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ETHICAL COACHING: A CHARACTER BACKDROP AND TRUE SUCCESS

BY DON & RON HEIDARY, ORINDA AQUATICS

"Prepare the child for the path, not the path for the child." unknown

What is ethical coaching and why is it important? What role does ethical coaching play in athletic training and youth sports? Aren't coaches recognized for athletic performance? Should there be some dual mandate for coaches? Can't we leave the ethics to the parents? Are we even being paid for this?

"The Big Picture" - our View

As time and years go on, we become more convinced that what can and should be gained from sports is truly invaluable and can be life-changing. For the countless hours committed, the physical, emotional, and financial commitment, and the sacrifices made, there has to be more than a fast time at the end of this process. Every time we see a youth sports team, from T-ball to collegiate athletics, we wonder what will be the real reward from all of this. After thirty years, we have no doubt that sports do have the ability to stimulate extraordinarily positive changes in an athlete's life. Too often in swimming, we see careers stray for the wrong reasons: overzealous parents, coaches with a single-minded focus on winning, kids obsessed with times or ego, and poor role models. Athletes become concerned more about who they beat in practice rather than whom they helped and seem to care more about their time and place rather than their effort and attitude (life skills). Energy and effort can flow into areas



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that actually break down a career rather than support its health and longevity. An environment driven by ethics can significantly mitigate this.

In a broader sense, coaching is much more a life process and a people process rather than an athletic process. Not only are kids wrapping their lives around a team, training, a process and a coach, but in many ways, their emotional development, college decision, and the person they become will be shaped by this process as well.

Our mission is to be more than a coach, but rather a partner with our swimmers on their athletic journey, and to a greater extent, partners on their life journey. Our ultimate goal is that four or eight years from now they are swimming at their very best, are loving the sport, are leaders on their teams, and most importantly, are better people. And there is no one meet or one success on that path that will define it more than the process reflected in the quote:

“GREAT OCCASIONS DO NOT MAKE HEROES OR COWARDS; THEY SIMPLY UNVEIL THEM TO THE EYES. SILENTLY AND IMPERCEPTIBLY, AS WE WAKE OR SLEEP, WE GROW STRONG OR WE GROW WEAK, AND AT LAST SOME EVENT SHOWS US WHAT

WE HAVE BECOME.”
BROOKE WESTCOTT,
BRITISH THEOLOGY
PROFESSOR

Ethical coaching comes down to ethical living and purity of heart and intention. Ethical coaching is and should be all-encompassing. It should apply to every swimmer, every parent, every staff member, and every policy. It should be an unwavering commitment and conviction to do the right thing in every area and any circumstance. Not only should ethical coaching exist, but it should be a cultural pursuit. This should be a lifestyle that defines the team environment and its success. Companies, organizations of every kind, and virtually every athletic team possess some kind of mission statement or value list, and ethics is always intertwined. It is to be what guides them, shapes their actions, and defines their environment. It reads well, sounds inspiring, and offers hope.

Too often though, organizations do not connect to this overriding message. Every day, we see ethical leadership break down in the athletic, political, and business arenas for reasons of ego, agenda, power, greed, status, and money. There seems to be a departure from words and concepts to being and reality. How do you embed a few phrases or concepts into a large organization and hundreds of people with varying degrees of interest or participation? How much do athletes, or parents for that matter, understand the mission statement, embrace it, commit to it, and actually take ownership and pride of those very concepts: integrity, work ethic, respect, teamwork, and personal growth to name a few?

This must be a top-down approach.

Some coaches struggle with balancing environment and success. Is a program driven by performance or experience? The greatest leaders in the world (many in coaching) are adept at not only focusing on the greater good but also creating the greatest achievement. They adhere to the highest ethical standards while achieving extraordinary results. Both culture and success are possible and we would argue the former enhances the latter.

Ethical coaching must first be articulated as a vision and a mission. And it must be defined not by individual members, isolated actions, trends, or even success, but by a group with vision that knows well the constituency, the organization's goals, the traits that it would like the organization to embody, and even the community and peripheral groups. That message must then be sold aggressively to everyone directly or indirectly involved in the group or process. It should be omnipresent, wrapped around the team like a blanket. It should become so prevalent that it is the only message seen, heard, offered, and accepted. Coaches must not only be the salesmen, but be the example as well. And if fully embraced, it should stay with the athletes beyond the athletic setting; in the locker room, at home, or a social setting. This will truly reveal an athlete's connectedness.

And finally, the organizational leaders or staff must enforce it with vigor, tact, integrity, and enthusiasm. In our program, we use “we” in selling, promoting, and disciplining. To reinforce the mission and ethics, we state aggressively that “we will be a program driven by character” and

there is no other option. When disciplining, we simply say, "We do not do that or represent that. You must embrace this concept or find another program. It is just not who we are."

