

A COACH'S INFLUENCE

BEYOND THE GAME

BY GRANT TEAFF

ABRIDGED EDITION



A Coach's Influence Beyond the Game

Abridged Edition

Grant Teaff

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A Coach's Influence: Beyond the Game

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Football is one of the only remaining sports in which participants between the ages of 13-20 must be enrolled in an academic institution to play. Coaching under that distinction yields authority. With authority comes influence and with influence comes responsibility.

Great coaches have an unquenchable thirst to be better tomorrow than they are today. The constant quest to improve is driven by two things: the urge to be victorious against all competition and, more importantly, the immense amount of responsibility that goes along with the power of a coach's influence.

Staying educated is the best way for coaches to practice responsible influence. A football coach's education can take many forms. From reading publications and going to clinics and conventions to watching videos and visiting with other coaches, the information shared amongst the coaching profession is imperative to the constant search for success in all areas of the industry.

The American Football Coaches Foundation (AFCF) has become one of the football coaching profession's most important resources. Through the AFCF, topics such as Personal & Professional Development, On the Field Operations, Program Management, Personnel Organization, Administrative Logistics and Ethics/Character Development are provided to the members of the country's largest and most diverse organization focused on educating football coaches, the American Football Coaches Association.

With an emphasis on answering the question, "Is this for the good of those who play the game?" the American Football Coaches Association relies heavily on the AFCF to help create and maintain an educational environment where football coaches can develop themselves professionally, as well as personally. Better educated coaches are better educated leaders and better educated leaders are the pillars of a successful American society.

A COACH'S INFLUENCE

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Why is *A Coaches Influence: Beyond the Game* important to you and those you teach?

Every person should strive to be the best they can be, particularly if you are using yourself as an example for others to follow. Whether you really want to or not, if you serve as a teacher and/or coach, it is your obligation to be the best you can be. As teachers and coaches, we must back up our words with our actions. For students, working and striving to win is an important part of the growth process. Combine that with learning to handle both victory and defeat and you have the makings for great life lessons.

The ultimate lessons you can teach through the game of football are respect, accountability, integrity, and eliminating negative peer pressure. Teaching the importance of developing a consistent work ethic will dull the prevalent and rampant feelings of entitlement. Developing a personal value system is the fertile earth from which positive character traits grow.

Personal development is important because being better developed, educated, and trained makes a better teacher, coach, and role model. The chapters in the abridged version of *A Coach's Influence: Beyond the Game*, will help the teacher/coach master the keys to success, convey them to those they teach and strengthen their influence as leaders.



A COACH'S INFLUENCE

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CHAPTER 1

A COACH'S POWER TO INFLUENCE



Introduction to Chapter 1 — A Coach's Power to Influence

On the first page of this chapter is a poem I wrote in 2001. I had just been inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in New York City and I was filled with emotion. I was thinking of my high school and collegiate coaches and the profound influence they had on me. Having followed my coaches into the coaching profession, I was driven to do for others what they had done for me.

This poem is about a little guy dreaming of playing our great game, being encouraged and taught by his coaches how to fulfill his dream. Once that little boy grows up, he shows others how to fulfill their dreams. Almost 100% of the coaches in today's society decided to pursue the profession of coaching because they wanted to have an influence on others, similar to how their coaches influenced them.

Chapter one is a small sampling of thousands of stories of the power of a coach's influence.

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Chapter 1 — A Coach's Power to Influence

Coaching is a very special position. In the sport of football, coaches are granted the opportunity to use the practice field and game sites as extended classrooms for teaching life's lessons because of the very nature of the game. There is no entitlement on a football field. Everything has to be earned.

Coaches, now more than ever before, have the chance to be a positive influence in today's society. Coaches are able to use practice and the games to teach values and develop positive character qualities in their players. Validation of the lessons taught and modeled by the coach will be reflected in the behaviors and increasing maturity of the youngsters. Indeed, a coach's greatest influence is not so much in what he teaches, but in how his players recognize what he teaches in the way he lives his life.



A Coach's Influence by Grant Teaff

I dreamed a dream,
but I had my doubts.
"You can do it," he said.
"I'll teach you how."
I tried and tried,
he said I should.
I gave it my best,
he knew I would.
Lessons taught
on the field of strife,
Have been invaluable,
as I've faced life.
When challenges
come my way,
I always think,
what would he say?
His inspiring words
I hear even now,
"You can do it."
"I taught you how."
Now, others dream,
and have their doubts.
I say, "You can do it,
I'll teach you how."

Coaches must be inspired to use the influence that comes with the title coach in such a way that those they coach learn the nuance of the game and what it takes to be successful on the football field. Our players will leave the presence of our influence, but they take with them the positive lessons and principles taught. Hopefully, we will have been a model with what we taught that can help them become better husbands, fathers, citizens, and leaders. If that happens, the influence will continue.

Coaches sometimes fail to grasp the influence and the impact they have until grateful former players or parents of players tell them. Dick Dullaghan coached at Carmel (IN) High School, and Paul Estridge's words about his coach are deeply inspiring:

Few people in my life knew then and even today (Coach Dullaghan included) that the 16-year-old boy he met in 1973 was a very troubled and lost soul. Nearly bankrupt of self-esteem and confidence, my life would never be the same after he reached out and shook my hand.

It's been 28 years since I have captained one of Coach's teams. However, not a week goes by in my life that I fail to reflect on his teachings and how my life has been completely and totally transformed for having known and played for him. Coach Dullaghan continues to impact my life. Therefore, for the lives of my children, my employees, and thousands of customers, I owe a debt of gratitude for the principles he taught me and the power of his influence.

Joseph Wells, who also played on Coach Dullaghan's teams, wrote the following:

I will always remember you, not just for your coaching, but for your teaching of attitude and poise, which can only be learned by example. Today, I am a police officer for the Indianapolis Police Department. I deal with society and the problems which it creates as a result of individuals trying to find the easy way to succeed. My experience in the majority of my runs as a policeman is a result of people making bad decisions because they lack the ability to think for themselves. When I approach a difficult situation, I often think back to my coach. The proper state of mind, the ability to overcome an opponent, and the heart to live with one's decision have helped me be successful in school, with my career, and especially with my family.

This heartfelt, appreciative letter came from a mother of one of Coach Bob Schneider's (Newport, KY) players:

Mike's father passed away when he was in the third grade. My biggest fear was how I was going to raise two children on my own. All I kept reading in the parenting books was that the most powerful role model in

any child's life is the same-sex parent. What was I going to do? How was I going to keep him on the right path?

I was lucky when he became involved in football. My prayers were answered. Coach Schneider, you and your coaching staff helped me raise my son to be the man he is today. Your year-round discipline, devotion, and dedication to care for and teach the boys by example were the difference maker. The power of your influence will be everlasting.

A coach's positive influence is not always with his own players. In 1974, Texas Christian University played the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. A collision with an Alabama player left TCU running back Kent Waldrep paralyzed from the waist down. When the TCU team flew home, they had to leave their teammate as Kent went through a bevy of tests that drained him physically and psychologically.

In Kent's book, *4th and Long*, he describes a particular occasion while he was still in Alabama. He awoke to the unmistakable presence of Alabama Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant. Coach Bryant had with him two special visitors: George Steinbrenner of the New York Yankees and Charlie Finley of the world champion Oakland A's. Through his awe, Kent thought, *I must look like absolute hell and in front of these guys, too.*

Coach Bryant broke the ice: "Kent, you know we've enjoyed you hanging around here. It's time for you to quit lying around loafing and get back to TCU." A trace of a grin graced his grisly face. With as strong a voice as he could muster, Kent answered, "That's my plan, Coach."

Steinbrenner and Finley each presented Kent with an autographed baseball. They wished him a speedy recovery, then left Kent and Coach Bryant alone. Again, Coach Bryant spoke first: "I want you to know, Kent, you've already made all of us proud."

"Sir," Kent said, "it was a privilege to have played against your team."

Coach Bryant nodded. "You touched a lot of folks here in Alabama. Everyone appreciates your spirit and wants to help. I want you to know I'll always be here for you. You're one of my boys now, and together we'll beat this thing and get you back on your feet." Swallowing hard to choke down the tears, Kent put on his best game face. "Coach," he began, paused, and then said with all the strength he could muster, "I promise you I'll always give it 100 percent."

"I know, son, I know," a gruff voice responded, "But you call me when you ever need to talk to a friend. Anytime, home or office. You tell the doctors to fix you up so you can get home, and I'll be back to see you." Coach Bryant did stay in touch with Kent. He meant it when he said he would always be there for Kent.

Teaching and coaching provides the opportunity to have a lasting influence. The dictionary says this about influence: "To have an effect on the condition and the development of." That definition is left incomplete, "of what?" It is up to us as spouses, parents, teachers, and coaches to affect the condition of a young person's life and the development of personal capabilities.

The dictionary also says, "Influence: an emanation of spiritual and moral force." To emanate means to "come out from a source." So there it is in a nutshell. The coaches and teachers are the source, and what emanates from the source will be influence. However, it is up to the source to make sure that the influence is positive.

The opportunity to be a positive influence, beyond the game, to every player on the team is also a coach's greatest responsibility. Embrace it.

