

# Putting Athletes First for More Powerful Coaching

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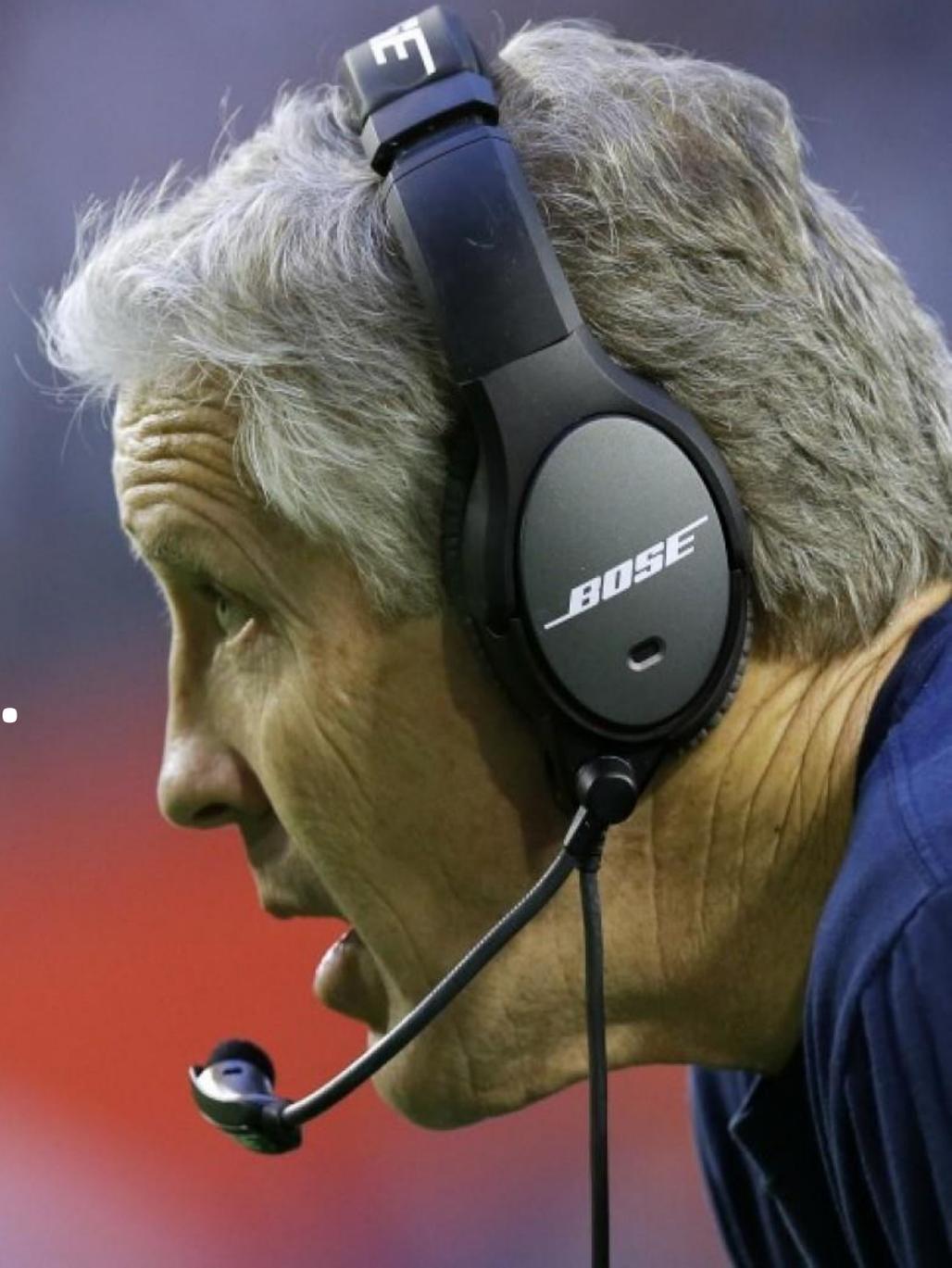


# Our Purpose Today

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.





Leadership is defined, and demonstrated, in our everyday coaching moments



# LEADERSHIP

- 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.*

Batista, E. (2015, February 18). How great coaches ask, listen, and empathize. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2015/02/how-great-coaches-ask-listen-and-empathize>

# Connect and Inspire?

- High school varsity baseball athlete selection
  - *“I have no use for that kid”*
  - Cut from program, doesn't serve coach needs



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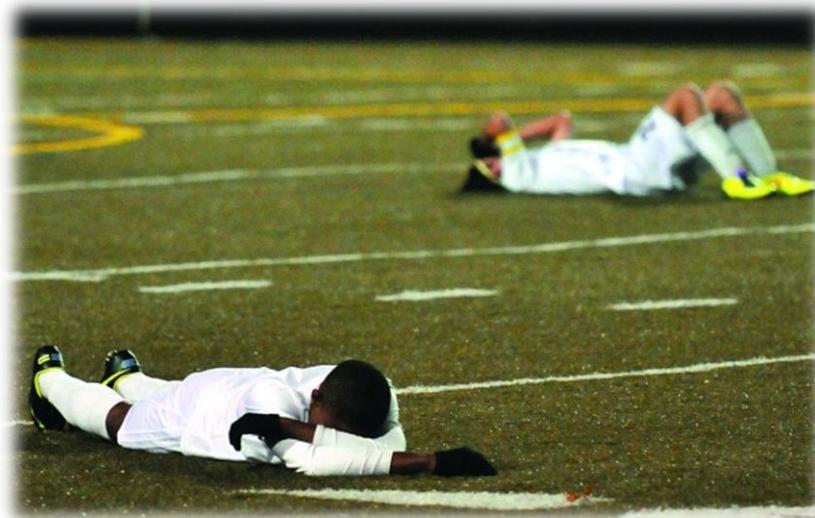
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# Connect and Inspire?

