

Tim Harkness Bio

Tim Harkness is a South African psychologist working in London.

He grew up in Durban, and did a science degree at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, before beginning to work as a psychologist in 1998. Tim also worked as a SCUBA instructor and instructor trainer from 1990 to 1995, working out of Durban, Umkomaas, and Sodwana Bay.

As part of his Masters degree, Tim studied baboons in the Drakensberg mountains, spending time observing social behaviour within the troop.

Tim ran a conventional psychology practice in Durban from 1998 to 2009, working with ordinary children and adults facing normal life challenges like parenting, marriage, work and school, and worked with a range of athletes, including professional rugby players, cricketers, golfers, surfers and Olympic and World Athletics Championship gold medallists.

Parallel to his psychology practice, Tim was a consultant to wellness consultancy Energi from 2001 to 2008. Energi offered health management and behaviour change services to health insurers, whose clients included Standard Bank, ABSA, FNB and the Reserve Bank. Tim travels to Europe frequently, and consults to businesses in Iceland and Hong Kong and London on communication and decision-making.

Since 2009, Tim has worked in England and Europe with elite athletes. His day job is with Chelsea FC where he is Head of Sports Science and Psychology, but he has also worked with the Delhi Capitals in the IPL and with Saudi Arabia at the 2018 FIFA World Cup, and 2019 squash World Champion and World no.1 Ali Farag.

Tim is married with 3 sons, and played provincial squash for Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa, and held a 2nd Category BC racing licence, and is a British Cycling Level 2 coach, and is now a competitive squash player ranked in the top 10 o45 age group in Surrey.

In June 2020 Tim published his first book 10 Rules for Talking.



5 Kinds of Conversations

1. Learning
2. Emotions
3. Evaluations
4. Predictions
5. Fairness

4 Types of Talker

1. Escalators
2. Storytellers
3. Safety-first-ers
4. Analysers

3 Basic Errors

1. Needs threat
2. Group threat
3. The papaya-banana problem

10 Rules for Talking

1. Agree what you are talking for
2. Accept that agreement takes skill and effort
3. Remember most people are good, competent, and worthy of respect
4. Talk fast and slow
5. Keep the conversation safe
6. Use resilience
7. Use rigor
8. Use complexity
9. Listen
10. Reach out

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