Addressing ethics on a case by case basis becomes problematic without a firm backdrop that has predefined a team's position on sensitive issues. Your best swimmer comes to practice late regularly. A popular swimmer uses bad language. A Board member's child is blatantly disrespectful. A "group" decides they don't agree with a policy or coaches' decision. The absence of a mission and an (ethical) cultural landscape can exacerbate issues or conflicts like these and complicate their resolution.

And no, we do not get paid for this, monetarily that is. Its compensation comes in the form of emotional dividends that change lives (of coaches and swimmers) on a daily basis, forever.

"THIS IS THE TEST OF YOUR MANHOOD: HOW MUCH IS THERE LEFT IN YOU AFTER YOU HAVE LOST EVERYTHING OUTSIDE YOURSELF?"
ORISON SWETT MARDEN

There can be extraordinary and very tangible benefits to employing an ethics based/"Character First" environment. We have witnessed these firsthand over the past few decades. A few are: a positive culture driven by work ethic, humility, great and consistent role

models, mutual respect, and team pride, less (or no) burnout, limited discipline issues, an extremely high percentage of swimmers swimming in college, and incredible team pride.

Concepts we employ that support a culture of integrity and success are;

Eliminate Negativity and Complaints

First, and obviously, if you want to be a high-level athlete, challenge is the only path to growth and development. Negativity is a cancer that has no place in athletics or in life. A saying we repeat often is, "If you complain about anything, you will complain about everything." This is not and cannot be allowed.

Service over Success

A life of service is a life of sincerity and purpose. As intense or aggressive as a program can be, it's fundamental root can be of service, for swimmers and coaches. Service is the key to humility, character, and ethics. It is found in the "daily duty" of supporting one another and giving back. We share a great article entitled, The Uncommon Professional, from Chicken Soup for the Soul, about a common man in a common job, doing everything with uncommon professionalism. For us, this attitude translates into being the first one to the pool cover reel, to helping set up, to cheering for teammates, to getting the equipment for your lane, and even picking up after others.

People over Times

If people feel and know that you care about them as individuals first, they will do virtually anything for you and the team.

Unconditional mutual respect must drive the coach-athlete relationship. This eliminates lying, deceit, disrespect, etc. This relationship is and should be a true partnership.

Humility over Ego

An environment based on ego is toxic. We let kids know that if they have an ego, they have a problem (need attention). And without being a psychologist (although we play one on the deck), we let them know that their need for attention will not be satisfied or tolerated. This reason alone would prevent swimmers from moving up into higher training groups on our team. There is a quote that refers to two types of people, one who walks into a room and says, "Well, here I am," and another who walks into a room and says, "Ah, there you are." Needless to say, there should be room for only one of these two types of people on a team.

Team over Individual

Athletes must learn early, that the team always comes first. Swimmers must place the team above themselves at all times. We suggest this is analogous to having the wind at your back as you move through a demanding season. From a coach's and an individual's perspective, decisions and policies should reflect only one thing, the greater good, and the team as a whole. Sacrifices become easy and automatic when individuals care about the team (and their teammates) unconditionally. A phrase we use is, "Teamwork takes work. It is created by you, not for you."

I (Don) had a conversation with several senior (high school) swimmers recently. The conversation centered on

choosing championship meet events. I posed the question simply, with no angle or supposition, wanting to hear from them what they felt their two best events were. I asked, "What would you like to swim at the League Championship Meet" (a shave meet for most)? Not one answered the question directly, i.e., "I want...". This was the typical conversation.

Coach: "What would you like to swim at the league meet?"

Swimmer: "What would you like me to swim?"

Coach: "No, I am asking you what you feel your best events are."

Swimmer: "Whatever the team needs."

Coach: "No, again, what is best for you?"

Swimmer: "What is best for me is what is best for the team."

Each swimmer basically answered the question the same way. When kids feel one with the team and connected, sacrifices become welcomed opportunities.

Owner/Partner

Coaches and swimmers should take ownership of the program and the environment. They should feel and act as if they are a partner or a shareholder. We tell our swimmers that they are all co-owners of the team, like it or not, want it or not, "you are a stakeholder, and thus accountable".

Team Attire

Team attire is and should be a statement of pride and not a policy in and of itself. Your team attire is your representation of the team. We believe there is a correlation

between one's commitment to wear team attire and one's general feeling about the team. Our swimmers do not compete in a meet or travel with the team if they are not in team attire. It is not about the clothes, or the rule, it is about what statement they are making with their appearance. Coaches should lead the way in this regard.