- 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...



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# 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



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# 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



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.*



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# 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.



# Webinar Outline

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

# 1

## Characteristics and examples of athlete-centered leadership



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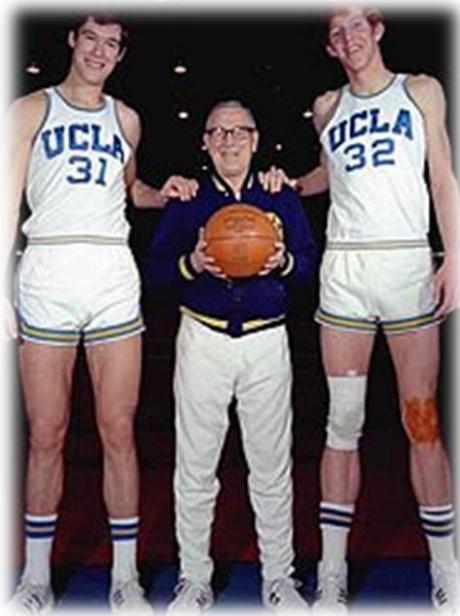


What is athlete-centered  
leadership?

# 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](http://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



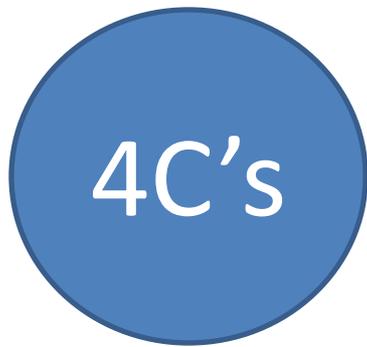
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**Competence**

**Confidence**

**Connection**

**Character**

An Integrative Definition of Coaching  
Effectiveness and Expertise

by

**Jean Côté and Wade Gilbert**

Reprinted from

**International Journal of  
Sports Science  
& Coaching**

**Volume 4 • Number 3 • 2009**



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# 1. Competence:

- sport specific skills, competing, and performing

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# 2. Confidence:

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# 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...





Miller, G. A., Lutz, R., & Fredenburg, K. (2012). Outstanding high school coaches: Philosophies, views, and practices. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 83(2), 24-29.

## 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



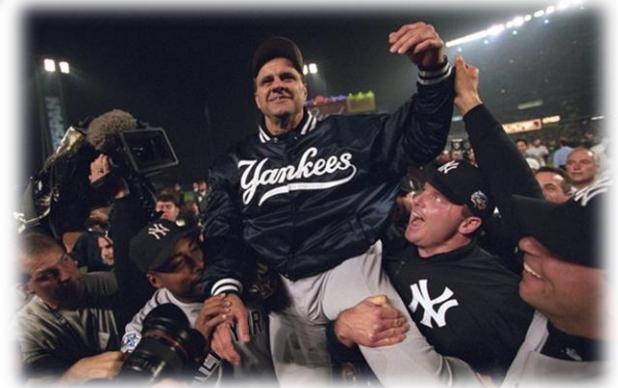


Camiré, M., Trudel, P., & Forneris, T. (2012). Coaching and transferring life skills: Philosophies and strategies used by model high school coaches. *The Sport Psychologist*, 26, 243-260.

- 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

McRae, A. E. (2005). *The keys to success: Coaching styles of professional championship team sport coaches*. Unpublished master's thesis. California State University, Fresno, USA.

## 29 Pro Sport Championships



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McRae, A. E. (2005). *The keys to success: Coaching styles of professional championship team sport coaches*. Unpublished master's thesis. California State University, Fresno, USA.

- 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



# 2

Transformational and servant  
leadership as athlete-centered  
leadership



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# Transformational Leadership

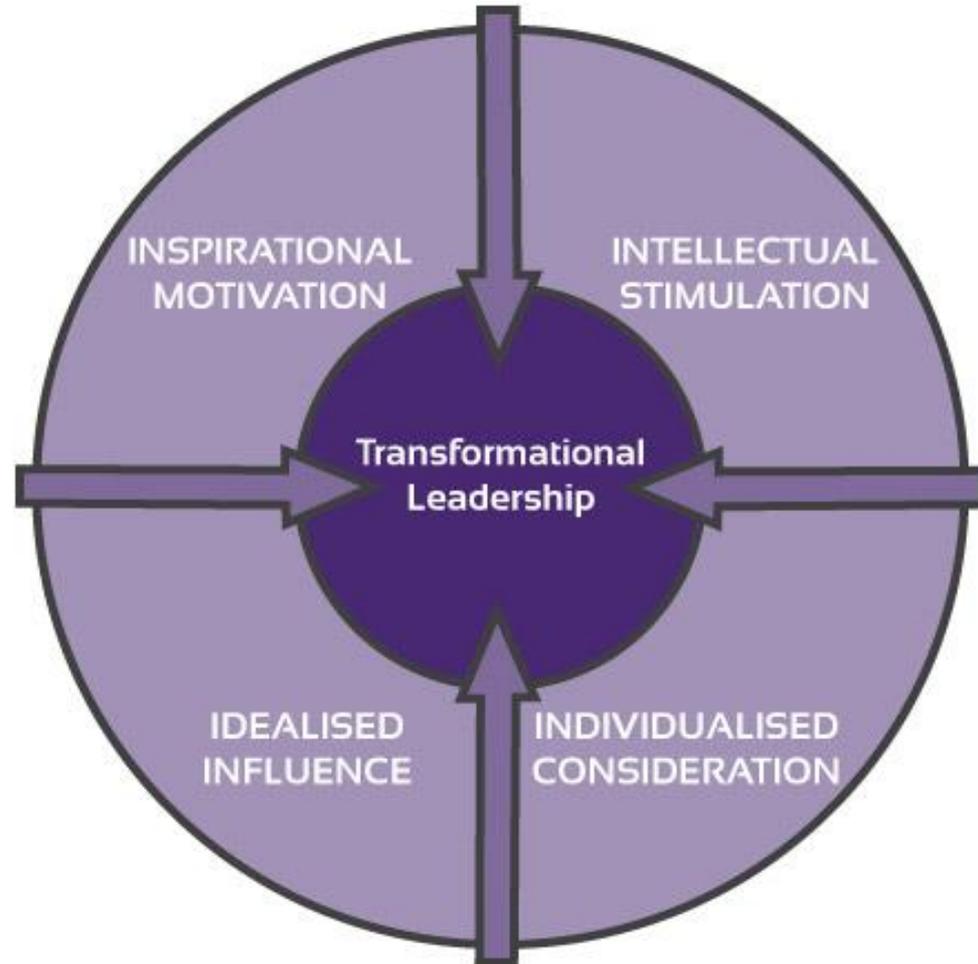
- Emphasis on inspiring others to become self-directed and motivated
- De-emphasize personal interests and goals in pursuit of collective team needs and goals
- Ethical behavior, shared leadership, leading by example, frequent praise and encouragement



