

A photograph of an ice hockey rink with a goal in the background. The scene is dimly lit, with a bright light source from the left creating a strong glow and casting long shadows. The title text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

# **HOCKEY LEADERSHIP & COACHING**

**From theory to practice and drills**



**HockeyCoach.se – Jukka Aro**

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## Energy / Engagement

### Goals / Direction

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- Visualization
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- Capacity
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- Capacity - Skating

- Capacity – Passing
- Capacity – Shots
- Capacity – Food, rest and sleep
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- Capacity – Small improvements

## **Teamwork**

- Team spirit
- Team spirit – Clear roles
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## **Teamwork**

- Collaboration losses
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## **Results**

- Results – Goal scoring

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## **A father's wish**

Dear Hockey Coach,

Tomorrow my son starts to start in the hockey school. He will go out on the ice, to begin his great adventure, which I am sure will include both joy and disappointment.

I wish you could take him in the hand and teach him the things he needs to know. Teach him to respect the referee and that his judgment is final, he will not change it by complaining.

Teach him not to hate his opponents or see them as enemies, instead teach him to value them, and his own skills and performance. Teach him to compete against the situation and the challenge, not against an enemy.

Teach him to be a team player and that it each role is equally important and that the pass before a goal, is as important as it is to score. I know, the goals count, but still...

Teach him to never blame his own goalkeeper when a goal is made against him, five mistakes were made before the puck ended up in his goal.

Teach him that it is much more honorable to lose by doing his best than cheating to success.

Teach him to be a competitor who focuses on the team's goal and achievement, as well as on individual goals and his own performance.

Teach him to close his ears to unnecessary criticism from the stands and to stand up for himself in difficult situations,

if he thinks he is right.

Teach him carefully, but don't curl him, because only the fire makes fine steel.

This is a great desire coach, I know, but I put my son in your hands. See what you can do for, and with him. He's such a nice little guy.

/His father

## **Being a leader**

A leader role is not easy regardless of sport. The demands and expectations are sometimes great (you can only look at the fictional example, a father's wish). You have to deal with hockey's seasonal and training planning, create exercises, talk to parents, moms, fathers, grandparents, fans, other coaches, media, newspapers, teach ethics, be a psychologist, diplomat, win, let all players be a part of team, manage losses, have fun, coach, support, set rules, norms, visions, goals, develop team...

Or as a job ad for a youth coach could look like:

## **Youth Coach - Vacancy**

You will work with a group of 20-30 young people. We see as a very important that you are able to motivate others, since there are different engagement levels in the group and around the team. You should create “the internal drive”.

**Working hours:** Flexible, but usually weekday evenings, early afternoons, weekends with early mornings and full days (to some extent overnight stays are also included), even some “24/7 call service” occur, and that some tasks need of course to be handled during the day, as contacts with the employer.

**Financial compensation:** 0 €/\$/£ (currency is not important, we look for the right candidate) You have to pay an annual membership fee of 50 €/\$/£ and of course the annual fee for your own children who are part of the group or in other groups.

Pay for your profiled work clothes and other work-related personal equipment.

Pay for your trips to, and from your work (Frequent flexible travelling within the region, sometimes outside, we see it as an advantage if you have a large car).

...and participate in various events and sales activities (this is required, so you can do your work).

We view education as important and expect you to continuously educate yourself in defined training programs, to some extent at your own expense. You should also practice and participate in the trainings for: prevention of injuries, emergency care and diet counseling as well as the

internal meetings (we try to schedule these as much as possible on your vacant evening so that you can participate).

You are responsible for ensuring that you, the group and relatives follow the set values and act on the basis of the developed policy, as the task is to educate future adults, by: Educating and developing all individuals in the group, starting from their conditions. (Here the requirement picture from relatives may vary and does not necessary relate to attendance and player engagement level) Being responsible, accountable, answer and argue for your training methods, choices, results and decisions, to the group's relatives and if necessary for the employer. (Here late evening work might occur and we expect you to have your own phone)

You are responsible for ensuring that all activities are well-planned, performed efficiently, with discipline and good organization, which provides opportunities for development for everyone. This requires great flexibility and innovative ability, as the pre-conditions, training attendance, times, engagement levels etc. vary and can be changed with short notice.

