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## Teaching Gender Equality in Sports: Dynamics of Change and Resistance of CrossFit Instructors

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## ***Introduction***

### *Sports and Inequalities*

The performance of a body in the physical world, the interpretation of grace or aggressiveness, strength and power has and is always shaded by the interpreters themselves. For expectations and limitations are assigned on the body and its performance through the lens of sex, color, age and class. Furthermore, each interpreter has her or his particular way of seeing created through their own social standing and gender. In the physical world of sport this phenomenon is indeed prevalent. Over the last three decades feminist theorists and sports sociologists have consistently pointed out that sports is a cultural epicenter where male superiority is universally condoned (Messner, 1988, Heywood & Dworkin, 2003, Mennesson, 2005). With such a filter in place what are the effects of these interpretations on female athletes themselves and on those who teach them? These body designations create inequalities and explain in part the existence of the low representation of women in sports in the media, the unequal salaries between male and female athletes, the low level of interest worldwide of women in sports and a woman's own lack of self-confidence in her body's abilities (Messner, 1988, Heywood & Dworkin, 2003, Young, 1980).

The focus of this work is on the human body in sports, particularly showing how under such a body performance paradigm, differential treatment of each kind of body is a result. Specifically concentrating on the teaching element of coaching, this work looks to the principal actors, i.e. the coaches and seeks to evaluate if and how change can happen, that is if gender equality training might increase awareness. Maintaining that there is no difference in degree between teaching and coaching (Bergmann Drewe, 2000), this work also seeks to challenge the teachers and to show how and if awareness of the effects of stereotyping causes a change in behavior in the teachers themselves. In doing so this would provide a matrix to counter stereotyping in all educational activities.

Although many studies have looked at gender integrated sports in schools, very little research has looked into the world of leisure sports and the roles a coach will play to challenge or bolster sex, race and class hierarchies. The first part of this work focuses on exactly how coaches in the relatively new sport of CrossFit fuel such hierarchies whilst combatting them simultaneously. The second focuses on how much personal change and awareness can be influenced through a seminar which introduces the role teachers in producing and countering stereotypes and hierarchies.

### ***Literature Review***

#### *Hegemonic Masculinity*

First termed by the Australian sociologist R.W. Connell, hegemonic masculinity is a culturally and historically placed normative ideal of masculinity. Ever changing with time it nevertheless gives an ideal for men to position and compare themselves to and as such, it sustains a patriarchal social infrastructure. (Connell, 1987 as cited in Messner, 1988). By no means a static process, the instability of masculinity and its performative act leads to a process in which “masculinity must be proved, and no sooner proven that it is again questioned and must be proved again” (Kimmel, 1994, as cited in Messner, p. 122, 1988). In fact, feminist theorist Judith Butler points out that the collective performative and comparative element of masculinity and in duo femininity, creates corporal styles that only *seem* to be an inherent and natural configuration of the differences in the human body (1988). Therefore, as in all performances there is an ephemeral quality of its rendition, interpreted first by the actor and then by the audience. From this perspective, what is defined as “natural” qualities of the body in sport are only of an interpretative nature. Thusly, it is the act of reading bodies that reproduces inequalities and bolsters the naturalization of the existing gender order.

The origin of male hegemony in sports is explained as a reaction to industrial capitalism that weakened the existing forms of male domination in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Messner, 1988). As women entered the workforce and the political sphere (spheres that were exclusively for men prior), the exclusive club of sports became an even more segregated domain that was symbolic proof of their “natural superiority” (Messner, 1988). In short, Mishkind (as cited in Messner, p,202, 1988), adds that today, “the symbolic representations of the male body as a symbol of strength, virility and power have become increasingly important as actual inequalities between the sexes are contested in all areas of public life”. Sport then has a profound and primordial role in maintaining the cultural understanding of a superior masculinity through the visibility of the performing male athlete’s body (Anderson, 2008; Connell, 2005). In consequence, the performance of the male body is a culturally symbolic act and as such, is rigidly confined in specifically controlled assignments. Hence, there is a great importance in defining, delineating and describing bodies to maintain and develop in accordance to the ever fluctuating socially constructed ideals (Mosse, 1997; Anderson, 2008; Connell, 2005).

Since an ideal form (male) is relationally constructed, the exclusionary moves towards bodies defined as the antithetic is explained, given that their body performance is not assigned meanings of virility, strength and vigor. This socially constructed norm necessitates a comparative model and what ensues is a paired opposition to racial minorities, sexual minorities and most of all women (Connell, 2005). Thus, the masculinization of the male body and the feminization of the female body creates a physical model of the relations of domination which then becomes naturalized (Bourdieu, 2001 as cited in Oliver & Kirk, 2015). Specifically, the major trend in the kind of sports like football, basketball and hockey is influenced to segregate males into a homophobic, sexist, anti-feminine and misogynistic gender regime (Anderson, 2008). To sum up the performance of masculinity, the behavior reflected in the model of the



male athlete includes characteristics such as “risk taking, self-sacrifice, competitiveness, a willingness to inflict bodily damage and the acceptance of pain and injury” (Anderson, 2008).

The female athlete contests the precept of male superiority in sports by challenging the idea that women are passive, weak and helpless (Connell, 2005; Dworkin 2001; Messner, 1988). Her behavior, when ruthless, combative and competitive turns her into “just one the guys” to some (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003). Seen by some feminists as an act of accepting masculine values, the female athlete is also viewed disparagingly, for a woman should have higher values and strive for something beyond the combative, aggressive spirit to move outside of the male hegemony in sports (Burstyn, 1999). Nonetheless, the counterargument for a woman who enjoys competition, who enjoys testing her mettle against other bodies whether male or female; for within her actions, the fluidity of gender in body and behavior reveals itself (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003, Butler, 1988).

### *Stereotype threat*

Albeit the female athlete contests male hegemony, the effect of a perceived stereotype on the sporting body itself can aide in the propagation of the negative stereotype of embodied weakness. First noted by Steele and Aronson in 1995, when these individuals perform a difficult task in an area in which they feel at risk of confirming that stereotype, the psychological pressure will lead them to underperform (Steele & Aronson, 2016). This is otherwise known as stereotype threat. According to an ever growing body of research, those belonging to minority groups suffer from a performance deficit when the negative stereotype concerning their group becomes salient. Such negative stereotypes can be made prominent through simple, insidious means such as noting a task as competitive between male and female or referencing it as an exclusive male domain or even stating that the minority group will have more trouble (Hively & Alayli, 2014, Moriello *et al.*, 2013, Chalabaev *et al.*, 2013, Steele & Aronson, 1995). In leisure sports this is particularly important in view of the pejorative stereotypes of women and

the aged in situations where their performance is evaluated. Indeed, studies have shown that when a physical performance is being evaluated women and the aged are particularly susceptible to stereotype threat (Hively & Alayli, 2014, Moriello *et al.*, 2013, Chalabaev *et al.*, 2013, Steele & Aronson, 1995). Consequently coaches have a great responsibility not to illicit any stereotype for to do so would cause a vicious circle of the Pygmalion effect and stereotype threat.

### *Pygmalion Effect*

In a seminal paper Rosenthal and Jacobson conducted a study of how teachers and students behave if given false positive information about the educational talents of the students. These teachers were told confidentially that certain students were gifted scholastically. After observation of both the teachers and students, it was shown that teachers solicited and praised those students who were labeled as gifted and were considered more curious and involved. In turn the students' progress was also measured and a better scholastic performance was confirmed. Rosenthal and Jacobson concluded that an expectation that a teacher has over a student can cause a student to confirm that expectation otherwise known as the Pygmalion effect (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

In sports, research has found that coaches were less critical and gave more workload to athletes expected to have a higher ability than other athletes (Weaver *et al.*, 2016). And, if given a false positive expectation, coaches allocated more opportunities for those athletes than those that were given a negative expectation. In turn, just like Rosenthal and Jacobson's research, the athlete reported feeling more confident and did perform better (Weaver *et al.*, 2016). This is particularly relevant to this study. If coaches have a false expectation of an athlete whether positive or negative, the greater the chance that the athlete will confirm that expectation thus the importance of a coach's interpretations cannot be ignored.

### *Educators influence: reinforcing and reproducing stereotypes*

Although there is little research in leisure sports that examines how a coach's interpretation will influence an athlete, a wealth of information can be garnered from studies within physical education and school programs. Studies have shown that teachers are among the primary agents for reproducing gender inequalities and stereotypes (Flintoff & Scranton, 2001, Guérandel, 2011). For example, studies have shown that teachers have a tendency to interact and solicit more from boys than from girls (Flintoff & Scranton, 2001, Drudy & Ui Chathain, 2002, Nicaise *et al.*, 2007, Mosconi, 2011) and their expectations are often based on sex stereotypes (Drudy & Ui Chathain, 2002, Mosconi, 2011). Also, how they organize the activity and interact with the students can reinforce or question gender relations (Guérandel, 2011, Nicaise *et al.*, 2007, Vigneron, 2006). Additionally, without any formal education on the matter of gender and sports, the transmission or questioning of gender stereotypes will largely depend on the teacher's own sex and sports background (Guérandel, 2011, Guérandel & Beyria, 2010, Martino & Beckett, 2004, Patinet-Bienaimé & Cogérino, 2012).

Within sports culture and sports education, the body is seen as a machine, something to be worked upon and tinkered on for its performance to be uniform and perfect. As a consequence, teachers in physical education (coaches) are imbibed in a sports culture that does not allow for sloth like movements, clumsiness and instead favors efficiency of movement, quick responses to instruction and competition (Couchot-Schiex *et al.*, 2009). As a result, there is a tendency for coaches to favor those students who show effort and enthusiasm (Biddle & Goudas, 1997, Couchot-Schiex *et al.*, 2009, Guérandel, & Beyria, 2010). As it is at times a social risk to perform in such a way because her own femininity might be questioned, many girls withdraw from sport (Couchot-Schiex *et al.*, 2009, Flintoff & Scranton, 2001, Gorely *et al.*, 2003, Vigneron, 2006). Likewise, this favoritism solicits behavior that is conditioned to be

more acceptable in boys than girls (Couchot-Schiex *et al.*, 2009; Guérandel & Beyria, 2010). For as Connell pointed out, it is the use of the body to forcefully occupy space and manipulate objects that is valued about muscularity and body performance parodying the structure in dominance (1983). Consequently, girls are underserved in physical education and seen in an unfavorable light (Couchot-Schiex *et al.*, 2009, Flintoff & Scranton, 2001, Gorely *et al.*, 2003, Vigneron, 2006). Furthermore when in the presence of the opposite sex girls have a tendency to underestimate themselves, certainly in domains that are labeled as masculine (Mosconi, 2011) and could be the result of stereotype threat (Hively & Alayli, 2014, Moriello *et al.*, 2013, Chalabaev *et al.*, 2013, Steele & Aronson, 1995)..

#### *Movements in education and social psychology against stereotype effects*

Research in teacher training for ways to reduce and illicit a reduction of stereotyping and stereotype threat is mixed. Studies have shown that courses about such topics have little impact (Drudy & Ui Chathain, 2002, Couchot-Schiex *et al.*, 2009). However, this is not to say that there is none, indeed those teachers that are the most likely to coach while keeping stereotypes at bay are those that have had some instruction on the topic (Guérandel, 2011). What research has shown is that what creates more impact is developing critical self-awareness (Drudy & Ui Chathain, 2002, Couchot-Schiex *et al.*, 2009, Oliver & Kirk, 2015), allowing for teachers to gain insight on their own behavior and values and teaching with equality in mind. Self-observation from video, reflexive practices as in self-reported journals, seminars eliciting self-critique and consciousness raising are all seen to be beneficial to reducing stereotyping and bias in class Couchot-Schiex *et al.*, 2009, Drudy & Ui Chathain, 2002, Wright 1997, Oliver & Kirk, 2015).

Furthermore, in social psychology research has shown that presenting counter-stereotypes can often prompt individuals to think more thoroughly about the person at hand and having

less biased emotions toward them (Prati et al, 2015). In fact interventions for reducing prejudice not only reduces biases but can foster creative and different ways of thinking about prejudice and how to reduce it (Malgorzata et a., 2013).

### *Leisure sports and Inequality*

Little research is available on how interventions could prevent stereotyping based on gender dynamics within the domain of leisure sports. What is known is that, outside of a school setting, juggling between work and family-related tasks imposes significant constraints on time allotted for leisure activities, including sports and fitness. Numerous studies have identified inequalities in sports/fitness participation by demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and gender is one of the most important stratifying factors (Taniguchi & Shupe, 2012). Because women still bear the majority of family responsibilities they are often even more constrained for free time than men (Beck & Arnold, 2009, Taniguchi & Shupe, 2012). Moreover, adults with lower levels of income are least likely to participate in athletic activities considered to be in part due to the expenses of equipment or access to fee-based social amenities (Taniguchi & Shupe, 2012). Given the social stratifications inherent in leisure sports such a terrain provides rich insights into social interactions that challenge or comply with the social order embedded within male hegemony.

CrossFit is a relatively new phenomenon in the sports world and as such, relatively little has been published on its place in the sports world. Even less has been said on how CrossFit can challenge and promote inequalities within the specific act of coaching. Given the influence and range for change that a coach will have on each member as discussed, the relevance of examining CrossFit within a framework of stereotyping and hierarchies and giving a seminar to increase awareness is not lost.

## ***CHAPTER 1: SETTING THE STAGE***

### *Methodology and Design*

Due to the nature of the research question-how are traditional notions of gender produced and challenged through the social interactions of coaches in an educational setting within CrossFit this study is decomposed into two areas of questioning:

The first and major part of this work is based on the search to understand how teachers act out, promote and resist stereotypes both as a coach and personally.

The second, to observe how and if a seminar on gender awareness provokes any change in the coach's thought processes and behavior with regards to his or her students. The choice to hold an intervention was based on studies that have shown them to have a great influence in changing bias (Dovidio et al, 2010).

The decision to conduct an ethnography is best suited for these questions in that it allows for an insight on what internally occurs within the specific context of CrossFit Leman. An ethnography provides ample material to focus on the social interactions of the coaches with members, the meaning they put in these interactions and allows for an analysis of their internal dialogue that give meaning to this epitome of male superiority in sports and the inequalities that are created as a result of it.

Because CrossFit is a gender integrated sport and is not seen as a sport that is culturally associated with any gender, age or class the choice of it as a terrain seemed evident to study teacher stereotyping of adults in leisure sports. Nonetheless given the fact that CrossFit Leman does have exorbitant prices (no more so than for any fitness center in Switzerland) this does favor a social class standing that reduces heterogeneity in that regard.

To understand how coaches resist and act on stereotypes in teaching, this ethnography uses an interactionist perspective attentive to the micro-interactions between participants (Goyon,

2005, Geertz, 1973). Over the course of 2 years, over 200 hours of participant-observations were conducted at both sites of Vich and Nyon and took place in several forms as an athlete, a coach and an assistant coach. Field notes were recorded outside any direct presence as not to interrupt the socializing process.

To further comprehend each coach's perspective, 18 semi-structured interviews were also conducted of one to two hours on two occasions: prior to the workshop seminar on stereotyping and after. Their placement was particularly important to understand if the workshop had any impact on the coach's awareness of stereotyping. Added to that a focus group of the attendees was conducted to identify their suggestions as to how to actively counter bias, unfortunately only nine out of the fifteen attendees were able to come.

The first set of semi-structured interviews began by asking informants to discuss their life history in sport and the process by which they came into CrossFit. I asked them to reflect on their role as coach and on who they enjoyed having in class. Aware of a potential social desirability bias due to my clear positioning on women and sports I chose not to ask the coaches directly about gender or age inequality but rather if they saw any specific groups or patterns within the CrossFit Leman community. The second set of semi-structured interviews were conducted after a four hour seminar that I gave to the coaches on stereotypes and physical education. (See annex). After which, I asked the coaches what they thought of the course and if they thought anything would change in the way they would coach.

Upon completion of fieldwork, all the data collected through observations and fully transcribed interviews were formally coded and compared. Coding involved breaking down the data into categories of ideas, concepts, behaviors and events and labeling them through a process of examination, comparison and conceptualization (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Finally, in light of the dangers of generalizations and aware of the need of more intersectionality in one's approach, it is important to note that throughout this work I use the term women

to describe the female members within CrossFit Leman, in no way do I wish to make a generalization that all women will correspond to these conclusions.

### *The Sport of Fitness: CrossFit*

Founded in 2000 by Greg Glassman and his then wife Lauren Jenai in Santa Cruz, California, CrossFit claims that it is the only fitness program that has defined fitness in such a way to be measurable for each individual's progress (CrossFit Level 1 Training Guide, 2016). Additionally, CrossFit contests that its unique training program enhances physical fitness through the use of constantly varied functional movements performed at high intensity within a specified time (CrossFit Level 1 Training Guide, 2016). The underlying goal of the program is to improve performance in ten fitness domains consisting of accuracy, stamina, balance, coordination, strength, power, speed, flexibility, agility and cardiovascular and respiratory endurance (CrossFit Level 1 Training Guide, 2016). Therefore, a CrossFit box will rarely repeat its content unless done specifically and the movements are a mix of gymnastics, weightlifting and general movements like running and rowing.

Particular workouts or WODs (workouts of the day) are known as benchmarks and used by CrossFit affiliates to measure their members' progress (CrossFit Level 1 Training Guide, 2016). They are considered exceptionally challenging, were created by CrossFit headquarters and are grouped with titles such as "The Girls" or "Hero" workouts. The "Girls" with names such as Annie or Fran and the Heroes so named for fallen members who were in service to the military, police or fire departments (Knapp, 2015).

All members of a CrossFit box will complete the same workout of the day or WOD with the opportunity to change the intensity (otherwise known as scaling) if they are unable to perform a particular movement, entailing a fraternization of different ages, skill and performance levels in a shared-sexed fitness space (Knapp, 2015). Although unspoken, the workouts are constructed within a time frame that is a window for individuals to measure themselves against



each other for the fastest times, the heaviest lift, the maximum number of rounds completed etc. In part this is for individuals to track and record their progress but it inherently creates a field of comparison and competition.

To coach CrossFit, one must take the CrossFit Level 1 Certification course for the sum of 1000 US dollars (Level 1 Certification, CrossFit). The training course last one weekend, the cost of it already delineating a line between those that can afford such a costly weekend.

CrossFit has relied heavily on on-line media to reinforce and spread its fitness movement. In 2001 CrossFit went on line as a site that simply provided a workout and over time began to post articles in its journal free of charge (Herz, 2014). For example, boxes in Switzerland site CrossFit.com (CrossFit Inc.'s main page) as an integral link to access information about CrossFit, be it about nutrition, the movements or seminars to be held. Various movements and conversations with well-known coaches and athletes are easily accessible through the CrossFit journal (also on the CrossFit.com website). Today the site requests 50 dollars to have complete access to the journal but still posts a daily workout accessible without charge (Herz, 2014). Furthermore, it is a requirement of the affiliate agreement to have the CrossFit Journal logo and link on the website.

This sport of fitness hosted its first CrossFit Games in 2009. Athletes qualified through trials that had to be posted online to CrossFit Inc. of which the finalists went to California. Still using this format, the CrossFit Games is now televised on ESPN and sponsored by Reebok with over 175 countries participating (Herz, 2014). According to CNBC CrossFit has 13,000 gyms in more than 120 countries and is estimated to have four million CrossFit members. (Wang, 2016). The growing worldwide popularity of CrossFit gives an indicator of how it has become a large social epicenter within the sporting world.

Since its beginning CrossFit uses an affiliate system to open new gyms reasoning that: "free markets will reward an excellent product or service with financial success" (Saran, D. 2013).

Thus, to open one's own gym an annual affiliate fee of 3000 US dollars to CrossFit Inc. must be paid. After which this new affiliate member is free to make all financial and logistical decisions without any control from CrossFit Inc. However, all affiliates are required to have an online site and typically their own workout of the day is posted along with tips on how to perform it, normally this is accessible to everyone. Nonetheless, the experience of going into a CrossFit gym anywhere in the world which has similar markers and objects has exported a sports culture with no real roots except through media.

Although the affiliation allows a box to use the CrossFit label it provides no business system nor marketing material (E. Robertson, personal communication June 24, 2017). Furthermore, great emphasis is made by CrossFit Headquarters on brand use rights (CrossFit Level 1 Training Guide, 2016) and it often ferociously "goes to battle in court to protect its trademarks and the affiliates who license them" (Saran, 2013). Whistle-blowing on those who do not abide by these agreements is greatly encouraged by CrossFit Inc. which consider it as "unfair competition" (Saran, 2013).

Moreover, as utopic the affiliate system might be, leaving an individual completely free to establish her or his own gym, CrossFit Inc. offers no financial guarantee. As affiliate owner E. Robertson states that "until you've had to call them and say hey that fucker down the road is pretending to be a CrossFit and taking my business, you feel like the 3k is rape. No one sends me flowers". (E. Robertson, personal communication June 24, 2017). In short CrossFit leaves its affiliates to either sink or swim, and the financial risk lies solely on the affiliate and not CrossFit Inc.

Additionally, taking into account the costs of having access to CrossFit as a member, affiliate or coach, the economic capital of those who participate in CrossFit is relevant. Interestingly, those that are in any military, police or fire service do receive discounts in CrossFit Leman. A

form of social capital in itself, welcomed in part because the CrossFit model of the symbolic warrior that can adapt to any form of physical engagement is now made flesh.

### *CrossFit Culture and Community*

The first athletes to try CrossFit were indeed the military or police and founder Greg Glassman's approach to convince them was to show physical dominance, to exceed their physical capacities whilst the exemplar CrossFitter breezed through (Herz, 2014). The message was, CrossFit would keep you from sinking; CrossFit makes you even more of an athlete, more of a machine so that you can do your job (Herz, 2014). Today the workouts often require wearing a weighted vest or to run while carrying heavy, awkward objects, climb ropes, jump over barriers all simulations of combat training. The athletes label themselves as "warriors" and "fire breathers" confident in knowing that anyone outside of CrossFit cannot perform as well as they do in the whole spectrum of physical challenges (Herz, 2014 & personal observations).

This is because CrossFit maintains that it creates bodies that have a higher "general physical preparedness" than any other fitness program (CrossFit Level 1 Training Guide, 2016). Meaning that no matter the task, whether it be a sprint of any kind or the lifting of heavy objects or both, the CrossFitter will perform them quite well. Thus bolstered with this confidence, the identity of a CrossFitter is embedded in a facet of masculine hegemony. For a CrossFitter theoretically has the body of the soldier, strong, capable and prepared, a physical manifestation of man's inherent virility (Mosse, 1997). Its popularity is not only in that it sells an image of a body transformed but in fact all the movements are accessible to all types of bodies because CrossFit offers "scaled" options for all bodies and as such once in, the body can not help but to improve.

Interestingly, an analysis of the CrossFit journal dating from 2002-2012 showed that males made up 72% and females only 28% of all people visibly represented (Knapp, 2014). And yet,

research suggests that general membership of women in CrossFit is over 50% (Knapp, 2014). The significance of this underrepresentation of women in the journal is not irrelevant (Knapp, 2014). Not unique to the sporting world in this representational violence, CrossFit can be considered an active participant. Nonetheless, similar to Anderson's findings amongst male cheerleaders (2008), such coed training spaces allow for new ways of considering male and female expectations and thus expanding gender expectations (Knapp, 2015).

Furthermore, although the physical demands of the "Girls" workouts could challenge ideal femininity which brands a woman's body as weak and passive, Glassman's description of why a woman's name was chosen does not (2015). Founder Glassman explains his choice saying "anything that left you flat on your back looking at the sky thinking what the f\*\*\*\* happened to me deserves a female's name. They are not old girlfriends, they're like storms if a hurricane can wreak havoc on a whole town so can a workout" (CrossFit Inc., 2011). The so to speak merited female name due to the havoc it invokes underscores a message of women as malicious destructive creatures as is so often noted in feminist analysis (Knapp, 2015). These "Girls" are objects or even obstacles that males must conquer to prevail another day (Knapp, 2015). Additionally the Hero workouts of which only two out of the 122 are named after women suggests yet another form of symbolic annihilation, similar to what is found in media's underrepresentation of women in sport (Knapp, 2015, Menneson, 2005).

### *CrossFit Leman*

CrossFit Leman, run by a husband-wife team Olga and Euan, is located in the industrial zone of Vich, Switzerland and has been open for nine years. When I joined CrossFit Leman in 2014, it had over three hundred active members, today in 2017 CrossFit Leman has over 600 members and three different locations which are in Vich, Nyon and Eaux-Vivres. Forty-five percent of which are female and the majority of members are white.

At CrossFit Lemman classes are run at 6am, 9am, 10 am and 12:15 pm, the afternoons are sometimes filled with private lessons and classes continue from 5pm until 9pm. All classes last an hour and members are suggested to attend the Rookie classes until they have attended at least three months or a total of 150 hours of classes. After which they can begin the Intermediate classes.

On weekends classes run on Saturday mornings and although there are no classes on Sundays the gym is still open. This is known as “open gym” (which also occurs on Saturday morning after 11:30), members can come and have access to work on anything they would like and a coach is there to answer any questions. In general those that come to the open gyms are the more motivated and older members (in terms of their frequentation) who also have a social circle with which to meet with. Typically, these are the most advanced members or coaches although any newcomers are welcomed and encouraged. As a result a certain social stratification is built between those athletes who want to improve in the sport of CrossFit and those that are wishing only to maintain a level of fitness. Logically, although children are welcome to come and stay while their parents are exercising, weekends which are often devoted to more family organized events also create a separation between who has access and benefits to the weekend classes.

Those members that come in the mornings are generally housewives or individuals with a more flexible schedule and vary from health professionals, policemen or those people working from home. Very often there is a greater majority of female expatriates at these hours. The evening clients are very often those that work full time at jobs away from home and in general there is a slight majority of Swiss people attending these classes.

CrossFit Lemman has a continued education program that is obligatory for coaches and any assistant coaches to attend. Although CrossFit.com considers that having the Level 1 certificate validates and allows coaches to actually coach, CrossFit Lemman requires more. Coaches and

anyone interested in becoming one must attend a 7:15 Saturday meeting that is unpaid known as ITP (Internal Training Program). However, attendance to the program and completion of the tasks required in no way guarantees a position at CrossFit Leman. To be accepted into the program members must complete a letter of intent; once accepted different tasks must be completed before any job offer. These reunions can cover an array of topics all within the scope of coaching and educating. Subjects such as teaching a push up or pull up, therapeutic remedies such as kinesiology taping, to presence and attitude with members are just a few examples.

Obviously the motivation for coaches and aspiring ones must be high for there to be regular attendance so early Saturday mornings. Additionally, the time allotted to do so with small children or a job filters out those potentially wishing to become a coach as well. As such the need for the social capital to attend in the form of time, financial position and infrastructure if with children is a key factor in who can become a coach at CrossFit Leman.

The majority of coaches are paid as outside consultants. As such coaches bill their hours to CrossFit Leman and it is up to the coaches to be responsible for their accident insurance and retirement funds. Also, each coach billing as an independent will not bill for an hour of their time in return for free membership. However CrossFit Leman does have three coaches as official employees, besides coaching they are also responsible for all the administrative details such as adding members to the online infrastructure, merchandising, marketing and general custodial tasks.

As of spring of 2017 CrossFit expanded with a bar and kitchen, as a result the position of Angel was created. Angels are responsible for assisting and completing sales, completing all the administrative details for potential new clients, serving coffees and smoothies and assisting the coaches if necessary. These individuals receive a free membership in return and get all merchandise at cost rate (generally around 50% off).

At the initial moments of this study four types of courses were given Rookie, Intermediate, Advanced and Competitors. As demand and attendance declined for the Advanced and the Competitor classes in 2015, only the two levels of Rookie and Intermediate were offered in 2016. This is thought to be due the high difficulty of the classes and their extended length of time. Another class aimed at seniors was added in the fall of 2017. Named as Active its approach is to simply encourage seniors to be more active as well as work on proprioception and balance. Just recently the Advanced classes have begun again due to demand which indicates the advancement of members in their own proficiency, in the fall of 2017.

In general the more experienced coaches will coach the more advanced levels. Furthermore, the morning classes are given by the female coaches. However it is unclear as to whether the split is based on gender or if based on availability of the coaches. Nevertheless, the morning classes are often perceived as less serious in part due to the large amount of leisure time the morning classes have to chat and talk after the classes are over.

The class begins with an informal gathering around the whiteboard where the WOD (Workout of the Day) is described and members introduce themselves. After a warm up, the coach demonstrates and teaches the more technical movements required for the class and monitors each individual, makes weight recommendations (i.e. how much to lift) and addresses technique throughout the hour lesson. Following the technique or the strength piece of the class the members then complete the workout of the day. There is no distinction between the movements required between men and women and is a shared-sexed space.

As a coach I have had access to the members and their reasoning as to why they do CrossFit amongst those reasons were: Diversity of activities, stress release, motivating, fitness improvement, weight loss, pushing beyond one's limits, physique, community, ambiance, self-esteem, endurance and fun. Out of this freely given list from my classes the two overwhelming choices were stress release and fitness improvement.

*The CrossFit Coaches (all names are pseudonyms chosen by the coaches themselves)*

*Conan*

Conan is a Scottish 43 year old upper class male, married father of three. He is both co-owner and head coach of CrossFit Leman with his wife Samantha. When describing the emergence of CrossFit Leman in 2010 it his experience with CrossFit that brought CF Leman to light. After suffering for many years from a back injury to the point that his family life was greatly impaired and searching for exercise programs to improve it, Conan found the CrossFit website and began the workouts at home with Samantha. After a year and seeing his own improvement Conan and Samantha began to recruit their neighbors into the sport and seeing their enthusiasm, opened up CrossFit Leman in 2010. Besides his responsibilities at CF Leman, Conan works with his father in their international insurance company as the general organization director. He and has been coaching for 9 years.

*Samantha*

Samantha is a Russian 36 year old upper class female who is married and a mother of three. She is both co-owner and head coach of CrossFit Leman with her husband Conan. Participating in sports throughout her life mainly through school and going to gyms, Samantha was introduced to CrossFit through Conan and found the workouts suited her lifestyle with two small children at that time. She works full time as a coach along with running all the organizational facets involved in the gym, such as employee scheduling, marketing and merchandising for CrossFit Leman. She has been coaching for 8 years.

*Sarah*

Sarah is a Croatian 29 year old upper class woman who is one of the fully employed staff members at CF Leman. Before working there, she was working as an auditor for Ernst and Young. Besides coaching, Sarah also is responsible for the accounting, administration and retail. Her previous time in the fitness world was spent going to gyms and attending aerobic



classes. She was introduced to CrossFit through a work colleague and she claims to have completely changed her life, her lifestyle because of it. She has been coaching for three years.

### *Rich*

Rich is an Irish 47 year old upper class man who works full time at CrossFit Lemman and is responsible for business management, software and communications, along with building maintenance. He was previously working in Communications as head of internal communications. Rich formerly competed in skiing and hockey at a Division 1 level in his youth and was moderately bike riding when he was introduced to CrossFit by his neighbor's Conan and Samantha. He has been coaching for 3 years.

### *Scooter*

Scooter is an American 51 year old upper class man who works as a contractor for CrossFit Lemman and works from home as a video producer. Scooter was a champion swimmer in high school and for his first two years of college. Before leaving to Switzerland for his wife's career opportunities Scooter was a Class C cyclist and he began CrossFit in the United States in 2010 before moving to Switzerland. Scooter describes that he was looking for some sort of exercise that was more time efficient than cycling. He has been coaching for 5 years.

### *Winnie*

Winnie is a Swiss, 30 year old middle class woman who works full time for CrossFit Lemman. Along with coaching, Winnie is responsible for the Nyon site, its administration and general maintenance. Before working for CF Lemman Winnie worked as a fitness instructor in a physical therapy clinic. Winnie was a champion figure skater and hockey player before entering into CrossFit and is considered one of the elite members, having placed well in several CrossFit competitions. She has been coaching for 2 years and for her, CrossFit's great appeal lies in its capacity to push her beyond her limits and the satisfaction that she feels as a result of accomplishing.

*Winston*

Winston is a 28 year old, upper class German male who works part time as a coach and also works as a salesman for a health food distributor. Winston is finishing his studies on a part time basis in physical health management in Germany as well. Winston did very well in basketball and gymnastics before trying CrossFit. Once he began CrossFit in 2012 he committed himself entirely to the sport because... He has been a coach for 5 years and is considered one of the elite members in the gym due to his performance in several CrossFit competitions. During the course of this study, Winston was fired from CrossFit Leman.

*Theo*

Theo is a 35 year old, upper class Indian male who works part time as a coach and co-manager of the gym in Geneva. He also works full time in an upper midlevel position at an international bank. Theo was an intense student of the martial arts and when introduced to CrossFit he became completely immersed loving the intensity and the new challenges of the sport 6 years ago. He is presently co-owner of CrossFit Eaux-Vives.

*Tom*

Tom is a 43 year old, upper class Swiss male who works as a substitute coach when there are vacancies and is also responsible for web design, graphic design and photographs. He works full time for his own company as a graphic designer and also works as a freelance photographer. He began CrossFit because he was tired with the repetitiousness of a gym and was slowly extricating himself from playing soccer as seriously. He has been coaching for 2 years. Due to time constraints Tom was only available for the second sessions of the interviews.

*Andrew*

Andrew is a 29 year old, Swiss male who is currently finishing an internship and will move into sports management. At the time that this study began, Andrew had been coaching for three years and was coaching at 60% but had stopped to continue his studies. For this reason

he was unavailable for interviews but was a significant source in my observations. Recently he has begun to take on one early morning 6am class again.

*Dag*

Dag is a 48 year old, Swiss male of Swedish heritage who has been working for 15 years in an international banking firm. He was one of the very first members of CrossFit Leman and has been an official coach for 2 years. Prior to CrossFit his time in sports was spent in competitive skiing. Always present and engaged, Dag is a well-recognized and well appreciated part of the CrossFit Leman community. Due to a technical failure in the recording process Dag's interviews were not accessible for interpretation.

## *Chapter 2:*

### ***THE REGIME OF THE CROSSFIT BODY AND HEALTH LIFESTYLE AND THE INEQUALITIES IT CREATES***

In this chapter I will show how coaches do articulate a sort of fitness tyranny despite their well-meaning intentions. Coaches' ideals of healthy and how a healthy body should appear is couched in various forms and is the first rung to exclusion and stereotyping. In fact, members' bodies and their performance are judged and categorized with the assumption that physical change i.e. increased physical capacity, loss of weight, increased muscle is the ideal. And as a result, the paradigm to uphold a certain body form mandates a lifestyle, which as a consequence, is also judged. This archetype of fitness is the groundwork for inequality despite its good intentions. As is at times, the process in which a coach will affiliate oneself with Cross-Fit and their interpretations that come as a result.

#### *The Tyranny of Fitness*

If the body is used as a representation of male hegemony, one begs the question as to what is actually assigned to the figure itself, what is used to label a body? Since the early 1700's the idealized male form has been lean of fat and his strength seen through his musculature (Connell, 2005, Mosse, 1997, Vigarello *et al.*, 2011). Muscles, no longer deemed necessary in the modern day world due to the mechanization of labor is still of great importance, their presence or lack of, a signifier of a symbolic virility, physical power (Vigarello *et al.*, 2011) and physical capital as we will see later.

Furthermore, it is not the presence of muscularity alone that is the male archetypal body, the ideal is the youthful body, the one of the young soldier: masculine, virile, strong, able to resist pain long before age begins to render it soft and weak (Burstyn, 1999; Mosse, 1997; Vigarello *et al.*, 2011). Age and sickness are threats to this ideal such that age is now treated as sickness

something to remedy against, to go to the cosmetic surgeon for and body work through fitness has become another cure (Vigarello *et al.*, 2011). Body work then is an active negation on the signs of age, a laborious denial of death's arrival and essential to maintaining a body ideal (Vigarello *et al.*, 2011). This collective conclusion that age is the tipping board to bad health implicitly creates an ageist positioning on the body. For in the world of leisure sports and fitness, one must maintain one's body "in shape" to either keep it in its youthful shape of before or to create a more idealized form. Hidden within this logic then, is a set up that denigrates the aged or the female body as the un-ideal from the muscular soldier. Thus they are opposed forms to be literally rejected and fought against.

Herein lies the power of fitness on the body and how health is perceived. No longer considered an act of God, luck or even as a result of good genealogy, health has become a status that one works for and achieves (White, Young & Gillet, 1995). This cultural message emphasizes that work *should* be enacted on the body to maintain health, a far more active and intrusive behavior upon the body than in times past (White, Young & Gillet, 1995). As a consequence, those who are not performing this body work are somehow deviant and responsible for their own ill health (White, Young & Gillet, 1995). Although well intended, the development and promotion of cultural beliefs around health, flow from and help reproduce structures of inequality and relations of dominance (White, Young & Gillet, 1995). It is the tyranny of fitness.

Throughout this chapter I show how the actors within this social entity of CrossFit both promote and resist this defensive posturing which entails a push and pull movement between producing inequalities and challenging them. They will do this through the lens of their perceptions which is always filtered by a prescribed CrossFit way, which is in turn a way of creating an environment of insiders and outsiders. As a result exclusionary practices and stereotyping occurs. As we will see in the following paragraphs, they will judge the performance of others,

assume that CrossFit is the best thing for their members and chase for themselves physical signifiers for their own validation.

*The Cult of CrossFit: Alternation, Transformation and Induction into a New Sports Culture*

How coaches acquire this filter of validation lies in large part to their own assimilation into CrossFit. For it is seemingly clear that any introduction and induction into any leisure sport is indeed a process of re-socialization and transformation. The process of joining a group, of fusing one's identity to a particular organization or activity is also fuel for excluding and down casting others.

Transformation or alternation as named by Berger and Luckman, is a process in which an individual "switches worlds" and moves from one social sphere to another (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p.157). One of the key components to the change is the need of the individual to establish strong, emotional ties with significant others of the new group to do so (Berger & Luckman 1966). Serving as guides into a new reality, these figures are also responsible for creating durable links into the community itself, another key step in the transformation (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Without this, an individual introduced into a new world cannot maintain its plausibility and will become disillusioned and disengage (Berger & Luckman, 1966). In fact, there must be a displacement between a new and old world, a before and after and if a physical separation between the old and new is not possible, then a metaphysical one must be put in place, one of believers and unbelievers (Berger & Luckman, 1966). In this case the role of coach takes on a significant importance in a members' introduction to CrossFit, because it is the coach that is the emblem of this change.

For a new sport requires a displacement of one's reality in which the way we use our bodies, the way we care for our bodies is newly defined and reconfigured by this indoctrination be it Zumba, triathlons, bodybuilding, running and even CrossFit. Nonetheless, the strength of this displacement is relative to each individual (Coquet, 2014). As both guide and follower each

coach acts out this dynamic, there have both moments of defensive positioning and alternation. There is tension between the coaches own individual engagement in CrossFit and alternate realities, defined by each individuals' subjective experience that can produce, promote or challenge inequality.

CrossFit has since its origins been labeled as a cult or sect (Herz, 2015), and within this labeling lies the requirement that as actors and leaders within CrossFit one must be adamant that CrossFit is in fact a good cult. Their defensive posture in saying it is for fitness and therefore is benign and beneficial, masks the symbolic violence on individual expression and any other definition of fitness and health. But this is necessary, for as Berger and Luckman argued, a social entity involved in transformation cannot allow for individual discrepancies which would run the risk of losing authenticity and plausibility. Consider this passage in Herz's work on CrossFit:

“...members choose not to eat corrupt and unclean foods of the outsiders, you reaffirm your tribal membership, even if members of the tribe are not around to witness it. The more rooted you feel in your tribal identity the easier it is to routinely make non-conformist choices even if it comes as a social cost...it's an act of social allegiance” (Herz, 2015, p. 203).

Once inducted into the “tribe” of CrossFit the choices about food may seem non-conformist in comparison to the outside world, and yet the insiders indeed make similar lifestyle choices that are a form of “social allegiance” confirming their authenticity of a group. Just as Berger and Luckman describe signifiers such as food in this case allows for a separation of worlds. To note, within CrossFit Lemman the prescribed CrossFit nutritional program is greatly encouraged.

To further distance itself from any other bodies in fitness, CrossFit has promoted itself as being the first fitness program that actually defines fitness, that without such a definition any other program “combines elements of fraud and farce” (Glassman, 2002). Advertising this,

CrossFit both sells itself as superior and unequal to all within the niche market of fitness, heralding itself as having found a working definition of fitness. Glassman's fitness uses elementary physics to define itself, through the equation of work to establish a construct that measures fitness. As such, Glassman claims that CrossFit is the only sports system that allows for measurable results in fitness. Thus the metaphysical separation needed for CrossFit to incorporate people into its self-defined reality rather than others is evident.

More importantly, the fact that fitness within CrossFit measurable by time, distance and weight allows for a system of surveillance and self-monitoring through the use of mobile applications, creating an international platform that strengthens its existence by yet another metaphysical separation fortified by surveillance. CrossFit members are adamantly encouraged to track their progress by entering their results after a workout into a mobile application that other members, other gyms can also have access to. Not only does this allow for CrossFitters worldwide to compare themselves to each other and to measure their own personal advancement, it also allows for coaches to monitor their members and boxes to compare themselves against each other.

As Lupton has described, the use of technologies for individuals to track the functioning of their body for health reasons has powerful implications (2012). As such, a system of surveillance and self-monitoring creates a normative power of CrossFit within itself, for it fabricates the social pressure of an outside gaze, encouraging individuals to behave in a manner conforming to CrossFit ideals. For example, when individuals' results are posted, encouraging and or admonishing messages are sent back by other members and or coaches. However as Lupton describes, the gaze is no longer just from the outside but from the individual as well, and as result a focused "data self" is created and is constantly monitored (Lupton, 2012).

Within CrossFit Leman, members are constantly updating their performance, self-tracking their maximum weight in Olympic weightlifting, inputting their body weight, body fat and



even how they have eaten and slept. All of which coaches have access to if the member decides to make this information public which is the commonly the case. As a result, there is a constant dialogue amongst members and coaches of performance improvement, body improvement which members willingly proffer to the coaches to examine. Furthermore, emails are sent out if a member stops attending within intervals of three, six and eight weeks and contain messages of encouragement to come back and acknowledgements of how difficult it is to return. In short, given the voluntary access to personal information CrossFit, through the use of technology manages to monitor its members in a way that promotes conformity, social allegiance and fortifies one's alternation,

Additionally, CrossFit strengthens and maintains its stability by encouraging criticism whilst remaining adamant that the proof and truth of CrossFit is only to be discovered by those who try it:

“...it warrants mention that we are not attempting to demonstrate our program's legitimacy through scientific principles. We are but sharing the methods of a program whose legitimacy has been established through the testimony of athletes, soldiers, cops and others whose lives or livelihoods depend on fitness” (Glassman, 2002).

Note that CrossFit maintains its own validity within its own circle so to speak, thus further concretizing an insiders/outside dichotomy. Furthermore, its figurehead is one of ultimate survival the archetypal body of man, the fireman, the soldier, and policeman. Those in the armed services and athletes who depend on their bodies for their financial and even literal existence. The danger of life then, is mitigated through doing CrossFit, preparing even those uninitiated in war and physical threat to a higher physical capacity. It literally evokes the idea of survival of the fittest, a transfigured source of social Darwinism represented in the body of the CrossFitter with a desk job. In a world where physical threat is evermore unlikely but the

threat of competing for a desk job with a once thought of inferior form (i.e. woman) ever increases, the need to establish physical superiority runs rampant.

CrossFit also has a stalwart positioning with regards to pain. The sport itself is described as one that is “hardcore and insane” and Greg Glassman has gone so far as to say that the sport “can kill you” (Cooperman, 2005). Emblematic of such dialogue, one of its mascots is Pukie the Clown (a vomiting clown) which alludes to the real, possible and negative results of practicing CrossFit. Thus, the soldier paradigm of persisting and enduring beyond physical discomfort is incorporated into the ideal CrossFitter whether male or female. In consequence, it is the self-perceived CrossFit body and its performance that separates and individual from other social circles. Those that are members of the CrossFit community consider themselves part of an elite group of worldwide warrior athletes who defend the legitimacy of CrossFit with their bodies.

Hence the conviction of a CrossFit coach is linked to both his or her identity and process of alternation. Conan, head coach of 9 years and owner of CrossFit Leman demonstrates the link between his own relation to CrossFit and his role as a coach:

My main role is to improve people’s lives... How do I improve people’s lives with CrossFit?

So I improved my life with CrossFit and that’s the reason why it’s all here [gesturing to the gym] ... It gives you the physical abilities to be able to live your life better –Conan

When explaining his relationship to CrossFit, Conan has recounted to the uninitiated how he had been told that he would not be able to lift more than five kilos after being diagnosed with a severe back injury. After much searching Conan found CrossFit and surpassed the expectations from the medical community. Indeed for Conan CrossFit has improved his life. His belief was so great that he and his wife built CrossFit Leman. Thus personal conviction and history of each CrossFit coach, their process of alternation are other reasons as to why a coach

will view physical improvement as life betterment for members. Consider Rich and Sarah and their connection to CrossFit:

... so I think there's a group that do CrossFit cuz it's like a cool thing to do, And then for others it becomes a way of life. Umm and it's certainly done and helped me in a lot of a lot of different areas and it has changed my life and my outlook and it's helped with self-confidence, dealing with uh life's frustrations and uhh it's it's an outlet which I now need. And uh I think I'm gonna be doing CrossFit for the rest of my life- Rich.

And then 6 months later I started CrossFit and it changed my life. I began to realize that my career wasn't the most important thing but to feel centered and balanced between your health and your mind. To feel healthy because when you think of it, your career and the salary that goes with it isn't what is going to make you happy. -Sarah

CrossFit for Rich is a necessity, something that has improved his life and has for him become something he cannot imagine living without. However note in his first statement that he makes a separation between those that do it due to CrossFit's growing popularity whereas for others it has become a way of living. Members in his mind are already separated by their relative attachment to CrossFit. As for Sarah, she has made significant life changes quitting a corporate accounting firm to work for CrossFit Lemman. She has found in her opinion a healthy life when previously she wasn't respecting such a lifestyle. Both Sarah and Rich evoke a before and after, a remaking or rebirth of their lives and their realities that have now changed. Any athlete that feels the same way about CrossFit would be identifiable and approved by these coaches. For as Berger and Luckman describe, these coaches serve as guides to induct others but also the force of their conviction validates and fuels their own adherence.

*Kings and Queens of CrossFit*

However what happens when an athlete does not correspond with the lifestyle choices and behavior encouraged and acted out by the coaches is exactly when differences in treatment of the athletes begins.

Marianda I have been meaning to tell you that you are really progressing and I can see that you are working so hard and so I wanted to tell you: Good work! -Ac

Upon first interpretation of my comment to Marianda, it would appear as if I am functioning within one of my roles as coach: encourager, motivator and approving her body performance as a mentor to a novice. And yet what I cannot disguise in that moment of benevolent approval, is that underneath it, lies a form of pity and judgement.

I was the first person that Marianda met in CrossFit Leman and have been her coach for the past three months. I see her once a week and enjoy her presence in class, she is enthusiastic and is quick to smile. I as a coach, consider her athletic performance to be good, she is motivated, works hard during the WODs but I see that she often is slower than the rest especially when it comes to running.

Marianda is significantly overweight and I admire her grit. I think to myself that she must be working harder than the rest because she has to push, pull, jump, run with all that extra weight and still, she comes in every day. Poor Marianda the fat girl. In my mind, Marianda is possibly double in kilos of what her body really is or really could be. It is as if the blood and tissue that surrounds her is excess and is hiding what her true body is and it is my job, my mission to reveal it to her.

My thoughts continue in class onto poor Laurence who is 50 and is so slow and skinny that it is a miracle that he can get a simple thing like 20 kilos over his head. He persists at coming every day as well and his body hasn't changed in the slightest from a year ago. No muscle gain, no weight gain he has the same soft body. I wonder to myself: why isn't it changing?

What am I not doing/ saying/encouraging for this to be so? When can I start talking to both Marianda and Laurence about nutrition and lifestyle because... don't they want to have a fit body? Isn't that the reason why they walk into this box every day? Isn't this the goal for everyone and my aim is to help them achieve it?

Despite my good intentions, how much does my behavior, my low expectation of their body's performance influence them in their actual movements? How much does my opinion on what a fit body should look like influence my actions? Given the research concerning a teacher's influence just through non-verbal communication and the Pygmalion effect I believe that I am not giving justice to Laurence or Marianda. I am certainly not treating them as I treat those that physically *appear* to me as more fit and move more skilfully.

And furthermore, who am I to assume that they aren't happy with their body the way it is right now? Who am I to say that the way I would prescribe them to eat, sleep and workout would result in their increased well-being? How does my ideal of health and a healthy body limit a student's own journey to find what works for him or her? Here indeed is the tyranny of fitness. Herein lies a potential for exclusionary practices, the dehumanization of both the actors and those acted upon.

When coaches like Conan state that he is there to improve other lives there is a question that leads out of his conviction. He believes, like Sarah, Rich that CrossFit will make others' lives better because it has his, I feel the same but how can I assume that this is the case for all? For my assumption that this is truth leads to produce a hierarchy of bodies in my mind. All of which I have catalogued as fit or unfit based on shape, size, age, sex all these things that my eyes use as filters before the member has even come and spoken to me. Isn't this some sort of "body-ism"? If we as instructors in sport and fitness are promoting an ideal body form and life, a reference to compare others to how many do we exclude, deprecate and ignore whether unconscious or not?

From coach's point of view, Conan describes in more detail how we lead those on to an improved state of being:

If I can improve somebody's fitness by improving their strength or cardio whatever then they are going to have a better day further down the line...simply because the physical demands of their everyday life become easier so they can manage easier, you can have more fun now because you're not getting tired playing with your kids, you can have more fun when you're playing your football games now because you're not feeling tired and if you're older you could also stop worrying about falling over on the floor and having the strength to get back up again and if you're a parent who is suffering from backache carrying their children well now that's not going to be such an issue anymore...so yeah just trying to help get things better. -

Conan

Conan believes that CrossFit, will improve members' lives by increasing their physical capacity. The everyday becomes simpler and "better" because your body is "better". The underlying message is that life becomes more entertaining and liberating because we can move and play without the imperfection of our bodies hampering us. The subjective experience of a coach, supplemented with the ideas of the work one must do on the body as White, Young & Gillet describe, creates a biased perspective. Samantha evinces this idea when she discusses how unhappy the members are with their bodies:

...you know people like uh get themselves into into this miserable way of living that they are unhappy about and they are unhappy with their body and they come to see us at 40 years old like completely out of shape having done so much sport in their youth and they're like ok I want this back and umm of course we can get there so that's what's cool...Samantha

In her description of some clients she describes how members are living in discord with their wishes and happiness, far away from the free, healthy, active body of their youth and wish to gain it back which Samantha is certain CrossFit can do. In the members' quest to reach a higher form of their body, they reflect the social aversion of a body that is old and flaccid, that

aversion sustained by a coaches positioning. A dangerous line for a coach to stand on if he or she is strongly antipathetic to certain body forms. Regardless, the general message of body transformation and life betterment is one all the coaches' share:

For me? Why CrossFit? Well ummm...it's really something that makes me feel alive when I do it and it is about surpassing my own limits to feel alive to feel uhh reborn because it is hard and because well life is hard and as a result it brings something to you you feel stronger more alive-Winnie

Winnie feels more alive with CrossFit, stronger and as stated before Sarah believes it has given her an equilibrium between "her health and mind", Rich has found an outlet for life's frustrations, Conan can play and pick up his children. In all cases the coaches strongly believe that the physical changes that occur when doing CrossFit are beneficial for the body and one's life. As such coaches are entrenched in a tyrannical perspective that does not allow for anything less than a body performance that concedes with CrossFit.

### ***CHAPTER 3: INTERPRETATIONS & PERFORMANCES OF THE CROSSFIT COACH***

What occurs then if an athlete does not perform in the expected manner within CrossFit? Research has shown, as discussed in the literature review, coaches prefer students who show effort and in this chapter I will explore similar findings within CrossFit Leman. I will demonstrate how through the subjective judgement of intensity, coaches will judge and treat athletes unequally. Moreover, the movement of a coach to judge and condemn the member of lack of intensity is mitigated by the adherence to the CrossFit ideal held by the coaches themselves. Since the coaches are seen and consider themselves as models, they themselves must articulate the physical message. As such, I will illustrate how coaches knowingly use their own bodies as social capital and as such embed within themselves and in CrossFit Leman a potential for bias.

#### *Judges of body performance: Ranking bodies*

To begin with let us look at the source and the reasoning of judgement within the sport of CrossFit. In CrossFit it is paramount that tangible evidence of fitness improvement is produced at each physical endeavor. This is measured by the time taken to accomplish the workout, the amount of weight moved, or the amount of work done. Furthermore, it is the ardor with which a member uses his or her body that is essential. Within my observations there is a clear pattern, coaches will spend more time with members that show this ardor.

And yet, how is this favoritism articulated within the coaches when their training requires them to treat all members equally? A facet of this bias is validated through the concept of intensity. In discussing his role as coach, Conan stresses how important this intensity is and that it is the responsibility of the coach to ensure it:

In a class itself my role there is to make sure that that the members or the athletes that are coming to workout are able to get a workout in a safe and fun environment and at an intensity that actually produces results.-Conan



A certain physical vehemence is paradigm then to improve an athlete's physical fitness in CrossFit, producing the desired results is imperative. Therefore, to ensure that a member is doing the desired body work one must make a judgement of their body performance and encourage a certain form of it. As a result, the role of coach is embedded in a power relation in which the coach must police the athlete. A coach must urge and champion that physical arduousness and do so when they consider and interpret that an athlete isn't going towards intensity or losing it. They determine this by the amount of weight members choose, the sweat on their brow, whether or not they are gasping for air at the end of the workout afterwards or chatting and laughing with a friend as if they just went outside for a stroll. Under guise of the intent of improving physical fitness, the set up for subjectively categorizing between motivated and unmotivated is in place. One gives a stamp of approval so to speak on their performance relative to how inline it is with CrossFit values and behavior, which in turn influences a coach's approach to different behaving members.

For, what is openly seen as a segregating factor within a coach's eyes in CrossFit is intensity. A frame of judgement is constructed within the coach's mind: there are those that push for intensity in the appropriate CrossFit way which, as was discussed earlier is a style of body performance embedded in the toleration of pain and pushing beyond one's limits. Samantha points out that there is a dividing line based on physical performance:

I think you have to umm I think the concept the concept of CrossFit is such that it doesn't make any...uh how do you say any umm segregation? It's either you like intensity or you don't you know? And that that's where is where you do the separation...-Samantha

Samantha makes a clear distinction that it is intensity that separates members, although adamant that there is no segregation, Samantha does contradict herself by describing a dividing line based on intensity.

Furthermore, for coaches this sort of intensity is not something that can be learned it is innate, a characteristic of the person. Just as Samantha underlines, one either likes it or not, suggesting a built in preference and Winnie explains further:

CrossFit puts people out of their comfort zone but again then it gets down to the personality.