# Evidence for Transformational Leadership

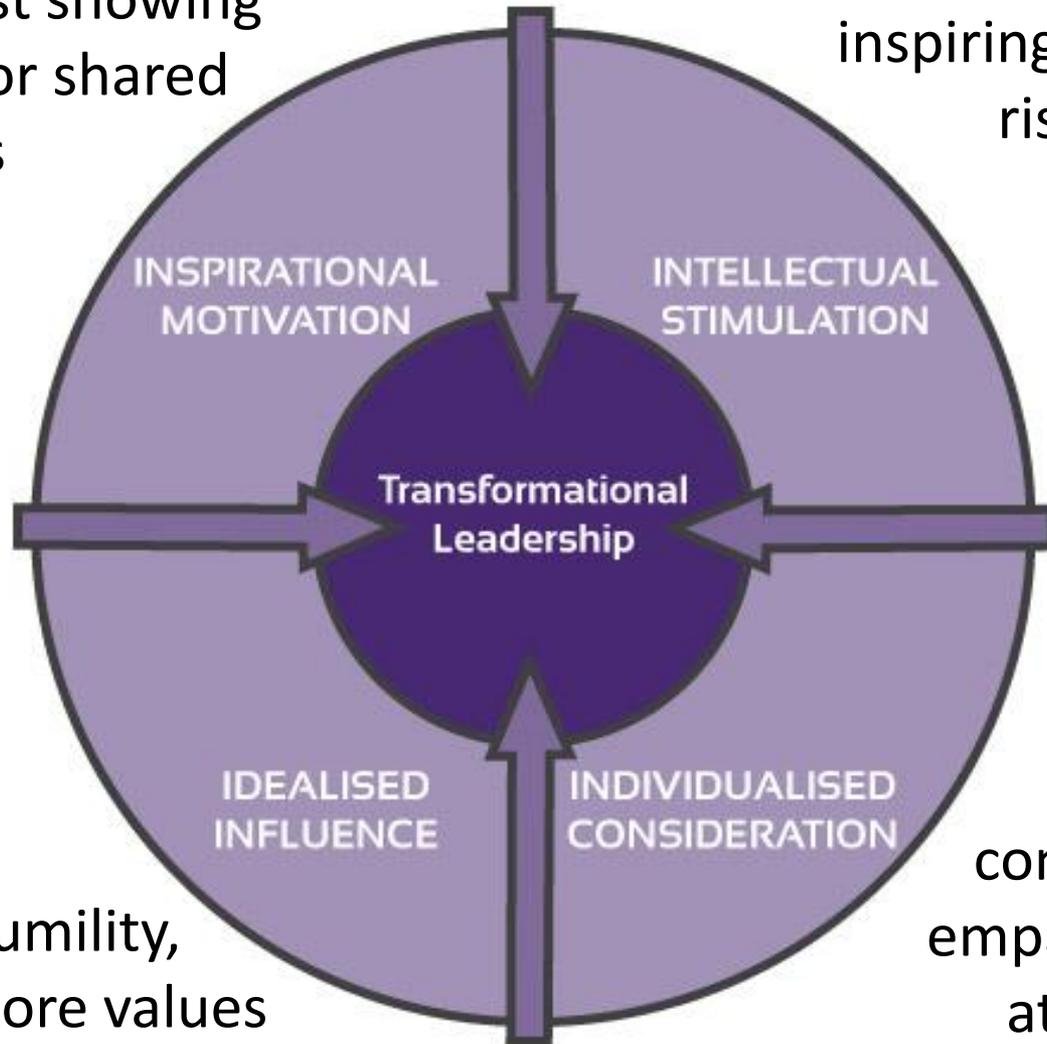
Inspires greater self-confidence,  
commitment to team goals and  
positive relationships

