Putting Athletes First for More Powerful Coaching

Wade Gilbert, PhD

wgilbert@csufresno.edu  @WadeWgilbert
Our Purpose Today

To illustrate how successful coaches apply athlete-centered leadership
There’s really nobody to blame but me. That’s my fault totally. I made the decision.
Be the best you can be. It's all in the attitude.
Leadership is defined, and demonstrated, in our everyday coaching moments.
• What is the right – or best – way to navigate the moments?
• What leadership style is most effective?
Coaching Leadership

Coaching is about connecting with people, inspiring them to do their best, and helping them to grow. It’s also about challenging people to come up with the answer they require on their own.

Connect and Inspire?

• High school varsity baseball athlete selection
  – “I have no use for that kid”
  – Cut from program, doesn’t serve coach needs
Connect and Inspire?

- High school varsity soccer 7-0 loss
  - “Time to run”
  - 90 minute conditioning practice
Connect and Inspire!

• 5-5 to start season, 3 game losing streak
• 24-5 previous year
• Coach frustrated with way team losing
• A leadership moment presents itself...
Connect and Inspire!

• Choose a teammate who they didn't hang around with and find out three things no one else would know

• Get in front of team and talk about three things they learned about teammate
Connect and Inspire!

When you get to know someone, I think you naturally build a stronger relationship and you care more about that person. It really helped us all come together. We're a different team.

- 14 game win streak
- 2-time coach of the year

HUMAN KINETICS
Coach Education Center

www.HumanKineticsCoachEducationCenter.com
Most effective coach leadership approach is one that puts needs of the athletes first.
I'm not coaching golfers; I'm coaching human beings who deal with love and hate and fear and all those different aspects in the emotional arena. If you look at them as just a golfer, you're missing out.
Adapted to the reality of...

- The athletes you are coaching
- The environment in which you coach
- The demands and constraints of the moment
My style of leadership is not a style. I try to have a leadership that is adapted to the reality.
1. Characteristics and examples of athlete-centered leadership
2. Transformational and servant leadership as forms of athlete-centered leadership
3. A framework for coaching leadership
Characteristics and examples of athlete-centered leadership
What is athlete-centered leadership?

People Building
People Building

Shhhh! Here's a well-kept secret,
That all great leaders know.
The bottom line
Will be just fine,
When you help your people grow.

Swen Nater (www.coachswen.com)
Leadership Defined

• Generally defined as a process of influence
• Leading is the act of influencing (athletes)
Leading to What?
Leading to What?

4C’s
An Integrative Definition of Coaching Effectiveness and Expertise

by

Jean Côté and Wade Gilbert

Reprinted from


Volume 4 · Number 3 · 2009
1. Competence:

- sport specific skills, competing, and performing
1. **Competence:**
   - sport specific skills, competing, and performing

2. **Confidence:**
   - internal sense of overall positive self-worth
1. **Competence:**
   - sport specific skills, competing, and performing

2. **Confidence:**
   - internal sense of overall positive self-worth

3. **Connection:**
   - positive bonds with people and institutions
1. **Competence:**
   - sport specific skills, competing, and performing

2. **Confidence:**
   - internal sense of overall positive self-worth

3. **Connection:**
   - positive bonds with people and institutions

4. **Character:**
   - respect, integrity, moral courage
Examples of how coaches lead athletes toward the 4C’s...
175 state championships

- Gain credibility by demonstrating genuine concern
- Give athletes opportunities to share in decision-making
- Communicate high expectations and standards of conduct
- Use discipline issues to teach and reinforce philosophy
- Emphasize earned, equitable treatment as opposed to equal treatment for all
- Supplement group interactions such as post-game rituals with frequent one-on-one communications
• Philosophies slightly adjusted season-by-season depending on athlete profile
• Mid-season anonymous peer evaluation to identify 1 strength and 1 weakness for each teammate
• Keywords to capture elements of philosophies, such as ‘social conscience’, repeated in practices and games
• Impact not immediately evident, athlete report long-term impact on their development as people