You are responsible to ensure that relatives occupy a number of roles and posts around the team (you can of course have double roles) and in working groups internally and with the employer and contribute with their time and commitment according to the employer's directive.

**If this sounds interesting, don't hesitate, maybe YOU'RE just the one we're looking for!?**

Challenging! Still fun and developing, or otherwise no one would take such a role?



I hope that I can give you some theoretical advice and practical tools in your hockey leadership role, no, I'm pretty sure you'll find valuable tips, advice and knowledge in this book in order to be a successful and communicative leader and Hockey Coach.

## **The author**

Who am I then? My name is Jukka Aro, born 1976 and have worked with leadership, team and operational development for almost 20 years (professionally) and as a coach on different levels for 25 years. I have the highest coaching degree of sports-specific training (ice hockey) and the highest degree for sports, from a coaching academy and other leadership and management trainings and courses. Leadership and teamwork is my profession.

## **Is it possible to predict success?**

Is it possible to predict whether a hockey team or a leader will succeed or fail with a team? I say it is, and that luck has nothing to do with it. I will explain leadership blocks that will be used to secure your success as a hockey leader or coach. The hockey leadership model, which you will find on the following pages, can be used to build things from the beginning or to analyze where you are at the moment and which parts you can improve or you are strong in (strengths and weaknesses), the model can also be used in communication, to secure you reach out with your message.

Even though I say hockey's leadership model, it will work outside the hockey and in other sports. The leadership methods and tools are the same in football, basketball, floorball, associations, companies, boardrooms etc.

## **Briefly about the book before we continue**

The text in the book can certainly sometimes be perceived as a bit jumpy between the headlines, because I have originally written the text in small pieces to a blog, or in

some cases as short own memory notes, which create added value or I felt were important learnings.

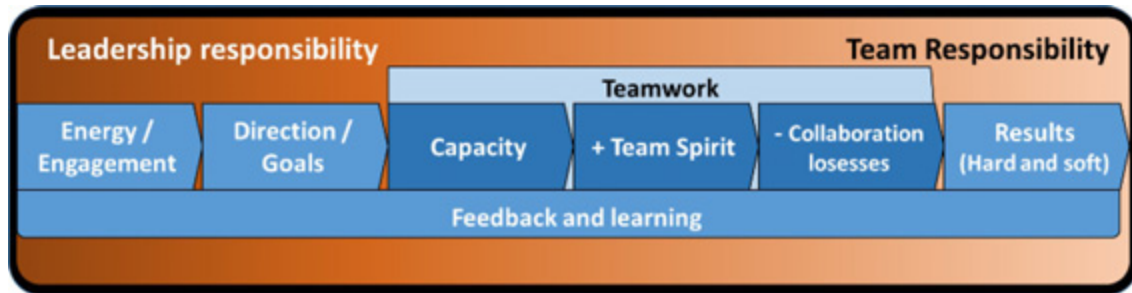
Since the book has been written for a blog or more as a guide for leadership, it is not always like reading a "normal" book, with a clear red thread from topic to topic and between each chapter, the transitions can hang on a thin red thread in some cases, although I have spent a lot of time connecting the text.

Certain repetitions also occur when the subject can be linked to different leadership blocks depending on how the subject is angled. Your guiding light should be the different main chapters / leadership blocks where I have visualized the transitions between the blocks through the image of the leadership model and the content of the chapter is always linked to the respective leadership blocks.

I have also chosen to refer many times to football leader José Mourinho in this hockey book, although the last years have been tough for him, but I think it is important to get influences outside the "innermost hockey circle". The content is also a mixture of leadership theories, real and fictional examples, as well as practical hockey coaching from basic level to more advanced and from leadership to hockey drills. The book should give you an overall picture of being a leader and coach both on and off the ice for your hockey team and what is required in different areas to succeed with your team. Enough with explanations and possible excuses. I am convinced that you will benefit from the book with new ideas, theories, lessons, exercises and to structure your previous skills to develop yourself as a leader and your team.

*When it comes to the grammatical and language in the book, I'm Finnish (mother tongue), living in Sweden and fluent in Swedish, so English is my third language, if you find some grammatical errors or funny / strange expression, you know why... Please try to see above the "Swenglish" and just try to catch the message 😊*

## The leadership model



### About the leadership model

Above you see my interpretation of what needs to be in place to succeed as a leader of a team or a working group. I have combined some different leadership models and theories into one own coherent leadership model, these are the elements that I think you need to work on getting in place in each team to be successful.