# 4 Types of Leadership Behaviors

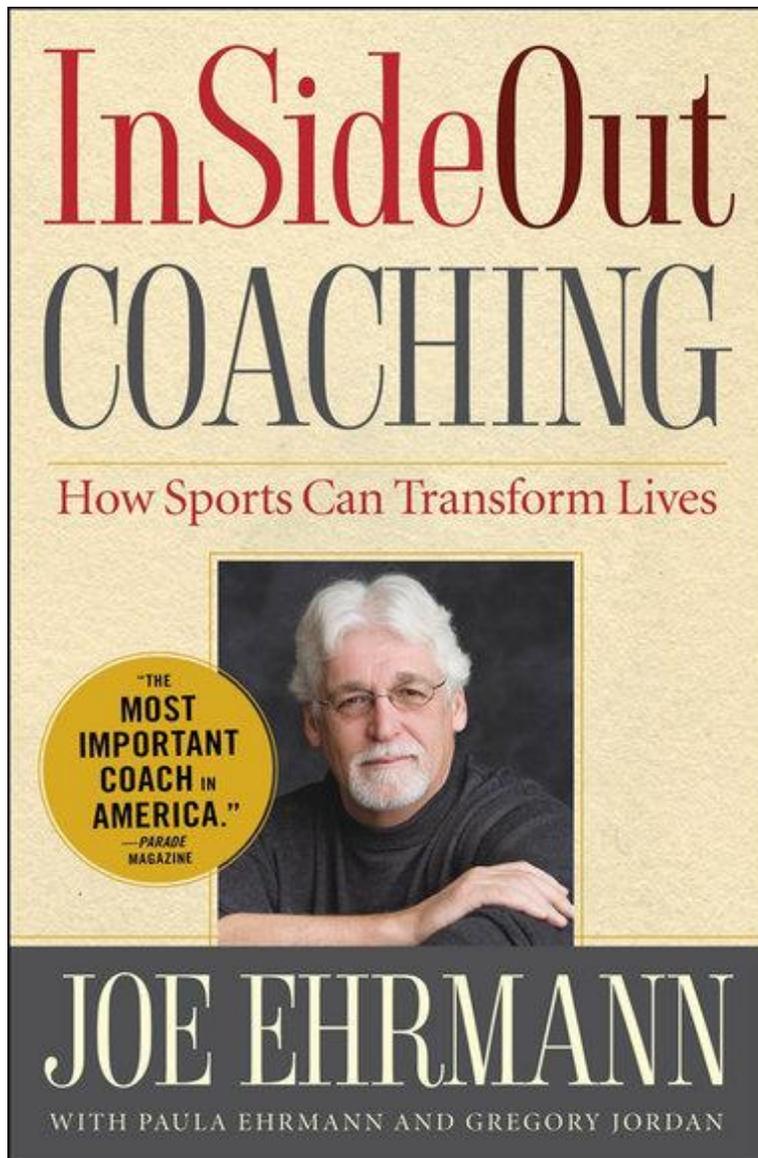


eternal optimist showing  
enthusiasm for shared  
goals

inspiring creativity and  
risk-taking



compassion and  
empathy for unique  
athlete needs



transformational  
leadership  
emphasizes  
*'doing the right  
thing'*

(people building vs. people using)



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# 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

# Evidence for Servant Leadership



- Hammermeister, J. Chase, M., Burton, D., Westre, K, Pickering, M., & Baldwin, N. (2008). Servant leadership in sport: A concept whose time has arrived. *Journal of Servant Leadership*, 4, 185-215.
- Rieke, M., Hammermeister, J., & Chase, M. (2008). Servant leadership in sport: A new paradigm for effective coach behavior. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 3(2), 227-239.
- Hammermeister, J. (2014). John R. Wooden, Stephen R. Covey, and servant leadership: A commentary. *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, 9(1), 65-67.

# 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*



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## **A Leadership Development Intervention Program: A Case Study With Two Elite Teams**

**Mike Voight**

Central Connecticut State University

*Journal of Sport Psychology in Action*, 1:1-14, 2010  
Copyright © Association for Applied Sport Psychology  
ISSN: 2152-0704 print / 2152-0712 online  
DOI: 10.1080/21520704.2010.497695



## **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*



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# 3

## A framework for coaching leadership



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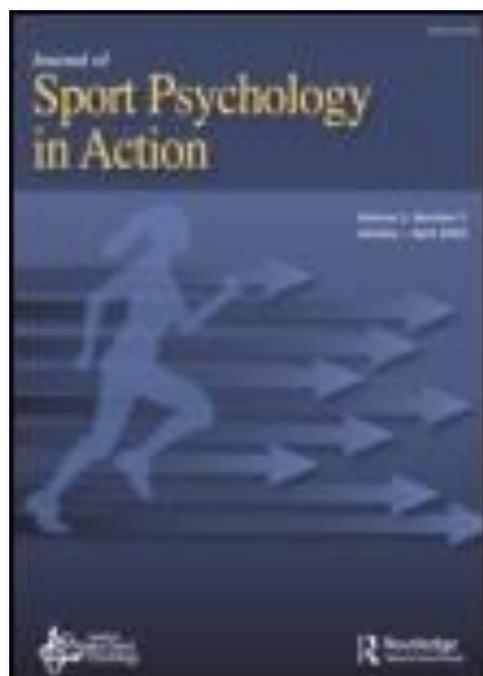
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DOI: 10.1080/21520704.2010.528172

