

About Yvette McCausland-Durie and Nathan Durie

Yvette is a mother of two, netball coach and educator. Co-founder of MANUKURA with husband Nathan and currently based in Auckland as they open TIPENE - St Stephens School, the oldest school in New Zealand. With a passion for Māori Education, Yvette and Nathan continue to challenge the system to deliver excellence for Māori. Yvette has her Masters in Education, Postgraduate degree in Sport Management, a Bachelor of Education and a Diploma of Teaching. In Netball, Yvette has worked with players from emerging talent at secondary school level through to high performance. Head Coach of Manawatū age grade teams, MANUKURA school teams, ANZ Premiership PULSE Teams over a 9 year period along with coaching roles for NZ Under 21, NZ Māori, NZ A and Silver Fern programmes. A former track and field athlete to World Juniors level and netball player from NZU21 to NZ Silver Ferns Squad level. Yvette enjoys the synergy of coaching and teaching which enables continued opportunities to grow potential in herself and others.

Below are some quotes from the interview with Yvette McCausland-Durie and Nathan Durie.

On keeping with the athlete/student at the centre

“We make sure the students and athletes are at the centre of decision making, that the system reflects the individual needs, their intent and what they want to get out of their engagement so that we can tailor the system to meet their needs and we need a bigger group of people that can make a significant impact. One [support] person is never the whole answer, we need to connect them with that people are relevant”.

On holistic wellbeing

“We use [Te Whare Tapa Whā](#) – a Maori model for how you look at people as a whole. This covers physical health, spiritual health, family health and mental health”.

“We are trying to set up young people to become fathers, mothers and members of a community, so beyond sport and school. We want young people to walk forward with a level of confidence, and if they happen to have won a few games along the way, that have given them the confidence then wonderful and good but ultimately, they will be remembered by the attributes that they carry”.

On building on strengths builds confidence

“Don’t try to fix problems, be focused on their ability, ‘teach the genius’ that is within them. We look at their ancestry, those things are really rich, so if we can get them to see that, that allows them to fly”.

“Sport is a catalyst, use their strength and passion and then elevate from there all other components that make the skill set. Some of the skill set is specific around sport, some of it is soft skills, the emotional intelligence, the humility and grace that comes with winning and losing, how you support team mates and classmates. Ultimately, we want them to have a level of confidence to take on opportunities. Because we keep saying, there are jobs that we don’t even know exist that we are trying to prepare young people for”.

“We want to be able to celebrate tall poppies, and encourage them to seek the lofty goal that they have in mind. And we also have to have a layer of honesty.”

On individual performance planning

We aim to work with the concept that there are no surprises, so we meet with our students regularly. We have regular check-ins, we watch using the ‘eye-ometer’, watching their body language closely, and we pick up information their friends or whanau. We spend time connecting the dots, [in partnership] with the parents. Quite often, we find that their ‘big ideas’ can be forgotten or change within three weeks.

“The biggest reason for the Individual performance plans is to allow you to hear athlete voice, and glean from them what they want to achieve and how they are thinking. When they stop playing for enjoyment, they stop playing. They are not easy conversations to have with parents when they have [different aspirations].”

On problem solving

{Today’s young people} have a skill-set that we don’t have – the ability to think about teach, coaching and learning as a two-way process, and forming enough of a rapport withing a group that you work with that you don’t have to have the answer but you provide a really strong structure that they know they can fail and will be supported or have success and they will be supported”.

On creating an inclusive environment

A fair amount of teaching and coaching is about creating an environment first, you can spend a lot of time talking about goals, vision and strategy but unless people feel they have a place, and can use their voice and be who they are, and that you are genuinely interested in advancing each of them.

On the importance of peers

From year 10-12 the athletes’ peers are their greatest support, we need to hear what the kids want for themselves, not what their parents’ aspirations for their kids are. So, we work really hard with them around what good relationships look like.

Advice on getting through difficult times

When going through difficult times, for all of us there is always an opportunity keep busy and find the next opportunity and by creating an IPP that is not always about single endpoint, [for example] it's not just about making the team, but understanding the steps along the way ...and what is the next step into the next space.

On Māori culture

"For some young Māori kids, culture can be a scary place, because they haven't always grown up with it".

"Its about being respectful to people, listening to people and understanding them and working with their journey and if that includes a cultural element then so be it. For example, there are some simple things to get right, like pronunciation of their ancestral name".

"We know about most young people from a cultural perspective is that they stand on the shoulders of [their ancestors] and that comes with a level of expectation. Some kids don't have any understanding and it can be a point of embarrassment for them".

"Young Māori people (as a generalisation) will often do it for other people, as opposed to themselves. They are not too fussed about their own personal gains; they are more worried about looking after the people that put them in those positions. They need to know why they are there, what is the Kaupapa, how do I fit. Most of the time it is about saying: *'we see you, we recognise you, and you count'*".