I see a clear connection between a group's success and how well you get the different blocks in place. So in other words, success is predictable, and luck has nothing to do with lasting success!

The first part that must be in place is energy / engagement. When you have energy / engagement, you have to steer and direct it. When you have energy / engagement and direction, you have to get the team to work together (Teamwork) this part consists of three important components, capacity, team spirit and collaborative losses.

When the first three blocks are in place, you can expect results and these can vary depending on how you succeeded with the first three blocks. You must take care of

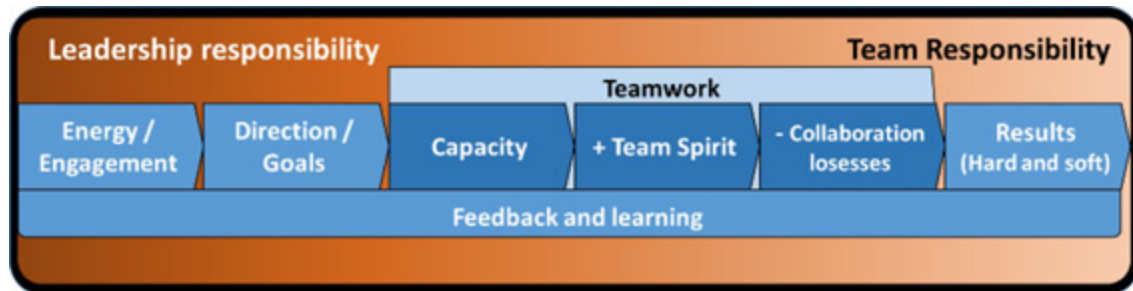
the results that comes from the process within the team and visualize those and communicate these.

The last part is about feedback, feedback can be given on each individual block and will strengthen the different blocks in the management model, depending on how the feedback is given.

I will now begin to explain each block more in detail, but still at the overall level to give you the whole picture before we go into details, theories, methods and tools and deep dives into each block.

*"We lead the league with nine points. Is it because we have been lucky? Of course not. It is about anything but luck when you talk about my players."  
/ José Mourinho*

## Leadership responsibility vs Team responsibility



### The scale

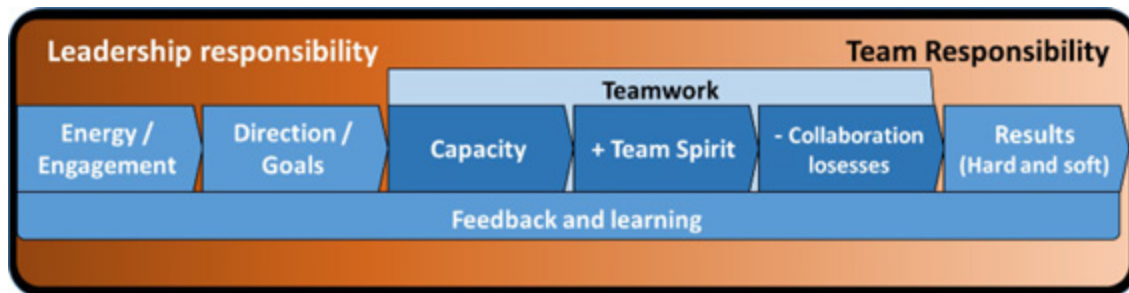
At the top you can see a scale describing the split of responsibility between the leader and the team, it's not a sharp line, but leadership responsibility is more to the left and team responsibility from middle towards the right.

Of course, the leader is always responsible for all aspects and especially for the team's results and performance, but it is the team that delivers the results and makes the work. The leader's main elements are at the beginning, with the creation of energy / engagement, focus the energy through the formulation of goals and strengthening the teamwork block.

The team's main responsibility is the team work as such (performance) and results, with obvious support and guidance from the leader.

Feedback is a shared responsibility, from coach to team, from team member to team member and from player to coach.

## Energy / Engagement



## Energy / Engagement

To explain why we do something or why we need to do things in a certain way is the foundation of energy, together with the description of opportunities, obstacles and threats.

If you do not know why or do something because you "must" without understanding why, you will never have any extra engagement and energy to do so, because you do not understand why, and it can only feel unnecessary when there is a lack of understanding.