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group

# **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**

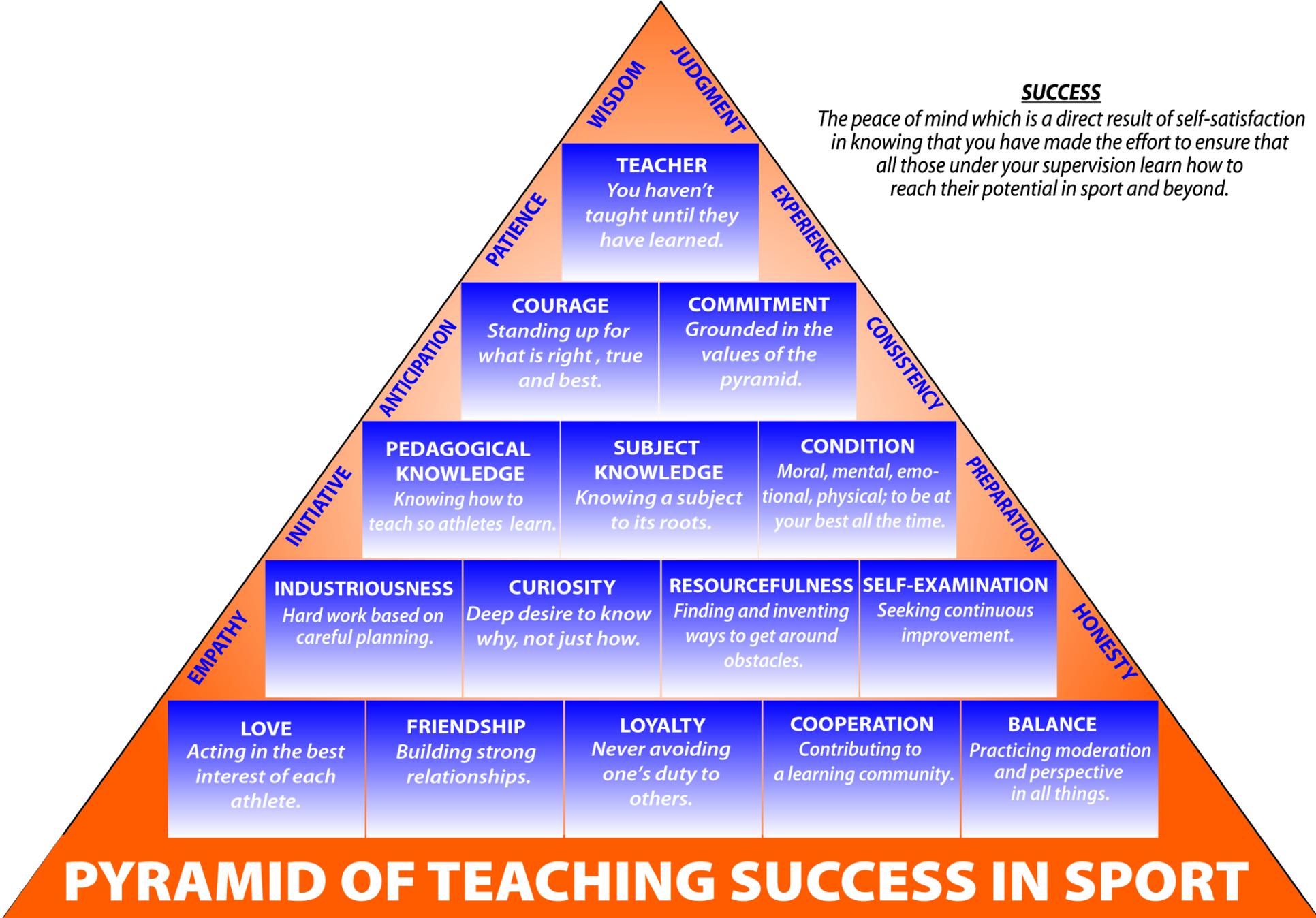
*BeLikeCoach, Cleveland, Ohio, USA*

**RONALD GALLIMORE**

*University of California, Los Angeles, California, USA*

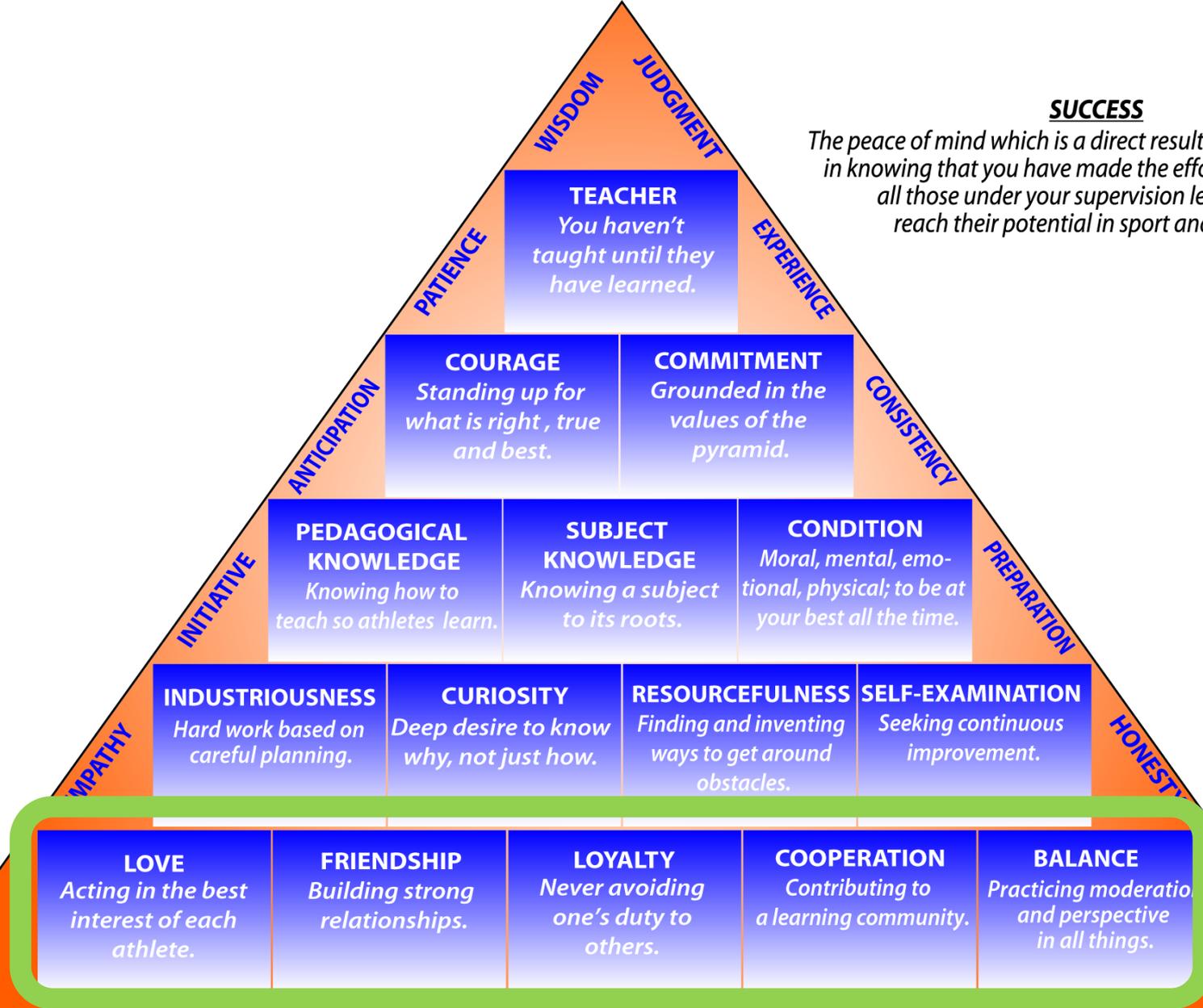