There are some people that can't get out of their comfort zone-Winnie

For Winnie, there is a filter of perception between who the coaches identify with as a true a CrossFitter and not. Those that are CrossFitters can go out of their comfort zone and those that cannot have a fundamental difference in their persona that keeps them from achieving the desired performance. How coaches categorize this depends on the perceived "seriousness" of the athlete, and again reaffirms that coaches prefer the athletes who *appear* to work harder within the stratagem of CrossFit.

In consequence, coaches do prefer members who conform to the prescribed CrossFit physicality, because they fit the paradigm that they themselves as coaches adhere to and thus little is needed to encourage those members to move and perform in the CrossFit way. For example, Scooter competes at a master's level, is considered one of the elite athletes at CrossFit Leman, and he along with all the other coaches is often on the ground gasping after a workout:

You know I do have to admit I do have my favorites. Some people you just you know I mean it's just because they...not necessarily because they move well but they bring a good attitude...They are just there and they are going to bring everything... Yeah you're depriving yourself on everything that CrossFit has to offer if you if you are not willing to push yourself.

-Scooter

Scooter highlights once again that doing CrossFit is considered by nature and by creed to go beyond limits, to bring everything and to spend everything. Scooter does not consider technique or perfect movement to be a determinant factor, what he prefers is good attitude (implying compliance to the class and the prescriptions of CrossFit) and the willingness to push for

intensity for otherwise, this is a loss if not using one's body in such a manner. There is implicit judgement of those members who do not "bring everything" and it is to their own detriment if they do not perform the sport as Scooter does.

Intensity categorizes even more specifically:

...the people who go for intensity are people who have more drive. People who don't go for intensity might just come in for a good workout, they are coming just to keep fit and have and have a good time and they don't want to go any further with this than this they're happy with what they're getting. (about those who like intensity) I would say they are a little bit younger? Umm they tend to be more in their 30's than older? Umm...possibly they don't have significant life stresses and pressures and so they can push more on the physical side because they're not they don't have to worry about dealing with the family or children or whatever when they get home or a tough job or something like that. –Conan

Conan acknowledges that there are members who come with a rather complacent spirit and "just" enjoy CrossFit. The young however tend to have more drive albeit the fact that the need for enough leisure time and lack of stress to have it is often inhibited by career and family. It is an admission on his part, that lifestyle has a more likely influence on one's commitment to CrossFit than an internal drive. His comment also underscores the potential for favouring the younger members simply through this filter.

In fact, this viewpoint of his fuels his reaction to complaints about the programming a subject often brought up during the coaches' meeting. Quite regularly, those that are able to come and train more often than average complain about the lack of intensity in the everyday workouts. In which case he replies that out of the six hundred members only a very small percentage complain of that, and that in fact he is programming for the everyday member. Implicitly he is suggesting that there are members whose passions or lifestyle towards CrossFit are not equal

to the demands of CrossFit which has intensity as a prerequisite. However, Conan still mentions that the “younger” members have more drive and on occasions when Conan coaches he requests feedback on members experiences of a workout from the young and more performing athlete than the everyday athlete, indicating that even though he is aware of the constraints that would impede a person from following a CrossFit lifestyle, as a coach he still solicits those that are more performant fostering an unequal treatment of members by validating the more experienced and fit athletes to those that are not.

Additionally, if a coach perceives that an athlete is physically enacting intensity inadequately judgement from the coaches ensues, it is considered a loss and travesty and as Scooter evoked earlier, failing to achieve intensity is a shame, a loss of the opportunity to progress. Winnie expresses this sentiment as well:

Well I try not to think about it too much nor do I get up in their face about it... However if you want to progress you have to move out of your comfort zone it's in fact the point of CrossFit. But you can't like I said before, you can't force them but you can go and say that's too bad you could have put on something heavier...they have to finish first yeah I dunno that's not really in my personality either because... I prefer to finish last and it was hard and... that I gave everything I could than to finish first and it was easier I think it's not as gratifying -Winnie

In fact it is even uncomfortable for Winnie, a top athlete in her own right, to watch and see athletes that aren't using their bodies in the prescribed way. Though she accepts that some athletes will go lighter, she doesn't hesitate to admonish them for not adding more weight. In her example, the intensity is created by putting on weight. She explains their choices as ones based from the competitive need to finish first, not at all how she herself would behave, preferring the CrossFit archetype of working hard with your body until spent.

Interestingly in the world of CrossFit finishing first repetitively is antithesis to it, a contradiction of the sports behavior so encouraged in other sports. It is better in CrossFit to finish last on your knees. There is little acknowledgement at times from coaches of how one must learn that in CrossFit it is sometimes the slowest who reaps more benefits and unknown to those from a more traditional sports background.

Beyond intensity, the coach's judgement of performance also focuses on form and lifestyle. For example, consider Winston, who considers any digression from a perfect squat and body ideal to be a travesty. For Winston the physical performance of a body is a great and important determinant to being healthy not just intensity. But his determinant in being healthy is framed by his own physical capacity which as a 28 year old who has the time to train 3-4 hours a day, is quite different from the average member. For example, his explanation of explained how the majority of people cannot stand in one spot, jump and turn three hundred and sixty degrees his frustration and astonishment of this non-success belays his standard of what a healthy body should be:

They cannot do it! That's so sad. I mean actually you could just start crying and fall on your knees and holy crap! Where did we end up? ... I 'm getting so angry because the human body is amazing! I love it I mean it's God or whatever whoever made us created something so perfect and then you see...I don't want to say fat people but or also skinny people whatever and they cannot even squat under 90 degrees their everything is looking so shitty I'm getting so angry how can you treat your body so bad to end up at that level. Then I need to calm me down in my mind and no one is seeing that never ever would someone think that I think like this. -Winston

For Winston the body's performance is the supreme expression of humaneness thus being unable to perform such an act is seen as a failure for humankind. Those who underperform in his eyes have failed to honor the body's God given perfection and were irresponsible enough to treat themselves so badly. Clearly, in Winston's mind the perfect work of art that is the human

body is squandered and mistreated. He positions himself at the head of the flock, in despair over the “weaker” masses, on his knees at humankind’s ominous future. There is no acknowledgement of how those that he is looking at might have a lifestyle and responsibilities that does not allow for such body work. However, he knows that this judgement should be hidden that he needs to “calm his mind” so that no one should perceive such a judgemental position, possibly due to the fact that he would then have relational problems with his athletes. Nonetheless, members have complained to Samantha and Conan about the lack of recognition that they are getting from him in class.

For those members in the general population not looking to become CrossFit champions (which is the majority) Winston is a problematic coach. Members have complained of being ignored, unsupported and unencouraged. (Observation, 2017). They also noted that there were clear signs of favoritism in his classes where many members felt ignored because they “weren’t good enough” (Observation, 2017). Winston exemplifies a process by which the regard of a member’s physical performance and if it adheres to CrossFit culture and bodily norms and translates into a biased perspective on nonconforming or non-performative bodies:

But I think it’s pretty tough because you kind a like you have the perfect athlete in your mind and then you have those people who are really far away from them or you have those people who are really close to them like the good ones and your like I saw this I can work with this I can try this I saw this I just need to tell this to the person and they’ll realize what they need to do I think that’s that’s always a problem but I think I I I try to be quite even with everyone. -

Winston

Looking through this lens of physical performance and perfection one of the dangers of judging members this way are clear and evident in his comment. He has a “perfect athlete” in his mind as reference and infers that it is only the “good ones” that he can work with because he “just needs” to instruct them a bit. Instructing the more skilled athletes is simple and he implicitly knows it’s a problem and source of frustration to work with those that are “really far

away” from perfection. It is no surprise that many complaints about Winston came from beginners, older members, out of shape and/or female members that are far from “perfect” too. Another facet of judgement is framed within a prescribed CrossFit lifestyle, for example Sarah feels that the population as it has grown has been diluted from the athlete who follows the ideal lifestyle and body performance of CrossFit to those in the population who identify with health and fitness in a way that she feels isn’t prescribed by CrossFit.

...before (there was) the athlete who really wanted to push themselves, who (was) researching and finding that CrossFit can help in their sport and now you have a whole of range of population...like even the mom with her kids who just wants to stay in shape or you have... I don’t know the fitness who comes in who just wants to you know workout because they say it’s good for your health you know and then he’s going to go out and eat a pizza and drink cocktails so yeah the customers have changed. Like I want to lose weight. I want to get stronger. I want to be able to do a 70 kilo snatch. So you are here for a reasons and you have others who are here just like they would go to the fitness club and...you know do their treadmill work and then leave but they prefer to go to CrossFit because it’s funnier. You know? They have their friends there, they do it as a group so it’s better than fitness. But yeah you really see those two different people. Even more now than maybe 3 years ago when I started. - Sarah

Those that don’t want to lose weight like Sarah, and eat right, those that don’t want to get stronger and go for intensity, those that don’t parody the same goals are somehow suspect in their reasons for doing CrossFit for Sarah. In her opinion, they aren’t going to eat correctly because they don’t want to lose weight, they don’t want to get stronger so they won’t go for intensity but have different reasons to come, and it’s more “fun” than a regular fitness club. Wanting to “just stay in shape” is viewed as not enough to fit her idea of CrossFit. Even nutrition is a signifier to one’s commitment to CrossFit since pizza and a drink sullies what a person has done in the gym. Thus in Sarah’s mind, that behavior or even the state of motherhood

somehow excludes you from her full approval of a member's effort, from being a true CrossFitter.

However, the difference in attitude towards the members is again in part explained by who these coaches are. For example, Conan is a 43 father of three who works full-time and is a coach and co-owner of CrossFit Leman and therefore his time for personal training are quite limited as is Samantha's and as such as pointed out earlier, Conan acknowledges that adhering to the ideal CrossFit body performance of intensity is more accessible without the social restraints of job and family. Whereas, both Sarah and Winston are single without children and work primarily within the world of CrossFit and fitness. Therefore their frame of judgement is biased by their own adherence to CrossFit values and facilitated by their lifestyles.

Who the coaches are and how they perceive intensity and the lack of, is greatly mitigated through their own favoritism towards intensity and explains the general trend for coaches to encourage and solicit more from members that are considered capable, enthusiastic and physically fit. In consequence, given that this physically aggressive behavior is performed more by men and is seen as a natural attribute in them, there is a palpable disparity of attention given to whatever body does not perform as such particularly to women. Countless times in my observations I have seen coaches spend more time explaining and encouraging those athletes who are moving faster with intensity, showing more effort than those athletes who move slower and awkwardly.

Moreover, coaches will spend less time with the overweight athlete, particularly if the athlete has been at CrossFit Leman for a consistent period of time, indicating a sanction of sorts towards the member who does not eat in the prescribed way to produce idealized results within the coach's mind and the CrossFit framework as echoed in Sarah's comments. Additionally, the older members and those who lack the physical knowledge or capacity (generally women)



to embody the actions of a CrossFit body (and therefore a male one) are overlooked or dismissed by coaches. Coaches spend less time giving them input through correcting, advising and even encouraging (Observation 2015-2016). As one of the older members commented over coffee one day: “no one notices me I am too old” (Observation, September 2016). Thus, through the lens of a CrossFit ideal of performative intensity, lifestyle and nutrition, when differing with their own conceptions, coaches have been shown to treat their members with a bias resulting in inequalities based on gender and age.

### *The Body as Social Capital*

As much as the performance of the body takes on an important role in establishing gender and class, race and age hierarchies another dimension of it is relevant. The body as an entity in itself has several dimensions of importance to the coaches that create a hierarchy amongst them and that they knowingly use to influence members.

To begin with and taking from Bourdieu, the body to the individual also represents a form of physical capital. In other words it is the social formation of bodies by individuals *through* sports and leisure activities that express a class location and a symbolic value (Bourdieu, 1986). Physical capital can be converted into economic capital (goods and services), cultural capital (e.g. education), and social capital (social networks which enable reciprocal calls to be made on the goods and services of its members) (Bourdieu, 1984).

The symbolic value of a healthy body then, expresses a voluntary choice and life-style that has its own socially defined set of rules and material constraints. In consequence, having a “good body” to practice healthy behavior is to improve one’s physical capital and differentiates one into a defined group (Bourdieu, 1984). In turn this physical capital becomes a social marker and has a relation to increased social success (Bourdieu, 1984, Sassatelli, 1999, Harvey *et al.*, 2014). Such that the more physical capital is amassed, the more desirable that body

and the knowledge of how to attain that body becomes (Frew & McGillivray, 2005; Harvey *et al.*, 2014).

The result is that individuals have unequal opportunities for acquiring that physical capital most valued in society, as its accumulation requires an investment of spare time and economic capital normally reserved to the upper classes (Bourdieu, 1986). Within CrossFit Leman the link between physical capital and economic capital is evident. The price of membership to enact and maintain a body transformation into a fit and muscular ideal is equal to that of a fitness gym and therefore illuminating for the chance for people of lower incomes to have access are already limited by prices and furthermore limited in comparison since opening hours and classes are given less. As a result, it is no surprise that the majority of members and coaches represent the white upper middle class.

Research has shown that amongst personal trainers in regular fitness gyms showing the value of physical capital is of utmost importance (Harvey *et al.*, 2014). As many members come in for weight loss and bodily transformation, the physical capital of the coaches directly influences the economic success of the gym itself as a marketing tool (Harvey *et al.*, 2014). But is also a sign of individual validity amongst coaches, as the members will translate coaches' bodies as having the knowledge to transform theirs (Harvey *et al.*, 2014).

Three interdependent components of physical capital have been delineated in research: adornment, capacity and physique (Light, 2001). Adornment refers to the modification of appearance through particular clothing, jewelry or body art (Light, 2001). In the case of CrossFit Leman, coaches must wear Reebok clothing while coaching, with an emphasis particularly on merchandise from CrossFit Leman. As such, the coaches' bodies are used to publicize and encourage purchases within CrossFit Leman. However as is seen in personal trainers in regular gyms (Harvey *et al.*, 2014), most coaches develop their own particular style either by purchasing Reebok clothing from another vendor or wearing older items that are no longer in stock.

Thereby maintaining their own individuality and their differences to other coaches and yet still encouraging the proper brand to wear within CrossFit Leman.

Adornment as body art is certainly evident in the coaches in their lower to mid-30's with numerous tattoos, another signifier of social capital in itself given the relative cost and time consumption of getting one. It is quite common for members to have tattoos themselves particularly if they are of the same age group and if not, to get one within the months following their adherence to CrossFit, a clear signifier of their wish to embed themselves within the culture and a clear example of a coach's influence.

The second component, capacity indicates the physical ability of the individual in terms of strength, speed or fitness (Light, 2001). It is usual practice for coaches to train at the gym and often coaches will join a class. Similar to personal trainer, when coaches are seen training outside of classes, coaches will perform complex or otherwise difficult movements to illustrate their physical capacity (Observation 2015-2017; Harvey et al., 2014). For example, they will lift significantly more than average when weightlifting and perform movements like handstand walking that are rarely given as exercise within the workouts due to their difficulty and the lack of physical capacity of the members themselves. Thus the coaches distinguish themselves as separate from members by demonstrating their physical capacity and thus obliquely confirming their knowledge as coach.

However, within CrossFit Leman there exists a nuance in the training behavior between those coaches who work out with members and those who do not. As is the case for any athletic endeavour, time and discipline is needed to increase one's skill. Interestingly, the coaches over thirty-five train predominantly with the general classes offered but for those under thirty-five they often train outside of classes. These younger coaches are unmarried with no children, working full time at the gym or part time as students, and as such have ample time to invest in the sport. Lacking family and job responsibilities this time allotment increases their physical

capital, which the older coaches with those responsibilities do not have access to. (The older coaches with families often just “try to squeeze in a workout” between their work). Coaches such as Winnie and Winston, train for two to four hours a day, both often competing in international events. This allows for them to train longer than just the hour provided in a class and to work on the moves of their choice. Therefore, the increased amount of time the younger coaches spend enhancing, practicing and improving their technique and fitness gives them an increased capacity and as a result, a legitimacy in the eyes of the members that the older coaches must seek in other ways such that other tactics must be deployed.

The way coaches approach the more challenging movements within CrossFit illustrates how differing physical capacities are negotiated. For example, it is often a concern for some coaches that are unable to perform a highly technical, gymnastic movement known as a muscle up. To complete one, an athlete holds gymnastic rings overhead, swings up to straighten his or her arms and push the rings to his or her hips. It is a move that typically requires time and practice to complete and is heralded as one of the demarcations between an efficient CrossFitter to an elite one (Herz, 2015). Needless to say, the younger coaches that have had the time to invest, can indeed complete one. As for those lacking this capacity, some take avoidance tactics. For example, Theo who is unable to complete a muscle up, gladly switched classes during a coach’s meeting with Scooter who can, explaining:

“I know I can coach it, I’ve done it before, I know the steps I’ve uh done all the research but since I can’t do it myself, some element of confidence is missing and I don’t think I am as effective” -Theo

And later in our interview together Theo stated:

I can’t do muscle up but I can coach them. I know how to coach them but it’s it’s just very it gets me destabilized as a coach when I’m coaching something I don’t do there’s uhh I had that last Saturday and I was I was self-critiquing my coaching because my coaching went down the drain because I lost my confidence- Theo

Theo's perceived sense of ineffectiveness when he coaches the muscle up, despite knowing all the techniques and steps is a result of his own physical performance that he deems lacking. Knowing that he cannot complete the movement weakens his confidence and his own sense of validity, rendering him "destabilized", with a sense of fraudulence and having less authority and impact on members. However, Theo is well liked and very respected by members notably because of his honesty, sense of fun and depth of knowledge. The dichotomy between Theo's perceived lack of authenticity because of his physical lack and the members' appreciation of him illuminates how coaches do tend to give too much importance to capacity. However, giving more validity to physical capacity rather than to the skill of teaching is not restrained to just Theo. During another coach's meeting Winston adamantly proclaimed that for him:

"only people who are able to perform all CrossFit movements correctly should be coaches and if you can't do a muscle up, you shouldn't be coaching"- Winston

In this case, Winston clearly considers that his physical capital gives validity even to the extent that it is the only source for determining whether one can be a coach. (Of course, Winston can indeed perform a muscle up). His logic reveals a message that all coaches are sensitive to, uncovering a meaning that a top athlete corresponding to the CrossFit ideal will be a better coach. Sensitive to because why would they feel uncomfortable and avoid teaching the muscle up if they weren't?

Furthermore, Winston has been known to select young, promising athletes and encourage them to only train with him and as a result, has created a selective group of individuals who are members but do not train with the general population. Their skills and capacities are above the average member indeed, but again their youth and time is favored. What is more his reputation as a coach increases because of the gains those chosen by him make. Obliquely, the increase of the physical capacity of these young athletes, increases his validity as a coach.

As such, Winston's position has created a natural scission between those who can complete the more challenging movements and those coaches who cannot. As a result there lies a discord between bodily capital (i.e. physical capacity) and actual teaching skills in the discourse of the coaches. Those who lack the physical capacity to complete a muscle up emphasize their success in teaching the movement regardless of their inability to do so. For example, several months after his comment, Samantha mentions Winston's opinion from time to time in disparaging and defensive tones:

Like we are not coaches since I can't do a muscle up, ha! I've been coaching and getting people to do muscle ups for 8 years! Samantha

Despite the confidence in her skills as a coach, Samantha still feels the need to defend herself indicating a response and acknowledgement to the possible lack of accreditation she might receive for not yet accomplishing the movement, for not having that physical capacity. As such, she feels the need to acknowledge this risk towards her validity as a teacher by pointing out that it is false assumption.

Also, this leads to a new point, because (for whatever reason the male body is quicker to accomplish this movement) the validity/capacity as coach and as an athlete is harder to attain having a female body. Since the muscle up is a pinnacle of performance to CrossFit along with lifting very, very heavy, the social maneuvering for respect and embodied validity for a women is more difficult to reach as both coach and member.

Lack of capacity is in fact dismantled by discourse of teacher effectiveness or hidden. Hidden through coaches' avoidance of certain movements in class and hidden by avoiding visibility.

Both Conan and I often complete our workouts away from others and workout less with the general population. Conan has explained that he fatigues quickly of explaining his back injury and as a result he does not want to give the impression that his injury is due to CrossFit. How-

ever, since this is something that I do as well, my reasoning is not only to uncouple a link between CrossFit and injury but also to not appear less of an athlete which I feel would take away from my credibility as a coach.

In these two examples, there is a contradiction between the often repeated maxim of how anyone despite injury or capacity is included and welcomed within CrossFit and the normative pressure of performing movements well and with ease. Thus a coach reinforces the culture of high performance rather than inclusiveness by keeping away his or her own weaknesses within the sport. As a result, by such an act coaches reinforce the sports culture of high performance and perfection rather than inclusiveness to all sorts of differing performances.

The last dimension of physical capital, physique concerns the physical attributes of the individual such as height, build and weight (Light, 2001). The discourse around nutrition and is constant and although at times reflects the goal of increasing performance dialogue more often revolves around weight loss and specifically fat loss. Coaches measure their fat content along with other associated biometrics and amongst each other, discussion of one's diet, what one ate or one's frustration or success at losing weight is almost an everyday occurrence irrelevant of gender. Coaches like the members monitor their diet and are in constant self-scrutiny. For example, there are everyday comments over how one has had a "cheat day" and eats outside of the prescribed diet and the pleasure one had in doing so. Clearly, the importance of physique is extremely important in CrossFit Leman expressing the social obsession of fat loss (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003).

As CrossFit Leman also provides a nutrition program it is of relevance to physically show how that nutrition creates the "successful" body. Nonetheless, the sort of diet encouraged by CrossFit Leman is a high protein one which is costly in Switzerland thus privileging coaches and those that are financially able to do so and illustrating not only physical capital but the economic capital to go with it.

Interestingly, certain parts of the body carry more signification in terms of physical capital, within CrossFit Leman it is the appearance or lack of abdominal muscles that are the main source of concern:

I'd love to have 6 pack abs and I am far from that (laughs)...-Winnie

I'm working on my abs..- Sarah

I'm trying to knock off fruit, I've got to get rid of this gut.- Scooter

God I'm losing my abs! I have to get back in shape- Ac

To the coaches then having abs is an eternal quest something to constantly “work on”, and the loss of them requisites immediate attention to body change “get back in shape” getting “rid of this gut”. The coaches lament either about not having them, are obsessed with them, are constantly working to have them, keep them and are terribly concerned at losing them. The desire to have such a physical marker indicates that it is a body part of extreme importance to the physical identity of the coaches.

However, the most definitive example of how abdominal display is a major source of physical capital happened during a conversation with Conan and a coach in training Melissa. While discussing my own insecurities about coaching and not being able to perform the more sophisticated movements, Melissa interrupted me and said: “Yes but you have abs” to which Conan laughed and said “oh now wait” and relaxed and pushed out his abdominals and said “ah finally!” to which we all laughed. Melissa’s dismisses my lack of physical capacity and knowledge of teaching, and points out that I have abs as if that were to erase my inexperience. In her eyes, my physique carries far more weight literally and figuratively as proof that I am a coach. Furthermore, Conan implicitly acknowledges the importance of abdominal muscles, holding his to appear to have a flat stomach and subsequently admitting to the farce. Knowing that his body is on display, Conan maintains a muscular tightness to maintain the illusion of a certain type of physical capital.



In short the physical manifestation of social capital for coaches at CrossFit Leman and its level of importance to them, echoes what has been seen in other sport worlds (Sassatelli, 1999; Frew & McGillivray, 2005; Harvey *et al.*, 2014). Within CrossFit Leman it is important to note that the physical capital also implies a moral positioning. Given that the coaches are representatives of a group that members want to belong to, the perceived judgement puts coaches in defensive or avoidance positioning if their capital is threatened, which does not challenge the importance of performance. Despite the message of inclusiveness regardless of the body's actual capacity within CrossFit, the pressure of performance is although unspoken still enacted by the coaches themselves.

As we have seen, the importance of physical capital and a performance within the maxim of high intensity and high skill to the coaches and its possible lack of it in members is a conduit to judgement and sanction from the coaches and of the coaches.

## ***CHAPTER 4: Body Politics***

In this chapter I will show how gender dynamics are enacted in a same sex environment to the detriment of women through the use of different tactics. First, I will discuss the placement of women within the sporting world and within CrossFit in order to provide a context in which men and women are functioning. Following this I will begin to illustrate the different maneuvers enacted within the context of CrossFit Lemman which foster unequal gender dynamics.

One scheme uses the guise of biological essentialism, which designates differences in gender as natural, thus validating male superiority in sports. Another revolves around the discourse of the coaches, on one hand it reveals a distancing between capacity and the female body and in the other it is used to explain and excuse the inferior performance of males to steady the gender order. Additionally, I will show how the labeling of objects by coaches designates a gender difference with negative connotations of the female body and social pressure on the male body. Lastly, I will explore the dynamics of sporting behaviors which condone and create limitations on members' access to improvement, particularly in members who do not enact or embody assigned behaviors or corporality that reflects male hegemony.

### *Women in Sports*

Girls and women are caught in a double-bind of sport, if they conform to the dominant forms of femininity, they are unlikely to play sport at all or, if they do, they are likely to participate in traditionally "female activities" (Gorely *et al*, 2003). If on the other hand, they choose to play in a manner traditionally viewed as masculine they risk having their femininity and their sexuality questioned (Cahn, 1993; Gorely *et al*, 2003; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Dworkin, 2001, Blinde & Taub, 1992). Moreover, despite a woman's increased access into the world of sport the superiority of men is still maintained by valorizing sports that favor the extreme possibilities of the male body (American football, rugby for example) thus allowing the "lower"

performance of women in these sports to be muscular proof as the “natural” differences between men and women (Messner, 1988).

Additionally, various sanctions are conditioned from the “risk” of transgressing male hegemony. Most notably limitations are imposed on women for reasons of health and security to keep women from competing in the same arena as in men. As example, early in this century women were forbidden to ride bicycles or horses as men did for fear of damaging their reproductive system (Strange & Brown, 2002) and in the winter Olympics of 2014 female ski jumpers were prevented from jumping an equal distance to men within the same logic (Anderson & Loland, 2016)). These are just a few examples of how mainstream sports and physical leisure activities were organized in such a way to emphasize that women could not physically do the same as men. This in turn keeps the ever present complex of male superiority in sports in check.

How then is a woman’s body placed and performed in this context? In her article “Throwing like a girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality, Iris Young describes the basic modalities of feminine body comportment, her manner of moving and relation in space (1980). Concentrating on movements in which the body aims at accomplishing a specific purpose or task, she posits that the feminine modality reflects the tension held within the female body of existing as both a subject and object in a patriarchal society (Young, 1980). This tension creates the timidity and hesitancy that one often sees when a woman will have when approaching a physical task (Young, 1980). Yet she explains that there is no mysterious connection between this behavior and the female body, much emerges from the lack of practice in using her body through socialization.

For girls are encouraged strongly to stay within the home, to stay in a confined space where movements stay compact, celebrated for their domesticity and admonished for any wildness. As a result her sense of self is further compounded by her perception of her body in space

(Young, 1980). In fact, how a woman perceives her body in space is inhibited when in action and as a result the action itself is inhibited (Young, 1980). She calls the experience of the female body as one of “fragile encumbrance” in which a woman will feel that she must make sure her body is doing what she wishes it to do rather than paying attention to what she wants to do through her body (Young, 1980). Therefore, the manifestation of the female body in movement is inhibited by itself and of itself through the implicit messages steeped in patriarchy. From this point of view then, how a female athlete will move her body will be performed differently in accordance to the messages stamped upon her and how much she believes it. As a result the possibility from the spectator’s eyes to judge and systematically conclude that women indeed are inferior in their physical capacities fuels the stereotype of feminine weakness in sports.

### *CrossFit Women*

Nevertheless a woman who is engaged in competing within in CrossFit at any level and the work involved is nothing like Young described with feminine movement (2005). Like female weightlifters, CrossFit women are “embarked on an unambiguous quest to transcend themselves” (Shilling & Bunsell, 2009). Strutting around the gym, focusing on themselves and their goals, these women inhabit a milieu not authorized within the sphere of femininity in the interaction order nonetheless (Shilling & Bunsell, 2009). Therefore, in itself CrossFit allows for women to express a different physical modality.

Additionally, within a singular CrossFit box, Knapp found that the act of working out in a shared non sexed space allowed for members to move beyond stereotypical beliefs of what male and female bodies are capable of physically accomplishing (2015). And yet, Knapp also notes that certain dimensions of the workouts such as prescribed weights for men and women (where men lifted heavier) and different sized barbells labeled for each sex did nothing to challenge cultural norms (Knapp, 2015). Most importantly Knapp underlines the role of

coaches in leaving the norms unchallenged. She notes that “by demarcating prescribed weights by gender instead of body size or physical ability trainers are complicit in reinforcing gendered stereotypes about men’s and women’s perceived natural physical abilities” (Knapp, 2015). Thus, although potentially opening the door to different expressions of female movement and breaking stereotypical thoughts by putting men and women together (as Anderson has also argued 2008a), movements that resist these opening doors and challenges to stereotype are also in place.

*Natural Bodies: conforming to male hegemony*

When women and men are physically measured up against each other “nature” and conversely “genetics” materializes as a construct that can explain the differences in our sexed bodies of male and female. As such the socially constructed “natural” is used to embody and reconfirm a patriarchal power structure and in this case male supremacy in sport (Guillaumin, 1981). Expressions of how differences between the sexes are the way they are because it is “Nature” must be examined closely. For, as Guillaumin argues, there is an erroneous presupposition that a man simply because he is one, is thus stronger and as such, gives credence to his superiority allowing no place in the “natural” world for a woman to be strong (1981). “Nature”, Guillaumin explains, “gives them strength, which is innate, but which as it happens, allows them to dominate the material elements of Nature (which includes other human beings, for example)” (1981). In other words, it allows for the ‘natural’ (and in this case male dominance) to be seen as internally programmed, be it by blood, instinct, genes, chemistry etc. (Guillaumin, 1981 p.101). This presupposition then fixates masculine physical superiority whilst damaging and impeding other interpretation of bodies.

Within CrossFit Leman, this socially constructed notion is articulated in subtle ways. Take for example, Samantha’s comments about her own exploits:

I am very competitive I like competing with men it is most interesting for me because when you get to do something better than them it's like ok I know that genetically I have uhh less favor but I can catch up with hard work perseverance...

Samantha states clearly that she can compete with men, that she can surpass them and does outperform them. However, instead of saying that she is in a playing field with bodies that she feels equal or better to, she diminishes herself, alluding that her body is inferior genetically and as so has to work harder and “catch up”. Indeed she has to play catch up but not because her body is inferior but because of the lack of bodily space and access that she has had to practice and move her body. As Guillaumin describes, her body was censored as most girls are, from practicing these activities deemed aggressive and masculine (1992). Censored because those actions would imply that she was not “lady-like” that she was too much of a tom-boy etc. and therefore not a proper girl (Guillaumin, 1992). Furthermore one cannot dismiss that even for Samantha’s generation, access to sports was limited as a girl and therefore her playing field in comparison to boys’ access which possibly limited her in increasing her skill (Mennenson, 2005).

Also, in the act of denigrating her body: claiming it natural to be inferior due to genetics, Samantha dismisses the fact that she does surpass many men and women within the gym (She often is ranked as one of the highest in the interclub competitions). She actively supports the idea of masculine superiority by shading her accomplishments as sort of fluke, only due to her “hard work and perseverance” and nothing to do with her own body’s capabilities. Physical prowess is somehow distant from the female body. As if there is a blindness or a veil filtered through gender that does not allow any transgression of what is expected from sexed bodies. Another example of this social blindness within CrossFit Lemman revolves around the movement of a pull up (in which one holds onto a bar and pulls her or his body up until the chin passes the bar). Time and time again I have heard it said from coaches that women don’t have

enough upper body strength to do a pull-up when they first come into the gym. But what I have seen is that the body observed trying and failing to accomplish a pull up is simply out of practice or has never done it and is muscularly deconditioned. All this regardless of gender. Indeed what I have observed is that those men and women that can perform a pull up upon first try have been working on those muscles and conditioning them for that movement previously. Given that it is a movement that is strongly associated with young soldiers in training (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003) as Sarah exclaimed when she first began CrossFit: “Pullups, push ups, weight lifting that’s for the military not for women!”, there is a strong reason and explanation as to why women are not quite as successful if we consider the arguments of Young (1980) and Mennenson (2005) again. Neither have they had access to doing it nor do they contain the belief that they can. (Young, 1980, Mennenson, 2005). And yet, if they persist and continue practicing they *all* succeed. So why is it repeated by coaches that women don’t have enough upper body strength? When this statement comes from coaches it is to confirm the socially constructed reality that women are just “naturally” not as strong despite the fact that what they see is the contrary. Again there is a sort of blinder that encourages male superiority in sports.

#### *Discourse that blinds*

Moreover, coaches’ discourse around the success of a body to perform a difficult movement belays an essentialism which mars any move toward gender equality. Coaches’ reactions after a male member’s exploits will be associated with the innate, “yeah he is strong”, “he is really fit”, “he’s a stud” etc. The explanations are couched within the idea of “being”. He can lift 200 kilograms and so he *is* something. Whereas for a woman’s exploits, coaches will label hers as a phenomenon she had to work for. If she is labelled as strong comments such as “yeah she’s a good athlete”, “she’s been working hard”, “she practices that a lot” ensue. She *is* nothing, she isn’t strong, she isn’t fit. Often, explanations are given such as “yeah she was

doing gymnastics before or Pilates before or was in the military before” etc are heard.

Coaches ascribe a movement or a certain distance that a woman’s body has to regain or catch up to achieve mastery. As if her success has nothing to do with her body and is in fact foreign to her feminine body that she *is*. In short the coaches’ discourse is an example of how the essence of what the body can do in sports can only be associated with the masculine, if it is not then an explanation and a dialectical separation has to be provided for a woman’s “unnatural” success.

Furthermore, the coaches’ are very quick to defend their male counterparts if a woman is really very successful within CrossFit relative to her male counterparts, explanations and excuses have to be made to explain why she outperformed her fellow coaches. For example, when Samantha lifts heavier than the male coaches, other coaches are quick to explain that he “must be having a bad day or he is tired from the previous workout” to excuse and explain his inferior performance, wiping away the possibility that Samantha might just be stronger. In another instance, after an international competition (French Throw down 2017) in which Winnie placed 10<sup>th</sup> and Winston placed 23<sup>rd</sup>, a young male assistant coach said adamantly and repeatedly mentioned to members and other coaches to the point that all members and coaches were repeating that: “oh that’s because there weren’t as many competitors in Winnie’s category” (Personal Observations, 2017). In fact, this young man did not take the time to look at the competition and the results. Both Winnie and Winston competed with the same amount of participants. What is interesting to note is that in reality Winnie was competing in Intermediates and Winston in Elite categories but that was not mentioned at all, which could logically and fairly explain the differences in placement. However, what is important in this matter is that despite the fact that it was erroneous, this young man had to defend Winston’s performance relative to Winnie’s, attempting to show in some way that her results were inferior and thus establishing the “appropriate” ranking order of male supremacy in sports.



*Marked objects/Board markers: signs of gender differentiating*

What is more, weakness within the gym is symbolically associated and designated with the feminine or with alternate body forms, further supplanting the idea that the male body is superior. For example, the lighter weights are colored pink and thus associated with the feminine. Also, the weights under 5 kilograms have been called “the kiddie weights” or the “baby weights” another bodily form that is considered weak. But the most marked objects are the barbells used for weightlifting. Coaches name the 20 kilogram bars ‘men’s’ bars’ and the lighter 15 kilogram bars as the women’s often claiming nature again. Winston defends his choice to name the bars as so:

...that’s just a woman’s bar smaller grip lighter bar finished boom. That’s what CrossFit is all about. The women get lighter weights so women have the women’s bar the men get man weight so they get a man’s bar. There is no discrimination between the two. - Winston

Winston attempts to validate his choice to call the bars differently in various ways. He evokes a general idea of sexual dimorphism as universal, making the assumption that a woman will naturally have smaller hands and thus a woman’s bar is for her “smaller grip”. (Except one has to wonder, what about those men with small hands?). Furthermore, in his designation of weight ascriptions to defend the existence of the bars, Winston disconnects the word weight from the female body saying that women get “lighter” weights and connects it to men since they get “man” weights. It is judged natural, even in his choice of language that man means heavy, man means strength as opposed to women. Since he deems it natural he cannot even fathom that this might be discriminatory. Unfortunately, not only do his comments shorefront the idea that women are by nature weaker but it is definitely something that CrossFit (sometimes) is about despite his disclaimer. Indeed the discrepancy around the bars makes little

sense, coaches often recommend members to use fatter bars than what is comfortable to increase grip strength (Observations 2015-2016). As such, if a woman is using a thicker bar isn't that going to make her stronger?

As a further point it is interesting to note that the gymnastic rack has bars that are all of the same dimension, I believe the reason for the lack of this is because the bar dimensions on the racks are unseen and therefore can't be questioned, compared or put on display. As a result, men do not have to question their masculinity because a woman is using the same objects as him and women don't have to doubt their bodies' capacities to grab and hang onto a thick bar. Thus once again the logic that bars need to be thinner for women's hands is erroneous for several reasons and only exists to assure a separation between men and women's bodies in a way that doesn't supplant traditional hegemony. Moreover, going back to barbells, several male members with smaller hands do indeed sometimes use the "women's" bar stating that they can improve their Olympic lifts because they have more control. As we will see with weight prescriptions, when coaches designate the bars as male and female it solidifies male hegemony and allows no transgression of it in either direction just as Knapp discovered in her analysis of a different box.

A veil of false separation is further compounded through an obtuse sex based separation that is made during the classes. Although CrossFit Leman classes are conducted without an oblique separation between men and women the division is made by the very description of the workouts themselves. Like Knapp noted in her analysis of a box in the United States, despite the fact that Crossfit.com posts its workouts without any sexual differentiation of weight recommendations, CrossFit Leman does. There are prescribed weights and effort for calories that are established indirectly between the two sexes.

For example, a workout can look like this on the whiteboard: 4 rounds for time of 10 Kettlebell swings 32/24 kg, 20 Box Jumps 24/20 in, Row for Calories 15/10. Normally, this is the

first thing that members will come to look at and talk about with other members. Furthermore, it is the most important element that is talked about amongst coaches and members throughout the day. Countless discussions are had about how hard the workout will be, how hard it was etc. and throughout, the numbers are loudly proclaiming a separation of expectations based on gender. For the slash separating the two numbers are known and understood to be the division as: male prescription/female prescription. Note from the workout described above, that women lift less kilos, jump less high and row for less effort. In short, members are literally told what their bodies can do because of their sex and the slash sign imposes yet another limit which separates them. Nonetheless, it bears to mention that members often transgress this division, the men going lower and women higher and so it is of importance to point out that members do negotiate this division as they wish.

This division is particularly delicate and relevant when it comes to weightlifting, which comes as no surprise since strength and power is the main sign of virility and the natural essence of what a man is (as discussed earlier) and is internalized. If a man cannot lift the prescribed weight he considers himself de-masculinized:

Most men do this (try to lift the prescribed rates or heavier) but it's more from this masculine evil thing going on where you think uhh if I can't do this I'm less of a man-Theo

Theo describes what he feels within himself but also he outlines it as a general nature. He recounts a sense of pressure, "an evil thing" within himself that will question his masculinity if he does not succeed. Evil indeed, not only does the separation of a prescribed weight create the evil of separating bodies into sexes but also creates a socialized pressure on men themselves. (The weights prescribed are generally very heavy and generally take quite a long time to amass the strength to achieve it). What is ironic in this is that men will reap the physical reward of lifting at a higher weight even if they fail (CrossFit Inc., 2016). Consider a man who

insists on lifting heavier than he should, under the watchful eyes of the coach (for safety reasons) successful or not his body will get stronger. And as a result makes the gap even further between male and female members' performance.

For, what is striking is that the very approach women will have towards the prescription is different. Most women, upon reaching a physical point that a certain weight gets easy will hesitate before lifting heavier and actually ask the coach permission and advice to do so thus permeating a fragile encumbrance. Additionally, most women use the weight prescription as a sort of absolute limit that they must go under for lack of complete faith in her body's capacity to lift anything heavy. Sarah describes the situation well:

...we were doing back squats I told her ok you can you can go heavier just put 5 more and then she does it with 30 and it's great and it's easy and I'm like ok put some more and she says oh no I don't want to I'm gonna like...don't worry I'm here if you can't go up I'll just uhh hold the bar and she did a back squat of 45 kilos that day which is 20 more than her previous 1 rep max so you just need to push her a little bit and we have a lot of women like that who are just not confident in their capabilities...-  
Sarah

The lack of confidence in the capacity of what a woman thinks that she can actually do comes as no surprise if we can consider Guillaumin (1992), the message she has imbibed about her body is that she weak and incapable of lifting a heavy object and as such acts out the fragile encumbrance that Young described (1980). The unquestioned slash distinction and prescriptions for the workouts that the coaches present are themselves creating demarcating gender lines despite the shared sex space. It impacts both the physical and mental, bolstering an idea of masculinity and innate masculine strength. This is seen in Theo's description of the pressure he feels and puts on himself and in the insecurity and self-doubt as Sarah's describes a member's reluctance and fear to lift heavier.

*Behavior within the box: the subordination of those that differ*

It was mentioned in the previous chapter that coaches tend to favor those members who perform and do CrossFit in the prescribed way that the coaches themselves identify with. If we consider this fact within a larger framework of male hegemony and underline that qualities favoured within a sport such as competitiveness and aggressiveness are seen as masculine traits (Connell, 1985; Connell, 2000; Anderson 2008b), then a certain predisposition to identify and accommodate those behaviors in men by the coaches comes as no surprise. In short, men generally get more advice, more encouragement and attention from coaches.

However this predisposition to favor men is often indirect, as they are also solicited more by the male members themselves (Observations 2016-2017). Research has shown that this is the case within physical education classes in schools. Boys will solicit their teachers more for advice and aid more than girls (Couchot-Schiex *et al.*, 2009, Flintoff & Scranton, 2001, Gorely *et al.*, 2003, Vigneron, 2006). Within CrossFit Leman, the process of how men overshadow the female members is explained:

Yeah but I think we always have that it's the fight between men and women and I think that's not really happening here in CrossFit. Yeah... But I think it's still man! We are egos we are powerful we want to stand on both feet straight ahead going and saying what we think ...and I think that's still a problem I particularly don't want to say they (women) are not like that I think just because men are just like (Roar sound) like shouting so loud into the room maybe you don't hear the women's voice because they are like over exaggerating what they are doing maybe they should like shut the fuck up and let people do their shit people are good at what they are doing so there is no difference between men and women...-Winston

Although Winston claims that there is no war between the sexes he does describe a certain tension in which men do dominate (since women are quiet there is no fight of course). What he depicts is the archetypal powerful man careless and impervious to others in light of his

needs. In short he describes the very act of dominating albeit he claims that women can behave likewise but they are simply not loud enough. Nonetheless, Winston does describe such behavior as a problem and that should be silenced to allow people (notice not women) to do what they are “good at”. Winston implicitly articulates the lack of access to a space for women to be heard by masculine behaviors. But regardless of the domineering behavior of men that tends to silence and overshadow women there is “no difference between men and women”. What Winston is describing so succinctly is the position of privilege and power of the ruling class which by nature, nurtures behavior that allows for pre-eminence over women and any other person that is considered as not conforming to the ideal man.

As this aggressive, domineering behavior is one conducive to sports it is enacted time and again within the gym. What I have seen, much like within a classroom is that in general those athletes that are the most vigorous in their demands, that are more willing to ask questions, to ask the coach to physically come over to look at technique, that are loudest and are “roaring” i.e the most vociferously with their performance during the workout do receive more focus, time and encouragement from both the coach and members alike (Observations, 2015-2017). However, these members that behave this way are not necessarily the best athletes, but are generally male (Observations, 2015-2017). For example when the moment in the class becomes the most instructional and the coach is teaching technique, male members will quite often interrupt the coach, ask personal questions about their technique and generally overwhelm the moment with their own needs (Observations, 2015-2017).

This facility to impose one’s will to the detriment of others logically poses a problem with those that are more reclusive, timid or unsure in their bodies; not only for assistance from the coach but for access to space and objects at times. Without intervention from the coach, I have seen male members take the more privileged spots (for example near the fans during the summer) that were clearly marked by other members. Or recently during a class with two

twelve year old boys, a particular male member repeatedly bumped into them without apologizing and took their materials away to use for himself (Observation, 2017). The coach afterward did note this behavior and intervene whilst the member appeared surprised himself at his behavior and said “oh I didn’t think about it”. This is exactly the point, it did not even occur to him that his behavior was sublimating others without the coach’s interaction. Behaviors that create a sublimation or a violence by dominating space and access to the coach are prevalent in CrossFit Leman. Thus the role of a coach is instrumental to create a space without such behavior hierarchy.

What we have seen then is that although there is a potential to break down gender dynamics of male dominance within a same sex sporting environment, various tactics and movements are used, encouraged or simply allowed that do not supplant the placement of male hegemony in sports.

## ***CHAPTER 5: THE FEMALE BODY CONFRONTED***

In this chapter I will point out ways in which the coaches and CrossFit Leman resist gender stereotypes and other biases focusing first on the subject of how the female body. For it is presented in a way amongst the coaches that both resists stereotypes but has a complicity with them, which is no surprise since the female body has long since been observed as a site of resistance to male hegemony whilst bolstering it simultaneously. (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Dworkin, 2001, Young, 1980). As such I will discuss how the female body is framed within sports and then within CrossFit. I will then delineate an ambivalence on how female muscularity and prowess is presented. In short, I will demonstrate that different strategies are enacted within CrossFit Leman to present and promote muscularity in women. One such strategy is that the coaches embed the new image (which challenges the traditional ideal of a female body) within the framework of male desirability and cosmetic change leaving little but a dichotomy between strong and skinny. Which, in itself is both a strategy of resistance and challenge to the biases surrounding the female body.

### *The Female Body in Sport*

If a woman or girl chooses to participate in those sports that favor increased muscular possibilities of a body, her choice not only has a physical effect on her body but with how she is perceived. For, a female athlete will gain a great deal more muscularity than her non-sportive counterparts, which is perceived as exclusive to the male body. As a result, her body transgresses the ideal femininity necessary to maintain hegemonic masculinity and her femininity is questioned. For example, female body builders are told they are no longer women and are told they are “disgusting” and unattractive (Shilling & Bunsell, 2009). What is more insidious in the promotion of gender inequality in sports is female athletes are condoned for not just being unfeminine but for being “too masculine” in appearance and therefore sexually undesirable (Blinde & Taub, 1992; Cahn, 1993; Dworkin, 2001). Also, the image of female athletes



as mannish, failed heterosexuals represents a thinly veiled reference to heterosexism in sports (Cahn, 1993). But the insidiousness lies in the fact that if validated by herself, the female athlete willingly imposes a limit on her muscular potential (Dworkin, 2001). For example, often women will refuse to lift heavier weights in fear of “getting too big” and appearing “too masculine” leaving male hegemony in sports unchallenged (Dworkin, 2001, Heywood & Dworkin, 2003).

Furthermore, researchers have found that women’s relationships with fitness is based on a desire for appearance to change not health, meaning that women participate in fitness for cosmetic reasons; their investment in physical activity has specific goals of weight loss or obtaining an ideal, slender, feminine body (Dworkin, 2001, Salvatore & Marecek, 2010). Logically, this narcissistic gaze has little to do with health and fitness. For example, despite the fact that general guidelines for physical activity promote muscle strengthening regardless of gender (Salvatore & Marecek, 2010), since feminine body ideals promote thinness (Dworkin, 2001, Heywood & Dworkin, 2010), the perception of what increased muscularity means to a woman is negative despite the health factors of it.

#### *The Female Body, CrossFit culture*

The female body and CrossFit is in itself a site of both resistance to male hegemony and acceptance (Knapp, 2015, Washington & Economides, 2016). As far as media is concerned a google search of CrossFit women or the coverage of the CrossFit Games there is little sign of resistance (Washington & Economides, 2016). The images presented of women all share the markers of femininity such as tight clothing, long hair and make-up which contrast against the traditional markers of masculinity, such as well-defined large muscles, weightlifting accoutrements and strength (Washington & Economides, 2016). The contrast as briefly discussed above expresses the double bind of sports for women. Although muscular, the strong cues such as long hair, painted nails and revealing clothing are a way of dressing the body to mask

the fact that it is so similar to a man's and thus there is less of a bodily transgression. Although CrossFit bases its appeal on a rhetoric of empowerment with slogans such as "strong is the new skinny" it is obviously still drawn from familiar discourses about attractiveness, femininity and the body (Washington & Economides, 2016). In video analysis of CrossFit media, women's bodies were shown to still be inscribed as sexual objects for both the heterosexual male gaze and the narcissistic gaze (Washington & Economides, 2016). In short, instead of disrupting and challenging the traditional modes of understanding women athletes and challenging strength an all exclusive domain for men, Washington and Economides found that CrossFit still focuses on an attractive body, rather than a functional one (2016). Nonetheless, Knapp also found that "the purposeful refocus of female members' attention from weight loss, and other features associated with cosmetic fitness (through conversations with coaches and slogans on the wall), to issues of fitness, functionality and strength pushes the boundary of gender normativity (2015).

Knapp also found that female members noticed a shift in the ways they perceive their bodies (2015). Herz describes this phenomenon:

When women first show up, they look at the female trainers, the cuts in their shoulders and the V's of their backs, and say "I don't want to bulk up". But then two months go by, and they decide they want to climb a rope or lift their bodyweight. They start to diet for performance. The women's legs get stronger. Their waists shrink. Their back broaden. They get faster. They lift themselves up. Their bodies become a by-product of what they're able to do. (Herz, 2014, p.68).

In fact, what is described in the above passage is the process in which women appropriate their bodies through the practice of CrossFit, moving away from the fragile encumbrance that Young describes as discussed in the previous chapter. Notwithstanding their initial resistance away from a hegemonic ideal of how a woman should look, some women begin to focus on wanting their bodies to "do" more. Female body builders and CrossFitters alike mention how

they enjoy knowing that they are strong, how the feeling *within* their bodies of getting stronger and completing heavy works gives them satisfaction and that seeing the physical evidence of it makes them proud (Knapp, 2015; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Shilling & Bunsell, 2009).

However that is not to say that all women go through this process and then abandon a skinny ideal, many still choose deliberately to not increase weight. Just as Dworkin observed in the weight rooms of ordinary gyms, women will deliberately limit their potential (2001).

#### *Strategies to present female muscularity*

Within CrossFit Leman women often have said to me the same comments stating that muscularity is “not pretty”, which logically limits them from achieving their full potential by CrossFit standards (Personal observations 2015-16).

Umm I dunno I guess women are like scared of this aspect I mean we can see it in our gym umm like you know girls are afraid to lift weights and uhh they would rather run for 10k every day but uhh lifting weights is like no way I'm gonna get big and I don't want that and so yeah everyday we are fighting against that uhh image and uh lifting weights- Samantha

Similar to what Herz describes female members speak often of this fear of bulkiness and increased muscularity and would do something aerobic like “running a 10k” to avoid it. In fact some members will tell coaches they want to start lifting less because their shoulders became “too big” (Personal Observations, 2015-2016). The common positioning of resistance to weight from women is a dilemma for coaches at CrossFit Leman, since their job is to improve their clients' performance, the challenge to have female members lift heavier weights is an important one. For within CrossFit, lifting progressively heavier is of great necessity to improve one's overall performance. Winnie expresses the dilemma perfectly when asked about women who fear becoming “too” muscular:

so yeah it bugs me but you know we can say that but we can't exactly force them either so sometimes I feel like saying go back to a regular gym but you can't...I understand because you...well let's say that it's not acceptable in our society to be uh...you know to be like really buff and strong with muscles, in general women are supposed to be like this (holding up a finger) and has to have really fine thin arms...uhh you see that's not what we learn it's not the message we are getting.

Winnie knows perfectly well and understands that society dictates a certain form and shape. She knows that a woman socially praised and encouraged to remain thin and physically weak. Indeed she is frustrated, however she also assumes that she cannot impose these members to lift heavier because of the social messages about the female body that these women are willingly ascribing too. However, in this assumption she is also condoning a behavior that she herself does not follow. Winnie as an international competitor does indeed lift heavy and has the musculature that comes as a result. However she does not tell members that for her:

it's really something that makes me feel alive when I do it and it is about surpassing my own limits to feel alive to feel uhh reborn because it is hard and because well life is hard and as a result it brings something to you feel stronger more alive yeah...-Winnie

She does not explain how for her CrossFit gives her a sense of rebirth and strength when she does it, in some way she believes that although she finds the moment of surpassing one's limits to almost failure pleasurable she does not believe that it is for most women. She explains that because of fear and lack of confidence women want to stay in control and:

I think it's maybe a type of person who needs to control everything and the idea of moving out of their comfort zone and when they get to that point where you lose control it could be nerve wracking for certain people...but I mean it's difficult for me to understand since I love that. But uhh I try, I try and understand that when you are trying to control everything it can be really difficult to pass that comfort zone and let go -Winnie

Indeed losing control and moving out of your comfort zone implicates that the weight is too heavy for you, that your body gives out, your knees buckle and at that moment, you do have to let go and let the weight crash down, a fearful experience for anyone. Winnie finds it difficult to understand and yet she forgets that she has always been involved in sports that have an element of risk. As a figure skater and a hockey player she has had to leap knowing that she might not have had the skill to land without crashing to the ice. Such moments are reflections of the male hegemonic in sports, in which risk and physical pain are encouraged and celebrated. Thus, she is familiar with failure and implicit need to practice as well as the physical rewards and change that comes with success. As a result, it is simple for her to incorporate that metaphor into her approach to CrossFit and compete at a high level as she does. However, as much as she knows that some women might be fearful to this approach she does not encourage them with her own enthusiasm for it, perhaps out of a sense of disillusionment since she knows women will be fearful of putting on muscle but perhaps it is also out of a sense of misunderstanding. Having played sports in which risk and pain are prevalent in its performance she cannot physically and mentally comprehend those bodies that resist putting on weight.

Furthermore, given that Winnie is a full-time coach and whose social life revolves around those that also do CrossFit (Andrew is her boyfriend of two years), the chances of Winnie being socially admonished for her appearance is less likely than for other female members who voice their fear of bulkiness. Such is also the case for Sarah who describes in more detail how she incites less commentary about her physical body within CrossFit than outside of it:

Well CrossFit has influenced by view of the female body of course. Because I just wanted to be skinny and now I'm a I'm uhh proud to be strong and I'm proud to have muscles which is not the case in day to day life I mean when I'm in the CrossFit world I don't see any problems because all the women are like that. But when I go outside, when we have outsiders come in. They see me differently, they don't see me feminine. They see my like uhh... too bulky, too

much muscle, too strong. And before...I would have cared but now I just don't care. Because what is important to me is how I want to be. I want to be muscular. I want to have abs. I want to have strong legs. I want to be able to Push Press 80 kilos you know I don't care about how big my muscles are, my arms are. It's not important anymore. So people when tell me ohh that's horrible you have big arms I don't want to have arms like you. So yeah I say well you're never gonna press 65 kilos over your head, I will. -Sarah

Sarah knows that there is a social price outside of CrossFit. She knows she will be pointed out for her transgression and marked as unfeminine and describes the implicit comfort of socially staying within the CrossFit world. For in her mind all the women have made and are enacting a similar choice. However, she has also expressed frustration at being unable to encourage women to lift more. Like for Winnie, perhaps her lack of success to have female members to do so is in part because of the members' resistance. Nonetheless, since she understands and has experienced the social price for her body outside of the CrossFit world and knows that other members do not work in it as she does, Sarah might be reluctant to push any harder than she does.