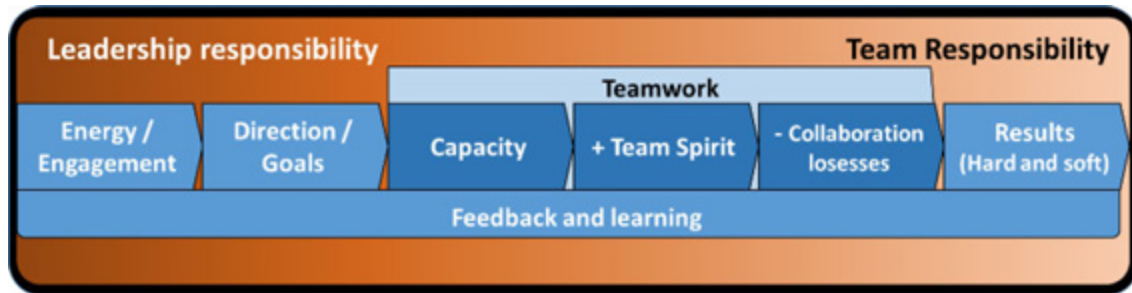
You as a leader or coach also need to know the reason why your players are there. Why are they in the team and why do they come to the training? What drives the individual player? This will help you understand the individual driving force of each player when you know why they are there.

*"Here, in every exercise, every match and every minute of your social life must steer towards the goal of being a champion"  
"First line" will not be a correct word. I need you all. You need*



*each other. We are one team." (In a letter sent to the  
players)  
/ José Mourinho*

## Goals / Direction



## Goals / Direction

When energy / engagement is there by understanding why, why we are there, why we practice in a certain way, why we practice different things etc. We need to control the energy / engagement with what we strive for, what is the purpose, what is the goal for the drill / practice, what is our vision, goals, focus areas, norms, rules, values etc.

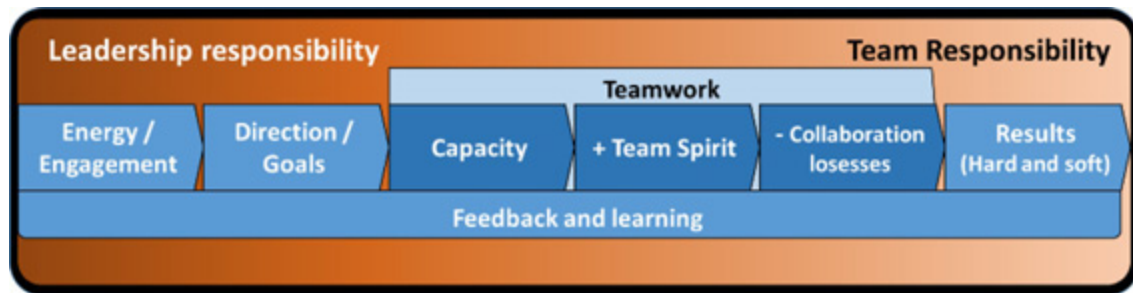
The vision, goals and objectives guide the achievement in the desired direction, norms, values and rules will indicate the direction for team work within the team. You have a limited amount of energy, steer it against what you want to achieve or improve. What is the goal and purpose, with what we do?

*"I want to see Mr. Moratti holding the trophy and watching him cry."*

*"I have to defend what is mine. Currently, it's my Champions League. I'm the last winner - so it's my tournament."*

*"I'm absolutely sure we'll be champions next season."  
/ José Mourinho*

## Teamwork



## Teamwork

Teamwork = (Capacity + team spirit) - Collaboration losses  
The third block is about teamwork, how you and your players work together.

The three parts in the middle are about teamwork within the team during a training, match and outside, the parts come from Steiner's model with small changes, it describes the group's cooperation and the conditions for achieving results. The Steiner model is based on what we can strengthen within our team, capacity and team spirit and try to minimize the third, collaborative losses.

**Capacity** can be defined e.g. such as training and utilization of knowledge, skills, physical, mental skills, equipment, facilities, coaches, training times and opportunities etc.

**Team spirit** can sometimes be difficult to define, it is something that is in the group and that makes the team stronger. Togetherness, clear roles, security, appreciation, positive climate, community, common vision and goals can be some keywords when we talk about team spirit, 1 + 1 becomes more than two.

