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**Professor Name: Dr. Chaitanya Sridhar**  
**Department Name: Humanities and Social Sciences**  
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## CHANNELING EMOTIONS IN SPORTS

We are almost coming towards the ending stages of this section. Today we are going to be looking at emotions. Emotions are a very vital part, especially when we are looking at a sport and especially team sports, working with teams. This section is called channeling emotions, and I think that is a really powerful image. This was post a major event, and just the relief and all the effort which has come true can be really seen in that picture. I really wanted to put out this picture because I think it is so powerful if you just stay with it, and right next to the athlete who is bending is another one who is applauding.

You can really see this variety of emotions here, right. I want you to also take a minute and think about how you are as a person. Where would you categorize yourself? Would you say you are emotional? How emotional are you, and how do you handle emotions? That is what we are really going to be looking at. I will also be touching a little upon my own PhD, which was about emotional management in cricket, in this section.

We all use the word emotional. You might say, "This is an emotion," or, "That was a good emotion," or, "That was not a good emotion."

Let us really look at it. What really is an emotion? Deci. defines it as: an emotion is a reaction to a stimulus event, either actual or imagined.” Just take a second to think about that.

It is not necessarily reacting to something which is physically present; it could also be imagined. A lot of the time, that’s what happens. If you think of an athlete, let us say a young budding athlete, going in for a very important match that could decide his or her selection for an

upcoming tournament. What is this athlete playing in their head, and what is this athlete been playing in their head even a few days prior? It does not necessarily have to be immediately before.

I have this young cricketer I am working with. He started his work before the season began, but he was kind of going with, "Oh, when the season starts..." And it is the minute he says that and the minute he is sensing that, "okay, this part is going to be tough, and am I going to get selected for this court or the main thing, what is going to happen?" You suddenly already notice that his body language is tightening, he is probably going back, his jaws are probably tightening, and that becomes very important. Of course, kudos to him, he came earlier, right? We could really begin the work, rather than if he had just come, let us say, a week before the tournament. At that time, what you are going to do is very basic management,. It is very, very essential to understand what is this player.

We all know that, when we talk about a human being, there are thoughts associated, there are emotions, and there is behavior. Sri Aurobindo, on whose philosophy Indian psychology is also based on Indian psychology, categorizes into—I am just giving a comparison—the physical, which is our body, the mental, which is our mind and thoughts, and then the vital, which is emotions. He actually says how, you know, it can either make or break you. It is very, very essential. We think, I thought this and then I got emotional, right? but it is also very essential to go, okay, what actually first reacts in me? Do I notice something in my body? Do I notice some feeling or emotion, or do I notice a thought?

Then you will begin to understand, oh, which is the place I am actually predominantly functioning from?. You know, especially with sports, a lot of people think psychology is just to do with the mind, but I always say your body is giving you cues. You know, when an athlete is saying, my heart is racing, that is a cue as to probably what emotion you are feeling. You may not be able to label it, but it will be wonderful if you can label it, because then you start understanding, "okay, this is what is happening."

Okay, this is a little lower; maybe you can see it better if I move, yeah.

If you look at the diagram, what we discussed in the previous slide was thoughts, emotions, and behavior. When I started my career as well, and you know there is still a lot of dialogue with people, as to whether thoughts come first and then emotions, but the longer I have been in sport and psychology for that matter, and the more I have understood and integrated a lot of modalities, you realize that it is not necessary. Someone could just be very emotional as a person, and it could be the emotion which is coming first. When we work only with a thought, we probably lost track that it is probably the vital or the emotional which is playing here. This is why it is extremely important to go, "What is happening and what can I do?"

It is not always over here; that is what I am trying to say. What is very essential is our thoughts, of course, influence emotions; emotions also influence thoughts, and these two together lead to expression. What we see is the behavior.

I will come to this slide, but I want to just talk about this slide first.

Now, let us take an example. Let us take an example that you are getting ready. I am going to first take a non-sports example and then we will build into it. Let us say you are getting ready; it is morning, it is an important day, and you are ready, and something happens and someone drops something on you, let us say water or food. What happens now? This is where we are going to play with this thought-emotion-behavior and the consequence module.