Moreover, Sarah enunciates a similar movement that Herz describes in which a woman let's go of the ideal skinny and wants to achieve a physical challenge like lift 65 kilos over her head. Also, she refutes the outside gaze by putting more importance on how she "wants to be" which is stronger and more muscular. Samantha also mentions how she perceives her muscularity as being able to achieve a physical challenge, and yet Samantha attempts to have female members embrace muscularity that unlike Sarah's comment does not refute the outsiders gaze:

I mean I tell them, that some girls are stronger so why the hell not? It's ok to be strong. It's not ugly, it's not aesthetically offensive. It's beautiful, strength is beautiful- knowing that you can do so much with your body you know? ...well you know what those muscles represent

right? I mean it represents me able to lift 60 kilos three times over my head you know? ...it's when I see skinny legs in skinny jeans I'm like ahh you can't really do much in those!

-Samantha

Samantha proclaims an increase of self-assurance gained with a stronger body but has to reassure and argue that it is not “aesthetically offensive” in attempt to appease women’s bodily concern over transgressing the male hegemonic ideal of a woman’s slim and weak body. To be brief it is the beautification of muscularity. Therefore, Samantha evokes the importance of capturing the male gaze with a new definition of beauty denying the potential that a woman could change her body without the narcissistic gaze in mind. Nonetheless, her need to compare herself to the thin ideal belays a defensive posturing, the incapacity of thin legs compared to hers bolsters her in her transgression and so likewise she encourages other women to do so with that framework in mind. However, the framework is still encircled by male hegemony, as it not only refutes the loss of the male heterosexual gaze because bulkiness is beautiful but also creates a dynamic of competition between women for that gaze when comparing the skinny and the strong. In short, in some sense the argument that strong is beautiful creates a beauty pageant between (only) two models: strong and skinny.

This is further compounded by the male coaches. For their attempts to convince women to lift heavier despite their fears are also examples of the embedded objectification of a woman’s body in that she must be perceived as attractive. For example, in line with CrossFit culture, the coaches at CrossFit Leman are often heard repeating that “strong is the new skinny” which attempts to replace a body ideal for another one as mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

This takes form for example, in expressions of simple encouragement:

...but it's not much more I mean load up. Go heavy. Be strong. Strong is sexy. Strong is cool.

-Scooter

Or in using a member with a healthy body but emphasizing sex appeal:

I tell them about Catherine... (pseudonym). You know all the women are looking at her and saying oh I want to look like her. You know what she's doing? She's training every day for 1 or 2 hours. Is she bulky no she's fucking sexy! ...she's training two hours per day and she's also lifting heavy weights! Sorry. The sexiest thing in the world is a woman with a nice butt trust me. Yeah she's really hot. Sexy. -Winston

Like Samantha saying muscles are beautiful, Winston and Scooter's comments focus not only on sex appeal but on the external gaze of the female body and particularly a heterosexual one. Winston is clear in expressing how much he finds Catherine appealing since "the sexiest thing in the world is a woman with a nice butt trust me". He has decided that Catherine is attractive and as such since he is a male heterosexual man I should "trust" him to know what is desirable. More importantly, he knows and assumes that the female members are envious of her body because he finds her attractive. Here, Winston mentions nothing about her health and prowess which as a coach he should encourage and falls in the trap of considering physical form and appeal as more important to a woman. That is why he presumes they "all want to look like her" and not "be like her".

As Winston did in the previous paragraph Theo presents an image or a person to female members in an attempt to appease their fear. Theo explains:

I've had that happen once and I whip out my phone and show Camille LeBlanc (a professional CrossFitter) and say look at her how beautiful she is? And then I realize oh shit she has shoulders oh I've got to come up with someone else umm look at the other people the other people in our gyms this... Samantha for me is a great example to show that transformation. We've known each other for 5 years now so the beginning of 5 years to know her form, her physical form hasn't changed much except for the fact that she's become much better... I don't know the term...but guys call it ripped. Her measurements have remained mostly consistent her weight has increased she does not look fatter she can lift heavier...



Theo first thinks of a professional CrossFitter no doubt in part because he himself finds her beautiful but he realizes “oh shit” that she has strong, big shoulders which in his opinion defeats the purpose and he has to “come up” with someone else. Despite his own opinion as a heterosexual man, he inherently edits his image of beauty and women that corresponds to a more socially conscribed one. Not too big, not too bulky. He knows that such muscularity is in fact an anti-image of what a fit woman *wants* to look like. So as he looks for other people he thinks of coach Samantha, using her as reference since her body “measurements” did not change and although she may be heavier on the scale she “doesn’t look fatter” but is stronger. In fact in Theo’s mind Samantha has transformed but not so much that it would challenge any normative image.

Theo and Winston’s response to a woman’s fear of getting too bulky by using images does nothing to supplant the body ideal within the frame of masculine hegemony. By pointing out models, it allows for no encouragement of any sort of transgression. Furthermore, they bolster the idea of what is more important is attractiveness and not health even though the metabolic rewards to muscle are well known (Salvatore & Marecek, 2010).

Another strategy to present female muscularity is to reassure women that there is no possibility of gaining such mass, since it is based on nutrition and is a choice:

Well I tell them the truth if you eat like you are eating now and if you are working out 3 times a week not taking protein shakes or anything. You are not going to get bulky, you have to want to get bulky to get bulky. If I have these arms it’s not because I did CrossFit it’s because I eat towards a certain goal and I work out towards a certain goal. -Sarah

...I show them a picture most likely Brook Ence and I ask them you don’t want to look like her? And I tell them you know what this person here is working 7 days a week, 3 times a day is eating only protein has 3 different kind of coaches and it’s her full time job. Trust me you don’t want to look her? You will never be like her because you have a full time job on the side you don’t even have the time to look like her. That’s impossible! -Winston

Sarah and Winston explain how increasing muscle mass is something that is consciously chosen and is a “full time job” and that the enormous time commitment that most members with another job cannot achieve. Both comments are stemmed to ease a woman’s fear of becoming too muscular. Despite the encouragement to liberate a woman’s body in CrossFit Leman from being caged into the thin yet slightly muscular body that is commonly celebrated in the world of sports, when coaches reassure clients that “they will never look like that” except by choice, they only nurture the voluntary ceiling that a woman puts on herself. However, considering that CrossFit Leman depends on its members’ sense of contentment for its success, coaches are in another double bind. For assuredly many members would feel unease if their fear of getting more muscular would be answered “yes you will and isn’t it great?” Nonetheless, there is a missed opportunity to argue for another form of body that transgresses the societal norm.

And yet, couched within their statement is a facet that implies a breakage of gender determinism of the body. For what Winston and Sarah both underline is that it is nutrition, notably high protein along with working out consistently that causes muscle mass to increase. Therefore it is a choice and not confined to a male or female body. Even so, this is not to say that these expressions of the freedom within body work is not encapsulated with the social norms of body ideals as mentioned above. Howbeit, coaches who argue that getting big is largely due to high protein diets and high physical activity do convey a sense that both women and men have access and their persuasive power as figurehead of CrossFit cannot be dismissed. Scooter responds to the fear of muscularity in a way that belays an implicit connotation of muscularity as being an exclusive masculine domain and presents another approach to present female muscularity:

... tell ‘em unless you start shooting testosterone in your ass tomorrow. And umm eating nothing but entrecote you don’t have much to worry about, you are just going to be lean in

strong...uh so...yeah so it's women are afraid of getting bulky they have all this misinformation that lifting heavy is gonna make you bulky and it doesn't.

Like Sarah and Winston, Scooter does imply the importance of a high protein diet in achieving muscularity but what is interesting about his comment is that he does mention testosterone, obliquely referring (in a very funny way) that it impossible for a women to achieve such muscularity without a male hormone. Furthermore he implies that women are misinformed implying that achieving muscularity is still considered as only reserved to the masculine body. Scooter's comment is an articulated response to the embodied threat of a muscular woman, for it is perceived as a solely male characteristic and therefore unnatural and out of reach for a female body.

*Women and barbells and pull ups revisited*

Despite the previous acknowledgement of how the encouragement of women to weightlift heavy amounts does not necessarily challenge gender norms. I wish to argue here that despite that failure it is nonetheless a moment of resistance for it is an attempt to free them from a "fragile encumbrance" (Young, 1980). In the act of motivating a woman to lift heavier, the perception of what her body can do is contradictory to the one socially ascribed to her. Samantha talks of this moment saying:

Yeah I think it's just about giving the confidence that you can actually do those things we are just limited by our imagination it's that that stops us you know? -Samantha

What can be imagined is circumscribed by what we think is possible, Samantha is aware that women put limits on their capacities. As does Scooter when he states that "I think well again a lot of women are a lot stronger than they believe themselves to be" and again Sarah when she describes that "it's forgetting their fears and moving past that... it's just again a change of perspective". Coaches are cognizant of self-imposed limits that women put on their bodies as

a result of societal beliefs. As such, by supporting them to go beyond such limits coaches do indeed challenge gender roles.

This ends the discussion of how coaches implicate different strategies to present female muscularity and demonstrates how coaches are both resisting and challenging stereotypes doing so.

## ***CHAPTER 6: UNDOING GENDER: CHALLENGE AND COMPLIANCE***

In this chapter I will explore the different ways that the coaches and CrossFit Leman do challenge stereotypes. I will first discuss the effect of having a female coach has upon the members and show that despite the fact that her very presence does challenge gender norms the act is not met without resistance. After which, I will review how the importance of creating a community to CrossFit Leman provides a context to break down social barriers while simultaneously maintaining others. Moreover, I will expose moments of masculine resistance, within which male coaches challenge gender norms and perceptions. Lastly, I will examine how the emotional labor requisite in CrossFit Leman also challenges gender norms since both women and men willingly participate and take pleasure in it. Further, CrossFit Leman engages in a policy that deems the emotional work of empathy as an integral part of coaching and as such creates a climate that can create internal change away from biases.

### *A Girl Coach*

First and foremost the impact of a woman coaching, instructing and encouraging an often-times all male group cannot be dismissed in its importance of resisting gender expectations and interactions. As in all power dynamics in which traditional roles are reversed, a female coach provides a visual and real-time challenge to the conventional distance of women from sport and even more so from managing athletes' physical performance (Norman, 2010).

Moreover this situation allows for alternate dynamics (such as a man openly asking for a woman's expertise) along with the opening up social spaces that challenge traditional gender roles. Many times I have seen and experienced expressions of gratitude from a male member when a coach has helped them in their technique. They often seem surprised and yet do not hesitate to acknowledge the switched power dynamics with a: "thank you coach!"

Still, research has shown that female coaches often have to work harder to prove their validity and their superior knowledge to athletes as such they must fight and carry a burden of doubt

and suspicion (Norman, 2010). Often, the reaction to such hostility leaves the gender order unchallenged (Norman, 2010, Hinze, 2004, Rudman & Fairchild, 2007, Swim & Hyers, 1998), Winnie elucidates this well:

But umm but I've already seen and realized or maybe it's just me but I have the feeling that sometimes men don't really appreciate comments and coaching from women but uhh it depends on the men some can take it just fine but uhh there are some that have a lot more trouble receiving a correction in CrossFit from a woman so that and that has annoyed me sometimes but I could be wrong...-Winnie

Similar to Norman's findings (2010), Winnie evokes her sense of hostility and lack of appreciation coming from some male members. Although, instead of challenging and attempting to confirm this feeling emitting from a member, she takes on the responsibility for such sexism by suggesting she might be too sensitive, that it is just her and she could be wrong. Doubting one's experience of sexism is also a demonstration of the power structure within such social moments (Hinze, 2004). Research has shown that women will refrain from responding or confronting sexism because of the social pressure to not respond, against identifying oneself as a feminist, or from fears of retaliation or fears of being perceived as impolite or aggressive which would be inconsistent with what is perceived as her gender role (Swim & Hyers, 1998).

Winnie's choice to diminish her claim protects her from the threat of being perceived as too sensitive, too aggressive to men which would in turn harm her relations with them since such behavior hazards the threat of fighting for gender equality. As such she would risk rocking the post-feminist supposition that equality has already been achieved which insidiously reaffirms the patriarchal gender order (Swim & Hyers, 1998, Hinze, 2004, McRobbie, 2004).

Consequently, Winnie's self-disclaimer does not challenge the existing gender power structure as much as her presence before the class does, thus sexist hostility towards a female coach could go unchallenged by some female coaches.

Nonetheless, the presence of female coaches does prompt other forms of change. For example, CrossFit Leman does endorse the transfer of knowledge amongst coaches whereas in other sport domains, male coaches tend to keep their mastery to themselves (Norman, 2010). Not only does CrossFit Leman have the ITP program in which coaches share and transfer their points of expertise; the in-house web forum allows for coaches to share their savoir faire, ask questions and share their doubts all of which is done with no specific gender pattern. Thus, the presence of female coaches amongst the team also provides a way to challenge gender norms for CrossFit Leman.

#### *Crossfit Leman: community and diversity*

CrossFit Leman members come from a diverse range of class and lifestyle, as Scooter mentioned to me one day: “We got housewives next to bankers, policemen next to accountants” this crossing of boundaries takes a significance in reducing biases. As Allport argued in 1954, contact with members of different groups has a major role in reducing stereotypes and prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), especially when engaged in a collective action and under equal status (Tausch & Hewstone, 2010).

As CrossFit Leman does actively engage, foster and promote its own community, within itself it does provide opportunities to reduce prejudices. Monthly activities are mandated and organized such as barbecues, intergroup competitions, themed workouts and holiday parties. The reason for these as enunciated in the weekly staff meetings is to give members a sense that they belong to a community. The recent opening of CrossFit Nyon and Eaux-Vives are examples. Many staff meetings were filled with the concern over how to create an emotional tie to CrossFit Leman Vich whilst also creating a space for those new members to feel a connection to Nyon. Additionally, when there has been scissions or split offs that might damage the community (such as the creation of Winston and his group of young athletes), coaches and staff

react stating that it is not “the CrossFit Leman” way, indicating how coaches actively take a role in creating this community. Tom explains CrossFit Leman’s priority quite succinctly:

CrossFit is about bringing people together like from different genders, different age, different social whatever and I think it’s all about mixing so when you mix people, people different obviously. So you have to be aware of that and you know you can have some uhh stereotype stuff you know so I think it’s important. This is something we try to promote in CrossFit Leman like we are all together but still ...you try to put those values out there that you want to make sure everybody’s equal. Tom

Tom points out the mixing of gender, age and “whatever” and acknowledges the risks of stereotyping. Tom understands and points out that CrossFit Leman consciously creates a feeling of universal connection, breaking down stereotypes as Tausch & Hewstone suggest it does (2010). As a consequence, the creation of such connections, ensures possible changes in members and coaches perceptions of individuals outside of their own self-identified group. Nevertheless, although CrossFit Leman does indeed attempt to foster a sense of community and a social network, its own existence does create an exclusion through dress codes, diets and regular attendance, necessary in part to preserve its uniqueness and deepen the sense of conversion and strength of the community itself (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Howbeit, it is also important to point out that those that cannot afford membership, those who have never experienced the benefits of doing a sports through lack of time and access are denied a potential link to CrossFit Leman. Therefore, as much as CrossFit includes by creating an environment where the mixing of different social strati is possible, it also limits this mixing to a select few. However, in direct acknowledgement to this CrossFit Leman is in the process of getting the necessary approval from health insurances to cover membership costs. Nonetheless, this is not a perfect solution for individuals who have insurances that offer to do so can



afford the higher than average monthly insurance fees and thus it still disenfranchises those with lower incomes.

### *Masculine resistance*

A more oblique example of how CrossFit Lemman coaches challenge stereotypes is within the social space generated amongst each other. Possibly due to the daunting challenge of actually doing CrossFit, discussions about it amongst the coaches often generate a moment of resistance to the masculine ideal. For example when speaking to me about weightlifting Rich admits:

Well when you're lifting something heavy and you've you know if you're lifting a bit of weight and putting it over your head it's a bit freaky? And umm even you know even doing cleans or things that aren't necessarily overhead it's quite daunting I mean sometimes the bar scares you. Rich

Rich discusses the masculine associated activity of weightlifting and acknowledges that it can be “freaky” and “daunting”. In this instance, it is an admission that Rich makes when he states that “the bar scares you”, which should not go unnoticed for it is in defiance of the classic, fearless male. This is one example of how in conversations amongst other coaches, male coaches admit to fears and concerns that is in nature of the feminine domain. Another example are the bodily concerns that the men openly share. Scooter for example, will lament his problems with weight loss saying such things (as was referred to in Chapter 3) as “he wants to lose his gut”. Doubtless this is not such an emancipatory event since Scooter is now trapped into the dilemma of bodily appearance and body work, nonetheless considering that such disquiet was once considered only concerns requisite of the feminine (Markula, 1995, Heywood & Dworkin, 2003), it does blur the lines of masculine and feminine behavior.

Under the same notion the male coaches also challenge the idea of women having weaker physical capacities. For example, Theo states when he looks at performance levels that he

“frankly sees no difference” and Rich, when discussing the intensity required to be a CrossFitter, also claims a certain disregard for gender differences:

...you know you'll see someone but then is not really a gender thing it applies to men as well it's like come on you can do more than an 8 kilo floppy, kettlebell, sudo, half-assed swing you know. Emm I I've been do you know Sue? Umm I mean she uhh she gets in there and down with it and throws some heavy weights around and I've done team workouts with her and she's pushed me just as much as doing a WOD with Tom or you know one of the hardcore guys. I think you know it's not... which is a cool thing about CrossFit I don't think gender comes into it? Umm after the end of WOD it's high five all around and it doesn't matter if you're a badass or someone just starting out I mean male or female I don't think it comes into the equation. -Rich

As a coach, Rich has identified no gender distinction over the lack of intensity in some members, pointing out that he has seen men that physically underperform, taking less than what they could at light weights and doing it “half-assed”. He then describes his own experiences with a female member Sue, pointing out that he felt as if he were with any of the advanced and “hardcore” men, this connotation of physical equality similar to other studies of coed sports (see Anderson, 2008). More to the point, his remarks ascribe the position of equality within CrossFit, how gender is not an issue and “doesn't come into the equation”. However much gender *does* come into the equation, the act of male coaches declaring women as equals is indeed a resistance of gender norms.

### *Emotional labor*

The coaches' professional ethos can also be enrolled in the process of fighting stereotypes within themselves. Given that coaching leisure sports remains within the service sector it is an occupation that requires workers to use emotional labor and specialized knowledge to provide customized service for individual clients (George, 2008). Briefly, emotional labor is required

in any service occupation where emotionally positive interactions with clients are necessary (Guy & Newman, 2004). Such labor has been compared to acting in which workers invoke and display emotions within a social structure that imposes constraints on these efforts. (Wharton, 2009. Guy & Newman, 2004). Therefore this aspect of work involves attempts to align privately felt emotions with normative expectations or to bring the outward expression of emotion in line with them (Wharton, 2009). Thus with regards to inner prejudice, emotional labor within a context of equality can possibly reduce bias.

Research on emotional labor has shown that there is normative pressure on the employees to behave in specific emotional manners, otherwise known as feeling rules (Wharton, 2009). This is why Winston deliberately hides his frustration concerning out of shape people (mentioned in Chapter 2). Despite his internal feelings, he knows that unmasking his impatience will disrupt the service he is trying to provide (which is to get a member in shape). The feeling rule is that he must show empathy and patience with those clients within CrossFit Leman. Also, studies have shown that empathy per se, its presence or lack has great influence on how individuals within groups of different hierarchical structure interact, for empathy is known as having a major role in prejudice reduction (Dovidio *et al*, 2010). In precis, taking the perspective of another group can improve even well-cemented intergroup attitudes (Dovidio *et al*, 2010), as was the case for Anderson's male cheerleaders when they began to practice the sport with women (Anderson, 2008). Therefore any social context where a sense of empathy is encouraged can provide an avenue to reduce prejudice. Such is the case within CrossFit Leman and is in essence a feeling rule. When describing his role as a coach Rich describes that:

...a big part of coaching is the human aspect and being able to connect with people and in order to be able to connect with people you need to have that empathy and understanding of how

you know group dynamics but also how individuals work and respond to the support or lack of support- Rich

Rich acknowledges the importance of understanding human interactions, of comprehending how individuals “work” and the need for connection that implies empathy. In other words, he is describing what he feels are the qualities of emotional labor within CrossFit Leman. What Rich is implying is the necessity for one to see the other individual and empathy implies that one sees and feels what another individual is experiencing within that individual’s frame of reference.

Additionally, CrossFit Leman’s policy is adamant that coaches must know all athletes by name and it is deemed mandatory that a coach spends time with each member during a class. In consequence the emotive infrastructure of CrossFit Leman streamlines its coaches to make connections, a foreground to empathy. Some coaches implicitly understand the relation between the two, for example Winnie describes how:

... if you take the time to learn one small thing about each member uhh...I think you can gain their trust and they will feel less like someone who just comes and who does their thing and leaves uhh honestly I think that we as humans we need to know that we are not invisible because I think there is nothing worse than coming in and not being seen ... -Winnie

Even in the simple act of discovering a personal detail about a member, a coach accomplishes the prerequisite emotional labor as requested by CrossFit Leman. The coach now knows something about the members’ lives, they have also have tried to see that particular individual’s frame of reference such that they do not feel invisible and thus, have possibly restrained their own prejudices. Theo reveals more detail to this attentiveness of coaches:

So yes time of day would define how you need to be with athletes those that come in the evening are coming just after work and their already mentally stressed you want to keep you want to watch them really carefully. -Theo

Theo points out the adaptability that a coach must have, he mentions how some members are already mentally and emotionally fatigued and evokes the emotional work needed from the coach to remain alert to their needs and behavior, to “watch them very carefully”. Note that there is no mention or prevalence of gender, age or class in this regard. This form of vigilant care creates a framework for the coach to attempt to see and empathize with members. Thus the strategy put in place amongst the coaches to have a watchful eye, to see and make contact with members is an illustration of how empathy is significantly encouraged and as a result the chances of reducing the coaches’ own prejudices are put in place.

A more focused example of this emotional work and its benefits to prejudice reduction came while Sarah was coaching and a potential member came to test CrossFit. As her assistant at the time, I was given the task of giving this massively muscular, unsmiling, curt and abrupt man the necessary paperwork. Skeptical of whether or not this man would be agreeable and respectful to Sarah, I asked her about the experience coaching him afterwards to which she replied: “You know I was certain that he was going to be a know it all, macho prick but in fact he doesn’t speak French and he was so shy and awkward about it! I so completely understand that! He’s actually super sweet and wants to learn”. Thanks to the measures put in place by CrossFit Leman which creates the possibility of learning another’s perspective, empathizing with his hesitancy and shyness instead of seeing a closed and surly person allowed for Sarah to surpass her initial judgement of him. Nevertheless, this is not to say that the presence of these measures eradicate stereotypes and creates de facto empathy but it is a foreground nonetheless.

Coaches also realize and acknowledge the importance of emotional and psychological support implicated in that hour of coaching. As Samantha and Conan both describe what coaches do to young trainees: “we try to give them the best hour of their day” inferring an emotional and

psychological influence that a coach can have on a member. Winnie's remarks on her role further imply an influence on members that goes beyond the physical when she explains:

Maybe I give them a support that allows them to go farther than they would alone and also if they have had a bad day them being able to do something here gives them a small happiness after a hard day so that is cool. It's something that I love and that I see I think that I can see that really well and have a feel for people that have low self-esteem-Winnie

Winnie feels a sense of responsibility for improving their day with a "small happiness". Winnie's reflections underscore the oft-mentioned boost of self-confidence that their encouragement can bring to individuals and the pleasure that derives from it. And in Rich's point of view it is seen as a privilege, when comparing his presence as a coach to Winston's (who admittedly prefers the more advanced athletes), Rich laments Winston and coaches like him because they:

... miss out on encouraging, empathizing and getting people to push themselves without becoming CrossFit competitors. -Rich

Like Rich and Winnie the majority of coaches mention how they enjoy emotional labor and it is something not be "missed out on". Seen as a moment of great social influence and privilege, their perception of coaching creates an atmosphere in which gender norms concerning emotional labor is challenged. For research of emotional labor has found that it is often gender segregated, meaning that those aspects of reassuring, encouraging, nurturing and comforting are generally relegated to women (Wharton, 2009, Guy & Newman, 2004). However, both men and women within CrossFit Leman indicate their contentment at such work and as a consequence their enactment and pleasure in emotional labor does break gender stereotypes.

As noted coaches frequently mention their delight in seeing an athlete progress or complete a challenging movement under their tutelage. For example, Theo mentioned after an ITP session about returning to teaching Rookies:

I forgot how much I enjoy being mother, encouraging them, giving them the technique and confidence and then letting them go, go fly now to Intermediates. -Theo

Notice that he directly refers this aspect with the feminine and yet nonetheless is clear as to how much he takes satisfaction from it. Winnie expresses her gratification in this aspect as well in her coaching:

In general, well my role well I really enjoy transmitting something to others and seeing that they are happy as a result and certainly when they thought they couldn't do it. -Winnie

Winnie like most teachers enjoys the transmission of knowledge and the positive reception of it but what is most notable is that she mentions that it is certainly the case when the athlete achieves a new accomplishment. Like Theo and Winnie, time and again coaches will mention this moment amongst each other as this is particularly event in CrossFit Leman. When an individual achieves a personal record, a small ritual of celebration is enacted. Traditionally (but not obligatory allowing for members who wish to be more discrete), members ring a bell, and what ensues is congratulations from all members and coaches who heard it while the member recounts what they have accomplished. For coaches, the news that a member reaches a personal record is shared amongst them regardless of the perceived complexity or difficulty of the movement achieved. The appreciation of “getting someone to do something when they couldn't do it before” that the Winnie describes and all coaches mention and participate in is blind to sex, race or gender. Which is a concrete example of how by the simple quest in wanting to improve member's capacities and the emotional labor involved, socially constructed biases are erased within the coach.

## ***CHAPTER 7: Change and Permanence***

The following chapter will discuss evidence of change or resistance after the seminar on gender equality and stereotypes in physical education. Its purpose as noted in the notes and outlines (see Annex) was to induce awareness and self-regulatory techniques to combat internal prejudices and stereotyping. As I will show, many coaches articulated a change in their behavior and in perception, confirming evidence that seminars and workshops do indeed promote a move away from bias and stereotyping (Dovidio *et al.*, 2010). However, research has shown that although self-awareness of prejudice and the response of self-regulation to impede it does indeed reduce prejudice, this does not give protection from the automatic or unconscious activation of bias (Monteith *et al.*, 2010).

### *Noticing and Acknowledging the hook/ Change in behavior*

After the seminar many coaches noted a rise in their reflections concerning their own biases. The coaches observed an increase in *noticing* that they were indeed interacting with judgments in mind. As Scooter remarks: “it made me think a little more closely about my interactions with people”. This in itself is the first step to self-regulation and the reduction of stereotyping (Monteith, *et al.*, 2010). Coaches observed this new cognitive focus on these social issues in themselves:

Certainly in terms of my awareness in terms of gender equity, equality and paying a lot more attention to my own biases uhh I’m a little more aware of my own biases -Conan

Notice that Conan is only a slightly more aware of his biases, acknowledging his potential for containing some that are still out of his cognitive reach. Along with moving towards self-awareness and self-regulation he is aware of his own unconscious activation of biases. Conan’s motivation towards change is highly reflexive, a hopeful sign of his capacity to integrate conscious tools to combat stereotyping (Monteith, *et al.*, 2010). In fact, now integrating this



awareness coaches subsequently admitted to the difficulty of putting biases aside which is in also itself a first move towards prejudice reduction (Monteith, *et al.*, 2010):

... I have stereotypes I mean it's life when you look at someone you have like an instant thinking about their look so it's you have to work around that you can't stop having stereotypes or thinking about them but you can learn how to get over it and don't you know be stuck in those. -Tom

And also uhh well yeah our judgements of people...because in reality it's hard not have them but since you know that you try to work against that and fight against yourself saying ok you shouldn't have stereotypes blab la but sometimes it hooks you anyway...it's impressive just how strong that is -Winnie

The fact that the coaches became more aware of their stereotypes is not to say that they didn't know they had them. Tom and Winnie are recognizant of the existence of their own biases and yet due to the seminar they refocused their attention and realized the difficulty of not having them. They are aware of how much bias is embedded as it takes just one look to create a judgement and will "hook you in". Despite this, as Tom and Winnie articulate, the coaches know that they can achieve a cognitive process with a determined focus and work that reduces those judgements, a clear move towards change (Monteith, *et al.*, 2010).

After the seminar coaches actively searched for on the spot strategies to combat their biases based on their conscious self-critique while coaching:

... so I'm actively trying to address those when I'm in classes when there's situations where I am like uh oops careful of this or that -Conan

...so now I when I'm in the class I think even yesterday I found myself it's a quick switch a quick question: am I umm being fair in my interactions? Uhh it's a question I've started asking myself a little more than I used to before? Uhh and specifically around for example yesterday when I was not yesterday a couple of days ago when I was coaching I found myself

spending a little extra time with umm certain people in the class and uh Rather than others and I had to self-correct and say oh wait a second ok these guys this girl is completely new but that doesn't mean I can neglect the rest of the class because she needs extra attention so I had to modify uhh my behavior a bit and I came up with the solution of getting the whole class involved in giving her encouragement rather than just me so it became a kind of a class exercise this was uhh basically because I had this on switch on am I being fair in my interactions-Theo

Conan and Theo consciously address their bias within their classes and attempt to identify moments when they must tread more softly. They both identify self-regulatory moments when they explain how they alter their behavior once they recognize an “oops” moment of prejudice. Theo goes farther in his explanation, noting that he now checks himself for any movements that would create inequality and that the reason for any of his modifications are indeed because of his self-critique. Therefore, pointing out the success in discussing the need for self-regulation.

The changes in behavior during classes that Theo elicits are also observed by other coaches with regards to specific subjects brought up during the seminar. Some remark that they have changed their language concerning barbells, for example:

I certainly changed uhh my language I don't call it a baby's bar or a training bar, it's a 10 kilo bar, 15 kilo bar and a 20 kilo bar -Sarah

Whilst others concentrate on systematically checking and ensuring that they spend time with every member to promote equality and prevent acting from their own biases:

The thing that got me the most was for example what you said about Sue Ellen (pseudonym :an over 65 member) when you said sometimes we pass her aside and let her alone because she's older and now I am working on that. -Winnie

So for me, umm I've made like since discovering it I've made a conscious effort to give them the same amount of time as I do everybody else in the class so the result has been that I am a

little more systematic at working my way through everybody that is in my class and giving them each the individual time that they desire -Sarah

(The seminar) made me think a little more closely about my interactions with the people who have little or no English uhh cuz I probably you know interact more with people who I can communicate more with so uhh I've really made an effort since then you know -Scooter

In each of these examples coaches have modified their behavior, Sarah consciously chooses different words than those used before the seminar, Winnie concentrates on her interactions attempting to avoid ignoring members that might not be soliciting attention and Scooter attempts more to overcome cultural and language boundaries. In these examples, these coaches make reference to a self-discovery that wasn't available before the seminar. As for all the changes described, the coaches profess to a net change in their behavior and acts, a clear sign of its benefits in reducing stereotypes and bias.

#### *Solutions proposed*

As is presented by Oliver and Kirk (2015), teaching with equality is effective when the actors themselves discover their own micro-solutions, this was the purpose of the focus group. The subject for this focus group was to find active solutions to limit and change inherent biases and stereotypes in their dealings with members.

The coaches came up with diverse ideas. The majority insisted on the need for more role-plays and exercises with a post-discussion that would allow them to discuss and reflect on their perceptions and observations. Another solution proposed was to continue insisting that coaches check they spent equal time with everyone. They suggested that this could occur during the ITP sessions. Additionally, they requested more assessment of their classes focusing on equity teaching, suggesting also that video recordings of their classes could be useful.

Note that all these suggestions reveal the need for constant surveillance to encourage self-reflexivity, evincing the high motivation amongst the CrossFit Leman team to ensure long last-

ing change (Monteith, *et al.*, 2010). Currently CrossFit Leman is looking to put these suggestions in place and has already listed gender dynamics as part of the pre-existing assessment form. Additionally, CrossFit Leman has since reinforced the importance of assuring that equal time is spent with all members during a class as further insurance of fighting certain biases.

*I already know: stereotypes unchallenged*

Although the seminar attempted to bolster awareness of gender inequality and provide solutions to ensure equality, there was a notable lack of self-critique with regards to gender issues. Being male is a privileged status, and one of the most significant features of male privilege is that those who experience it do not have to think about it.

Several of the male coaches, though responsive to their bias in some areas dismissed any self-regard to gender, considering it already as a *fait accompli*. For example, Scooter spoke about it as if it were a non-issue: “I never had that much of problem with gender you know umm that was never really an issue I don’t think”. As for Winston he is already informed: “a lot of things you talked about is nothing new to me” and so the seminar brought no new reflections: “to be honest not really because that’s that like stuff I’ve had like twice already”. In these examples, the appropriation of the knowledge that there is inequality seems to be enough in their minds for actual change, as if simply “knowing” about gender suffices.

Not only are these comments reflective of their privilege, the passivity inferred within them reflects the presence of post-feminist positioning. One in which the feminist movement and gender equality are “no longer needed and a spent force” (McRobbie, 2004). Because Theo’s response to this dilemma of “already knowing” is so succinct I choose to use his words to describe the problem:

...that’s the problem with the response I KNOW, the response of I Know uh..do you? Really? Know? Because you might know it but you’ve not internalized it until you’ve vocalised it and practiced it and uh when you vocalise it then you realise oh yeah it was in the back of my head

but it never quite translated into actions yes I know that genders are equal uhh but what has that so called knowledge done to my action? -Theo

Theo's comments underscore the problem with this positioning, without any self-questioning, how can just "knowing" create change? Although consciousness raising has its merits, it abuts to little when there is no movement as a result.

As aforementioned, for CrossFit Leman, Winston is a problematic coach perceived by members as very authoritarian with clear favorites. Conan and Samantha have, after several meetings with him about these complaints, have said that "he refuses to see any negative in his actions and take responsibility". For Winston then, self-critique is perhaps not his priority in interpersonal relationships and perhaps as a result will resist any change in his behavior that could promote equality. For example:

I don't care if I call it a woman's bar or man's bar if woman are getting like discriminated by me telling them that's a woman's bar that has nothing to say to me -Winston

Despite knowing all about gender, having had the subject presented "twice already" Winston's defensive positioning and clear disinterest in challenging gender does give evidence that the seminar's goal to promote a change in the reflection of individuals, did not in his case. However, Winston was recently fired from CrossFit Leman, a hopeful indicator that CrossFit Leman does indeed prioritize equality and asks the coaches for the same.

### *Did it backfire?*

An interesting and alarming paradox was made apparent after the second round of interviews with the female coaches. Despite the seminar's intention of combatting inequalities and stereotyping, it seems to have backfired with regards to how some female coaches react to sexism. In sum, suggesting to the coaches that empathy was a major move towards deconstructing inner prejudices perhaps has given some of the female coaches fuel to tolerate sexism. For ex-

ample, just before my second interview with Winnie, I observed her class with Phillip (pseudonym) a Swiss-German whom other female coaches have complained because of his lack of respect towards them. During the class, Phillip questioned her explanations and decisions repeatedly during her class, attempting to argue for his own opinion, made very little eye contact with her and additionally was dismissive of her suggestions with regards to his technique. Winnie describes that since the seminar she has changed her approach with him:

... like Phillip that we saw at noon uhh for me with his attitude I can conclude he has a problem with female authority so I can conclude he's macho and an asshole (laughs) yeah like that but perhaps in reality and we can't forget that there is also a language barrier so maybe in fact he just wants to tease me and I don't understand his humor you see? Who knows? –Winnie

Instead of labelling a member within the stereotype of a “macho asshole” Winnie explains that she attempts to see him within his own context, empathetic to the idea that his behavior might be due to cultural difference or her misinterpretation. But what if in this case Phillip at this moment is indeed acting like a macho asshole? (Which begs the question since he has been pointed out as difficult by other female coaches). Similar to the denigration of her interpretation of men's distrust of her as a coach (Chapter 6), I am afraid that the section of the seminar that touted the benefits of trying not to judge someone stereotypically is a double edged sword that could in Winnie's case, maintain a lack of certainty and credibility to her experiences of sexism.

Likewise, this is the case for Sarah:

...if someone's not really following the class and just doing his own stuff. I used to ah fuck this, this fucking jerk is doing whatever he wants I think there is a reason now behind it and I try to investigate it a little bit more and not umm not take it against myself because it's not about me it's probably because he had a horrible day and he's just here to do this thing and

leave. Not because he doesn't like me or doesn't want to follow my class it's just that he's in his world –Sarah

For Sarah, instead of feeling frustrated and threatened by a member who doesn't follow her class, she attempts to invest energy in finding an explanation rather than taking it as critique on her coaching and strives to see his world and what is happening in it. In both examples, the coaches alter their negative perception of a member moving towards a more sympathetic point of view and were proud of it. However, this is an alarming reaction in that the possibility of being able to frame and fight against sexism disappears. Indeed, attempting to understand another's perspective is important and necessary for unprejudiced relations but it does not imply a need to excuse mistreatment nor that sexism should be ignored and should at the very least be considered as a possibility.

In conclusion to this chapter, stereotype awareness and gender equality education for educators was shown to be prevalent. The coaches' increase in self-regulation and their activation of purposeful individual and group strategies to reduce bias was shown. However, there seems to be a delicate line between tolerance and tolerating injustice. It was exposed that some female coaches demonstrated an acceptance (or at least a lack of introspection) of sexist treatment because they were attempting to not stereotype the men in question. More insistence must be made to clarify this line and thusly, more research is needed in this matter to ascertain all the possible motivating factors for this behavior which indeed do not challenge the gender order. Furthermore, more attempts need to be made to hook those that "already know" everything about inequality but feel no inclination to reflect on their own actions that might, through inaction, sustain gender, age and class prejudices.

## *CONCLUSION*

Research has also shown how masculine hegemony is prevalent within sports albeit challenged by newer sports such as CrossFit. Thus by focusing on CrossFit Leman's coaches this research was able to investigate how stereotypes and biases are resisted within a shared sex space by educators. Unlike previous research on CrossFit, this study focused on the perspective of the coaches as actors within male hegemony. The main reason for this approach was to attempt to provide insight on the dynamics of educating adults in leisure sports since previous research has determined the great impact a teachers' role has in challenging or perpetuating stereotypes.

Simultaneously, as studies have shown that interventions do reduce bias, the secondary focus of this study was also to elucidate if there would be any change in resistance of social norms through a seminar discussing equality teaching and stereotype resistance.

As such CrossFit Leman in many ways can be seen as a space of resistance. In this space coaches challenged dominant ideas about women and muscularity and revealed that the ethos of these educators does provide impetus for more equality within teaching. However, immersed in the well-intended tyranny of fitness as the icon to health and happiness, coaches were also working within a framework that allowed for positions of judgement. Moreover, bodily perceptions were still encased with the male hegemonic, belying ideas of natural male superiority and the importance of appearance over capacity within the female body.

Additionally, this research did support previous studies which found that interventions can influence change, a clear indication that this is a useful tool for fighting biases within teachers. Nevertheless, although the coaches professed to cognitive change and attempted to alter their behavior, further research is needed to investigate whether these were long lasting changes. Furthermore, the implications of a possible negative impact of a stereotype awareness course



in women's resistance to sexism cannot be ignored and thusly, further research into these ramifications on women educators is needed.

These findings point to other issues within leisure sports and education where research is inexistent. One area of focus is an attempt to see if similar patterns of reproduction and resistance of hegemonic social norms are seen in other CrossFit coaches. In addition, following research to examine change effects within CrossFit Lemna following the implementation of equality strategies is also a continuing subject to question. Lastly, continuing research on whether or not such seminars can positively influence teachers in physical education is sorely needed.

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## **Annex**

### ***Notes and Procedures to Gender and Equality Seminar***

*Introduction:* Thanks to Olga and Euan and Izzie/Ask for their permission to be there teacher

*What the project is:*

- To introduce the principles of stereotyping in teaching
- To show the effects of stereotyping
- To find and give tools to work against stereotyping: to induce awareness and self-regulatory techniques to combat internal prejudices and stereotyping
- To explain the link with equality and stereotyping

*Goals of the Day*

- First section: To have you understand, experience and observe stereotyping
- Second section: To explain the social impact of stereotyping on equality in sports and the potential in CrossFit
- Third section: To find/ discuss solutions as coaches to reduce the impact of stereotypes

*Lesson Plan*

(50 min)

Activity 1: *negative self-talk* (5 min)

- Discuss and make reference to negative self-talk.
- Make the moment universal by referencing moments while they workout or at work
- State that it has an impact on how we perform physically

Exercise: (10-15 min)

- Self-demonstrate the 3 good things/3 bad things arm hold exercise ( hold out your arm while saying 3 good things about yourself while someone tries to push your arm down and then 3 bad)
- Put them in groups of two to do the same thing

- Ask them how they felt about the exercise

Activity 2: Identifying stereotypes (material: clipboard for each group/5 pages) (20 min)

- In groups of 4-6 ( by language) ask them to list adjectives associated with the titles with no censorship!: man/woman/old/teenager/rookie/intermediate/  
housewife/businessperson/ fat/fit

Discussion (15-20 min)

- Collect their ideas and write up the adjectives on the board
- Ask how accurate these adjectives really are
- Ask if these are the internal messages that we all have then how much does it affect our performance? Do you think it does?
- Each individual will react and cope to these messages differently some being more susceptible than others but how as teachers do we work against it and how do we work with it?
- Draw circle diagram

Break 5 min

*Presentation (5-10 min)*

*Role Plays and Discussion*

- State that these are situations that observed over the past year...
- Purpose is to identify where is the bias coming from and what can we do about it

*Role Play 1 (15 min)*

Scene: Waiting for class

Instructions: Tell them all have stickers on forehead and not to look at it until I say so. Describe the scene. If big group ask 2 to observe.

Material:

- Stickers: Which have instructions to others what to say:

- Smile at me and ask about my recent PR/Pat me on the back and ask how are you feeling today/Give me a huge hug (or bises) and ask me about my weekend plans/Give me five. Ask how my Friday night was/ Turn away from me.
- 5 min of mixing

#### Discussion

- Ask: How they were feeling?
- Without looking at label, do you know what it says? How do you know?
- All of you who think you have the “Turn away from me” label, please come and stand together in front of the room. How did you feel?
- Ask observers what they say and felt
- Let them look at labels and describe all of us have felt left out and yet some more than others, any ideas of who that can be in our classes?
- Point out you see this in newbies, try outs, older people, women when majority men and vice versa
- Remind them all of this is nonverbal/ no negative comment.
- What can we change in our nonverbal behavior to help everyone feel included?
- What do people from groups that are left out sometimes do?

#### *Role Play 2 (20min) Teaching Snatch*

*Materials: Copies of the instructions*

*Coach: You must teach the Snatch. You don't use tactile cues and only verbal and are a bit impatient with athlete 1 who never listens...*

*Athlete 1: You are an athlete who has never lifted anything heavy, who has no concept of your body in space, who lacks any capacity to use your body to push, pull etc. in a rapid, explosive manner. You have been doing CrossFit for 3 months but you can't seem to get it...*

*Athlete 2: You are very shy and sad today. You just want to hide stay in the back and not get noticed.*

*Athlete 3: You are on fire! You feel like you are the bomb, and the Snatch? Simple. But you want to improve your technique so you want the coach to come to you as much as possible and you want to ask the coach a ton of questions.*

*Athlete 4: Just a normal day for you.*

*Observers: Observe*

- Ask the “athlete” and coach how they felt and open a discussion as to how that interaction could go better if needed.
- Discuss what that athlete might be feeling, what a coach’s role is and then point out that this behavior (athlete 1&2) is often seen for beginners and women and older athletes. The more confident (athlete 3) (usually an older member, male, experienced) athlete, the more they will solicit and ask for help while the less confident will hide.

*Role Play 3 (20 min) Goats and Burpees*

*Have each coach do their goat next to someone who feels confident...have a certain amount of people only encourage the stronger one.*

*Discussion*

- Ask for their observations, how did it feel when they weren’t being encouraged

*Presentation (30 min)*

*Role Play 4*

*(15 min set up/ 20 min WOD)*

- Aim: To point out the influence of teacher’s biases
- To open up a link between coaches actions and their students’ performance
- To make coaches aware of what it feels like to be ignored etc.

- To introduce the effects of stereotyping and favouritism as a teacher and class environment

Material: Large colored stickers/ Scene instructions printed out

Coach:

Make sure when you introduce yourself that you welcome the orange group and the green group. You like the green group, they are good athletes. They respond quickly and well to your instructions and listen to your advice. However, you do not like the orange group. They never listen to you and are all train wrecks. You greet them with a distant and professional hello, the green group you greet warmly with handshakes, hugs and kisses (if appropriate). When describing the WOD you make sure that you that the greens are doing the more challenging WOD. (The Orange take the lighter loads, row for less calories etc.).

When demonstrating the Warm up movements only choose the Green. You try to be patient with the orange but there are particular ones (sticker has 1) in the group that you can't stand and try to avoid as much as possible because otherwise you will lose your temper.

Green group: It's just another day for you, time for a WOD.

Orange group: You hate this WOD, it has too much of what you hate. You are a Rookie and almost every day you still encounter new stuff. You have no idea what you are doing.

Orange 1: You are having a shitty day. You don't feel like you can do anything right today and you really want help on your technique.

Orange 2: You are super shy and unconfident you always try to hide in the corner and not be seen while you WOD.

Yellow group: You have friends in the green group and you want to encourage them as they do their WOD. You don't really care about the orange group and take little if no account of them.

Observers: Please observe and note anything particular that you see with regards to the interactions taking place.

*Discussion:*

- Discuss observations, how Orange group felt, did they identify with any real situations?
- Did any of the groups identify with their groups interactions?
- What could the coach have done to keep these feelings from happening?

Discussion (10-15 min)

- Ask why having man bars (haltères) and women bars a problem
- Why Rookies and Intermediates can be problematic.
- Why Rx could be a problem?

Wrap up the seminar with a general discussion.

*Transcribed Interviews (1 indicates before the seminar)*

CONAN 1

2.09.16

AC: Ok we are going to start with standard questions how long have you been coaching now?

CONAN: 8 years

AC: 8 years now?

CONAN: Yeah

AC: eh what do you think your role or roles as a coach are?

CONAN: Umm...my main role is to improve people's lives umm

AC: That's a big role

CONAN: I don't I think that's it really, there's and then it's just for me to learn the tools to help people do that. I guess

AC: And how do you do that with CrossFit?

CONAN: How do I improve people's lives with CrossFit? So I improved my life with CrossFit and that's that's the reason why it's all here umm how do I do that with CrossFit? It gives you the physical abilities to be able to live your life better umm so if I can improve somebody's fitness by improving their strength or cardio whatever then they are going to have a better day uh further down the line uh simply because the physical demands of their everyday life become easier so they can manage easier you can have more fun now because you're not getting tired playing with your kids you can have more fun when you're playing your football games now because you're not feeling tired and if you're older you could also stop worrying about falling over on the floor and having the strength to get back up again and if you're a parent uhh who is suffering from backache carrying their children well now that's not going to be such an issue anymore uh so yeah just trying to help get things better.

AC: So, for you primarily it's a physical thing?

CONAN: No, no the CrossFit part is uhh a physical part of it umm there is a whole other aspect uhh to CrossFit which is the community side and that provides the support structure for people to make a change in their lives. Umm Everybody who comes here is some sort of state of flux, nobody is here is here to maintain the status quo they're all here to change their lives in some way or other umm and so if you have you have a program that that provides uhh the results but if it was dull and boring and and unentertaining and your results are gonna be diminished and if you have a program that is providing you with the support structure that is entertaining to do then your attendance is going to be higher and you're gonna get more more out of it. Umm so that that's what the sort of like the two CrossFit big pieces of CrossFit then as a coach you want to provide the tools for people to be able to implement the improvements in fitness and you want to provide an environment that fosters that that community social support structure uhh that goes that goes with that and then... you gotta try and fix the lifestyle factors after after that.

AC: After that..



CONAN: Yeah umm once people who have been doing CrossFit for a while they then see that they have improved improved then they want to go a step further and going a step further we have to be able to provide those the avenues for those steps as well.

AC: Ok

CONAN: Some you know you are going to start with doing sport regularly then you're gonna go and say you know I lost 5 kilos starting CrossFit but now I stopped losing weight what do I do next? Well no let's talk about your nutrition but I am still not making progress I lost another 3 kilos or whatever but now my progress has stopped again so now ok what lifestyle factors are involved are you smoking are you drinking are you sleeping? And then start to chase down the rabbit hole until you get where you want to go?

AC: And how about and what about in a class itself

CONAN: yeah

AC: what are your active roles what are you doing in there?

CONAN: In a class itself my role there is to make sure that that the the members of the athletes that are coming to workout are able to get a workout in a safe and fun environment and at an intensity that actually produces results.

AC: What about those who resist the intensity?

CONAN: That's one of my biggest problems

AC: Go ahead

CONAN: Teaching intensity is really difficult to do. It's really difficult to do. Umm and I haven't I haven't come up with a solution to that yet. I am still working on that.

AC: Well, what do you do or what have you tried when perhaps you get what's common is: oh I don't wanna lift heavy cuz I'll bulk up.

CONAN: ummhhh... My sort of standard response to that is that we don't work in rep ranges that produce large amounts of muscle. We work in ranges that that create strength and we want to be strong without having the muscle.

AC: Right

CONAN: And you're not gonna look like a body builder tomorrow so (chuckles) so it's not always successful with some of the ladies and so I take a longer term approach and I say ok let's not worry about it today let's just put this 1.25 kilos on the bar and it's a little bit heavier then what you wanted to use but it's still doesn't seem like a large amount of weight so..

AC: Umhhh

CONAN: It depends a little bit on the arguments from the lady you don't I don't get that with guys.

AC: No..

AC: So what about that quest for intensity? What have you tried?

CONAN: What have I tried? I have tried prescribing a 500m Row nothing else in the workout uh or a 1000 meter row with nothing else in the workout. It's very difficult to hurt yourself on

the rower and you can go help whoever and and before that I've tried to explain what the red-line is and what the concept of redlining is and the the uhh concept of of intensity when it comes to CrossFit and tried to explain to them how they should feel during the row and how they should feel after the row? Emm then we perform the row and I'd say out of a class of maybe 10 people I've had 3 people who experienced it and had another 4 people who pushed hard but they're ok

AC: umhmm

CONAN: And I've had 3 people who stood up and said ok well what do we do next? It's like well...

AC: umhmm

CONAN: yeah so I maybe got only about 3 people out of the 10 to understand what intensity is.

AC: Did you see a pattern with who is going to go for intensity and who is not?

CONAN: Yes...yes...the people who go for intensity are people who have more drive. People who don't go for intensity might just come in for a good workout, they are coming just to keep fit and have and have a good time and they don't want to go any further with this than this they're happy with what they're getting.

AC: What makes the drive? Who are these people? Do you see any generalities?

CONAN: I would say they are a little bit younger? Umm they they tend to be more in their 30's than than older? Umm...possibly they don't have significant life stresses and pressures and so they can push more on the physical side because they're not they don't have to worry about dealing with the family or children or whatever when they get home or a tough job or something like that. It's a good question.

AC: Umm...what about so we have a difference in drive in the input but then on the exterior as a coach after all the years of coaching do you see generalities? Like can you when they walk in the door maybe after seeing them a couple times mind you but like ok I need to do your're this kind of CrossFitter I need to work with you like this. Do you see any categories like that?

CONAN: I don't think I would be able to generalize like that uhh with time I start to learn what motivates people or let's say some people like need to be put in the right position it's like you need to get in there and you actually need to to to get hands on them for them to understand

AC: Unhuh

CONAN: To get them to understand more sort of like people who feel positions and then you have other people who you can just say put the weight back on your heels and they understand that straight away and so you don't need to do any more than that then I guess you have other people who learn better by seeing? Uhh...how it should be done uhh and so demonstrations I couldn't say that in advance though by looking at somebody whether I could determine how they're gonna learn or how better they would learn. In other words you know what's my teaching approach going to be with this person versus that person until I've started actually trying to teach them something and seeing ok that's not working you know if somebody

doesn't if somebody's sort of a feeler and it doesn't matter how much verbal cueing I'm gonna do they're just not going to understand the position. So if that's not working then I need to switch the tools and once I've sort of understood ok that that person understands like this, I don't bother with the verbal cue anymore I'm just gonna go in and manipulate the person and try and get them into the right positions.

AC: Right. What is the worst kind of athlete that you have worked with or you really don't want to work with and the best?

CONAN: So the the I wouldn't say there is any that I don't want to work with

AC: Umhmm I guess what are frustrating

CONAN: The ones that are frustrating for me are the ones we call...motor morons. It's a little bit of a derogatory term but essentially these are people who during their uhh younger years and their stages of development as children weren't active and so they're more cerebral like people they are people who did a lot more studying than than playing or whatever or video games they did something that is nonphysical so their coordination and their understanding of their kinaesthetic awareness their understanding of their body positions their proprioception is so is so bad

AC: Umhmm

CONAN: That that just getting them to do a healthy squat is a challenge every time you make one correction something else goes wrong or you've got 5 or 6 things that are going wrong at the same time and it's difficult to say well let me fix this one first and that will hopefully fix the next ones so you concentrate on that and you realize that that the chain didn't work.

AC: Umhm

CONAN: They don't know what their hips are they don't know what their bodyweight is they just have no understanding of their bodies at all and they are the hardest ones to work with because they demand so much attention and they are probably the ones that we should take into personal training session but you know they need 6 months of personal training before they are ready to do a regular class.

AC: Oh do you see any kinds of elements in those kinds of people?

CONAN: I yes I would say they are more the sort of geeky nerdy uhh types who once who probably didn't have a very nice childhood. Umm they were maybe bullied or laughed at or teased or whatever as kids because you know I am sure all excelled themselves academically but socially they didn't have the skills to fit in properly and so that's you don't why they weren't playing football is because they probably didn't have anyone to play football with.

AC: Right right

CONAN: And I guess this probably effects their psyche when they come to places like this to train they should be they should be encouraged for doing that.

AC: Definitely I mean just walking through the door...

CONAN: That's right, it's tough.

AC: Umhhh...

CONAN: The best ones to work with? Are ex- yoga people or gymnasts because they know exactly where their body is and they know exactly what its doing so you can usually just say to them weight in the heels, knees out and it's done there's nothing else to do you can move on to the next person uhh the ones I like working with the most? Are the people that are overweight and trying to get back into shape umm because those are the ones who you make a small change in their life and you have a huge impact and that big life change is very rewarding.

AC: Yeah well for them and for

CONAN: Me as well.