## **SUCCESS**

*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.*



## **SUCCESS**

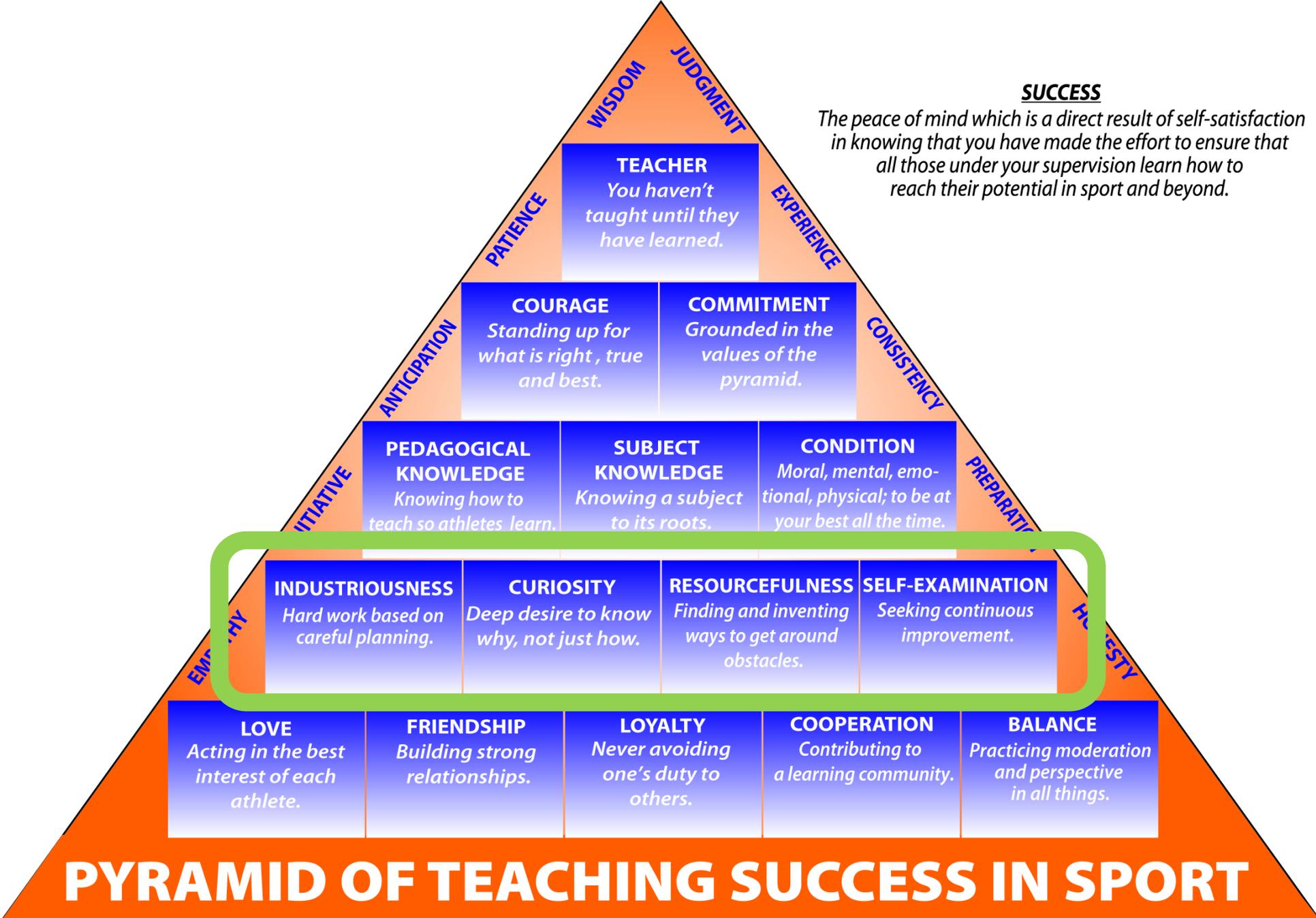
*The peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing that you have made the effort to ensure that all those under your supervision learn how to reach their potential in sport and beyond.*