First thing, let us say you are rushed. You might get really angry at that person or that being. It could also be a pet and probably respond out of anger. Second, could be you go into, "Oh my God, what just happened," but you just get up and go, "What do I need to do? Let me just clear this up," but you still ignored that person or that being over there. Third, could be, you take a minute, you have paused, and then you have gone, "Let me clear this," and once you have probably calmed a little, you can go back and talk to that person and say, "OK," and move on.

Now, what is going to happen? The first was storming; the first was anger, would be just really angry and walk out or probably explode. How is that other person or other being going to feel? That person is also going to be in that state. Second is you walk out; you were least left the place uncertain, but the other person is still not going to be feeling great about it. Third is you could

still choose to walk out; you probably even got a little angry and said something, but then you calm down or after you cleared yourself, you come back and say it happened, I have to go. Now, just think about the three, and this is not about preaching; this is just for us to reflect on what happens. Now, as you listen to each of this, this has happened to each one of us including me; every one of us goes through these scenarios, correct? It is not a first-timer, but as you listen and you put yourself, I want you to also put yourself in the other person's place. What would happen to you, and what would be your feeling in each of the consequences?

One is being shouted at; second is being ignored; third is then a reconciliation. Now, why is this important for us? Because first is when something happens, we all lose it. We are all human beings, like I have said before. I always tell athletes, especially when they get into that state, that listen, we are all in the process of becoming Buddha; we are not in that state yet. We have our moods; we have our personality; we have our certain traits, right?. Point is to reflect and not to start beating ourselves. That does not mean that I justify everything I do, but what it means is certain times demand certain things, and you probably have been in a certain state and behaved in a certain way. That is why if you look at this image in front of you, I call it the three-step process, which is also what we follow pretty much with performance enhancement; at least I follow that. First is to get self-aware—what really happened here, what really triggered me, and when do I get triggered?

Because this becomes very vital, you know, one is with our family; second is also, let us say, you feel that at a very important meeting. Now, when we go into that state of total, you know, being absorbed by an emotion which is not affecting us positively, that is going to affect your performance as well, right? That is why once I start getting aware, once I start reflecting, that is why reflection, neuroscience also says, begins to shift our mirror neurons. It begins to shift the way we look at things, how we are going to be as human beings, and how we are going to function and connect.

The next is, then once I know what is happening, I can go, "OK, you know what, this state when I am getting angry, there are certain things I can try out." That is where we begin to monitor and also try out. Then comes the final, where the regulation begins to happen, and that is vital. It is always, you know, there is a problem-focused approach, and there is a

solution-focused approach. Some of them will go, "I did this," and go on and on about it. That is not going to serve the purpose because, yes, there was a problem. How do we solve it? That becomes very important, right?

Now, I am going to just touch a little, which I think most of you all will know, on emotional intelligence, which will then help us to connect to emotional management or what was emotional labor, which was my PhD thesis.

Of course, we have with us in front, on the screen, Mr. Dhoni, who is known as the Captain Cool, and what better image because he was someone who was really, really, what would you say, acutely sensitive to what was happening in the team, and he also knew what and how to do to bring the team to work for a desired result. What Mr. Daniel Goleman actually says is that, you know, there is the awareness part again, which is the self and social, which is, "Who am I? How do I function?" So, knowing about myself and then, "How do I interact with another? What impacts me?"

That becomes your awareness. Once I am aware, then comes the management. How do I regulate myself again within myself for my own, let us say, work and then in a social situation? He takes these four. There are basically four quadrants here: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and social skills. Now I want to connect this to my thesis, and the reason I bring this in here is also because my thesis was on emotional management in cricket. In fact, I actually took a concept called emotional labor from the management sector, which is you use emotions for your work or your role, of course, and we modified it.

It looks at four main quadrants, which is really reading the emotions of others, managing the emotions of others, suppressing emotions of myself, and expressing oneself and expressing unmet emotions. It really is about how much a person employs this and what was the need? Was it the need of the individual, the need of the organization, or the need of the game? I took both cricketers and organizational personnel, including support staff and CEOs, just to really understand what happens in the setting, and my participants were Australian and Indian cricketers. I am going to touch on some of the key aspects just in terms of understanding emotions, and this is a beautiful, very touching quote by one of India's top players after the World Cup exit in 2007.