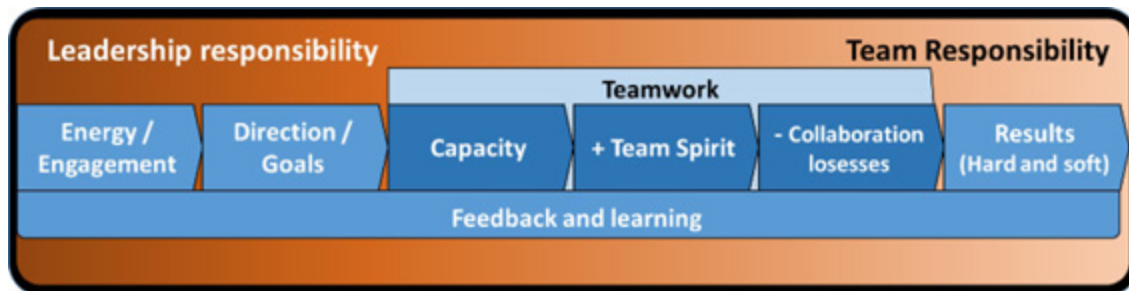
**Collaboration losses** can involve, for example, unclear roles, incorrect positions on the plan, bad passes, unsynchronized activities, bad timing, in short, all "errors" that complicate and impair the team.

The second part of collaborative losses is about loss of motivation in groups.

Motivation losses tend to occur when the team size increases, or when the leader does not see all the players, then you suddenly do not get 100% from each team member, this phenomenon is called social loafing, the player / players feel that "I am not important for the team and I don't have to do my best, my achievement is not so important and will not be visible, to the team, the leader or the audience."

*"We have top-class players and, sorry if I sound arrogant, we have a top-class trainer" / José Mourinho*

## Results



## Results

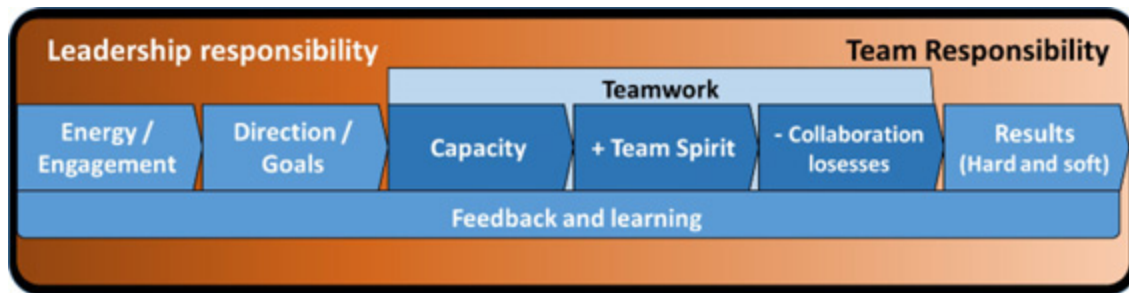
What have we achieved? What results can you see? It is important to see both hard (objective) results, such as points, improved speed (time), skills (skills track on time) etc. But also to see the soft results, such as improved cooperation / teamwork, team spirit, communication, fighting spirit etc. The follow-up of the results is usually a minor problem in sport, than in, for example, many workplaces.

In sports you have the points in the match, your league position, how many goals you have done, how many goals you have allowed, power play statistics, number of shots etc. but in the workplace it can be more diffuse many times, how do you know you are doing a good job, or how do you know you are performing at work? Many companies strive for "world class", but have not defined it, or have no idea what it really means, or how their competitors perform, there is no league table available and updated weekly.

Visualize what you have achieved, hard and soft results. Small and large. Short and long term. Visualization of results will also strengthen the "direction" of energy.

*"We're not entertaining? Okay, I don't care, we win ..." / José  
Mourinho*

## Feedback



## Feedback

How was the result? How was the energy, motivation, teamwork and results? What did we do well? What can be improved? What have we learned? What do we take with us in the future? Your feedback will affect all parts of the model, energy, direction, cooperation and the results you will achieve in the future, or specific depending on your approach, where do you want a changed behavior or what behavior do you want to keep and strengthen?

This is perhaps the part that many of us do not spend so much time on, or if we lack time, e.g. after a practice, this is the block we are likely to skip, but this is an important part. It is about learning for the future, for the next exercise, training, match, so that we will be improving our performance over time.

