creating a time to “decompress” and transition from an occupational environment to a home environment.

One factor that can greatly impact how one reacts to stressors is the final stage in Taylor’s (1992) model: social support. Social support can be defined as behaviors provided to a person to help cope with a problem and promote his or her wellbeing (Rosenfeld & Richman, 1997; Wills & Fegan, 2001). Social support may be measured structurally by looking at the quantity of resources available to a person or functionally by considering the quality of those resources (Wills & Fegan, 2001). Social support has been linked with reducing stress and burnout and the risk of illness as well as behaviors

that may produce health risks (Antonucci & Israel, 1986; Rosenfeld & Richman, 1997; Taylor, 1992; Wills & Fegan, 2001). Conversely, lower levels of social support have been linked with a greater perception of stress (Kelley, 1994). The exact relationship between social support and its outcomes are described in a number of models. Some posit that social support directly affects variables and outcomes in a person's life and behavior while others suggest an indirect effect through a possible mediator (Wills & Fegan, 2001). Both models strongly indicate that high social support lowers the likelihood of negative outcomes as a result of high stress (Wills & Fegan, 2001).

Specifically, social support moderates job demands and burnout (Peeters & LeBlanc, 2001). As Maslach puts it, "People can provide many things that you cannot provide for yourself" (2003, p. 111). Inglis and colleagues (2000) conducted a study looking at support females working in athletics received. In conducting this study, they identified four areas where coaches receive support. Social support may come from mentors or role models within or outside the athletic department, from an athletic league that provides a personal and professional network, from administration, and from athletes and parents.

Rosenfeld and Richman (1997) describe a model of social support coaches might receive. They identify three types of support: tangible support (e.g., assisting someone in completing a task), informational support (e.g., telling a person he or she is part of a team maintaining accountability and communication), and emotional support (e.g., comforting an individual). These three types of support may be reflected in eight forms: listening support (without offering opinions), emotional support (giving comfort and care),

emotional challenge (encouraging an individual to assess his or her attitude, values, or feelings), reality confirmational support (affirming a person's perspective), task appreciation support (acknowledging and appreciating one's efforts), task challenge support (stimulating how someone approaches a task in order to motivate that person to expand his or her creativity and involvement), tangible assistance support (financial resources, products, or gifts), and personal assistance support (offering services or help).

The forms of support are demonstrated through the interaction of four elements: the recipient, provider, interactional exchange process, and outcomes. One does not simply receive social support passively. Rather, personal characteristics influence how a person finds and receives support (Rosenfeld & Richman, 1997). There is a personal strategy involved in attaining and responding to social support (Inglis et al., 2000). Various individuals may fall under the category of "providers." They may include family, friends, co-workers, clergy, medical health professionals, and may or may not require specific skills in order to offer support. Both the recipient(s) and provider(s) must be identified in order for the interactional exchange process to take place. Moreover, recipients need to be able to identify sources of social support and providers must recognize and be willing to offer support in order for support to be exchanged (Rosenfeld & Richman, 1997). Winnubst (1993) echoes this fact in warning that if social support is not given appropriately it can actually contribute to creating stress. Social support has a positive outcome on both the physical and mental wellbeing of the recipient, whereas a lack of social support may produce a negative result (Kelley, 1994).

Considering the aspects of stress and social support as they pertain to the relationship between coaching and personal factors is helpful in analyzing features of the coaching profession and how they interact with stress and its effects because they work on a continuum. It is the constant interaction of the individual and the environment, and cognitions that result from coaching and personal situations that contribute to stress and burnout. Failure to address and identify certain events in coaching will lead to stress, and if it is allowed to continue without intervention and proper buffers it can lead to extremely detrimental scenarios such as burnout and attrition. Social support can be understood as the lens through which a coach can assess his or her profession and the stress it may produce. The presence of social support may magnify the positive results of coaching and diminish the negative stressful effects while the absence of social support may magnify the negative, stressful elements and diminish the positive factors in the profession.

### **Gender and Marital Status**

As mentioned earlier, gender and marital status influence the balance between work and personal life. A number of studies have looked at the effects of specific personal and situational factors in how stress is perceived and reflected in psychological behavior. Pastore and Judd (1993) recommend, “demographic variables such as marital and parental status be examined to determine how these variables affect male and female coaches’ burnout levels” (p. 210). This suggestion came after the researchers found gender differences in reports of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment between male and female coaches (Pastore & Judd, 1993). Kelley and

Gill's research (1993) found that coaching responsibilities differed between men and women, as a larger percentage of females had more than one coaching responsibility. Another interesting personal factor involved marital status as the majority of males were married (87%) while the majority of females were single (72%). This information may provide insight into why results found females experience slightly higher levels of stress compared to males when linked with other factors such as social support (Kelley & Gill, 1993). Later studies reported that women scored higher in perceived stress and emotional exhaustion than men (Kelley, Eklund & Ritter-Taylor, 1999; Phillips-Miller, Campbell & Morrison, 2000). Research indicates that women continue to provide more childcare and household labor than men (Phillips-Miller, Campbell & Morrison, 2000). As a result, women in professions may experience role overload, and greater stress at work and home. While some research indicates that work related stress can influence career satisfaction (Phillips-Miller, Campbell & Morrison, 2000), others found that gender differences did not account for job satisfaction or productivity (Baruch -Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayana, & Schwartz, 2002).

Research consistently indicates that professionals cannot compartmentalize or neatly separate their professional and personal lives. This study can help identify how the two realms interact in coaches' lives and provide insight into how each may affect the other. Even more, the findings may also reveal what each may provide for the other as coaches and the people involved in their personal lives seek to achieve a balance between these two demanding areas of life.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### **Research Design**

This study used a qualitative design based in the case study tradition of inquiry. A case study attempts to convey lessons learned through in-depth analysis of a specific and purposeful sample bounded within the confines of the case (Creswell, 1998). Consequently, the intent of this study was to research the experiences of NCAA Division III head college basketball coaches and the meaning and impact of their coaching selves. It should not be ignored that each person possesses unique experiences based on his or her life, but this study also sought to learn what the collective experience of the coaching self conveyed.

Therefore, this study took the meaningful experiences conveyed through interview transcripts with each participant, and their words produced shared themes relating to the self within the coaching role. The researcher designed the interview guide, which relied on the researchers experience and results from previous pilot studies with Division III head coaches. Analyses were used to derive meaning from the participants' experiences and provide answers to the research questions.

This study was conducted to better understand the experiences of those within the coaching network of Division III head basketball coaches and the factors relating to the coaching self. In addition, it sought to provide a voice for individuals within that context

and accurately portray the reality they encounter as part of the coaching network. The findings provide insight into who these coaches are and the effects of their coaching role on themselves and others within their coaching network.

### **Participants and Procedure**

This particular study focuses on the experiences of four head college basketball coaches at NCAA Division III institutions within the same Midwest conference. Rather than limiting the case to coaches themselves, each case extended to two people who are significant to the coaching story and experience. One of these persons came from within the athletic domain, and the other person was from the personal domain. The significant others (SO) included spouses, a roommate, and a sibling; significant others within athletics (SOA) consisted of an athletic director, assistant coach, coaching colleague, and equipment manager. Each coach, along with the people who know and share in that coaching life, serve as an individual case. In addition, the combined experiences of all four coaches' worlds constitute the broader case. Demographic information regarding the coaches is provided in Table 1. Each coach was given a pseudonym to maintain anonymity.

The researcher used personal contacts and experience working within college basketball to obtain participants. Coaches were contacted by letter informing them of the nature of the study and requesting their voluntary participation in telephone interviews. The researcher followed up with a phone call to each coach to seek his or her participation in the study. Based upon the coach's response, the researcher scheduled times to interview each coach and sent the coach a consent form and a general guideline



of interview questions. Prior to the interview, coaches signed a consent form outlining the purpose of the study, indicating their willingness to participate and understanding that they may withdraw at any time. The researcher also verbally communicated these details before conducting the interview.

<b>Coach</b>	<b>College Athlete</b>	<b>Number of Years as Assistant Coach</b>	<b>Number of Years Head Coach</b>	<b>Significant Others</b>
Beth	4 years basketball at NAIA	1 at NAIA 9 at D1	4 at NAIA 4 at D3	Head women's soccer coach at same institution (SOA) Sister (SO)
Susan	4 years basketball and softball at D2		8 at high school 12 at D3	Athletic director (SOA) Roommate (SO)
Larry	4 years basketball and baseball at D3	18 at D3	10 at D3	Equipment manager (SOA) Wife (SO)
Rob	4 years basketball at D3	9 at D3	17 at D3	Assistant coach (SOA) Wife (SO)

TABLE 1. Selected Demographic Data of Participants

In order to gain a comprehensive grasp of the context, it is helpful to consider more than one angle and gain perspectives of the coaching situation beyond that of the coach. When discussing consent with each coach, the researcher asked the coach to identify two people in the coach's life who share in his or her coaching experience and the coach was willing to allow the researcher to contact. The people coaches identified as being significant in their lives completed interviews that further explored the coaching

life from their own perceptions and experiences. The researcher contacted these people by phone informing them of the nature of the study and requesting their voluntary participation to take part in the case study by taking part in a telephone interview. Similar to the coaches, these participants were sent a consent form and general guideline of interview questions prior to the interview.

### **Data Generation Methods**

As the case study tradition allows for descriptive and thematic analysis, data generation involved in-depth interviews. Archival records such as coaching records and season records, newspaper articles, and media guides were also used to provide greater detail for the coaching background.

The researcher conducted telephone interviews with each participant in December and January. The interviews sought to generate meaning from the words and experiences of the coaches. The semi-structured interviews aimed at gaining a better understanding of the coach's experiences and path, how the coaching role affects his or her perception of self, and how they perceive the coaching self and its impact from their individual perspective. The interviews had open-ended questions and prompts that also dealt with experiences within the coaching life and how intersecting factors may express an understanding of the coaching self.

