Exercise 01

Our addiction to criticizing others is a huge block to effectively giving feedback.

When we criticize, even if we choose our words with care, we are likely to assign others to a specific, potentially harmful, status.

We are likely to assign others, for instance, to the status of being “wrong.”

No one likes to be labeled “wrong.”

Most people get defensive when they are labeled, even when sure they are not “wrong.”

And what’s more important, defensive people block messages.

Unless you are trying not to be understood, then, criticism is not an effective communication strategy.

And it doesn’t help to call it “constructive” either.

Saying something like, “I’m telling you this for your own development, your design is all wrong” isn’t going to produce positive results.

Criticism is criticism.

It blocks understanding.

Exercise 02

The competitive arena is, by its very nature, difficult, unpredictable, and uncontrollable.

Despite their best efforts, athletes can never prepare for every eventuality that may occur in competition or control everything that may influence their performances.

Routines offer a structure within which to prepare for performance and the flexibility to adjust to the uncertain nature of competition.

Because routines are not inviolate, but rather provide a guide for athletes to follow, they can also be readily altered to fit the demands of a unique or unexpected competitive environment.

Unforeseen changes in the competitive setting, such as weather, unexpected opponents, late arrival, insufficient warm-up space, and broken or lost equipment, can have a disturbing and disruptive effect on athletes before a competition.

Athletes often perform below expectations because they are unable to respond appropriately to these occurrences or become unsettled mentally (e.g., lose motivation or confidence, get distracted, or experience anxiety).

Athletes with well-organized yet flexible routines will be better able to respond positively to these challenges, keep calm, and maintain a high level of performance.

Exercise 03

We tend to think of myths as rather silly old stories about the adventures and misadventures of gods, warriors, and demons, invented by primitive people to explain a world they could not understand in our modern, scientific sense.

But it is a mistake to dismiss these stories as trivial and old-fashioned, with no more important meaning for humanity.

Scholars such as Joseph Campbell and Claude Lévi-Strauss have shown that common themes in myths from many diverse cultures speak to us about the universal concerns of all people and about ways of thought that all humans share.

As we move increasingly toward a unified world ― a global village, as it has been called ― it is important to see how much basic human nature we all share/

The systematic study of mythology reveals important points about the human psyche, about universal human motivations, fears and thought patterns.

Exercise 04

When we think of medieval Europe, there is a tendency to think primarily in terms of what is visibly today: the buildings and cathedrals, the literature and the scholastic philosophy.

Yet what is of equal importance, particularly from the standpoint of the rise of modern science, is the fact that medieval culture was a mechanically sophisticated culture, even if little remains today of their machines.

For example, Albertus Magnus, the teacher of Aquinas, is rumored to have had a robot in his laboratory that could raise a hand and give a greeting.

The story is no doubt apocryphal, but there was in any case a great interest in machines, even if science itself was primitive and qualitative.

What is clear is that the spread of mechanical clock technology was underway by the beginning of the fourteenth century.

It is also clear that there was a multiplicity of machines at this time with clockwork mechanisms, ranging from monastic alarms, musical machines, and astronomical simulators to striking clocks.