AC: Umm the train wreck? These people

CONAN: Yeah

AC: I often see them hiding in the back corner especially in Nyon they'll go in the other room. Umm I often see them hiding in the back corner being as far away as possible from the coach and far away as possible from everybody's else's place and not just the train wreck maybe it's the beginners or the try outs they all hide.

CONAN: Yeah

AC: How do you approach that?

CONAN: When...when I start a class I like to make sure that everybody knows everybody else umm and I I know that nobody is actually going to remember everybody else's name in the class but I do like to try and make everybody introduce themselves present themselves to everybody else and actually cross a social barrier which is to look at somebody in the eyes and shake hands makes it a little bit stupid and a little bit fun and it helps to break the ice and make everybody feel a little bit more comfortable ok you know I'm not the only guy who makes an ass out himself and I make sure I am the first person to do it each time so I try and get the get the ball rolling on that and then during the class uhh I don't manage every time but I do try to spend a few minutes with every single person umm and give them some one on one time during the class eh if there is a it's sort of unfair because if there is someone who is more advanced in the class I don't spend so much time with them and I do end up spending more time with someone who is less advanced in the class.

AC: So how do you do I mean it's exactly that you've got the train wreck who's gonna take a lot more time?

CONAN: I so if I will go to the person and I will try and work with them on a movement or multiple movements and if it's it is a total train wreck then I am going to try and simplify the movement that they are doing so if there was wall ball shots in there and their unable to tie the squat in with the throw I tell them to forget about the target and I tell them to forget about the squat and they are just gonna do a dip drive and throw the ball against the wall. So I try and simplify the movement so that there is not so much room to mess themselves up. So a little less a little less for them to think about. It makes it easier for the WOD...

AC: The ambiance or the dynamics of a class morning versus evenings because you've got two different lifestyles there...in general...

CONAN: Oh no there are absolutely... I only coach morning classes on the weekends and I think it's a different crowd again to the to the crowd that come in the mornings during the week. I haven't taught a 6 am class for at least a year uh and so there's a whole lot of crowd so I don't know.

AC: I guess that's not the best question for you, I guess the best question for you would be the difference for you between the rookies and the intermediates you teach in the evenings versus Comp class.

CONAN: Ok so the Rookies for me would be for me the frame of mind that they have no experience that any of the movements that are prescribed for the day they don't know any of them and so we will go through all of them. I am not sure if all the coaches are doing the same but that's my that's my approach so really try to go through all of them. If it's something simple like running and push ups then we don't need to spend so much time on them but you know 5 minutes I am going through the push up that would be a good thing to do. And then if that's the case then we can try and learn a different skill during that period umm I try to keep the movements to less than sort of 3 uhh so that there is an opportunity to learn and it's a cognitive load which is sort of sustainable. You know that people can actually absorb.

AC: Umhmm

CONAN: Uhh try and teach 5 different movement at the same class they can't get any of them right uhh so I try to bear that in mind then for the Intermediate classes I am assuming that they have already done sort of roughly a year of CrossFit that they will have seen all the different variations of the movement. That when I say today we are doing a push press I don't have to demonstrate what a Push press is, it's already known. Umm that most of the different types or formats of workouts they are already familiar if it's a Tabata they know what it is, if it's an AMRAP they know what that is, EMOM etcetera so I I do expect a little bit of understanding. In terms of teaching in that class typically what I would do is select the most complicated movement or the biggest risk movement and I will go through the instruction on that movement and just that movement. I do not need to go through all the other

AC: So the push up

CONAN: Yeah. So I just try and select on that when it comes to my Competitors Class I am expecting that they know all of the movements that I don't need to instruct a movement at any level all I need to do is refine technique and improve technique for competition. Technique for competition is not the same as technique for regular people. Uhh competitors worry less about their joints and uhh overall health because they are doing a sport which is umm when you are doing a sport it's not for health it's for something else

AC: No it's for something else. What is that something else in your mind?

CONAN: Umm competition? Winning? I dunno uhh I do it I personally compete to show the way. I don't do it because I want to be competitive I have no chance. (Laughs).

AC: But if you did?

CONAN: If I did I probably would

AC: So if you show the way because...?

CONAN: Because I think that competition if a normal person participates in a competition they will learn something about themselves and they will learn something about intensity that they have no idea of. So if I am able to show look hey you know I am 42 and doing this stupid stuff as well umm why don't you give it a shot. You know that I am not the best athlete here so why don't you participate as well and learn something about yourself?

AC: Yeah but there's that worry though...you said they're not worried about their joints and articulations so you...are ok so they're already athletes that are in great health.

CONAN: Yes

AC: But as soon as there's the older ones who go as well and naturally or some of them they are going to worry about their joints or whatever and so do you see that separation of age versus mentality. And do you address that?

CONAN: So in my competitors class I maybe have about 2 people in their 40's everybody else is way younger one of those people in their 40's is going because his girlfriend is going umm and so he he's not really interested in competing as such then the other one who's doing it is not not that uhh driven uhh and certainly doesn't put himself in any sort of dangerous or at risk or or

AC: Again they don't go for intensity

CONAN: So we don't really no neither of them really go for that

AC: They don't go for the redline

CONAN: No they don't go for the redline....even some of the young ones they don't hit that red line very often. I would like to see it more. Then you've got and you know if you're in a competition and you've got a ton of Snatches to do those Snatches need to be done as quickly as possible. As quickly as possible doesn't necessarily mean in the safest manner possible.

AC: Yeah

CONAN: So there are there are trade-offs that you do for that speed and that's where the difference is. In a class you want to be doing it fast yes but safely too uhh because you're just training you're not you're not trying to go beyond that. So if you injure yourself your actually taking a huge step backwards so you gonna try to do it as quickly as possible as safely as possible. Whereas in a competitors class we'll actually teach you ways to do the Snatch faster but it's not safe.

AC: It's not safer. So it's that here's the deal, you've seen a certain hesitation or I've seen: ah my shoulders, ahh my back in the over 40's and this is kind of linked to the idea of making a Masters class like we talked about a long time ago.

CONAN: Yeah

AC: And you see this same kind of dialogue, same kind of attitude ahh for perhaps...well in the morning workouts when you have more stay at home moms or moms that are working part time and that kind of thing and I this for over the 50's they are not going for the comp classes, they are fearful of their performance, and of injuring themselves constantly and therefore in my mind they're limiting themselves because they could go more because what they're telling themselves

CONAN: Umhm yeah

AC: So this is where I see ah I can't do this because I am a woman, I can't do this because I'm old, I can't do this because I'm injured. This is the kind of pattern that I have been hearing and seeing a lot. How do you address that? And do you see the same thing?

CONAN: Yes I do. Umm sometimes I wished that I would see it in myself because I know I've got issues and I don't, I don't slow down.

AC: Umhm

CONAN: Umm...(sigh) so we haven't got a solution. Like we don't have a master's class but if we were to have one I would make a fairly clear distinction between sort of like the strength training portion and let's call it the conditioning piece. Where the in the strength this is what I am doing when I am training alone where the strength piece would be more uhh slower movement then more dynamic stuff. So you would see less uhh jerks and more push presses or you would see less push presses and more shoulder presser. You'd see more deadlifts then you would see sumo deadlift high pull. So if you were to classify the complexity of the movements and take the most complex movements and call them class 3 and class 2 would be the middle-end and class 1 would be the basic ones you would have more class 1 and 2 than 3. Now they're less potent in terms of their power output but they are better in terms of developing strength. However without a mix it's not gonna be ideal.

AC: So you are going on the idea that the

CONAN: By reducing the complexity of the movement I would reduce the risk of injury and a joint being out of place.

AC: ok

CONAN: Then the actual metabolic conditioning piece would end up being a lot more cardio based so you would probably have some sort of run, row bike in there uhh and then simpler gymnastics or weightlifting movements that that would be less prone to somebody injuring themselves. So for example rather than having uhh overhead squats you might have goblet squats so that the shoulders are not being put into positions that sort of hard to hold at speeds and loads and I already have a shoulder problem so let's not put it at risk.

AC: So that addresses a group as a whole now let's take in individual that says ok I can't do this because and ok injuries aside and I can't do this because I am too old. How do you respond to that?

CONAN: I the first I guess the first thing is why?

AC: Ok it's the Snatch and loading up a little bit heavier on their Snatch

CONAN: Well I...so I have a fair amount of patience and so if somebody is struggling with a snatch because they don't feel comfortable with the movement or they don't feel comfortable with the load then...I would first observe them doing it and try and assess whether that person is capable of doing more or whether there really is a technical deficiency. And let's say there is a technical deficiency in which case I will ask them to reduce the load or stay with the load as it is.

AC: As it is..

CONAN: If there's no technical deficiency and they have a a an injury or pain that is preventing them from wanting to go heavier then they're going to stay with that that load as well or come down a little bit. If I look at them and see it's just somebody that is lacking confidence then what I'll try and do and find the smallest plates in the gym and give them the smallest plates to add to the bar and say here try it again with this and usually that snowballs into ok I can do it with 500 grams more what about with 750 grams more am I able to do that and then it just goes off by itself...so it's just to get them to...for me it's just to get them moving in the right direction. If they're moving towards improvement then I'm doing good.

AC: Ok...I think I've got everything covered. Thank you that was awesome.

CONAN: No thank you.

## CONAN Transcription 2

9.02.16

AC: So umm the seminar how do you think it went personally?

CONAN: For me personally I thoroughly enjoyed it I found some of the exercises very difficult to complete umm for example walking around and cheering some people and not others was a real mental exercise and I felt terrible for the people that I wasn't cheering for

AC: I felt really bad...Robin as well

CONAN: I felt really bad

AC: Robin looked like a little sad puppy

CONAN: And I thought my wife was going to burst into tears and things like that

AC: And Winnie as well

CONAN: So yeah it didn't feel uhh it didn't feel nice doing it, I understood the purpose of the exercise but uhh it was it was quite difficult to do. And a lot of the other stuff was very interesting I was very very interested in the Pygmalion effect because now that I am aware of that which I wasn't before I started to see that in other aspects in my life as well so you know so the children that are known to be or known to have behavioral issues you see that as reinforced and it's reinforced and it's reinforced and therefore they always do have behavioral issues.

AC: So you're thinking as a parent also?

CONAN: Yeah also as a parent, yeah exactly. And so it also kinda helps some reinforce some things I do do as a parent. Which one of the things that I do every night with the kids when I put them to bed I tell them how good they are and that they are good kids and so I feel like ok at least that hopefully will be part of the Pygmalion effect as well so it won't be just negative stuff it will be also some positive stuff. So that was nice emm and since it's hard to say if anything has changed since the seminar because a lot has changed since you started your project umm certainly in terms of my awareness between in terms of gender equity, equality and paying a lot more attention to my own biases uhh I'm a little more aware of my own biases and so I'm actively trying to address those when I'm in classes when there's situations where I am like uh oops careful of this or that

AC: Ummm



CONAN: For example talking with AJ who's somebody I have no...I just can't...can't connect with him I've made a real effort to try and engage and I am not sure I am making any headway but I am trying so that that that has had quite a large impact on umm noticing and trying to do something about it those are the things...

CONAN: In terms of a manager, I I think uhh that it...highlighted some issues that we have with our coaches. Which I wasn't particularly aware of uhh and I'm not sure how to address some of those issues

AC: Like what?

CONAN: Like some of the sort of like the overly authoritarian approach and lack of empathy on some and the consequence of that is that there's a loss of trust between the athlete/student/client whatever and the coach.

AC: Umhmm

CONAN: Uhh and when when you don't have that trust anymore it's like how is anybody how is any member going to come with you a problem.

AC: Umhmm

CONAN: So that that was a bit of an eye opener and I saw how some coaches really dealt dealt with that really really well and others didn't deal with that so well emm so perhaps some more exercises in those sort of areas uhh should be helpful towards for some of the other coaches whether they'll actually come in

AC: Umhhmm

CONAN: So I think that that was very I hadn't realized just how important that aspect was until we went through those exercises

AC: umhmm...uh it slips through the cracks..

CONAN: You know it's sort of a I feel like I was doing a lot of that stuff but I can do a lot of that stuff better. Alright? But if that stuff is not being done at all that's a real problem. I would like to get some of that fixed up or done better.

AC: I think we can all do that and fine tune

CONAN: Yeah exactly.

AC: I think going into it already knowing that I know I do this is the main umm factor to improvement which was the point really to the seminar. Umm I don't think we talked about this last time actually we didn't. In terms of CrossFit how important do you think that something like this, what is your perspective on having emm this kind of information out to the CrossFit community do you think it is necessary?

CONAN: Yeah, yeah I do.

AC: How come?

CONAN: Umm I think there's too much of the authoritarian CrossFit coach type approach. You know this is my gym this is how, you do it like this or you can fuck off and blab la bla. And there's too much of that umm and you know there's uh a rigidness in a lot of coaches about this is how you teach the squat and this how you teach the Snatch this is how you do the

Clean and Jerk without realising that there's a lot of nuances and facets and differences between other ways of teaching and knowing those will only enhance you're your own coaching whereas if you are shut off to those and it's like this is the only way you squat and this is the only stance you use when you squat there are situations and lots of situations where a different stance may actually be better umm and so I think I think this will definitely help the CrossFit community.

AC: Umhmm what are some things that you think could have been improved from the seminar and where do you want this to go from now as a manager? What would you like to see?

CONAN: The seminar was too short and so I think umm it was like a nice little taster so I think it could be like your 101 and now we need to have a 102 and go into certain aspects in a lot more depth on some of those things umm it's you know I would have loved to have had a debriefing after each exercise that actually went in went into it a little bit more the uhh you know why did you...we brainstormed on different categories based on fit and old and you know why did you it's like why are you saying old is slow? Why are you saying old is soft? It would be nice to go

AC: to go into more depth

CONAN: to go into some of that and try and say ok you have a problem with this kind of person how would you deal with that?

AC: Umhmm

CONAN: Whereas you know I understand that throwing it out there makes it less personal and people they are not like oh you hate them fat, you hate them slow and you hate them this and that

AC: You hate them weak

CONAN: Exactly why are you here? (laughs) Emm so you know they some of the you know to really talk about like how we did the exercise where you were cheering people some people on and not cheering others on how how that effects the one that wasn't cheered and how that effects the one that was cheered and and we've touched on it really really briefly and it was not a lot. It was like yes you know you have a fight reaction after that because who are you I don't need you anyway! And that why is that not sustainable why can't you do that every single day and how how does that effect you in the long term? So some of that stuff... Yeah basically I would like to know more.

AC: More

CONAN: Pretty much.

AC: And there is so much more

CONAN: Exactly

AC: Umm...I think that's it yeah it's really short

CONAN: Ok well as a manager, coach trainer whatever umm I would like all my coaches to not just be uhh technical coaches. I want them to be people who can help people and if they don't understand their own limitations or how their approach can effect people then they're not gonna be that good. Because it's not I don't just want people that can come in here and

lead you through a great warm up and take you through a great workout that's in fact I need somebody who's really able to help people. Get them to come to the gym one more time a week if it's not that, can they get them to exercise somewhere else at home, if it's not that can we help them give a better diet, if it's not that is there something we can do to help their lifestyle and just move everybody towards health, not just a workout. That's what I would really like to have.

AC: Umhmm well it looks like its

CONAN: So that's something that I think that this stuff can really help

AC: Yeah I think it naturally gravitates towards a certain sense of empathy and I think it is something that we can all work on from time to time...so that's about it thanks...

RICH 1

2.11.14

AC : Ok so first off how old are you ?

RICH: I'm uhh 46

AC: 46? You don't look 46..

RICH: Crossfit...(laughs)

AC: Yeah...yeah and umm what's your profession?

RICH: I'm uhh in communications

AC: Uhuh

RICH: I studied I went to design school in Pasadena, California

AC: Oh ok

RICH: Uhh doing communications design and I was there when whole Internet bubble was beginning so I specialised in digital e communications

AC: Ok that was what were you doing with um UniLabs?

RICH: Unilabs I was head of the group communications so head of corporate communications..

AC: Umm so how did you start CrossFit?

RICH: I started CrossFit because I live in Arzier not far from O and E.

AC: Uhuh

RICH: And on the same street Sven started doing CrossFit with E before they were here...so they were doing WODS in the garden and Sven would try like to persuade me to go but you know it would be like: oh man I am so sore and ah you know we did this thing the other day and I was this close to puking and I can hardly walk and stuff and I was like you're really not

doing a great job of selling this to me. And umm you know he continued to try to convince me to go and I resisted for a long time and I in the end I was like I'll I'll go even if it's just to shut you up I'll go and try it and went along and from the first WOD that almost killed me cuz I hadn't done sports uh or anything or real real sports apart from skiing and biking from time to time umm but yeah apart from that first WOD almost killing me I was hooked from day one and I got into it and haven't looked back since.

AC: Why do you think you got hooked? What is the element that grabs you?

RICH: Umm definitely the challenge and the need to push myself beyond my sort of comfort zone and then the satisfaction which comes from that having you know stars lit off lifting what light weights and then you see the progress that you make and it feels good.

AC: Is it the weight part that you enjoy the most? Is it that progress?

RICH: Umm no I think it's everything I mean even when you start you do like 3-4 pull ups maybe 5 and you're like oh my god and then uhh after a while you know you see WODs with uh three rounds of 15 pull ups and you're like how am I gonna do this and uh after a while it's like ok 15 pull ups it's a breeze but yeah I enjoy the weightlifting part. Because of the whole technique and the mental challenge as well as the physical one.

AC: What kind of mental challenge?

RICH: Well when you're lifting something heavy and you've you know if you're lifting a bit of weight and putting it over your head it's a bit freaky? And umm even you know even doing cleans or things that aren't necessarily overhead it's quite daunting I mean sometimes the bar scares you but then you have to get over that and so it's a mental barrier that you have to overcome and a lot of things are more mental blocks than physical ones? So you have to push yourself mentally to say no you know I am not going to die if I go another 400 meters run uhh and so you you push yourself mentally as well as physically...

AC: Right...how long have you been doing CrossFit?

RICH: I started in 2010 when I started early like I said I got into it I started straight away and a few months after having started I think I lifted um too much too quickly without having proper technique even though I still don't have proper technique for quite a few things uhh including Double Unders and injured my back for a while medications and all that stuff now like lifting heavy weights and stuff I look at it and it's like is this going to be ok but then I got over that.

AC: Umm you keep mentioning mental so do you think it was more mental?

RICH: Not lifting more? Yes and there's also the whole umm like getting getting a Squat Clean down which means you've got to practice and you've got to learn how to do the movement before you can actually do it umm there's a whole ehh there's a lot of learning which is part of the challenge which is part of the fun.

AC: Umm what do you think it takes to be like a real quote unquote CrossFit person? Because there's been discussions from coaches like people who kind of like just go through the motions why are they there? they are not really CrossFitters or they are but..

RICH: Ehhhh... umm it's a good question I'm I think the appeal of CrossFit I think some people like the idea? And then for others it becomes a way of life? I mean for me it it uh like I

said from day 1 I was hooked and I am not quite sure why but it just happened I was like yeah this is cool. Umm and it's certainly done and helped me in a lot of a lot of different areas umm and it has changed my life and my outlook and umm it's helped with self-confidence, dealing with uh life's frustrations and uhh it's it's a outlet which I know need. And uh I I I think I'm gonna be doing CrossFit for the rest of my life yeah.

RICH: So uh I think what makes a real ..yeah I mean you see some people show up and they've got all the gear and they've got all the stuff and they are like yeah I can't do this and I can't do that and it's like well you...if you don't try, if you don't push yourself and you don't deal with that mind you know the head fuck thing then you're not gonna get there and so I think there's a group that do CrossFit cuz it's like a cool thing to do

AC: Umhm

RICH: And yeah I'm a CrossFitter and stuff and there's another group you know like the ITP people umm I mean the last thing you want to do is wake up at a quarter to 6 on a Saturday morning to drive down in the dark but I mean you get there it's great fun and you feel good and you are with a good group of people and like minded and you go and do the stupid zombie WOD and umm and you are all in it together and yeah I so I think...I dunno if you look at the guys who go to the CrossFit games and stuff I mean there's no way we'd or I would be at that level I mean I started CrossFit for one but um you know those guys they wake up in the morning and that's what they do from first thing in the morning to the last thing at night which not everybody has the luxury to be able to do that.

AC: But would you if you could?

RICH: umm if I could make it if I could make a living out of doing CrossFit then I would probable do it yeah. Yep but yeah what makes a real CrossFitter I mean you know there are a couple of the older ladies that go and I think it's we shouldn't be saying that they're not real CrossFitters because they've got different goals and they'll be doing you know the movements uhh like Euan's grandmother she had a fall and couldn't get up and she started CrossFit and was able to get in and out of the bath and do stuff that she wasn't able to do before and I would say she's a real CrossFitter even though you know using a CrossFit term she's not gonna go balls to the walls and end up in a heap of sweat on the floor but she's still a real CrossFitter because she's doing it for a reason. And I think some people's reasons are maybe more vain or more about vanity then for themselves? Which to come back to one of your previous questions I think I you know as a kid I did a lot of sports and did competition skiing and played in first league hockey uhh Swiss hockey and so I've always been quite competitive and now but now doing CrossFit I am finding that the competition is more about me against myself as opposed to you know I am not going to measure myself to A he's half my age, he doesn't drink, he doesn't smoke, he doesn't all he does is CrossFit so I'm not gonna compete against him? But umm when I do a heavier back squat then him then I'm like good!

AC: Yeah (laughs) that makes sense to me you're happy I mean there is that element of comparison that I think we all can't help ourselves you gotta have a bar to measure yourself by..

RICH: Right it's uhh and the others do push you I mean umm when umm one of the reasons I am doing this WOD today with E and I said to him you are doing this on Friday and so you are going to be doing this by yourself? I mean this is probably one of the last WODs you want

to be doing by yourself and he said well come and do it with me. And uh you know so doing stuff together means that everybody pushes everybody else

AC: Yeah at what moments do you think you need the most...pushing? When is it really helpful?

RICH: Umm um all the time I think encouragement is something that helps maybe you know more so towards the end when you're like you know I've got another ten more of these to do and then somebody comes and says just do three you know come on know pick it up and let's go and you know you're nearly there just to get to push you to get to the end. That is maybe that when you need it.

AC: And what is it like for you working out with women around you?

RICH: Fine great, it's cool, it's fun and it's umm and again coming back to what is a real CrossFit person umm sometimes you know you'll see someone but then is not really a gender thing it applies to men as well it's like come on you can do more than an 8 kilo floppy, kettlebell, sudo, half-assed swing you know. Emm I've been do you know Sue?

AC: I have not met her yet

RICH: Umm I mean she uhh she gets in there and down with it and throws some heavy weights around and I've done team workouts with her and she's pushed me just as much as doing a WOD with N or you know one of the hardcore guys. I think you know it's not which is a cool thing about CrossFit I don't think gender comes into it? Umm after the end of WOD it's high five all around and it doesn't matter if you're a badass or someone just starting out I mean male or female I don't think it comes into the equation.

RICH: Well I think I think in general again without getting into clichés and stuff but uh I think that you know on an emotional level women again without uhh women are a lot more intelligent emotionally than men which makes things a lot more complex uhh but then men are more I think in some respects down to earth emotionally and it's pretty much well uh it's either that or this fuck whereas women there's a whole well you know there's that but it could be also a due to a combined piece of this and that comes into it and if you take this and consider that umm which is you know again the whole dynamics in terms of of marriage and stuff it's like uh it's the book Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus which I thought was a crap book by the way it's stupid...

AC: I know... I just I don't..

RICH: Don't let So (his wife) hear that she's the one that tried to get me to read it and after a couple of chapters this was fucking nonsense

AC: I just feel like thanks a lot now you've entrenched this and this and it's not that clear...

RICH 2

3.04.17

AC: Umm so first of all what did you think about the seminar?

RICH: Umm I thought it was good because I think um AC: umhmm

RICH: So I think it was useful to kind of push that through? Some people may have taken more away from it than others but that's going to be the case no matter what and I think uhh

so I think that was that's an important thing to reinforce umm I think maybe...it could have been more group stuff to get people you know more hands on

AC: umhmm

RICH: you know see? This is what happens...but uhh no it was good.

AC: What do you think for CrossFit? How necessary do you think a project like that is?

RICH: Umm CrossFit in terms of HQ? General?

AC: Yeah HQ the general culture of CrossFit

RICH: Umm I would say important because the I mean HQ does talk about the misconception of CrossFit of CrossFit being the CrossFit Games and being about elite athletes and athletes and what they are capable of doing and their bread and butter is uhh you know everyday kind of person that comes to the box to do an hours workout and

AC: just leave

RICH: and just go to work or go shopping and dealing with kids and umm you know someone that is going to the CrossFit Games doesn't need that human side to coaching and that you know to use names if you take someone like Winston his approach to coaching is quite different to someone that is older and you know more the normal kind of CrossFitter I don't think. I mean Winston is a good athlete, I don't think he is an elite athlete but I think you know taking a more humane approach to coaching could do him some good for instance and uhh I am pretty that there are quite a few boxes out there that are filled with 20 year olds that have been doing CrossFit for a few years and are pretty good and fit and got big biceps and tattoos and think they look cool and are cool and being a bit blasé and miss out on encouraging, empathizing and getting people to push themselves without becoming CrossFit competitors so it's something that they should but like what you said you submit something to then and integrate it more in the CrossFit journal.

AC: Yes definitely ummm what about for you as a coach did you find that the seminar has changed anything?

RICH: Umm maybe reinforced the sort of you know step back and umm consider individual needs within a group and uhh having started CrossFit quite late and being a bit older than someone like Winston and having you know from work having to manage teams and deal with the you know different people and and somehow I did have that empathetic side to coaching but you know it was good to know the Pygmalion effect and good to have that as reminder or reinforcement so it was good. So umm it was definitely useful and good to go through as a team.

AC: What would you like to see more of?

RICH: Like I said more practical exercises like the double unders to do even though it was obvious that Conan was ignoring me and I thought ok get through it, time's gonna be up anyway yeah kind of an action speak louder than words kind of thing so yeah..

AC: Ok so that's pretty much it

## SAMANTHA 1

10.9 14

AC: Ok let's just do the basics first how old are you?

SAMANTHA: 36...

AC: And how did you get into CrossFit?

SAMANTHA: We were living in Gland so it's down here and we were going to the gym where we can go to be fitness and e was always into this uhh fitness and trying to improve his health and physique and everything and I would come along with him and that's what we did always we do things together and that's just one of the things we did together and it was fun you know trying different programs and what works and it was like very slowly progressing you know ok you feel like you are doing something but in the end it just took you two years to get anywhere you know?

AC: Right

SAMANTHA: but I was always very active I worked out when I was pregnant with A but it was of course just rolling on a ball and minimum and running on treadmills was the most intense we were doing (laughs) and everyone suspected that something was coming along and uhh e injured his back which and he had to be checked out he was in real pain and he couldn't walk more than 15 meters without umm collapsing and uhh it wasn't fun and umm two years of pain that led him to uhh surgery and uhh he recovered really quickly and the surgery was a success he was a good health and then he was uhh the doctor told him he couldn't lift anything because since his spine was now fused and uhh because the damage to the disks won't be repaired you won't be able to lift anything and we just had Andrew who was 2 months old and uhh they said he was like you are telling me I won't be able to lift my children? There's no way! Without saying any bad words but uh yeah it was like and he said there must be something I can do because I still have to manage my own body you know? At least that in fact I mean no weights but I have to be able to get off the toilet I mean he'll tell you in more details he found CrossFit and he had tested other things as well and it was like a great success and in like 6 months he recovered more than before and in better shape than he ever was you know? So we were like that's like crazy and so um we started like awesome workouts with him you know it was like such a short workout all I needed was like a Post-It paper to write it on you know? And I was like but that's it you know we are used to a long list of things to do and that was ok that didn't seem to hard and then you are like well I think that's something else because it would be like 4 rounds of pull ups and then um push ups and um something else and thrusters and so it would take just 20 minutes which was convenient because Andrew was little and just go back quickly and it was like wow ok I got really more fatigue in no time and so yeah so even for me it was effective of course I couldn't do pullups but there was a machine that you can pull yourself up that was the pull ups and e progressing and doing more weights and I was doing it not very seriously like not very strenuous but still I was doing it and then we moved to Arzier which is up the hill and we couldn't go to the gym because it was too far now so instead of getting another membership we got some weights like uhh an old Olympic bar and some old weights and we started training and then I remember the first



wall ball shots we ever did it was a pretty heavy ball I think I was crying like why am I doing this you know? It was so horrible

AC: I get that

SAMANTHA: Why am I doing this this is so horrible (laughs) and I was outside by myself so basically my workouts will be I would set up the kids with breakfast we had two kids by then they would be eating breakfast so I would have like 10 minutes to do the training to do the workout and I would go outside to do the workouts and it would be double unders or something whatever that was there and I was like this is horrible but then you want always more you get this feeling that you feel so great after you've done it you feel so shitty during but then the accomplishment of it so it was like ok let's keep going and of course you know you start to get muscles in your arms and like shoulders and you feel better leaner stronger still now what I feel now but that's just like an evolution...and um so then we just it became more serious for me of e was like 2 steps ahead and umm so he was already in the nutrition he was trying Paleo well we did Zone for like 6 years before that and we cut out wheat and I felt ok I feel less sick and then I cut out the dairy and I thought that's not too bad I can live without dairy and so we do it with our kids now so that was the journey then yeah we did the CrossFit competitions because at the beginning of CrossFit umm CrossFit was starting in europe it was great because there were no women first competition I went there were like 5 women in 2009 amongst 50 men and I was like you know only 5 women and that's really cool and we are doing it you know? Well because of my mom and she's like always the driven one and uh she wanted to succeed amongst the world of men and I think looking at her I'm like this is cool I want to be as cool and uhh I am very competitive I'm like competing with men is most interesting for me because when you get to do something better than them it's like ok I know that genetically I have uhh less favour but I can catch up with hard work perseverance accuracy and you know (laughs) I am a better shot then him

AC: You are a better what?

SAMANTHA: Shot because we do hunting it's something that we do together and we also do MMA wrestling and I can sometimes take him down which is fun (laughs)

AC: Which is gratifying

SAMANTHA: He's uhh he's uhh e is a great male counterpart because he lets me win... (laughs)

AC: And what made you guys want to open up a gym?

SAMANTHA: Oh my gosh e one day he said this thing is so cool we have to share it you know? And I was like you are just insane you know because Alexander was like 20 months he was just barely walking I was like well I do have time on my hands and we started you know approaching in our same apartment we invited friends over neighbors you know we had N and Alex they were neighbors and I knew they were fit so they were always outdoors and moving about and I was like hmm maybe we can uhh show them something different and they came for the first workout and they were like what the hell we suck you know with very little on paper you can do so much you know? And of course that's how that's the intensity balance and uhh yeah it worked out e is always very umm how do you say was very up on technique it's

extremely important to him the how and why and everything so we learned everything he went to the first Level 1 in Europe where Greg Glassman and he was there at that time I was like no I'm not at that level yet I can't even think of you know what am I gonna do there I stayed with the kids and uhh a year or so after I just went and he did four Level 1's and I also and we learn a ton so much and you know through the years you are coaching and getting a lot of practice and you are starting to understand mechanics and how it works and how it can look better basically when you look at a regular person just doing a squat you are like uhh ok I know how it works how to fix it and it just seems obvious it's easy and it's just it's all about movement and umm once you get that it's easy it's straightforward but then you have so many techniques to improve on and if only time was on my side...(laughs)

AC: Seriously...umm but who is the one responsible I mean you guys manage this the both of you

SAMANTHA: Yeah yeah yeah we have a few people helping us you know? We have uh...because we just throughout the years we got to a point that we couldn't just manage it ourselves I asked Tan she was coming to the gym and she seemed to be the right person to ask help for from and uhh she started just joining us and executing classes so yes the business just expanded so we are able to do more yeah that's uhh and uhh what you miss in the beginning when you start a business is that you don't have time for yourself or your family and along the way we decided to have another three and I was like ok we know it's going to be freaking intense which it is but um now we are able to play and we need it...

AC: Ok women only showed up 5 in 2009 what was that like for you and why do you think it's like that?

SAMANTHA: Umm I dunno I guess women are like scared of this aspect I mean we can see it in our gym umm like you know girls are afraid to lift weights and uhh they would rather run for 10k every day but uhh lifting weights is like no way I'm gonna get big and I don't want that and so yeah everyday we are fighting against that uhh image and uh lifting weights it is really really umm yeah it's you can't got without it I mean in everyday life in every culture women are lifting and it could be that it's just in the Occidental world that women think like that you know because when you take women even in Russia they uhh you know even my granny take my granny she's like old school had been through the second world war umm and she was always active lifting everything she had to but in her image women should not lift but she was lifting everything you know?

AC: Right right

SAMANTHA: So it was like ok we have this image but in practice you do though those things that's part of life as well so I guess I dunno it's uhh breaking that idea that woman should not do that but I guess it just comes from what you've been taught and that women are weak and they should stay home and do the cooking and caring for kids cuz you know I mean women are more active than men because in society men are just sitting down all day long and women like you can see they are always moving they are going to pick up kids drop kids uhh you know cook clean uh you know we don't have time to sit down what the hell you know (laughs)

AC: I have to force myself to sit down

SAMANTHA: me too! And it's exactly that every women I know is in the same only those who are working a lot I mean the roles are reversed so we've got Mark he's staying at home and he's the active guy you know? And she's come in to train and we had to train her how to move and yeah we are forced into that pattern where you know it's a desk job and that's how you earn your life and so I'm I'm uhh ok what do we teach our kids...it's like...yeah it's just a way of modern world and there isn't much we can do about it at least you know try and for now getting our kids to do as much as they can and they can choose for themselves but yeah you know people like uh get themselves into into this miserable way of living that they are unhappy about and they are unhappy with their body and they come to see us at 40 years old like completely out of shape having done so much sport in their youth and they're like ok I want this back and umm of course we can get there so that's what's cool and umm yeah I'm very lucky to be able to live it you know and uh work in it so everything is at my reach to make it happen so I aiming to try and get at a competitive level and I know a lot of women in the States have done it you know three kids and uh yeah and uh high level competitor but it's a lot of sacrifice at the same time so I'm uh I have drives but I'm not as ambitious as maybe they are you know it's finding a reasonable compromise where I can get what I want and it's ok I won't reach the high goals that maybe I have but maybe once the kids are older I can do more

AC: Yes definitely, trust me it gets easier and easier to find that time...

SAMANTHA: Yeah cuz I mean already the two year old is much more independent and uh I can do a whole workout of an hour without him you know screaming for mommy but it's all a process of learning for him you know mommy's working out and then that's you know stay safe and play and I think it's every household it's the same when you make the child too dependent on you they are not confident playing on their own and he has brothers that know how to do that already so....

AC: So we had a conversation with Conan the other day that women work harder...I mean can you give me examples?

SAMANTHA: uhh you know personally that I don't work hard enough even though I have everything I want I can accomplish more so I think it's all about the balance...

AC: I mean in the workout itself?

SAMANTHA: well...I believe it's like in the evolution of as you know as an athletic evolution of a person it's more in terms of how you know where you stand in your progress. Because there's the prescribed they had an article this morning in CrossFit and how they don't scale umm umm the workouts for women you know so women should be able the same workouts you know maybe at a different degree but exactly the same for older people you just vary by degree not uh not uh kind. Yeah I think it's just about giving the confidence that you can actually do those things we are just limited by our imagination it's that that stops us you know? It's like oh I am a woman so I can't do the same things as men but yes you you are able to do things I mean how many great women are capable of those things and have done it before? We have uh just look at the examples in front of us, we can look at Camille Bazinet

that uses the same weight as men and does better, and umm Of course we're not umm we're realistic but we can aspire to the same heights so it's not um it's what you want to do that makes the difference and umm yeah and uhh we are just lucky that CrossFit you know it's such a program that doesn't yeah it's not chauvinistic at all it gives the same chances to the people who want to work hard you know and that's all and um you do what you want with it you can say oh yeah I am a woman so I have to be do more lifts and then you progress and every time you add more work on your lifts and then ok I can actually do better that's what we do we give confidence to people every day you know we say I think your form looks good and it's been good for a year so you can put more just increase those weights and that's why I always get upset with girls you know? They think they've done their maximum but you know I keep telling when you start finding it hard that's when you've finished warming up right? Good thing right (laughs)? Over and over yeah you just try and fight you know yeah it has to do with a person's confidence and once you as a coach find that for yourself then you can just put people the same way... I think the umm the world is uh in such a way and we have the gentleness of women and the drive of the men I guess or their their toughness and if you combine the two I think that's why our gym works so well you know e is our go go go guy and then umm never give it up and I am like you know maybe today you can take it easy and tomorrow you can add more and then so like the motherly aspect of it and like everything makes it smoother and in essence we are moving in the same direction.

AC: Uhhuh

AC: How did you I mean obviously your shoulders get bigger and all that how did you manage that body transformation on you?

SAMANTHA: Oh very happy (laughs) I don't think uhh well you know what those muscles represent right? I mean it represents me able to live 60 kilos three times over my head you know? And being ok and managing pull ups and you know uhh doing double unders and having slim strong legs and uhh that's like ok for me I'm very happy it's when I see skinny legs in skinny jeans I'm like ahh you can't really do much in those! (laughs). But you know like yeah the muscles that's what you use so it's it's nice I don't have a problem with that and people are you shouldn't be afraid of it you know? Muscles are ok

AC: Yeah yeah, it's coming...I have the impression

SAMANTHA: I hope so but at least in our gym we say the weight in your scale is nothing it shouldn't represent anything it's more the performance that you should strive for it's not uh... you know I love a musclely back you know because you know that's where their strength comes from you know that's yeah I dunno I am very happy with my body...people look at me and I hope they think oh my gosh you know she's strong my granny says I have too many muscles but (laughs) that's how the work is done but you see in our culture in the Occidental world we can do this for fun where other countries people do it for a living so you don't choose right? Whether you do it or don't do it they have to do it they don't even ask themselves people like so like women who are pregnant you know that's another subject they say oh should you be lifting? I'm like are you serious? And Asian lady from our gym asked me that and I was like dude do you know that the the uhh women in your country don't even ask that question they work until they deliver and then they go back to work you know? Having

their baby in their pouch and so again it's a mentality we don't have to work as hard as other cultures you know? And throughout time it's like a question and now it's ok we don't have to do hard labor but it's like yeah machines do it for us but uh before it was all human power and before we didn't have the choice and now we just use different things...

AC: So we've talked about how we've broken down and cried during a WOD have you seen that in men? When they break?

SAMANTHA: Uhh I made a few men break...

AC: Can you tell me about that what's it like for you?

SAMANTHA: Yeah you know when you see a person that is capable of something there's there's two people that are capable of and people that they think they are but they are not

AC: Right

SAMANTHA: Ok? So umm so and then you have those that are so so those that know they capable of so they push themselves and he just has elements that keep him down but it's his personal life that he needs to deal with those issues but um he's capable of but he can't and that's what's frustrating he has some goals that he wants to reach but because of what he set himself up as a trap he's not able to so that that's and those those that think they can they are like former athletes and they push themselves beyond what they are capable of and it could be quite dangerous but it's hard to identify at least in the beginning cuz you look at him and you say oh he looks ok and then he just goes for it and so usually men don't break down too much but uhh they make themselves sick you know puking everything coming up so that's another thing and um that's the two categories I can identify. Women are kind of wiser in that sense I think and so they progress more steadily without too much umm making themselves sick although that's the limit and that's the difference with uh (laughs) because uh women have another umm limit to their progress like the are afraid of weights and you know so but once you find it and you are able to do it and maybe maybe

AC: Do you think they are more afraid of getting hurt?

SAMANTHA: Yeah usually usually, that's why they like don't push so much and maybe an old injury will make them more wary and uhh I umm yeah I guess some are self-destructive which is no good and that happens and we see overtraining...

SAMANTHA: But umm it's not just training because training happens about one hour a day and if you want to give it a good chance you have to attend your injuries you have to see a physio, a massage therapist whoever to help you and try and get better and I am working with a massage therapist next door and then they have great results and then there is nutrition and we try to attend that with uhh guiding people as best as we can uhh and uhh manage stress you know help them manage stress so yeah you can't just look at the training it's more of a global umm the body as whole and how you are try and manage that and then we have those with psychological issues and we try to send them to a specialist

AC: Like what?

SAMANTHA: Well we have one who has a really bad body self image and he uhh used to train to be able to eat and we uhh tried to do everything and we are not able to do that it's usually when the perception of the person isn't matching what they want to be ..so um that's hard so we try and get them to see a specialist that can help but it's a long term thing like for anorexia and things like that...

SAMANTHA 1

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AC: So I more of the the classic stuff... How long have you been coaching 7 years?

SAMANTHA: 7 years plus

AC: 7 plus years almost 8 years right?

SAMANTHA: Well um actually yes counting that uh when we started with my mom and uhh yeah so officially 7 plus and more

AC: More right

SAMANTHA: Uhuh

AC: And umm your role as a coach?

SAMANTHA: My role?

AC: What do you think uhh your uh role when is your role or what are your roles as a coach?

SAMANTHA: Ummm I believe it uh like umm like umm like being a parent to help them improve themselves, ummm find their weaknesses and work on them and ah identify their strengths and work on them too. And umm yeah, just you know, make them realize their potential and uh work towards uhh keeping it and how to use it in everyday life also you know?, to realize that oh you can do this, you can do this here you can do this outside. Take it. Run with it. Go for it, (laughs) you know run with the the fire..uh that't it. That simple.

AC: So you would say in a lot of ways it's uh it's how much of it is actually physical with words and speech and how much of it is mental in terms of support, what do you think?

SAMANTHA: Well it starts with physical because first it's your body moving. Uhh but them it is also your head being connected with your body with what your body should be doing and what it is your doing and improving on that. And then ummm the more you have that connection backwards and forwards the more you can uhh then apply it to the mental aspect. But then it's you know...some people use it for just feeling good, some people use it high level performance and there's everything in the middle, you know. So... um yeah we just have to see what the person needs it for and uhh wants to do with it and then we can then adjust and push them towards that goal.

AC: Ok so really that, your role as a coach is is goal achievement

SAMANTHA: Yeah!

AC: and helping them get there

SAMANTHA: Absolutely, yeah sometimes it's setting goals or sometimes it's helping you know...I mean I have some people who don't wanna set goals at all. They just trust to make them move and uhh keep them safe for doing whatever they want. Like running or anything. So that's really cool because they recognize that I am capable enough and ummm how do you say? Ummm qualified enough to help them do that so that's really cool, that's the best reward. You know so..

AC: Are you talking more about the private classes

SAMANTHA: Oh yes

AC: when you think of that?

SAMANTHA: Yeah, yeah yeah so it's really cool.

AC: So what's the difference between the private and the group I mean in your mind?

SAMANTHA: Well I think you can you can really spend the time, and umm more refining the need. I take people that more beginner or intermediate. Uhh euan will deal more with high level competitor so for me it's simply improving their every day life you know, keep them injury free. And umm work on more refined goals, it could be as silly as fitting in the black dress again or umm just achieveing a race or you know things like that. I think these are like the most important ones to like a normal person, someone who is not like a high-level athlete but just wants to do well in his life. So..

Ac. Ok, so does the dynamics change between individual

SAMANTHA: Oh yes, I didn't answer your question yeah

AC: and group?

SAMANTHA: Uhh yes and no, because with what we do we try and make it as personal as if the person was on his own. Umm for me, and I try to let people know that it is the same and it should be applied to that. Because you, even if you are one on one you are not... holding the person for the whole hour.

AC: Right

SAMANTHA: Which you are like trying to let her work still on her own you know? Maybe a bit more appraisal maybe a bit more encouragement for a target towards that that person but that is not necessarily that she needs it

AC: Uh huh

SAMANTHA: it you know it's just that you are there and you can do that. But in uhh a group setting you should be the same, there should be attention given to everybody your and uhh just your role is to you know mind everybody as if they were on their own.

AC: Uh huh

SAMANTHA: Of course your attention is split but the uhh effects should be the same.

AC: What about umm you talk about how you identify the different goals within each individual as much as possible and getting there. That means that if there are different goals for each individual that means that in some ways there are different types of CrossFitters.. right?

SAMANTHA: Oh yes!

Ac. So tell me about those different types?

SAMANTHA: Umm ok, let's see if we can identify them. Umm so there are...well complete Rookies uhh they will be for example haven't done anything in a long time umm or never. So yeah let's start with the zero. They're nothing, they haven't done anything, so out of shape and are hurting everywhere. But has the intention of moving you know? So that's really good. Cuz we can start from scratch, we can teach them everything from the start umm unless he has some really motor deficiencies then it's even more fun.

AC: Umhmm

SAMANTHA: We get to do a complete (unintelligible) it's gonna be fun. (laughs). Umm so that's the zero uhhh point soo umm they just improve. Whatever you do to them, whatever they do they improve. They get better at coordination, their agility, strength, speed whatever. They even umm yeah everyday life is easier.

AC: Ummhmm

SAMANTHA: Uhh then One uhh I will call it category one where they have done some sports in their life in their youth typical. And then they had an active life that umm put them sitting down for twenty, ten, fifteen years. And uhh their bad, out of weight, out of shape, their depressed and they want to move again. Because they know how great it feels to move actually. So those people they just have to you know, probably they come from injury, have an injury so you have to work around it not to umm to do anything in the wrong direction. So you just have to explain to them ok you need to safe. You shouldn't be loading too soon and you know work on mobility and stuff like that. So so that's those. So yeah just keeping progress because the the umm program is started/targeted in a way that it benefits all those people.

SAMANTHA: Uhh Category Two we'll put it, always been active. Does either yoga or pilates or some kind of walking, running typical umm.

AC: uhhuh

SAMANTHA: Typical uhh typical second umm second group. I'm just making them as I go. (laughs). And so they have already a good base of cardio, no mobility or some if they do yoga you know. And uhh yeah that's interesting because they still progress. So for them it's like ok, you want to start Rookie than move to Intermediate. Where the first group would be stuck a little bit longer in the Rookies and it's fine because it's still an improvement.

SAMANTHA: Then it would be umm Third Group ummm and those will be like I've done CrossFit like two years ago and I'm stoked and I injured myself and haven't done anything since. So there you are like ok, body awareness. Why did you get hurt? What have you been lacking? Training, maybe some gymnastics or mobility or whatever and you know probably calm it down on the weights. And uhh just a Rookie for a while but then they make gains quickly and yeah nutrition. And you know of course, all those groups Nutrition, nutrition, nutrition.

AC: Nutrition!

SAMANTHA: You know it's like building the base. Guys how are you eating? Oh I had a sandwich no, no, no.



AC: (laughs)

SAMANTHA: So you know that's that you know...that's that. Uhh you know nutrition gymnastics it's easy. I mean they uh they...Once you've applied and it a few times and you see it worked you can apply to all the people. And uhh so that's the Third group and then you have a Fourth group, that would be more higher level who have already been here for a while with us or have been training in some other gyms. And those are more committed, they are the uhh very umm small population of our gym, but they are present and they're most visible I would say because they go to compete and we are proud of them and pushes everybody else as well.

AC: but they are much more visibly noticeable

SAMANTHA: Yeah and those are typically coaches and are the example umm I guess to follow or the Top Dogs to say in a good way. Umm and yeah they need to just make sure that they keep their shit together, eat well as they know, recover. Then they () right? Laughs. So we just make sure that they know that and we just make sure they know that and they follow the same rules they apply to people to themselves.

AC: Uh huh

SAMANTHA: And yeah and then go have fun.

AC: Yeah..Uhh I was thinking you mentioned, I think the second category. You mention people who do Pilates, Yoga and the minute you said that I automatically think. Ah! Suddenly, I am generalising here but the majority people who do that are woman but is there equal representation of men and women in all the different categories?

SAMANTHA: Umm no for sure I mean...we we see clearly I mean, there's a very small population of uhh girls who come in here having done rugby for example

AC: uhhh

SAMANTHA: right? But there's a much bigger proportion of boys having done rugby typical.

Ac. Yeah

SAMANTHA: or football or it's clear right I mean yeah. Girls do yoga or pilates why it's so boring (laughs) I dunno. But yeah it's fine if you call it ROMWOD and you can do it and but uhh (laughs) you don't have fun and music. But umm yeah it's umm I dunno umm maybe girls are afraid to move fast and lift heavy weights and stuff like that which I think is a shame because we all need it. And as you know that's why my mom is lifting heavy shift.

AC: Bone density man

SAMANTHA: Yeah absolutely. But yeah it hurts but girls but you know we still have more women in the gym so so..what the fuck?

AC: so yeah that's the big question I mean how often do you think these women are coming in with no physical background if you look at category zero. I think again we will find more women just because they they never did anything before and if it was...it was...soft

SAMANTHA: Umhmm

AC: Right. So there was no you have to push yourself, no intensity. I dunno I am generalising here what do you think about that?

SAMANTHA: Ummm..yeah I think you have to umm I think the concept the concept of Crossfit is such that it doesn't make any...uh how do you say any umm segregation? It's either you like intensity or you don't you know? And that that's where is where you do the separation but I think the male population or the female population it's quite equal. I mean...I I don't don't see it. Maybe the chances are different to getting to this kind of intensity if you're a girl but now it's even more available so...

And they all keep saying that soccer moms are the most uh the biggest clients so yeah we really do enjoy it I think. (Laughs) Getting stronger and no it's cool

AC: That's the thing you talk about intensity and there is no segregation absolutely not in what is given. However what you hear over and over again..."I don't want to lift heavy--"

SAMANTHA: Ah..I hate that!!

AC: You want to finish that sentence?

SAMANTHA: Fuck..I don't want to get too bulky, I don't want to get too big. I'm like...(changes voice)ten years fuck you!

Ac/SAMANTHA: Laughs

SAMANTHA: either you are really lucky in your genes and I'm like really dude you know how much I lift? Yeah try try.. Do you think we are going to give you weights to lift with? What are you talking about? Yeah for sure it is girls that say that...and they're like yeah I'm afraid of lifting weights, I'm afraid of hurting myself. And I'm like you lift weights every day. You lift your children, your groceries and you are afraid then? It's because you say oh it's heavy you're gonna hurt yourself but it's yeah...my granny says to my mom you shouldn't be lifting heavy you are a woman, you know my granny she's been fucking digging in her garden all her life? And I say, Granny how can you say that you have been doing the same without even thinking about it.

It's just because we put umm uhh label on it "lifting weights" oh my god. Why should it not be safe? You know?

There's the coaching yes, but you know it's natural. That's why functional movements are natural. The worst thing that happens is that it doesn't come off the ground!

AC: Right (laughs)

SAMANTHA: Fuck! (laughs)

AC: Yeah so we get a lot of that resistance and I hear that in CrossFit and I have heard that all my life, Right? And so have you...umm.

SAMANTHA: Umm

AC: So as a coach what do we do? What do you do?

SAMANTHA: Well I try and put it in perspective and I'm like you know uh but you but for example if someone is injured it's the same as being weak you know? Uhh people are like uhh I have like my friend Clemence?

AC: Right he has that bicep

SAMANTHA: Oh yeah Jesus I know it's nothing. I mean nothing that should start him from coming. He's texting me and writing "oh I can't do CrossFit. My doctor says I have a partial tear in my bicep" and I'm like one muscle. It's an arm. What's wrong with the rest of you body? Did your doctor say to tie your hands behind your back and eat with your feet? And he was laughing and I was like yes what is CrossFit is functional movement and you do what you can and you scale it and you pay attention and don't take too heavy of course but you know it's just common sense and coaching. (sigh)

Ac. Yeah, yeah

SAMANTHA: So why not?

Ac. So basically with people who have that kind of argument and that kind of resistance...you you're always trying to encourage them...

SAMANTHA: I'm trying to change their perspective of why do you think that way. It's like oh I don't eat meat. Why can't you eat meat? Is it uh religious? Or Cultural? Or is it uh what? Just try and understand then..

(Interrupted stopped tape)

AC: uhhh now I need to think about what we were talking about?

SAMANTHA: Oh ummm yes it was about their misconception..

AC: Oh yeah how you work with people who are hesitating about weights or anything else? How you know ok there's the women, who are hesitating about weights or if they're...or for example Sara Jane (Over 60 client).

SAMANTHA: Yes. Oh she kicks ass!

AC: I know she does.

SAMANTHA: But yeah she started with and worked a lot with the PVC pipe and then she's like "oh maybe I can try a bit more weight" and I was like oh yes you can! I was like this is your handbag, the weight of it. You can lift it you are strong. Why can't you lift it? You're strong.

AC: Ummhmm

SAMANTHA: So you lift your children? Your grandchildren? Your dog, the food for the dog...so you know..

AC: So how would you...uhh what's his name...Giuseppe. Who resists.

SAMANTHA: Ah...Oh god. (laughs) yeah (laughs)

AC: who resists..

SAMANTHA: Oh yes,

AC: So you get these the kinds of resistance, you've got someone who perhaps thinks that she can't or is concerned about hurting herself or ..Giuseppe. Or people like Giuseppe who I dunno how do deal with those three things those three different situations.

SAMANTHA: Where he thinks he can?

AC: yeah

SAMANTHA: yeah yeah so obviously he can't really. I'm like "Giuseppe but you see your back is not straight, you must be feeling it in your lower bac. "oh yes, yes, yes" but you know there's Nick next to him going much faster. And I'm like you know maybe you should take a little less weight. I think he got humbled a few time you know like uhh he realized that he can't uhh lift as much or he cheats on the reps or something like that.

AC: Awww

SAMANTHA: I know so sad. But umm yeah he does know and uhh he's umm and you know with time I think he does get more reasonable and uh he uhh but he yeah the fact that the girl lifts more than him that bothers him a lot. And I'm like ha ha ha

Ac. And how do you.. (ha ha ha).. I know I'm the same way I honestly have to admit for many things...

SAMANTHA: Umm that's why I always pair with a guy (laughs)

AC: Well I think it's important to do that for a lot of reasons and the personal satisfaction as well (laughs). Ok so but how do we do that as coaches? When we are doing that..so as individuals performing we are going to make clear our position on this..But ummm as a coach...what do we do when we get resistance? Someone saying "ah I don't think I can do it".

SAMANTHA: Umhhmm well I think it's more like proving themselves, proving them that they can do it. And uh just you know surprising them like for example I had one time S she she was lifting she was either on eMOM or had to increase weight and I just kept adding you "you know go go just keep going" know she actually PR'd by like 10 kg because she didn't know how much was on her bar....and she was like "oh I can't believe this, this is crazy" and it's that it's forgetting their fears and moving past that you know so it's just again change of perspective ummI am reading that book on motivational interviewing, you know where you just work on that that..this that perspective.

AC: Yeah and how much do you think what have you seen in your mind from CrossFitters that propagates their fears? What do you think they are saying to themselves and are there any differences between individuals?

SAMANTHA: Yeah for sure well umm it's like always umm girls do ballet and boys do fighting sports. And that's changing more and more and that's really really cool. Still in some cultures it's more present you know? But I think you are we are I hope I to see the move past that? More girls do combat sports? For example when I have a kids CrossFit party? I try and assess what the kids are doing. And yeah they are doing uh the girls do martial arts but the boys still do what they will do but they will do arts and crafts you know. Actually in schools they make the boys do girl stuff you know? Sewing or things like that? I was even surprised that umm the JOM when the girls have to go with their dads and the boys with dads I was like yes! That is so cool!!