Data Source	Purpose
Interviews with coaches	Gain demographic information, coach's perception of coaching self, and factors involved
Interviews with significant others	Gain broader context of coaching context, coaching self and social/relational impact of coaching self
Media guides, team websites, archival records	Gain broader context of each coach's story and experience

TABLE 2. Overview of Data Sources

### **Verification and Analysis**

Qualitative inquiry recognizes the limitations and difficulty of communicating human experience through language. While positivist research seeks to make generalizations towards a population based on its findings, qualitative inquiry recognizes a difference between “getting it right” and “getting it” despite individual subjectivities and contexts (Richardson, 2000, p. 10). It asserts authority, truth, reliability, and validity through the text itself (Richardson, 2000). Even with such subjectivities, procedures of prolonged engagement, reflexivity, external audits, negative case analysis, member checks, and detailed description contribute to the trustworthiness of the data and their findings (Creswell, 1998).

In order to ensure meaningfulness and trustworthiness, the interviews were recorded with participants' consent using digital voice recorders and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Participants' names and specific details that might identify them were removed in an effort to maintain anonymity and protect the participants' right to privacy. Transcriptions were sent to each participant to confirm accuracy and allow them to contribute any further thoughts or clarifications. Only the researcher saw the names of participants to maintain confidentiality.

Analysis took place throughout the research process and involved continually reading and rereading interview transcripts and field notes and coding the information they contained. Early readings involved the researcher familiarizing herself with the transcripts and the information they contained. Initial reflections included identifying categories based on the Markus and Wurf's (1987) self-representations in the transcripts and provided an opportunity to compare and contrast the experiences of each participant. As analysis continued, central themes emerged regarding the impact on those self-representations, and the categories were grouped within these themes and in light of the different interviews. Finally, these themes were interpreted and organized in relation to each other and the data as a whole (see Appendix A). An external data reviewer read the transcripts to verify the themes. The goal of analysis was to move from surface description to the texture of meaning contained in the coaches' words and experiences. Part of verification involved simply recognizing the process involved in data generation and analysis, and a systematic method of organizing and managing data. It also included identifying and clarifying the role of the researcher within the research study. As mentioned earlier, cases were analyzed individually for each coach, considering the factors that shape and impact the coaching self. In addition, all four cases were bound and analyzed in relation to each other for a broader understanding of the coaching self within different experiences.

## CHAPTER IV

### INDIVIDUAL CASE RESULTS

While all four coaching participants share the same profession and even coach within the same conference, they all have different experiences deriving from their individual personalities and contexts. This section seeks to address each unique case and provide (a) background information of the coach; (b) entry into coaching and reasons for coaching; (c) the commitment involved in coaching; (d) the influence of others in coaching; and (e) the influence of coaching on others. Because the participants' experiences and stories are uniquely their own, these cases rely heavily on the words of the participants in order to express their reality.

#### **Beth**

Beth has been the head basketball coach at her current institution for four years. In addition to her head basketball coaching duties, Beth is also the Senior Women's Administrator, teaches three credit hours of activity classes each term, and advises twenty students. Her contract outlines that her job is split 50-50 between academic and athletic responsibilities. However, Beth points out, "although I'm evaluated that way, I don't believe that the institution sees me that way either. My athletic director doesn't see me like that." Instead, Beth considers the majority of her job to involve coaching. This is Beth's first position at a Division III institution. She played basketball at the NAIA level

and has coached basketball at the NAIA and NCAA Division I levels since graduating from college.

Initially, Beth entered into coaching because her former coach asked her to be his assistant. In speaking with Beth, her coaching colleague, and her sister, a number of factors for entering into and continuing in the coaching profession emerged: continuing in athletics, love of the sport, desire for competition, and impacting student athletes.

I had never planned on being a coach, so that was another reason why I thought I probably shouldn't do it, but at the same time, I had always had athletics that had been part of my life and part of my success. So I wanted to continue in that avenue and I wanted to learn more. I really did; I wanted to learn more about basketball and about coaching. (Beth)

I just said initially I think a lot of us get into coaching because we play the game, and it just kind of seems like the most convenient progression. You just kind of think, "Well, I still want to stay with the game, and maybe I'll try coaching." (SOA)

I think she really just has a passion for it. I think she's one of the few who really loves the game. We just had this discussion. Well, I think we've had more than one discussion, but we had one discussion late last year when she comes out saying, "Well, you know, I didn't always think that I really loved the game, but then the more I coached the more I realized that I really love the game." I really think that she just has a passion for it so there's a deeper connection than that's how she makes her money. (SOA)

If I can somehow positively impact any of the young women that play for me—even just give them some additional confidence that they may not have had to show them some kind of way to get results from what they're doing, whatever it is, if I can impact them in some way, then it's a good thing; then that's why I do it. I do it because I love the game too. I love basketball, and I love all sports, but I love basketball and I think it's such a great metaphor for everything that you do inside and outside of sports and in your own life. That's why I like it so much, but I've always felt like I'm the kind of person who really probably could have done anything, it's just that when I was in basketball and then once I was asked to coach, it started me on a path, and then I said, okay, this is my path; this is what I'm going to do, and I stuck with it. (Beth)

Beth's case brings up a dichotomy between coaching as a job and as a career.

This tension seems to arise as a result of the commitment involved in coaching due to the time involved in performing coaching duties, the unconventional hours, and mental and emotional investment.

The nature of the job makes it consuming because—well, I call it an illness. When you're a coach it's almost like you're ill. And what I mean by that is that you think about it a lot, all the time. You're thinking about your team, you're thinking about coaching, and that's not so unlike other jobs. I mean, some jobs. Eight to fivers probably don't worry about that, but people who have more of a career than just a job probably think more like that. But the nature of the job is that you do play at night and you do play on weekends. Those are natural break times for other people when they wouldn't be working. The nature of the job is that you can come in at 10:00 or 11:00 in the morning and be here until 10:00 or 11:00 at night if you have a game or if you're recruiting or working on stuff in the office—that your hours aren't set the same way necessarily. Now some days, yeah, you have to be here at 8:00 if you're teaching a class, but some days you don't have to be. So that's what I mean by the nature of the job—the hours that it demands are different and the flexibility is different as well. (Beth)

Beth approaches the demands of coaching from the perspective of someone who spent nine seasons as a Division I assistant. Given her past experience, she considers Division III to be less demanding and allow for more personal flexibility.

I like this feeling that Division III allows me to have some other interests... You know, there's other parts of me that are kind of growing, but I am able to still do the things I'd like to do as far as coaching and that life and still explore other areas of my life. (Beth)

It still consumes my life. It's still very consuming. The nature of the job is very consuming, but I can sleep in my own bed much more often, and yeah, I get to go to church on Sunday. And so I have some friends that I can do some things with; it isn't like I have to schedule my life around basketball. There's a little bit more of a balance. Basketball still does take a great deal of time, and it does consume a lot of my life still, but it's not to the extent that it was. It's a little more balanced. (Beth)

Even in the Division III environment, Beth's personal life is affected by her coaching commitment. Beth's case reveals that her choice to prioritize her occupational role meant a risk to her other roles such as her romantic role.

I think that it's really, really difficult, almost impossible for anyone else to understand what it's like to be a coach unless you're one of them. Because it's just so time consuming, but it's not even the time that you spend actually doing what you're doing. It's really just the mindset. You know, a lot of times you don't sleep at night because you think about the things you did the day before, and you already worry about the things that you have to do the next day, and call it a sickness. It's probably not always very healthy, but that's just how it is...It's just one of those worlds that it easily sucks you into it. It's easy to just kind of forget about the rest of the world and what else is going on because of weird hours and the commitment. (SOA)

You know, that has not been—that was not part of my life plan or my desire even to remain single, and I hope I don't, but it's just because of the job and I guess my intensity in pursuing it that, for a while when I initially got into it, I kind of shut all of that other—you know, I was so consumed by it...I had serious relationships, but they always failed because I couldn't always be there for the guys. Because I've always put my job first... And that's why I call it an illness; it's almost like, you're expected to do this? This is kind of crazy. I mean, that's kind of sick. It's a sick way to live, but a lot of people do it, and that's the norm, so you feel like in that world you're normal to think that way, but outside it's really not normal at all. But there's lots of workaholics and all that. I wouldn't necessarily say I'm a workaholic, but that was kind of how things went. And, you know, I'd date someone for a couple—two maybe three years, and they were like, no, no, no. You know, it just didn't work out...Because, for a man to say, "Okay, honey, this is what my job is; this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to do it." And she's usually supportive, like, "Okay, yeah." But for a woman to say, "Okay, honey, this is what my job is; this is what I'm going to do." And they're not that supportive. At least that has not been my experience. But I do think that it makes it easier for me to just keep going in the job. It's allowed me to be able to do my job without that as I guess a barrier. But at the same time, it's been a barrier for me personally. (Beth)

Beth's coaching experience reveals the impact of other people on her as a coach.

Three particular influences stand out: her former coach, her family, and her colleagues



and friends. Her former coach was influential in starting Beth's coaching path because he asked Beth to join his staff as an assistant coach. Her coaching colleagues and family are people who provide feedback and support for Beth as she fulfills her coaching role.

Part of her "coaching world?" Yeah, I guess I could say so. I don't really know a whole lot about basketball, but we interact a lot. We usually talk before the game; we talk after the game, and I think the way I can come in is always just as someone who can listen but also since I'm outside of her immediate coaching circle, I can kind of provide a different perspective just from based on what I know from coaching in general. So I think that's one of the aspects that I can offer that some of—for instance that her assistant coach cannot provide. (SOA)

...right after the game I usually ask her what she thought was good, what was bad. And then she kind of asks me what I thought was good and what was bad. We usually go through a lot of the plays and even some of the game situations, do a lot of analyzing... (SOA)

I give her advice. When she really needs a pick-me-up I'm there. There are ups and downs in coaching, and I'm just there for her...she's asked me for advice... We can just talk about what she needs to do or how she needs to handle things, or she can bounce things off of me. (SO)

The fact that people can witness coaches at work during games allows these same people to provide support for her.