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BEYOND THE GAME

CHAPTER 2

KEYS TO SUCCESS



Introduction to Chapter 2 — The Keys to Success

Buddha said, “To enjoy good health, to bring true happiness to one’s family, to bring peace to all, one must first discipline and control one’s own mind. If a man can control his mind, he can find a way to enlightenment and all wisdom and virtue will naturally come to him.”

Buddha, to my knowledge, neither played nor coached the great game of football. As a matter of fact, he died prior to 479 B.C. Buddha was around over 500 years before Paul the Apostle. Paul the Apostle wrote in Romans 12:2, “And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.” These are two different leaders of two different religions but they both had a similar message.

Controlling one’s mind to achieve success is obviously not a new theory, but it is a proven one. The four areas of mind control I learned in high school are as essential to success as they ever were.

They are as follows:

1. Attitude as an approach to life.
2. Giving total effort in all you do.
3. Self-discipline and self-control, to be the master of your own life.
4. Developing a strong capacity to care.

These are the simple secrets to success.

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Chapter 2 — Keys to Success

Most former athletes learn to realize that much of the success they have enjoyed in their lives can be traced back to the positive influence of their coaches— influences like the pebble dropped in a smooth body of water, causing ripples to radiate from the stone's impact. The ripple becomes enlarged, as an ever-expanding circle, and in many cases, it becomes a tidal wave of influence, impacting those in its wake.

When I was a sophomore in high school, one of my coaches literally changed my life when he said to me, “Grant, your most important assets are not your athletic skills, but your mind. Control your own mind and you will achieve the goals you desire.” Napoleon Hill said it another way: “To be successful, we must master our own tongue.” The clear message to me from Mr. Hill was what comes out of the mouth first is formulated in the mind. Mr. Hill added, “With your mind, control your emotions, love, hate, fear, sex drive, and what you put into your body.” That made sense to me, and I accepted my coach's challenge and began to identify actions I could personally control, allowing me to find the success I sought in my own life. Those actions were attitude, effort, self-discipline, and the capacity to care.

Let's look at these essential and controllable actions that will lead us individually to success, and, when related clearly by our words and our actions, can be life changing for those we are trying to influence.

Attitude

Successful people have positive attitudes. Conversely, those with negative attitudes almost always fail. William J. Bennett said, “There are no menial jobs, only menial attitudes.” Winston Churchill said, “Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”

Attitude is changeable. As William James said, “The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human can, after he has begun life, alter it by altering his attitude.”

Negative thoughts are the enemy of a victorious football team and a victorious life. Because our lives are controlled by our minds, our thoughts will help us succeed or fail. Negative thoughts have a way of distracting us from doing what needs to be done to achieve success, so it is essential to take a positive approach to life and to coaching.

Edward Everett Hale wrote, “I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something I can do.” “I can't do everything” is a realistic admission to the limits of one's abilities. The second part of that sentence, “but I can do something,” reminds us that the gifts and talents we do possess can be used to help others, thus achieving a measure of success in life. Then the challenge, “That which I can do, I ought to do.” That sentence challenges us to take the talents and abilities we do have and develop them to the fullest.

To maximize your potential, you first must believe in yourself and in others. Belief can drive an individual and unite a team, and in doing so make it possible to achieve something special.

An example of positive expectations and a confident belief was personified in former Baylor quarterback Neal Jeffrey. Neal had been a starter since he was a sophomore and though he was not blessed with speed, he was a smart, tough senior leader. Our players appreciated his talent, but they appreciated his tenacity and the way he overcame a speech impediment even more. Neal had been a stutterer since childhood and still is. Through it, he has become one of the great Christian ministers to men across America.

In mid-season 1974, Baylor and Texas were playing in Waco. Before a sellout crowd, the University of Texas took a 24-7 halftime lead. With what appeared to be the same old story of Baylor-Texas games in the past 19 years, about a third of the fans from both sides of the field left the stadium. The Texas fans did not believe a comeback for Baylor was imminent, and the Baylor fans just knew there would not be a comeback based on history.

Whether the fans stayed or left was not my immediate concern. Walking up the steps leading to the Baylor dressing room, I was thinking about important halftime adjustments. Then I looked to my left and there alongside me was Neal Jeffrey. When I turned my head to look at him, I was surprised to see a big smile on his face. I reached over with my left hand, stopped him, and turned him so I could look directly into his face. I asked, "Neal, what do you find funny about a 24-7 halftime deficit?" In typical Neal fashion and only stuttering just a little bit, he said, "Coach, we've got Texas where we want them." The puzzled look on my face prompted him to explain further. "Texas got the breaks the first half, but we moved the ball extremely well. Coach, I guarantee we're going to win this game in the second half." Pausing for just a moment, I looked at Neal and said, "Neal, you are absolutely right. When we get in the dressing room, you go to the left and I'll go to the right. Shake every player's hand, look them in the eye, and tell them just what you said to me."

The players sitting on the benches with their heads down all took on a determined look and started yelling at their teammates, "We will win!" The dressing room became electric. We made no tactical adjustments, but when Baylor took the field in the third quarter, we were a new team. On their initial possession, our defense held Texas on three downs. Then we blocked the punt and took it in to score. The rest is history. Baylor won 34-24 and went on to win Baylor's first Southwest Conference Championship since 1924.

Neal's "we are going to win" message was embraced by each of his teammates. They believed. What the mind can conceive, a positive attitude can achieve. Never underestimate the power of belief and positive expectations.

10 Keys to a Positive Attitude

1. Repulse negative thoughts as they come up in your mind.
2. Put on a happy face and don't take it off.
3. Look in the mirror and repeat words that will help reinforce your new positive approach to life, such as "I'm a winner and I will succeed."

4. Fill your mind with positive thoughts through repeating positive quotes and associating with positive people.
5. Consciously commit yourself to never uttering negative words.
6. Be proud. Keep your head up and shoulders back and walk with confidence.
7. Find a way to help someone every day.
8. Do not associate with negatives, do not listen to negatives, and do not read negatives.
9. Spend a few moments every day thinking about and being grateful.
10. Visualize yourself successful and celebrating with your team after a great victory.

Effort

Success comes from knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of being. Basketball coaching legend John Wooden said, “All the secrets to success will not work unless you do.” One of our founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, once said, “I am a great believer in luck, and the harder I work, the more I have of it.”

Effort is the conscious exertion of power, hard work, or the serious attempt to produce something—trying. A positive attitude and willingness to give total effort will contribute greatly to any success.

Elements of Total Effort

1. A day is only 24 hours long and must be planned and prioritized to be maximized. Such preparation will put you in position to outwork and outthink your competition.
2. Effort should not be wasted on unworthy projects. Keep unimportant issues from stealing your time.
3. Take care of yourself physically. Get sufficient rest, proper nutrition, plenty of exercise, and timely medical check-ups.
4. Spend quality time with your family.
5. Attend to your staff and team. Take time each week to ask how your staff and their families are doing and check with your players on their families and schoolwork.

Mahatma Gandhi said, “Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment; full effort is full victory.” Theodore Roosevelt, a man of great passion, energy, and intellect, nailed how hard it is hour after hour, day after day, month after month, and year after year to give total effort every day in every way on every play: “It is only through labor and painful effort, by grim energy and resolute courage that we move on to better things.” The great Vince Lombardi observed that, “Leaders are

made, they are not born. They are made by hard effort, which is the price all of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile." Total effort is hard to accomplish, but the willingness to try is essential.

Self-Discipline

Self-discipline is the product of persistent willpower. Willpower is the strength and ability to carry out certain tasks. Self-control is the ability to use willpower routinely and automatically. An analogy for the relationship between the two might be defined as follows: Where willpower is the muscle, self-discipline is the structured thought that controls that muscle.

Self-discipline is the assertion of willpower over base desires, and the same applies for self-control. One should act according to what one thinks, not what one feels. To be self-disciplined, you must control your emotions.

The first time self-discipline was really pointed out to me in a dramatic way was by my defensive coach at Snyder High School, Coach Kayser. The event took place at practice on a Wednesday afternoon prior to a Friday high school game. We were inside the 10-yard line in a contact scrimmage. On that particular day, I was playing offensive right tackle. Max Coffee, our quarterback, and I had played together all year. Part of the time I was the offensive center and learned his cadence well enough to anticipate his snap count, making me appear faster than I was. On one scrimmage play, I may have appeared to move too soon. The whistle blew, and as I returned to the huddle, I dropped my head just enough so the helmet covered my eyes and protected me from the dreaded eye contact with Coach Kayser. Then curiosity got the best of me and I peeped out. Our eyes met as he stood there with arms folded and his whistle still in the corner of his mouth. Loudly he said, "Do you know what you just did?"

I said, "Yes, sir. I jumped offsides."

"Do you know what that means?"

I replied, "Of course, Coach. It means a 5-yard penalty."

He continued, "Let me ask you another question. Do you in your wildest imagination think that because of your lack of self-discipline the officials are going to penalize you 5 yards?"

"Well, no sir, they penalize...the whole team," I said hesitantly.