Build Leadership from Day One

Ethical coaching should support the leadership process. Every team and athlete must know that the younger members are future leaders and role models. Therefore, from day one, we begin building future leaders. Swimmers are made aware of the standards and responsibilities and what is expected of them now and in the future. Hazing or "tradition" as it is euphemistically put, that makes people feel less or inferior is not tolerated in any form and has no place in building young leaders. It simply becomes a rite of passage that allows individuals to "give back" what they "took." It is a cycle that builds on itself. It is a negative feedback loop that can be replaced with guidance, motivation, mentorship, leadership, and support. If we want extraordinary and inspirational leaders in the future, they must see that play out in front of them and aspire to be that. Through swimmers (captains, seniors, and anyone of influence), and coaches, young athletes must see role models and leaders. They must see a demonstration of work ethic, integrity, and a resiliency that inspires. We must develop in young athletes the "uncommon professional," and an understanding of the moral foundation that drives the culture, the day to day operations, and the success of the program.

Travel Lightly - "Integrity has no need of rules." Albert Camus

That is, travel with the absence of attitude, ego, or indiscretion. Our travel policy is very simple. If you need to be watched (or babysat), you need another team. We fully expect that our swimmers carry themselves as mature, dedicated athletes (and individuals) on a "business" trip. They owe this to the rest of the team, the culture that defines us, and their parents who pay and support them. We would even say that neutral behavior is not acceptable. They must add value. And if they can't do that, not only should they not be on the team, they really have no business being an athlete.

Little Things are a Big Deal

If one bad word is acceptable, then why not two? If one minute late is acceptable, then why not five? If one act of disrespect to another is tolerated, then why not to a group, or a coach? If it is acceptable to "cheat" on a lap, then why not a set, or a season? Ethics and character are black and white. There is no middle ground.

Embrace Work

Take the path of "most resistance" is a theme we ask the kids to embrace. They should welcome the most challenging aspects of swimming and their life, and reposition them as a positive, growth process. A quote that is relevant is, "Be aware when the going is easy, you may be headed downhill."

Embrace Academics

Beyond the obvious need for an education, a diligent student represents a great deal more than his or her academics. We have

seen academics and athletics work hand in hand and support and complement each other. The more an individual commits to either, the more the other is strengthened. Athletes that do not embrace academics are generally not leaders (in the student-athlete sense) and can become one-dimensional. Their lack of academic focus can open the door to less productive alternatives. Our process and objective is to foster and support student-athletes at the highest level. Our team must commit to both.

Appreciation of Parents

This is probably the most significant sign of character. As the saying goes, "Gratitude is the mother of all virtues." A young adult that does not appreciate the unconditional commitment and support of their parents would typically be unappreciative of other key support functions and miss the broader parent-child connection. A sincere awareness and gratitude for that which supports an individual is a critical component to a well-rounded athlete, person, and team. We devote meetings to this topic and make it clear this is a part of our culture and mission.

The Team Concept

The team concept is a life concept and there is no better place to learn it than in an athletic setting. "Team" is family, friends, students, co-workers, community, and on and on. It is co-existing and co-producing. The ability to be a good team person or a leader can be developed in the pool and the locker room every day. It requires empathy, sacrifice, and an unconditional commitment to a greater cause. This ability and understanding will serve athletes long after their careers have ended.

Don't Push on a String

As coaches, it can be easy to focus on the wrong thing; many try to win a battle when the "war" is not even understood. Rather than draw people into the process, we may actually create more separation by disciplining someone for poor behavior when they have nothing invested in the team. We try to fix a stroke in someone who doesn't work hard. We condemn a parent without trying to bring them into the process. We try to win a meet with a team that has no identity, or criticize a group for not caring when they don't know what to care about. It is critical to know at what level the individuals and the team resonate or connect to the mission of the team and the goals of the coach.

A Puzzling Concept - Build a Culture (and success) from the Outside in

The borders would be your vision. Then work your way in with philosophy, culture (a way of aquatic life), then add life lessons such as character, integrity, respect, humility and work ethic, along with policies and guidelines, which brings you to the center, revealing a picture of a strong culture with extraordinary results.

A "Team" Issue with an Ethical Response

The following is a real life example of a situation that was dealt with aggressively, and in our view, ethically. In this situation, many would have seen no issue, simply "young adults being young adults" away from the pool. We saw the seed of a breakdown in a culture that we were committed to build and foster. Many years ago, we became aware that some

of our swimmers were involved in an incident involving alcohol (not a team event or a team activity). These were great kids, committed swimmers, great students, and always respectful individuals. We, as coaches, were very upset and had a firm meeting with the entire senior group of over fifty swimmers. Prior to the meeting, we became aware that a few of the kids involved didn't understand why their social life (outside of OA) was any of our concern. One swimmer even asked, "If my parents are OK with it, why do you care." This was our response in a letter to the group:

"Let's simplify the key issues for all of you to understand. We do not own your social life, nor do we want to. We do however own the team and have a responsibility to every member. That being said, ANYTHING that affects the team IS a team issue. Period. It does not need a memo attached or Board approval. One person or one action can become a "team" issue. Chatter in the locker room Saturday morning made it a team issue. If in your world, this is not a team issue, what is? Will you know when it is a team issue and when behavior threatens reputations, athletic careers, and even lives? We truly believe that we as coaches are infinitely better qualified than you to assess the effect on the "team." You do not have to answer to parents, or rumors. You do not sit in living rooms defining our team and its environment to prospective members, or sit in Board meetings answering questions.