Well, I would say friends are supportive of what I do because what I do is, you know, when they go to their job and they do—say they're in marketing and they do this kick butt campaign and they have all this success and they get the account, you know, you can kind of celebrate that a little bit with them, but when I have my challenge, my game, it's open to the public. They can come and watch me work. I don't go to their office and watch them work, and they can come here and watch me work... (Beth)

The public nature of the profession Beth refers to above also means that her career has a reciprocal effect in impacting others. In fact, Beth's coaching experience highlights an influence on her friends, family, and the student athletes who play for her.

My athletes, my friends, my family, the people that I work with. I think it impacts almost everybody that knows me. (Beth)

What I do impacts everyone around me. It impacts my family because they're supportive and I also cry on their shoulder when things aren't going that well, but it impacts the time that I get to see them...So it impacts family time together. And it certainly impacts the athletes that I work with and the staff and the people around me as well. (Beth)

If I can somehow positively impact any of the young women that play for me—even just give them some additional confidence that they may not have had to show them some kind of way to get results from what they're doing whatever it is, if I can impact them in some way, then it's a good thing; then that's why I do it. (Beth)

## **Susan**

Like Beth, Susan's job duties include more than just coaching basketball. Ninety percent of her job is designated for coaching basketball, and the other ten percent involves teaching fourteen credit hours of physical education theory and activity courses a year. Susan played basketball and softball at an NCAA Division II institution and began coaching at the high school level immediately following college. In speaking with Susan, her athletic director, and her roommate, a number of factors for entering into and continuing in the coaching profession emerged: previous sports experiences, previous positive interactions with those in sport, love of the sport, and desire for a challenging environment.

It happened at a very early age. I knew when I was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. I was a student helper to the lower classes like kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade; I assisted the PE teacher whenever I could, and...I liked movement and how they learned to move, etc., things like that. And just the excitement that was in the classroom, the physical education classroom. I knew from a very early age that that's what I wanted—I wanted to teach PE and to coach. And then, um, my dad coached a lot of my, well, non-school related teams. Like he coached my summer softball team; he coached my brothers. I had 3 brothers, and sports were our entire summer. We just—one ball game after another—and I think one thing led to another, and when I got to college—again, I knew—I already knew what I was going to do, I wanted to teach, I wanted to coach. (Susan)

It is absolutely what I really, really love to do. I think it's easy for me to get up in the morning and come to my job even if I have to come the day after a loss—a bad loss. It's challenging, and the rewards far outweigh some of the negative aspects. (Susan)

So I definitely don't do this job for the money. Although I think it pays fairly well, but I definitely do it for the love... (Susan)

Susan's brazen love for her profession comes despite the fact that she describes her job as a "24/7 situation." However, the commitment to the job seems more like something Susan chooses rather than an automatic outcome of the situation.

For me, it's all about—it's totally about how hard a person works. Like, I have a choice in the morning. I would not have to be here until 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock. I might not even have to be here an hour before practice time simply to put together a practice plan, but I'm here everyday at 7:30 working hard on recruits, you know, watching—evaluating film—not just film of the opponent that we're going to play, but also of our own kids to try and make it better. (Susan)

Time is not the only sign of Susan's commitment to her profession; there is also an intimacy that emerges between Susan and her coaching role. The title of "coach" is not simply a description of her occupation, but her identity. As a result, she credits

relationships with her players on and off the court as valuable parts of her life. In fact, her roommate is a former player.

Well, I've actually given thought to the headstone, and on my headstone I would like for it to read Coach Mitchell because that is—it is such a huge part of my life. Next to my family it is my life. (Susan)

One of the things that brings me great joy in coaching is the return of my players. Like if players come to watch us play as alumni, I enjoy that. And getting an invitation to their weddings is—it is just a huge thing for me for some reason. And I'm not sure why, but I guess it's like your children coming home, that type of thing. (Susan)

I mean she treats her basketball team as if they're her family also, and so she gets involved in their lives too and becomes a part of their family. (SO)

...devotion is one of the terms that would come to mind. You have to be totally devoted to your kids and devoted to your program. (Susan)

Throughout Susan's experience in athletics, a number of people have impacted her. She mentions the influence of a former physical education teacher and that being coached by her father caused her to want to pursue coaching for herself. She also mentions that her athletic director and colleagues impact her. In addition, her roommate contributes to Susan's coaching experience.

She asks for my advice or just like, "What did you think of the game or do you think I could have done something different?" Because I keep the scoreboard also at her games, so I get to watch what goes on throughout the game and so I give her my feedback for whatever it's worth. She'll even bring—she brings work home with her too, so I'll sit down and watch a game with her if she's scouting one of her teams that's coming up to play and kind of help out with her and takes off some of that workload. (SO)

One thing that stands out in Susan's case is the absence of other people who affect her life beyond the coaching context.

I'd say that she's kind of tunnel vision, consumed by it, in that she's not married; she doesn't have a family. So her total focus is on her team and her coaching job. (SOA)

I don't have an immediate family. I don't have children of my own. Although, I feel sometimes like I have 22 or 18 or however many is on the team. That is one. I think that if I had a family, I wouldn't be able to give as much priority to my girls as I am now, or to my job period—to recruiting, to scouting. (Susan)

Despite this, Susan's role as a coach impacts her athlete "family" as well as her extended biological family in both deliberate and inadvertent ways.

I hope that they take away my work ethic...I let my kids know when I am very proud of them. I mean, I'm not beyond running up to them and just grabbing them and giving them a big hug, but at the same time, if they're making mistakes I try to be firm and use constructive criticism. (Susan)

It does affect my family. I talk to my grandmother two to three times a day about my team—usually something that's going on. She wants to know—she wants to be able to wish me good luck and then she wants to know the results of the game every time we play. And she comes up as often as she can. My grandfather used to be the same way, but he passed away 2 years ago. My parents are snowbirds, but my mom and dad are both—even though my dad wanted me to go to work for him—I know they're both very proud that I do what I do. And I know that my brothers are because they come up as often as they can too and watch my kids play. (Susan)

Yeah, it's not just a four-year relationship. She truly cares for the players and their families. It's kind of hard not to [have an impact on each other] because you get to know each other so well because you're with each other so much of the time. (SO)

## **Larry**

Larry has been coaching basketball at his college alma mater for twenty-eight years. He began coaching as an assistant coach at the college one year after graduation and assumed the head coaching role ten years ago. Larry got married three years into his coaching career and has two children: a daughter who is a junior in college and a son who is a senior in high school. In addition to his coaching duties, Larry is an assistant exercise science professor, teaches six credit hours of lecture courses each semester, and advises majors in that department.

Larry's entry into coaching followed a college playing career and growing up participating in athletics. In speaking with Larry, the athletic department equipment manager, and his wife, a number of factors for entering into and continuing in the coaching profession emerged: previous sports experiences, desire for competition, knowledge and love of the sport, and enjoyment in working with athletes. There is a sense in Larry's case that a coaching career was his unavoidable destiny.

I felt all along for some reason I just never questioned what I was going to do. I always thought I wanted to coach... (Larry)

I've always been fascinated by athletics and have enjoyed it, and quite honestly, it was the one thing that in my free time or spare time is what I've always done as a child and as a teenager... And I loved being around it, and I think the next logical step was after you got through playing, if you wanted to stay involved, it would have to be coaching. I've just had a lot of respect for the people that I've played for, and always looked up to them and I just thought it would be what I would enjoy doing for the rest of my life. (Larry)

I think there's a number of reasons. I truly love the game of basketball. Maybe more than basketball, I enjoy the competition part of it... I think the common thread is just the competition is what you crave more than the actual sport. And

that's always been an important part of it. And just the relationships and being able to be around young people. (Larry)

I think that all coaches have something that really triggers the competition part of it. There's some things in life that you have to enjoy—you have to enjoy the college level; you have to enjoy being around people. There are a lot of competitive people in the world that aren't coaches, but after you play if you want to stay involved in it I think that's the easiest way. I truly enjoy the people; I like being around the kids. For the most part it's just like any other profession; there's always good people involved. I like the people in our league; I like the people that I'm around, and that's what I do. That's what I've done for 30 years, and I feel comfortable with it and I like it and it's been good to me. (Larry)

He enjoys basketball very much. He's very knowledgeable. He's very dedicated to the sport. He enjoys teaching the sport and helping young kids get better. He's very competitive. Like I said, he was a basketball player and baseball player while he was in college. (SOA)

I think he's always loved sports. I think, from the way he talks, he knew he wanted to be a coach from a very young age. (SO)

Larry has questioned whether to continue in coaching, but has remained in the profession.

This decision may be due to the reasons given in the statements above and may also be the result of not having the alternative to pursue another occupation.

Oh, there were times—just late there were times he talked about what else could he do or—but not really seriously. I think it's more that he's done that for so long I think that there's times that he thought he might enjoy just being able to get off work at 5:00 and come home and not have to worry about it. (SO)

Well, I think he still enjoys it when they're having winning seasons, but he loves working with that age group of kids too. And I'm sure another reason is—pretty much for any job—after you've done something for that many years it's tough to make a change at the age that he is now. (SO)

He just doesn't have a lot of confidence that he could do anything else, but I think that's probably the biggest concern that he has right now. (SOA)

When describing the duties involved in performing the coaching role an overwhelming theme of time involvement emerges. Not only Larry, but both significant others mentioned the time commitment required by the profession.