**29 Pro Sport Championships**

---

[Image links to Human Kinetics Coach Education Center website]
Genuine care for players; consideration of individual needs

Create team togetherness and working coach-athlete relationships

Set clear and defined roles for every player on the team

Deep passion and drive for winning

Awareness of leadership approach that is true to their personality and values

Perspective on sport; not the sole purpose in their life

Transformational and servant leadership as athlete-centered leadership
Transformational Leadership

• Emphasis on inspiring others to become self-directed and motivated
• De-emphasize personal interests and goals in pursuit of collective team needs and goals
• Ethical behavior, shared leadership, leading by example, frequent praise and encouragement
Evidence for Transformational Leadership

Inspires greater self-confidence, commitment to team goals and positive relationships
4 Types of Leadership Behaviors
modeling humility, modesty, and core values

eternal optimist showing enthusiasm for shared goals

inspiring creativity and risk-taking

compassion and empathy for unique athlete needs

transformational leadership emphasizes ‘doing the right thing’

(people building vs. people using)
Servant Leadership

- Premium on integrity, morals, and empathy
- Virtues supersede concern for sport specific goals
- Considered ‘upside-down’ or inverted style
- Primary role is to build and enable by focusing on athlete strengths (as opposed to weaknesses)
Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership

Community

Customers

Employees

Servant Leader
- Person of Character
- Puts People First
- Skilled Communicator
- Compassionate Collaborator
- Has Foresight
- Systems Thinker
- Leads with Moral Authority

Strategy

Culture

http://successimg.com/servant-leadership/
Evidence for Servant Leadership


Evidence for Servant Leadership

Score higher on:

• Personal and team satisfaction
• Sport enjoyment and motivation
• Confidence and mental toughness
• Respect for the coach
Evidence for Servant Leadership

• Teams coached by servant leader coach outperformed teams coached by non-servant leader coach (win-loss record)
• Athletes who play for servant leader coach had higher team performance expectations
Common Theme

Connect and inspire through distributed leadership

Don’t try to be the one
A Leadership Development Intervention Program: A Case Study With Two Elite Teams

Mike Voight
Central Connecticut State University

Youth Sport Leadership Development: Leveraging the Sports Captaincy Experience

DANIEL GOULD and DANA K. VOELKER
Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, Michigan State University,
East Lansing, Michigan, USA
A framework for coaching leadership
The Pyramid of Teaching Success in Sport: Lessons from Applied Science and Effective Coaches

WADE GILBERT
California State University, Fresno, California, USA

SWEN NATER and MARK SIWIK
BeLikeCoach, Cleveland, Ohio, USA

RONALD GALLIMORE
University of California, Los Angeles, California, USA
SUCCESS

The peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing that you have made the effort to ensure that all those under your supervision learn how to reach their potential in sport and beyond.

PYRAMID OF TEACHING SUCCESS IN SPORT

LOVE
- Acting in the best interest of each athlete.

FRIENDSHIP
- Building strong relationships.

LOYALTY
- Never avoiding one’s duty to others.

COOPERATION
- Contributing to a learning community.

BALANCE
- Practicing moderation and perspective in all things.

INDUSTRIOUSNESS
- Hard work based on careful planning.

CURIOSITY
- Deep desire to know why, not just how.

RESOURCEFULNESS
- Finding and inventing ways to get around obstacles.

SELF-EXAMINATION
- Seeking continuous improvement.

CONDITION
- Moral, mental, emotional, physical; to be at your best all the time.

SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE
- Knowing a subject to its roots.

PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE
- Knowing how to teach so athletes learn.

COURAGE
- Standing up for what is right, true and best.

COMMITMENT
- Grounded in the values of the pyramid.

TEACHER
- You haven’t taught until they have learned.

