

Finding Your IZOF

Follow the steps to map out your individual zone!

Purpose: To help you identify the feelings that help you perform your best and hurt your performance. Each athlete will have their own personal zone of emotions that help them perform their best, knowing yours and how to maintain that zone will elevate you above the competition.

There are 4 main categories of emotions that will impact performances, for better or worse:

- **Functional Favorable (FF)**
- **Dysfunctional Favorable (DF)**
- **Functional Unfavorable (FU)**
- **Dysfunctional Unfavorable (DU)**

As you begin to think about your emotions, it's easy to identify how favorable feelings may help performances and unfavorable feelings bring it down, BUT competition pushes us out of our comfort zone. That means there are unfavorable feelings that may help us and that some favorable feelings might diminish our performance. It is imperative to evaluate all 4 categories equally to find your zone.

Step 1: Identify your feelings. Reflect on your past performances, your very best and worst in memory. These emotions may include your mental state (ex. ready, calm) and your physical state (ex. fast, tense).

For each of the 4 categories, list at least 3 words to describe your mental and physical state.

FF: What favorable emotions helped your performance?

DF: What favorable emotions hurt your performance?

FU: What unfavorable emotions helped your performance?

DU: What unfavorable emotions hurt your performance?

Step 2: Identify preferred intensity of feelings.

A: Look at the 4 lists you created above and circle 2-3 emotions that impact your performance most.

B: Rank each of the circled emotions by making a list of 12 emotions.

1 = the emotion that most helps performance & you want to feel the most

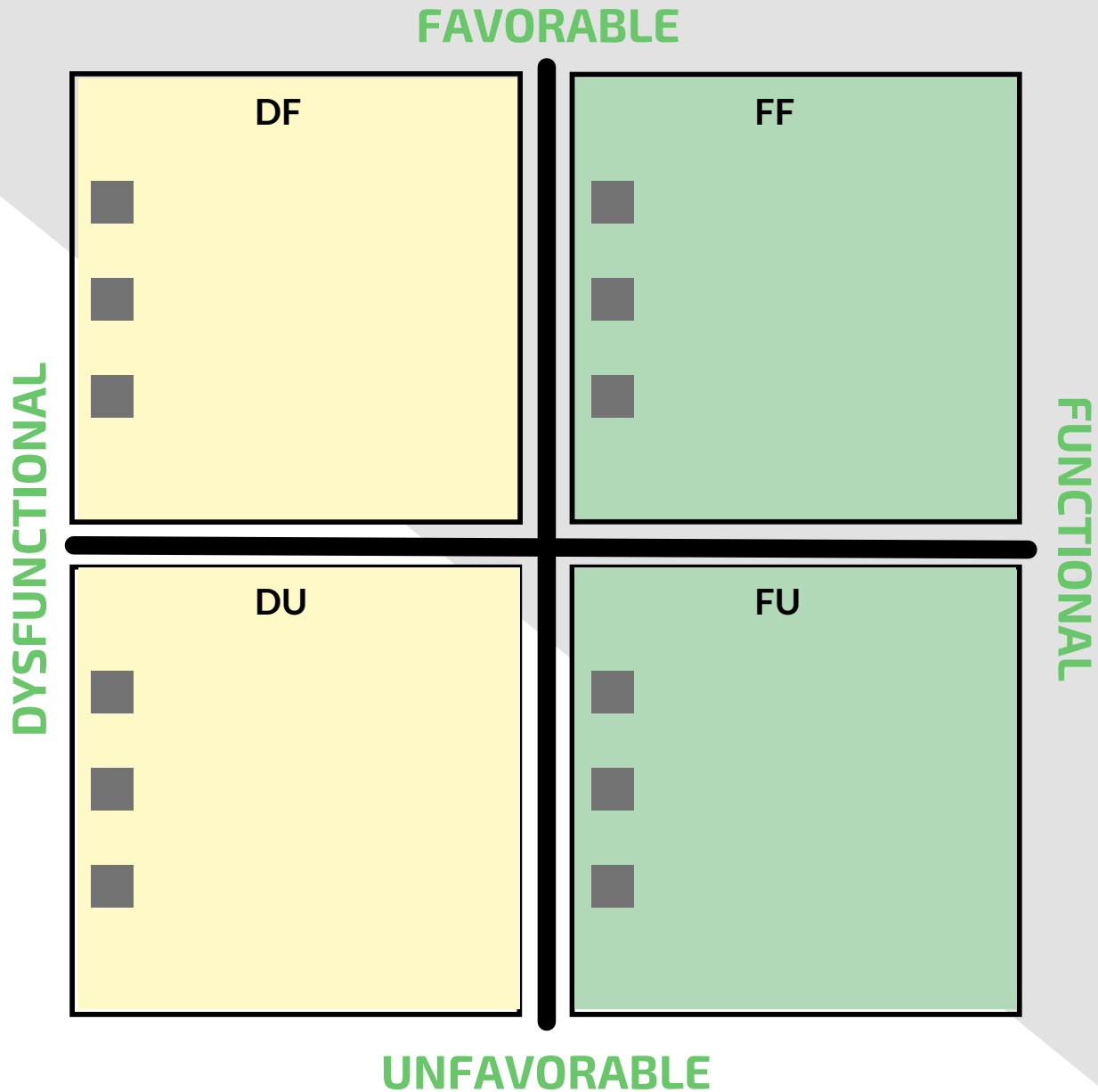
12 = the emotion that most hurts performance & you want to feel the least