I don't think people understand the amount of time, the number of hours, those type of things that are involved in coaching. And I think one of the things that has changed over the years is that you're probably doing less coaching than ever. You're spending more hours, but you're probably doing less coaching. You know, with all the non-on-floor issues and recruiting and everything that goes with the job now, and I just don't think people realize what the job entails. You know, the number of hours are the main thing. (Larry)

We go to a game every Tuesday and Friday night, and quite honestly it's a seven-day a week job. You're usually on the phone—right now we're usually on the phone on Mondays and Thursdays. You play on Wednesdays and Saturdays. You're on film all day on Sundays, and your week's gone. That's all seven of them, and I think that's pretty typical. (Larry)

I think the thing that would be without question is time. Time involvement. Time away from your family. Just the overall complexity of what we do. You know, I think one of the things that people don't understand is the preparation that goes into coaching and all the time spent—preparation in terms of an hour and a half game. It doesn't sound like much, but the amount of time that you put in preparing for those types of things. (Larry)

He works very long hours. He goes to school about 7 in the morning and gets home about—well, if he doesn't have a game it's usually about 7 or 8 at night. And then we usually will have supper and then he gets on the phone and recruits for another hour or two. And then on game nights he doesn't come home until—if he's out of town it's probably closer to midnight. If he has a home game we don't see him until after the game even though we're usually at the home games. When he's not playing and there's high school games he'll come home, change clothes, and go to the high school games. We don't see him a whole lot. (SO)

Hectic because of the complexity of it, and not just basketball—most of the sports at the collegiate level today, it's a year-round venture. You go right from the season into the off-season workouts, and recruiting at Division III is a long, drawn out process. (SOA)



Larry's various relationships result in an impact on his coaching career. In particular, his immediate family influences how he performs and evaluates his duties as a coach.

I think that one of the things that you're always aware of as a family is your wife and your kids and how important they are to you throughout your career. And the most important thing that you can be is a good husband and a good father. (Larry)

I think most of us would get out of any profession if we thought that it was something that was a complete detriment. I would do the same thing as quickly as possible. (Larry)

I really think I'm a big part of it. Not when it comes down to actual calling plays or anything, but I just feel like—if he has a bad game or something, just knowing he has us to come home to really makes that a lot easier to deal with. (SO)

That's a good way to put it [that family is support system]. Just being at all the games; I think that really means a lot to him too even though we quit going to out of town games. (SO)

In addition to his wife and children, Larry's best friend and equipment manager also impacts him as a coach.

He relies a lot on me for my expertise from the equipment standpoint. I think he knows that we can sit and talk behind closed doors about things that maybe he can't talk to some other people about... He knows he's got ears that will listen when things are going tough and will be honest with him, but he also knows that if there's anything that we can do to help him, whether it be recruiting or whatever, that we'll do that and we'll back him up... he relies a lot on me to talk to the kids sometimes because I'm down here in the locker room with them quite a bit. They don't really see me quite as a coach. They'll share some things with me that maybe they won't share with the coaches, and I don't divulge everything to them but I kind of know where the kids are coming from so I kind of serve sometimes as a bridge in helping if there's some problems with the kids upset about playing time or whatever. I really think that I help him with that... (SOA)

Larry's position as a coach also has a significant impact on his family. His family adjusts to his presence or absence, joins him at the gym, and catches his enthusiasm for athletics. In addition, the athletes Larry works with as well as others who know him as a coach are recipients of his impact.

...you're not around as often as other dads and sometimes during the year maybe you're around a little bit more than other dads. (Larry)

I know when my children were younger you try to have them around the gym as much as possible and just be involved with them while you work and that type of thing. (Larry)

I wasn't really into sports that much. I mean, I enjoyed it occasionally, but nothing like I do now. It was actually a lot of fun. As soon as I met we started, you know, I'd go to games, and I met a whole new group of people than what I had previously been around. (SO)

We don't see him a whole lot. I used to—I haven't done that much lately, but just to spend time with him I'd go to high school games with him. Even though it was somewhere where I didn't even know anybody playing, and we'd take the kids occasionally. Sometimes they didn't care for that; they didn't know anybody playing either. (SO)

He not only impacts the players that he has, I mean, they'll come back. They really consider him a friend. They come back all the time. They call him all the time. He spends a great deal of time with those young gentlemen as he's recruiting them and develops a special relationship that carries throughout. (SOA)

I'm not sure why that is, but because he is a coach a lot of people look up to him. Especially I've noticed a lot of younger people, like maybe my son's age—teenagers—really look up to him because he is a coach. I think he's been a huge impact on—I can think of a few different [friends of my son] that have had some problems and [he] goes out of his way to try to talk to them and try to help them through those problems. (SO)

## **Rob**

Rob has been coaching at the collegiate level since graduating from college twenty-six years ago. He spent nine seasons as a Division III assistant coach and spent

the last fifteen seasons as a Division III head coach at two different institutions. Rob has been at his current institution for two years after spending twenty-four years at another university. Rob's contract stipulates that fifty percent of his job involves coaching duties while the other fifty percent entails teaching physical education classes. Currently Rob teaches one activity class each trimester. However, Rob breaks down the percent of emphasis that he places on the two responsibilities as 95 percent athletics and five percent academics. Rob is married and has three sons. His oldest son is a college freshman and is a member of his team, the middle son is a high school freshman, and the youngest is in third grade.

In speaking with Rob, his assistant coach, and his wife, a number of factors for entering into and continuing in the coaching profession emerged: previous positive experiences as a player, the influence of a parent coach, love of competition, and a desire to teach the sport of basketball.

You know, really the influence, even though my father wasn't a coach, he had coached me in athletics: baseball, basketball, and had an influence on me from that end of it. And then as I went into middle school, junior high I had some coaches that were very influential that got me turned onto it. (Rob)

I never knew his dad. His dad died before I met [my husband], but when he was in like junior high his dad coached his team and from that point on, he said he always wanted to be a coach. But he liked how his dad made him feel. He liked the feeling of his dad coaching—how he felt as a player. I don't think so much as a son but as a player. (SO)

He's pretty competitive, and I think he likes that competitive side of winning basketball games. He loves the game and really feels strongly about what he can offer as far as teaching the game of basketball, and I think it's fun for him. I think he has a lot of fun doing it. (SOA)

Like Larry, Rob's case hints at the coaching profession being his occupational fate.

However, it appears more to be a deliberate choice.

I don't know what else he would do; I don't think he really knows what else he would do. I think he's just a coach; that's just what he is. I don't really see him doing anything else. And I don't think he sees himself doing anything else.  
(SOA)

While Rob mentions the time commitment involved in his coaching context, he places greater emphasis on the mental investment it requires. It appears that the greatest commitment coaching asks of Rob is his exclusive focus.

I'm pretty focused during those months I would guess as far as in the games. I'm one of those that after the game's over I'm looking forward to the next one; I want to get ready for that one. I probably don't enjoy our wins, and I probably take our losses too hard. (Rob)

Is he different in-season than off-season? Yeah, I'd say he is. Just definitely has more on his mind, so can't help out around home as much or anything. (SO)

As mentioned earlier, Rob's father had an impact on his decision to pursue coaching as a profession. In addition, Rob's wife and children and the university administration are factors that impact him as a coach.

My wife probably is the biggest factor. She's very understanding. It's not easy when your one son has a basketball game last night at 7:00 but you're in [other town] watching and scouting a game, and you can't see him play. (Rob)

Well, the administration that hired me, they've been very supportive. (Rob)

I guess I felt it was really nice that he had [our son] to confide in afterwards because oftentimes when he would come home throughout [our son's] high school life they'd always talk about the game together. So I guess I found that

was nice that not only [my husband] can talk to his assistant coaches, but then he can talk to [our son] too. (SO)

Rob's coaching experience highlights his impact on others as well. His family reflects his competitive nature. His wife feels tension and occasional distance as a coach's wife. His players match his discipline and businesslike approach to basketball. His former players maintain relationships and share in the current victories Rob's team experiences, and his assistant coach learns the mechanics of the game from Rob.

So from then on, I became pretty sporty because you just get that way when you live with someone more competitive. It's hard to lose, and it just seems we talk a lot about that: about winning. And it doesn't always mean winning on the basketball court; it's just a competitive family. If we play cards—it just happened. I'd have to say it was more him. I wouldn't say I was that competitive until I got involved in all this. (SO)

I hadn't taken a trip with him in I think nine or ten years, so I really—but you know when your kids are little and they're involved, you can't get away either. So you just don't get to do those things. Sometimes it's not anybody's fault. It's just that you can't do it; you've got to be with the kids. But I guess, yeah, sometimes after a game he'll sit around and talk to the assistant coaches, and I have to get the kids home. (SO)

It's upsetting. When everything's going good and you're winning that's awesome. But when you're losing it's not so fun. I don't usually want to stick around after the game anyway, but you don't want to stick around and people are unhappy. (SO)

That kind of stresses me out. Like I almost would stay away. I don't care if people don't like me, but maybe I just need to detach myself a little bit. I think everybody can be a sideline coach and point fingers. And I'm not saying they do that, but inadvertently I always think they are, so I'm like, "Oh, I better just stay away from that." Or if some kid didn't get to play and the parent walks past me, you know, you just don't know what to say. (SO)

You know, I can remember so many Friday and Saturday nights he'd be going to watch a kid play. Then came time for getting the kid to commit to the college and he would go to another college, and in my mind I'm like, "I stay home every

Friday and Saturday night by myself because you went to his high school games, and he's not coming to play for you?" You know, I would think that in my mind because you often do when you're sitting there thinking of what game he's going to, but that's life. (SO)

Oh yeah, the players. They're so much more in tune and more disciplined than they were when we first got here. He's really taught them how to play the game the right way and share the basketball and be unselfish and take great shots as opposed to just good shots. From a personal standpoint, I don't know if I've seen many changes. From a basketball perspective, it's very easy to see the difference between when we first got here until now. (SOA)

It impacts my family I'm sure. It probably impacts the alumni too—everything else, but it's not something that—I guess I really haven't thought about the overall impact on everybody other than my family and our team. I think we can be positive for alumni. I think we can be positive for the school. I think athletics—obviously you don't read a whole lot about somebody in the classroom in newspapers, and I think any positive media that you can get is good from a recruiting standpoint; it's good for the school just in general. (Rob)

So I learn a lot about that. And then also from a basketball standpoint, the guy's been doing the same system for 15-16 years, so he knows it like the back of his hand. So just little things on how to execute an offense and how to just play the game the right way I learn everyday. (SOA)

## **Summary**

The experiences surrounding each coach and those who know them point out a number of relationships that result from interpersonal interactions, individual characteristics, and various factors relating to carrying out the coaches' professional and personal roles. Consequently, it is important to recognize the differences among the coaching experiences and identify reasons for those distinctions. Each coach comes from a different background and perspective that influences his or her self and actions. Each case represents the impact of a unique occupational role, gender, household, and personal factors. However, their stories all communicate a collective coaching experience. All

four cases hold commonalities expressing choices in how the coach prioritizes his or her coaching role, similar occupational tasks, shared factors influencing their coaching path and self, and comparable consequences resulting from acting within the coaching self.