# **PYRAMID OF TEACHING SUCCESS IN SPORT**

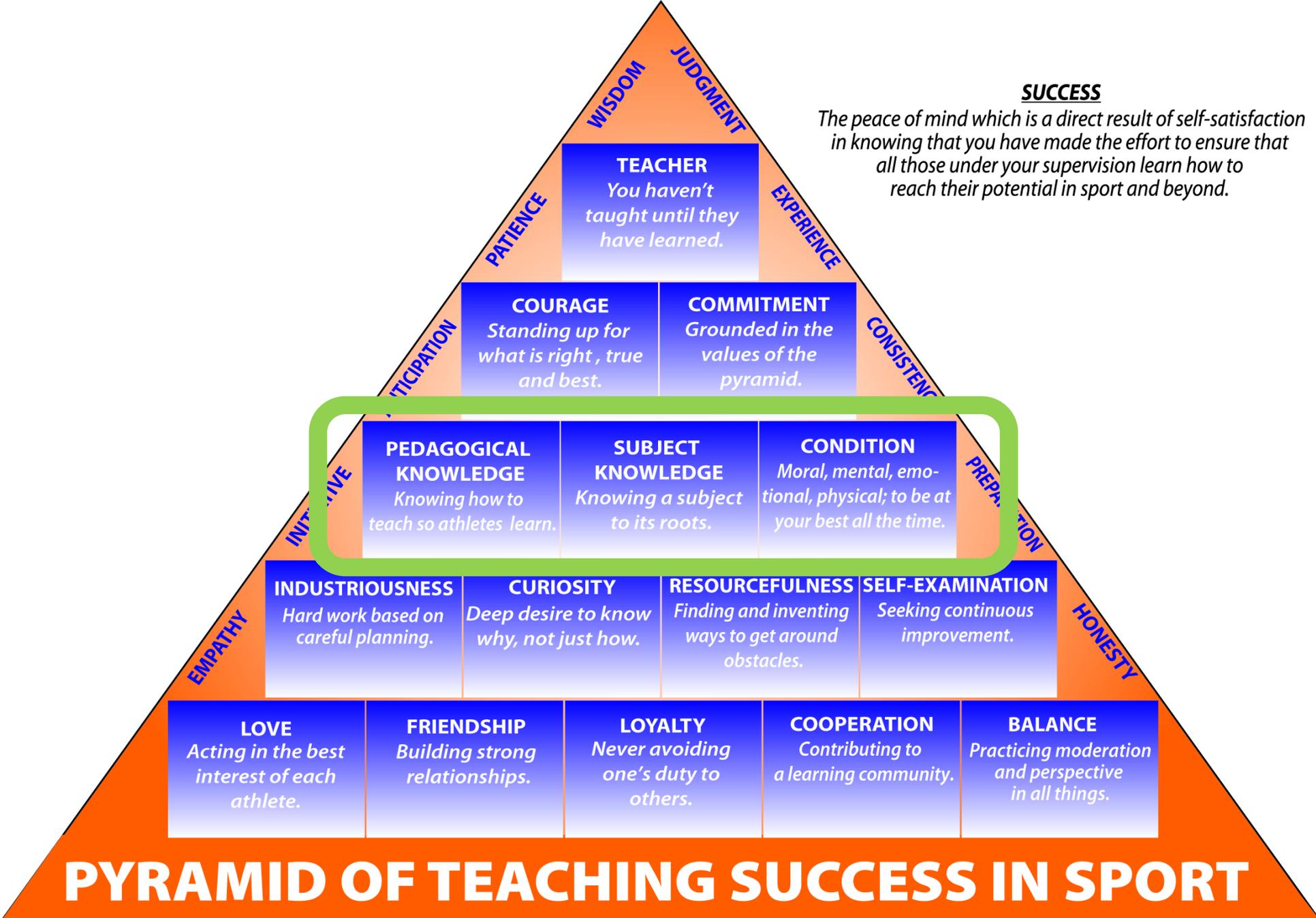
## SUCCESS

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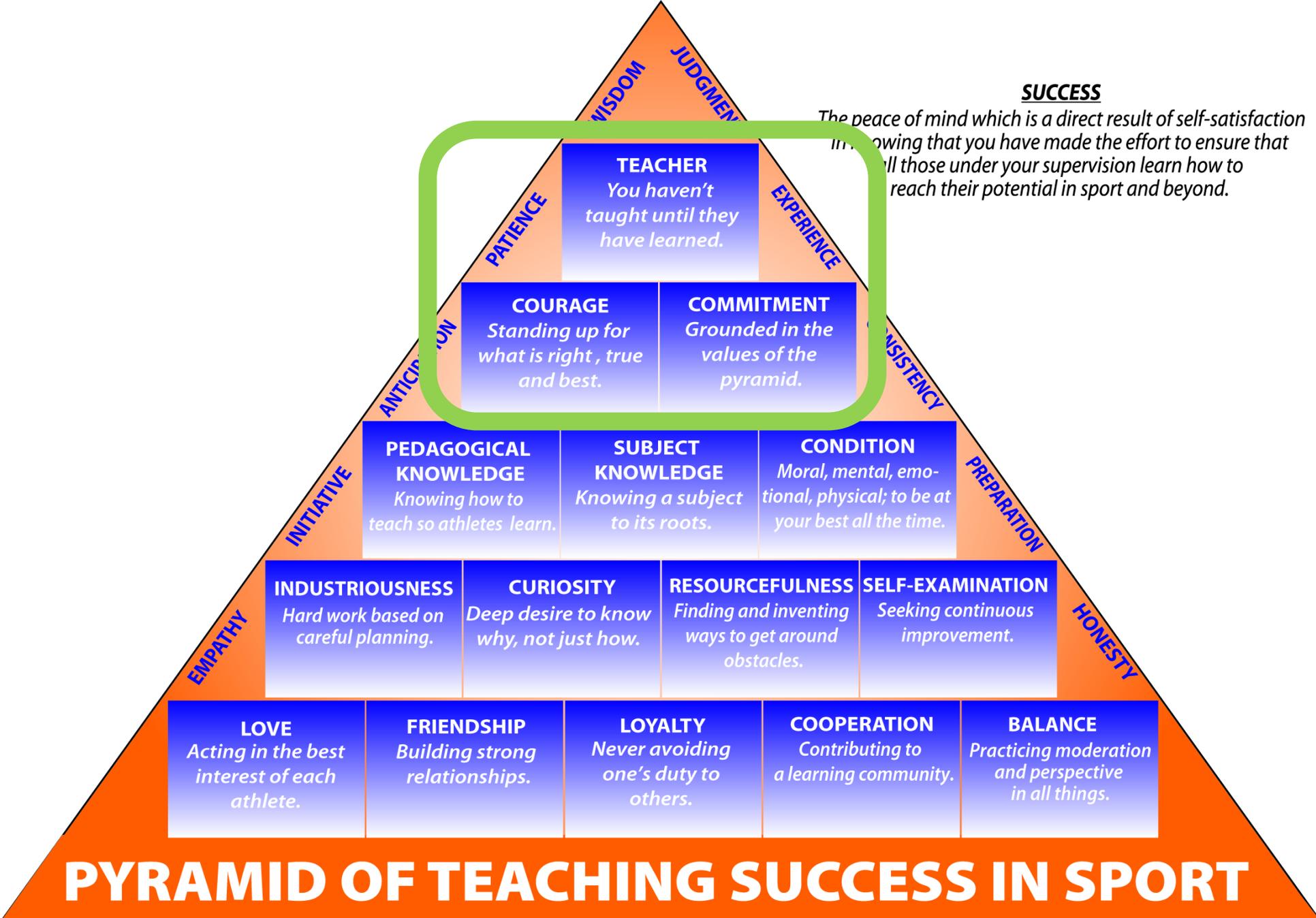
## SUCCESS

