

ROLE PLAY

Can I play you and you play _____?

How would _____ respond to this: _____?

***SITUATION:** In a film session after a loss, the head coach said, “90% of the reason we lost is because of you,” to the best player. The best player felt like he was losing credibility with his teammates because the coach would make him the example. I challenged him to have a conversation with the coach. I said:*

“Let’s role-play. I’ll play you and you play your coach. How would your coach respond to this: ‘Coach, I understand why it would look like I’m trying to play hero. I work on my game more than anyone. I see people not executing, just like you. I have a difficult time trusting they’re going to execute when it matters. What should I do about that?’”

“You just have to trust them. You won’t get anywhere on your own. You need them.”

“What would that look like to you, coach?”

“Stop taking shots off of one pass. Giving them an opportunity to make the play and building them up when they don’t. Asking them to come in with me to shoot extra because I’m already going to the gym.”

“I will commit to those things. Here’s my biggest challenge, I love when you coach me hard. But, when you say ninety-percent is my fault, I feel like that lowers my credibility to lead the team in the way you want me to lead them. How do you navigate that?”

“Honestly, I don’t know what he would say.”

“Don’t you think the fact that you don’t know what he would say is why the conversation needs to take place?”

“Yeah.”

“Thoughts?”

“It’s not that I don’t want hard coaching. I’ve always had that in my life. It just gets so blurred with my teammates. It just makes me seem like I’m a bad leader.”

“Last question. How would your coach respond to this: ‘Coach, you know I believe in your vision. You know I love hard coaching. This is the first time that I feel like my credibility with my teammates is being hit by your words. If it wasn’t, I’m fine with the blame. Can you help me with that?’”

“I don’t know how he’d answer. I think he would know that I want to be a soldier for his vision. And, I’m just trying to find the next level of my leadership. I think he’d feel like it’s a partnership.”