AC: So that's so important...

SAMANTHA: So this society is moving in the right direction. So it's really cool.

AC: How do you think we do that as CF coaches?

SAMANTHA: I mean I tell them, that some girls are stronger so why the hell not? It's ok to be strong. It's not ugly, it's not aesthetically offensive. It's beautiful, strength is beautiful- knowing that you can do so much with your body you know I mean why it makes you proud of yourself and happier mom or happier dad knowing that you can be with the kids without having to you know suffer and uhh yeah it's empowering. And hopefully people see that but you know that's in the long term it's not the one time or the three weeks or whatever I think it 's uhh it's the 3 months, 6 months

AC: One year in

SAMANTHA: One year in like wow I wasn't expecting that. So they are surprised but what they can do. You know you come in and it hurts so much, it sucks so much you are like fuck- ing hell and then why you do it 6 months later and you think wow I wasn't able to do this you know so imagine what it does to your self-confidence? So that's what it does and what it means to fit and that is really CrossFit.

AC: The success that we will all are going to improve if we just stay consistent no matter what..

SAMANTHA: Yeah It's the same thing..

AC: Given that we steadily increase our loads that we chase after that goal and doing the things we suck at basically..

SAMANTHA: Yeah you know people get frustrated that they can't manage heavier weight. And I'm like dude people make a career out of it, how do you expect me to teach you in 5 minutes? We have to calm down...it's already good that you can jump and shrug today.

(Telephone call)

AC: Ok so without thinking of anyone in specific but what is your worst kind of CrossFit athlete that gets on your goat while you're coaching? And what is your best? Who do you like coaching more than others?

SAMANTHA: Well of course as a coach we always like the coachable ones that respond and recognize that there is a problem or a lack and they do something uhh to change you know? To improve. So I would say do we naming names?

AC: You don't have to if you want to that is fine..

SAMANTHA: Like Winnie you know, I've had from day one and she still responds really well when I cue her on you know on something she's like ?? and I also like to praise her for what she how she is doing because she is going really well.

AC: Ohhh I don't know (Laughs)

SAMANTHA: So I am really good coach and I am really proud of what we have accomplished with her but it's also the athlete and the coach so it's uhh team work so it works really well.

SAMANTHA: Now the worst one is Angel of course because he is arrogant and stubborn. And he doesn't recognize there is a problem and he does his way until maybe he finds that somebody else knows better so he tries to copy that so it doesn't work. So whatever

AC: Do you think that is particular with you when you coach him or with everybody? even Conan...even..

SAMANTHA: No everybody...yeah yeah. He would listen to it, he would consider it maybe or eventually...

AC: If it were coming from...?

SAMANTHA: No no.... or maybe. No he's uhh I think he is definitely chauvinistic and umm macho like lord knows what so yeah he would probably be less responsive to my cues but umm I am done coaching him. Like I've gave up already a long time ago and I've tried and tried you know? I stayed with him a long time you know as coach and maybe more or both and know I am fucking done and so he can go fuck himself up as he wants to I don't care.

AC: But you care a lot that is the element of it?

SAMANTHA: And I still care and that's why it makes me so angry. I just decided to let go, "don't care" like Edward. (laughs).

AC: Umm...so that makes me think of one more thing so we have umm people how come you aren't teaching the comp classes number one ?

SAMANTHA: Umm I do sometimes when e is away. But umm I think I can do much more in a Rookie and Intermediate class than Competitor.

AC: But how about the I mean is it because your own personal feelings about..do you like teaching rookie and intermediates more?

SAMANTHA: Umm I guess. I mean I do enjoy uhh coaching more uhh higher level umm more because I am confident enough to help them

Ac. exactly

SAMANTHA: Yeah, but I think I can give more to to Rookies and Newbies and uh Intermediates.

AC: How come? Why can you give more and not just as much to the Comp classes.

SAMANTHA: Umm...good question. No I mean I do coach I do give a hand to Joelle who is you know really competitive so we work more on nutrition and no that's not true I do give her advice on movements as well. I dunno I leave that to Conan and Winston wants to do it more and e is really it's his passion so I don't want to take it away from him.

Ac. Yeah of course and Winston too I have the impression

SAMANTHA: Yeah Winston enjoys it much more so I happily take over when it's needed but I dunno

AC: What about Theo?

SAMANTHA: Oh yes, yes he's really good.

AC: But what makes these guys good?

SAMANTHA: Well for sure Conan the knowledge and experience on working with Mareck for example I'll say it for the record. He took Mareck to the Regionals twice. And a lot of people don't know that and that makes me angry that he doesn't have the recognition for.

AC: Why doesn't he say anything?

SAMANTHA: I guess he doesn't say much about him and he doesn't want so of course we..

AC: Oh so he doesn't say much in general about himself

SAMANTHA: And I think Conan deserves more recognition about that so he'll talk with him. And now he is coaching Winston. But I want to see more results coming out of it first. I mean I know I will see results and the commitment is another thing. And whatever he does else on the outside so we will see.

AC: So it's knowledge and experience...but what about Michael and Winston?

SAMANTHA: Umm...I dunno. Cuz they are there doing it? (laughs)

AC: Has Winnie ever coached the Comp class? You see where I am going?

SAMANTHA: Umm... I don't think so.

AC: Why not?

SAMANTHA: Umm I don't know I have to ask her. Umm I haven't asked her yet if she would be comfortable. I mean I know she used to have trouble with giving large classes you know? Umm...I think it's an evolution getting comfortable with it that's another thing. Umm but I would be happy to talk to her about it for sure

AC: But why wouldn't she be comfortable?

SAMANTHA: Because she's umm she's shy. Already going and teaching the other class, that I knew she had trouble umm coaching large classes. She is much more at ease now...but yeah I guess the fears that people in the Comp class are more well that's not true but that they might be more experienced than who coached. So yeah, I mean I have no problem going up to Denny or Nic and saying this is shit. (laughs). But uhh yeah, it's uh

AC: And they respond well to it... So how much is that just that again hesitation of this person that is more experienced than me...

SAMANTHA: Oh but yeah it's umm absolutely. It's just that But it's building your own confidence. People can tell you what they want in terms of who you should be. But it's up to you to make your choice to be what you want to be. Me? You tell me you can't do it. I'm like fuck I can (laughs).

AC: Uhuh!

SAMANTHA: So it's like my mother in law she said maybe you're not the studious type she told me that at the end of school and I said fuck that. (laughs)

AC: Seriously

SAMANTHA: Just because she isn't and she's been told that she is weak and knows shit. And stuff like that

AC: no that has nothing to do with you

SAMANTHA: I know so yeah. No I know exactly what I am capable of. So in time yeah we seem to get confident enough to you know and more and more confidence she scaling

AC: And also all the competitions she's done too and she has the mental capacity and has done a lot than the average person here. And she has the ice skating she's got the mental so she could really and so I am wondering why isn't she?

AC: Because there is CrossFit but there is also the mental strength that could easily...?

SAMANTHA: But the umm but yeah she's been told by her boyfriend that she sucks and won't be able to do it. So of course after so many years it has done something to her. He's a narcissistic pervert and yeah it does affect her. It could be your dad saying to you that you won't be able to handle it. So shit.

SAMANTHA: You know I didn't have a Dad so telling me I can't do it so that was no problem. (laughs) But umm yeah you know it made me want to be strong because my mom also was on her own and so someone has to stand up for you and do shit at home. So yeah I grow up to have that strength.

AC: So yeah I guess that is where it is all individual.

## SAMANTHA 2

24.3 2017

AC: Ok so we had the seminar and one of the basic questions after the seminar was did it give you avenues of thought that were different from before?

SAMANTHA: Let's see I just have to realize I mean we were conscious about things like that before umm but umm I think I'm really wanted to see how everybody else was going to react to that you know because we do there was some really interesting things that I really enjoyed the that exercise you made us do with three things and up and down

AC: Yeah

SAMANTHA: OMG that really helps Conan uses it on me all the time and I use it on other people as well and it's like wow that's so cool

AC: pretty effective the word and how we take it and what it does to our bodies

SAMANTHA: And it's true that there are things that we know but not necessarily what we think about you know? So it's always those simplest concepts that are there we just ignore or we are just like too busy to see so it's good that we are being pulled back to the umm simplicity you know? and that's what it is it's just like laying the cards out and seeing who's who who's what and umm you know how we deal with it so and also it's interesting how we implement to it with the kids you know? And umm I learned about the Pygmalion effect that I didn't know and it's true I mean of course. Being told you are a shit then you become a shit and that's exactly what happens to umm kids that don't really you know want to work hard at school oh you're lazy blab la bla so I am trying not to do that to Andrew

AC: Right

SAMANTHA: You are not lazy (laughs) you can do this!

AC: Right (laughs)

SAMANTHA: So I am trying to be more of a coach with my kids although it's really really hard or and try and delegate even better



AC: Uh huh

SAMANTHA: And umm but see how to be you know better more motivating. I try and do that with Conan as well so fricken hard I just want to yell at him but that's ok. It's ok (laughs) and umm but no of course but be yeah the gender thing I was always really aware of it because the umm it's clear some people just like say out umm out loud that women are weak uhh old people are weak and you know that's it they can just curl up and die but uh guess what suckers who lives longer? (laughs)

AC: (laughs)

SAMANTHA: So but umm that's quite an interesting one but you know I am very proud to be a strong women and nobody can shatter that except myself of course

AC: Uhhuh

SAMANTHA: But then I'm like aww come on you know you built all this around you look at you've got all this around you and got awesome people that say they enjoy coming here so I'm like ok that's cool you know I'm positive and stuff like that so no about the seminar umm it was interesting to all get together and role play that was really cool and I really enjoyed that and umm so it just made clear who is aware of it and who is not umm and yeah I think we just drew some conclusions from that of course because umm if people are not open and willing to help other people like we do then there's not point you know to bashing our head against the wall and umm wait for a different result but umm yeah we just uhh I am sure it aided everybody at a level umm but everybody will be benefiting from umm eh differently so maybe not now maybe not tomorrow but one time in their in their future. So there...

AC: Yeah you said they will benefit from it differently like how can you give examples?

SAMANTHA: Well some of them because of their young age may not perceive things as we older can I say that?

AC: Wiser

SAMANTHA: Wiser more experienced would do so they would you know see it uhh from their point of view like oh yes you know maybe I should treat people equally or whatever or maybe consider everybody who is in the class and just be fair and put myself in their position you know? And some who are already aware of umm the umm the umm gender equality equity umm they would see oh yeah we may be segregating this guy because or that one or whoever you know they would ok, realize that oh yeah maybe I shouldn't be saying men's bar or women's bar and uhh so many things like that you know it just makes you think maybe you won't to change straightaway but you can definitely see how it can be hurtful to other people you know so it just broadens horizons and yeah makes you more aware of your impact on some people that may not say things or not feel the less you know?

AC: So you think that I mean that it allows for it opens a window in fact?

SAMANTHA: Totally

AC: And uhh have you seen any concrete change in that in other coaches?

SAMANTHA: Umm like everyday you mean? Everyday, everyday life?

AC: yeah yeah

SAMANTHA: Umm I'll have to really pay attention to that and realize but like I said it's like probably long term effect. I have to really think a bit about it. It's probably effected my language how I talk you know probably more I mean I have to see about everybody else but yeah am definitely more aware

AC: Umm...how important is it for you to see a change? I mean how much do you think a change was needed?

SAMANTHA: In uhh behavior some people drastically but uhh others you know it's just uh realising certain things why we talk as we talk why we act as we act you know probably umm just to be more accepting to be more yeah accepting of everybody else you know? Want them to just be not so arrogant (laughs)

AC: (laughs) I wonder who you are talking about?

SAMANTHA: Well exactly I am trying not to think of just one person or two people or maybe broader general aspect and also how we interact and how we react to other what other people are saying you know if we are confident enough about who we are then it's still going to effect us but not every coach is you know confident about their abilities and who they are you know umm but maybe having a clearer pictures allows them to deal with situations better

AC: Uh huh

SAMANTHA: You know when their authority is being being undermined or just understand why and how and maybe it has to do with the person undermining it and not with you

AC: Not taking it personally

SAMANTHA: Yeah

AC: And uh if you were to describe those that were in drastic need of a change how would you describe them?

SAMANTHA: Umm you mean what needs to be changed or who needs to be changed?

AC: First who and then what...

SAMANTHA: Well first of all you know I was hoping that Winnie would get more confidence because she's uh she's uh woman because you know she has a past that umm makes her you know a little bit self-critical and lacking confidence so I was hoping that would make her realize oh that you know it's just because that the world is organized and that's how people are being perceived because of their uhh gender or their education or their uhh age and stuff like that so you know just having explained the what and how would make it umm improve I mean it it probably didn't make her evolve that much but you know it's part of the process of growing up I think as a coach as a person as human being umm yeah it takes time so we just learn from it.

SAMANTHA: Umm other people umm just be more accepting of others you know umm Pack that would be you know that would be like the worst case that we would be addressing and uhh we saw during the exercise that this kid just thinks that everything is about him and not about the others. Well you know we are we're here to help others it's not about you, it's about what you can do better to help them to get better help them so they come out of this grown, change or just distracted you know the hour that we spend with them uhh same same with Sarah I should say because she you know she places herself above others you know and umm

she needs come down a little bit to earth and to put herself in other people's place to umm feel and see how she's been dealing with them whether they are old or not understanding or technologically challenged or whatever I mean it's just being more yeah more tolerant I think that's the word and yeah that's going to take a while umm then others who are already pretty open minded like Scooter you know and yeah maybe he learned something and umm he uhh maybe it helped him you k now be more confident with dealing with people he needs to be coaching and umm help them in that way for example. Dag he's just a force of nature (laughs).

AC: (laughs)

SAMANTHA: and uhh no he's really good and I think uhh he recognizes you know the experience and you know he's really he's quite uhh humble so there's not much to worry about from his uhh perspective of course he's got the macho side to go with but you know it's not not offending anybody (laughs). And he'll be receptive because of course he doesn't want to hurt you or anybody.

AC: Or anyone in fact

SAMANTHA: But uh yeah you know how many times do we hear don't cry like a girl? Uhh I'm sorry boys like cry a lot as well so even my nanny says that I'm like it's ok to cry you can be sad or weak or at that moment you know and stuff like that and not wanting to face the situation. I am also trying to shift things around in how we teach our children because you know they are going to be impacted I mean they are unfortunately already impacted

AC: Of course because they have the outside world we can't...

SAMANTHA: And we're like I don't even dare say that but I mean it's like they are biased but by what? I am an international child how would I be even heard to say that you know or stuff like that (sigh) I guess we are all conditioned in some way and ...

AC: Yeah but there's so much outside stuff...

SAMANTHA: Umhmm

AC: Ideally what would you like to see as a change? If you could go exactly how you wanted.

SAMANTHA: you mean umm?

AC: With regards to the coaching..

SAMANTHA: Umhm and umm

AC: and equality and effective teaching

SAMANTHA: Well I would like to have everybody embrace the equal values that we have set up for ourselves to begin with. And we try not to think but not all of the people we work with us do. And that's sad and we are having to do with them for now but I think at some point we're gonna have to make decisions and those people won't be part of the team anymore And you you know I am sure some of them are willing to change some are not. And we will see how many are we are...Because I think we built something we sacrificed a lot for and umm it's not fair that we have to compromise on what we think is right..

AC: No

Samantha: So there's gonna be some change in the future and going the way I want it to and lead you know and of course it will all bring to a better quality of service that we deliver. It's only going to be going that way. And I f if have to suck up and do 24hr shifts and you know that' how it happens you know. We've been through a few transitions in that way and we were just like say like fuck off and I just took it on and I you know 6 months I was like (grime) and you know people notice the quality went up we got more members and more people happy and if that is what has to happen then it's fine but uhh I think now we can rely on my side people who are you know on my side living the same principles and umm we can move on and um I don't have to sacrifice..

AC: as much

SAMANTHA: yeah as much but still you know there are times I just have to take everything and shift this ship forward you know and uhh willing and happy I know that the result will be there

AC: and it will be there definitely...do you think that umm things like this seminars like this is necessary in CrossFit

SAMANTHA: Absolutely

SAMANTHA: Umm I think it would be great to do like a social psychological uhh you know maybe because there's nothing done in the psychological aspects of coaching so that could be really really well integrated in that you know I think that would be a great tool to have because nobody yet has realized the psychological part so yeah I think of course it's part of it you raised it you know in the in the uhh in the last part of your presentation on how media in sports and umm images and uhh yeah CrossFit is all about shifting that you know strong women and everything I mean C would disagree because she thinks women are exposing themselves too much you can ask her you know but you know if you are proud of your body why wouldn't you show it how you want it how you want it

AC: Well the idea to that even if it is horrible is that she is getting something out of it just as much as she is paying a price...that's the hard thing about it...we're creators of that too

SAMANTHA: Well you know I'd rather the young girls and boys that we raise nowadays they see the image of you know strong mothers strong women strong dads too cuz you know that concerns them as well right? So it's just bringing up uhh a healthier population of uhh humans and uhh I think that's healthy and so you know if everything can be aided in that direction it's very socialist but umm yeah and hopefully you know if we look throughout the social groups that it's as accessible to all populations you know which I don't know if it's all equally distributed or not you know because..

AC: Not yet but I think it would be a nice to spread it more

SAMANTHA: That's another 4 years for you right? A new topic? (laughs)

AC: Yes that is the ideal...because they can't do sports at all

SAMANTHA: Yep because they have to go to work

AC: Any other reasons why it would be good for CrossFit?

SAMANTHA: Well uhh you're providing a psychological tool in uhh how to deal with humans how to make them better at everything that's part of it you know having a broader picture a broader understanding so you can make better choices and seeing how you can use those choices to improve their lives performance you know everything how they cope with life and yeah make them stronger..

AC: Yeah that's definitely what I'm hoping for and well that's what is going to happen

SAMANTHA: Of course you just have to want it and work for it...assholes (laughs)

AC: And not just wait for it but do it...

0: Laughs

AC: Ok I think we've got everything...

AC: Oh wait background stuff..what sport did you do before CrossFit

SAMANTHA: Oh we all did fitness and umm I was always sporty I enjoyed moving...you know wait can I say that? Yes. And um I enjoyed volleyball so I understood that you know I was ok and now if I did it now I would be better and I played tennis did ballet whatever what a regular kid does you know

AC: Ok so you were always an active

SAMANTHA: Yeah, yeah yeah..Since uhh I met E we were always doing

AC: going to the gyms and stuff

SAMANTHA: yeah but never as fit as you would be in CrossFit

AC: of course not seriously but you also did MMA

SAMANTHA: Umm we started it together actually and yes it was fun until E got really really broken and he couldn't do anything together anymore but um yeah I enjoyed grappling I wouldn't do it with anyone else but him it's just too awkward

AC: yeah I get that

SAMANTHA: But umm yeah we do it as a family and the kids practice and we practice and yeah it's playtime... and what else of course CrossFit opens the horizons so you just want to do anything you're like superwoman..

AC: Seriously I've gotten so much faster and I'm not "supposed to " be getting better I'm supposed to be getting slower you know with what the world says but with CrossFit...

SAMANTHA: No way kick ass woman (high five)

AC: Seriously seriously

AC: ok so thanks that was great

SAMANTHA: You're welcome

## SARAH 1

5.11.15

AC: Ok easy stuff first, how old are you and what's your educational background?

SARAH: I'm 27 and after finishing high school I didn't want to go to university because I thought it was too impersonal and listening to someone with 400 other people in the room wasn't for me so I decided to go to Hotel School in Lausanne for my bachelor's for four years and it was a lot more hands on you had internships and you worked at the school and so it was quite different, there aren't any huge classes which is what I liked but after that I didn't want to stay in the hotel business because well it was interesting and I liked it but it had hours that were hard and it wasn't a domain to me that seemed respected and so I oriented myself and looked for something where I could have a career and work for a big company and move up the ladder fast. I uhh was looking and I wanted the prestige of working for something like that and I decided to go into finances so I became an accountant for Ernst and Young. I wasn't able to get in right away so I did a year of internship umm 3 months and then they hired me as an accountant but it wasn't really auditing which is what I wanted because in 3 months you are manager so that is what interested me. Uhh I was really a career girl and a year later I was working at Ernst and Young. It wasn't that interesting of a job but I was looking for something to get me to the top.

SARAH: And then 6 months later I started CrossFit and it changed my life. I began to realize that my career wasn't the most important thing but to feel centered and balanced between your health and your mind. To feel healthy because when you think of it, your career and the salary that goes with it isn't what is going to make you happy.

AC: Because before CrossFit what was it...you were doing sports?

SARAH: Yeah I was going to the gym I tried to lose weight and did 8 hours of sports but nothing...

AC: And so CrossFit..?

SARAH: Well the lifestyle that is behind it, healthy eating, healthy sleeping in fact respecting your body is and well knowing that I realized that the job that I was doing wasn't at all respecting that and it wasn't at all what I wanted to be doing and I felt good and that my job wasn't corresponding to that ethic and wasn't interesting to me at all and was far away from a healthy life. I had awful hours I was eating terribly and I had no time to train I had no time for anything no time for me at all. Apart from my work and career which no longer fit with what I wanted because it changed thanks to CrossFit. But I told myself ok I will continue for at least two more years, to put that on my c.v. so that it will serve a purpose and after I can find a job that is less demanding and to have time to do CrossFit and after I had a burn out almost because you know in auditing it comes in seasons what happens is that between April and January is the busy season when you work like crazy because you have accounts that have to be closed and audited to give to the government. So during those 4 months for me it was even more because we had accounts that were a bit off and in June I worked like crazy and then I got till.

AC: How?

SARAH: I had a flu that really I felt like my body was falling apart and there I realized that I could no longer continue and then in the summer I left for a training course and I had classes from 8 to 4 and so my time was a lot lighter and I saw what kind of life I could be leading. I had time for me, I could make food for myself and it felt a lot more true to myself and the life I wanted because I couldn't do it anymore, I just couldn't. I could no longer go through another "busy". I would have burnt out I had already been depressed I didn't want to go there again. So uhh I told myself I had to find something else...and I knew uh that I was going to change and had to look and I looked at a few spaces and I was talking about it to Olga. And that is when she uhh said they were looking for someone for CrossFit so I was like well!! (laughs) and so it took a few months to talk about and I had to think a lot because my salary was going to go down by 30% which is a lot I had been used to a certain style of living and uhh I could offer myself whatever I wanted and now uhh well it's not the same but did I really want my passion to become my job? Would it break something? But I thought a lot about it but I decided to take the risk it's now or never to change careers and I took the leap and quit at Ernst and Young and uh well since January I've been working at CrossFit Leman. And people are happy to see me not like when I was auditing...and uh what I enjoy is seeing people improve they walk in out of shape and then you see them change physically and psychologically.

AC: What do you mean by psychology?

SARAH: Uhh I think uhh you realize that life can be lived differently, at first they don't care at all what they eat, their nutrition: I want to eat whatever and then little by little they change. They see that they aren't having the effects they want for their performance and so all of the sudden they say well maybe it's true that I have to eat differently so to get to a higher level maybe I can change my diet..maybe there is something more than the immediate pleasure of eating..

AC: So how did you get into CrossFit?

SARAH: Well so before I did yoga, Zumba and spinning and I learned about the Paleo diet because I wanted to find a way to eat well and lose weight and I found it on the internet and I tried it for a month and so I tried it in January and it was working so well and I saw that everywhere CrossFit stuff was around but I didn't really think about it and I had a friend that said hey I wanted to try CrossFit come with me! And I thought wait...me doing pull ups, and push ups are you serious?(laughs) I do Zumba please...but I went and I was hooked immediately. Yeah this is the real deal..

AC: What is the real deal for you?

SARAH: Umm the feeling I felt afterward I was tired but I felt good and uhh I had the feeling it would work, I knew that I would lose weight and I saw J and I saw her do an Overhead Squat and it was amazing and you see....and I see this beautiful woman do these Overhead Squats with an ass like I don't know what and doing it at I don't know how much and I thought ok I want to be like her...

AC: Umhmm...so that's how you got into CrossFit?

SARAH: Well yeah after I did the beginning courses to check and see and I was so hooked that even though uhh I had emm a membership at a local gym I still got one with CrossFit Leman and I got out of the other gym as soon as I could..

AC: So you say CrossFit has changed your lifestyle, your diet... and has become your life? You work here..

SARAH: My life style...I go to sleep early uhh I dunno I don't go out late because I know I am going to workout the next day and I don't drink because I know that it will reduce my performance and I am doing the Zone to make them go up so yeah I really changed everything...my boyfriend does CrossFit as well and so..

AC: And how about the perceptions of your loved ones around you with all these changes?

SARAH: Well now I have more and more friends that have the same lifestyle sometimes I see my old friends but I don't really want to anymore we don't talk about the same things nor the same lifestyle..I try to drag a few in but...I didn't succeed...I already managed with my sister and my mother which isn't too bad

AC: Yeah how did they react?

SARAH: Well uh when I started they thought I was crazy just crazy my sister my mom both of them and

AC: But why?

SARAH: But I mean think about it? Pullups, push ups weight lifting that's for the military not for women! But after a few months they saw my body changed after three months I dropped two pant sizes and then after a while my sister wanted to try after hearing me talk about the intensity and the challenges and she had the same reaction we went once and then she was hooked but my mom it took more time...I pushed her a bit to come and she likes it but more for the community than anything else..

AC: And this passage into the community how do you see it as a coach?

SARAH: Umm well it's like being reborn...you let go of everything that was bad behind you and you move forward...and the group dynamic is what makes people come back at least that's the case for me, it's more motivating to train together then by yourself

AC: And what kind of classes do you like to coach private..?

SARAH: No I don't like private

AC: Why?

SARAH: Because unless you have a good connection with the person it's cool but if you have nothing to say to each other then...

AC: It's what? It's slow...

SARAH: Yeah and you don't know what to say and I don't like the Foundation classes because you don't know how to deal with the people sometimes they're so many mistakes in form you don't even know how to begin and they are introductions so you have to teach technique and if you you don't then...

SARAH 1

26.08.16

AC: Ok, so that's all in route...umm so the first thing I wanted to ask was how do you perceive your role a coach? What is coaching Crossfitters mean to you?



SARAH: To myself or...? Umm..that's a hard question. Ummm...I feel like umm...it's changing people's lives in a way?, trying to make them healthier than they are, ummm sometimes it's a little bit of psychology.

AC: Like what for example?

SARAH: Umm..people come in they are not happy, they have a problem, they have an issue, you're also here to listen, to make them think about something else. Not give them a solution because I don't think we are here for that but just listen to people. Sooo....we are here to help them in their life you know. Not just giving them a class you are also here as a guide somewhere.

How about an example of like that you know that psychological element? So someone comes in with a problem. What kind of problem?

SARAH: Well, umm sometimes it can be in their private life umm so I had a girl come in she wasn't really in a good relationship with her boyfriend so she was, she just told me what was wrong and I just tried to comfort her and make her see another perspective that maybe she didn't think of

AC: Ummhh

SARAH: with my own experience. Ummm yeah so things like that or maybe at work it's not going well and you know I think that when you come to CrossFit it's such a friendly environment that you feel comfortable to admit stuff to your coach because we have another relationship than just uhh coach and student, it's more like a friend or family member so you are more inclined to tell people to tell stuff to your coach.

A: Right. Ummm ok so since it's not coach and student, what other roles do you think, I mean do you think...there's the role of being a supportive that psychological element and..to me there is still that role of teacher/student if we're showing

SARAH: Of course.

AC: A movement then after that the role's different right? During a workout, where's..how do you see yourself? Like during a WOD for example.

SARAH: During a workout I usually try to encourage people to go further so I am here to push them a little bit. Some people don't like to be pushed so after awhile you know who they are, you just don't push them, you just encourage them a little bit, but some they need to be pushed so they will go above or beyond their limits. So I feel a bit like uhh, like a German coach you know, like those old Nazi coaches that are there and shout at to you and push you uhh further.

Ad: so uhhh ok

I have a different roles during a class.

AC: ok well that's the thing, that's what is so fascinating about this so you said there are two roles or different roles or different athletes, the one that wants to be pushed the one that doesn't want to be pushed umm... what are the differences between those two athletes?

SARAH: I think it's their goal for CrossFit, some are there just to workout move and have fun. Others are there really to progress and change their lives. Get better, get thinner, I dunno they have a goal you know?

AC: Uhhun

SARAH: Like I want to lose weight. I want to get stronger. I want to be able to do a 70 kilo snatch. So they are here for a reasons and you have others who are here just like they would go to the fitness club and...you know do their treadmill work and then leave but they prefer to go to CrossFit because it's funnier. You know? They have their friends there, they do it as a group so it's better than fitness. But yeah you really see those two different people. Even more now than maybe 2 years ago when I started.

AC: How come more now?

SARAH: I think CrossFit has become more popular so people know about it before it was the athlete who really wanted to push themselves who were researching and finding that CrossFit can help in the their sport and now you have a whole of range of population uhh like even the mom with her kids who just wants to stay in shape or you have uhh I don't know the fitness who comes in who just wants to you know workout because they say it's good for your health you know and then he's going to go out and eat a pizza and uh drink apero so yeah the customers have changed over the years

AC: What are some other types of customers that you have seen?

SARAH: Hmm?

AC: What some other types of customers

K Umm we have a few people who really want to compete uhh who really want to improve who changed their life completely as I did. Ummm...then what else do we have yeah...that's pretty much it.

AC: we have the moms we have the fitness guy, we have the umm what about how about within the time slots do you see differences between morning and night.

K. Of Course

AC: Yeah well tell me about that, I meant it's pretty obvious but

SARAH: Yeah well at 6 am they are the workers umm because they can't come during the day and mostly people who have kids because after school they can't come and then 9-10 there's stay at home moms and people who have different schedules like uh shifts working in shifts.

And then in the evening we have the regular workers who don't have kids or with kids who are already grown up or who have day care and so they come and they workout so the population is more mixed than in the morning.

AC: And so what do you...are the...are the classes different? Depending on what times it is? Are the attitudes different?

SARAH: Yes in the morning it's more uh...people come just to workout and just to have fun and sweat a little bit and in the afternoon well it also depends on the level of the class, intermediates are little bit more uhh into CrossFit than the beginners are so that is also a change.

AC: but in the evening you would say that they are more? Focused? I mean what is the difference between that and the morning and the evening?

SARAH: Well I don't think there really is a difference in the focus because now we have so much people who come just to sweat and nothing else that we you don't really see a difference between that. It's only more about the population type that changes from morning to afternoon.

AC: You mean between moms and stay at home moms and flexible workers? Like myself...or..I have to admit that I really enjoy when there is more of a mix of you've got a couple stay at home moms, moms, parents and then a couple uhh policemen umm it's a lot more interesting but that is a personal aside. Ummm...what about so do you think that there are certain if they if you could say there are certain types of CrossFit types, how would you describe them? I mean we were kind of dancing around that but..

SARAH: Yeah...but I think I described that already

AC: Yeah more or less

SARAH: Yeah...I really think there are two types uhh you have the person who really wants to increase their strength and change their lives and who have goals and then you have the people who just want to workout.

AC: So here's the difference, is there a chance that you can move from one to another?

SARAH: Yes, usually when you start CrossFit you think it's just gonna be a workout routine and then you realize that it is more than that that you can lift weight and lifting weights is fun, it's not like a dreadful job and some people go into that other category where you really want to umm progress and increase your strength and get better at CrossFit

AC: um. Ummm so what about the other...so the the other those that are more uhh invested in CrossFit umm do you think there are some qualities of age or class or things like that that make a difference?

SARAH: Uhh I think that people without children they have le more time and I think that they can relate more to that? Ummm ...yeah I don't think there's a quality really. We have a lot of different people in that category too.

AC: Yeah...well I think umm I think uhh...I was surprised the other day because I noticed in myself ummm something that Sarah said, you know Sara she comes in the mornings, she comes at 9? Uhh she finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in her triathlon this summer

SARAH: Wow..

Yeah yeah and we talked a bit the other day and she's a phenomenal athlete, really but she...you know she comes to CrossFit and she doesn't lift much she doesn't ask for much

SARAH:No

AC: She just does her thing and then she goes and I noticed that a lot of time err with some coaches I've been watching I that she often goes unnoticed. Same with the other...she's blond at 9, 9 she comes at the 9 am course, she's English her name is not Becky but she's a little bit older and looks older so we are talking the 50 plus women and with certain coaches , not with

you but with certain they get put into the corner or ummm and I was surprised when I , in myself when I realized oh wow Sarah actually she kicks ass

SARAH: ummhmm

AC: But I never saw it before because she just is very discrete does her thing and doesn't lift very much

SARAH: But maybe she doesn't really take CrossFit as a sport in itself, maybe she comes there just to have fun and then she does triathlon to really, in the competitive spirit so she still falls in the first category with the people who don't really have a goal,

AC: Right

SARAH:... at least not for CrossFit

AC: Right

AC: Well the other woman she said we were talking about the coaches and particularly one coach who has, who no longer is coaching very much. Uhh she said it's normal, I am old I get ignored all the time, nobody notices me. And I thought ohh this is not good this is not good at all and I said well do you feel like that's the case for everyone and she said sometimes yes, sometimes no. And that is when I asked myself, because we're because you know because there is Luc and there is Volker and they all are older and they all perform really well but it's true...they don't get...they they kind of go in their own thing and they don't get as much attention as perhaps Johanna or Cedric or even Andrea when he's working out and that's interesting to me because I think and it's something that I will present to Euan as well because his new project you know he's thinking about opening

SARAH: A Senior Wod

AC: Yeah a "soft" CrossFit and I thought ok, this is something that is happening without us thinking about it cuz I missed Sara completely I just kind of thought oh...

SARAH: She's a....

AC: Exactly and what is that? To me that's me stereotyping. So I was wondering of other examples when you've ever done that or you see that happen?

SARAH: Well I see that happen all the time but with the coaches you mentioned not only concerning age groups, but also if you are not a good athlete. If you can't lift like 100 kilos in a back squat, he won't even look at you and I've seen that happen a lot. Umm.. I think there's maybe ummm some kind of shyness, ummm from men, young men to older women you know?

AC: uhmmm

SARAH: You don't, maybe you don't feel comfortable, maybe they don't feel comfortable going up to them, telling them stuff or you know "oh you aren't doing this right" you know? Ummm, I try to avoid that as much as I can, I really try to go and see everyone during my classes. I have the other problem, the other way around. I don't feel comfortable saying stuff to better athletes than I am.

AC: Ummm

SARAH: For example I won't correct Andrea, well because I don't see anything to correct. Umm or yeah, stronger athletes than myself.

AC: Unhmm

SARAH: I don't see myself going up to Winnie and saying your deadlift form is shitty so that you should do that that that different. But I rarely coach them so...

AC: Well I thought about that with them, I know that I saw one day because I was watching with Pack, that Andrea has an immature squat like big time and he knows it and so I was thinking the only thing I can do to help him is to say "it's looking immature again" and I'm done, I can't give him anything more than pointing it out and yeah again I don't feel comfortable or confident enough to say ok, this what you should be doing.

But I guess that's why I am starting with Rookies and I've got a long way to go before umm coaching other levels in terms of confidence. So you're saying you don't but what about ok so there's the athletes like that who are already in competing like Andrew and Winnie and they are at a level that we're not but we could be

SARAH: If I stop injuring myself then maybe one day (laughs)

AC: Yeah and then how...what about others? Are there some others you don't feel comfortable talking with and going interacting with? And what about those athletes that you just don't like who are they and what do you do with them, you know?

SARAH: Well, I try to put that aside when I coach, obviously I won't go up to them and talk like chitchat you know how was your day. How was your weekend? I do that usually with people that I like and people that I like to talk to. Uhh but I still try to see them and say like ah you know and at least tell them ah good form, keep going and motivate them during the workout. I try really to put that aside, sometimes it's hard but I still try and do that umm but yeah no chitchat.

AC: Yeah that makes sense. Umm...well I think I got put in a catalogue with the coach that we are not mentioning ummm and I think that it was clear to me (sounds) that whatever you can't do it. And I remember a few times I asked him for help on certain movements and uhhh he didn't come at all. And whereas I know a month before he had helped somebody else no problem. And what happened as a result, and it's my job to not take it like that but I completely lost confidence and in that movement and in feeling good about doing CrossFit particularly with him because I knew I was being judged. So here is the underlying point of the project is to see what we can do to stop that kind of thing from happening and Rick and I were coaching or I was assisting right and it was like a class of, well it was a big class. And three of the other women went to other room and were doing their snatch (AC demonstrates a ballet like movement)

SARAH: Laughs

AC: Right you know like this one?

SARAH: Yeah, yeah yeah

AC: This thing like this isn't ballet this is...

SARAH: Laughs

AC: Do you know that movement? And I've seen it...It was interesting because he said, he said I sometimes you see that a lot yeah and it's not necessarily just women, which made me happy that he say that because not a lot of people see that and he said at that point you have to encourage them try to get the count up, all the things we know to encourage them how to do as coaches but at the same time if it's such a train wreck you can't go and fix everything.

SARAH: No

AC: So how do you approach that kind of thing because I haven't seen you coach that much

SARAH: Ahh...I try to fix the most obvious one, I try to fix one thing at a time. So if I see like four stuff that don't that are not correct I will say it's the triage concepts. What's the biggest one or the most dangerous one so for like example if you are rounding your back on a clean or a deadlift, I'm gonna fix that first you know always spine first you just focus on one thing at a time. Because people can't get three I mean you can tell them, you have to fix that that that and that and they are like...What the fuck?

AC: Yeah

AC: Uh huh yeah

SARAH: What? Like what first? You can't do anything afterwards, so I just tell them. Straighten your back, get your shoulders back, shoulder blades together just be careful to have your back straight when you lift. And that's it. Afterwards if the other stuff is not correct (demonstrating) you know like this or this, on a deadlift that's alright but the spine is dangerous.

AC: What about months and months go by, and the person is still like that, how do you feel?

SARAH: (sighs) Uhh...I had this problem with Thierry, his snatch is.. I mean a year, a year of really focussing on that and no change or maybe slight change but you know nothing and you know I feel so frustrated because I've tried everything, I mean everything and you just have to try more actually.

AC: How does he feel about the snatch?

SARAH: OH frustrated too, yeah ummm but you know you just have to try and find something ele another drill something you know? Or practice more? Somethings take more time to practice and to learn

AC: Sighs...no really

AC: So we talked about your perception of athletes and CrossFit itself, I mean there is a wide variety of different CrossFitters right?

SARAH: Yes

AC: Ummm who are your favorite to work with?

SARAH: Umm probably people my age? Umm and my ummm who have the same kind of lifestyle as I do. Because I can relate to them Uhh it's easy you know...Umm I like working umm with beginners too because they learn fast you know, it's easy.

AC: yeah

SARAH: Actually, I umm like to working with everybody you know every every uh category has it 's own challenges, but it's true that I really like when I have people who I can relate too, and talk to we have the same interests, same lifestyle. Yeah usually.

AC: What about the differences between men and women what do you see?

SARAH: So how do I feel with men right?

AC: Yeah

SARAH: Umm I don't have any issues with that I try to stay professional when you know not use umm the flirting uhh part that you could do with the men so I try really to stay professional. Sometimes they don't (sigh) a lot of times but uhh

AC: How do you deal with that?

SARAH: I just do as I didn't notice and just stay you know straightforward and friendly but uhh I don't give them any sign that I could be interested too.

AC: Umm and what about giving corrections and stuff to them or touching them or things like that?

SARAH: I don't have any problem.

AC: Have you ever had any problems with them saying something?

SARAH: No. No. As I said I try to stay professional and when I touch them to correct them I really try to limit the gesture to what it really....

AC: yeah of course

SARAH: Yeah and not touch them in any part that could suggest suggest that I would be interested in more than just coaching.

AC: Of course. What about ummm so we I I have seen many things in terms of differences between men and women. Women you have to encourage them to lift heavier and men you have to encourage them to lift lighter. How do you deal with those two situations?

SARAH: Ummm well I have women who want to lift more than they should too so...you aren't tehe only one (laughs)

SARAH:I have others who are like...no just empty barbells for today it's gonna be enough. So umm for encouraging women I I tell them you can do it your form is great go for it you know you have to boost their confidence. Men it's a little bit harder. Usually uhh when I see that the form is not good but it's not dangerous I'll go go ahead take that. And usually...

AC: They unload as...

SARAH: Yeah I tell them at some point if you feel it's too heavy then unload and they usually unload more than I told them too during the workout. Uhh for girls that workout I tell them your technique is not right enough, so just take off some weight and put that. You know men you can't tell them, they have to realize by themselves

AC: Yeah

SARAH: They're not not strong enough (laughs)

AC: But if the at the same time I think there's an element for each individual you gotta have that they have to try to lift heavier than you think you can then you pull back.

SARAH: If the form is correct...

AC: If the form is correct...

SARAH: Uhh I mean if the form is correct and the person want to take heavier than than she should then I say Ok go for it just just take some weight off when you feel like it's too much. It's technique after er.. before everything

AC: Yeah uh huh it is.

AC: I think that's about it...ummm and oh yeah in terms of working with your colleagues do you feel like there is a difference between how they are treated?

SARAH: Of course. Uhh I think that umm my umm men colleagues get away with a lot more than the girls uhh so yeah I don't think it's not fair, it's really not fair. Umm when we started with this private training classes like being paid more on top of our salary, Olga and I weren't in the deal because we were 100% and it should be included in our hours and I thought that was really unfair you know? And of course we are girls so..

AC: why do you think, is it really a girls thing or is it something else? Because Winston comes with all these ideas and he talks a lot and he knows his stuff.

SARAH: He thinks he knows...

AC: He thinks he knows his stuff and he comes at you with this idea of being...and Michael does it too. They know the talk and they talk the talk...you know which is similar and you know they've read a lot and they've done all this...and umm I wonder how much of this just has to do with their ability to present themselves that way? I mean what do you think? Do you think it's really just because they are guys or is it because they...?

SARAH: They know how to talk you mean and how to present stuff?

AC: Well...Since Euan is responsible for making the major decision and Euan works that way. He's always reading and analysing and talking about the gluteus and the ischia and that's connects to this and this is why you are having a problems and uhh Winston does the same thing, Theo does the same thing I don't know about Andrea at all umm it doesn't seem like it

SARAH: No but when he asks for something Euan considers it whereas Olga and myself I don't think he really he considers it as much as Andrea or Pack or Michael..

AC:Ok why

SARAH: I've seen that I don't know why I think it's the gender uhh but you know he asked for the Foundations to be paid uhh so to have a commission on the Foundations and Euan considered it... for a long time...he did some research analysis and I think that if I asked it? he would just say ah no..

AC: No...

SARAH: So I don't think it's related to the talk and how you present stuff it's more related to the gender



AC: Unfortunately...(sigh) I can talk to you about that and the workplace for hours and the things I've read and unfortunately it goes hand in hand umm...with how we ask as women cuz we are going to ask for things differently and umm but it also has a lot to with...I don't have a pair of balls therefore my questioning and my thoughts are taken in consideration less unless I am...pushy which means I get sanctioned pushy. I am not using the word I used yesterday because I have to type all this stuff up..

LK. Laughs

AC: Umm and I...with uhh last week the 6am thing, was it last week the 6 am thing or Monday 6am thing?

SARAH: Uhh it was Tuesday 6 am thing,

AC: Okay Tuesday 6 am thing, you said that you doubt that (it was Hugo, wasn't it?)

SARAH: yeah

AC: you doubt that Hugo would have written an email...

SARAH: I doubt that he would have reacted that way if it were someone else.

AC: And why again? Is it gender or is it just...?

SARAH: Uhh I don't think it's only gender here, I think it's probably also hierarchy because he started CrossFit before me, uhh I am not the owner so he probably wouldn't have talked to Olga like this it's just that I am low on the hierarchy and I am not a boy. If it was (sites male coaches) he would have never have talked like that.

AC: Yeah

SARAH: And even less written an email...

Stopped tape

SARAH: She has no confidence herself, she's crying all the time. I mean I that's also what threw me off, Monday ah Tuesday morning she uhh so I put them in groups of 3 for the workout because 3 stations rotating same weights you know and I told her ah you can go with the girls over there and she started crying

AC: Immediately oh...

SARAH: Oh what's wrong? What did I say? And like oh but they're lifting like uhh light weights and I want to go with the other girls who are lifting more because I really want to push myself and I was like ok...don't cry that's... it's ok go with the other girls I was just like you know

AC:

SARAH: Yeah I was like ok no problem go with the others I don't mind it's fine so she's that type of girl. She will cry all the time.

AC: huh...

SARAH: Even sometimes she's you know she's just in a workout and you see her crying and leave the room! And like what the fuck and then I go and see her and she's like oh but I suck

so much today at my workout I am so frustrated and she starts crying, you know? So I think she's got really confident issues and probably she's very stressed in her life

AC: Hmmmh

SARAH: And it just, it's here because you are doing stuff so it all goes out at the same time

AC:nhhh

SARAH: Yes and so that girl anyway to come to that, we were doing back squats and she was lifting like I dunno her max back squat is 25 kilos and I'm like ok and I saw her do a back squat with 25 and I told her ok you can you can go heavier just put 5 more and then she does it with 30 and it's great and it's easy and I'm like ok put some more and she says oh no I don't want to I'm gonna like...don't worry I'm here if you can't go up I'll just uhh hold the bar and she did a back squat of 45 kilos that day which is 20 more than her previous 1 rep max so you just need to push her a little bit and we have a lot of people like that who are just not confident in their capabilities and they just don't want to try because they are too scared

AC: Yeah it's the fear element

Exactly

AC: Describe to me that fear element? I mean what do you think is going on, do you feel it sometimes or when you see it what do you think is happening? How do we How do we help?

SARAH: It's self-talk, it's you it's just your evil voice that gets to loud. Oh no you are not good enough, you didn't eat today, you didn't sleep enough, you are not going to make 50 that's 5 more than your 1 rep max are you crazy? And it just keeps talking and I think that those people they just have this negative voice in their head uhh

AC: Did a study, I think it's Thierry told me about it with uhh people who are drug addicts or alcohol addicts and they just made them sleep more and they saw that with more sleep like 8 or 9 hours, uh a night they are less inclined to go back to their drug addiction or alcohol addiction than those who sleep uhhh less than 6. I think the point was 7 or less, uhh less than 7 you are more inclined and if you sleep seven or more you have..

AC: You're your stronger

SARAH: Exactly. So apparently sleep is a big issue with addictions and probably with confidence too

AC: hmmm

SARAH: because when you are feeling good , when you are in the zone how I call it, you don't have that negative voice

AC: no..

SARAH: it's in the back somewhere and you don't really here it you just here the positive voices saying keep going, keep going you can do it, that's fine, 50 that's nothing just lift it

AC: yeah keep going, don't hurt...don't I think that's why I like the longer WODS cuz it gets me over that passage where I am like you suck you suck and I'm like no...just keep going... just go

SARAH: yeah

AC: but I think there is also the element of CrossFit that's hard for a lot of people who have confidence issues ummm across the board and generally I do think that in physical activities that will be women just because they have less access to it and they have never done a pull up and they don't know about lifting heavy things ummm social comparison is a big one. They compare themselves to oh I don't lift as much as you or I can't do this as well as you.

SARAH: Yeah that's what I you know when I show pull-ups, it's really uhh flagrant on pull ups I don't know why girls are so scared of pull-ups and I showed the pull-ups

AC: Pull-ups

SARAH: So strict, chin over the bar and I go down and like "oh I am never gonna be able to do that" and I am like yes you will, you just have to start from the scr from the beginning and I told them when I started I couldn't even get a ring row! Ring rows were so hard and they were like they are like really? And how much time did it take you to and I tell them oh...it took six months to get 1 pull-up that's a lot and I worked every day for it and so they are like oh wow oh alright and then it boosts their confidence.

AC: Yeah...yeah. So that's the thing it's all about confidence building rather than anything else, isn't it? And how much of it how much of....ok so we've got sleep, we've got nutrition we've got self-talk and we've got the coach, right? How much of that can we really influence?

SARAH: We can influence everything.

AC: Yeah?

SARAH: Of Course.

AC: How?

SARAH: Umm...I think we are here to set an example

AC: Ummhmm

SARAH: So you have to do things right in your life, which is hard. I get it. I mean, not eating Ben and Jerry's is really hard for me!

AC: (Laughs)

SARAH: But if you set the good example then more people are more inclined to listen to you

AC: Ummhmm

SARAH: Uh... I've got a guy who uhh came to me and he's like oh ah umm I don't know why he asked me and then I asked him how many coffees are he is he drinking per day. And he's like, oh 12-13 per day. I'm like What? Fuck? I'm like you're crazy I'm like told him that's really really bad I mean coffee is good for health but in small amounts and they say not more than 3 cups a day.

AC: umhh

SARAH: And he's like aw ok ok and I thought it was just like (whistling noise) and then out uhh on the other side. And I told him that also caffeine has an influence on insulin so it raises your insulin levels which means that you you umm store more fat. Of course

AC: Umhmm

SARAH: and insulin is a storage hormone and I explained him how it works. And I don't know I think I don't know maybe it was one month later he comes to me and yeah you know what I've lost 4 kilos just by reducing coffee

AC: Reducing coffee

SARAH: I drink 3 cups and only decaf afterwards, it was really hard the first week but now I feel good and it thanks to you. And I was like...oh my god. I was so happy you know? And I think you can really influence people's life by leading by example

AC: Uhhh

SARAH: They have to see you workout, they have to see you uhh fail also because that's part of life you know if you fail ah that means you know I failed it's not that bad cuz the coach failed too.

And then nutrition also if you tell them how you eat, that's not that bad you know. I eat like, like that for two years and I feel great and my performances are up and you explain them why and how, and it helps them and it motivates them to uhh because you know they see you lift like 50 kilos overhead and they are like woah

AC: uhmmm

SARAH: maybe if I do like her, if I eat like her or sleep like her maybe I'll do as good as she does.

AC: Ok, well let's take this scenario let's say I start eating, doing the Zone ok? And I start being able to train appropriately uhh I don't know how but with regards to the kids everything, maybe I have the key finally to the Drop Zone and I go and workout every day ok? Not every day... or appropriately, appropriately. Ok? And I get sleep and whatever. Do you think really that I could do a 50 kilo overhead because there's this part too..

SARAH: Yes..

AC: Because there's this part too

SARAH: yes...you can work on that

AC: And there's a difference, I am gonna need to get

SARAH: But do you want a 50 kilo snatch or

AC: I dunno when you were thinking of raising 50 kilos over your head what you were thinking?

SARAH: Or overhead squats, or snatch or whatever

AC: Ok alright, so do you think that would be really possible to do?

SARAH: Yes

AC: What would happen to my body?

SARAH: I think everything is possible

AC: yeah... but what would happen to my body? Because to me obviously, to be able to do that you have to have a certain a bigger muscle mass.

SARAH: Uhh... yes yes but it's not mass you know in volume it can also be

AC: yeah

SARAH: it can also be density in muscle so I think everything is possible of course

AC: Because I am not worried about that at all mind you that's just a personal example because there is obviously a difference in physique for the moment right?

SARAH: How tall are you?

AC: 5 feet uhh 155

SARAH: Camille LeBlanc is as tall as you and look at how much she lifts

AC: (whispers) I know, she's awesome. She's big

SARAH: yes but she certainly wasn't that big when she started CrossFit

AC: No...no

SARAH: Which she, you know she chose a different lifestyle of course you choose to have kids and that great tha't your decision but of course you can't compare yourself to someone who can go to the gym 8 times a week

AC: yeah 4 hours a day

SARAH: who can sleep 8 hours per night and who can eat..

AC: Yeah and workout

SARAH: And yes you compare yourself to me but I don't have kids and I don't have that much responsibilities. So I have more time...uh to sleep uhh which is a big difference or umm eat well because I can eat at specific hours I don't have to worry about going to fetch my kids or bringing them to school

AC: yeah yeah and that's stress

SARAH: I don't deal with that stress so you know of course you're your path is going to take more time but you can, you can get there

AC: Yeah..cuz the reason I mention and I agree with you and I am going there...believe me I want to get there. I totally want to get there

SARAH: You'll get there, and your kids are growing up so will get easier and easier

AC: yeah yeah and it's ll get easier and I think there's a lot of things to change to make it easier on myself too but that's an side (whispers) but anyway

SARAH: (Laughs)

AC: Umm but the thing is when I talk about muscle mass and stuff because to me there really isn't any difference between men and women physically, except muscle mass.

SARAH: Ummm

AC: and bone density. And women if they are encouraged to do so they could easily get to Rx that the men can do...but as you have to have an increase of muscle mass so

SARAH: ummm

AC: You know? So we could all look like Camille but you know we will we will increase muscle mass which isn't a bad thing

SARAH: umhh

AC: As an athlete it's awesome, as a woman? I think a lot of women have problems with that you know?

SARAH: Yeah!

AC: So when you have those women who say (high-pitched voice) ahh I don't want to get too bulck how do you deal with that?

SARAH: Well I tell them the truth if you eat like you are eating now and if you are working out 3 times a week not taking protein shakes or anything. You are not going to get bulky, you have to want to get bulky to get bulky. If I have those arms it's not because I did CrossFit it's because I eat towards a certain goal and I workout towards a certain goal

AC: umhhmm

SARAH: You can't get bulky in a day, just with CrossFit you can't.

AC: No.No I agree..

SARAH: And it also depends on your physiology you know I had big arms before I started CrossFit

AC: Yeah so yeah...and I mean I had defined arms before I started CrossFit and it's funny because people will ask me how do you get arms like that it's like nutrition? Really? Nutrition and nutrition. And nothing else that really changed to have gotten so defined, especially here. Although this summer I can see the proof I am like ah aha it's nutrition!

SARAH: (Laughs) Yeah...abs are really in the kitchen

AC: Oh my god yeah they totally are. I had a ball this summer and I don't regret it all and I can accept but!

SARAH: You know I've eaten ice cream twice this week and I don't see my upper abs anymore.

AC: Isn't that weird? So you think that it's able to to...well

SARAH: To go that fast?..

End of recording..

SARAH 2

17.3.17

AC: Ok do you think the seminar was useful?

SARAH: For me yes?

AC: Yeah? How come?

SARAH: I realized that maybe what I think is not...the truth. I f you can say that like that umm... I realized that maybe some the the people who are in the class and who come they have a different perspective which I wasn't really aware of before so yeah it was useful it

made me realize a lot of things but even though they're complaining and they're not happy they're still here and they're still coming so they're must be a reason so I've been quite more tolerant with people since we did this seminar.

AC: Cool! That's good to here. But then do you think? You said for you but then are you thinking it wasn't as useful for other people?

SARAH: No no.. (sighs) well think of Winston he wasn't really there and his view of stuff hasn't changed at all. I mean at the end we were all talking about our own experiences and he was like yeah I did this I did that but it wasn't my fault it was not wrong. It's never his fault

AC: Umhm

SARAH: It's never coming from him it's always because the others are like that so and he can't really feel empathy and I think he is able to feel empathy. It's a shame but..

AC: Yeah, we'll see I can't wait to interview him and hear what he has to say umm

SARAH: The thing is there is a gap between what he says and what he shows.