"That's my point," he scolded. "Your lack of discipline has just cost your team 5 yards inside the 10-yard line. Your 5-yard penalty cost your team a touchdown. Failure to score a touchdown could cost your team the district championship. Because of you and your lack of discipline, this team will not play in the state championship." His lesson was clear: a lack of self-control or self-discipline in the real world can cost you a lot more than a 5-yard penalty and the state championship.

The truth was that we were not a good enough team to win a state championship, but that football field lesson caused many of us to understand our responsibility to control our own actions on and off the field. If we fail to apply self-control and self-discipline in our own lives, the world will surely do it for us.

Caring

“I feel the capacity to care is the thing which gives life its deepest significance,” said Pablo Casals, cellist and conductor. Those of us in education have always been told, “Children don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Your players need proof, as in words and actions, that demonstrate you have their well-being foremost in mind.

The expression of caring can come in many forms. Author and professor Leo Buscaglia said, “Too often, we underestimate the power of the touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” After all, is that not why we teach and coach—to make a positive difference in young people’s lives?

In 1992, I was coaching my last football game at Baylor University. I had stepped down to become the athletic director. This final game was very important to me, because it was my last regular-season game and the opponent was the University of Texas. Although we were the underdogs, if we were to win, my teams would have 10 victories over the University of Texas. The Baylor team was very young and surprised a lot of people by being in the position to go to a bowl game by beating Texas. The national media was in attendance and the game was to be nationally televised. It was a dark, misty day.

During warm-ups, I was standing on the north end of the field watching my team warm up for the last time. Suddenly, I felt a presence beside me. It was a fifth-year senior, who because of an injury did not play during the year, but there he was, all 5 feet 10 inches and 175 pounds in full uniform, with a worried look on his face. It was Trooper Taylor, a red-shirt senior from Cuero, Texas. He was a relatively small defensive back who had not been heavily recruited, but when I first met him, I knew I was going to give him a scholarship because he had such a passion to get an education. I felt like his positive personality and mental toughness would be an asset to our team while allowing him to reach his educational goals.

Trooper said hesitantly, “Coach, I need to talk to you about something very important. I didn’t sleep any last night. I came in early, got my equipment, and put it on. I know this is your last game, Coach, but it’s my last game as well. My injury last year didn’t heal as quickly as we thought it would, so I was unable to play this year. Coach, the doctor released me on Wednesday and said I could play if you would allow it. I would like to play today. Coach, I’m 18 yards short of breaking the school record in kickoff returns, so please allow me to return one kickoff? Then just one play on defense, so when I come back years from now to watch Baylor play with children of my own, I can say to them, ‘It was Coach Teaff’s last game and my last game, and we beat the University of Texas.’”

My reaction was probably typical of what any coach would feel under such circumstances. First, he had a severe knee injury and he would play in a tough, physical game without any prior preparation. Not good. He might fumble and cost us the game, so I said to him, “Do you honestly think I’m going to take a chance on your knee and the possibility of a fumble that could cost us the game?”

"I will not fumble, Coach!" Trooper pleaded. "Coach, I care so much about playing. Will you care enough to let me have two plays, please?"

I said, "Look, Trooper, the best I can do for you right now is to tell you that I'm going to think about it." Trooper quickly said, "Thank you, but please, Coach, I care about it. Would you please care about it?"

Four times during the first half, Trooper mustered up enough courage to ask me, "Coach, have you thought about it yet?" My first-half responses were, "I'll think about it at halftime." During the halftime, I actually thought about Trooper's request. I had been impressed with his persistence and his expressed desire to get in the game. I knew how much he cared about it and I realized I really cared about it, as well.

So, even though our lead was only 14-7 as we took the field in the third quarter, I gave in. I waved for Trooper and Scott Smith to come to me so I could talk to both of them. Scott was in charge of kickoffs and coached Trooper in the secondary, prior to his injury. I turned to Scott and said, "What I'm going to say to you is not up for discussion. Let Trooper return a kickoff. It is important to him and he cares deeply about it. I want you to know I care about it, as well. Therefore, I expect you to get it done." I continued, "Scott, somewhere in the second half, get Trooper in on one play on defense. He cares about it, I care about it, and I expect you to care about it, as well."

As fate would have it, Trooper returned the kickoff close to midfield and gave the Baylor Bears enough field position that we went on to score on the first drive, taking a lead of 21-7. We had a couple of turnovers, and Texas had a long drive, so with two minutes to go, the score was Baylor 21, Texas 20.

Texas had the ball on the Baylor 38-yard line, fourth and two to go with no timeouts. If the Baylor defense can rise to the occasion, the game will belong to the Bears, but if Texas makes the first down, they will likely kick a field goal and win the game.

Texas came to the line of scrimmage in an I-formation and everyone in the stands knew they were going to give the ball to the tailback, which they did, and he drove hard to the line of scrimmage, but just before he got to the line of scrimmage, he was forced airborne by our defensive tackle who had penetrated the Texas backfield. I was standing on the 38-yard line looking directly at the ball carrier as he was airborne. To me, he looked as though he would make the first down. Suddenly, out of the corner of my right eye, I saw a green jersey literally flying through the air, hitting the ball carrier straight on. Both stopped in midair and fell directly to the turf. The ball was spotted, and I could tell I was going to be very close. The officials brought the chains in to measure. Texas' ball was three inches short of a first down. All that was left of the game was for Baylor to take care of the football and run the clock out. Just before sending the quarterback in with his final instructions, a green jersey appeared in front of me, jumping up and down, screaming, "I made the tackle, I made the tackle!" As I focused in on the individual, it was Trooper Taylor. Trooper had made the tackle that won the game.

We ran the clock out and the players carried me out onto the field in celebration, where the student body took over and carried me around the field. Finally, I got down off the shoulders of students and found my family so we could walk off the north end zone together, as we had planned. When we approached the end zone, the media was waiting. The cameras were rolling and they immediately began to interview my wife, Donell, and our girls.

I looked around and saw Scott Smith off a distance with our other coaches. I took about four strides toward him and yelled out, "Scott, come here. What was Trooper doing in on that last play?" He said, "Oh, my word, Coach, you had made it very clear to me that Trooper cared, that you cared about it, and that I should care about it, as well. The problem was that if our defense holds on that last play, there would not be another chance to get him into the game, so I made the decision to send him in." I looked directly at Scott and said, "Thank you, Scott, for doing that." Scott replied, "Coach, I might as well go ahead and tell you because you'll see it on the film anyway. Trooper didn't line up in the right spot." I looked back at Scott Smith smiling and said, "It's okay, Scott, he ended up in the right spot."

I returned to where my family was being interviewed. As the media turned to me, I was asked, "To what do you owe this, your last victory over the University of Texas?" Without hesitation, I said, "I owe it to caring." With puzzled looks they said, "What do you mean?" I said, "One young man who has not played in a year cared so much about the opportunity to play, he came to me and asked if he could get in this game. Because he cared so deeply, at halftime, I began to care, too. I gave the responsibility of putting him in the game to an assistant coach who cared enough to put Trooper in at the most critical stage of the game. Doing so allowed Trooper to make the play that won the game. Yes, you can chalk up this last victory over Texas to caring."

A COACH'S INFLUENCE

BEYOND THE GAME

CHAPTER 3 LEADERSHIP IN COACHING



Introduction to Chapter 3 — Leadership in Coaching

Leadership is a means by which one person influences others to obtain certain goals and objectives. In coaching and in society in general, there is an ever-increasing need for capable leadership.

As an inspiring leader you must possess integrity, wisdom, and be trustworthy before you are taken serious by the very people you are chosen to lead. Once you establish trust, you must commit yourself to mastering the six requirements for leadership: knowledge, courage, communication, character, decisiveness, and decision making.

Upon committing yourself to these six requirements of leadership, you then must take the difficult step of mastering the 10 basic actions of a successful leader: ask others their opinion, set an example, take responsibility for failed efforts, give others the credit, make sound decisions, listen to others' ideas, have a written plan, visualize end results, solve problems, and make accountability a top priority.

Finally, throughout your journey, you must continually develop these four personal traits:

1. Strive each day to make a difference, because you care.
2. Accept challenges and extend challenges to those you lead.
3. Be self-motivated and passionate about leading others.
4. Always be a positive influence.

A Coach's Influence: Beyond the Game

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Chapter 3 — Leadership in Coaching

The first two chapters highlighted the potential impact of a coach and the keys to performing capably in that role of great responsibility. In this chapter and the next, you will find proven methods for developing and improving two critical facets of your coaching position.

Leadership is a means by which a person influences others to attain certain goals and objectives. In coaching and society in general, there is an ever-increasing need for capable leadership.

Aspiring leaders must learn from successful leaders before them, emulating the best of their leadership skills and eliminating styles and techniques that fail to fit their own philosophy. All great, positive leaders have core values and positive character traits. Some leaders have more natural talent and skill than others. Natural talent is a gift, but many leadership abilities, such as learning, communicating, creating, negotiating, serving, and sharing can be developed. The ability to persist or endure through inevitable challenges might be the most important leadership skill of all.