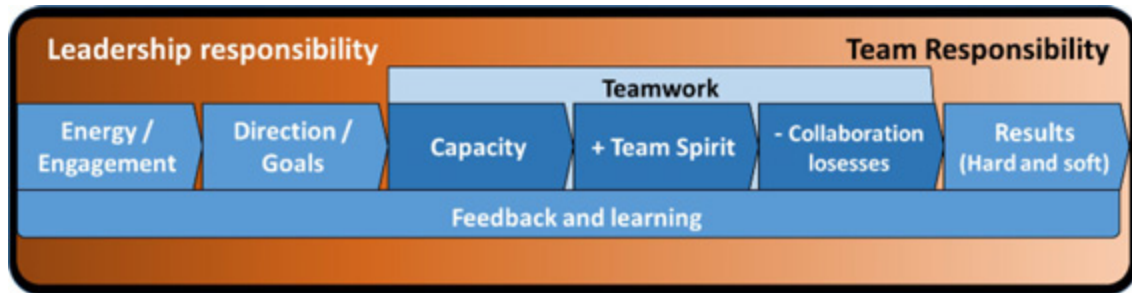
*"We should have won this game with seven players. Perhaps with six we would have had to fight, but we would have won with seven." / José Mourinho*

*"I hate to talk to players individually. Players do not win trophies, teams win trophies ... I love players who love to*

*win.*  
*/ José Mourinho*



## Categorize your previous knowledge



## Categorize your previous knowledge

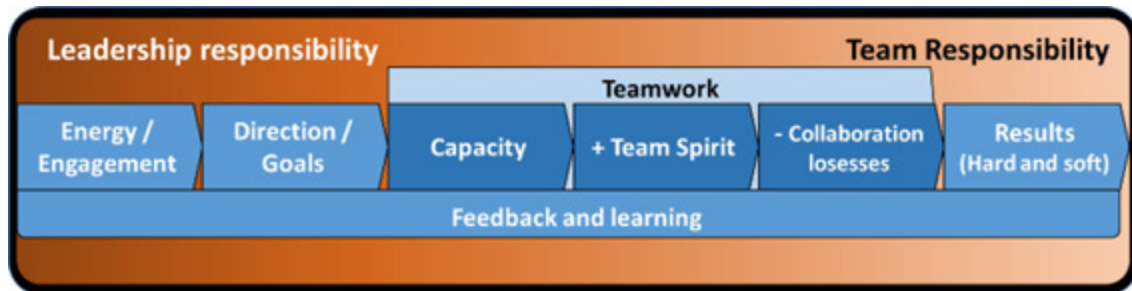
You probably already have a good and broad knowledge of many of the blocks, this is a good way to structure the previous knowledge, at least it is so for me.

Many times you participate in special courses and training on goal setting, collaboration or team building, but you get no holistic view or how the parts are connected, affect and interlink with each other. I think this model can give you the links and a way to structure it.

Jose Mourinho quotes are in some cases "over the border" or even extreme and therefore you have to find your own way of expressing things, but I believe his statements clearly visualize e.g. his goal for the next season and what he wants with the team.

With his clear communication, the goals or the type of rules and norms he has and values within the team become clear to all players involved, the people around the team, including the media and the fans.

## Analyze your team's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats - SWOT



## Analyze your team's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats - SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)

Use the blocks to analyze your own team, where you are strong and where are you weak. You can use the model at different levels, for the whole organization, the club, for the team, the group of players, e.g. goalkeepers, defense, or forwards and for individual players and of course for yourself as a coach.

It is also suitable for the whole season, every practice or for each drill. Why do we have this drill? What is the purpose of it, what do we want to improve? What / Who Do You Need to perform it? What are the teaching points (to avoid co-operational losses)? How was the result? What could you see? How did the players feel that they were performing? What worked well? What can be improved?

Or from a team perspective, why are we in this team, what's the purpose of what we are doing? What is our purpose, what are we aiming for? How should we do it? Where or how can we see the results? How can we learn during the

journey? This activity can of course and should be in different dimensions, short-, mid- and long-term.

In the beginning I also mentioned the model can be used for communication. When you are delivering a message or speech, why are you doing it, what do you want to achieve with you message, what does the audience need to know-feel-do? How will you do it, just talk, use a flipchart, PowerPoint? How do you know you get the results with the communication (look back to the three words, know - feel - do), finally ask for feedback, what was good, what can improved?

