

“old habits die hard”

Aristotle said, “the path to excellence is not an act but a habit”.

A habit is something we learn. We consolidate it into effortless behaviour through repetition. It drives our lives. It is routine behaviour/action that we perform unconsciously. Who said **practising habits, your attitude is your constant barrier to improve performance?**

We witness this behaviour/action within bowling clubs. The same people turn up at the same time, play with the same people on the same green, same rink, same game 2x4x2. This is what we call club training. Nothing much changes from week to week. The same old same old. They will then go and find their same spot on the balcony or lounge, buy the same drink, mix, talk with the same people and leave at the same time. **Creatures of habit.** If a newbie comes along you will hear, you had better not sit there, it belongs to whoever. Everyone has their place, their role, their sense of perceived position, responsibility within the establishment. The cumulative effect of these habits is what we call **club culture.**

The challenge for the club coach, visionary bowlers, is how to transition these same old same old habits (culture) to new habits that will move players and club forward into a new progressive era. In my previous life working with and in schools I could pick up the vibes, dynamics of the school quickly by simply walking through the school gate and into the building. The first port of call, office staff. Their greeting said much about the place. To be consciously aware there are always tell-tale signs within organisations about the environment you are entering, about to engage with and what to expect. I think we can all relate to this. We have all experienced organisations that are alive, vibrant and those that are dead or dying.

In 2015 the Richmond Football Club was self-destructing. They performed a Lazarus led by dedicated, committed and passionate players and administrators. **They transitioned the bad habits into good habits.** They changed their thinking, their mindset about what sort of club they needed, wanted to be. Importantly they looked closely and deeply into people relationships and what motivates performance. They accepted and acknowledged that **effective motivation is a lifestyle.** There was a need to **change attitudes, processes, relationships.** They had to set goals and manage the process. Players had to accept responsibility for their actions, their teammates, the club, their members. They had to establish their own special environment of excellence, to train as you would compete. The rest is now history.

Elbows and now pBus is in my view a Richmond. It is a special arrangement involving special people who have a special relationship and mindset. To establish such within an established bowling club environment is a challenging and difficult road to travel. What are the chances of bringing about such change? I think we need to accept this is highly unlikely. Dreams of a better bowling world require a reality check. From where I now sit my energy bundles will continue to be directed and focussed with the Elbows/pBus mob. It is a joy and pleasure to be associated with this special environment of excellence, to train as you would compete. And so Lach, back to where it all began 20 years ago. **“old habits die hard....so recreate the new habit”.**