Leadership Requirements

After years of study, observation and exposure to great leaders, and many opportunities to lead, several identifiable essentials of leadership began to emerge. In my book *Coaching in the Classroom*, I define six requirements of leadership:

1. **Knowledge.** Have a thorough knowledge of your task and those who could oppose your successful completion of the task. Know your staff, team, employees, and associates. Know their talents, their strengths, and their weaknesses.
2. **Courage.** It takes courage to create a plan and stick with it and courage to give others credit and take the blame if the plan fails.
3. **Communication.** Failure or success of a well-conceived plan rests solely on the shoulders of communication. Clearly define the plan, the ultimate goals, and individual responsibilities in order to achieve the goal. A leader must communicate his or her own passion and confidence as well as express appreciation.
4. **Character.** To succeed, a positive leader must possess and live a value system. Positive character traits, such as integrity, trust, accountability, and faithfulness, are essential to the leader. Leaders are judged by their personal actions and words.
5. **Decisiveness.** A leader must be able to make decisions with confidence after studying the options. Being indecisive is a ticket straight to failure.
6. **Decision making.** A leader can have all of the previously mentioned leadership requirements and end up a poor and ineffective leader by making bad decisions.

Actions of a Leader

Prerequisites to leadership are integrity, wisdom, and trust. However, a leader also is a person of action. The following behaviors are the earmarks of successful leadership:

- **Ask others their opinion.** Asking for an opinion denotes respect for the individual being asked. It says to others that their opinion is important and will be considered. It also gives you insight you might not otherwise have.
- **Set an example.** Never ask anyone to do anything you are not willing to do, but the flipside is that it is okay to ask someone to do something that you have already done. As an athlete running wind sprints, it always comforted me to know that my coach had run these same wind sprints in another time and another place. The example of the leader sets the tone for everyone.
- **Take responsibility for failed efforts.** Leaders who point fingers and place blame publicly will not remain in a position of leadership very long. As a leader, you do everything in your power to achieve success, remembering that success is not always possible. Taking responsibility for that failure without playing the martyr will enhance your chance for success at the next attempt.
- **Give others the credit.** When achieving success, point out the efforts and contributions of others. Everyone knows you are the leader and you had a part in the success, but there are many within the group who will be recognized only if you acknowledge them. The philosophy I adhere to is very simple: It doesn't matter who gets the credit as long as the job gets done.
- **Make sound decisions.** Substituting the word solid for sound and making such a decision will produce the same results. Solid and sound denote factual and basic, and the types of decisions can be made only with the proper information concerning the issues and the problem related to them.
- **Listen to others' ideas.** Many times a leader's responsibility is that of broadly outlining objectives. After setting broad objectives and directing discussions about them, if you listen to and generate the ideas of others about the broad objectives, you add a "we" flavor to what you are trying to accomplish.
- **Have a written plan.** Written plans keep you on course. You can also use them as a yardstick with which to measure your progress and get feedback on your performance. Written plans keep you from putting off action and becoming stagnant. A plan keeps you focused on your goals and not on the doubts that always occur.

- **Visualize end results.** Seeing in your mind's eye a successful end result creates positive expectations of your stated goals.
- **Solve problems.** Anticipating that there will be problems allows the leader to have a predetermined backup plan and a procedure to follow. Approach each problem with individuality, apply the win-win-win theory to each problem, and don't jump to conclusions. Problems and setbacks will occur, but the more quickly they are addressed and solved, the better.
- **Make accountability a top priority.** Accountability has several meanings: acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions, decisions, and policies including administration, governance, and implementation.

Leadership Traits

Four personal traits are tied to capable leadership. You can develop and perfect all of these traits. They should, in fact, affect every action you take as a leader.

1. **Care deeply** and strive each day to make a difference.
2. **Readily accept challenges and readily extend challenges to those you lead.**
3. **Be self-motivated** and passionate about motivating others.
4. **Be a positive influence** within the game and beyond.

A COACH'S INFLUENCE

BEYOND THE GAME

CHAPTER 4

SELF MOTIVATION TO COACH



Introduction to Chapter 4 — Self-Motivation to Coach

Before you can motivate others, you must master self-motivation. Paul Meyer, the founder of Success Motivation Institute, wrote hundreds of leadership and motivational books. He wrote one of those books for the coaches of the American Football Coaches Association entitled *The Coach I Always Wanted to Be*. In the book, Paul asked and then answered the question, “Who motivates the motivator?” Paul’s simple answer was, “He motivates himself.”

The keys to self-motivation are first self-evaluation. Set goals that are realistic. An individual must know oneself. Under the heading Self-Evaluation in this chapter, you will find a simple method of analyzing your strengths and weaknesses.

Setting goals in your life is your fuel for your self-motivation engine. Learn to set your goals by the book, this book. If you want to make an “A” in a course, set your goal to do so. On page 32 in this chapter, you will find five goals for receiving an “A” in any class. Reach all five, then enjoy the results.

As is suggested in Chapter 2, the key to all humans’ success is initiated in our minds. The foundation for self-motivation is built on the same principles. In the 1960s, Dr. Maxwell Maltz wrote a book called *Psycho-Cybernetics*. In this book, Dr. Maltz introduced self-imaging psychology and goal-visualization. His eye-opening statement had a huge impact on me, “The mind cannot differentiate between that which is vividly imagined and that which is performed.” This can work for you as it worked for me. Vividly imagine your ultimate goals, and then use the power of mind-control to reach all of your goals.

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Chapter 4 — Self-Motivation to Coach

Leaders who are highly motivated are more successful in all areas, and that's true of coaches. In chapter 3 we saw that self-motivation is one of the four essential traits of effective leaders. After all, how can we inspire others if we are not inspired ourselves?

Simple rewards—a pat on the head, an encouraging word, or a bite of a desired food—can, in the right context, encourage certain behaviors. Similarly, punishment and negative reinforcement (withdrawing something that is undesirable from the environment) can, at least in the short term, prompt one to act in a certain way. But research and most experts downplay the value of reward and fear as effective long-term motivational sources.

Homer Rice, a brilliant and innovative head football coach who achieved success at the high school, college, and professional levels, has given our profession his leadership secrets over the years. He says, “You can motivate by fear and you can motivate by reward, but both of those methods are only temporary. The only lasting method is self-motivation.”

Self-Motivation

From my early experiences in sport, playing high school and college football with a minimum of the talents and tools needed to successfully play the game, I found personal motivation to be essential. Later in life I stated in my book, *Coaching in the Classroom*, “I believe the truest form of motivation, the most lasting and best is self-motivation.” And now after 37 years of coaching and 20 years serving as executive director of the American Football Coaches Association, I am more convinced than ever that self-motivation is a necessity.

What I learned from my personal experiences has been verified over the years by experts such as Paul Meyer, the founder of the Success Motivation Institute (SMI). In conversations with Paul, he and I discovered that we were both heavily involved in the same concepts and theories about motivation and leadership. We became very close friends, and a couple of years before he passed away, I invited Paul to speak to our coaches on leadership. In typical Paul fashion, he responded and actually wrote a book for the membership of our association titled *The Coach I Always Wanted to Be*. I highly recommend the book to coaches of any sport.

In the book, Paul asked the coaches a question, then answered it: “Who motivates the motivator? He must motivate himself.” Paul says, “The coach can no longer look to the upper echelon for outside inspiration. He is the upper echelon. Once the coach realizes the motivation for his continued success must come from himself, he can proceed with the proper steps to achieve it. He can build a comprehensive program of personal motivation that will keep him moving steadily forward. He can and must ‘press on.’ He cannot stand still.”

In order to understand our own self-motivation, we must first understand motivation. In 1943, Dr. Abraham Maslow addressed the topic of motivation in an article titled *A Theory of Human Motivation*. Maslow submitted that all humans have hierarchical needs that proceed in this order:

1. Physiological: things required to sustain life, such as air, water, food, sleep
2. Safety: living in a secure area, medical insurance, job security, retirement, police protection
3. Social: friendship, belonging to a group, giving and receiving love
4. Esteem: self-respect, personal achievement, and self-esteem

His theory states that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire (or focus motivation upon) secondary or higher-level needs. Maslow believes that individuals are motivated to meet these personal needs but are ultimately fulfilled when they are able to operate at a higher functional state that he called self-actualization, which, according to his definition, simply means the full realization of one's potential.

The four personal needs cited by Maslow are clearly key factors in determining one's self-motivation. However, I believe that a need to succeed is the foremost personal need.

The Hot Button Theory

When gasoline engines were developed, they were magnificent pieces of early engineering. However, they would not start or run until a supply of gasoline reached the engine and an electrical charge ignited the gasoline. The engine cannot start until someone pushes the starter button, which completes the contact between the electrical source and the engine. The electrical charge released into the piston causes the engine to run. Through the years, the start button became known as the hot button. Self-motivation is embodied in finding your own hot button and pushing it at the appropriate time, thus starting your engine and propelling yourself into action. The first step in self-motivation is discovering your own hot buttons.

Self-Evaluation

A simple description of success is the attainment of one's goals. To set goals that are realistic and reachable, an individual must know oneself.

Years ago, I developed this simple method for analyzing one's strengths and weaknesses. On a sheet of paper, draw a line across the top and another line down the middle. On the top left side, write the word Assets; on the top right, write Liabilities. Assets are your strengths and liabilities are your weaknesses. Under Assets and Liabilities, draw five lines. Now, create a list on those lines with both your five best assets and your five greatest liabilities. Examples of an asset might be your attitude, work ethic, integrity, and loyalty. The liabilities list could include negative attitude, lazy, lack of confidence, or procrastination.