CHAPTER V  
GROUP CASE DISCUSSION

**Origins and Development**

The stories that comprise the reality of each participant provide a broader vantage point with which to look at the coaching self and its characteristics. With this foundation, the data and experiences of the participants in this study do reveal some answers to the three primary research questions. Each coach had slightly different reasons for entering into the coaching profession and remaining there, but through those processes all four developed a coaching self. Two themes emerged when considering the answer to the first research question: How is the coaching self formed and changed over time?

First, the coaching self is a *continued or adapted self*. All four coaches possessed a commitment to basketball prior to coaching as athletes. It seemed like a natural progression to step into the role of a coach and still hold on to a large part of that self that was linked with basketball as an athlete. More than simply being “natural,” one may consider that it was easier for these individuals to hang on to a prior self than to lose it or drastically alter it. Perhaps the salience of the basketball athlete self was so strong that the individual preferred to continue it, and the most acceptable or fulfilling way was through coaching. Along these same lines, the coaching self is *unoriginal*. In other words, it does not simply form and develop from nothing. It is rooted in past experiences, results from previous relationships, and forms as the outcome of the individual translating these experiences into a new context.



Because the coaching self is not entirely new, it is made up of parts of the overall self and is enacted within the coaching role. Consequently, there is no consistent response to how the coaching self changes over time. In many ways it stays fairly constant. It adapts to each particular coaching situation and the changes that take place overall in an individual. Job changes, maturation, personal experiences, and professional experiences all have an impact on the coaching self. Overall, however, it is still one part of the whole self and cannot easily diverge from that foundation.

### **Coaching Self-Representations**

It is difficult to condense the coaching self into simple words or categories because it is an idiosyncratic phenomenon. However, it helps to return to Markus and Wurf's categories of self-concept to address the second research question: What are the components (interpersonal processes, intrapersonal processes) of the coaching self, and how are they linked?

The cases and contexts representing each coach's experience provide a setting in which to consider the coaching self of each individual. One can find within the words and stories of these coaches' lives the various components of the self-representations identified by Markus and Wurf (1987). The unique nature of the coaching profession as it relates to social interactions and personal attributes allows coaches to expose both interpersonal and intrapersonal representations. In general, all four coaches cited interpersonal features related to themes of a public coaching role, using the title "coach," relationships with others, and aspects of time within the coaching profession. The intrapersonal features found among the four coaches dealt more with the reasons for

entering into the profession and continuing to coach, aspects of time within the coaching profession, and relationships with others.

It is helpful to return to the interpersonal and intrapersonal processes Markus and Wurf (1987) delineate to gain a glimpse of how the coaching self may be identified within those labels. Table 3 reflects how coaches' self-representations fit within Markus and Wurf's categories. While Markus and Wurf (1987) define social perceptions as how individuals judge themselves compared with others, the social perceptions exhibited in Table 3 convey how others may perceive the coaches. This difference is due to the nature of data generation in this study. Interviews with the coaches dealt only with the coaches and their perceptions of themselves. However, interviews with the significant others asked them to consider an individual other than themselves.

<b>Self-Representations</b>		<b>Beth</b>	<b>Larry</b>	<b>Rob</b>	<b>Susan</b>
<b>Intrapersonal</b>	<b>Motivation</b>	I guess it's just my desire for competition. Yeah, I think I just like the competitiveness. And I don't know if that enables me, but that's what kind of drives me. (Beth)	I think the common thread is just the competition is what you crave more than the actual sport, and that's always been an important part of it. (Larry)	If your game plan works pretty well you feel pretty good. If it doesn't and you don't win, I'm like every other person I think as far as coaching; I hate to lose. (Rob)	I felt like you could work hard at it and get greater rewards. So if it was just about having to outwork my opponent, I always felt like I had the upper hand. (Susan)
	<b>Affect Regulation</b>	I think that for her going from Division I to Division III, the reason she made that jump is because Division I took up so much of her personal life that she wasn't able to really have a life outside of athletics. I think with Division III she's been able to find a better balance... (SO)	I think if there's ever any guilt feeling to being a coach, that is always what it is—it's time being spent away from your family and your children. And you're always trying to figure out how to rectify it, how to make it better and trying to spend more quality time as compared with maybe some quantity. (Larry)	I would say selfish is a perfect word [to describe him], and just very into his own thing. That's all his concern is, is himself and his program, and if it goes outside of that, it needs to be something pretty major for him to take a lot of care into what's going on outside of that circle. (SOA)	You can tell when somebody thoroughly enjoys going to work, and I don't think she ever complains about going to work...you can just tell when somebody really likes what they do through their actions and through their facial expressions. (SO)
	<b>Information Processing</b>	Regardless of how much you love your job, you reach a point in your life that you've been doing it for awhile and you start questioning what else is out there and if you truly just live to work or if you want to do other things as well. (SOA)	I think he's a little more aware—not that he wasn't before because he was—but even more so because he has children now. You become concerned about what's going on off the court—you know, academically, socially. (SOA)	It's a tie game with 40-something seconds to go, and he's cool as can be and I'm sitting there sweating. So cool under pressure. He's been doing this thing for so long he knows himself like the back of his hand, so it's not like he's coming up with new things. He's just able to communicate it in a way that gets through to the kids. (SOA)	I always wonder what job could I do if I were to change jobs, and it would have to be one where I could be totally self-reliant—where you don't have to rely on other people for your own success. That may sound a little selfish. (Susan)

TABLE 3. Self-Representations in Coaching

Self-Representations		Beth	Larry	Rob	Susan
<b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>Social Perception</b>	... in general, people do not understand what college basketball coaches do. I think there's more credibility for a man who says they're a college basketball coach than there is for a woman. (Beth)	Even parents of athletes who have not ended up coming [here]. If he sees them out socially they still go out of their way to say, "Hi, thank you for showing an interest in our son and being so nice and doing those types of things for us." (SOA)	My friends knew him, and then they went to see him coach and he was kind of more aggressive, and they were like, "That can't be [Rob]!"...There were just so used to him being so quiet and soft spoken at home that to see him in another role really surprised them. (SO)	It's kind of cool because you go out and people know who she is, so it's almost like you're with a celebrity in their own little world....She's got long blonde hair, and it's just like everybody knows who Coach Mitchell is. (SO)
	<b>Partner/Situation Choice</b>	We share a lot of the same interests, and as a coach the hours are not always so regular so a big part of your social life actually consists of hanging out at work...Honestly I think we've spent so much time together both at work and outside of work that a lot of times I go through the same emotions that she's going through. (SOA)	You have to have a very understanding wife, and she has to be there a lot of the time that unfortunately you're not. And I think that's one of the keys is to have a partner that truly understands what you're doing and enjoys athletics enough to understand the time and the pressures and those types of things. (Larry)	My wife is probably the biggest factor. She's very understanding...she doesn't get overly excited when we win; she doesn't get too upset when we lose. (Rob)	Most of my personal relationships are coaching colleagues. (Susan)

TABLE 3 CONT'D. Self-Representations in Coaching

Self-Representations		Beth	Larry	Rob	Susan
Interpersonal	Interaction Strategies	One of the first questions people ask you when you meet them in social situations is, "What do you do?" When they ask me that, if I feel comfortable enough I'll say I'm a coach, and if I'm not comfortable I'll tell them I'm a teacher or instructor at a college. (Beth)	I think the reason I use my name more than the title of "Coach" is just to put people at ease. You know, I'm not going to coach you. I'm Larry to you, and without question I think I use my name first. If I'm talking to a kid recruiting or something like that I usually use Coach, but if I talk to an adult it's usually first name. (Larry)	You know, you have a personal life and then you have this "we're going to work" type attitude where when they're at practice they're at work for those two hours and he doesn't want anything to get in the way of that. When they come and talk to him, he's not going to come up to you and put his arm around you and ask you how things are going. If things are going bad and you need somebody to talk to and you want to come and talk to him, that's fine, but he's not going to go and seek you out for that. (SOA)	She treats her basketball team as if they're her family also, and so she gets involved in their lives too and becomes a part of their family. (SO)
	Reaction to Feedback	As far as how to maybe handle different athletes or what kind of things that I've gone through in certain situations, she's asked me for advice. I think for us, I can understand what she's going through. We just can talk about what she needs to do or how she needs to handle things, or she can bounce things off of me. (SO)	I think I'm a big part of [his coaching life]. Not when it comes down to calling plays or anything, but I just feel like if he has a bad game or something, just knowing he has us to come home to really makes that a lot easier to deal with. (SO)	You know, the holidays are never quite like you'd like them to be because there's always so much basketball around that time....It's just so busy. I know he tries, but he can't help thinking about something else. (SO)	I'm a confidant...[she's] always eager to pick my brain, asks me often to drop in and take a look at practice, after a game will want to talk to me about strategies. (SOA)

TABLE 3 CONT'D. Self-Representations in Coaching

While they manifested themselves through interpersonal and intrapersonal processes, the components of the coaching self could best be described according to the following themes that emerged from the participants' experiences: competitive, consistent, autonomous, and shared. The competitive nature of coaches is somewhat expected in a profession based on a game that people win and lose. The theme of consistency dealt with a common pattern of behavior that each coach displayed. All three participants in each coaching case gave similar pictures of who the coach was. While all the participants admitted that the coaches' personalities and lives change depending on if he or she is in the midst of the basketball season or it is the off season, the coaching self remained constant and was never removed or altered. The last two categories, autonomous and shared, may appear to be an oxymoron. The coaching self is autonomous because only the coaches possess it, and it's unique to each individual coach. Even more, as head coaches, these four coaches possessed a self that differed from assistant coaches or others within athletics. However, the coaching self is also shared because it affects others close to the coach. It seeps into the lives of people the coach interacts with, and they come to own some of the coaching context through their participation in the coaching network. The third research question deals more closely with this phenomenon when it asks: How does the coaching self relate to other people?