AC: This is the definitely the case which is why the observations were so important

SARAH: Umhm

AC: So you know hopefully this project will get something published in CrossFit.com, and do you think that there is a need for it within the world of CrossFit?

SARAH: I think so even if we don't realize it I mean the biggest example is men's bar and women's bar it's just stupid to call a 15 kilo bar men a woman's bar and a 20 a men's bar but it's everywhere. So yeah I do think it's important.

AC: Umhm and do you I mean as a coach I mean you sent me that picture of the other box of the bars which was great of the lady's bar so you can see it now so as a coach now that you can see it are there ways that you have changed when you're coaching?

SARAH: Well I am not coaching that much anymore but I certainly changed uhh my language I don't call it a baby's bar or a training bar, it's a 10 kilo bar, 15 kilo bar and a 20 kilo bar

AC: Yep

SARAH: And I know my boyfriend uses the "lady's bar" because he prefers the grip it's smaller...

AC: Yeah for smaller hands

AC: And umm and do you think I mean now that there is a sort of perspective of before and after how do you think it can help the...the members? The fact that there is a change in your language and stuff like that. What do you think about it?

SARAH: Well maybe but especially for the beginners they will feel less umm like a zebra you know like ahh I can't even lift a woman's bar I really suck at CrossFit. AC: Do you think it's do you think that the seminar is more needed for the male coaches than the female coaches? Or do you think it is all coaches?

SARAH: I think it's more for male coaches and I mean it is certainly useful for female as well but I think as a female we are more empathetic.

AC: Umhm

SARAH: And men they don't know what it's like to be a woman, they don't know how society is towards us it's much harder to prove yourself as a woman than as a man. They don't they have no idea so I think for them to realize how it is... it's more useful.

AC: Yeah, yeah hope we did a little bit of that and maybe just scratched opened a little window for some of them because it's not umm...and do you think umm well what are your goals as a coach now? I mean what do you...what do you think your role is?

SARAH: My role is to give everyone attention during a class even if they don't want to. It's just...before I think I was just leaving people in the corner and now just even if they don't want my attention I'm gonna give it to them so that way they don't feel like you know I didn't..

AC. Umhmm just how do you know they don't want your attention I mean?

SARAH: It's an impression that they don't want your attention but actually you need to persuade them to come.

AC: Ok

SARAH: And also you know when people are complaining on the phone it's also umm after I read *The Secret*...I'm trying to be more...loving? And not judging people um directly and if they are complaining it's probably because they had a shitty day, it's not because of you, it's nothing personal they live in their world, they have their vision and it's not the same as mine so...I'm just trying to be more understanding

AC: Umhmm

SARAH: And they react better actually at the end,

AC: Yeah of course

SARAH: When I don't judge them

AC: Umhmm and what about what about in your personal perspective? I mean just not just at the box but outside...do you feel like things have changed there?

SARAH: Umm not really well I live at the box so...

AC: What would you do if you had some guy who's being really fussy, well if you had a scenario like Hugo, right? How would you deal with it now?

SARAH: Good question. Umm...

AC: Not that there is any wrong way to do it I just want to see...

SARAH: Actually I don't think I would change anything...

AC: (laughs)

SARAH: I'm not sure I would change anything because I think I reacted perfectly, maybe I would have changed the workout umm but at that time we were supposed to do the Intermediate program and that's it. So it's after this episode that we decided we could switch in All Levels and maybe I would have switched from all levels to intermediate maybe I would have switched to beginners that's the only difference I would have done.



AC: Umhmm

Sarah: Because umm sending back people who weren't logged here and they are here at 6am, I mean they are here at 6 am so definitely---so yeah I think it's the only thing I would have done

AC: Umm what else was I gonna say....oh yeah and it's just background stuff but you weren't really into sport before I mean it's just CrossFit that...

SARAH: Not at all I stopped I mean yeah I was when I was younger and now here we are

AC: Ok and how do you perceive your body now as a woman as a coach and being a role model? Has the seminar influenced anything there?

SARAH: Well CrossFit has influenced by view of the female body of course. Because I just wanted to be skinny and now I'm a I'm uhh proud to be strong and I'm proud to have muscles which is not the case in day to day life I mean when I'm in the CrossFit world I don't see any problems because all the women are like that. But when I go outside, when we have outsiders come in. They see me differently, they don't see me feminine. They see my like uhh... too bulky, too much muscle, too strong. And before...I would have cared but now I just don't care. Because what is important to me is how I want to be. I want to be muscular. I want to have abs. I want to have strong legs. I want to be able to Push Press 80 kilos you know I don't care about how big my muscles are, my arms are. It's not important anymore. So people when tell me ohh that's horrible you have big arms I don't want to have arms like you. So yeah I say well you're never gonna press 65 kilos over your head, I will.

AC: Yeah wow yep

SARAH: Yeah, I can strict press 44 and push press 65 and now when people tell me that I'm like just you won't be you won't have strong arms if you don't do CrossFit 5 times a week and you don't eat accordingly

AC: Right

SARAH: It's effort it's and I'm proud of it now...society wants women to be skinny and frail and CrossFit gives another image of that of femininity what is femininity it's different so I think it's starting to break the stereotype in society I mean when you see those fitness models they have muscles

AC: Still a little too skinny

SARAH: I agree ...I saw a video of a fitness she was like so happy because she deadlifted 50 kilos

AC: Serious?

SARAH: (laughs) So funny...

AC: Umm I think that's about it so thank you...

SCOOTER 1

30.08.16

Ac : So umm

scooter : Yes

Am : So how long have you been coaching I forgot.

SCOOTER: Ummm I got my level 1 in September of 2013,

AC: Ok and you coached straight off?

SCOOTER: Ahh pretty much, yeah I was uhh coaching with ummm CR TerreSainte pretty much right away and a little bit with these guys here in

AC: ok

SCOOTER: Vich but not as much I was more of a fill in kind of guy

AC: Ok

SCOOTER: Umm yeah

AC: And with TerreSainte are you still coaching,

SCOOTER: No

AC: they changed didn't they?

SCOOTER: Yeah what happened is Gretchen one of the women who owned it there were three uhh owners who came from here Gretchen, Gina and Melody and uhh Melody went off to Amsterdam to become a DJ umm , Gina's husband got transferred to London and uhh Gretchen's husband got transferred to San Francisco

Ac; Ok

SCOOTER: So they had to sell really quick yeah I worked out with them a couple of times, and gone bike riding with them and stuff and try to do a little coaching there too you know it was kind of fun with them but they...Gretchen wanted you know sort of expand their offering so I did a little cycling coaching

AC: Oh ok how awesome

SCOOTER: Yeah it was fun, you know umm I think the results were good and I think people appreciated it but not so much you know that they kept coming back

AC: Right, right I hear you

SCOOTER: So but as the first of this year umm since you know pretty much most of my friends were sort of gone. I think the first week of this year I told them that I was done there and they were they were you know fine

AC: Ok

SCOOTER: I was only doing two hours a week so it wasn't a big deal

AC: So that's not that much

SCOOTER: Yeah it wasn't a huge hole to cover but you know it's still a hole in your schedule that you got cover.

AC: Yep

SCOOTER: Yep it can be nothing or it can be nothing or it can be a huge deal if you can't find someone to fill the hole.

AC: Ok so about coaching

SCOOTER: Yes

AC: What do you think your role or roles are as a coach? I mean what do you when you walk in the box..

SCOOTER: Yeah, umm did I think that there a couple ways to think about coaching...umm I grew up swimming and I had a variety of well...I had one coach in particular who had a particular coaching style..I said particular twice in one sentence. He was a bit of a yeller and this was in the 70's

AC: Right

SCOOTER: and you could hit kids and no one really gave a shit

AC: Ummhmm

SCOOTER: And I decided that wasn't the style of coaching that I wanted to adopt, he was a nice guy. I mean when I got older I mean I started off swimming with him at around 8 or 9 till I went off to college so that was about 8 -9 years I had this one coach. And you know, so you're your job is to instruct, is to motivate, ummm hopefully inspire uhh encourage. Umm...You know..I get a little grief from the wife sometimes she says your I am too much of cheerleader and uhh you know that can be true but I just want people to do well and I think they can do well you know maybe I need to be more critical but..

AC: So I mean so there after 9 odd years spending time with someone who probably was pretty critical and..

SCOOTER: Yeah yeah I I think my coaching style is part of reaction to that and and it's my personality too

AC: So you don't think it's about being a critical

SCOOTER: Ummmhmm well there's there's a level level of criticism there but you have to keep in mind that everyone who comes to us is here to to get fit and to have fun and to you know not get hurt so you know you don't want to necessarily be too critical because you know they're not going to come back

AC: yeah

SCOOTER: if you just if you're just a jerk to people...you know you are not going to inspire as much you may inspire them to be pissed off at you but umm you know that's not the sort of inspiration that I'm here to create I don't think

AC: Ok so if I were to sum it up I guess the role that you see more in terms of coaching is more just encouraging...

SCOOTER: Make sure you do it right

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: you know I am not here to pick you apart I just want you to do it right cuz you'll you know when you do it right you can feel it. Umm so I am going to encourage you to keep doing it until you get it right umm it's gonna be (intelligible) and it's gonna be upbeat and umm you know that's that's how I think I operate best

AC: Right right..ummm..What about the or who are the kinds of people you enjoy most working with?

SCOOTER: Ummm we have such a nice, nice collection of people here ummm you know I do have to admit I do have my favorites. Some people you just you know I mean it's just because they..not necessarily because they move well but they bring a good attitude..They are just there and they are going to bring everything and they are going to have fun doing it. I don't...you know..I want you to pay attention umm you know. Because I do think I have a little bit to offer umm

AC: Laughs yeah

SCOOTER: Yeah and uhh so I get irritated sometimes when people sort of drift off...it doesn't happen all that often though. I think I am getting better at keeping the class sort of focused and on point and moving forward and umm so yeah So I don't necessarily have a favorite type of person I like to coach anybody who wants to come and do the work. Just walking into the door at one of these places is huge.

AC: Laughs

SCOOTER: I remember my first Cf experience first in the US and you know a month later here. And you know just getting in the door was is you gotta really screw your courage up a little bit so once you get in the door I want you to keep coming back.

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: So you know I don't have a favorite person, my favorite person is the person who go screwed up the courage to walk in the door in the first place.

AC: And then who maybe uhh is focused on doing it and.

SCOOTER: Yeah and doesn't wander up you know who is really concerned with doing the movements properly you know we have a few people who come who I see come in and umm you know I'm pretty sure they can't count umm any putting weight on the bar is a math (unitint) you know but it's really important that they you know that they want to finish first. You know

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: There's no benefit to that.

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: Yeah you're depriving yourself on everything that CrossFit has to offer if you if you are not willing to push yourself. If you are going to go fast form be damned.

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: So

AC: Yeah umm so well there's that there is a lot of reluctance to put on weight

SCOOTER: (smiles)

AC: But would you say that there is, is that more common what I mean what kind of athlete is that like? I hear that more honestly in women

SCOOTER: Oh I hear it from both

AC: and they are concerned about getting too big stuff and that kind of stuff

SCOOTER: Yeah I should should carry a laminated uhh postcard of Alexander Sandborg and just "she lifts heavy"

AC: Yeah, yeah

SCOOTER: You wanna look like that?

AC: Laughs yeah

SCOOTER: Slap some more weight on the bar. Yeah Yeah it's...you know or you or my wife you know? They're not bulky. You know..yeah that's one of the most frustration misconceptions that that mostly women have. We have a few men that are just afraid to push themselves but the women in particular are afraid to lift anything heavy. And I tell 'em unless you start shooting Testosterone in your ass tomorrow

Ac. Laughs

SCOOTER: And umm eating nothing but entrecote you don't have much to worry about, you are just going to be lean in strong...uh so...yeah so it's women are afraid of getting bulky therefore they they have all this misinformation that lifting heavy is gonna make you bulky and it doesn't. I'm gonna lift a little weight 4 thousand times but then the benefit to that is you get some benefit because your moving

Ac yeah

SCOOTER: but it's not much more I mean load up. Go heavy

AC: yeah

SCOOTER: Be strong. Strong is sexy. Strong is cool

AC: Yeah, seriously if I could only get stronger faster but that's just me.

SCOOTER: Laughs

AC: Umm...but umm what about so would you say after all these years of experience.

SCOOTER: Ummhmm

AC: You've worked in two boxes,

SCOOTER: Umhmm

AC: oK would you say that there are different types of CrossFitters, I mean we I it's its dangerous to generalize I understand

SCOOTER: Yeah

AC: But there seems to be certain

SCOOTER: Yeah well

AC: Patterns of people

SCOOTER: Sure yeah. Oh yeah you absolutely see that. I mean everywhere you go. I mean my G likes to travel and when we go anyplace we like to drop ins so we've done drop ins in South Africa in Mexico in Spain umm where else a couple in the US of course. So we've we've uhh been in a lot of different boxes and yeah yeah there there's there... are different kind of groups. I mean you have you have the people who have been doing it for a while and have a certain level of skill umm and they are there and they're consistent and you know they are going to be there. You can see the interaction between them and a coach with with you know it's it's pretty obvious wherever you go and then you have the people who are just sort of approaching that level. You know, they don't look quite sure but they think they maybe want to be that long timer and then you know you have umm you have you have some newbies you know. I I think with what I have seen here because we've grown so much it's hard for me to see the line between sort of the umm we have so many new people. I 'm not sure who is moving up out of that sort of newbie category and it no that hey I think I may

AC: Stick around

SCOOTER: Stick around category and people stick around. I mean you are already a stick arounder. I mean once you drink the Cool Aid and take the Level 1

AC Yeah seriously drank the Cool Aid now it's just the skills...and that's coming

SCOOTER: No it's yeah it.s

AC: Yeah it's frustrating on a personal not

SCOOTER: No and that's why it's frustrating you can really frustrating but you know I think it's important for you to take that frustration and use it as motivation

AC: Yeah absolutely

SCOOTER: You know this is where I want to go and this how I am going to get there

AC: Uh huh

SCOOTER: I need to follow my advice thought cuz I'm frustrated with a lot of things.

AC: Like what for example?

SCOOTER: Oh my muscle ups for example

AC: But you started to do one or two as of last yeah?

SCOOTER: Yeah and I backslid. Yeah I wanted to to get it before my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday which I did I got several before my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and then since then I haven't t trained them enough, and I haven't been able to do a decent one I put a little weight back on. I think that is part of my problem. Umm you know, July was just...you know because the wife was off work and we took two weeks yeah

Ac. Tough yeah

SCOOTER: And my training sure hasn't been as good as last year but you know fall is coming

AC: yeah

SCOOTER: and um training hard. Training hard again

AC: Well that's the thing I'm not sure if we can really maintain that consistency all the time, you know. Life happens

SCOOTER:. Oh yeah

AC: AT the same time

SCOOTER Yeah yeah oh yeah it

AC: I have to forgive myself when that happens

SCOOTER: Yeah it's it's peaks and valleys and you just have to to umm you know accept that

AC: Yeah but I would really prefer to be at that peak all the time

SCOOTER: Yeah sure yeah umm I mean one of things I learned from cycling you can't just be on all the time umm and swimming too. You know

.

AC: Right

SCOOTER: There are valleys you know

AC: And going back to coaching isn't that something that we I mean it's obvious what I am gonna say but it's something that we really have to remember especially when looking at newbies

SCOOTER: oh yeah!

AC: They progress rapidly

SCOOTER: Very rapidly at first

AC: And then...

SCOOTER: then they are gonna plateau

AC: Yeah..and then

SCOOTER: Yeah I think your job our jobs as a coach is to you know. Let them know that it's ok, you know. Don't be down on yourself because you're having a bad day or a bad week. Or

you know you weren't able to hit that one Rep that you were able to hit two weeks ago but no it'll come back and it'll come back stronger. You'll dip down and you'll come back stronger

AC: Somehow it's more satisfying.

SCOOTER: Yeah exactly once you break through that it's great.

AC: Ummm CrossFit

SCOOTER: Yes

Ac. In general, what is it that brought you into it...why?

SCOOTER: You know I I can't really I dunno...ummm I'd heard a little bit about it umm you know so I was in the States and we were getting ready to move here. Gretchen was already here and uhh I think I guy I worked with did it but you know and then I just did a quick Google search and uhh you know I was gaining weight like a crazy person. I was not in a very good place you know mentally, physically umm so I just I just was looking for some sort of exercise that I could do in an hour

AC: umhh

SCOOTER: you know I had this it was a difficult time because we were trying to sell our house in the US and umm and I used to to go for a a bike ride you know for a couple 3-4 hours bike ride

AC: Yeah and you don't have that time at a after certain point

SCOOTER: And no that was my main exercise you know going out for a big ride and I was afraid that that one phone call was going to come you know...hey do you want show the house: and I m a you know an hour and half way and they want to come in 10 minutes and you can't my my with pitbull looking dog coming around cuz it'll terrifying everybody yeah so I found this and you can do it in an hour there was one 5 minutes away from my house.

Perfect

SCOOTER: Yeah, umm one of the women who owned it and started it was I think it was 2010, but when was the first year the Games 2009?

AC: Uh huh

SCOOTER: She'd gone 2009- 20010

Oh wow awesome

SCOOTER: Yeah, she was a middle of the field but she was in California for a couple of years couple years and so she was a hell of an athlete and uh yeah I sort of fell into it and then you know. They were good they brought me in and they were really cool and they were just like yeah come on in it'll be fun. And I could do it an hour and then get back and put the dog in the back if I had to

AC: And you still felt like you did a 3 hour ride?

SCOOTER: Yeah



AC: that was the thing for me is that I no longer have the time or the ability to and I came in here and I felt like I did a triathlon in an hour so so I'm good this is for me I'm done

SCOOTER: Et voila:

AC: Umm with regards to so ok, we describe a lot you know the trainwreck athlete right? How do you approach them?

SCOOTER: Uff you know that's harder here for me umm because usually they only speak French.

AC: Right

SCOOTER: So (laughs) usually I have someone else work with them. (laughs) I run away, I shun my responsibilities. Yeah umm usually when someone is a real trainwreck it's going to start on their squat. And I figure work on their squat first.

AC: Yep

SCOOTER: Make 'em do wall squats get that sorted and hopefully everything will fall into place after that. You know? That' that's the initial that's you know you gotta start someplace, right?. You gotta triage it.

AC: yeah

SCOOTER: umm so and usually that's the first place but I I think everyone's a mess in a different way. Some people you know you're just like...do your best, don't hurt yourself

AC: (Chuckles)

SCOOTER: And they won't they're usually...well usually they're often umm someone who's a real train wreck knows not to go heavy on their first day I 've had a few people who God you try to go no you need to go lighter and they're like no I wanna go heavier. And yeah you hurt yourself you signed the form...

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: So I'm tellin' you that's too heavy. Umm...

AC: Do you find that's more often is the case I mean I've seen lots of arguments like that or not arguments like that or discussions like that and in general I always there's only one occasion have it be with well with besides myself be it with another woman and the coach is like eh eh nope.

SCOOTER: Yeah,

AC: Umm

SCOOTER: Yeah women usually are.. and this goes back to what we talked about earlier women aren't normally all that eager to go heavier unless they have another woman pushing them. Like if... umm if were doing Push Press or something. I'll put, I want to put a new athlete with Gretchen with Alexandra even with you

AC: yeah

SCOOTER: With with ummm you know with someone like that. Cuz A of all you're gonna get coaching you know even though they're well even well actually Alex has her level 1

AC: yes she does, she does

SCOOTER: Yeah Gretchen doesn't she never will...she just

AC: She know she I think she she does she sees and knows a lot more than the most of us

SCOOTER. Oh yeah, she's very good

AC: She knows her shit

SCOOTER: Yeah she really does. She really does. She's really I love putting her with the newbies you know cuz she'll coach them umm you know and she'll encourage them to go heavier. Cuz, cuz I think ummm well again a lot of women are a lot stronger than they believe themselves to be .Dudes want to go heavy because cuz male dominated society because yeah

AC: yeah

SCOOTER Yeah we only have a few guys who just sandbag all the time. But...

AC: And what about those guys who sandbag all the time? What are they like? I mean how would you describe them? I can think of one

SCOOTER: I got one in mind

AC: He always has uh uh a problem to keep him from..

SCOOTER: Yeah, without naming names you know there's nothin' I'm gonna be able to say to him umm especially cuz you know my French is so bad I could say just say to him quit being a girl and no...or be a girl be a strong girl. Put some fucking weight on the bar, you know? Umm..do the women's RX weight cuz that would be heavier than what you are doing here. But you know a lot of that just gets lost in translation.

AC: Ok so why do you think he resists it? Is it just..?

SCOOTER: Just I dunno, it's just I think it's just personality or umm you know there there's certain people who have a certain quirk of personality where you know it doesn't matter if they push themselves. They just want to be first or they just want to be go really fast. Umm

AC: Right

SCOOTER: And you know eh eh I think a lot of that is ego driven? And I think what you have to do is you have to and like in any sport you have to realize that there is always going to be someone better than you unless your Matt Frazier this yeah or Annie Thorisdottier you know? There's always going to be someone better than you so just accept that so what you need to do is do your best. Yeah just do your best you know? Do it right. Do it best. It's...because you know if if you win in our little pond by not really challenging yourself well then

AC: yeah

SCOOTER: What have you accomplished? What is the takeaway from that?

AC: So..

SCOOTER: So..I you know I let em go just you know what? You don't want to go heavy? That's your problem, you're not going to improve.

AC: Yeah I think that's the one thing that I see the most is that they're happy because they finished first. But there's not really any—

SCOOTER: Yeah! There's no there there.

AC: Progress yeah

SCOOTER: Yeah what you get out of it is going to be minimal.

AC: Umm yeah so the train wrecks

SCOOTER: Yeah

AC: You kind of deal with the squats

SCOOTER: Yeah deal with the squat first, you know? And everyone's a mess in a different way. So..

AC: Well that's the thing what are some of the different ways that they're a mess and how much is that related to there their who they are?

SCOOTER: Yeah , yeah that's the thing. I had one woman who didn't know how her arms worked and we just we just I kept working with her. And finally she figured she's gonna go light and she's gonna figure out that bar path and we're gonna get her to put that bar over her head and finish with her shoulders next to ears. Umm...and a lot of it is just repetition and you just stay on em. You pick the one thing that's wrong that day and you fix it.

Yeah

And then the next day they come in and they do something wrong and you fix that.

Yeah

SCOOTER: I think that's one of the benefits we have at what we do here is that it's different every day it identifies these weaknesses and umm so you know you see that weakness and you try fix that day. Maybe you don't fix it that day but that's the thing that they messed up that day, ok? The next day it's gonna be something different and let's fix that and after awhile..hey look no longer a train wreck.

Ac. Yeah

SCOOTER: Look my hip crease is below my knee everytime I squat, my chest is up nice and proud umm you know I never arch my back

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: Umm I always keep my lumbar curve

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: and that's that's the big thing. I figure out figure out the bar path is straight up and down and not..

AC: yeah and if-

SCOOTER: in a big arch

I now know where the bar goes and how it moves.

SCOOTER: If the bar goes here (gesture) it will keep going that way. Just think about that? I mean where

Ac. Laughs

SCOOTER: do you want the bar to go?

AC: uh huh straight up that's it

SCOOTER: I've had, I mean I've had some successful people with a lot of the the lifts just think about straight up and down.

AC: yeah, yeah

SCOOTER: You know? Not out here (gesture). The woman who couldn't figure out how her arms worked I made her do like you know just (gesture) you can do it like snatch grip or like the queen grip. Where you are just having them bring the bar up

AC: Uh huh and just have em do that

SCOOTER: Roll over and that actually works pretty well I think

AC: I'm gonna remember that

SCOOTER: I Winnie brought that back from California, first workout I do with her when she came back from Cali. And I was like oh I like that. I had everyone do that yesterday when we did Greace.

AC: That probably helped a lot of people

SCOOTER: I hope so

Ac. Umm I'm gonna have to do that next time.

SCOOTER: Yeah, I really it really do it yourself. So umm one of the girls from Iceland...

AC: She was doing it?

SCOOTER: Yeah well no no she was in her squat she took the bar up curl it up and then she do a strict press..

AC: Just doing it as close as possible

SCOOTER: Yeah while in their squat. Which is...Yeah you can do it...you try it and you'll be like oh yeah

AC: Yeah yeah no problem

SCOOTER: Got it.

AC: So umm I spoke to umm Sarah and some of the other coaches and as coaches they have certain athletes that they're not so comfortable working with.

SCOOTER hmmhmm

AC: Uh and they it wasn't about personality it was just more about why they were discom uncomfortable or whatever. For you what would that be like? I mean

SCOOTER: Well you know the problem I run into is the language barrier I mean

AC: Language thing, yeah

SCOOTER: Yeah those anyone... I've got no you know anyone...I mean as long as I can communicate I don't have really have a problem talking to anybody. It's just you know, the athletes who don't speak any English? And my French is just not there, I was just kicking myself walking in here and if I had just stuck with it you know? I took a year of classes and I just stopped and had I just stuck with it I would be way far along

AC: Well, don't kick yourself...

SCOOTER: Well, yeah

AC: I mean I think I think

SCOOTER: Missed opportunity

AC: Yeah but I think as an ah umm ex language teacher cuz I used to do that as well umm I think ideally it would be to do it just try to keep trying to do it in French. You've got an opportunity here, everybody loves you, everybody knows you...and you could say ok today I'm going to try today only in French and I'm sorry

SCOOTER: Oui je suis désolé

AC: Everyone's going to smile most people know the routine, they know what to expect so its as long as there are no try-outs

SCOOTER: (Chuckles)

AC: I think it would be as advice as a teacher you could so do that.

SCOOTER: Cool, yeah ok.

AC: Umm but uhh what was I going to say? Ok so basically it would be the language barrier for you.

SCOOTER: Yeah, that's the biggest problem. I haven't really encountered anyone I haven't felt comfortable working with.

SCOOTER: Um you know only the people I can't talk to.

AC: Cool Umm...what about the older people who you know, they come in and you see that they are a little more fragile, right? How do you go about with them?

SCOOTER: You know I haven't had that many of them, quite honestly. Ummm...you know I haven't had to coach uhh you know like even even Samantha's mom and she's...Tatiana's fine like Sara Jane and she's fine

AC: Sarah Jane is more than fine.

SCOOTER: Yeah she's great but yeah you know. They're older and they have needs I mean you just don't push people you don't push them. Cuz they know, they're not gonna hurt themselves.

AC: yeah

SCOOTER: You gotta encourage them, I even encourage them to go heavier just cuz I think they can

AC: yeah yeah

SCOOTER: Lifting heavy is gonna build that bone density, keep you from breaking those hips.

AC: Yeah exactly so lift

SCOOTER: Yeah lift, lift heavy that's what I keep trying to get Gretchen's mom to do.

AC: I she she where is she?

SCOOTER: She's in Atlanta. We use her her house for our mailing address in the US

AC: Ok, makes sense

(the rest of the conversation ended on discussion of taxes as Americans...)

## SCOOTER 2

27.3.17

AC: So about the seminar..?

SCOOTER: Yeah, umm it was good it made me think about a lot of stuff...

AC: Like what in particular?

SCOOTER: Just just umm how we interact with people uhh you know I I you never know how well you are doing umm... and I I think before the seminar I thought yeah I did pretty well umm I think it it made me think a little more closely about my interactions with the the people who have little or no English uhh cuz I probably you know re interact more with people who I can communicate more with so uhh I've really made an effort since then you know to just try to communicate with umm people without any English..just a little bit. Umm so yeah in that regard that was very good umm I don't think I ever had that much of problem with gender you know umm that was never really an issue I don't think umm but yeah it was good.

AC. Cool so you know we are thinking of getting this published in the CrossFit journal and I am wondering what you think I mean do you think that it would be useful for CrossFit?

SCOOTER: Yeah, yeah you know I think anything that adds to the knowledge basis would be useful you know I haven't seen what conclusions you've come up with yet but umm yeah you know anytime anyone can learn anything it's good. And if this adds a perspective umm you know that hasn't shown up in the journal before then it's terrific. I think it would go a long way.

AC: What could be improved? In terms of how we coach with regards to that aspect what do you think where would there be a need for improvement? That's two questions in fact...

SCOOTER: Where to improve and what to improve?

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: I I think um I think the coaches all do a pretty good job and I don't see a lot of bias unconscious or otherwise I mean you know I don't I haven't sat down and watched anybody but I've worked with most of the coaches and I think umm I think they try to give everyone equal attention and I think they try and explain everything as well as they can if you want to start if you want to talk just coaching you know I think what a lot of coaches struggle with is you know just umm identifying you know that issue of faults and then not being able to figure out but we've talked about this before umm but that doesn't really go with what we are talking about. I think we part out equally. Umm I don't know what to tell you you I mean the best you can hope for is you make people just think about their coaching.

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: Uhh if it's from a biased perspective and and I mean you know I I think if you do coach you think about your coaching quite a bit

AC: yeah

SCOOTER: On a number of levels, how could I have taught this better, who did I uhh not work with as closely as I could have umm yeah there's there's always room to improve and... if dividing your attention equally is one of the areas you need to work on then well you need to work on it but it's you know... and then it being that I I think just making people aware or having always thinking about it a little bit is going to be helpful because obviously a lot of people don't know umm

AC: Right

SCOOTER: that they do it. I'd heard that people had criticized one of our coaches saying that he didn't spend as much time with women as he probably should have umm and you know there's definitely some truth to that so I'm I'm thinking I haven't seen him coach recently but I think he's probably taking steps to try and correct that.

AC: Yeah, I think it's just consciousness raising and after that...

SCOOTER: You just do your best you know. Some people are gonna struggle. You know some people have been raised a certain way that um or they just have these biases that they just can't shake off

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: Or try as they might or they think they are and some people are just stuck

AC: Or they don't see the need

SCOOTER: Exactly yeah this doesn't apply to me I'm fine.

AC: Yeah exactly

SCOOTER: I think that's not the best attitude to have I think you need to you know...one thing that CrossFit has taught me is that no matter how good you are at anything there will always be somebody better

AC: yeah

SCOOTER: You know? It's just always it's unavoidable and it's and that applies to you know to all things it's just I mean doing CrossFit just beats the cocky out of you

AC: Yeah yeah definitely I think that's what's great about it at the same time

SCOOTER: Oh yes

AC: It allows for self-reflection and humility and...

SCOOTER: yeah, yeah you gotta be humble

AC: And also I think you learn to be proud of what you can do

SCOOTER: Any day I see Overhead squats I am just jumping for joy I'm like yay

AC: (laughs)

SCOOTER: I'm just thrilled beyond measure

AC: Umm what was the other thing? Any improvements in the seminar? What do you think worked what do you think didn't?

SCOOTER: Umm...I'm trying to think back it's been a little while we should have talked sooner umm no I think generally I was pleased. I think we could have tightened it up a little bit...there there where although I can't tell you anything specifically umm should have taken notes.

AC: But did you umm...you answered the survey right?

SCOOTER: I think I did...

AC: I think you did I think everybody did I will have to look again...

SCOOTER: umm yeah uhh a little faster I umm but yeah it had you know it was good I was...I was pleased I think for you know this was your first time doing it?

AC: Yeah

SCOOTER: Umm getting through things a little more quickly but a problem with a group like us is that we're just going to fuff around..

AC: Yeah but that's the fun of it though

SCOOTER: Yeah, yeah exactly but you gotta herd these cats

AC: Yeah and I think some things could have been more uhh efficient and the role plays

SCOOTER: Yeah I enjoyed the role plays I had fun with those...

AC: Ok well I think that's about it..

SCOOTER: Cool, right on.



THEO 1

29.12.17

AC: So what is CrossFit for you? If CrossFit isn't "it" what is it I mean why are you what's the bigger picture?

THEO: It's a broader vision of health, not just fitness but health mental, physical, emotional everything. It's not just...CrossFit one one small part of it.

AC: Umhm

THEO: A really really tiny part of it. So yes I li love CrossFit as a part of my life but I think there's much more to it. For me to be able to dedicate myself to something I need more.

AC: Right, right. Yeah it's not the umm..

THEO: Or I need to create more that's the idea

AC: You need to create more...?

THEO: In the sense of so one of the ideas that I had discussed with Euan as well as I was interested in opening my own box.

AC: Uhhuh

THEO: You know I I failed multiple time either because I couldn't find the property or it was too expensive or the numbers didn't work out or the people didn't work out or whatever. At the end of the day I am grateful none of that did work because now that I look back and I think would I have really wanted to be stuck running a box and not having anything beyond that and the first thing how would I want to run that box to be happy? I would need it to be a CrossFit box, a martial arts studio uh a restaurant, a café, a lounge maybe even a bar in the back. That's the idea, it's the idea of fitness, health? It's a broader, slightly broader perspective. Life. All the social fabric everything everything I I have no idea what I am talking about at the moment but that's what I visualise it's weird because stuff like yoga for example it has a place in it and it does well meditation certainly has a place in it and um we don't do any of that nor should we it's a CrossFit box. So I guess.

AC: Yes but if we consider health

THEO: We would be yeah exactly if it's a health box it's a different thing.

AC: A health box?

THEO: Health unboxed.

AC: umhm health unboxed I like that and certainly because in terms of meditation and yo well meditation one is mentally struggler and yoga well we know the benefits to that but ok

THEO: I'm creating that social fabric which gives you the opportunity to get emotional strong well nothing can get you emotional strength there's no workout for emotional strength I mean it's life. Life brings you emotional strength.

AC: Right

THEO: You can't put that in a box really

AC: No but you can create

THEO: But you can create the environment to spark it and that we are doing even in a CrossFit box

AC: Why do you think that?

THEO: In this box specifically not in CrossFit I mean CrossFit as a whole encourages it because it is a social movement just as much as it is a fitness movement but our box in particular

AC: Right

THEO: Simply because it puts people first, it puts family first it puts this notion of the social aspect first. Fitness second. Which takes a little bit of guts to do

AC: And faith

THEO: And faith exactly. Because it's a difficult question it's often easier to look at it in black and white, it's very binary. Either it improves your fitness or it doesn't. When you're getting the social aspect it's a grey zone. Like umm I am sure you have been around staff meeting where ideas were floating around of we should not allow kids. Come on! Absolutely not!

AC: Right or dogs

THEO: Or dogs and uh yes from a pure fitness and safety sense it makes sense but I really really liked umm both Olga's and Euan's almost immediate response at that which was absolutely not, no way, it's non-negotiable, we have family we come here because it's family.

AC: Yeah

THEO: That's what I think binds uhh people. That's what gets me driving 26 kilometers every day back and 26 kilometers forth to come here.

AC: Yeah but so what is your role now as a coach?

THEO: What is my role in the sense of my responsibility as a coach?

AC: The whole package

THEO: The whole package umm there is the role during that 1 hour, there is the role during every interaction beyond that 1 hour and then there is the role when you are by yourself and not confronted by anyone in the gym.

AC: Ok so explain those ones to me?

THEO: So first role during that 1 hour, it's to get people, it's the standard, it's getting people to be better than they were the day before and better the next day and better the day after that. Safely that's goal number one and that goes hand in hand with goal number 2 which is however they walk in they must leave feeling better about that day, about themselves, about the people around them about life in general. Umm they have to go together, if they don't go together then you then I feel I failed even if I see that someone has PR'd assuming of course that the PR doesn't make that person happy which is very unusual but let's assume that but if that person does not leave with a smile it's uh it's unfulfilling so it's twofold during that hour.

Outside of that hour but within interactions of that community that you are coaching or training with there is this notion of setting an example as a coach.

AC: Umhm

THEO: That's harder then the actual 1 hour, I must say that's my biggest challenge

AC: How come?

THEO: Every time you move, every time you well the way you talk about whatever you say how you react to things what you're eating at the back of the bar everything is noticed umm it's not noticed for judgement it's noticed because people look at you as a coach

AC: umhmm

THEO: And they will subconsciously look at you as an example and they're gonna replicate so you want to make sure they're replicating the right thing. So when you are in the gym you need to be moving well if you are not moving well you need to be doing something else.

AC: Umhmm

THEO: Which is why I substitute a lot of movements because I do not want to be seen in general seen doing shitty movements

AC: Umhmm

THEO: I would have done shitty movements if I were not a coach, I know that because I am lazy myself. When we are in the Coop for example doing shopping and that uhh comes to the last part which is one is within the hour then the outside the hour within the community but then there's outside the community. Outside the community it changes everything when you go out in the supermarket you look at your cart you say that's gonna cut it, that's not, that just doesn't look good I'm not gonna be seen dead with that shit in my cart and uh unusually enough I've walked into some CrossFitters umm for example Le Clerc in when we're shopping I came by Antony he looked into my cart and there's a packet of Pringles there...I was feeling horrible (laughs). Whatever explanations I give, I'm not gonna cut it right?

AC: Right

THEO: But he's a good athlete and so on so he probably knows whatever the reason for the Pringles to be there it's just an itch you change your lifestyle because you are trying to set an example, a better athlete, a better a healthier person and it has it's umm upsides and its downsides because you are always being hard on yourself not hard you're being strict with yourself. You're

AC: Strict

THEO: You're never really truly letting go.

AC: Umhm

THEO: Because I think being a coach it just is it becomes who you are and it's not just your job. It's not a role as much as it is uhh an identity so to speak. It becomes one.

AC: Umhmm, yeah. It's funny to think about..I uh often uh bump into Olga at Carrefour and both of us are talking but we are also checking out each others' cart. (laughs).

THEO: Uhhuh (laughs). I just want to add to that well you know I am so happy that Rish is nothing like me it keeps me it keeps me in check otherwise I would have gone a bit psychotic and that's one I would have come back and my answer would have been probably different if

Rish wasn't in my life. I would probably say that CrossFit is my life and I would say that this is the most important thing in my life and my life centers around it but it gave me a broader perspective. I do have Pringles every now and then I am hard on myself anyway but I because you are a coach you know how to calculate pros and cons you know how to calculate action and consequence and you can make the deductions.

AC: Right and you also assume the consequences it's not going to be a surprise if things are a little harder for a couple months because you've been...

THEO: Yeah, you've accepted that consciously...

AC: It was funny Conan said something today last week and there were two birthdays and there were two birthday cakes around and he said no I am only going to get only 1 workout this week so no. So you know conscious...and these are Paleo cakes but umm...but umm...in terms of the members so how would you...? Do you think there are any like I don't want to put them in boxes or in stereotypes do you see any patterns oh yes that's the word I am looking for do you see any patterns of members?

THEO: Patterns in terms of?

AC: In terms of well..

THEO: Personalities or performance?

AC: Well in other sports we have like the weekend warriors so in terms of our members do you see any patterns of people?

THEO: (long pause) the wonderful thing of this box is that yes I do see patterns but I see so many that there is no it's not a simple answer

AC: no no I know

THEO: Unfortunately, there are so many patterns you could almost individualize them.

AC: Almost yes, like what?

THEO: Uhh you have your little friendly cliques and I dunno a bunch of people living in the same area CrossFit together, become very close friends come and go together eat together drink together party together they come in and workout and compete with each other. I've seen that plenty of that that is the most common pattern that's not an athletic pattern that is more of a social pattern. I like seeing that. Those little cliques. It has its ups it has its upside and its downsides of course the downside being cliques function as a clique so they are not as a holistic social unit they don't they don't engage with people around them

AC: With other people yeah

THEO: That's ok, that's human nature

AC: yeah

THEO: There's nothing we can do about that there's nothing we should do umm... the couple of the solitary morose ones

AC: What are they like?

THEO: Actually there are a few of them if I think of it, they've gone through a bad patch in life or t

hey are going through a bad in life you can see it in their eyes, you can see it in their auora, you can see it in the way that they are. This is their place of peace. I've been there, that's uhh I was in umm in my martial arts studio I was like that so everyone so at some point in their life have been there but you don't usually pursue something specific to get out of it very few have that in us. To say you know I need an outlet, I need a place, I need this place to come find myself again you see a few of those around and uhh I see that. And then there is the really relaxed I'm here because I have fun and ther are people around and it gives me a sweat type of people that's like Rish for example

AC: umhmm

THEO: She's a she omes here because she loves the environment, she loves the people, she doesn't like pain so much it's very surprising so anyway there's there's her

AC: Do you think there is sort of necessity to enjoy pain to be part of CrossFit?

THEO: No no absolutely not. It's very few people enjoy pain, very very few people. Umm most of us don't. You're doing it for the end of y our

AC: umhm

THEO: Or they're in it for the rest of the stuff that comes around it of of the pain, it's uhh what I used to tell buddies, the best part is the journey up of course until the journey starts getting painful and then it's just somehow having to get up there and then the best part of the climb is the moment you get back down on flat ground and you say that I was up there.

AC: I was up there

THEO: That is the best part of the climb ever for me for most of my climbing buddies it usually resonates it's the moment you say I did all that and it lasts until you look down and oh shit I have to get all the way back down (laughs) and the moment when you get back down. The best part of a climb is when you get down. It is the most fulfilling thing.

And it's the same thing with Woding and with any kind of suffering there is of course, while your suffering and y you say I am ahead everyone and I am killing this Wod and it feels great your suffering and then you look at the clock and you say oh shit I'm half done I hope I can hold this up. It's suffering but by the end of it you're feeling great ok? I've reached the end or you're not because you sucked, you're not as good as last time and that's ok who cares. But at the end of the day you're suffering together but that's the thing about suffering as a pack it makes suffering more team-building than suffering when you suffer together.

So in general, in terms of our athletes you have, I've not see many of the elitists here to be honest I've seen a lot of the snobby athletes in CrossFit but not here not in CrossFit Leman not as much

AC: Not as much there's you know..but I think there's a couple young egos but that's normal for young egos

THEO: It's a defensive mechanism because I think I see less ego and more insecurity and I I see I first see the ego and then I see oh no you're...

AC: Wait a minute you're just a teddy bear

THEO: woah yeah (laughs)

AC: You're so cute

THEO: (Laughs) The formidable personalities that I have seen mostly in other boxes these are mega-sized egos...that are usually accompanied by fairly decent performance umm not so bad not bust

AC: Umhm

AC: I have always found that the elite athlete really, the cream of the crop well not all of them but a great majority are humble and always wanting...they're never

THEO: Wanting to share, wanting to be part of the normal world so to speak

AC: Yeah, yeah

THEO: That's true

THEO: I've not many elites but that's what I comes across on when I see I dunno Jason Kalipa or Rich Fronning explaining something. They are so relaxed about the whole thing...no judgemental criticism.

AC: Well that goes again to how do we how should we coach? What is our...you know because there's you know.. there's the old-fashioned teacher no you're wrong you do it this way ok umm how do we go about improving without completely deconstructing the person because it can be sensitive right? Walk up to a train wreck oh f..what how do I start? And then how do I do it so I don't overwhelm the persona?

THEO: Oh...use Bruce Lee's quote adapt because there is no one answer for that. Try everything, start nicely always start nicely and steel it up on the realism but start nicely. Always. This guy could be a burly ex professional rugby player it does not hurt being nice uh

AC: Umhm,

THEO: A smile goes a long well, saying solid work goes a long way and that burly rugby might be having a slip disc or a very bad injury I dunno and and that could have damaged him mentally. And saying you really did a good job with that squat but could you try going a little lower this time it would be much better than saying come on guy you're a rugby player you can do better

AC: yeah...

THEO: But I would say that to someone I've known for I dunno year? And I know the style that the guy likes and I know that when I say that his eyes light up oh hell yeah I'm a rugby player I can do better than that. Ok it it depends so be like water that's all I can say, so start easy be like water adapt try and figure out what's working what's not and keep going out at differently.

AC: What about is there any difference between for you between going approaching this with rookies, approaching this with the Intermediates, approaching with the comp classes?

THEO: It depends on who's in the rookies, who's in the Intermediates who's in the competition classes because if we are to use those strict boundaries. Rookies being really rookies not just to CrossFit but to fitness then by definition go easy, you're scaling up or for realism would be far far far slower if any at all. So for example when I used to coach Rookie classes I was always about being the nice coach just like awesome job while in my head I'm screaming

awesome job, really good job let's try to get that hip a little lower really nice you went 1 inch further.! I am excited to see progress

AC: Yeah, yeah

THEO: Watching a trainwreck and walking away from it knowing you have fixed one part of it, it takes a little bit of experience and a little bit of patience that I've not seen in people exercising a lot so Rookies are not for everyone it's it's for coaches that have patience and that take the time and prioritize what they want to fix and what they want to let go.

AC: Right

THEO: It's not about perfections. Umm Rookies in general are less fit, another thing is umm knowing when to say you know what? Sit down stop, that's the end of your workout. You really need to know that point. I've done that probably in my 4-5 years of coaching, I've done that three or four times with athletes, once even with an Intermediate. So it depends uhh with the Intermediates they're all over the place some of them you can get in their face others you have to be nice, you really have to be nice. Competitors? Uhh by the definition of that term I like it and I am able to get in their face right away. Typically I know these guys so I can get in their face. Say like..no rep umm get used to it this is competition so there there's no scaling of course I'm gonna be nice about it but you have to push. I'm not gonna abuse the guy

AC: Of course

THEO: But it's you have to push a little more the competitors so yes there's a definite difference in terms of style, in terms of realism, in terms of what some advance athlete who calls cut the crap give me the news you know

AC: Right

THEO: what am I doing wrong...don't tell me don't give me the sandwich I don't give a shit about the sandwich give me the meat

AC: Yeah, yeah just give me what's what do you see?

THEO: Exactly. And I've seen some people who really dislike being given the sandwich. I don't give them the sandwich I give them the meat. Fix that. They love it

AC: Yeah

THEO: They love that kind of coaching but you have to be able to adapt.

AC: Umhm what about times so there's morning classes and evening classes do you see the difference there?

THEO: Well I don't come much in the morning

AC: Oh yeah

THEO: The bit I have seen yeah definitely just going by lifestyle their more work from home, parents and kids not many but work from home parents coming during the day uhh evenings are more significantly post-work. Styles are different for sure. Uhh post work especially and this is something I uhh from first time experience I do not like coaching in my face when I'm an athlete I've just come out of a day of work, I've already had people in my face for 9 hours straight I've come here because I want to let go. I've come here because this is my

place of peace, my place of happiness yes we are going to suffer in the process but don't make it bloody military. I used to do that as a coach initially but that was because I wasn't intimidated by coaching athletes and my defense mechanism was going military. So yes time of day would define how you need to be with athletes those that come in the evening are coming just after work and their already mentally stressed you want to keep you want to watch them really carefully and you want to scale things up during the workout a little carefully

AC: Ummhh

THEO: There's anger going on

AC: Fatigue

THEO: Fatigue there's a lot of stuff and it's mental but it comes last

AC: This is your first month transition ever?

THEO: Probably I've probably done a few I can't remember

AC: Forever

(Interruption)

THEO: Muscle ups coaching muscle ups because I can't do muscle up but I can coach them. I know how to coach them but it's it's just very it gets me destabilized as a coach when I'm coaching something I don't do there's uhh I had that last Saturday and I was I was self-critiquing my coaching because my coaching went down the drain because I lost my confidence

AC: Right

THEO: Not because I couldn't coach the muscle-up but because all I could do show them was scaled versions of it and cheer the guys on that were doing them That's a hard one for me it's it that's one the reasons why I want to lose weight and so on that's that's my next

AC: You want to get your muscle up your next goal

THEO: I want to get my muscle up I'm not willing to not have muscle ups. Handstands ok, I've got handstands but not I uhh can't hold them off the wall that's the second one after the muscle ups are down I'll go for that

AC: right, right

THEO: These tow things get me destabilized

AC: Uhh yeah, yeah it's funny umm I've got a list of

THEO: Every coach has that

AC: Yeah umm let's talk about the differences between people who resist putting on weight on the bar?

THEO: The differences between people who resist versus those that want to put on more?

AC: Yep what are the dynamics to that? How do you, how do you coach that?

THEO: Hmm Those who resist have a reason. And as a coach we need to know the reason, we need to understand that reason respect it and walk away

AC: So what do you think the reasons are?



THEO: So one of the I mean one the reason or reasons for example you could have one of someone who doesn't want to put weights on because they have an injury. They're scared. Fear. Because they damages their body part where there have a n injury. You get to know the injury you ask about it and get to know it and maybe they're right or maybe they're not and if they're not you know what you should be fine if you had uhh try the 2 kilos bar let's see how that feels. Stand there while they do the rep until they're done with it just and give them the credibility of having done a good rep if they've done it don't just tell them put the 2 k on and walk away

AC: And then leave

THEO: You gotta take them through that so it's a little it's a bit of a commitment like great I think you can just keep scaling up by .5 each set let's see how it goes and they'll gain confidence with those little colored plates. The coloured plates are a good psychological uhh

AC: Tool

THEO: Uhh tool to break those barriers. Secondly uhh they don't really like weight lifting uhh it's too heavy it just feels all wrong umm there's probably because they are new to CrossFit or their form is suboptimal to be polite and they are not confident. It happens a lot with Snatches. Again, watch them do it without the weights they could be fine and not putting on the weights and their form really sucks in which case fix their form not the weights. Especially in the workout, you you do not want to be giving them a weight that they are going to be injuring themselves if their form sucks. I have not really seen people from other category which is they can lift heavy but don't.

Aww no I would put myself a bit in that category, we're the gamers we like playing the system because we've been doing CrossFit for awhile. I can tell you how Euan as a coach has yelled at me because he's the only who one who is

AC: Sees?

THEO: Who spots me doing that and now you will know about that and you will spot me doing it as well. I 've played the system because I have been doing CrossFit for awhile...a lot so I look at the workout and I say you know what this is how I am gonna game it so that I finish you know with a decent time so it's gonna be not bad and uhh I am not gonna suffer as much (laughs) so I could probably go 60 but I'll do it be but it is suffering it will be really bad so I might as well go 55 but Euan will walk over and say what's up with weight man? (laughs) uhhh you know 60 would be too heavy it's uhh he knows all my injuries he knows exactly where my injuries are so if it is the front squat and uhh it's a lot of reps he'll probably tell me you know what umm go to 60 and do the back squat. So ok, that's because I have an injury but he also knows when I am gaming the system for example forget weights for a moment rowing.

AC: uhh

THEO: I play a lot with my pace. Euan will walk over Michael that's too slow. As an example of he doesn't sandwich it for me he doesn't bother with that he says too slow speed up man. So ok, speed up and that you still continue gaming and every time he walks away I'm gonna get a breath take a breath and he comes back and he comes back and I speed up again.

It works that way sometimes but weights could also be psychological in sense fear, it could be gaming or it could be a physical barrier. If it's a physical barrier you will respect that

AC: Physical barrier how?

THEO: Injuries

AC: Oh injuries yes what about the ones I hear a lot the other ones there's one more?

THEO: Add too much weight?

AC: People who resist... for specific weight time and time again...I don't want to get big

THEO: Uh to be honest I don't get that much could because of the timings of the classes I coach

AC: ok

THEO: Because the Saturday mornings are the committed CrossFitters you've got to be a bit committed to come in on Saturday mornings and work out

AC: Yeah that's true

THEO: So I don't end up having ladies which is the case I guess who say I don't want to get big. I've had that happen once and I whip out my phone and show Camille LeBlanc and say look at her how beautiful she is? And then I realize oh shit she has shoulders oh I've got to come up with someone else umm look at the other people the other people in our gyms this...yes I don't know how to deal with that yet because my only response to most athletes who come tell me that out of the gym would be you don't necessarily get big you get toned if anything else. Another example for me is if I if someone in the gym Olga for me is a great example to show that transformation. We've known each other for 5 years now so the beginning of 5 years to know her form, her physical form hasn't changed much except for the fact that she's become much better... I don't know the term...but guys call it ripped. Her measurements have remained mostly consistent her weight has increased she does not look fatter she can lift heavier for me I use Olga as an example.

AC: Yeah a lot of people have used Olga and Alex

THEO: And Alex. My favourite example is Olga since everyone knows her...did you know that Olga used to be 5 kilos later and she would be exactly the same. My first question to these athletes is are you planning to compete in the Games? No. Are you planning some kind of physical competition? Like weightlifting? At an elite level? Not really not all. Then you don't have to worry about getting bulky, you're just gonna get toned. If you want to gain bulk let me know. We can do that. But that that would take a significant change in the bottom of the pyramid. Nutrition to actually bulk up to the extent that you see elite CrossFitters and one thing I criticize openly is the way CrossFitters market it. It is marketed using elite CrossFitters who are not represented as the real population of CrossFitters.

AC: And who is the real population to you?

THEO: Ordinary people who go to work sit 9 hours in front of a desk or you know in a car delivering stuff. Normal people with normal jobs umm with normal lives and some extraordinary people who have extraordinary who have extraordinary jobs but for the majority we have

normal people. Just normal folk. Who don't really, they're not gonna compete at any national level they are just there because they want to be healthy.

AC: yeah

THEO: And it's a good environment to get healthy when you put that in perspective and tell them about that stop you can add weights that that's probably the way to go. I've not dealt with it much

AC: Yeah I've hear it a lot

THEO: Probably morning sessions

AC: yeah just women in general they'll come and ask me you know I don't want to look like Cynthia

THEO: That's another thing when a man is coaching especially umm for example when I'm coaching even if I were coaching in the morning sessions I don't know if a woman would come up to me and say you know what I don't want to bulk up ah that's just the woman already knows that I am not going to accept that as an answer so probably you you probably hear that more because she knows you will understand she thinks

AC: As a woman right I'll I'll

THEO: Yeah can understand it. That's probably one of the reasons you don't walk up to a guy like me and say you know what I don't want to bulk up

AC: (Laughs)

THEO: (laughs) what are you talking about?

AC: Well um so that that is another question like ok I know for me...umm well for some coaches not necessarily for me they feel sometimes uncomfortable dealing with this big beef of flesh who wants to put on more and you know his form is not good enough and you say no you cannot and you know there's that conflict you know as a woman and telling a man you know this dynamic. For you you just mentioned one sort of dynamic like you doubt that that's gonna happen but do you see any other kinds of discrepancies in your relationships between members that are men and members that are women?

THEO: Not so much other than this factor of women no actually not much. The women in our community are quite pretty much like the men I don't see any difference between in the way they are they just a little more discrete about certain conversations with a male coach then they would be with a female coach. Uhh but

AC: But what about their performance?

THEO: Performance levels frankly I I see no virtually no difference that I can think of apart from the difference that come with the physiological form of women. Stuff like women will generally have weaker shoulders or weaker arms umm lift lighter weights than them however on the points of comparison cardio. I think the women do better for the most part. I would need to check the statistics but just the general impression you get is that women are better and uhh stuff like cardio and they are better at stuff like long distance workouts the oxidative type of workouts they stick with it they keep going. Guys have a tendency of gassing themselves out. Women don't

AC: Umhm

THEO: Uhh coaching style it depends I might need to adapt it a bit uhh for not so much women-men but a little more to do with age of the women or the men so I don't you can't put them in different groups of women and men you put them in different age groups so if I have younger men and women closer to their teens and this holds true for both men no actually no women that that's where the difference comes actually. The younger women I have to approach uhh with care they are a little more I dunno they're very they come across as being very docile uhh so I can't go with my persona you know stand there and coach the way I coach especially if it's an Intermediate actually uhh I step back and bring out the smiles and try to make it light and try to make it more of a social event than a workout if it's a younger women because in general they get intimidated very easily and younger boys on the other hand are always seeming to try to prove something

AC: umhm

THEO: Umm of course they've grown up watching their idols on tv so they try and replicate stuff with shitty form umm for them it's about a bit of discipline. It's the opposite that I I do quite different techniques because then if I'm coaching the younger girls then make it social and really easy you know what you don't feel comfortable with that big bar? No problem take a smaller bar, not comfortable? Take a stick relax That's ok.

