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## 5 Elements of Effective Encouragement © 2025-09-09

**Yellow Belt Question:** What are the five Elements of Effective Encouragement?

**Yellow Belt Succinct Answer:**

1. Be sincere (only say it if I mean it).
2. The closer to the time of the event the better.
3. Be as specific as possible.
4. Say or write what I sensed (saw, touched, heard, smelled, or tasted) that you did.
5. And say or write why I appreciate it.

**Why These Skills Are Important:**

- Encouragement is effective positive reinforcement for training, and it helps maintain fun and energy in my group.
- [Free Video 8, 3:50-4:30](#)
- [Muddling Along or Unity: Confessions of a Recovering Jerk, p. 60](#)

**Explanations of the Yellow Belt Succinct Answer:**

- Regarding being as specific as possible - If I give vague encouragement, the other person generally thinks of all the things they did wrong, which puts the wrong pictures in their head, which makes it more likely they will repeat the wrong. The more specific the encouragement, the more likely the person will not argue with it, which puts pictures of the good in their head, which makes it more likely they will repeat the good.
- A specific type of encouragement that provides a powerful boost of motivation is pointing out the Gain to someone who is trying to improve.
  - Gain - The difference between where I was and where I am.
  - Gap - The difference between where I am and the ideal of where I think I ought to be. The person improving rarely notices the Gain. The Gap constantly looms. Frustratingly, as a person Gains, the Gap generally increases because the more you know the more you realize you don't know. Many Gains do not make life easier, they just make you more effective. Trainers need to do effective encouragement.

**Illustrations of the Skills:**

- [Free Video 8, 5:47-8:32 \(Girls' Volleyball Team\)](#)
- [Muddling Along or Unity, pp. 63-64 \(Girls' Volleyball Team\)](#)