Given the unique nature of each individual and each context, it is not beneficial to generalize one "coaching self" for all coaches in the Division III context. The coaching self is so embedded in the individual characteristics and each particular setting that it is unique to each individual coach. However, in considering these four Division III head

basketball coaches and significant people who know their coaching experiences, two major themes emerged that can help in understanding the relational factors that influence how the coaching self is formed and adapted in its context. First, Division III head basketball coaches hold a public role. Second, the private response to public role is isolation. In other words, because of contextual factors, the coaching self is a public function that results in an isolated individual.

### **Public Role**

Two subcategories provide insight into the public nature of a coach's role: using the "coach" title and the general misconception of the time commitment involved in coaching. All the participants gave reference to the public role coaching holds.

...when I have my challenge, my game, it's open to the public. They can come and watch me work. I don't go to their office and watch them work, and they can come here and watch me work... (Beth)

It is without fail, if I am in the grocery store between 6:00 PM and 8:00 PM somebody says, "Saw your game on TV" or "Saw your 'Coach's Corner' show the other night." (Susan)

I think athletics—obviously you don't read a whole lot about somebody in the classroom in newspapers, and I think any positive media that you can get is good... (Rob)

If you're an accountant there's only a few people who know if you have a good day or not. The world knows if you have a good day or not when you're a coach. You're being openly evaluated a number of times each year. (Larry)

The title "coach" is used as an immediate cue as to a person's profession. All four coaches indicated that when they were in a professional context they used the "coach" title to introduce themselves. However, each indicated that "coach" carried

different connotations and assumptions for the audience. For all four coaches, using the “coach” title meant that their identity at that moment included identification with the school where they coached and the coaching role because they used it when in a professional context like recruiting. Larry also indicated that the “coach” title created distance and formality between himself and others. It appears that introducing oneself as “coach” put up a wall that limited the person from knowing him or her beyond the coaching role. Susan’s roommate also referenced the one-dimensional perspective of the “coach” title versus the intimacy of her first name, “It actually took some time because it went from Coach Mitchell to being Susan. So that was a little awkward, but you do see different perspectives of her.” Likewise, Beth’s sister indicated that the role of “coach” was only a part of Beth’s identity and insufficient in completely capturing who she is:

For me she’s just Beth. She’s Beth. She’s this great person, and a lot of times I don’t even put a coach into the equation. I do say to a lot of people that she is a coach, but that’s not the first thing that comes out of my mouth about my sister. Obviously that’s a big part of her life and that is her identity, but there’s so much more to her that that’s not only her. That isn’t her identity.

The two female coaches diverged when it came to being comfortable with the “coach” title. Susan embraced it heartily as an apt title to her life. “On my headstone I would like for it to read ‘Coach Susan Mitchell’ because that is—it is such a huge part of my life. Next to my family it is my life.” In contrast, Beth seemed a bit uncomfortable with anyone knowing her “coach” title because of assumptions they might make.

If I feel like it’s somebody who can grasp what coaching is, or if I don’t want to get into that conversation, then I just tell them I’m a teacher. If I want to get into the conversation about being a coach, then I’ll say I’m a coach...because as soon



as you say what you do, then immediately, especially if it's a male they react a couple of different ways...they generally are either like, 'Whoa, geez, you must have been a good player. I bet I can take you one-on-one.' And blah, blah, blah. You know, they do that whole macho thing, right? Or else they are going to tell you every single story from their grade school championship in fifth grade on up through.

Beth also suggested that people already have certain assumptions of what a coach does based upon what they see at games, but the "coach" title is insufficient in encapsulating the whole role. "It's almost irresponsible to say, 'Well, I coach,' and that's all...In general, people do not understand what college basketball coaches do."

The most prevalent misunderstanding the participants alluded to was the misconception of the amount of time involved in coaching. The general public thinks that coaching involves daily practice and scheduled games. However, it is a year-round venture that includes hours recruiting, scouting, teaching, and a myriad of administrative duties.

People just think that you coach a game and that that's all...They don't understand that it's a full time job. (Beth)

You know, I think one of the things that people don't understand is the preparation that goes into coaching and all the time spent—preparation in terms of an hour and a half game. It doesn't sound like much, but the amount of time that you put in preparing for those types of things. And at our level I think it's the recruiting—the yearlong recruiting process and that type of thing which people just don't understand. People in the business do, but average people don't. (Larry)

I think it's definitely not an 8:00 to 5:00 job. She's in at work most days between—she'll leave the house around 7:00 and some nights she won't get back until 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning, so it's definitely a full time—a full day job for her. (Susan's SO)

The nature of the job makes it consuming because, well, I call it an illness. When you're a coach it's almost like you're ill. And what I mean by that is that you think about it a lot, all the time. You're thinking about your team, you're thinking about coaching...the nature of the job is that you do play at night and you play on weekends. Those are natural breaks for other people when they wouldn't be working. (Beth)

### **Isolation Response**

It seems that the misconception regarding the time and effort involved in the coaching profession versus the role portrayed to the public forces private isolation of coaches. There was a sense in every case that the coach was alone in his or her venture. In part this is due to the number of hours required to perform the coaching duties that come at the cost of time spent in their personal lives, the pressures placed on performing well for public evaluation, and personal characteristics that lean toward separation. In all the coaches the isolation results from devotion to the coaching self. However, the isolation manifests itself differently for each coach. In some, it is portrayed as self reliance or selfishness. In others, it reveals itself as separation. Similarly, each coach deals with the distance the coaching self creates differently. Some accept it, others don't recognize it, and some choose to bring their other lives into their coaching life (or vice versa, they absorb their coaching life into their private life).

Rob pointed out that a part of leadership isolates a head coach, "It's the pressure that I think every coach puts on himself. As an assistant you can make recommendations, but as a head coach you have to decide right away who's playing; you decide everything." However, he also noted that the outside pressures and voices contribute to separating the coach as well, "I think you just have to ignore [the opinions of other

people] as best you can and do what you think..." The pressures also can isolate others who are close to the coach. Rob's wife commented on how she felt isolation:

[Losing] kind of stresses me out. Like I almost would stay away. I don't care if people don't like me, but maybe I just need to detach myself a little bit. I think everybody can be a sideline coach and point fingers. And I'm not saying they do that, but inadvertently I always think they are, so I'm like, 'Oh, I better just stay away from that.' Or if some kid didn't get to play and the parent walks past me, you know, you just don't know what to say. (Rob's SO)

Rob's case seemed to indicate a tension between pursuing coaching and maintaining a personal life that resulted in isolation.

Well, he's pretty private with his family, but yet his kids come around here all the time and they pretty much run the place. But yet I just think that he doesn't want there to be any overlap between the two...He's just more into his own life. He has his own family, his own issues there, and he wants to keep that to himself. (Rob's SOA)

It seems that in some ways coaching is such a singular, personal pursuit that it only allows room for the coach.

How would I describe his life as a coach? I think probably very meaningful for him because he's doing what he loves to do. Sometimes that takes him away from being with the family and me because you have to do what you got to do. But I think he likes it so much that that's what he chose. (Rob's SO)

Now don't take this the wrong way, but I would say selfish is the perfect word [to describe Rob], and just very into his own thing. That's all his concern is, is himself and his program, and if it goes outside of that, it needs to be something pretty major for him to take a lot of care into what's going on outside of that circle...So from a selfish standpoint he makes sure that our program's getting what it needs, but yet also it tends to alienate people I think a little bit. (SOA)

What Rob's assistant coach defined as selfishness, Susan described as self-reliance, "I always wonder what job could I do if I were to change jobs, and it would have to be one where I could totally be self-reliant—where you don't have to rely on other people for your own success." Susan liked the independence of coaching because she felt that professional success was a direct correlation of how hard one worked.

Winning the [conference championship] is the pinnacle right now of my athletic career. It was the greatest achievement and most satisfying. I can't ever remember working harder for anything in my life, and to be able to know that I could work that hard and the success was the reward for working that hard.  
(Susan)

Larry uses the strategy of including his family in some of his coaching duties in an attempt to counter the separation that can occur. "I know when my children were younger you try to have them around the gym as much as possible and just be involved with them while you work and that type of thing" (Larry). Larry's wife also pointed out, "When he recruits we try to make a fun evening out of it. We usually find a different restaurant and stop and eat. It's just a way to spend time together, even if it's in the car or sitting on bleachers together."