If you will remember, we got knocked out quite in the early stages and this is what he says. I am going to read it out, and I want you to listen as an individual before you listen as a fan, just as a human being.

“I have given my heart and soul to Indian cricket for 17 years. No coach has ever mentioned, even in passing, that my attitude was not correct. Cricket has been my life. I am shattered beyond words, and I feel helpless. I have never felt this bad in my entire career. World Cup was our passion, our collective dream. Tell me, even as the world goes on talking about our defeat at the World Cup, has anyone spared a thought to ask what we are going through?”

I remember it. It really touched me very deeply. I felt, and I think as a psychologist, your empathy quotient is quite high. You probably worked with a few of these players, or at least you worked with individuals, and it really, really hits you. If we actually sit with this, yes, of course, when we identify ourselves with the team, with our country, it hurts when they don't perform. We feel let down, but I think what he's put across here is so clear and succinct because do we realize how difficult and what difficult emotions they're sitting with? I want you to also connect it to... sometimes what we see and what we expect may disappoint us, but we need to also understand what's happening to that individual or team.

I'll give you an example. This was again, I think, when I was in Australia during my PhD phase, and I remember a very good friend of mine said, “oh, you know, XYZ players, there's so much attitude; they didn't give an autograph.” I said no, “they're really nice most of the time they did”, and then I said, “when did you ask?” Something just made me ask, and you know, India actually lost the match very badly just prior, and I think this was in Perth. The team's walking out, and people are asking, and that's when they've really not. You need to understand, just put yourself in a position when you're feeling really, really bad. You had, let's say, a presentation, and it hasn't gone well. You don't really want to face anyone. You're also sitting with very difficult emotions, right?

Of course, I may be excited as a fan, or I may be excited that- oh, this is my country people, and we go running and ask, but then the person's in a very different emotional space. I think here, this is where emotional intelligence comes in, emotional management comes in. Can I be a little conscious that it's not just me here; it's the other as well? Because yes, as much as it hurts, they are the ones who are getting all the thrashing, especially from the media, the whole world over, especially when you lose a difficult match, and that's the reason I really wanted to bring in this, you know, one of this I wanted to start with this.

Then this was a very interesting finding in it from my study as well, which was on handling mixed emotions. Mixed emotions are in a team game, you know, when you've performed really well, but your team has not, and your team loses. And the other way around, like your team wins, and you probably had a really bad day. I'm going to just read a couple of these, and all names are changed over the years to maintain confidentiality, and you'll get an understanding of what this is.

Handling mixed emotions: "I was happy that I got a big score but disappointed that the team lost. It was a weird situation. I'm disappointed but also relieved that I did well." The next one: "I got a 10-wicket haul in the match, and we lost by a few runs. Really hurts. It's a bit of both; you know, you're happy but not. It's a little disappointing, hard, and I'm angry but more batsmanly."

Like what you can really feel, really get into this, really feel what is happening. Imagine getting a 10-wicket haul, and then your team ends up losing. You're feeling good with how you've performed, but then your team still lost. It's such a—you know, you're handling both ends of the spectrum. And then, at times, the team wins, you're happy, but then you got a duck, you got a zero, and no runs, but you have to be happy because the team won.

It's very important to really understand the many emotions, many emotions that an athlete faces. I can be bringing in this, and I'm sure each one of us has also felt this at certain times, like maybe the company did really well, or maybe as a student, you know, your class has done really well, but then you're not happy with a particular score. Or your group has got something big, but then you feel you didn't really live up to the expectations. It is going to bite you. To be mindful of these emotions as well, and especially when it comes to sport, because it's so fast. It's so fast.

And then I wanted to bring a very vital aspect. We've been discussing with each of the faculty on some really great topics, and I think this is one of the topics, and which is, you know, really switching your roles from being a professional. Priyanka and I touched a little on this, and we spoke about retirement, but this is even with performance because one of the things which came out in my study was, how difficult it is to be on the road. You're constantly on the road, you're on, you know, and it is, you really need that support system. Your emotions also take quite a beating.