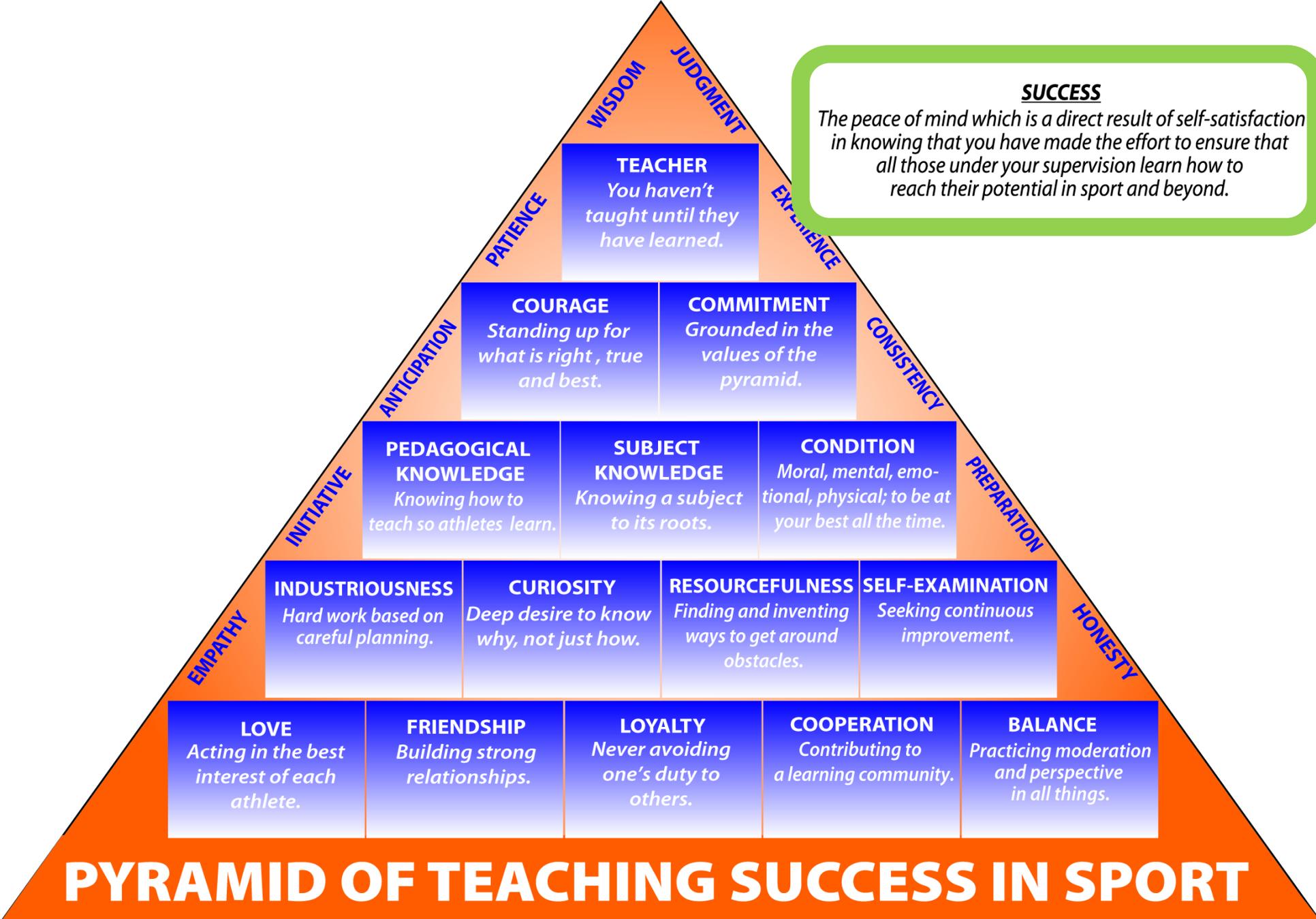
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## SUCCESS

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.





# *Focus first on who you are coaching, not what you are coaching*



- Allen, J., & Ritchie, D. (in press). 'Let them get on with it': Coaches' perceptions of their roles and coaching practices during Olympic and Paralympic Games. *International Sport Coaching Journal* [<http://journals.humankinetics.com/iscj>]

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