The objective is simple for your listed assets and liabilities. Like the title to an old song, accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. Build on and in-

crease the good, the assets. Evaluate each negative and try to understand where you developed the negative, because it will help you as you strive to eliminate them. Eliminating your liabilities and accentuating your assets are the first two and most important steps to becoming a self-motivated person.

Another important factor in motivation is how a person sees oneself in five or 10 years. If that vision is a strong, positive one, it can be a tremendously positive source of inspiration. Conversely, when one's outlook on the future is negative, it will undermine motivation.

Goal Setting

In order to fully activate self-motivation, an individual needs to learn how to set goals. Goals should be set in all three dimensions of life: physical, mental, and spiritual. Think of these dimensions as a three-legged stool upon which your life sits. A three-legged stool will hold up your weight, but a two-legged stool will not. To become a total person, you must set and reach goals in all three areas of your life.

There is a simple yet proven method of setting and reaching goals. First, determine the goal you want to reach and then make a judgment on the time it will take to reach it. Second, analyze what it will take to reach the goal and break that category into two sections: immediate goals, or the goals you can reach on a daily basis; and intermediate goals, or the goals that fall in between the immediate goal and the ultimate goal.

It is a proven fact that when our goals are written down and when we proclaim them to those around us, they are not so easily brushed aside. We have made a personal commitment, both written and oral, to accomplish them.

Each year, our players were given a new goal card to update. They had a copy and gave me a copy, so I could know their goals and we as a staff could help the players reach them.

In training our freshmen in goal setting, I would always personally ask them their major goals as freshmen at Baylor. You would be surprised at some of the answers I got back. On several occasions, I have been told flat out, "I want to win the Heisman Trophy." My answer was this: "A good goal for a freshman is to make the travel squad."

One answer was so profound that I continued to use it as an ultimate example of goal setting. Mike Singletary, a freshman from Houston, Texas, and a potential linebacker, when asked my freshman-year question, responded, "My goal is to make a positive contribution to our football team this year." Wow. What a goal. If every freshman had set the same goal, we probably would have had the best football team in the history of Baylor University. By the way, that freshman class did become the best in Baylor's history. In 1980, they won the Southwest Conference championship by three games.

Mike's attitude and quick adoption of goal setting put him in a position to fulfill his first-year goal. During the eighth game of Mike's freshman year in 1977, we changed defenses because of an injury with the nose guard position. The change

created a need for a middle linebacker, so Mike was inserted into the starting lineup against Arkansas. He had 28 unassisted tackles and helped to hold Lou Holtz's offense to one of its lowest outputs of the season. Mike went on to become a three-time All-Southwest Conference player, three-time All-American, three-time captain of the team, and two-time winner of the Davey O'Brien Award. A positive contribution to his team, indeed.

Playing football while maintaining eligibility and progressing toward graduation is a big and challenging job. Therefore, it's important that coaches assist their athletes in setting immediate and intermediate goals to pave the way for success in the classroom.

Goals for receiving an A in a class, for example, might read like this:

1. Take precise notes in class.
2. Do not procrastinate on daily assignments.
3. Approach each class period with a positive attitude.
4. Commit the appropriate time daily for study.
5. Sit in the front row, listen, and take notes on key points.

Whatever the specific academic goals that are recommended to players, it is essential that they prioritize them and make them their own. If they feel no attachment or commitment to the goals, they will never serve their potential motivational role.

Goals can serve as guidelines and direction finders in our lives. Sometimes, when we lose sight of our ultimate goal, they can be used to get us back on the right path.

Aubrey Shultz was a junior college transfer and came into our program as an upperclassman having never been a goal setter. Aubrey valued the opportunity to get an education. He aspired to be a head football coach in Texas high school Division 5-A, which comprised the largest schools in the state. Aubrey also had goals to become our starting center and gain 35 pounds in less than one year.

In the spring of Aubrey's first year at Baylor, he did become the starting center, but at 190 pounds. In looking ahead to his next season, he set a goal to report to preseason camp at 235 pounds. His daily workout regimen and eating habits were directed to achieving that goal, and sure enough, Aubrey weighed in at a solid 245 pounds.

In the spring of his junior year, I received a disturbing call from the director of the dorm where Aubrey lived. He informed me that the night before Aubrey had dropped a trash bag full of water on a passerby from an upper floor in the dorm. The dorm director said this act was dangerous, inappropriate, and grounds for probation. He also said Aubrey might be kicked out of the dorm if he made one more mistake. Being kicked out of the dorm could have caused me to suspend him from the football program, thus, he would lose his opportunity to finish his education.

I sent word for Aubrey to come to my office. Shortly after noon, he walked in and sat down in the chair in front of my desk. It was obvious he did not know I

had been informed about the incident. Without saying a word, I reached into my desk and pulled out a copy of Aubrey's goal card. I handed it across my desk and told him to read it aloud.

He read, "My ultimate goal professionally is to be a Division 5-A head coach in the state of Texas." A clear, concise goal.

I said, "Aubrey, your behavioral patterns in the dorm are not conducive to reaching your ultimate goal. Your conduct has put you in a position for a possible suspension from the dorm and ultimately from our football program. How do you think you will reach your goal of being a high school head football coach if you are no longer at Baylor, no longer on this team?"

"Coach, I was just having fun. I didn't mean any harm," he replied.

I said, "Aubrey, your actions must reflect your goals, even on a daily basis. A lack of attention to what it takes to get where you want to go can ultimately lead to failure."

Aubrey's head dropped and his eyes turned up toward me. "Coach, I understand exactly what you're saying. I promise you will never have another problem with me. I want to reach my goals."

I never had another problem with Aubrey. He went on to become a first team All-American center for Baylor. He also reached his goal of becoming a head coach at a 5-A high school in Texas.

Mental Pictures

In the 1960s, I read a book called *Psycho-Cybernetics* by Dr. Maxwell Maltz. The book introduced Dr. Maltz's analogy of the brain as a cybernetic servo-mechanism, similar to a computer on a guided missile designed to automatically find a path to the target (self-image). Dr. Maltz's book turned me on to the subject of self-image psychology and goal visualization. The following statement had a huge impact on me: "The mind cannot differentiate between that which is vividly imagined and that which is performed."

The average football player can become better by picturing himself in situations that will occur during the game and imagining himself successful. A football team can vicariously experience the invigorating feeling of victory even before the game starts. That feeling is second to actually winning the game; however, the imagined feeling adds to the confidence already attained by knowledge and great preparation for the game.

I employed psycho-cybernetics in my personal life and with my teams. During the week, as a part of the regular routine in preparation for a game, our team members were encouraged to spend quiet time visualizing their responsibilities and actions on every play in which they would be involved. In doing so, when it was time for the game, they would have rehearsed their responsibilities many times more than time restraints allowed on the practice field. We found our players to be better prepared, because they had played the game many times before kickoff.

On game day, during what we referred to as our devotional time, I would ask

players to close their eyes, visualize successful execution of what might be their most difficult job in the upcoming game, then visualize us in the dressing room after the game high-fiving and enjoying the victory.

Unbeknownst to the players, this was a way to have them relax before the game. I remember one specific time playing at Auburn University before a sellout crowd. Knowing we were in for a difficult game on the road, I did something a bit unusual. During our visualization time, I asked them to imagine themselves with only a few minutes to go, down to Auburn by less than a field goal. For the defense, visualize what each of them would have to do if they had to stop an offensive drive by Auburn to get the ball back for our offense in order to win the game. I told the offense to visualize taking over with only a few minutes left in the game and executing what they would have to do to drive the length of the field to kick a field goal and win the game.

As though scripted by a mysterious force, with only a few minutes left, our defense had to stop a drive to get our offense the ball in order to have a chance to win the game on a field goal. Amazingly, that is exactly what happened.

Mental Preparation

Mental preparation for a game is equal to physical preparation. On Sunday, our staff would meet to determine a psychological theme for the upcoming game. We would use the theme to prepare our team to win. Using the theme of the week as a catalyst for all preparation, the staff determined what they needed to emphasize for the rest of the week.

As an example, we might be playing an extraordinarily tough opponent on the road, forcing us to the underdog position and creating the need to have the theme "Whatever it takes." That theme is posted in the dressing room on Sunday afternoon and remains there the entire week, so the players see it every day. The trainers and equipment people have matching signs in their respective areas. Assistant coaches reinforce the theme in individual and position meetings throughout the week.

In 1978, we had a difficult season because of some early injuries, but we were fighting back. At the end of the season, we were playing a particularly tough team. The theme of that week was "Whatever it takes." On Thursday afternoon, I told the players a story of two Eskimos fishing on the ice, each with the same equipment and bait. One of them was catching fish, the other was not. The unsuccessful fisherman said to the successful fisherman, "We're using the same bait, the same equipment, the same size hole in the ice, so what is the secret to your success?" The one catching the fish said, "You gotta keep the worms warm," indicating he kept his bait in his mouth, so he would not be presenting a frozen worm to the fish. I said to the players, "Now that's doing whatever it takes. Remember, it may be distasteful or painful, but each of you needs to do what it takes. If you do, collectively, we will win the game." We did.