This was an example of one of the Indian cricketers who actually gave this. He says, you know, shifting from, let's say you've come from a long tour, and you come back home. Shifting between the two roles, "it's a different life altogether. When you're playing at the highest level, you have a lot of pressure and expectations. You're a different person. When you come home from tours, you're a different person altogether. You cannot just shift to that very quickly. It takes a couple of days to adapt to your family life again. It won't happen immediately. You have to be smart to adapt to these kinds of things very quickly. You cannot show your emotions and anger at your parents or your partner because they don't know the inside story. It is unfair to them."

I have to mention one of these players, in fact, who said that there was a time when something was happening at home, and he said, I just could not emote. You know, I was, because you're so used to maintaining a certain image, like balancing and holding your emotions, that I just could not when I had to. I think that's a very important aspect to recognize, mainly because it is still emotional management. Somewhere the player has become a little numb in the personal life.

You know, you have your cricketer or you have your athlete, and then you have to learn to switch off and then come into the next or your personal role. One of the things that I tell athletes is, you know, switch on, switch off. When you're in your training mode, your player mode, you're just focused, and once you finish, switch off and just come back and be like any other normal human being. It's very, very essential.

The role of the coach becomes very important. I've touched on this. I'll go very briefly with this because they hold the emotional mirror, especially with the highs and lows of elite sport and cricket in particular, because then this helps build resilience, helps them focus, and be team-oriented. This is also one of the reasons why athletes have to learn to be emotionally aware

and manage and regulate themselves. This is where discipline and professionalism come in and then the adaptability and fighting spirit. It is essential, and a coach plays a very huge role in this whole aspect.

I want to finally bring this section together by asking: how emotional do you think you are? And, what do you think is the role of emotions in work and performance in your life? Because what I really try to bring here is, of course, we all know good emotions and helpful emotions and not-so-helpful, but what I really try to bring in here is to help you to recognize: what are you? How emotional are you? When we were discussing flow and different aspects, we've seen that each athlete and player is different. Nadal is very different from Federer, to recognize that.

In the next section, we're also going to see... because then this also impacts stress and performance. I hope this section really helped in bringing this together. We will also be having a coach speak on managing emotions and channeling emotions, because once we can do that, then it gets channeled into performance and sport. The aim is not just to go; okay, this is happening, I'm emotional, I'm angry, I'm this.. but going; okay, what can help me, like what Mr. Hanin was saying in the IZOF model, and how do I channel this energy?

For example, I'll give this example of this very young cricketer who was saying, "I perform really well when I'm angry." We had to think of scenarios where you go, okay, you bring up that anger, which can then be channeled into performance, but you shouldn't get so angry that you explode, and then your emotional center has overtaken you, and you've lost contact with the others. Then performance will take a beating again. I hope this was helpful, and you got some new insights from this section on channeling emotions.

We will watch a video on how to harness emotions by Ray R Dharma, who's a Reiki grandmaster and energy healer.

Today's topic is harnessing energy to enhance performance. When we talk of energy, then we are talking of vibrations and frequencies, which each of our cells are made up of. Everything on the planet we know is energy, including our physical body, right up to the subatomic level, and nothing else but energy, like radio sets working around receiving signals and giving out signals. It's not difficult to appreciate thereby that higher our energy levels, higher frequency would

determine how high the quality of our life is, our mood, happiness quotient, performance, productivity levels.

To be able to channel this potent great potential to harness our highest potential from the storehouse, which is our subconscious mind, the method of channeling the pristine powerful energy emanating as emotions from the subconscious mind, the fire, the power—for example, if it is anger—how do you channelize the energy which is getting emanated from this emotion called anger? We do know that anger can destroy. We need to also know that if you flip the coin, the same highly charged emotion, which we are labeling as anger, could be channelized, circulated, single-focused energy into becoming a challenge or drive, a mindset-what is needed to be in high-performance levels. Greater quality of life, being more resilient.

