

Pressure Release

n/a

Ready:

"To the weak I became weak, in order to win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I may by all means save some." — 1 Corinthians 9:22

Set

We entered summer league basketball with a young team. Our inexperienced guards struggled to get our offense working, especially against a high-pressure, man-to-man defense, so one day in practice I tried a new strategy. I taught my players several pressure-release, back-door plays that changed our focus and took advantage of the defense. We'd invite the pressure so we could cut and score lay-ups, but my players were skeptical.

During the next game, when the defense was zealous and our guards were wide-eyed, I called time-out to remind them what we had learned. Back on the court, still afraid, my players decided to try to execute the play. Our wing came toward the sideline, then cut to the basket. Our point guard passed to her, and she scored! The way they celebrated, you'd have thought we won a championship.

Sometimes, the toughest defenses coaches face are the walls our players put up. We try to love and care for them, but they're not so sure. They ignore instruction from us on the court or field, cross their arms, avoid eye contact, and dare us to connect with them. The harder we try, the tougher their defenses become. As coaches of such players, we need to master the back-door play.

Paul understood this and "became all things to all people." Because God came to earth as a man to reach us, He can help us find ways to release the pressure our players might feel. As we understand and reach our players in creative ways, the defenses will come down and we can speak into their hearts the love of Christ.

Go

1. Do you expect your players to adjust to you, or do you sometimes need to adjust to them?
2. Do some players resist your coaching? Do you pray for them?
3. What are some creative strategies you can add to your team's routine that might help them know and trust you better?

Workout

Extra Reading: Isaiah 61; John 15:9–17; Acts 17:22–31

Overtime

Father, please give us the creativity and energy we need to coach this generation of athletes for Your sake. In Jesus' name, Amen.



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