

FOREWORD

I have met many coaches around the world through my books and coaching travels, but few challenge me to think about coaching and practice like Harri Mannonen. As with many coaching associates, I knew Harri initially through the Internet, but did not meet him until I visited Finland in May of 2018. Over 10 days and numerous clinics and practices, he continually challenged my thinking and beliefs.

Harri applies the pertinent research to coaching better than anyone of whom I am aware. He changed my approach to shooting development with the idea that to be “game-like”, a shooting drill must have, at minimum, a defender and a passing option. In this book, he again has combined research that few understand to the practical art of coaching.

Few coaches are concerned with coaching theories. Most coaches coach as they were coached, and many ask few questions of their process, especially if they played for successful coaches or had a successful playing career. Whereas nothing truly replaces coaching experiences, an understanding of the basic coaching paradigms and theories informs one’s coaching. In this book, Harri has explained some basic theories of coaching and their shortcomings, and added to our theoretical understanding of coaching as a discipline by framing coaching within systems theory and complexity.

Through the last decade, systems theory and complexity have impacted the way in which we see the world, but this book is the first, to my knowledge, to situate coaching within systems theory.

This sounds academic and theoretical, but Harri manages to add practical value for coaches. This is a rare achievement. From experience, I can attest that writing a book that stands up to scientific and academic rigor, while providing value for coaches, is very difficult. This book succeeds in both respects.

It describes the basic coaching paradigms and explains their shortcomings before providing a more expansive theory for the coaching profession, while providing real examples that coaches can use tomorrow in their practices.

This is an important addition to the coaching literature, and a book that can be used a textbook for coaching principles as well as a resource for coaches looking for new ideas and practical guidance for their teams today.

Brian T. McCormick, PhD

Founder, Playmakers Basketball Development League

*Author, The 21st Century Basketball Practice & 21st Century Guide to
Individual Skill Development*