Once we've tapped into this power, into this storehouse of power, we can also, with the same energy, enhance the power of intentionality or goal set. The energy that we will use will also be from the same source, which we can then call determination, steadfastness, the energy to follow through, commitment, integrity. A simple tool, a simple technique—I call it the bow and arrow effect. The deeper inward we pull the bow with the arrow, soak into the harnessed energy, pristine powerful energy stemming from the subconscious mind. Once this bow and arrow is soaked in all of this, the throw of the arrow will be much wider, more impactful, more accurate, and the best, the greatest of your potential is what you will experience. Think about it. I will leave you with this.

Hi, I'm Priyanka, and this is Santosh. We've already met Santosh. It's again wonderful to have you here, Santosh. Today we are going to be discussing about how young athletes can actually manage their emotions and how coaches play an important role in channeling the emotions that athletes go through, young athletes specifically, and how we can help them succeed in their roles. My very first question to you is: you have a six-year-old son and you have a ten-year-old daughter who are into shooting. What do you keep in mind when you're working with young athletes like them?

I look at working with discipline. It's about discipline and coming back every day and training. If that has to happen, that means they also need to enjoy the game. Otherwise, they're not going to come back. Today, the amount of opportunities that kids have is huge. If they don't want to do

shooting, they have swimming. If they don't want to do swimming, they have gymnastics. If not gymnastics, they have, let's say, cricket. They have Bharatanatyam or they have XYZ. The options just doesn't end. It's like an endless Excel sheet; that many options are there. Back in the day, we didn't have that kind of options. Today, the number of options open to kids is huge. Parents are also getting confused about where to put their children. If the kid doesn't turn up for two days, the parent decides- the kid doesn't like it and then switch to some other sport.

That's not the way to deal with it. The best way to deal with it is to allow the kid to explore and make them come back. If they are really good at it, there are exceptional talents who are prodigies. If you find such prodigies, lucky for you. What you have to do is sustain them in the game and ensure that, in the long term, they're learning their technicals a little better. Why do they become prodigies? It's because they understand something about the game that nobody else has understood. They've defined their game to themselves. In their mind, that kid has already decided, "This is how it is. If I do this, this is the outcome of it." That is very well-defined; you don't want to break that.

Now the kid knows that portion of the game. The coach's responsibility is to create the other aspects of development around using that knowledge. So, don't break that knowledge. Slowly inculcate good habits and build other good habits around that understanding.

I think you brought in a few interesting insights, Santosh, and one is you've spoken about creating a safe environment for the child to learn and explore at his own pace because that will help the child develop competencies within. The other thing which I really like is also the fact that you said about the learning pace within the child. Allow the child to learn at his or her own pace, and you also spoke about the fact that not everybody has the same level of talent or success, one hundred percent. Some of them may be exceptionally talented; some of them may take their time.

It becomes very important for us in terms of seeing whether there is real talent or talent which is still going to take time. If it is going to take time, we cannot compare the students, say, "Look at this person, who is doing really well. Why don't you perform?" It's not going to happen like that. Every person is going to take time, and at the same time, beyond.. Let's say.. time is the only factor, I always keep telling, somebody might reach it in six months; somebody might take

three years to reach the same thing. Eventually, both are competing at the same level. You need not bother about that at all. Be it as a coach or as a parent, patience is the key, and more importantly, deal with the students in terms to ensure they don't drop out.

Kids these days are much more emotional than what we would have seen back in the day. We don't expect this kind of emotions or emotional problems in kids as we would have expected out of us when we were kids. It's not the same anymore. These kids are more susceptible to different pressures.

Absolutely. You are also speaking of the reality that we are facing. Their exposure is so much, the pressures are so much now for the children, and their emotions are, you know, very different. Also, some children might perform exceptionally well, and some of them may not. How do you help, as a coach, emotionally channel these emotions?

The first thing is to learn as a coach what are the things happening. I'll give a very good example. One of my students, who is just twelve years old, came up and said, "I have a cluster headache."

Yeah.. What is cluster headache? I am also wondering- what is cluster headache! I had to open google and check-What is cluster headache?.