AC: Well they're coming in with different issues right?

THEO: It's uh It's uhh complicated age probably whereas with boys there's a vibe where you have to keep them a little bit structured because they are...they always want to do more than they should be doing and you find yourself a going little bit on the military side a little tiny tiny bit. I've found myself doing that a few times. Uhh once they grow up it's the same you treat them pretty much the same umm but I've noticed the difference in genders based on age groups yes. Older folk not so much, even the really older folks 60's and above I don't see any difference.

AC: They are still here for the same reasons and they are still performing.

THEO: Yeah they've got the same problems, similar problems, similar reasons, and similar attitudes..

AC: yep

THEO: But the boys are dangerous

AC: Yep because they always want to..

THEO: They are a danger to themselves

AC: Themselves but I see that I was thinking of a couple boys and then I was thinking about a couple men and it's the same in terms of the rookies. It 's the same energy it's like

THEO: yep

AC: It's like wait you're not you not strong enough yet

THEO: Slow down yes but I try never saying that to a man

AC: No I don't either I try to explain your shoulder hasn't adapted yet so we are going to do it like this and then we will work on technique

THEO: It depends on who I am dealing with

AC: No no no I don't say that

THEO: Because when it comes to men you say yeah strength? I don't go I usually say you know what you have all the strength you need what you need to work on now is the techniques so that you use that strength to your advantages.

AC: Use your strength

THEO: Yeah (laughs) that's my take on this when I see them really going crazy and stuff I say you're gonna break something if you keep going this way and you really don't want to break this solid piece of meat you gotta a lot of stuff going on there so keep it safe and and

AC: but there is a sense of careful with the ego there in terms of strength that you would naturally be able to say ok honey no just take it off because you're not ready yet.

THEO: So with the boys and there are overgrown boys as well so there are men who behave like boys they do that...all the men have a bit of that umm you do it from time to time you look at that bar and you say you know what? I feel 20 again (laughs) slap it on! Ahh we push but whatever the reason is that's the point of CrossFit to a certain extent. Our job as coaches is to make sure that they are pushing to the only when they're safe pushing

AC: But there's a question in that mental dialogue there umm I feel like I'm 20 again fuck it! I'm gonna put on more...but I do the same thing

THEO: What why?

AC I do the same thing which is exactly how I broke my rib! But umm (laughs)

THEO: You're rash, what is a what is a thought process when you did that?

AC: I'm still 19-20 and lifting 3 times a week heavy and my body remembers this and so of course I am going to be able to pick up that weight that's so easy except I was 20 maybe 20 pounds heavier. Yeah oops

THEO: For for me?

AC: yeah

THEO: It's more of I have to able to do this

AC: Ohhh ok!

THEO: I can't walk away from this not having done this. How will I face myself?

AC: Why? Because:.

THEO: No N it's a moment, it's a slip and that difference is because umm (sigh) but but I dunno if most men do this but it's more from this masculine evil thing going on where you think uhh if I can't do this I'm less of a man, I dunno? Whereas the feminine response to this and this is the second time I'm hearing it from from a from someone who was doing something phenomenal in the past. And uhh Cornelia is another example of someone who has done a lot of crazy stuff back in the day and she has the same thought process because I've had this

conversation with her before doing something ahh that breaks her and she's (unintelligible) low into time and I've told her the same thing you will get that memory back step by step you just have to do it step by step whereas for me it's different. For most men that I face it's more umm I have to be able to do it because I to I dunno prove a man to myself.

AC: yeah that's funny but I am not sure what Cornelia's thinking but for me it's like of course if I continue on and put on some more muscle I will be able to lift that without breaking my rib but it is something to work towards it's not something innate whereas it sounds like for you it's like it's innate

THEO: Absolutley

AC: I have to be able to get

THEO: I have to be able to do it now. If I do not do it now I'll be failing myself

AC: Uh huh so how do we deal with that as coaches

THEO: Umm watch out keep your eye open for that as you're gonna see that when for example but that's a real there are two then again. There is one category of this person who's saying I have to be able to do it and are staring at a 30 kilo bar well for them I just take a step back and you know technique buddy..it's that look they'll approach that bar when you watch them as if I have to be able to do it they go (sigh and makes a stern face) I have to be able to do it look.

AC: yeah

THEO: It's a look of determination but it's a look of also of there's a sense of vulnerability there because they don't really believe they can do it uhh so I have to be able to do it. You will see that

AC: I must be able to do this

THEO: You have to watch out for that, I've seen that a couple of time but the real so the first category is the one doing it with a 30 kilo barbell that person is doing it because the person doesn't know the movement. The second person umm he's probably doing it umm at 180 kilo barbell or something I dunno something crazy which if the guy has already done 170 ..you know what? I know your form you're able to do it, go for it. Fail. It's ok.

AC: yeah

THEO: They gotta fail and then that ego goes where it belongs ok? In there's competence there's ego and you gotta work on your competence and you can only work on your competence once you

AC: Let the ego go

THEO: Ignore it. Bust it. If they want bust it by themselves great go for it as long as they are doing it safely and if they are lifting 180 kilos with shitty form I don't I would say so typically I would keep an eye on all the weights and once you see weights heading heading

AC: Massive

THEO: Massive range you start watching them more, you look at their form and you start already to look your form in this aspect is that and that's where you gotta cut out that sandwich

because they don't understand the sandwich anymore, they're in testosterone zone. They're in the zone where your doing really well is really well they don't hear you gotta fix that so you gotta be a little more ego busting though it's slightly painful but you have to be able to do that.

AC: Yes I see that pain but then I see the relief, I see the relief ohh I don't have to do I I

THEO: Because it's reality

AC: I don't have to do that. It's like no you don't..

THEO: There's just the you know what? I suggest you stop right there umm and work on your form and I've seen that relief and it's oh you're right my form. And it just takes them from and it just takes a reminder because they're heading into negative territory just brought them back it's not their personality it's their I dunno their hormones or

AC: There's a moment

THEO: There's a moment it sparks it. It happens in men and maybe in women I don't know but you see that look.

AC: I think that the movement is the same but maybe the logic behind it is different.

THEO: Exactly. I'm absolutely ok with uhh athletes failing as long as they're not injuring themselves I I would say fail fail the weight no problem

AC: They have to I think we have to do that

THEO: Yep

AC: That really uncomfortable thing

THEO: Exactly

AC: I don't like that

THEO: That's my least favorite part as well is to tell an athlete who is lifting really heavy just to tell that you know what you know what your form your lifting heavy which is great because you're really strong but you know what you really need to work on your farm that part without the sandwich is hard

AC: yeah

THEO: Umm especially when you see that sincerity in their eyes you know I want to get better I want to get better and you say no you're not there yet you might hurt yourself

AC: Like antony

THEO: But Antony has...so it's again you gotta sense it. Antony for example he's a softer version. He's soft enough for me, he is soft enough for me to...Antony will listen.

AC: He will

THEO: And his that layer of people

AC: But you have to watch him

THEO: You gotta watch him. You absolutely have to watch him he has a tendency of flying away uhh but when you tell him he says oh yeah oh right and then you fix it. It's a thin layer

of (unintelligible) you can deal with it. Uhh then there are the likes of Jeremy, for example. Super strong, really nice guy

AC: super strong

THEO: Bloody strong. Really nice guy and he pushes himself like crazy and he gets emotional about it and in the middle of a workout what I did the last time I saw him do that was it was a really with heavy barbels I forget which movement we were doing but it was in the middle of the workout and uhh he was failing in the middle of the workout I say you know what I can walk up to him and tell him Jeremy you're going to heavy or deal with it... just step back until he gets really angry he started Jeremy gets angry it's downhill anyone gets angry it's downhill and I just stepped in and said and uhh that's the moment when you have got to just calm them down step back take a breath think about it, that's it and walk away. Relax. That's all you do you want to break that anger that second of anger. Uhh he removed the weights himself I didn't tell him to do it and you just have to calm down because uhh once you spark off the anger which is the male response to failure anger it's you're not going to light uhh er you're gonna keep going, you're gonna keep failing until you break Jeremy has that tendency. Anthony also has that tendency but he's less emotional about it. So each athlete has

AC: It's different

THEO: a you gotta measure that ego level and it's not a bad thing, it's just that's the way they are, that's the way they improve it's fighting their or they think they are for that idea of who they want to be and who they want to be is ego. So ok. Woman I've seen a bunch of women got... and the funniest ones to watch when there's a completely unrealistic ones and I've seen men and women both do this they'll go they'll pick up a kettlebell in front of them they'll look at the person next to them and like ok they look at the kettlebell put it back and put the heavier version and this when it's a consistent case whenever I am coaching this person I gotta tell her go lighter with that form go lighter and she feels like she's been insulted and uhh yeah I'm sorry the form really sucks at that point and you gotta be able to and here way of working out is she looks at who she thinks is a comparable woman

AC: Uhhuh

THEO: She will not look at Olga obviously she's an amateur she'll look at who she thinks is a comparable woman uhh the problem is no one really is comparable because each person has competences if that woman goes and picks up a 40 kilo barbell for I dunno Cleans she'll go and do the same thing when when she has shitty form on Cleans and there's no way she can do over three reps on cleans woah forget the WOD some of these problems are self-correcting if she can't do it beyond three she'll scale it down during the WOD but it's also dangerous because you gotta be able to fix it before it becomes an injury and uhh especially when this person is not very young anymore

AC: uhh

THEO: which means she can break easy. Uhh we've spoken about her once...

AC: yes yeah yeah

THEO: She's a difficult one you gotta keep an eye on her

AC: And you need to be gentle with her as well



THEO: She's very vulnerable, she has umm an inferiority complex of some kind going on uhh you can feel it in general uh um I'm very gentle typically or very careful because she's the kind of person who could injure herself very easily

AC: Right but I also think that she could easily be someone who would not want to come back if she's had a bad interaction with the coach which is tricky.

THEO: Yeah, we've had members like in the past that who have left us after having perceived by their corrections so it's..

AC: Yeah and um do you think it's just with women that do that? I mean I I've seen that with men too though they'll check each other out and then

THEO: Men are doing that, it's odd to see them doing that which is why I brought it up men are doing that perpetually all the time

AC: Perpetually, I think women are more discrete about it

THEO: And women are more discrete about it and when it comes to weights women are not such egomaniacs because they're not they don't think as weight as much as they think of I dunno women must have different things they compete about because weights are not it I I see it very clearly so when I see a woman competing in very strong weights it stands out. Women... I've not seen that kind of feminine competition in the gym

AC: It's really subtle, it's I I in my mind it's a lot more subtle umm I am thinking as a coach and an athlete. Because I am thinking of an athlete who is always looking always at everybody if you watch her carefully she's even competing with men you know you to keep up and I do the same thing because of course you want to keep up

THEO: You use them as pacemakers

AC: Exactly. Like I love Christophe I love working out with him because he's my pacemaker (snaps fingers) or you too it's like if I can keep up with your pace then ok..

THEO: I have I have such pacemakers Rick is my favorite we work very well in sync and I gotta scale a bit because he's a better lifter than I am and uhh he's but there was once a day this was way back where I was using Andreas as a pacemaker was Andrea

AC: Oh wow

THEO: So you can imagine where my ego is right now (laughs) Once upon a time...I used to

AC: So how many hours were you putting in?

THEO: I used to train virtually every day, CrossFit was my life. Rish was not in my life at that point uhh and no I was a solid athlete until I broke and then I broke again. (laughs)

AC: And why did you break?

THEO: Lifestyle. I put in more, so you have a goal which is great uhh you have to be willing to compromise on certain aspects of your life to be able to reach that goal. An uncompromising approach might be fine mentally but your body cannot cope with it.

AC: I don't know what you're talking about (laughs)

THEO: (laughs) Balance. Uhh in Buddhism it is something called (unintelligible) it is something I often have to remind myself. I pride myself on balance until I get imbalanced. My justification for imbalance is: to truly know the center you must know the extremes. (Laughs)

AC: But (laughs) don't tell me that that will just encourage me!

THEO: That was my shitty excuse for all the crap I got into actually I believe in (unintelligible) and I believe in these concepts of balance and I you know it's all about that yin and yang but how would you truly notice if you don't know the extremes

AC: If you don't know the extremes!

THEO: So I am going to spend time on exploring these extremes and explore them found them and now I pretty much am trying to keep them in the center but that comes with time and experience

AC: Exactly

THEO: And the follow of that is gaming the system because you have to keep checking yourself on because you have to keep checking yourself on because you have to bring in that personality that you had from the extremes to try and be so good at that balance

AC: Exactly to keep that

THEO: To keep improving otherwise you just stay stagnant balance doesn't mean stagnant but it's slower the path is slower and you need to accept it and that's difficult for me but I've learnt to do that so now when I have a back pain I put Compex and take care of it or I don't go to the gym which is huge and Rish is very proud of me the other day I said I am not going to the gym why? I think I might hurt myself because I'm really, really exhausted.

AC: Yes such a hard thing

THEO: And there are and I'm speaking of categories of athletes and there are that is one category that is one huge universe of athletes that we have at the gym here. People who don't know when to stop and umm I honestly have not found a solution about it yet. How to get people to step back but that's an individual thing it's it's this is the center of your universe well I can't find you another center as a coach and it's really up to you and it's all I can tell you is that you are breaking and your performance is dropping. You need rest and by rest I mean rest.

AC: Like 4-5 days

THEO: Yep 3 on 1 off that's how professionals do it there is no reason you should be doing more.

AC: Yep I finally go that, yep but there's a lot who don't how to quit

THEO: I was there been there, broken back now

AC: Yeah!

THEO: Now if people need to learn their lesson by breaking themselves so be it, all we can do as coaches all that I can see as coaches is warn them of the consequences. That's it and encourage them to take that rest day and if they are on that rest day not to...and this is another thing when an athlete comes in to ITP and says oh this is supposed to be my rest day and

works out. Instead of seeing it as something admirable what this guy is doing or what this girl is doing instead what the hell are you doing? To add that negative tone to it rather than say oh I am tired oh yeah this is rest. Yeah, pump it up!

AC: Yeah

THEO: It might work in this kind of social dialogue but it doesn't help in encouraging rest and I see that happen a lot.

AC: Yeah

THEO: And that's why most of our athletes are not, I would say most even our advanced athletes none of us are competing at Games level. All we get is local competitions I don't I don't think we are getting enough rest. I don't think we are getting disciplined about it umm we I don't think we are really disciplined about the training aspect let alone the rest aspect. They over train and they don't even do that well. Because overtraining has to be done systematically and followed by huge periods of rest. And when you overtrain you need to be thinking about stuff like which, for example which part, which pathways am I training today? What is the point of overtraining on one Oxidative all day long all week long and I am not talking about glycogen. What's the point of doing all my favorite movement? I see that happening a lot as well. I come to the gym and I'm gonna do Back Squats, or Bench Press: Watch this Bench Press movement about?

AC: I dunno it seems to be a culture about..

THEO: I think it comes from this globo gym stuff

THEO: The thing is guys are strong and they are terrible at other things and that's what umm yeah I I feel a bit sad at that it's not I don't feel upset or angry or stuff like that it's just a little saddening because it's uhh that's what gyms were about, that's what CrossFit is getting away from. Uhh general fitness is what we are trying to get and if you're going back to this specialisation where uh guys come in and I dunno just they love their squat all they want to get is a 200 kilo squat at the cost of everything else which I have seen. I mean there are athletes they have 200 kilo backsquats and uhh I can I dunno I have done 120 at the most and my back I don't think I can do more? I'm they come to the pull up bars it's it's sad I mean their pull ups are shit I mean come on! You will watch an athlete in that this is not weightlifting this is CrossFit

AC: Yeah I guess that's why Euan said to more Open Gym people.

THEO: Because that's all that they can do. They do their favorite movements and my way of getting around that as a coach is telling them that's uh just putting in the message just working on my weakness everytime I come. Softly of course because I can't be holding their (unintelligible)

AC: I will work on my weakness not my strength or everytime I am tempted... so how do I coach that?

THEO: We (sigh) there's no way to truly coach that. There's only a way to encourage that amongst athletes and umm encouraging that means setting number one telling them so once they say I just PR'd my bench press so oh great how much did you get? Ok, 150 awesome

High five! Ok what movements do you suck at? (laughs) Uhh which which is your least favorite? Oh Wall Balls they really suck, ok so Thruster type movements ok so how much uhh what's your one rep max thruster ah not much oh you need to work on that. Yeah, yeah that's true need to work on that. You know I would suggest working on your Front Squats and then your Push Press if you work on both those elements maybe you can get those, those wall balls will get better. Break them up, try and PR your front squat, try and PR your push press. I dunno it's conversations like that, usually they don't always help

AC: And plus they are still going to like what they like right?

THEO: Yeah exactly I like my rowing and wall balls and stuff that I'm good at basically it's always what we like because we are good at it umm but spending time doing things that we suck at is the most important pillar of getting fitter, getting generally fitter.

AC: Yeah absolutely, absolutely. Let's stop right there.

## THEO 2

13.6.17

AC : Ok so I know it's been awhile but this is about the seminar and it's impact on you.

THEO: Umhm

AC: And really what you thought about the seminar itself so part of it is just about improvement and part of it is a look at how umm you know what it brought up in you.

THEO: Umhm

AC: So just a general question would be well what...how, what did you think of the seminar?

THEO: I thought and I am pretty sure that you got this from everyone I thought it was very very useful we already had this conversation so it was familiar ground um but I'm pretty sure for the majority of people who were around it was extremely useful with a lot of new material or if not new material thought processes. Um... that said umm the most interesting part for me in that in the seminar was the practical elements that we covered specifically around umm going through the emotional process of I don't know being ignored or being given attention you know those those little group practicals we went through I think that was the most useful part for me personally

AC: Umhm ok

THEO: Umm it's nice to have felt that even though I knew it was under a test but still you still feel it there is an emotional impact directly of interaction or interacting with an individual or not at all uhh points of improvement umm probably but this is food for thought is more audio visual?

AC: Oh?

THEO: For instance videos of some kind where the kind of behavior that you speak about but you can't replicate you know easily in a group exercise so it would be nice to have I don't know if those actual videos exist but it would be nice to have uhh seen it in a video umm you know those behavioral nuances uhh and that might be getting into a little more detail then we

did in the seminar itself when we might be able to freeze the video and then start assessing the situation from that point on trying to predict or trying to understand what is going to happen or what's the thought process behind the certain behavior whatever but a little more detail but umm that would be like a seminar 2.0 umm and what you covered was the basics.

AC: Uhuh

THEO: It would be nice to have continuation

AC: Yeah

THEO: Getting into more detail more depth

AC: Yeah...exactly, exactly

THEO: That's what I would uh for me that's where we could improve in the sense of actually continuing the exercise

AC: Umm yep and then what about for yourself as an individual?

THEO: So the most concrete takeaway for me as an individual and uh so I think in our previous conversation I'd already told you I have this umm permanent on switch on critique on criticising my own I I self-critique a lot umm the way I am but uhh rather than the seminar it was more my conversation with you that umm that made that space a little more sensitive so now I when I'm in the class I think even yesterday I found myself it's a quick switch a quick question: am I umm being fair in my interactions?

AC: Umhm

THEO: Uhh it's a question I've started asking myself a little more than I used to before? Uhh and specifically around for example yesterday when I was not yesterday a couple of days ago when I was coaching I found myself spending a little extra time with umm certain people in the class and uh

AC: Umhmm

THEO: Rather than others and I had to self-correct and say oh wait a second ok these guys this girl is completely new but that doesn't mean I can neglect the rest of the class because she needs extra attention so I had to modify uhh my behavior a bit and I came up with the solution of getting the whole class involved in giving her encouragement rather than just me so it became a kind of a class exercise this was uhh basically because I had this on switch on am I being fair in my interactions..

AC: Right

THEO: so it it it's become a much stronger notion for me than it already was

AC: Ok

THEO: So no it helped, it helped it's helped in me being fair more fair

AC: So if you were to describe fair to you or give a list what would it be? What is fair mean besides just giving equal time?

THEO: It's giving giving uh... the more or less equal amount of attention now this attention might manifest itself in time it might manifest itself in looking at people a bit more or it might it might be speaking to people a bit more it depends on what those people need or what you

think those people need. So it's mainly giving each of those individuals in front of you the attention that they need now some people umm don't like you in their face so I can't say equal time because uhh time some people don't need as much time but they do need attention there with us fairness would be in terms of not thinking about uhh not letting the gender or the conditions you know the stuff you went through fat and thin unfit girl boy not letting any of that influence the way you would be with that athlete just thinking of the person in front of you as an athlete who needs coaching that's it.

AC: yeah

THEO: who needs coaching that's it. That's fairness and to look at everyone in the class would be fairness including if it's another coach if it's someone who's a professional body builder or someone who's looking at a CrossFit for the first time. It's just another athlete not in a demeaning way you are an athlete in front of me not a girl boy fat thin whatever else

AC: Right, right..I have to say personally that it's really I'm glad to hear you saying that is oh yes yes to verbalize it and hear it is a whole different think than just thinking of that so that's great

THEO: Absolutely, absolutely. And I think when we...that's the problem with the response I KNOW, the response of I Know uh..do you? Really? Know? Because you might know it but you've not internalized it until you've vocalised it and practiced it and uh when you vocalise it then you realise oh yeah it was in the back of my head but it never quite translated into actions yes I know that genders are equal uhh but what has that so called knowledge done to my action?

AC: Right right

THEO: And that uhh that's key and that's go back to what you just said you have to verbalize it out loud in your head and then assess yourself.

AC: Well...exactly .... And what else do you think...umm because this is an ongoing project and this will remain a focus in CrossFit Leman for sure umm what do you think we could offer to all our coaches including ourselves to enhance that to become that a practice that is regular? Because with you know most people that I've talked to they've all subjectively internalized some of it and I can only just trust that in their acts that they are doing it do you see what I mean? So how do you think we could uhh create something that is more concrete I guess..

THEO: So...yeah I see your point umm I'm a big fan of checklists umm checklists are useful in just about every walk of life in making your assessment or chain of thought concrete so for example put into context here uhh one idea could be and this is along the lines of something I want more of is feedback which means that someone is assessing someone else

AC: Right right

THEO: in the class and whoever the assessor uhh is assessing this someone not based on his or her opinion but based on a very concrete checklist with answers in very very straightforward scales either yes/nos or one to fours umm so yeah for example did the coach spend umm more or less equal did the coach say hello to everyone did the coach use everyone's name did the coach give eye contact was the did the coach give a high five to everyone? Did the coach a force quick chat with everyone? Was there anyone the coach in particular the coach spend equal time with? Why do you think? Umm things like that you know umm and having that

feedback to the coach is an eye opener for example when you gave Conan that feedback you Conan and I were in a room and Conan had asked what's uh what do you have for me? And you told him about this thing he does where he goes and asks only certain people about their score uhh I thought about that a bit and I had the tendency of doing the same thing as well. So what I did was I went ahead and asked the more advanced athletes oh what's your score and then as a result I asked the others and then as I result I didn't I asked the others just so that I realized oh shit I shouldn't be leaving them out and I asked the others as well uhh it's nice to have that feedback and for that you have to have someone observing and right now that's what is missing.

AC: Well to tell you the truth that was one of the main topics to the focus groups while you were out of town umm and hopefully well I'm gonna have a meeting with Samantha and Conan on Friday to really try to propose this project...but my point is I really want to get an assessment program where we give each other feedback so yeah it was something that also came up in the focus group..

THEO: you know what AC I had another thought about this uhh why not have the assessments done by the people directly impacted by the coach? Why not hhhh have these assessment done by the athletes themselves? If we make it user friendly enough we should be trying to get instead of waiting for complaints or people to praise us because they feel like it why not going out actively and asking them for feedback systematically however short it might be because so far I've not...but we send a lot of marketing news out and a lot of encouraging emails out you know you should come back I have have not seen an email that asks for feedback on both CrossFit Lemman and individual coaches anonymously...

THEO: And uh that's especially the kind of feedback that's because what is missing is not the content how to teach but how to be...

AC: Umm ok there is anything else you can think of regarding the seminar or umm equality teaching than what we have discussed because I think I've got everything...

THEO: Let me think for a second...and I think it's all full up...but frankly what I am trying now and what I am trying with my members in terms of perception is that perception of being human you know? It's uhh having fun as well because a lot of people love to eat and beyond a point it is kind of silly to get so hung up about what we eat all the time unless they are training to be professional athletes or aiming to be professional athletes

AC: Yeah because it gets to be no fun

THEO: Exactly and now I like I'm throwing in bits of you know saying that my lifestyle is mostly this but I make sure that a little odd weekend I'm having fun as you can tell and I point at my family pack and uhh and then when I workout they still see that damn this guy can still move so then it is possible to have that beer on Saturday and still move. Uhh so I'm pushing I'm trying it that way because I don't want it to come across that I'm and a lot of people are intimidated by the idea of CrossFit so I don't want them to be intimidated by the nutrition associated with CrossFit it's just a bit extreme for most people so

AC: right right

THEO: so I can I leave it lose I'm not a hard core advocate of Paleo Zoning and everything I just tell them these are available uhh it depends on what your goals are and what you want to

do I start with that now if the guy comes back to me and says I am a professional athlete and I want to get downe to 4% body fat I say ok that's a different story now. Uhh but most people are humans who want to have a good time as well so mixing it up a bit..

AC: yep yep

THEO: Boy that was a good chat...

AC: Yes definitely!



TOM 1 & 2

15.03.17

AC: Ok let's start with the basic question. How old are you?

TOM: 42

AC: Oh same age then

TOM: 74?

AC: 74

TOM: Best year...

AC: Umm so how long have you been doing CrossFit?

TOM: I think I started in 2012 I was just doing it once a week because I was also playing soccer back then I did that for about a year

AC: uhuh

TOM: And before I really got into it I had an old injury that I had to get uh fixed so I hadn't really started officially before 2014

AC: Ok

TOM: Yeah around that I was training and then I had the surgery then I was getting back and then I had the second surgery so the first year was not really...So I would say I really like started training properly yeah 2014

AC: So you were playing soccer before and you you'd played other sports?

TOM: Yeah I was doing rugby and regular gym stuff and I also played volleyball a lot I also uh skied a lot.

AC: And then what made you focus more on CrossFit?

TOM: Well I was getting older in soccer and soccer you know you play at umm a moderate level and the schedule was tough too you know you have to go by two times a week and you have a match and at fixed time so so it's kinda of yeah annoying sometimes so this is why I decided to do something else and I was already training like two times or three times a week in a regular gym so it was like a natural twist turn plus I was getting really bored at the gym.

AC: So yeah what is it about CrossFit that really...that you find attractive.

TOM: I think it pushes your limits and you get to compare yourself to yourself and to the others so uhh it's a good thing that uhh yeah this is what basically why I started. You learn some new stuff because at the gym you always do the same bench press and biceps curls and stuff like here you have stuff to learn and work on even though you are like 38? 39 back then? So challenging yeah that's why I got into it

AC: Yeah, I think that's why I started change of the routine

TOM: It's pretty much the same for everybody I guess but...

AC: At least for us oldies

TOM: Of course the communities great but community is nothing if you don't do something interesting.

AC: Yep that's true

TOM: Pretty sure that in stamp collecting the community is very cute but I don't want to join them (laughs)

AC: (laughs)

AC: And how long have you been coaching?

TOM: Umm in CrossFit? Almost 2 years but I'm not coaching like regularly I just umm taking days when people are sick or on vacation. I don't have time to do more, I'd love to more I just don't have time.

AC: Umm what would you have or would like to do more? What is it that you love about being a CrossFit coach?

TOM: I think it's not about being a CrossFit coach it's about being a coach. I've been coaching in my job for you know like 15 years now uhh photographer as well I also coach people, I give classes and I like coaching in general. I was a personal trainer back then. So I've been into for quite a long time, there's coaching like some yeah sport or whatever it's still coaching. You can be good at something and not know how to coach it. So I think I have some good coaching skills, and I have to learn how to apply it to a specialised particular field. So it is interesting.

AC: Umm what are the different facets to coaching. If you were to describe what coaching is what do we do?

TOM: You mean in CrossFit? What do we do as a coach?

AC: Yeah what do we do? What are the roles?

TOM: We should pass along the knowledge basically. What I like about it is when you try to teach something to someone the thing you have to do is really you to learn even more because you may know how to do things uhh I'm thinking right now about computer skills or something like that you may have to know a lot of them because you have been doing that for 20 years and so when you teach someone and why you do the things that you have been doing for that long because some the questions are going to come up and they are different depending on the person and their approach so you have to know all the aspects of these things to be able to answer correctly. So usually go deeper and deeper into whatever you are teaching which is great. Because you also coach other people and you learn for yourself a lot more. So this is maybe selfishly the part I like too because you become a better coach well so a better athlete I think

AC: yeah I get you on that one umm and so... for the seminar...did you find it useful?

TOM: Yeah, even though I was obviously aware about it because you know that's what when you coach people you have that kind of thing but it put the finger on something even more like you have to pay attention to that. Because we all tend I mean to have stereotypes I mean it's life when you look at someone you have like an instant thinking about their look so it's you have to work around that you can't stop having stereotypes or thinking about them but

you can learn how to get over it and don't you know be stuck in those. So I think it was really nice material.

AC: Cool that's always great to hear. Umm and uhh do you think that in terms of how you approach coaching has it changed anything?

TOM: probably yeah I would think about it more now. Cuz even though I knew it I wasn't really paying attention and now be more careful probably to uhh you know when I coach someone you know I coach everyone at the same level even though it's not possible cuz you are not going to say the same thing to that athlete and to that athlete and to this one

AC: Right

TOM: and I think that's also part of coaching to adapt your lingo or whatever you are gonna use to coach people to adapt it to your audience but not to adapt it or change it because this person looked like that or you know. You adapt it because you have to cuz you just don't really know...like that you don't know

AC: Right and ...what do you think it is necessary to have something like this in CrossFit?

TOM: I think it is cuz CrossFit is about bringing people together like from different genders, different age, different social whatever and I think it's all about mixing so when you mix people, people different obviously. So you have to be aware of that and you know you can have some uhh stereotype stuff you know so I think it's important. This is something we try to promote in CrossFit like we are all together, I don't like the term family cuz it's a little uhh yeah but still you try to put those values out there that you want to make sure everybody's equal. So I think it's really important to get people aware of that especially in coaching

AC: and uhh what do you think just in terms of ahh the seminar itself what do you think could have been improved? Uhh what could have been different?

TOM: I didn't truly like the part with Winston

AC: Nobody did...

TOM: Cuz I think he played the role and he knew that he was spotted by many people so like you pretend to act normally but your spotted so you don't like normally I mean it's like that in every kind of (role) play that you do so I never really like...it's like job interviews when you play job interviews you're never gonna have the same so I never liked that...

AC: Yeah, yeah..

TOM: Apart from that I think it was nice, even though the part where you have to cheer someone

AC: yeah that was a little fake

TOM: And yeah to me it doesn't make any difference so you know I didn't really click with that but the idea was great

AC: I have to admit as an athlete myself I don't..

TOM: I don't hear anything, even better if you insult and then I'm angry and then...so people when they get angry they lose like all their capacities. When I get angry I can just push more

AC: So when I coach you I'll tell you your form is shit

TOM: No no it doesn't effect me at all...so...

AC: ok profession? More than photographer right and how long?

TOM: I'm a graphic designer, that's my real profession. Not that photographer is not a real profession I'm doing that on the side. Basically, graphic design is getting me to do photography. So I do a little bit of both. Photography came after..

AC: ok so I think that's about it...Thank you

TOM: Awesome, You're welcome.

WINNIE 1

9.02.16

(Translation from French)

AC: How long have you been a coach?

WINNIE: CrossFit you mean?

AC: Yes

WINNIE: It's been about umm a little more than a year

AC: Ok but you did other stuff before?

WINNIE: Yes I have a certificate in fitness and personal training.

AC: Ok where did you do that?

WINNIE: I did it through the University of Lausanne

AC: Oh yes, that rings a bell and so after umm you were a personal trainer or?

WINNIE: Well I finished umm that course and in fact after that and I did another training course in something called umm Konga which is for giving group classes on trampolines and since they uhh didn't have many trainers and they had a class in la Linnieare umm on mini trampolines and they were looking for a trainer and I started like with just one class and after I substituted and after I was hired there. So that opened up a lot of doors for me it was really an opportunity to work for a fitness club that was linked with a clinic. I really enjoyed working and starting that way,

AC: Why?

WINNIE: Because I learned so many things I worked with physical therapists and I worked with a lot of people the majority had done University in sports science and as a result you learn a lot. We had a lot of in house training classes and focus groups and things like that and I thought it was really wonderful.

AC: Wow

WINNIE: And I felt really well supported to start working in this field

AC: And was it just patients that came?

WINNIE: No in fact if you want it is a classic fitness club so there are members and such but there are also people who are coming in and doing physical therapist and that was the majority of the members. So for example there were people who came in after a stroke or heart attack or a knee or hip replacement so there were a lot of people like that and after that the fitness club in the afternoon the club was closed and it was reserved just for patients. And my role was umm to watch over the patients in the weight machine room, they were patients that were there for psychiatric help but they weren't serious cases it wasn't a closed clinic but it was more depression or burn out or other events of life.

AC: Wow that must have been so rewarding!

WINNIE: Yes I loved that, I certainly loved that part of it but uhh then at night I had to watch over the club was really boring for me. In fact the majority of people there had their habits and they come and go on their machines on their bike for an hour and it was so boring.

AC: I can imagine you don't have a lot of interactions with people

WINNIE: No not at all in fact I just stayed for hours waiting for time to pass, watching the clock. And uhh another thing there was an extreme focus on health, you have to be really careful and after what was in CrossFit I understand that there was no happy medium. I can understand that not everyone can do CrossFit but I couldn't understand why those people couldn't do a sport or a sport that was so soft. After it depends on your age...

AC: You mean people who stuck on their bike like that?

WINNIE: Yeah but also people who were 20 or 30 and they wouldn't do much or they had been told that they couldn't do much other than stay 1 hour on the bike and no weights or nothing at all and that wasn't really working for me which is one of the reasons why I preferred to start working here. But I was was really happy to have worked there.

AC: So for you in CrossFit how do you see your role of coach or even in general?

WINNIE: In general, well my role well I really enjoy transmitting something to others and seeing that they are happy as a result and certainly when they thought they couldn't do it. I really love that aspect of it and umm my role I also love the interaction which is not just do this or that. I really enjoy talking to people and I think it is important and we learn a lot.

AC: Why is it important?

WINNIE: Uhh even for my my uhh own personal growth I think that sometimes you learn so much just through talking to people and uhh it's true that well uhh I didn't go to university, I didn't do any serious studies school was never my thing and uhh it's true that just talking to people sometimes listening to their life experiences or or well I think it's just wonderful. You can learn, I don't know what but everything but...

AC: So it brings you a personal satisfaction and opportunities right?

WINNIE: Yeah yes

AC: At the same time what do you think you give?

WINNIE: Well...a support that allows them to go farther than they would alone and also if they have had a bad day them being able to do something here gives them a small happiness after a hard day so that is cool. And also umm I have the impression that well what I like a lot is to be able to bring a certain self-confidence to them, that they feel more confident about themselves. It's something that I love and that I see I think that I can see that really well and have a feel for people that have low self-esteem and I think it's cool to I don't know to say there's no need to be a certain way or I dunno there's no need to be magnificent to have a have a high self-esteem.

AC: Yep, yep and in general when you think of this kind of person but hear "oh you don't need to be like that" I think immediately of women do you think it's a general dynamic that you see with women or do you think well...

WINNIE: Yeah well, I'd say that contact with men is a little different but then again I dunno if it's with men or just the type of person you see?

AC: Umhmm

WINNIE: But umm but I've already seen and realized or maybe it's just me but I have the feeling that sometimes men don't really appreciate comments and coaching from women but uhh it depends on the men some can take it just fine but uhh there are some that have a lot more trouble receiving a correction in CrossFit from a woman so that and that has annoyed me sometimes but that's how I feel right? I could be wrong...but

AC: I've had that impression as well and coming from our perspectives as teachers with our ideas and our own habits of course when someone replies or acts brusquely to you you can very quickly think it's about me but it could just because he had a bad day.

WINNIE: Yep exactly

AC: But uhh when it's repetitive then I think the conclusion is a good one.

WINNIE: yes yeah

AC: Uhh you talked about a type of personality do you think that there are some personality types in CrossFit?

WINNIE: Yes, that's exactly why you know that's exactly why they say yes it's maybe your classes are repetitive but in fact I don't think it's repetitive because the people are different in each class which makes them not so depending on the person you will approach the class differently or the person differently so in fact uhh I think there are so many types of different people.

AC: Yep, and if we could generalise? Or uhh if in your experience do you see maybe some categories or with your experience do you know how they are gonna work because you have already seen this kind of behavior? I mean this is tricky because you don't want to categorize everyone of course but at the same time with experience you can't help but to move in a certain predictable fashion if you see this kind of behavior.

WINNIE: Yes..

AC: So for you do you see categories in your head? Like oh in your head yes this person I think I will have to move like that or with you I have move like this and more directly. So who are these people if you could name them? Does that make sense? Ah! And there's also the difference between the morning and evening classes because of their lifestyles, so who are these people for you in the work of CrossFit?

WINNIE: Umm.... Yes but then after well one thing that counts is the ones that have never done sports before CrossFit and those that have already done there there is already a difference.

AC: Umhm and what is that difference?

WINNIE: Umm...those that have never done sports are much better listeners than those that have already done so

AC: Ah! That's interesting

WINNIE: It's easier at least at the beginning to correct and to put into place discipline certainly in the movement than someone who has already done sports.

AC: Oh ok... I would have thought it would be the opposite

WINNIE: Yeah I thought the same until I started CrossFit and no not at all...but of course this is a generality

AC: yes of course...and in general I mean we know from studies that in the the sociology of sport it has been said that certainly in Switzerland, that women have less access to sports while they are growing up uh...and so here we see the majority of members that have never done sports are...women

WINNIE: Women yes?

AC: How um do you...so we see a difference in experience and for you your role with these differences how do you deal with them?

WINNIE: Umm well...often it's at least in the beginning it's confidence building because we do have an image that CrossFit is hard core and when you come in you are often impressed, perhaps men aren't going to say that they are impressed however women are maybe more open at saying that they are impressed and in that they don't think they will or can do it and so for men and women I think my I think you have to give them confidence and that they are capable, maybe at different levels but that they can.

AC: What do you mean by difference?

WINNIE: Well if in terms of the exercises you are going to give, you might adapt them and to certainly show them the hardest version of the exercise because then you can be sure that

AC: They won't come back

WINNIE: Yes exactly

AC: We hear often I don't want to lift heavy because I don't want to get big, how do you deal with that?

WINNIE: I have to admit sometimes it really bugs me (laughs). I explain I try that it is a professional work to put on mass, and after yes there are morphologies and bodies that are going to put on mass than others. But uhh when you see like a bodybuilder it is a full time job with a special diet. It's not working out once a week with a little weight that will get you big.

AC: Yes, I asked the same question and

WINNIE: Me too I'd love to have 6 pack abs and I am far from that (laughs)...so yeah it bugs me but you know we can say that but we can't exactly force them either so sometimes I feel like saying go back to a regular gym but you can't...I understand because you...well let's say that it's not acceptable in our society to be uh...you know really buff and strong with muscles in general women are supposed to be like this (holding up a finger) and has to have really fine thin arms...uhh you see that's not what we learn it's not the message we are getting

AC: Yep definitely...

WINNIE: So yeah...I try at least to say it's not heavy lifting once a week that will get you big however if you want to progress you have to move out of your comfort zone it's in fact the



point of CrossFit it's put people about of their comfort zone but again then it gets down to the personality again. There are some people that can't get out of their comfort zone

AC: Why do you think? What is their reasoning?

WINNIE: I think it's maybe a type of person who needs to control everything and the idea of moving out of their comfort zone and when they get to that point where you lose control it could be nerve wracking for certain people...but I mean it's difficult for me to understand since I love that. But uhh I try, I try and understand that when you are trying to control everything it can be really difficult to pass that comfort zone and let go

AC: Yep, yep...and since you did competition before..

WINNIE: In skating

AC: So for you competition doesn't bother you

WINNIE: Yep I adore that

AC: And umm... the idea of getting out of your comfort zone is just natural for an athlete since you know that is what it takes to progress so for those people so there is that type and those that want to finish first and don't take heavy because they want to finish first. Do you see any generalities because I see that more in men and women. What do you think of this kind of attitude.

WINNIE: Well I try not to think about it too much nor do I get up in their face about it. But you can't like I said before, you can't force them but you can go and say that's too bad you could have put on something heavier or but in fact...they might be people that have already done sports before or... who have trouble with failure or who have always had everything uh and so that shows up in the you know you have to finish first yeah I dunno that's not really in my personality either because uhh I prefer to finish last and it was hard and uhh that I gave everything I could than to finish first and it was easier I think it's not as gratifying...

AC: Yep, physically and mentally I agree with you...umm but in fact what kind of athletes that you like working with and others that you don't

WINNIE: Umm...like the type of person you mean?

AC: Yeah or...yeah

WINNIE: Well it doesn't bother me if someone for whatever reason can't do an exercise or lift heavy but what I appreciate is when they come and ask me because if they do it all alone in their corner so first of all I feel useless and I have the impression that I am pointless that these people don't trust me and that I don't like at all...as if if I weren't there it would be the same. No I don't like that at all. Because I like what I am doing and I like giving advice and I also know when I don't know I can say that and I can say you can ask someone else or perhaps I will try to get the information one needs but that is something that hurts.

AC: Umhmm

WINNIE: Yeah I don't like working with those kind of people...uhh I do enjoy regardless of the level that when I make a correction they take it in and try to change it. I think it's very uhh well it makes me feel good because you have the impression that they trust you and they listen to you and that uhh they try and correct themselves. After that...in to have trained certainly

skating when it gets to a certain level it's really difficult to coach people because they have their personalities

AC: You mean when the level of performance is really high?

WINNIE: Yes, because in fact those people umm it's well it's easier to have a beginner progress than to make them progress because the corrections will be a lot more precise and may focus on really small details you see? So it will be less flagrant and it will be more difficult to see what correction needs to be made and I think it is also the mental strength that comes into play...

AC: Do you think for example you would be comfortable coaching the Competition Classes?

WINNIE: No

AC: Why?

WINNIE: Because I don't think I have enough experience as

AC: As a coach?

WINNIE: Yes

AC: Why?

WINNIE: Because it is based on small detailed corrections and uhh some tiny adjustments and also maybe because I am too nice maybe? Because that demands a bit more of uhh I dunno to coach the competitors classes I think you have to have a certain charisma uhh I see it like that uhh you have to uhh that emotional side I mean in other classes you can make a relationship and I think in classes like competitors you can't...you have to be a bit more straight and strict...I dunno I could be wrong and I think for the competitors they need that. For me, it's the same since I do compete and even in skating back then sometimes I needed to be yelled at I mean to be told you have no choice just do it and so...

AC: You mean to push you further ahead?

WINNIE: Yeah, yeah

AC: But umm...you have had a lot of experience competing in CrossFit more than the other competitors?

WINNIE: yes but...

AC: So you have something to give...

WINNIE: Yes but not enough by far and to say honestly...uh the real competition I did as an individual uhh was it was a big blow a really big blow

AC: Why?

WINNIE: (laughs) yep a big blow because it was hard, it was really difficult and it was above my level I went and it was an incredible experience but you're there with everyone looking at you and you aren't good enough...well that hurts..

AC: So it was a big blow because people were looking at you?

WINNIE: Yeah...and the skills and levels of the other girls was way above mine, it was, yeah it was hard. I wasn't, yeah there I wasn't at all in my comfort zone! (laughs)

AC: I can imagine

WINNIE: And so then afterwards...to differentiate from skating even if in CrossFit you know all the movements in skating you practice during a whole season the same sequence...so you have learned it by heart and so when you get there it's uhh you repeat what you have done any you know the effort and energy needed. But in CrossFit if you haven't done the WOD you don't know the effort required, you don't where and when you can recuperate whereas in skating I knew there were moments in my program I knew there were sequences where I could breathe more and recuperate but it's just repetition.

AC: Right, right and I am wondering now about having other people looking at you. I mean uhh we see it in Rookies with regards to other...they compare with others I can't do it like her and oh and we see some sort of auto-destruction if they choose to compare which we can all do. There is always someone who is stronger and better than us but uhh it's different if we train at a higher level

WINNIE: yeah but still

AC: Yeah but still it's still there

WINNIE: yes

AC: So at what point can we as coaches protect an athlete from that and at what point is it just due to the class dynamics.

WINNIE: I think yes that is a lot involved and if you take the time to learn but I know there are so many people now that you can't know everyone well but if you take the time to learn one small thing about each member uhh...I think you can gain their trust and they will feel less like someone who just comes and who does their thing and leaves uhh honestly I think that we as people we need to know that we are not invisible because I think there is nothing worse than coming in and not being seen. And uhh I think that that is something and if you take the time to which isn't much but just to talk to them for few minutes with someone of course you can't do it with each person for every class and also to not force yourself to talk to the same person.

AC: Yeah and that too because of course we have a tendency to keep going to those that we know well or have spent time with them outside of class.

AC: Oh now...what about the differences between the morning classes versus evening?

WINNIE: Ah well the morning there are a lot of I have the impression there are a lot more women, they're moms umm and in fact it is certainly the morning that people are more in need to talk, to be able to identify with someone else to get self confidence and moments of exchange because these are mothers who take care of their kids all day long and they are alone taking care of their kids and so they want to get out of..

AC: Yep

WINNIE: I mean I don't have kids but I can understand that actually it's funny I asked this morning what other sports do you do besides CrossFit and there was one is being a mom count? And of course it counts!

WINNIE: So I think it is mostly like that in the morning and in the evening there are more clients that need well you see that they are clients that are stressed and about to pop and have a bit more intensity or...after that I dunno it's not a generality either but in general I think..

AC: So you think that the intensity is different between mornings and evenings?

WINNIE: Non but I would say...no because there is intensity in the morning in fact...but uh no I think it's more of a way to approach the workout that is different.

AC: Yep and maybe uhh...they have spent the whole day working I mean my attitude is totally different from when I have worked all day or when I come at 9 just after dropping off kids from school...

AC: Uhh and what about an experience that you thought was difficult for you as a coach?

WINNIE: Umm...well I can think of something that sometimes...but it's not the worst experience but I know that if I am really tired I have no patience and I have to hold it in because sometimes I just want to "ahh" you know to...and then I realize I am tired and that is why..

AC: What does ahhh mean exactly?

WINNIE: Well ahh...honestly sometimes the interactions aren't so nice, there can be some small remarks or they don't listen to you like what I said early if you come to the class either as a coach or as an athlete uhh...there's nothing worse than being ignored and it's true that I think that is inconsiderate and those people like that who come late and don't say hello and that is hurtful because it's like I don't exist. You are there the whole day and you give a lot of yourself oh ok I know I am not like perfect but still I think that it's just not cool.

AC: So sometimes what do you want to say

WINNIE: Yeah like go fuck yourself you can at least say hello!

AC: Yep that's not cool I can understand

WINNIE: Yes and I can see that it can really change the ambiance of a class, just one person you know? Because of their attitude can make the ambiance negative, because the others aren't comfortable with their attitude you see which isn't very appropriate and yeah it's like someone who is turbulent in class a child who is turbulent and so...sometimes well I am giving a class to adults but it is the same as if I were giving it to children. You think you are going to handle this differently but maybe it's the way of dealing with people but maybe it's just their way of speaking to other people...

AC: Yeah...ummm and CrossFit for you?

WINNIE: For me? Well ummm...it's really something that makes me feel alive when I do it and it is about surpassing my own limits to feel alive to feel uhh reborn because it is hard and because well life is hard and as a result it brings something to you you feel stronger more alive yeah...

AC: Great and cool I think that's about it...

WINNIE

4.02.17

(Translated from French)

AC: So how was the seminar for you?

WINNIE: It was very interesting, umm to put yourself on the other side and to see a different perspective I dunno how to say it but umm because when you work every day you are stuck in a routine and you don't realize certain things.

AC: Like what?

WINNIE: The thing that got me the most was for example what you said about Sarah Jane when you said sometimes we pass her aside and let her alone because she's older and now I am working on that and sometimes when people are in the back of the class they aren't upset or mad at you but they might have just had a bad day.

AC: Yep..

WINNIE: And also uhh well yeah our judgements of people...because in reality it's hard not have them but since you know that you try to work against that and fight against yourself saying ok you shouldn't have stereotypes blab la but sometimes it catches you anyway...it's impressive just how strong that is

AC: Can you think of an example?

WINNIE: Yeah there are tons of examples...but typically like the guy that we saw at noon uhh for me with his attitude I can conclude he has a problem with female authority so I can conclude he's macho and an asshole...

AC: (laughs) yeah

WINNIE: (laughs) yeah like that but perhaps in reality and we can't forget that there is also a language barrier so maybe in fact he just wants to tease me and I don't understand his humor you see? Who knows?

AC: But yeah those kinds of people are difficult to deal with because you don't know if it's just us that are more sensitive or is it 50/50...I dunno..umm so you know how we will publish something in the CrossFit journal.

WINNIE: Yeah

AC: Umm and for you do you think publishing something about stereotypes do you think it's necessary for CrossFit?

WINNIE: Yes I think so. I think that it is interesting in any way but yes it concerns CrossFit but I think it can concern anyone in everyday life. I think that we all are quick to stereotype in this world without knowing it and sometimes we have to think at least twice before we give an opinion when we react to things it's not always clear

AC: Absolutely it's always a question of interpretation

WINNIE: Hmm yes

AC: Umm and uhh with regards to the seminar did you think of things that could be improved?

WINNIE: No I really liked it certainly during the role plays being on one side or another I thought umm that was really useful it was also fun and there was a good ambiance even if we fell into exaggerations and humor well uhh it's true at the same time (laughs) there were plenty of situations that I could identify with the situation even if we were laughing because well honestly I had a really nice time.

AC: Yeah, I certainly had a good time and even though we were playing and using caricature and gross stereotypes we are using something from existent.

WINNIE: Yes exactly!

AC: So now when you coach do you feel like the way you coach is different?

WINNIE: Yes well I I I try umm to tell myself to calm down sometimes and say no it's not their fault or it's like this or that and sometimes it's harder to control yourself, to manage those reactions and it depends a lot on how you are doing that day because yeah we talk about others but it's also about how our day was and what is going on in your life even though I am really for the fact that we should keep our private and professional lives separate but sometimes it gets you even though

AC: Oh yeah definitely even though we don't show it we are still carrying that energy so our reactions can be biased definitely...so do you think it was necessary with regards to the coaches do you think it was useful for some of them?

WINNIE: Well umm I have the impression it's always the same problem with this kind of training seminar (chuckles) it's always the ones that are the less impacted by it that are the most interested and those that are the most in need of this information they are the least concerned...They don't feel like it applies to them or they don't take it seriously. Even for me I was super interested even though I think I was already making an effort before but I am not perfect but I try to make an effort and I know that we are not all the same but unfortunately that there is a difference between men and women I don't think that is something we can ignore...so umm it's uncomfortable for them yeah?

AC: Yeah I don't know if they are uncomfortable or ...I dunno but we know it's there and so we have to work with it right?

WINNIE: Yep..

WINSTON

9.1.16

AC: Umm so how long have you been coaching CrossFit?

WINSTON: Umm coaching CrossFit since the end of 2012. That's three years

AC: Three years now?

WINSTON: Three years now.

AC: And how long have you been doing it though?

WINSTON: I started CrossFit uhh beginning of no sorry I started coaching CrossFit at the end of 2013 so 2 years now? And I started at the beginning of 2012, so I started CrossFit for 3 months and then I did my level one and then I was shadowing and helping other coaches because what I did. When I did the level 1 I got really scared because when I am doing stuff I am doing it at 0% or at 100% there is no nothing in between. Because when you coach, you coach, there's no maybe so when I started doing CrossFit and then I got my Level 1 I realized...holy moly I I definitely need to get more info because this I mean to be honest this weekend I mean it's kinda like you get your Porsche you don't have a driving licence and they give you Porsche and they tell you no you need to drive on the racing track. And your like How' So you need to do lessons and lessons and so I was shadowing a really good coach. Then I went to Cologne and helped another box growing up and I visited other people and I did a lot of seminars. And after one year of shadowing I realized now I was really ready to really go into that position and be a coach in from of a class.

AC: Yeah I think that is the best way to do it..

WINSTON: Umhmm

AC: Umm and so ok you had a lot of time to think about what do you umm what do you think are your roles as a coach?

WINSTON: Umm...so after two years of being a coach I would say like ten percent of the people I am coaching are high performance athletes because those are the people that are contacting me to help them get better as an athlete triathlon, marathon ice hockey whatever. I would say the other ten percent of people they actually don't care. They are just move and they don't really realize what they are doing here and they also don't really think about it. For the other 80 percent I'm a kind like thearapoit?

AC: Therapist

WINSTON: Therapist and best friend

AC: Meaning there is a psychological aspect

WINSTON: Yeah of course, especially in CrossFit most likely when you see people there's a really can you remember the guy who came over first long shirt, pullover. Most likely and super scared. But when I see those people I it's a most likely people don't tell me. When I see people I analyse them so the first thing I am doing is analyse their athletic level so that's kinda like something I do, that's like a tick what I am doing when I coach. And the second is

what is his social standing you know what I mean? Like how, he does he have friends and how is he behaving in a social environment? With this guy it was really impressive because I saw directly that outfit doesn't really know how to move his body but he's not super super bad but on a social level like (blows raspberry)

AC: Totally like

WINSTON: Like totally out of the zone like completely out of the group and no he's coming here he has shorts on and he came with a really short t-shirt and he's talking to people and can you really see smiling the smile on his face. I think the priority for him is not getting better in CrossFit it's like getting here and meeting those people and having kind of like a between human interaction.

AC: Yep and moving his body may be a bit...

WINSTON: That's a good side effect for him but CrossFit I mean so many people are so how can I say that you know politely? They don't know shit...can't find the English word. They are when you no longer know what to do you are like fuck this, fuck that. You are...umm

AC: Lost?

WINSTON: Yeah kinda lost, so he was like ok I really need to change something in life and I don't know why but quite often those people they take the huge instead of going like to a fitness globo they are like ok searching for sport or whatever because most likely people go to the gym to have fun to meet other people. That is the the first two points in every gym you can ask anyone to write in why are you visiting the gym: meeting people, having fun. That's the first two thing and the third thing I cannot remember and on the fourth place there is like ah getting healthier.

So the interaction between people are so important for those people and in CrossFit the interaction between people is huge.