While the isolation resulting from dedication in pursuing their profession produced a negative effect on others close to the male coaches, this was not the case with the female coaches. This was due in large part to the fact that the isolation the female coaches experienced was so great that it prevented them from having the people in their personal lives they desired. Both female coaches indicated that the commitment and devotion they gave to their profession was a large reason for remaining single:

I think that if I had a family I wouldn't be able to give as much priority to my girls as I am now, or to my job period—to recruiting, to scouting. (Susan)

The situation doesn't lend itself, for me anyway, to have a family, but it's something I would desperately like to have. But then again, I think that takes time too—which you don't have. (Susan)

You know, that was not part of my life plan or my desire even to remain single, and I hope I don't, but it's just because of the job and I guess my intensity in pursuing it that for awhile when I initially got into it I kind of shut all of that other—you know, I was so consumed by it...it's hard not to put your job first because that's what you're asked to do in essence. And that's why I call it an illness; it's almost like, you're expected to do this? This is kind of crazy. I mean, that's kind of sick. It's a sick way to live, but a lot of people do it, and that's the norm, so you feel like in that world you're normal to think that way, but outside it's really not normal at all...So I wouldn't blame [being single] on my position, but it certainly doesn't make it easier. Because, for a man to say, "Okay, honey, this is what my job is; this is what I'm going to do," and she's usually supportive like, "Okay, yeah." But for a woman to say, "Okay, honey, this is what my job is; this is what I'm going to do," and they're not that supportive. But I do think that it makes it easier for me to just keep going in the job. It's allowed me to be able to do my job without that as a barrier. But at the same time, it's been a barrier for me personally. (Beth)

Based on the experiences communicated by the coaches and their significant others, the isolation seems to be the result of two tensions: fear of the public role running into the personal self and fear of losing the personal self in the public role. Each coach's reaction to the public role differs. Some embrace it and become even more consumed in the profession; others try to avoid too much of it. Some try to cleanly separate the two while other coaches actively seek to incorporate them. Regardless of the coaches' strategies, however, the reality is that being a coach produces a sense of separation and isolation from others.

### **Adapted Dynamic Self Model**

Given these unique features of the coaching context, it appears that Markus and Wurf's model is not sufficient in depicting the working self-concept for coaches. Markus and Wurf (1987) focus on the self-representations that emerge within a given context, but fall short in considering how the particular context itself may shape and influence the self. They set their model within the social environment but do not describe the role of the social environment plays within the function of the self-concept. Through their descriptions of the processes involved in the dynamic self we are left to assume the social environment is a setting of interaction that holds an individual's personal characteristics and "situational stimuli" (Markus & Wurf, 1987; p. 314), but we are never told. Based upon the reflections and experiences of these coaching cases, it seems that the context is more than a social environment, but a complex, textured entity that contributes significantly to the working self-concept. Rather than the coaching context being a setting for applicable self-representations to gather, the context actively impacts how and why self-representations are formed and revealed. A context is not simply a place for the self to reveal itself; it is a place that informs self-representations and shapes the overall sense of self. With this understanding, it may be more helpful to consider the working self through the following adapted visual model.

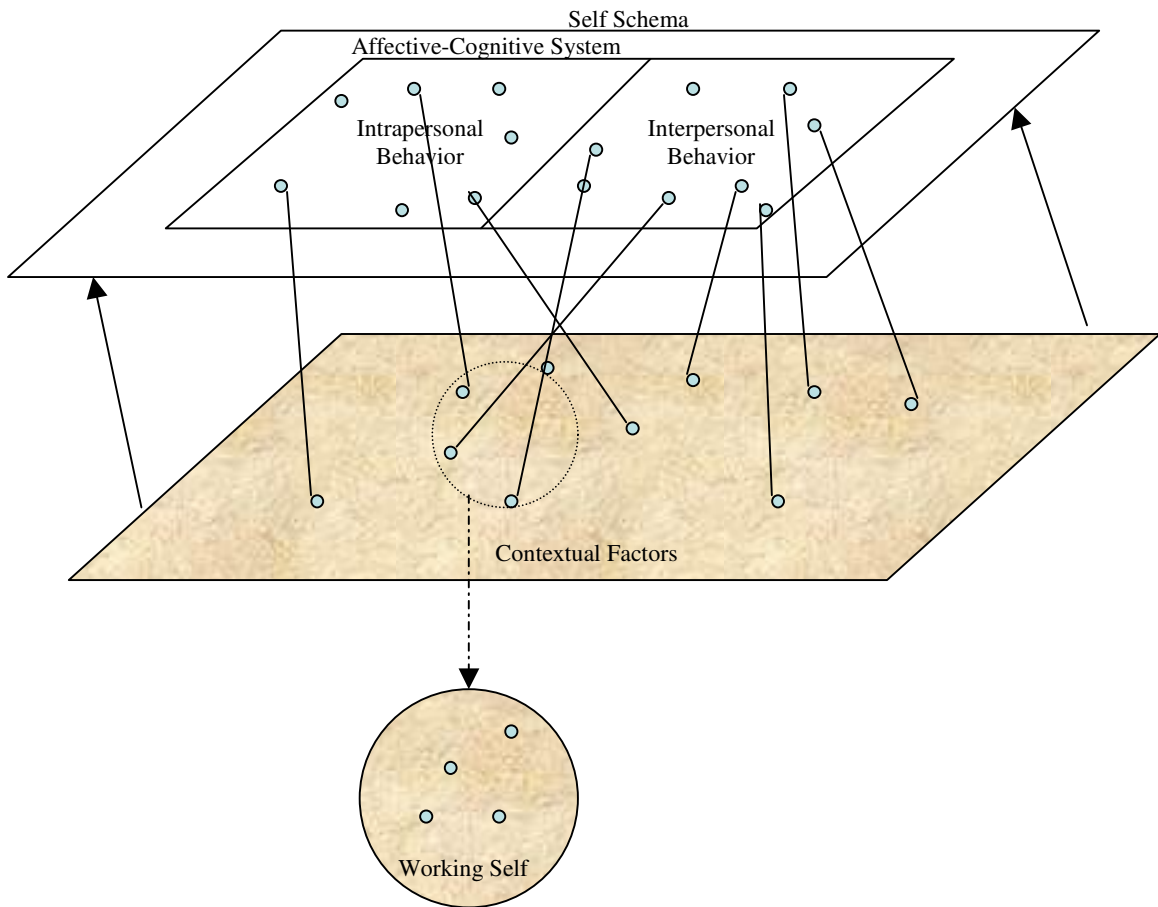


Figure 2. Adapted Dynamic Self-Concept

Susan's case provides an example of how the adapted dynamic self-concept can be applied. Susan possesses intrapersonal behavior of being competitive, self-reliant, and committed to hard work. Interpersonal behavior pertaining to the coaching self includes the relationships she maintains with her players and her only friendships being with colleagues. It is important to consider the context that informs and affects these behaviors and self-representations. Susan chose coaching over working for her father; she is single; her jobs responsibilities require a great deal of time commitment; the

college where Susan works is located two and a half hours from the nearest metropolitan area, so she often travels over 150 miles to watch recruits play each week. Perhaps Susan is so competitive because she wants to prove that she made the right career decision in pursuing coaching rather than the family business. Her lack of relationships outside the coaching network may be a direct result of the time she spends in her job and any social interaction is limited to the coaching context. Considering this, one could ask if Susan places herself in a context where these behaviors and self-representations can take place or whether the context forces her to possess such facets. The reality is that these contextual factors exist independent of Susan's self-representations, but they impact her coaching self at the same time.

The adapted dynamic self model still lacks a visual depiction of another important reality in considering the coaching self. It does not adequately convey the messy overlap of various contexts in producing the coaching self. It is impossible to create hard and fast lines between the various settings and parts of life. The lines tend to blur and run into each other. Therefore, the coaching self is not completely isolated from other contexts such as where an individual is a friend, parent, or partner. The coaching self is a part of the overall self—joined with the working selves in other contexts yet unique in its own setting. There is a sense of simultaneous union and uniqueness as the coaching self finds itself a part of the overall self-concept. This reality best conveys the response to the question: What is the coaching self? It is complex because the coaching self is not an isolated entity but constantly interacts with the other facets of the individual's life and selves in other contexts.



The coaching self is part of a complete self that is dynamic, perpetually interacting with various contexts and persons, and continuously presenting itself in various ways. While the coaching is a part, this does not mean it is incomplete. It is a whole part that comprises a greater whole. It exists in a specific context and informs the individual in other settings. The coaching self is one example of the various layers that overlap within a dynamic world in which an individual lives and functions. While it may seem too complicated to easily capture, looking closely at the coaching self and its various facets brings to light the complexity of the people who hold the role and title of coach, the personal traits they possess, and how these individual nuances translate into behavior.

### **Implications for Methodology**

Several factors of methodology impact the results of this study. First, the participants and specific coaches selected affect the context that was examined. Two coaches were male head coaches of men's basketball teams, and two coaches were female head coaches of female basketball teams. Their experiences express the differences that exist in those two contexts. At the same time, they differ from head coaches who coach teams of the opposite sex. Second, the use of telephone interviews in data generation bears noting in this study. The results are limited by the participants' self-censorship. The researcher felt there was a ceiling to what the participants were willing to reveal about themselves and their experiences. As a result, the findings are based upon what participants chose to reveal to the researcher. Similarly, data generation took place during the college basketball season. Given the fact that participants noted a

greater sense of pressure and demands upon the coaches during the season, the timing may affect participants' responses. It is possible that interviews conducted in person rather than over the telephone may produce greater disclosure or insight into the participants' experience. Likewise, conducting interviews in the off season may also produce a different expression of meaning and tone among participants.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Despite the positive coaching experiences and influences these cases communicate, possession of the coaching self also contains negative costs for both the coach and others within the coaching network. It is alarming to hear coaches refer to their profession as an illness. The female coaches in particular conveyed that placing a priority on their coaching careers was not healthy. However, they continued to place a high emphasis on their commitment to the coaching role. This seems to suggest that head college basketball coaches (female coaches in particular) suffer negative consequences as a result of their profession but are unaware of how to treat the illness or unwilling to alter their coaching role to alleviate the problem. While the male coaches did not create as severe a picture of the negative affects experienced as a coach, they also suggested a dissatisfaction resulting in the pursuit of the coaching role. Prioritizing the coaching self meant less than adequate time and relationships with others such as family. It appears that prioritizing the coaching self means sacrificing other desired selves, relationships, and time. Interestingly, the coaches conveyed negative personal consequences to pursuing the coaching role but did not communicate heightened professional consequences. Would coaches gain the same professional satisfaction and results if they

lessened the emphasis on their coaching roles? Is it necessary to sacrifice personal selves to maintain the desired coaching self? It is disturbing to hear coaches communicate an unhealthy aspect of their profession and even more alarming to note that they do not appear to know of any alternative to their present situation. Further consideration of how coaches can combat the negative and harmful facets of their profession and self is necessary.