These kids learn so many things, different things; they are able to pinpoint and say certain things. The first thing is to adapt to their language and the way they deal with things. That is the first step. Then look at what is justified and what is unjustified. These kids these days, you know, have a hundred reasons to not do things. Sometimes, you say "No", you put your foot down and say, "This you need to complete. It's a matter of discipline." The other aspect, yes, you can let go of a few things. .Sometimes, a lot of young athletes come in, and they are very good at sports but very naughty. They're all over the place. You allow them to be themselves. At the same time, you throw some challenges, saying, "Okay, today you complete this very difficult task, and then I let you off. If you finish it in five minutes, I am very happy." Throwing a difficult task, which might not happen in five minutes. If they finish it in five minutes, well and good. If they can't finish it in five minutes, absolutely no problem. You just have to learn and adapt over a period of time how to deal with, especially children and young athletes.

There are some very young people who are really good at their game. At that point of time, it's very difficult to coach them because they don't want to let go of that understanding of their game. That means it becomes the coach's responsibility in terms of to keep observing how they are growing and whether that is enough for the present level of competition. If it is, well and good, allow them to continue to perform really well. Ensure things are not affecting them. At the same time, if you are expecting that athlete to perform much better at a higher level, then ensure that, in a slow dosage, you are giving the right amount of techniques that will help them build over a period of time.

The real fear these days with kids is losing whatever they already have. They're scared of letting go of anything to acquire new things. This is another big challenge in working with young athletes. They'll be like, "No, no, no, I don't want this new technique. I don't want this new setting. I don't want these changes. This is going to affect my game. This is going to pull my game down." Their ability to bounce back is also not as strong. From setbacks, let's say a couple of competitions they lose, they're really down with their attitude. You need to work on that. It is a big challenge to work with younger athletes.

So, I think, the right way to deal with it would be having structured coaching levels where you have coaches working under the senior coach. You have junior coaches and assistant coaches who deal with certain aspects of the technical part of it. The emotional part of it can be handled by the coach, and the rest of it should be handled by the psychologist.

And as a coach, like you know, you might have also seen that sometimes athletes, some of them may be very aggressive, some of them are very anxious. How do you help them, like how do you identify and like what do you do?

Aggression can always be channelized. If a person is aggressive, you can always try to channelize that into the right energies. It does help. An anxious person is a little more difficult to deal with than an aggressive person. An anxious person, you don't know when it's going to affect them more and when it's going to affect them less. Okay, it becomes quite a challenge. Sitting and discussing with them, and any person who's anxious, giving them tasks much ahead of simulating things, you know, working with them much ahead of the actual problem does help in terms of easing their burden.

Let's say, you know, a person has to go and present in front of a camera or in front of a crowd. Right, so give him a dosage of work every day. You do this every day, you do this every day, you do this, so slowly that, you know, he builds that immunity towards that day. And that day that anxious person will get affected, but it might not be as bad.

You are saying, helping them prepare for the task way ahead and also giving them the confidence- you know to do this particular thing. That can be quite helpful.

The other side, the person who is very aggressive, you know, you can always charge them up, tell them, you know, again it depends on the kind of the game they are playing, and I'd be really happy if somebody is very aggressive, and it comes to cricket or basketball, the way they run, the speed increases, you know, the way they charge at things, and they get it done. So it does help. But if it's a very dormant sport like chess or shooting, so how do you channelize that energy? It's pure energy, you know, how do you control that into making it a smoother thought process? Again, that will take a long time, yeah, depending on sport and it's a lot of work.

There is no proper one-solution to it, right? No, you never get one one-stop solution for all these problems. So it is something the coach learns over a period of time. So it's not going to be easy for coaches as well. So coaches also have to have a long-term picture in terms of where my coaching career is going. So what am I learning? What are the things that I have learned this year? So, sitting and making an assessment at the end of the year, like a balance sheet, like you know, these are my assets, these are my liabilities. So as a coach, you know, these are my weaknesses, these are my strengths. So next year, I'm going to work on a few more strengths and trying to reduce a little bit of my liabilities.

So okay, so with this we come to an end on the discussion with respect to how you can help athletes manage their emotions and help them become more successful. Thank you.