AC: Huge

WINSTON: So he went from I think no interaction to like ok I directly go into CrossFit. And I think he loved it. I think he was overwhelmed at the beginning cuz he read something on the internet like how is it going be here and everyone is saying hello to everyone and he said ah I don't believe that is happening. Then he went in here and then hi I am Pack and hi I am AC or whatever he's like Oh! Shit now I need to talk to these people in real life and he realized and I think that kinda like this confrontation for him was really good. And I think he is not an only case I think this is happening quite often. I mean he is a special case because he was really closed

AC: Yeah extreme yeah

WINSTON: And most likely more open. But most likely people come to CrossFit to meet people most likely.

AC: Well that's uh good question I mean do you see different kinds of CrossFitters in terms of how they enter and how they progress?

WINSTON: Of course

AC: So what are the different kinds in your mind?



WINSTON: Umm there's that one person, sporty already like did normal gym before. Maybe did another sport at a higher level so their mindset is already a little bit competitive so they come here and they forgot about being competitive but they are still really sporty then they come to CrossFit and then they realize oh my goodness this is awesome I can kinda of compete a little bit in each class and after two or three weeks they are talking about the Opens and then everyone can doing it and those are the people that get like so excited about doing stuff on their own, coming in a half an hour earlier to train something they are not good at.

So that's the first kind. Old sporty guys coming here not really sporty still but then coming into Crossfit and then going (whistles) and they say ok I am back up to that level.

Then there are other people like me coming from a really good sports and that seeing CrossFit and seeing those competitions and realizing you can get more, you can be better in CrossFit. So coming from a high sport and getting here and doing this as a high sport but I think this is really rarely. So out of 400 people maybe like 5 for example because it's kinda like speciality. For example I came and three weeks later I did the Open because I was awesome. And I was like ok give me that I quitted everything basketball, gymnastics, stage diving all that I did next to play basketball and did my first session and I was like I called Olof my boss and I cancelled everything.

Then there are some normal some persons who are coming here they come here, it takes longer until they really arrive in CrossFit. But they really like it, they like to move, they like to sweat, they don't really care about technique they just come in here. Then they get the Snatch technique then as soon as they get out (blows raspberry) so they next time they do suck all over again. That most like the people we have in here so most likely in this gym people come, people train, they understand, they move out of the door and they forget everything.

Then there's people like Melinda for example, you, Jessica those people, Aline Toni, Kim. They get excited about it it's not the highest priority they realize I still have an adult (interruption) they come here they see CrossFit they like it they realize ok I can also achieve something I can have like a little bit competitive sports stuff on the side but they still know I have my normal job I still have my family. I can not I mean I am already working 40 hours a day but still they are kind of like they take three hours almost three hours per day just thinking about CrossFit doing Crossfit this is the other type of people.

This is the other type of people who are like having their normal job but still they want to try to do it a little bit at higher level they want to progress every year they want do the Opens every year they want to see this is how I am ok this is how I am and this is what I want to be next year so I want to improve to the next level. That's the other type of people.

AC: Yeah...do you see any differences between men and women?

WINSTON: Not really ummm I am quite surprised that CrossFit is so accepted for for em the women's side I've never saw that before. But...I mean look at the classes here it's like 50% women and 50% men. Most likely the women, 100% women most likely in the morning that's crazy I mean that's not..in Switzerland in Germany it's everywhere

AC: In Germany it's the same I know that in the States it's the same

WINSTON: I mean women love it! I mean it's awesome but most likely you need to compare you need to convince CrossFit try but it's amazing they just come and do it!

AC: But why are you surprised?

WINSTON: I mean why I'm surprised is most likely in this near the 21<sup>st</sup> century and everyone knows how to use YouTube Google whatever and when you start a new job women always want to get information what are you doing there give me a little bit more detail. Men are like CrossFit? Let's go there and try it. So women want to most likely they are searching and they see those shitty videos, those bullshit on the internet and they they are like holy crap I can not do that for me when a man is seeing something really impressive and he's like oh I want to do that so he's like ok let's try this even if I know I cannot do that when a women sees that she's like oh oh ok no I keep my hands off that.

AC: You mean with stuff about the weightlifting stuff like that?

WINSTON: Yeah in terms of that, so um that's what I am quite surprised at because I know a lot of people a lot of women who check before and still they love it. But that's also our job because I know YouTube is one of our biggest enemies because they are they are posting bullshit every fucking day. That's horrible.

AC: So are there specific kinds of athletes that you like to work with?

WINSTON: I mean I love people who start in a new sport and bringing them into a new sport but my passion is fine tuning. I love it when there is a competition class I mean I write everything on the Whiteboard and then they 3 21 go and let's start with the strength part and they know what is a back squat what is a clean high pull what is this what is that I mean because then my my I mean my coaching is really good when it comes to Rookies I explain the movement completely new but it's a whole different story when you have the people when they know what to do and you just go to that fine tuning because then there is that one person who is lifting 80 kilograms in a squat clean for a year and he has no clue why he isn't improving and me as a coach I see that I mean his pull is completely shitty and I tell him just two cues like being closer to the body and fixing a little bit the starting position and I tell him just two cues and whoops all of the sudden he's cleaning 90 kilograms that's awesome that's what I love that's amazing so Intermediates and competition people I like a little bit more but I don't have a problem with Rookies.

AC: Right, right. (Interruption) Umm ok would you say ok then there's always the train wreck

WINSTON: What?

AC: A train wreck athlete where everything on it is wrong and of course you do triage and you work on what needs to be fixed and you make the priorities of what you think needs to be fixed but umm how much do you feel that they...well what do you think are there reasons to be a train wreck? What are the possible reason in your mind

WINSTON: Because they are lazy ass

AC: Yeah (Laughs)

WINSTON: Umm you know what happens and actually I never tolds that someone when there is a person coming in here and you see them squatting for the first (interruption) squatting for the first time or running for the first time I 'm getting so angry because the human body is amazing I love it I mean it's God or whatever whoever made us created something so perfect and then you see..I don't want to say fat people but or also skinny people whatever

and they cannot even squat under 90 degrees their everything is looking so shitty I'm getting so angry how can you treat your body so bad to end up at that level. Then I need to calm me down in my mind and no one is seeing that never ever would someone think that I think like this. Because I need to be like this I need to go to them and that's a problem you have there so let's start improving and that's also the work that people love they don't they realize ok I have that kind of level and they will make me increase. No what makes angry is why the fuck are you doing that over years to your body if you would have started 5 years earlier when you didn't have that problem trust me we wouldn't be like here (makes sign with hands) and we wouldn't have to move step by step by step(slowly)

So that's kind of like when I see persons, and why this is happening I mean we have cars, we have mobile phones, we have couches, we have bosses we can watch I mean today we can watch the series or episodes on the fucking Smart phone

AC: yeah

WINSTON: Umm and then you you can actually you can be lazy in every position every time you can shut down your brain I mean look at all those kids who come here in the morning what are they doing what are the mothers doing? Giving them iPads..

AC: Give them an iPad

WINSTON: You see them in a shitty position sitting down their head is falling down their spine is in an absolute shitty position and they are starting with this already at 5-6 years. Do you know what I did when my my mother went to sport. She put in a place where kinda where a woman is taking care of the kids and we were running around in the woods jumping running we didn't have that

AC: Seriously

WINSTON: I mean I am so scared over what is going to happen in the next ten years because for example there are studies umm chronic lower pain is now on the second place, neck pain is the number one pain at the moment people have and do you know why?

AC: Why?

WINSTON: Because they are looking at their smartphones

AC: Smartphones

WINSTON: I mean I am not better I am not better I mean but this is my job. I am working for FoodSpring, I am working as a coach and I am working as a PT clients so I get emails and texts whatever. I need to look on that one but for example when I go on holidays you know the first thing I am doing is leaving my phone I am just leave me alone

AC: yeah

WINSTON: And those kids and all those young people that are addicted so fast to all those media and stuff and that's the reason why those I think our environment is creating those people that can no longer move.

WINSTON: They cannot do it! That's that's so sad. I mean actually you could just start crying and fall on your knees and holy crap! Where did we end up?

AC: yeah

WINSTON: Take ten people and ask them jump up turn 360 and land on the same spot. They

AC: They can't do it

AC: Right

WINSTON: I mean even kids and I mean adult persons sitting all day I can imagine like I kind of kind of can understand that because because of their job they need to do that. But kids? I also the whole school system is bullshit.

AC: I know meaning the whole sitting down thing?

WINSTON: Look at look at I dunno if it's Holland or Finland or Norway?

AC: Trust me it's Finland in education research they do incredible things.

WINSTON: Awesome!

AC: WE should take our kids to Finland that's where they should be

WINSTON: I mean they have standing desks, I think they have a 4 or 5 hour school day, they start at 9. Why the fuck do they do to people who start at 8 in the morning. Let the fucking kids sleep in! They have so much information they need to sleep! They need to work with that in their mind when their eyes are closed and then when in the morning when they get up of course they are zombies the first three hours. Do you think you can put information like that in the morning?

AC: I know..

WINSTON: Let them sleep in until 9:30 let school start at 10 and then finished at 2. Finished! Then they go home a little bit of homework then they're finished at 3:30 and then they can play. And then it's not bad when go to be at 9 or 10 because they can sleep till 9! I mean people are what the fuck..?

AC: I know tell me about it...

WINSTON: In Germany it's the same

AC: Oh really?

WINSTON: Yah it's the same there are so many people, so many signs to tell everyone that look at Finland or I think it's Finland I mean I mean when you start to learn that when you were a kid you will keep that through the whole life I mean they have the productive companies ever! You know when a person out Finland with a high bachelor or whatever is putting his CV to the company and hey I want to work with you ah they say ah come we take you they don't even ask.

AC: yeah

WINSTON: But it's the same question, it's the same thing we really know what's wrong. For example when you also look at nutrition. We all know that fat is not good. What is the food industry doing? Oh! Zero fat because zero fat is so bad. Every nutritionist knows that fat is absolutely no problem. They know that. Everyone knows that! But the whole industry is pushing in the mind of the people you need to eat stuff which has no fat.

AC: But that's the same thing as you know what you see on YouTube with CrossFit right? You know you see this image that is false surrounding it. And that makes me think of something else, makes me think of women and men and they are not supposed to lift heavy, you know?

WINSTON: Ummhmm. Stupid.

AC: Right and how often do you get the comment: oh I don't want to lift heavy because I don't want to get bulky

WINSTON: Oh, AC trust me when I ...I'm a coach since 2 years and I can see on the face of a woman that she wants to say this one sentence: But I don't want to get bulky? She doesn't even need to say that sentence I really see in that moment that she wants to say that.

AC: So what do you tell them?

WINSTON: I tell them you don't want look like her and I show them a picture most likely Brook Anderson and I ask them you don't want to look like her? Yeah I don't want to look like her! And I tell them you know what this person here is working 7 days a week, 3 times a day is eating only protein has 3 different kind of coaches and it's her full time job. Trust me you don't want to look her? You will never be like her because you have a full time job on the side you don't even have the time to look like her. That's impossible! And what do you think that like doing pull ups every day for one week your getting like a biceps like 40 huge biceps? Trust me when that will be the case I will do pull ups every day because I need bigger biceps. I don't know why women are so scared as soon as it comes to moving weight oh I am getting bulky. That's bullshit. I mean my girlfriend is a little bulky because you know why? Because it's fucking sexy! I went home uhh two weeks ago and I met two of my best women friends when I hug them I was like uhh

AC: You're going to break them!

WINSTON: I'm gonna break them one of them was like super skinny and then my girlfriend I can hug her..I can do everything with her yeah she's not going to break.

AC: She's not going to break.

WINSTON: Yeah! I mean when I hurt her you know what she does she slaps me back and she's like you know what the fuck a lot of women are like are more skinny, more skinny more skinny whoa shut up. I mean there's a change it's coming I can see that it's slightly coming. That people that women realize that being fit and having muscles is also feminine but as soon as you come to a fit person they always look at the wrong persons they look at Jullie Fouchet and I know they get scared I mean who's telling them that they are starting to think oh no I'm gonna get bluky like this when they start to train there's no one telling them look no. And when the first time I tell them they say actually you're right they train so often I thought they were doing one WOD per day, one hour! (blows raspberry) Hell no! But they don't I mean I think that everyone knows it that sports and women women and sports and men is always was a different kind of story. Because when a man sees a person who is fit and has muscles they know ok it's a lot of work to get to that point. But when a woman sees a bulky woman they are scared like oh two times a week and I am looking like her so they don't really have uh umm what it means to get to a certain goal with training.

AC: Why do you think they are so scared of that?

WINSTON: I have no clue. I dunno....I think I know why they are scared because when pictures popping up like Brooke Ande or whatever other women say Oh! That's so ugly! Ew! I never could be friends with her blab la bla. So they get scared oh my goodness I am doing CrossFit now and all my friends are disappearing now. But seriously if you have friends that are disappearing because of this I mean come on!

WINSTON: You know Caroline? She comes late all the time?

AC: Oh yes!

WINSTON: You know all the women are looking at her and saying oh I want to look like her. You know what she's doing? She's training every day for 1 or 2 hours. Is she bulky no she's fucking sexy!

AC: Yep

WINSTON: I mean of course she's also looking a lot on nutrition and stuff and a lot of stuff on the side and I mean she's not getting bulky because she's training two hours per day and she's also lifting heavy weights! Sorry. The sexiest thing in the world is a woman with a nice butt trust me.

AC: Yep

WINSTON: Yeah she's really hot. Sexy. I mean look at her daughter Jennifer who is also really nice body wise I mean she's training she's a policewoman. She's doing sports every day for hours!

AC: Yep yep...

WINSTON

3.05.17

AC: Ok first off what is your background, your educational background?

WINSTON: Umm so far am almost finished with studies in Physical Health Management and I have some um I did what is called (German word) in in German it's like uhh high school college? It's like your highest degree you can get in school and after that you are allowed to go for to uni so am finished my studies at the moment and it's a little bit tricky since I am already working full time so so this hard studying from home

AC: Yep!

WINSTON: and you also need to make money umm...(laughs) I think you know what I mean uhh life is expensive and you need to make money and so it costs a lot of time so

AC: It's slow going...

WINSTON: Yeah but I mean I am almost finished but it's hard...it's just terribly hard I'm happy to I'm happy to work on my subject as CrossFit which is perfectly fine but I still have to finish a few things and one of them is Law I hate that

AC: Oh really?

WINSTON: Yeah...what is the contract established blab la bla

AC: Eww..ok that doesn't sound to fun and umm ok and let's see you've been coaching for 4 years now and you've been doing CrossFit for how long?

WINSTON: Like approximately a bit longer like 5 years...

AC: Ok just to check cuz it wasn't quite clear ...ok! so the seminar what do you think?

WINSTON: I quite liked the seminar umm I think it's I am really passionate in about what I am doing in CrossFit and also what I'm doing in in in sports and as a coach and so a lot of things you talked about is nothing new to me but it's great that someone like brings everything like altogether and you get a lot of aspects a lot of people like people who don't especially people who don't coach daily? On a daily basis? Or don't have athletes or whatsoever or a class they like skip a lot of points which you mentioned in the seminar so that's quite good because it's kind of like an eye opener for them umm

AC: umhmm

WINSTON: For example we did that role play when you gave the roles to everyone and I was the coach in front of them yes it was funny but it didn't surprise me actually cuz it's actually daily life I think a lot of people were like ha ha this will never happen in class but actually it does in daily life so that was nothing that was not special for me even though it got more funny more funny and I can just stick to my plan and I have written it in my head and I just focus and just continue

AC: Yeah it does and it is caricature it's an exaggeration of what really happened umm let's see...umm were there any particular exercises that were effective?

WINSTON: I think the timing was quite good and we took a lot of time when we wrote down the words I think that's kind of like an eye opener and then umm talk about man and woman a little bit is always a tricky situation like that's a woman's bar that's a man's bar uh...I don't care me as a person I don't care if I call it a woman's bar or man's bar if woman are getting like discriminated by me telling them tha'that's a woman's bar that has nothing to say to me that's just a woman's bar smaller grip lighter bar finished boom. That's what CrossFit is all about. The women get lighter weights so women have the women's bar the men get man weight so they get a man's bar. There is no discrimination between the two but since this is a sensitive topic umm just might as well have that mind in doing coaching in CrossFit and whatsoever normal classes in school I think it's pretty important.

AC: Talk to me more about the non-discrimination in CrossFit in your mind?

WINSTON: Uh I think I think that one of the first points the way to see that is that we have a huge amount of women doing CrossFit uh just look at other sports like motivate other people uh woman to do other sports kind of like tricky um I'm still quite surprised that so many women are doing CrossFit. I think because just women quickly realize yeah I just go in an move people don't care if I am good or bad if I'm a woman or a man or if I'm black or white and whatsoever everyone is sweating and cheering you on that's what's positive part of CrossFit when you can keep that CrossFit will stay alive for really really a long time. I mean we don't what it will be called in ten years if it's called CrossFit or CrossGym or XFit or whatsoever I don't care if the mentality and the community stays the same. If there is not that huge doping whatever thing that pops up I say CrossFit will stay alive for a pretty long. I mean it will get more different I think it will get more like mobile fitness integrated with

CrossFit I think it will go to that side a little bit I cuz I travel for Foodspring quite a lot so I see that more and more and which is really really successful because you have everything you have CrossFit gym they have a sauna they have a normal gym they have a part lifting area they have everything and you are like oh this is heaven on earth I think it will go a little bit more to that side but still uh CrossFit is a brand so you need to pay for it so it will not be disappear.

WINSTON: Yeah but I think we always have that it's the fight between men and women and I think that's not really happening here in CrossFit.

AC: Right what is the fight between men and women in your..

WINSTON: Yeah men are always better women have nothing to say if there is a problem let's ask a man first because women are just like uhh they take or the babies that's it and they run the household that's it. I think it's uh even though like on the right side completely equal to men I think there is still some kind of trouble in the back of your mind I mean not for me I don't care I am really happy when there is a good woman and I can coach a good woman or if there is a young teen like M and I can coach M. I wouldn't care if he was if he would be a woman or a man uhh I would it would be no problem no problem. But I think it's still man! We are egos we are powerful we want to stand on both feet straight ahead going and saying what we think and yeah don't talk to me about just straight ahead and I think that's still a problem

AC: You mean that women aren't like more like that you mean?

WINSTON: I I I particularly don't want to say they are not like that I think just because men are just like (Roar sound) like shouting so loud into the room maybe you don't hear the women's voice because they are like over exaggerating what they are doing maybe they should like shut the fuck up and let people do their shit people are good at what they are doing so there is no difference between men and women

AC: Umm I see...what about you and the seminar as a coach do you think that it changed something that you did?

WINSTON: To be honest not really because that's that like stuff I've had like twice already kind of like I mean you brought everything together and how particularly like standards that were specifically focusing on different things so there was nothing new for me but it is kind of good because it is always refreshing. That's the point. With everything the more often you hear it the more often you gets into your mind and you can adapt to it and use it in daily life. As for me umm when you I mean you saw me coaching quite often and I'm always I tried to be like even with everyone. Maybe I have a different approach in some other things I know that Conan and Samantha they like it that people run around and like support everyone like almost like shouting into their face like oh let's go like doing the cheerleader thing? I'm not that kind of coach it's really hard for me to adapt to that I'm doing it a little better now but I'm still like this is something that is really hard for me this is something really hard for me because I don't like it and the people out there are in a tunnel and I know for myself when I get shouted at in the workout I don't like it. It's so annoying. And I realize that quite a lot of people have that problem so I might as well like take a step out see how people move and then in the end go to them and have a reflect on their workout cuz umm that's just how I am, it's how I coach it's worked really well so far and I will not change it at 100% of course I need to



adapt because I am a coach here so they have their philosophy and I should follow that but that's just something for example is a little bit different for me and uh...it was quite funny that we were talking a lot about that particularly on focusing on like pushing people by like that saying a word like keep up or keep your pace or whatever I mean that's what I 'm also doing but like standing next to them shouting at them I'm not a cheer...I'm not a clown. You lose quite fast like authority when you are like when it looks like it's a stage and you are jumping rope like a clown. Which is not good for me and I don't like that.

AC: What's the link between coaching and authority for you?

WINSTON: Umm you're running a class you have a huge responsibility so if if you are not the kind of person who can represent authority or who can represent look there's 12 people in the class or 15 I can handle that if there is someone passing out I know what to do if there is someone hitting a PR I know what to do that's like the complete ends of both sides like super happy or super super bad but everything in between you should be able to handle it it's like click and you are like ok I know what to do if someone twists their ankle I know to take it full up wrap it around be calm with the person tell them everything will be fine don't freak out finished. If someone is really good at their stuff encourage them to continue that is the huge like range and for that you need to have stable on both feet. You need to be confident in your voice and you need to be like I know what I am doing you need to be able to show all the movements cuz otherwise you you don't need it to be perfect like lift 150 kilograms on the Clean and Jerk nobody cares about that if you can do that perfect with 40 kilograms? Awesome go ahead. And that is something you need to have and that is something you need to have and that's linked to authority otherwise it's a small voice (high pitched voice)"maybe we do clean and jerk" No! Dude...(deeper voice) just go and do Clean and Jerks today finished.

AC: Umm would you do you anything in the seminar that you would have changed?

WINSTON: Uhh that's a tough question a long time ago you know?

AC: Yeah I know...it was a long time ago..

WINSTON: Yeah maybe maybe uhh maybe cuz we all are all coaches we know each other so maybe we start to laugh too fast like taking only the funny side of thing so maybe asking 15 or 20 people from the gym hey guys I need you at that time on that day for a class everything can happen so don't be afraid just do what you do ok? And umm maybe talk to them beforehand like particularly that's going to happen and we have no clue so certainly for the playing around I think that it would be a little more serious.

AC: Yeah

WINSTON: I think that's something I would change a little bit

AC: Yeah that's a good idea umm in terms of stereotypes or people that you don't like I mean we all have umm let me think we all have kind of preferences we've talked about this already when we talked and you said that you tend to like the more advanced athlete because you can fine tune, right? Remember that?

WINSTON: Yeah

AC: But what about are you aware that like sometimes for me I know I have the tendency to favour the more advanced athletes because it's more fun, it's because they respond faster, because I only have to say is one little thing and they are like oh yeah

WINSTON: Yep

AC: Because I can learn from them because I can ask them I can say ok I see this what do you think you know as a coach it's much more rewarding. So I know I favour them I know I spend more time with them so do you see in the way you coach sometimes do you identify things like that? Like after class you say oh there maybe I could have changed something..

WINSTON: Yeah I think it also depends because I am coaching like J and athletes so my I have a little bit more eye on the detail but those details don't fit on a lot of people cuz they are not so far what I mean I used to give really fast like how they move like how fast they can improve on something even though they're really bad or they think they are really bad and like we just make them realize you're not that bad you're just at the beginning look boom all of the sudden you can do good technique on an empty barbell just continue putting weight on it and then one day you will look like M or J or R [all male athletes] or whatever. But I think it's pretty tough because you kind a like you have the perfect athlete in your mind and then you have those people who are really far away from them or you have those people who are really close to them like the good ones and your like I saw this I can work with this I can try this I saw this I just need to tell this to the person and they'll realize what they need to do I think that's that's always a problem but I think I I I try to be quite even with everyone. But of course there's still the person you don't like there's that person he doesn't like you as a coach, he disappears from you, he shuts the fuck up or he tells bullshit behind your back whatsoever. We all have that...I get feedback that I'm that I'm uhh that I favour man before women but actually that's just protection on my side when I show movements I show them always with men that's just how I am because I got into shit like three times already so I'm done with that. So I always show movements just with men finished it has nothing to do with I don't want to show women. But I asked three times I asked particularly can I ask you with the small of finger on this side of your hip or whatsoever and then in the end they run to man the male coach or the gym owner telling bullshit behind my back so I'm finished with that and I don't do that.

AC: So this happened three times in German?

WINSTON: Yeah two times in German ah and once here? People uh women told O that they think I favour men before women particularly because they said like umm he always just shows technique with men and I'm like I just don't take that feedback because with what happened in the past now I mean I show the movement with a man doesn't mean that I don't coach everyone it's just once for the whole class I just show the movement finished. I can't show it on my own and I will need a demogirl a demoboy in this case just show the movement and finished there is no need to talk about that but people are getting angry and wanting to give me bullshit go ahead I don't care sorry maybe that sounds arrogant but sorry I don't care.

AC: But ok given the past I can understand why. What about explain that to them?

WINSTON: Umm the problem is I don't know who it is if I would know I would directly go to them I don't have a problem with having them ah a talk to another adult and they are like look this is happening let's talk about but you know they run to O and say to O please tell P but don't tell P that I told you so I in the end get the shitty feedback. And I'm like ok good

who was that? Let me explain me to that person so that they could be like ok that's the reason why he does that so that's always the problem because people are...I know I'm loud I know I have with people who talk to me I am scaring a lot of people happens it's like this it's ok but if you really have a problem with me just come to me talk to me finished period.

AC: Yeah umm let's see is there anything else? Ah one more thing...fat people!

WINSTON: (LAUGHS)

AC: How is for you coaching fat people?

WINSTON: It's funny because in early times umm that's really rude

AC: I know

WINSTON: That's really rude (laughs) I I know in earlier times I've said I hate fat people like that's really really rude I stopped doing that because umm well I should not do that. But umm being fat is not acceptable for me. It's really ,really not acceptable for me. I don't know it's really hard for me to see fat people because I what we have what I mean if you believe in God or not if there is a higher person or a higher force or whatsoever and they gave us this body and they way some people some people treat this body like smoking, drinking, alcohol and being like super fat. What the fuck! Don't do that! If there's a fat person tells me like look I did this huge bullshit to my body and I'm shitless scared and I'm helpless and I need some help wow you have the biggest respect from me and lets go at it and let's go do that. But with people that are like I'm not fat, I I am I'm ah I feel well by being fat that's totally fine don't lie to my fucking face that's not true. Out of a thousand there's one person who is happy being fat. Just one person. Trust me. The other ones are super unhappy and just like hiding behind the wall like ah being fat is awesome. It's not. Running up the stairs and being dead because you can not do it? Trust me that's not fun.

AC: Uh uh so how is it training athletes that are overweight?

WINSTON: Fine if they come to me and they really want to do it and if they're serious you see some people just go there and they want to have they come to the first session, they come to the second session and they are like yeah I am so motivated and then (blows raspberry) so that's the tricky part so I see that often like..

AC: Is there a difference between men and other newbies?

WINSTON: Umm I think with other newbies I think that people who are fat too fast think oh my god I can't do this they are all...I think that they have in their mind that they are thin so they are fitter than me and so I can't keep up with them why should I come? That's embarrassing I just don't come anymore I think that people that are body typing the same way that people are here as fit people. They come here and realize hmm maybe I should stop smoking a little bit more, maybe I should step up from the office chair a little more often then I can keep up with them because actually I look the same but something is different and I think it is easier to follow up. But when on top of that you have that I am 200 kilograms the other is 90 kilograms that that is just a blockade in their head and mentalwise you need to work uhh a lot different with them and I really like to help people with that so far I didn't have anyone here in Switzerland I had a few in umm one of my best friends like really best friends got to go after like training him umm to get healthy I got to know him way better than before I really know how sensitive he is he lost 30 kilograms with my training so I think that that's uh That's

every time I see him and I remember him being super fat and I think this is what you fucking achieved with him so that's pretty good. I also trained with a woman who had an eating disorder she weighed 32 kilograms woah that's nothing. And I was able to go up to 45 kilograms. And she after two years she had no success and noone could help her and then coming to me and me just being normal to her like having normal training like texting her everyday see how she's doing just text her everyday just push her a little bit and just lean back to her like that a little voice in her mind and she put on 7 kilograms of bodyweight so she looks so healthy I mean she's not over the hill but she looks way more healthy than before. So both ends fat and super thin people I like to work with them because they can have that wow or aha moment like so so fast. Just imagine a fat person like losing there first two kilograms they freak out like crazy and actually that's nothing but they're like I can do it so just go and do it.

AC: Ok cool I think we are done. Thanks

## FOCUS GROUP

(Alex, Jenny and Mandy are coaches in training who have since left the ITP program)

20.15.17

CONAN: So this meeting this morning is to discuss stereotypes that we might be feeling or having and that we could share and maybe learn something from someone else umm and you know I know that and this is how I did that and hopefully make each other better coaches in that sense so we will talk a lot this morning..the idea is to apply these ideas to have a working solution..

AC: And that way we can avoid certain movements that are detrimental to our members, our children whoever...so umm the first question is that now that we have done this seminar on stereotyping and now it's time to find solutions so now the question is can you identify the moments when you have moved with a stereotype in your mind? I mean I know for sure I've done it for sure..

CONAN: As for me I've been more aware since we've been talking about it umm I'm not sure that I am able to recognize my own stereotypes though and so having an outside part come and tell me hey you're doing this that was way more helpful umm because they were like unconscious I wasn't aware of doing them..

SAMANTHA: Like what what would you do?

CONAN: (laughs)

SAMANTHA: what did you do? What have you done?

ALL Laugh

CONAN: So umm when AC started to talk about this stuff I noticed I have a bit of an issue with attractive women and girls uhh in that I don't treat them fairly.

SAMANTHA: Do you?? (laughs)

CONAN: I I actually do the opposite so I'm I coach them less..

ALEX: Oh..

CONAN: Yeah

CONAN: Right?

RICH: So that's ok

(Everyone laughs)

SAMANTHA: You're not in trouble!

CONAN: I am so fearful of appearing like a creep that I end up not giving them any almost no attention at all so you know if there is like Deadlifts or Butterfly sit ups or something like that I'm like ok she doesn't exist because I don't won't to be seen as someone who's staring or giving too much attention to to a pretty girl ok so E is all handsy with her or whatever em so I find I do the opposite uhh and then the other thing that Ac pointed out to me that I was completely unaware of is that at the end of the workout em I am very interested in people's times how they did and how they felt during the workout and now I kind of like that because it

gives me a bit of feedback in terms of how my programming was and the experiences that people had during the workout helps me to determine where the difficulties were and I can maybe choose better movement pairings if I know ok so burpees and box jumps it sucks but if I put handstand push up then...whatever then it's ok but what I didn't realize that the people that I asked are only the advanced athletes I don't ask normal people what their experience was which is not right. That was I was completely and totally oblivious to that until Ac pointed out. So now I am making an effort after the workout to talk to the normal people and say hey man how did that go for you? So that's been that's kind of an eye opener for me and I thought I was doing well but umm but apparently I still have some issues.

AC: Unconscious hopefully it will not be just hey man but hey lady

CONAN: Yeah yeah well ok that's pretty good point

RICH: Hey pretty women

SAMANTHA: Laughs

CONAN: Yeah maybe I will make sure that I will ask the pretty girls how their workout was

AC: Oh was it too hard?

CONAN: I noticed you were struggling with the Double Unders I am sorry

SAMANTHA: Let me hold these for you..

CONAN: Exactly so let's ...

AC: So you found that it was a really good idea to have an outside observer

CONAN: I don't think I would have ever been aware that I was doing that had I not had the outside tell me

SAMANTHA: A is going to have a male model today to try out in Eaux-Vives?

ALEX: It's not like a model it's a body builder and he is more scary than anything he has tattoos on his face...everywhere so I get nervous with that.

All laugh

AC: Why are you nervous with that?

SAMANTHA: Because he is super huge to begin with

ALEX: Well for two things one is that he first impressed me but he was nice but with all the tattoos he just really scared me and I'm like Oh my god he's gonna be like super I dunno not nice and the second thing is yeah he's already huge umm well what am I gonna teach him? Why is here? Why is he coming to CrossFit? So at the same time he is a body builder so he knows himself that he is really bad at cardio at some movements at flexibility and so he already knows that so we already have something to teach him but uhh we'll see

AC: So what I am hearing is how you doubt yourself because he's already got muscles, right?

ALEX: Yeah yeah

AC: And number two he's kind of big and you're giving him a private lesson and that's scary right?

ALEX: Yeah

AC: And you're scared because?

ALEX: It's pure like his physical appearance...

AC: Ok so if you were as big as him, if you were as muscular as him would you feel that?

ALEX: no of course not

AC: Right ok so do you see how that works I mean as women if we do have to coach bigger dudes there is that problem as well we assume a lot don't we? We assume that they know more, we're already in doubt before we begin but fuck we've been doing CrossFit for longer these guys are newbies there's a lot we can give, right?

MANDY: Actually it's the same thing she's impressed by his muscles and Conan is thinking oh my he thinks that she thinks..so in fact we are at the same level. That feels good to hear..

AC: So what can we do in fact? To get rid of that moment of doubt for the member because they are the ones that are losing some of our regard which should be equal. How do we how doe absolve that?

MANDY: We have to work on it.

ALEX: We have to make an abstraction and try to make the person in front of you like everyone else. That's what I am going to try to do and see if it works

SAMANTHA: Of course it will work

ALEX: And certainly to try and ignore all his tattoos...and I think if I make him suffer a bit run and do pull ups it will make things easier

SAMANTHA: Make him do Fran that will do it

AC: but is that the big question we see someone, we assume certain things it reflects on how we're gonna move as coaches as teachers. So I mean S you've got the Italians "Basta, basta"right?

RICH: Mama mia!

SCOOTER: I thought it was a myth

AC: Really?

SCOOTER: I had him do proper push ups and he said "mama mia!" (laughs) just just touch the chest and "mama mia!" I thought he was making it up, real deal

(All LAUGH)

AC: Well how do you deal with this group right? From the outside I've hear mama mia basta basta and you come in with the idea that..

SCOOTER: Well sure but you just have to look beyond that they're very coachable, they listen

RICH: It's fun, you have a bit more theatrics to your coaching and like yesterday we just went around the warm up which was jumping jacks and angel lunges and squats and I got each one to demo the move and at the end it was like "yay! Applause!"

(All laugh)

RICH: Every every person got a “yay, applause” we just did the warm up and everybody was like yeah! And so it’s fun

AC: And so I was thinking about that because they were in the opposition to the ones that are more difficult?

RICH: Yeah they are easy, for finding faults it’s like...(grimaces)

All laughs

AC: So here are the uncoachables and who are those to you?

Samantha sighs

AC: Samantha?

SAMANTHA: Well I just let them have fun in the time of their life you know like whatever you can correct them if it works good, if it doesn’t too bad. They are still here for fun so yeah...

RICH: So you do the same thing as Conan you just let them...(Conan laughs)

SAMANTHA: No but you know if you go to them one time two times come on knees out or whatever or chest up and you are like good job...nice shoes.

All laugh

RICH: We have the shop over here it’s 60% off..

SAMANTHA: That’s exactly what I did to one guy....oh nice t shirts we have new tshirts!

JENNY: The thing is they get hurt after it ‘s our fault I have students and they don’t want me to teach them I go guys do you want me to teach you cues for the wakeboarding? And they go no no cuz I’m a girl and they think they know better than me

SAMANTHA: umhm

JENNY: But if they get hurt it’s my fault I’m the responsible as well I don’t want to give them cues if they don’t want it. But what am I supposed to do?

AC: This is something that came up in Sarah and Winnie’s interviews so it is a shame that they are not here but both of them have felt a lot of times like the men are whatever little girl I don’t your advice is irrelevant to me and will just keep doing whatever it is they are doing. Which is also a problem right? Because over long term then you start to think Oh god you know I’m gonna have to coach a group of men: It puts you in a doubt right? In already in a position too...so how do you do that?

SAMANTHA: Once in awhile I go and train with them

AC: And?

SAMANTHA: Ahh O you are strong just show them what you can you know

SCOOTER: Show them what you have

SAMANTHA: Yeah



JENNY: But it's not because you are a good athlete that you are a good coach. That's they don't understand that.

SAMANTHA: But you know you aren't gonna show them all it took to get there, no but you can always point out that like you know this is why I am giving you this corrections because I feel that you are uhh using your knees more than you hips and so you are going to end up hurting your knees right so that's why or you're not using your butt or giving them a few terms that they don't really understand and so they are like oh yeah.. and so just seem more credible and but uh without getting where you're not listening to them and umm it's up to you to make yourself credible and competent to coach them and so it's not it's appear more knowledgeable and you know maybe stronger if that helps and yeah it is up to us to prove ourselves in front of them it's not for them to automatically assume that we know more but uhh you know.

AC: I have to say that I can't necessarily well for some WODs go in and say ha ha I am stronger no that doesn't necessarily work for me

SAMANTHA: No but you have so much quality that you

AC: Of course but my tactic will be ok maybe I'll try to do the best I can and really try to do well but uhh for me when I feel like there's an athlete that's like whatever I say don't you think your knees are kind of funny? Oh yeah my knees are kind of funny you know I go into it not I change the role a little bit like now we're two people talking about your body. I feel like your knees are like this, what do you think? Because I'm concerned that your back is going to get screwed. Oh yeah! Ok so it's no longer the coach saying blah! And you get you're a woman you can't tell me what to do. Ok let's move that let's let's forget that I am this woman thing and move it to something else. So that's what I do. But there are times when big guy who is running and I'm like (miming running) hah ha!

ALL laugh

AC: I do do that too you know...so so that's the question is there a need to display a certain dominance in some fashion? I don't know if that's right or not? But what about like we said those that are uncoachable?

SAMANTHA: Well I have one guy Phillip he's a German dude he's very arrogant, small dude, he's in Nyon.

SCOOTER: Little Phillip?

AC: the little thin guy?

SAMANTHA: Yeah, yeah he's like (eye rolling) and he's doing toes to bar and demos good and during the workout I'm like those toes are not touching the bar

RICH: Phillip get to the second line on the wall balls...I can't

SCOOTER: Yeah

SAMANTHA: Yeah so you know you say yes you can do it come on you have to be nice and uh yeah he's a hard one

RICH: He's a weird one yeah

AC: Yeah maybe you should talk about this with C because she really has trouble with him

SCOOTER: I just let him go..(laughs)

AC: Well the problem she will question herself and then she feels bad because she thinks he's a dick (laughs)

SCOOTER: He's just German

AC: there's a stereotype for you

SCOOTER: Ooopps

ALL Laugh

SAMANTHA: They are all the same

SCOOTER: Stereotypes are real time savers

All Laugh

AC: So what do you do?

SCOOTER: You just got to keep trying to coach them like Phillip he's a really good example I mean you just keep tellin' him and one day he'll listen I mean he's not specifically is ignoring women I just think he thinks he has

SAMANTHA: Is a superior race?

All laugh

SCOOTER: Maybe

SAMANTHA: Maybe he's been told that when he was little you know

SCOOTER: Yeah could be I think I think he just feels he has limits you can tell him I mean I've tried to coach him more than once and he goes back to old faults or you know at least he doesn't overload he doesn't go to heavy when he shouldn't a lot of the time I think he should go heavier but I'm ok and I keep telling him knees out, make contact um you know other than that there's nothing else you can do than get a roll of ducttape and tie him up I dunno

CONAN: One of the things to remember generally we are coaching adults

SCOOTER: Yeah

CONAN: They're here because they want to be here. There's few there's few that are in the situation where they are forced to be here by a spouse or something else possibly so umm when you want them to do something you don't have any authority over them other than what they are willing to give you

SCOOTER: Yeah

CONAN: So if you are faced with someone who is unwilling to accept your authority then then you've got to use some other means like you're like it's kind of like a consensus

SCOOTER: Yeah this is for you, come on I'm gonna make this easier on you so do it this way

CONAN: And so yeah I think those ways of trying to work with somebody like that are the only resort because you don't have the authority. It's not like you're at school yeah you don't do your work I'm gonna send you to the principal's office so if you don't squat below parallel...

SAMANTHA: Oh I do that, if you don't do that everybody's getting burpees....ok!

CONAN: that's another way of doing that

SAMANTHA: They don't want to be responsible for everyone getting burpees that's for sure.

AC: So that's a good tactic too though it's just really trying to use the group like

CONAN: Peer pressure

AC: Peer pressure but then there's the idea at keeping at it

SAMANTHA: Well we would never use it on P though

SCOOTER: I try and like aw come on P! You can do better than that

CONAN: I do that as well, I step back from you know all the corrections and just to focus on the one don't give up man, keep trying just keep trying

SCOOTER: You know you can do this so do it

AC: And A now that you are coaching if you have a member that is giving some trouble...?

ALEX: A member that doesn't want to listen to our cues? umm no I...

JENNY: And the pretty girls?

ALEX: No I don't have a problem with that

All laugh

ALEX: I have noticed though that when you are coaching women you automatically you know you have to be careful for certain things

AC: Like what?

ALEX: Uhh you're not going to be in front of here depending on the movements she's got to do but a man you don't have any problem with...a girl you won't necessarily touch and you have to always think but it's not be careful you are going to look at her bra but you don't want her to think that you are looking at her. And you think about that...you won't stand in front of her when she is ...

AC: But that's funny I am not at all I'm just working out

ALEX: Yeah but I just think it's and self- automated kind of control, it's an auto protection

CONAN: It's our way of protecting ourselves

MANDY: Plus there are women who will put on a very pretty bra...

AC: Yes of course

ALEX: And they are certain clothes that they wear and the bend over and the thing falls over and so

All laugh

ALEX: I don't know where to look, to the side

CONAN: It hurts your eyes ah!

ALEX: Yeah automatically you have to be careful...it's a small extra effort...after for those that don't uhh yeah I try to explain why we push for these movements and what would happen if it isn't done correctly so I try to say it one time, two times but I am still in the stage where I really insist so they probably take it wrong but I imagine if you have more experience and you know that you will have to repeat yourself yeah how do you react? You can't give up on them because you are coach and like J said it is your responsibility I still haven't thought about it much...

AC: But do you think it helps in your perspective when a coach isn't doing well do you think that way are you worried with how the coach is looking at you when you are an athlete? Maybe most of the women...but when I train and I am training with my shirt off I am totally ok that someone will look at me it doesn't bother me so much because I am confident and so voila does it help knowing that?

AC: No huh?

ALEX: Because it's also the regard of all the others that are in the class...

AC: Yeah but I am thinking of someone like CA who has a body that no one can not look at...everyone is going to look because she is magnificent but you are afraid of looking like a pervert but in fact it is something that is normal and if it's a woman who is wearing revealing stuff she knows everyone will stare... I'm trying to give you guys something to get you more comfortable and there is also the idea of just asking is it ok if I touch you...I dunno so what would be the solutions?

CONAN: So for me, umm I've made like since discovering it I've made a conscious effort to give them the same amount of time as I do everybody else in the class so the result has been that I am a little more systematic at working my way through everybody that is in my class and giving them each the individual time that they desire and so whilst I am doing it although I may be kinda still like standing in places that are innocent where's there's no... where I am not appearing as an aggressor uhh I'm not sure how to describe that but you know like I wouldn't be standing in front or behind I would be on the side

SAMANTHA: Well anyway that's the best way to see the movement

CONAN: Yeah but... I still have that feeling that I'm going to give her the coaching that she deserves but I am going to do not that in such a way that I am still not appearing like just waiting to get in there and put my hand on her back and say right now we are going to fix your deadlift...it's still there's still although I am giving now the attention that she deserves there's still a second where I will say ok I am going to put your hand on your lower back now before whereas with somebody else I would probably just go and say (knocking sound) right this is where I want you to concentrate so that still affects me but I am now making a conscious effort of making my way through everybody in the class

AC: Hmm ok so working through everybody..

CONAN: That's the way that I have been able to to say improve on that stereotype I wouldn't say that I am able to ignore that stereotype but that's how I have been working on it and the same thing with the shitty movers the kids with spaghetti arms and all that stuff and yeah so despite it being a real uphill battle where every rep is not a consistent error you know so you try and fix one thing but the next

SCOOTER: Is a reaction to whatever your correction was

CONAN: Yeah exactly you know we are doing shoulder presses man and all of the sudden I am correcting a push press and all of the sudden it's a push jerk and it's like noo I am trying to fix a press so I've been I've been trying to as well is sticking with it sticking with it for that minute or whatever that I have allocated in my class to that person. That has been a big I won't call it a big change but a more consistent approach now that I wasn't applying as consistently before because of my fears

AC: What about you guys I mean what about you guys with regards to pretty ladies

CONAN: Uhh Scooter is ok with that but I do have one that Scooter has

AC: Oh go ahead

CONAN: Me

SCOOTER: Yeah?

CONAN: If I am in your class

SAMANTHA: Yeah me too

SCOOTER: Oh yeah you guys I know oh absolutely

AC: What happens?

SAMANTHA: We're uncoachable right?

CONAN: Stop let Scooter talk

(R laughs)

SCOOTER: No I just get nervous super nervous when you guys are in my class because I know...

CONAN: So you have the authority problem

SCOOTER: Oh absolutely, absolutely

CONAN: Does that if you have Winston in your class or...?

SCOOTER: I've had Winston in my class I didn't have a problem with him but I think a lot of that is situational too umm because we had Snatches and umm I'm comfortable coaching a Snatch and Winston does a Snatch fine so there's not a lot of coaching necessary there and when he's banging out 5 reps at 80 kilos I'm not really concerned that

CONAN: No

SCOOTER: That something off

CONAN: But there are corrections to his technique to be made

SCOOTER: I just ignore them yeah I have a hard time coaching other coaches it's true so I umm maybe I need to address that

AC: Oh that's cool I thought it was just cuz you thought I sucked so bad that I was hopeless

SCOOTER: No it's like and internal thing...it's like

CONAN: From my perspective I know I am not a perfect mover and I do quite appreciate when somebody does come and give me some corrections because I almost don't get any it doesn't really matter whose class I am in everybody assumes well

SCOOTER: Well you are the first person to get a Level 1 in the country

(E laughs)

SCOOTER: We assume that you probably have the shit dialled in

CONAN: But it's not perfect

SCOOTER: Yeah you know it's true

CONAN: so if you can see stuff that can help me I am interested in learning that because I can't see I don't train in front of a mirror right? So..

SAMANTHA: Oh so it's right the class starts by Samantha is here careful like oh I am going to try and behave (laughs)...it's ok we are human

CONAN: So I would really like that attention

SAMANTHA: Yeah I want to have the right you know (laughs)

SCOOTER: OK fair enough

CONAN: When we are doing the ITP you guys work your way through and then you kind of look at me and that's very good Conan and then you move on to the next one. Now it's possible that you aren't seeing any errors in which case it's an opportunity for us to actually like try and improve your knowledge on the movement so...use that use that time give me that time I need it too.

SCOOTER: Yeah I think part of it is I see you guys and I'm kind of blind to it

CONAN: Your assumption is we are coaches we know the movement and therefore

SCOOTER: your moving correctly

CONAN: Right but you know it's a learning opportunity for all of us

SCOOTER: I need to take a step back

CONAN: You as a coach and me as a A A A (laughter) I am not sure I can say it I don't deserve the title

(All laugh)

CONAN: As a masters, as one masters to another

RICH: As a Spinalfitter

AC; E, SCOOTER: As a spinalfitter!!

SCOOTER: Ok yeah thank you no that's you know I don't I don't know if I consciously I know I am doing it but I didn't realize that it is that evident so...

AC: So again it comes to having an outside observer is really a good thing to do

CONAN: Personally for me that observation I don't think I would have ever made if we didn't have these discussions beforehand and so I am starting to look at how the other coaches

are approaching things and I'm oh like R always has this issue and now I am much more open to it but uh for example you telling me about asking about their time I was like Fuck! Yeah I know I do that every every session I ask people how their workout was how their workout was I'm interested in sharing their pain with them but I never realized I was only asking a certain type of person that question uhh and so that's been just been like oh that's not cool I need to fix that but without you telling me that I don't think I would have ever been able to observe that myself perhaps perhaps if I filmed my class and I watched it afterwards I might have noticed that? But I am not convinced

SAMANTHA: Can you film your class with the dude?

CONAN: I don't know if you were aware of that but not necessarily

SCOOTER: Yeah I didn't I didn't realize it was evident I just thought you know I was doing a good job of being calm

CONAN: Yeah for sure

(All laugh)

AC: Well I have to say as a newbie coach whenever I have athletes of an advanced level and I'm like I can't do what you are doing I see something but I'm not sure because it is really subtle on this point I mean you have a perfect pull and all the obvious stuff that are easy to correct are done. So then it's more of an exchange I think you're doing this how do you feel about it or I see that you have that one foot that goes up on your cleans that doesn't look right what do you think but it really has to be I can't put myself in a position like I know better than you but I can say I think

CONAN: So yeah but it's not a question of knowing better you're an outside an eye

AC: So I say I think...I see I relate what I see without

CONAN: So you can share an observation it doesn't necessarily mean

RICH: Without judgement

CONAN: Exactly It's not a judgement on I've got a better snatch than you so shut the fuck up. Uhh P has a snatch of 110 kilos mine is 55? 60? No 67? That was my all time PR certainly not at the moment anyway and that doesn't mean that I can't see stuff in his Snatch that is going wrong and so why not have that exchange it might mean that your authority is at a different level

AC: right

CONAN: and so at that time when you are dealing with somebody like that at what level do you intervene as as a an outside observer and uh at this stage you are clearly doing this wrong..

AC: What do you think I mean you haven't said much with regards to

RICH: Well as E just said as a coach it's a question of being objective and you're just it's not I think that your snatch is shitty you say well a bit of early arm pull and you just see something and you state it as it is and it's not a subjective umm it's not an opinion it's just a statement and if you remain objective they you're I don't think you're I mean some people may be offended but you're not gonna be...

SAMANTHA: You had a problem with an athlete the other day that was questioning your...

RICH: I was gonna say the but again remaining objective we were doing...

SAMANTHA: Lunges

AC: Who was it?

RICH: Lunges and somebody asked me Lisa asked me what you know it was the sets of 12 umm lunges before doing the WOD so it was reverse front rack lunges and so Lisa was like ok well what should we be aiming for for the weight? And I had to pause and think about it well I said well the last set of 12 aim for 50 to 60 % of your Power Clean so if you've got you know your 1 rep power clean and I said to the class you know if you guys are wondering what kind of weight you should be aiming for you've got 4 sets of 12 aim for build up the weight and on the last set of 12 as an indication look at somewhere between 60-70% of your power clean. And Max was like (eye rolling and grimacing) and I saw him and I was like Max is there a problem? He's like nah I don't understand well I'm just giving you an indication to what you should be building up for the 4 sets so don't start too heavy you want to start the first set and build up the weight second, third and on the fourth set look at 50-60% of your power cleans and says this has nothing to do with Power Cleans and then he picks up his bar and does a power clean to get it into his front rack so I'm like well what did you just do? A power clean; I was like ok so your last set of 12 maybe look at 50-60% of what you've just done and he was like (eye rolling). I was like you little fucker and I just let it go but it was really in front of the whole class this fucking old guy fucking talking nonsense and so at the end of the class I went up to him and I was like Max this isn't the first time that I've coached you and you've given me some indication that you are questioning my coaching so first off if you have an issue with my coaching you can either come to me and talk to me about it or go and talk to Conan or Samantha and we can talk about but in the future if you question my coaching and you do it in front of the whole class I'm going to take offense on that and just so that we are clear and have it out open so that there is no misunderstanding you are a year older than my son and my son wouldn't talk or look at me like I was a fucking cretin in front of a group of people so I would appreciate it if you would refrain from doing that and again if you have an issue with my coaching come talk to me

AC: what did he do?

RICH: Well uhh I am it's just that I am here to learn and I am entitled to question yes you are entitled to question which is what I am saying and you can come and talk to me but don't scoff and look at me like I am a fucking a cretin in front of the class because it is not the first time you've done it. So so it was just a put it out there clear make it clear it was not I didn't get all upset and you know you fucking little kid if you do it again I'm gonna bitch slap you

AC: Which is what part of you wanted to do right?

RICH: Yeah yeah I did it was like but it was like ok poof and that was that so now I am curious to see how it will be next time

AC: Would you say that you have less patience with the younger ones? Because I was thinking about Sheila as well so I was wondering...

RICH: no...no the young no no, Sheila if anything I think is funny



SCOOTER: What? Where? How? Huh? What did you say?

(All chuckle)

SAMANTHA: What did you say?

AC: Can you tell me again?

CONAN: I had to stay with her a full round in a workout to make sure that she finished in that right order..you've got two more no what? Where? I've got two more? Ok I'm finished now no you have two more (laughter)

RICH: But again just to finish with the Max thing and it is what you say in the Level 2 that you need to be going and giving cues and go around the class and you have to give shared attention to everybody and the Max thing when he was like (make gesture) it really fucking pissed me off and I wanted to take him to task then and there but I just went you know...ok and moved on so I think when you remain objective and not get into I mean that's part of the thing of being a coach I mean you have to not get into the whole subjective thing it's part of the act and and take a step back and remain as objective as you can be

CONAN: That's really hard

RICH: it is

AC: so would you think again one of the solutions is (tick tock sound)

RICH: Yeah

AC: making sure you see them all just knocking down all those bottles

CONAN: yeah but the thing is you you do need to spend equivalent but it's hard to say equivalent because some people need more than others some will respond very quickly and others will need 4, 5 6 cues and different ways of approaching the problem before they understand you but the issue is ok I can fix giving each person the same amount of time but am I giving them the same amount of attention in that amount of time and then is that a problem I mean you can spend 1 minute with Max but if you are angry with him how good is that minute going to be for him

RICH: Or you?

CONAN: or you so umm I think that's the second step the first is yeah I am giving you all and I am paying attention and I have worked with all my class I didn't ignore the teen that is hiding in the background because she is worried about whatever and I am not able to I mean I have no rapport I mean I've got boys what rapport would I have with a 14 year old girl I don't even know where to start so I guess that's the first step to make sure you are giving everyone attention and then the second step is to say am I giving everybody and equivalent quality of attention

RICH: that was the thing with me and Max it was like and it was a conscious thing I could have gone on and on and I was like there is a whole class so no and you need to move on and so you say your thing and move on

CONAN: I have had time when the minute has come up for I am calling it minute and the minute has come up for a certain person and the one I am thinking of is Ramir and I struggle

with him I don't know what to talk to him about I have that stare that he gives and I can't I can't and

SCOOTER: Yeah I don't have much interaction with him just take some of that weight off that bar

CONAN: Yeah and there are some movements when there is not a lot to fix on him he's relative he's a pretty good mover and what happens is I will see him at a particular moment in a workout and I will see him and he doesn't really need help with this piece so I will move on and wait for him to get to a moment where he is shitty and the shitty movement and now your box jumps are ok right? Umm but your snatch is needs some work so let's try and work on on the snatch so there's time when rather than moving from person to the next systematically because I will change the order because I can give them more when they are doing this movement than that one

AC: But this is where we have to be careful because we either skip the advanced athlete or we spend a little more time with them for a certain thing you know? But so what you guys think is really having outside observation is really good, trying to systematically see everyone and remain objective and are solutions to keep us from giving our attention in an unequal way I mean is that what I am hearing?

CONAN: I dunno do you think an outside observer is helping? If you...

(All say yes)

JENNY: Yes we don't I don't realize that I am doing it and I don't see sometimes I am really mad with someone

AC: So there is a lot I could point out...uh what's a good one? Oh yes allez les gars, come on brother, go man...all these things get said a lot but there is one man in the room... one. Who are we encouraging? Those kinds of things...those are the kinds of things that are relatively problematic because that that's not equal.

CONAN: So you've got me thinking again now and without that outside observation I am not sure if I am guilty of that or not so I am going to have to think about it..

MANDY: But for me as a woman when I hear that I don't think of myself as separate from the guys, I am part of the guys and I take it like that

CONAN: But that's you...

AC: Plus I am not a francophone so when I hear that in French I'm like

MANDY: That's rude

AC: what the fuck but I am here too...

(interruption)