A Motivated Example

I have always held to the belief that if leaders, coaches, teachers, fathers, and parents give a sermon on life, they should live it. If we are teaching others using the motivation of goal setting, we must ourselves be competent and successful in that arena.

My first year out of college, while coaching at Lubbock High School, I met and married Donell Phillips, a cheerleader at Texas Tech. Perhaps prophetically, we moved into an apartment on Baylor Street.

Shortly after we were married, Donell and I sat down at the little kitchen table to talk about my dreams and who I wanted to become. I thought it was important for her to know these things, because I wanted and needed her support. If she was unable to support my dreams and goals, I needed to know so I could change directions. However, she was excited about my plans, so I began to talk to her about setting goals in three-year increments. On that night, we became a family of goal setters. It is amazing how we reached goals year after year and to this day continue setting goals and planning to reach them.

Donell and I decided to use three-year increments to reach our goals. It was truly amazing how planning and working together helped us check off our goals year after year. I shared all my goals with Donell. She particularly liked the one with my becoming a head football coach in the Southwest Conference. We expanded our goals by including physical, mental, and spiritual goals. We determined we would have a Christian home for our children and make the church a part of our lives. Those decisions are by far the most important ones we made.

As a high school coach, I was making \$3,000 a year, so we set our goals to someday be able to make \$1,000 a month. No matter what we made, we would give a minimum of 10 percent to the church as and save another 10 percent. We would buy a home as soon as we could to build equity. Three years later in Abilene we were able to do so: a brand new \$13,000 three-bedroom home. It stretched our budget, but we were building equity. We knew our life in coaching would be busy and intertwined with other lives, so we set aside time for ourselves. We committed to Thursday night date nights, and to this day we still have them. Donell worked the first few years of our marriage to help us get a solid financial foundation. Her goal was to be involved in my profession and with those in the profession, especially coaches' wives. To this very day, she is heavily involved with the American Football Coaches Wives Association, which she helped found several years ago.

An unintended consequence of family goal setting works just as it does with a team: It brings you together with a common purpose.

Believing that self-motivation is the ultimate key to individual progress and achievement, I endorse the part of Maslow's theory of self-actualization that recognizes the importance of goals in leading one to their full potential as a person. Only a small percentage of the population reaches a high level of self-actualization. Using the power of the mind, which responds to that inner "want-to" and quest to fulfill one's needs, ignites in each of us a capacity to be self-motivated.

My personal motivation is striving to be better tomorrow than I am today. This means I want to develop every asset to the fullest each day. I am motivated to learn a new word every day—the definition and its usage—in order to be a better communicator. In my car, I listen to audiobooks that otherwise I would not have time to read.

My goal is to remain a highly motivated leader for my family, my staff, and the members of the American Football Coaches Association. As such, I am motivated to ask you as an individual to become self-motivated and teach the fundamentals of self-motivation. In doing so, you will become a living example to those you coach.

A COACH'S INFLUENCE

BEYOND THE GAME

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL ISSUES FACING
TODAY'S COACH



Introduction to

Chapter 5 — Social Issues Facing Today’s Coach

The genesis of this book started when I began to hear from the AFCA members across the nation. They needed help addressing myriad social issues affecting the people they were coaching.

Through a survey, the American Football Coaches Association asked coaches on all levels to list the social issues they were dealing with and for which they needed help.

On pages 39 and 40 in Chapter 5, six social negatives are clearly defined. One of the major problems in today’s society is the epidemic of absentee fathers. The statistics are staggering and growing every day. They are not only mind boggling they are heart-breaking.

In a free society, there are three foundations through which a child develops into who they are going to be: the home, the church and the educational system. Frankly, the statistics tell us the home is disintegrating, in part because of a lack of male leadership. The church is in steady decline, which leaves us with the educational system. As we all know, there are many problems in that area as well, however, the roles of the teacher and the coach are imperative. In the classroom, and on the athletic field, a difference must be made.

The challenge for teachers and coaches is to accept the responsibility of being a positive influence through what they teach, as well as through their actions, by setting a positive example in the classroom, on the field, and in life.

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Chapter 5 — Social Issues Facing Today’s Coach

At all levels of coaching below the professional ranks, football coaches help mold their players into the adults they will eventually become. In addition to handling the technical aspects, a football coach has a number of other core responsibilities, including teaching values, developing a sound work ethic with colleagues and athletes, and emphasizing to the players the value of pursuing an education. Coaching football is an opportunity to use the game to teach meaningful life lessons.

Over the years, football coaches have risen to the challenge of dealing with the needs of their players. Yet, as American society changed over the past 50 years, it created a number of additional issues coaches had not needed to address before. As a result, over the last few decades, coaches and teachers in America have faced a more serious challenge in educating, developing, and providing discipline to the youth in this country.

Six Social Problems

One of the many responsibilities of a coach is to discover what holds a player back from reaching his full potential on and off the field. Increasingly, coaches pointed to a set of social problems that were hindering their players’ and teams’ development.

As the conversation about social issues expanded through the AFCA membership, it was clear most coaches were in need of assistance. In early 2010, the American Football Coaches Association sent all members a survey about problems they were witnessing with their players. The response was overwhelming, culminating in a list of 32 social issues. The AFCA carefully examined the list and researched the underlying causes of the issues. As a result, the 32 issues cited were grouped under six major topics of concern. During membership registration at the 2011 AFCA convention in Dallas, Texas, each coach registering was asked to prioritize the list of the six key social issues based on their personal experiences. The final list of social issues, as defined and prioritized by the AFCA membership, follows:

1. **Peer pressure**, leading to involvement with drugs, alcohol, gangs, criminal activity, and promiscuity. One of the surest ways to determine what an individual is like away from authority figures is to determine whom he spends time with. Over the years, many fine athletes with great potential for success in life have lost opportunities because of those with whom they associated and those to whom they listened.
2. **Disrespect for authority**, coaches, teammates, parents, and women. Disrespect is extremely troublesome because in order to be respected one must give respect. As Confucius said so perceptively, “Without feelings of respect, what is there to distinguish men from beasts?”
3. **A dysfunctional home**, often fatherless with no positive male role model, poor parenting, and parental pressure. A negative home situation leaves a child rudderless or on a misguided course in navigating the choices and responsibilities in life.

4. **Sense of entitlement** as reflected in selfishness, lack of dedication, and “the-world-owes-me” attitude. Entitlement is the belief that one deserves privileges. This is the mind-set coaches commonly face today. In 2006, Sacred Heart University’s Polling Institute found that nearly 83 percent of Americans agreed that the youth in 2006 seemed more entitled than youth when the same poll was taken in 1996.
5. **Lack of accountability**, which leads to inappropriate personal behavior, bad attitude, irresponsibility, and little, if any, self-discipline. Seeing adults behave with a lack of accountability is, sadly, why so many youth act with such disregard for the damage their actions (or inaction) might cause.
6. **Lack of character** evident by dishonesty, questionable integrity, dysfunctional or absent values, and quitting rather than persisting. Popular media and entertainment too often fill the void left by negligent or morally deficient parents.

Societal changes have escalated of these six social issues. What has changed in American culture and society since 1960? Just about everything.

For example, television has gone from a few black-and-white channels to over 300 on cable and satellite, with more adult programming creeping into the afternoon and evening time periods. At the same time, television has been called upon to help raise latchkey children and in turn has provided uncensored programming.

Social media and texting have provided a broad platform for instant communication. Media such as Facebook®, Twitter®, Instagram®, and the Internet place unsupervised children in an unrestricted environment where they can read or watch anything.

Another factor is the development and availability of electronics, such as cell phones, tablet technology, and audio players. Music blasting filthy lyrics into the ears of youth has polluted the language in our society. The tabloid newspapers and magazines, often with provocative pictures and headlines, are there for all to see at the grocery store checkout line.

Two other major factors detrimentally affecting our society are diminished work ethic and vanishing values. Coaches have expressed concern about the increasing number of athletes who believe that they deserve—are entitled to—certain privileges without having to work for them.

The positive influences, such as discipline and unselfishness, that a devoted dad can provide a child are sorely missed. Regarding the fatherless home in America, Wade Horn, director of the National Fatherhood Incentive, said, “This is *the* national crisis . . . because father-absence drives almost every other social problem we have.” Former Colorado Governor Roy Romer pointed out, “We spend 40 percent less time as with [our] children than we did a generation ago. That is serious, and it is mainly because of absentee fathers.”¹

1 “Life without Father,” PBS Online NewsHour discussion, moderated by Charlayne Hunter-Gault, June 17, 1996, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/youth/fathers_6-17.html.