This is the model in brief at the overall level and we will now start to dig into each part deeper, I personally think it is better to give you the overall picture at a high level before we go into the details, so you don't have to try to figure out how the picture of this puzzle looks when you read the details and that at the end you understand how everything is connected.

I think you already now have a pretty good picture of the message I want to convey? Now we will only strengthen each part more theoretically, practically and with more details.

### **Before you continue reading**

It was the introduction at the overall level, I hope you have an overview and understanding of the management model and the blocks and parts on which it is based.

*"The text in the book can certainly sometimes be perceived as something jumpy between the headlines, it is because I have originally written the text in small pieces to a blog, or in some cases as short own memory notes, which create added value. Since it has been written for a blog or more as*

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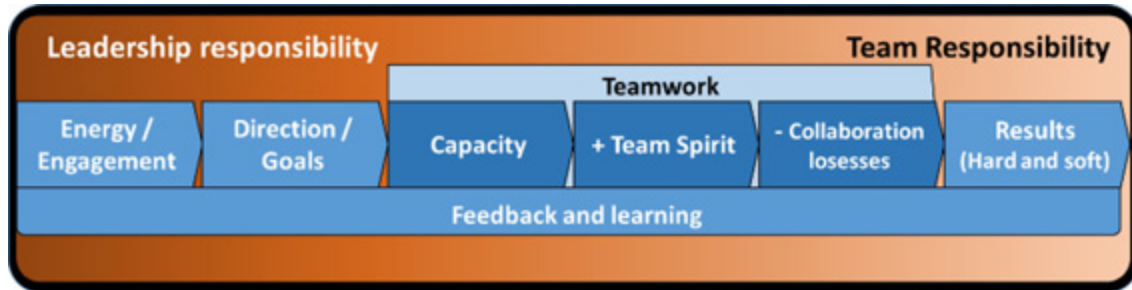
*The content is also a mixture of leadership theories, real and fictional examples, as well as practical hockey coaching from basic level to more advanced and from leadership to hockey exercises.*

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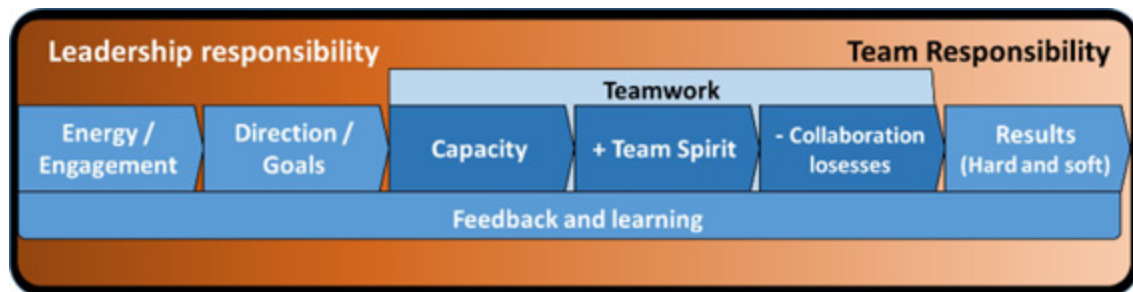
*Enough with explanations and possible excuses. I am convinced that you will benefit from the book with new ideas, theories, lessons, exercises and to structure your previous skills to develop yourself as a leader and your team."*

*"Repetition is a powerful teaching method and tool. Through repetition, an idea will be integrated as a normal thing, even though it was innovative or completely new from the beginning."*

# Energy / Engagement



## Energy / Engagement



**Category: Energy / Engagement:** Explaining why we do something or why we do things in a certain way is the foundation together with the description of opportunities and threats. If you do not know why you are doing or should do something, you will never have any extra motivation to do so, because you do not understand the why.

### The power in three letters

Think of a situation where you did not have the true energy or motivation to do something. A situation where you couldn't feel any desire to do it at all. Do you have the picture and the feeling, for that situation?

Was there something missing or something said or why didn't you feel motivated? Was the task important to you, or to someone else?

I can use one of my examples, it is of course from the sport. I played hockey and had my position on the right side. On some of the exercises on our hockey training I would go up the red line and then turn and go towards the middle, and then the defender would pass the puck on the same side that I went from, to another forward.