



BEING A CHEERLEADER

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR

COACH

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Have you ever been in a situation where you needed to talk to your coach about a problem with something he or she is doing? Piece of cake, right? Well, several athletes think that talking to their coaches about problems is difficult. Telling people you respect that they have hurt you, or done something you feel is unfair, can be quite awkward. But it's important to learn how to do it in cheerleading, in dancing, and in life!

There are many good approaches to talking to your cheer coach, but there are a lot of bad ones. It's important to remember that your coach is a person, just like you. Therefore, you should talk to him or her in the same manner that you would like someone to talk to you:

DON'T TRY TO TALK ABOUT SOMETHING THAT JUST HAPPENED SECONDS EARLIER.

Anger can distort your perception and cause you to speak without first getting an understanding for what you are really angry about. Sometimes it helps to give your problem a little time and space before acting on it.

DO SLEEP ON IT (OR WALK AWAY FOR A LITTLE WHILE) BEFORE TALKING TO YOUR COACH.

Once you have cooled off you see things a little clearer. You'll find that with a little cool-headed thinking you may realize the reason behind your coach's decision or the real cause of your anger.

DON'T TRY TO TALK TO YOUR COACH DURING PRACTICE.

Your coach is trying to run a productive practice, and there is probably a lot running through his or her mind. Bringing up a problem at practice will only frustrate you because the coach may not be paying attention. Trying to talk about a problem while at practice also wastes valuable practice time. No matter how big or small a problem, you should consider waiting until after to discuss it. The only exception would be when the problem pertains to the immediate practice.

DO SET UP A TIME WHEN YOU CAN TALK TO YOUR COACH ONE-ON-ONE.

This lets the coach know that you want to talk about serious matters and in private. A responsive coach will understand and respect that you are being mature enough to approach her in advance of a difficult discussion.



DON'T CONFRONT YOUR COACH IN AN ANGRY MANNER, WHETHER AT PRACTICE OR IN YOUR PRIVATE MEETING.

This is the least effective method of approaching your coach. Direct confrontation angers the coach and puts him or her on the defensive. The coach thinks that he/she must defend his/her position at all costs. When someone goes on the defensive, it is very difficult to change his or her point of view.

DO TRY AND KEEP CALM ABOUT THE SITUATION.

Be calm and try to conduct yourself in a respectful manner. Your coach should treat you the same way. None of this is to say that you should be avoiding the real issue. If you have a problem with the coach or their coaching style, be honest and direct. You will realize that most coaches welcome such criticism and feedback. Just be willing to also receive a little criticism yourself.