PATIENCE
- Anticipation
- Initiative
- Empathy
- Experience
- Honesty

WISDOM
- Judgment
- Consistency
- Preparation
- Honesty
- Empathy
- Initiative
- Anticipation
- Experience

SUCCESS

The peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing that you have made the effort to ensure that all those under your supervision learn how to reach their potential in sport and beyond.
SUCCESS
The peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing that you have made the effort to ensure that all those under your supervision learn how to reach their potential in sport and beyond.
SUCCESS
The peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing that you have made the effort to ensure that all those under your supervision learn how to reach their potential in sport and beyond.

PYRAMID OF TEACHING SUCCESS IN SPORT

INDUSTRIOUSNESS
Love
Friendship
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

CURIOSITY
Curiosity
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

RESOURCEFULNESS
Resourcefulness
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

SELF-EXAMINATION
Self-examination
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

CONDITION
Condition
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE
Subject knowledge
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE
Pedagogical knowledge
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

COMMITMENT
Commitment
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

COURAGE
Courage
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

TEACHER
Teacher
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

WISDOM
Wisdom
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

JUDGMENT
Judgment
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

PATIENCE
Patience
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

EXPERIENCE
Experience
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

CONSISTENCY
Consistency
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

PREPARATION
Preparation
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

INITIATIVE
Initiative
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

ANTICIPATION
Anticipation
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

EMPATHY
Empathy
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

LOVE
Love
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

FRIENDSHIP
Friendship
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

LOYALTY
Loyalty
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

COOPERATION
Cooperation
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

BALANCE
Balance
Loyalty
Cooperation
Balance

© 2010 BeLikeCoach, Inc.
SUCCESS
The peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing that you have made the effort to ensure that all those under your supervision learn how to reach their potential in sport and beyond.
SUCCESS

The peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing that you have made the effort to ensure that all those under your supervision learn how to reach their potential in sport and beyond.

TEACHER

You haven’t taught until they have learned.

COURAGE

Standing up for what is right, true and best.

COMMITMENT

Grounded in the values of the pyramid.

SUCCESS

PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Knowing how to teach so athletes learn.

SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE

Knowing a subject to its roots.

CONDITION

Moral, mental, emotional, physical; to be at your best all the time.

INDUSTRIOUSNESS

Hard work based on careful planning.

CURIOSITY

Deep desire to know why, not just how.

RESOURCEFULNESS

Finding and inventing ways to get around obstacles.

SELF-EXAMINATION

Seeking continuous improvement.

LOVE

Acting in the best interest of each athlete.

FRIENDSHIP

Building strong relationships.

LOYALTY

Never avoiding one’s duty to others.

COOPERATION

Contributing to a learning community.

BALANCE

Practicing moderation and perspective in all things.

© 2010 BeLikeCoach, Inc.
SUCCESS
The peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing that you have made the effort to ensure that all those under your supervision learn how to reach their potential in sport and beyond.

PYRAMID OF TEACHING SUCCESS IN SPORT

- LOVE: Acting in the best interest of each athlete.
- FRIENDSHIP: Building strong relationships.
- LOYALTY: Never avoiding one’s duty to others.
- COOPERATION: Contributing to a learning community.
- BALANCE: Practicing moderation and perspective in all things.

- INDUSTRIOUSNESS: Hard work based on careful planning.
- CURIOSITY: Deep desire to know why, not just how.
- RESOURCEFULNESS: Finding and inventing ways to get around obstacles.
- SELF-EXAMINATION: Seeking continuous improvement.

- PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE: Knowing how to teach so athletes learn.
- SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE: Knowing a subject to its roots.
- CONDITION: Moral, mental, emotional, physical; to be at your best all the time.

- COURAGE: Standing up for what is right, true and best.
- COMMITMENT: Grounded in the values of the pyramid.

- TEACHER: You haven’t taught until they have learned.

- PATIENCE: Consistency, anticipation, initiative, empathy, honesty.
Focus first on who you are coaching, not what you are coaching

Putting Athletes First for More Powerful Coaching

Wade Gilbert, PhD

wgilbert@csufresno.edu @WadeWgilbert