Hope Yen, an Associated Press writer, reported in a June 15, 2011, article that nearly half of all American fathers under 45 years of age said they have at least one child born out of wedlock. Furthermore, the number of fathers living apart from their children has more than doubled in recent years.²

A recent Pew Research Center report highlights the changing role of parents as U.S. marriage rates in traditional-family households fall to historic lows. The Pew Study, *A Tale of Two Fathers*, found sharp differences based on race and education. African-American and Hispanic fathers were much more likely to have children out of wedlock, at 72 percent and 59 percent, respectively, compared to 37 percent of white males. Among fathers with at least a bachelor's degree, only 13 percent had children outside of wedlock, compared to 51 percent of those with high school diplomas and 65 percent of those who did not finish high school. Three-fourths of fathers aged 20 to 24 had children out of wedlock.³ These findings come as the latest census data shows the number of marriages has fallen to a record low, pushing the share of U.S. households with married couples below 50 percent for the first time ever.⁴

The Fallout

The following U.S. Department of Justice statistics clearly back up the many individuals who believe that the fatherless home is a national crisis:

- 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes.
- 90% of all homeless and runaway youths are from fatherless homes.
- 85% of children who exhibit behavioral disorders are from fatherless homes.
- 71% of high school dropouts are from fatherless homes.
- 70% of youth residing in state institutions are from fatherless homes.
- 75% of adolescent patients in substance abuse centers are from fatherless homes.
- 85% of rapists motivated by displaced anger are from fatherless homes.⁵

2 Hope Yen, "Roles of American Dads Diverging This Father's Day," Associated Press, June 15, 2011.

3 Gretchen Livingston, Senior Researcher, and Kim Parker, Associate Director, Pew Social & Demographic Trends, "A Tale of Two Fathers: More Are Active, but More Are Absent," Pew Research Center Publications, June 15, 2011, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/06/15/a-tale-of-two-fathers>.

4 Sabrina Tavernise, "Married Couples Are No Longer a Majority, Census Finds," New York Times, May 26, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/26/us/26marry.html>.

5 Cicero Wilson, "Economic Shifts That Will Impact Crime Control and Community Revitalization," pp. 9-14 in "What Can the Federal Government Do to Decrease Crime and Revitalize Communities?" panel papers from January 5-7, 1998, a joint publication of the National Institute of Justice and the Executive Office for Weed and Seed, U.S. Department of Justice, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/172210.pdf>.

According to statistics gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2009, there are:

- 13.7 million single parents in the U.S.
- 22 million children are raised by single parents (more than one-quarter of all children).
- 82.2% of custodial parents were mothers.
- 36.8% of custodial mothers had never been married.
- 76% of single mothers have full-time jobs.
- 30.4% of custodial mothers and their children lived below the poverty line.⁶

David Popenoe, a professor of psychology at Rutgers University and author of *Life Without Father*, was interviewed by David Gergen, editor-at-large at *U.S. News and World Report*. Dr. Popenoe argued that the real change in America has come since 1960. He makes the point that in 1960, “17 percent of the children in America went to bed at night without their natural father at home.” In 1996, the number of fatherless homes was up to 36 percent.⁷ In 2009, 21.8 million U.S. children had only one parent. (not in book)

In his book, Dr. Popenoe stated the “high divorce rate and the high illegitimacy rate as being the product of a changing culture, [a] radical individualism that’s taken hold. I think you probably have to change both . . . there has to be a cultural shift, and then we have to back away from the kind of ‘expressive individualisms,’ one term, or ‘me generation.’ . . . looking at the data . . . we’ve gone too far in that direction.”⁸

The following social ills have been documented by data from Fathers.com, the website for the National Center for Fathering:

- *Poverty.* Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor. In 2002, 7.8 percent of children in married couple families were living in poverty, compared to 38.4 percent of children in female-household families. In 1996, young children living with unmarried mothers were five times as likely to be poor and 10 times as likely to be extremely poor. Almost 75 percent of American children living in single-parent families will experience poverty before they turn 11 years old. Only 20 percent of children in two-parent families will do the same.
- *Drug and alcohol abuse.* The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states, “Fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse.” Children growing up in single-parent households are at a significantly increased risk for drug abuse as teenagers. Children who

6 See “Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2009,” U.S. Census Bureau, issued December 2011, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p60-240.pdf>.

7 “Fatherless Families,” PBS Essays and Dialogues, David Gergen and David Popenoe, May 3, 1996, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/gergen/popenoe.html>.

8 “Fatherless Families.”

live apart from their fathers are 4.3 times more likely to smoke cigarettes as teenagers than those growing up with fathers in the home.

- *Physical and emotional health.* A study of nearly 6,000 children found that children from single-parent homes had more physical and mental health problems than children who live with two parents. Furthermore, boys in single-parent homes were found to have more illnesses than girls in single-parent homes. Children in single-parent homes are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent homes to have emotional and behavioral problems.
- *Educational achievement.* In studies involving more than 25,000 children, using national representative data sets, children who live with only one parent had lower grade-point averages, lower college aspirations, poorer attendance records, and a higher dropout rate than students who lived with both parents. Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school. School children from divorced families have more absences; are more anxious, hostile, and withdrawn; and are less popular with their peers than those from intact families.
- *Crime.* Children in single-parent homes are more likely to be in trouble with the law than their peers who live with two parents (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). In a study using national probability samples of 1,636 young men and women, it was found that older boys and girls from female-headed households are more likely to commit criminal acts than their peers who live with two parents. A study in Washington, using statewide data, found an increased likelihood that children born out of wedlock would become juvenile delinquents. Compared to their peers born to married parents, children born out of wedlock were 1.7 times more likely to become offenders and, if male, 2.1 times more likely to become chronic offenders . . . and 10 times more likely to become a chronic juvenile offender if male and born to an unmarried teen mother.
- *Sexual activity and teen pregnancy.* Adolescent females between the ages of 15 and 19 reared in homes without fathers are significantly more likely to engage in premarital sex than adolescent females reared in homes with both a mother and a father.⁹

We coaches who are observing and working with youngsters caught up in this cultural dysfunction cannot just stick our heads in the sand. The opportunity to positively affect young athletes off the field is one we must seize. Now.

9 These statistics and their sources are available online at "The Consequences of Fatherlessness."

A COACH'S INFLUENCE

BEYOND THE GAME

CHAPTER 6 COACHES' CALL TO ACTION



Introduction to Chapter 6 — Coaches' Call to Action

Tom Osborne, the great football coach and Nebraska senator, directly challenged every teacher and coach to teach, influence, and be a role model for their athletes beyond the game.

In the unabridged edition of *A Coach's Influence: Beyond the Game*, there are many examples of how coaches turn negatives into positives, providing ways for their teams to overcome negative peer pressures, and develop respect for authority, coaches, teammates, parents, and women. Coaches' who understood the dysfunctional home, often fatherless, found ways to use positive role models within the community to teach accountability and used the game to show there is no room for entitlement on the path to success. If you want to succeed, you have to work hard and earn it.

The greatest gift you can give any young person is to teach the value of a strong work ethic. A strong work ethic coupled with positive values creates the fertile earth from which positive character grows.

If leaders, coaches, teachers, fathers, and parents teach a positive sermon on life, they must in turn live it to give it credibility.

A Coach's Influence: Beyond the Game

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Chapter 6 — Coaches' Call to Action

In 1994, I took over as Executive Director of the American Football Coaches Association. In my inaugural speech that year I stated, "In the future, coaches will have to accept the fact that they will be the father figure to many of the young men they coach." Indeed, football coaches across the U.S. have been dealing with children from fatherless homes for many years. Research and anecdotal evidence confirm coaches often serve as surrogate fathers for many of their players.

Tom Osborne, former head football coach at the University of Nebraska and a former Nebraska senator, asserted the following to more than 4,000 coaches during the Master Coach Series at an AFCA convention: "I want to say just a word or two about influence. I think that you are all aware of this, but our culture has changed. I started coaching in 1962. In 1962, the out-of-wedlock birth rate was 5 percent; today it is 37 percent. When I went out recruiting in 1962 and 1963, we would occasionally run across somebody from a single-parent family, but if we did, it was usually because one parent or the other was deceased. Today, over half of our kids are growing up [with only one biological parent in the home]."

Tom continued, "The drug culture, the alcohol issue, the gangs, and the violence have shifted tremendously. The biggest factor that we are dealing with is homes without fathers. When you don't have a dad, just about every kind of dysfunction doubles and triples. So, in many cases, you're the dad. You're taking the place of someone the kid has missed in his life. It is a tremendous responsibility . . .

"A lot of kids don't know much about discipline. As coaches, you've got to teach them about discipline. A lot of them don't value education. They don't realize they're not going to go very far if they don't have some kind of marketable skills."

Coach Osborne then paused for a moment, looked directly into the eyes of the coaches in the audience, and said, "You are the only guy who can make them understand this."

That statement was a direct challenge to every coach and teacher from one of the greatest football coaches of all time. Coaching goes beyond winning football games, coming back from character-building losses, and teaching blocking and tackling. A coach has a responsibility to influence his athletes beyond the game.

Counter Peer Pressure

In order to combat negative peer pressure, an open dialogue must be established with parents, teachers, and coaches. By setting high expectations and clear boundaries, parents, teachers, and coaches have a positive effect.

Coaches have the unique ability to create positive peer pressure through natural groups created within the game of football. These groups learn and work together to become an essential part of the team. These small groups made up of running backs, defensive linemen, wide receivers, and offensive linemen create peer groups. These groups give position coaches a unique opportunity to instill camaraderie and closeness in their groups.