While this study focused specifically on the coaching aspects of Division III head basketball coaches lives and selves, all four coaches held academic duties within their job descriptions as coaches as professors or instructors within an exercise science department. However, the coaches put far more priority on identifying with their coaching duties compared with their teaching and advising responsibilities. The role as coach had a greater priority for these individuals, and the time and energy committed to fulfilling that role reflected this fact. However, their role as classroom instructors and professors cannot be ignored. It appears that coaches are unable to equally balance the two roles (or at least not to the same degree that their contracts delineate). This reality puts coaches at greater risk for role ambiguity and inability to adequately fulfill professional roles, which could add to the negative consequences of the job. This discrepancy in professional roles merits further consideration of whether coaches are able to fulfill these multiple roles and expectations. Even more, it is important to clearly distinguish the roles of a coach and whether the expectations for coaches match the coaching self.

## **Conclusion**

This study sought to characterize the coaching self and better understand its formation and development, its distinctiveness from the overall self-concept, and its impact on others. The experiences of participants within the coaching world of four NCAA Division III head basketball coaches revealed the coaching self to be a dynamic process greatly impacted by personal characteristics closely interwoven with contextual factors. The coaching self is linked with previous and current athletic roles; it possesses characteristics of interpersonal and intrapersonal processes; it is publicly revealed and shared yet privately protected at the same time. The coaching self impacts the lives, experiences, and perceptions of both coaches and those within the coaching network. It motivates and provides satisfaction but also isolates and produces difficult experiences due to the factors involved in the coaching context. Above all, the coaching self is a powerful component of the overall self-concept that has a deep impact on the lives of these basketball coaches and others within the coaching network.

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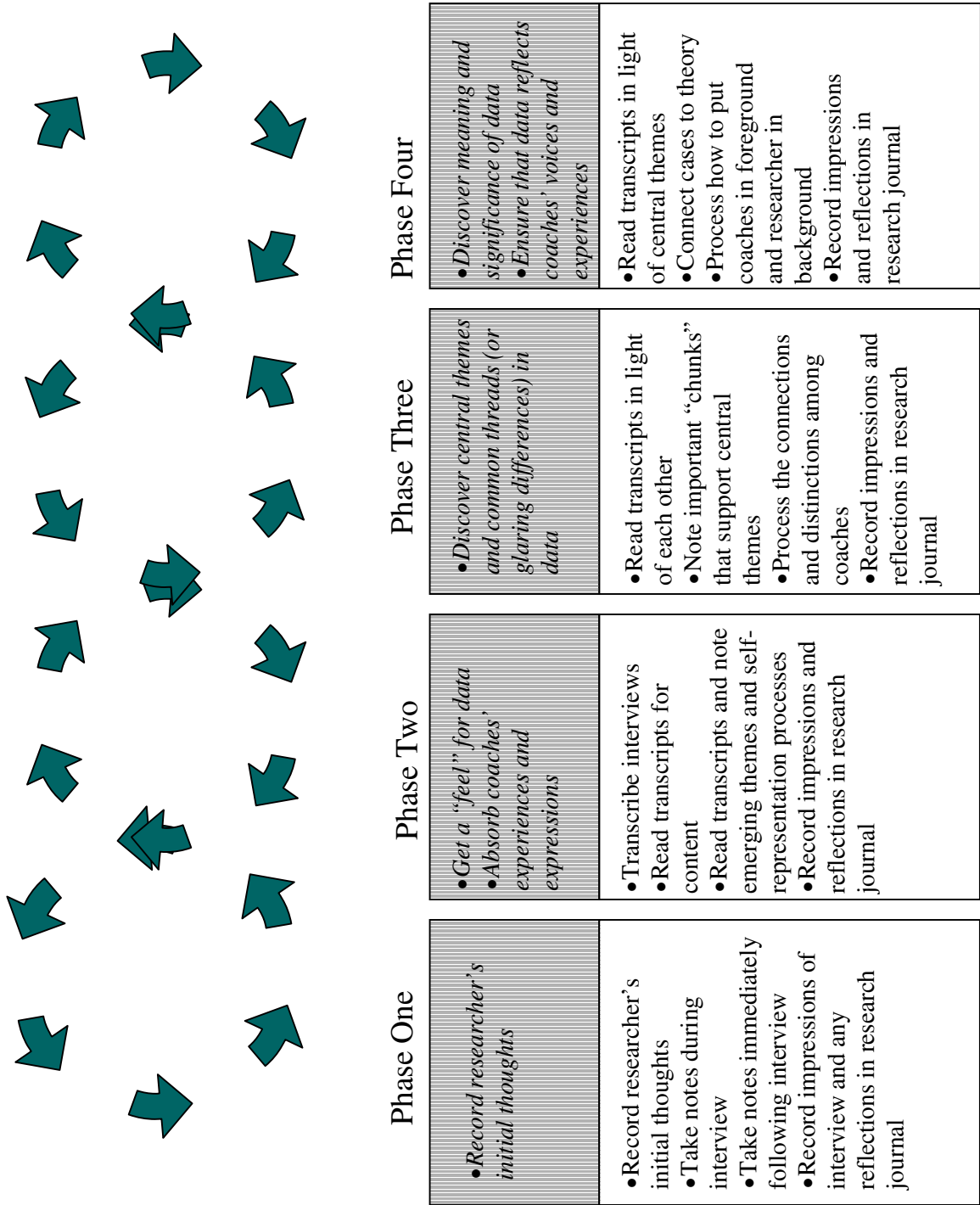
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APPENDIX A

ANALYSIS CHART



## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW GUIDES

#### **Coach Interview Guide**

##### **Introduction**

- When you introduce yourself to someone, what do you say?  
in personal contexts  
in professional contexts  
Do you add any information other than your name?
- Think ahead to the point when you have passed away. How would you like people to remember you? What would be included in your epitaph?

##### **Background and Demographics**

- I'm interested in hearing about your coaching path. How did you enter into the coaching profession?  
Why did you start coaching?  
How has it progressed?
- Why do you continue to coach?
- What enables you to do so?

##### **Coaching Self/Other Selves**

- If you were to describe the "coaching life," how would you do so?
- Has this changed over time?
- Are you a different person from Oct. to Mar. you are from April to Oct.?
- If profession involves other roles, ask about importance of roles—how much time/energy devotes to one vs. other

##### **Relational Factors**

- Does being a coach impact others?
- How?

## **Significant Other Interview Guide**

### **Background and Demographics**

- Can you describe how you know Coach \_\_\_\_\_?
- How did you meet him/her?
- How has your relationship with him/her progressed?

### **Coaching Self/Other Selves**

- Why does he/she coach?/Continue to coach?
- Would you say that you are part of Coach \_\_\_\_\_'s "coaching world?" How or how not?
- If you were to describe who Coach \_\_\_\_\_ is, what would you say?
- Has this changed over time?
- How would you describe him/her as a coach?
- Does this differ from who he/she is beyond coaching?
- What accounts for similarities or differences?
- Is there a difference from October to March versus April to October?
- Based on your interactions with Coach \_\_\_\_\_, how would you describe his/her life as a coach?

### **Relational Factors**

- How does your relationship with Coach \_\_\_\_\_ affect you?
- Does his/her identity as a coach impact you?
- Have you observed its impact on others?

APPENDIX C  
CONTACT LETTER



THE UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH CAROLINA  
**GREENSBORO**  
School of Health *and* Human Performance

Dear Participant,

I am a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the department of exercise and sport science. I am currently conducting research to explore the experiences of NCAA Division III college head basketball coaches and the various factors related to their coaching live, and I would like to invite you to participate in this study. In order to do this I will be interviewing basketball coaches and people who know their coaching experience. Each interview will take approximately one hour. Participating coaches will remain anonymous to all except the researcher. I hope that this research will provide a better understanding of the various factors that influence coaches as they seek to perform their jobs and develop quality basketball programs.

I would just like to remind you that your participation is completely voluntary and all information collected will be confidential. There are no anticipated risks to participation in this study. If you have any questions about this study or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the telephone number or email address listed below. Please read and sign the enclosed form. Keep the yellow copy for your own records, and return the signed white copy in the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Sarah Harris  
Graduate Student  
Department of Exercise and Sport Science

## APPENDIX D

### CONSENT FORM

#### CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT

Project Title: A Coaching Self Model

Conducted by: Sarah Harris  
Department of Exercise and Sport Science  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170  
sbharri2@uncg.edu

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES:

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the identity of NCAA Division III head basketball coaches and the factors involved in shaping their identities. To accomplish this, participants will be interviewed by the researcher and asked a series of questions that focus on this issue. All interviews will be audiotaped and later transcribed. Participants will receive a hard copy of their interview transcript and presented the opportunity to make any clarifications in order to ensure the interviews truly reflect their experiences and sentiments. They will return the transcripts in an envelope included with the transcript. It is anticipated that each interview will last approximately one hour. Participants will remain anonymous to everyone except the researcher. Data will be kept and stored in a locked filing cabinet by the researcher for a minimum of five years and then destroyed.

#### RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:

There are no anticipated risks involved in participating in this study.

#### POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

It is hoped that this study will provide a better understanding of the various facets and influences involved in coaches' lives as they seek to perform their jobs effectively and participate as members of society as well as those who share in the coaches' lives.

#### COMPENSATION/TREATMENT FOR INJURY:

N/A

#### CONSENT:

By signing this consent form, you agree that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time without penalty or prejudice; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which insures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-

1482. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by Sarah Harris by calling (336) 558-8461. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation in the project.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read and understood the points described and are willing to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date