Step 3: Developing your individual zone.

Fill in the following chart with your emotions in the appropriate categories.

- The green zone is when your emotions are helping to work towards peak performance
- The yellow zone is when your emotions are hurting your performance



Step 4: Use your zone.

- Mentally prepare to put yourself in your green zone of peak performance prior to and during your event
- Develop a plan for your mental and physical warm-up to put yourself in your green zone
 - How will you trigger your functional emotions to stay in your green zone?

- How will you settle your dysfunctional emotions to stay out of your yellow zone?



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Coach Sheet

The Why: This worksheet is to help athletes become aware of their emotions, the good and bad. Each athlete will respond to situations differently and require different emotions to cope with their reaction. Going through this sheet will help athletes to reflect on their emotions more methodically and allow them to prepare more efficiently for performances.

Learning how to properly identify and practice emotional and energy management will not only assist athletes in the weight room, but will allow athletes to productively manage their emotions throughout performances and competitions. These strategies can also be applied to events outside of sport, such as academics, personal, and professional aspirations. As a strength & conditioning coach, we know that our work and relationships with athletes helps them to become a better, more rounded individual. Teaching this skill will help them to be successful and strive for greatness throughout every aspect of their lives.

The How: This is best accomplished using the worksheet. The benefit in using the paper and having athletes physically write it down, is that they will remember it better and have something to physically modify as they progress. The directions are on the sheet but athletes might require help in naming emotions and feelings. Examples of common emotions felt for each category is below.

- **Functional Favorable (FF):** confident, ready, charged, intense, calm, strong, wired, energized
- **Dysfunctional Favorable (DF):** calm, happy, satisfied, certain, determined, comfortable
- **Functional Unfavorable (FU):** worried, angry, fearful, intense, nervous, uncomfortable
- **Dysfunctional Unfavorable (DU):** worried, angry, fearful, intense, nervous, depressed, uncertainty

The Prompt: No prompt for this sheet. This skill and process will take some time for athletes to do and practice to incorporate into their competitions. Start small, asking their energy coming to a lift, before hitting a set of an exercise, before practice. Have them practice filling out this sheet for multiple situations and modifying them in the weight room and then talk about how they can benefit their sport. This will be a long-duration skill that will always be evolving, keep having conversations with athletes!