Coaches should find a way to build confidence and self-esteem in their players who may have lost it through negative peer pressure. Teaching leadership and goal setting is a strong vehicle for empowering student-athletes to overcome negative peer pressure.

Any initiative or effort that stresses personal accountability, positive character traits, and a value system will play a large role in helping young people overcome negative peer pressure. Here's an example of how one coach, Rick Wimmer of Fishers High School in Indiana, approached the problem:

Future Tiger Football Club

We started a Future Tiger Football Club for young boys in grades K through 8. Those who join the club receive a Future Tiger Club T-shirt featuring the Tiger Ready! logo, a poster schedule we produce each year with a picture of our seniors, a Tiger Value Card (fund-raiser card with numerous discounts from local merchants), and an optional season ticket (at a higher cost). Three activities we hold for boys in the club help create a relationship with our players that we hope not only results in a positive experience for the young Tiger Club member, but also helps our older players understand the influence they can have on those young guys who look up to them. Our three activities are:

1. *Meet the Tigers Night.* Tiger Club members are invited to watch the end of a practice and our older players introduce themselves and hang out with them for a while. Our parent boosters, the Gridiron Club, supply some drinks and snacks for the club members and players. Club members receive their T-shirts and posters on this night.
2. *Sideline privileges for home games.* Future Tiger Football Club members are allowed on the sideline during warm-ups for home games. A parent is posted at the gate to check them in. These young guys get a kick out of high-fiving our players as they run on and off the turf during warm-ups. Again, our players get a sense of their influence with these young players. Club members are escorted off the field at game time.
3. *Tiger Big Brother Program.* Future Tiger Football Club members are assigned to players—seniors first, then others who want to be involved. The high school players write a short email or letter to the club member thanking him for being a part of the club, encouraging him to do well in school, asking him about his activities, and asking him about when he might come see one of his youth games.

Give Respect, Receive Respect

Through years of interviews during the Master Coach Series at the AFCA convention, I learned building respect in an individual player was a high priority for most coaches. In one of these interviews, I posed a question to Don Nehlen, former head football coach at West Virginia, “Don, is there something that you incorporated in your training that taught your players respect?”

He said, “I made my players understand the meaning of respect by the way I respected them. I made sure my players understood that we as coaches had an open-door policy. They could come and see me, or any of our coaches, at any time. When a player makes a trip to see one of the coaches, it’s often due to a problem. If the coach is not available, that problem can fester and it can hurt your football team.

“Respect is generated in a player when he observes a head coach and his assistant [coaches’] honesty. Your players may not always want to hear what you’re telling them, but, as long as you’re honest, they’re going to respect you. If you’re honest, fair, and consistent, your players will be encouraged to use your open-door policy.”

Terry Donahue, former head football coach at UCLA, said this about being respected by players: “First, everybody who coaches wants to be respected by their players. Being a head coach or assistant coach means that players have a certain level of respect for you. I think it’s important that coaches earn the respect of their players. Coaches need to understand that players are going to respect you first because of who you are, the rest of it you have to earn. You earn respect by your knowledge base, by the way you conduct yourself in crisis, by the way you handle yourself outside of football, and by the way you are perceived by your players as to the kind of person you are.”

The game itself teaches the great lessons of handling success and adversity. Through the game and team building, we are afforded opportunity upon opportunity to develop positive characteristics that allow players to succeed in life. Here’s how Coach Ron Stolski strives to instill respect among the members of his Brainerd, Minnesota, High School team:

The Warrior Way

The Warrior Way is a phrase grounded in respect and has, at its base, the desire to create and maintain an environment people want to be a part of. It operates on the premise that people will come where they are invited and stay where they are welcome. It is as follows:

- A **philosophy** of respect for self, others, the game, officials, and opponents. It is a practice and display of that respect in all our actions and deeds.
- A **method** of using positive teaching principles. It is encouraging, not demeaning. It is being fundamentally sound in technique, strategy, preparation, and play.

- A **style** of play. First-class behavior on and off the field, great sportsmanship, physical preparation, and performance. Employ the power of three: preparation, passion, and poise.
- An **ideal**. A model of exceptional behavior for the program and the community. Parents, youngsters, community, and former players relate to the ideal that is the Warrior Way.
- A **goal**. A desire to achieve, to always better your best and to do the best you can each and every day. The Warrior Way is what our teams inherit; it is what they desire to enhance.
- A **spirit**. Mostly, it is spirit that defines the core values of the program. Spirit is carried by players and parents wherever they may travel in their life's journey. It is spirit that lives in Warriors of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

This philosophy allows us to address the issues facing the student-athletes of today. It is a vital element of our school and community, plus a significant reason why we have experienced success. The support of former Warriors and the community at large help us in myriad ways.

Offer Opportunity, Not Entitlement

Solutions to the social issue of entitlement are inherent in the game of football. These are the lessons and benefits of football participation:

1. There are no free lunches. Everyone pays the price to play.
2. In football as in life, one must earn playing time and accolades as well as personal and team success.
3. Football is a goal-oriented game.

Furthermore, teaching the importance of goal setting and how to reach those goals will transcend an attitude of entitlement with an attitude of gratitude for the opportunity to reach goals.

Scott Smith, a member of my Baylor team, came from an affluent neighborhood in Dallas, Texas. However, because of his parents and coaches, Scott's only feeling of entitlement was thankfulness that he was given the opportunity to prove himself on the major college level. Seizing that opportunity, he proved himself first as a quarterback, then as a defensive back on that 10-2 Southwest Conference Championship team of 1980. Scott eagerly took to the concept of setting goals to become successful first as a player, then as a husband, father, leader, and coach.

Coach Smith's Goal-Setting System

Coach Smith teaches his players the importance of goal-setting, which he uses to reinforce the point that opportunity is the only real

entitlement. A free society gives everyone a chance to improve one's own lot in sport and in life, so it is incumbent on each individual athlete to seize that opportunity. And the way to do that is by setting and achieving goals. Here's how Scott, now coach Rockwall High School in Texas, describes his goal-setting process:

1. The head coach shares the importance of setting goals and working diligently to reach them.
2. Each student-athlete is given a sheet of paper with a line drawn down the middle and asked to list his personal assets on one side and liabilities on the other.
3. Student-athletes are asked to visualize how they see themselves 10 years from now.
4. A positive vision of one's future demands that positive goals must be set and reached in order to crystallize that vision in 10 years.
5. Coaches must be role models as effective servant leaders willing to help others. Our coaches continually ask the players, "How can I help you reach your goals?"

The process of goal setting can become a solution to many social issues. Setting goals on a daily basis, reaching those goals, encourage a student-athlete to set bigger and more long-range goals. In turn, that will someday allow them to reach levels of success that most of them never dreamed of. By learning to set goals and teaching our student-athletes to serve others, they learn they don't have to be given something, they can earn it by knowing what they want and how to get there.

Make All Accountable

I have always held the belief that if leaders, coaches, teachers, fathers, and parents give a sermon on life, they should live it. If we are teaching others to be accountable and to hold on to important values, we must ourselves be competent and successful in doing so.

Terry Gambill, head football coach at Midway, Texas, High School, has instituted a program he calls Question Mark T-Shirts. The use of T-shirts that send a message has been extremely effective for his program. In a few short years, he has taken Midway High School to consistently competing at the highest level. A plain, simple gray T-shirt with a big question mark on it sends the right message.

No More Questions

We give out three different T-shirts in our off-season program. The first shirt is a plain, simple gray T-shirt with a question mark on

it. Everybody gets one of these to begin with. The question mark signifies that the person inside that shirt has a question to answer. That question is, "Will I become an accountable, consistently eligible, and positively motivated member of my team?"

The player gets out of the question mark T-shirt and moves into either a red or a blue T-shirt with a white M on it. Each student-athlete is accountable for his academic progress and eligibility. If a player makes an A, B, or C in his classes, but misses a class or has a tardy during the week, he will be in a red shirt. To gain blue shirt status, his accountability is held to a maximum. He must achieve nothing below a C, with no absences—excused or unexcused—and no tardiness for the entire week.

This is an incentive for the players to take care of their responsibilities and grow. This amounts to accountability. No one likes to wear a shirt that has a question mark on it, so they are all heavily motivated to end up with a red or blue shirt.

At Midway High School, we have had principals, teachers, and individuals from the community tell us, "Coach, you just don't know how these players dislike having question marks hanging over their heads." It is a badge for everyone in the school to see when you wear the red or blue jersey and everyone knows you have been accountable for your grades and your attendance. This teaches young people that they have a responsibility to be accountable in all areas of their lives.

When an individual becomes accountable, his life changes forever. An individual who is accountable as an example and an inspiration to teammates can become a responsible, accountable person and team member.

A Final Word

I feel very strongly that as coaches we have an obligation and a responsibility to influence our players beyond the game. In fact, we are blessed with multiple ways of affecting our players in a positive way: practicing to learn the fundamentals of the game and preparing for an opponent; classroom settings and meetings; spontaneous points to be made that offer a life lesson; and planned programs, activities, and created experiences that teach and mold. We must seize the opportunity to lead and teach in our coaching role to help our young student-athletes surmount societal road blocks to their promising future.