What you did was not legal, not right, not positive, not conducive to being a serious athlete, not responsible, showed



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no leadership, hurt parents, and deeply affected coaches that have unconditionally supported you for most of your swimming lives. It is not obvious to us why someone could think this is "OK." And the fact that your peers or friends may have done this does not legitimize it but rather suggests that you need to find other friends and better role models.

We have seen, up close, every aspect of substance abuse from alcoholism to hard drug abuse to endless rehabs, an abyss of a mother's pain, and even prison. Please don't insult us by telling us it is "no big deal." Wait until your daughter tells you not to worry, that "it's no big deal."

About five years ago, a swimmer walked on the deck of this pool and told us he wanted to join our team. We knew he was a known drug user. We pulled him aside and told him that we were aware of his reputation and his social life and while we would allow him a trial period, if we heard one word related to drugs spoken in front of any member of this team, at any time, he would be gone and regret this meeting. He chose not to join the team. You were about twelve years old at the time and neither you nor your parents were ever aware of a two-minute conversation that put your safety and the protection of this team ahead of a new member, added revenue, and his "social life." So you tell us where a "social life" ends and "team" character begins. We may not know the exact answer but we will always err on the side of caution, for you. And by the way, while some

of you want to draw a line that separates this team from the rest of your life, we never have. We have never stopped caring about you or stopped supporting you when we leave the pool or take off our team jacket.

Some day you may have a thirteen, fourteen, or fifteen year old child and you will pray every time they walk out the door that they are safe and with good people doing the right things. You will pray that they can avoid drugs and alcohol, that they don't lie to you, and that someone is looking out for them. You will also hope that they might find an athletic program that places a premium on character and doing what is right. While you would not assume it, you would take comfort in finding overprotective people that run the program, people who actually care about your child as a person, even when they are not at practice. You will be grateful for a second pair of eyes to watch over them. You will care less about their success as an athlete than you will about their safety and personal well-being. Ask any parent.

When we were kids, the most important part of sports was earning the respect of the coach, from an athletic and a personal perspective. Too often in this day, the coach is simply a spoke in the wheel of a teenager's life, and not a partner. Today, focus is more about being happy and being "right" rather than being respected and doing what is right. We cannot, and will not, fit into that world. We want to be your partner and not someone who is dismissed when he is not

in agreement with you. We are not administrators enforcing rules, we are simply people who care passionately about you bringing out the best that lies within you and those around you.

As for insight into our reaction, it is not when we care this much or get upset that you should be concerned. For this you should feel fortunate. It is when we stop caring that the greater loss and the greater problem begins. And if you are not into the whole "character first, do the right thing" thing, you should know that every college coach we talk to asks about it and praises us for emphasizing it.

Should you disagree with this, that is fine, it simply means that our priorities and our philosophies are completely opposed to one another and that this clearly is not the proper environment for you."

Following this communication and meeting, the ethical culture, which would have been considered extraordinary at the time, became even stronger. The athletes and parents knew clearly our position and the team's mission. •

Orinda Aquatics is a Silver Medal team with 100 year-round swimmers. In 2010 the team qualified eight swimmers for Junior Nationals (men finishing ninth in Atlanta), had one Olympic Trial qualifier, thirty-five Sectional qualifiers, and traveled with fifty-three (high school age) swimmers to Clovis, CA with two coaches and no chaperones. On that trip, no one was ever late for a departure, there were no bed checks, everyone was in team attire the entire trip, and they cheered for their teammates throughout the meet, even in the rain. At Orinda Aquatics, you will never hear a word of profanity, see inappropriate attire, or see any swimmer disrespectful to a coach in the slightest degree. The average GPA of their sixty-five member Senior Group is 3.75.

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3. On backstroke: Keep your head still and enter with your pinky first.
4. On breaststroke: Work to perfect the timing of your pull and kick.
5. On butterfly: Work to find a rhythm and build that into your stroke.
6. Believe in your coaches and your training regimen.
7. Fitness and nutrition are important. What you do outside of the pool counts!
8. Use starts and turns to your advantage. Think of turns as something to perfect and get ahead, not a place to rest.
9. Always have fun and enjoy the process.
10. Use **Auro-Dri®** Ear Drying Aid to protect your ears when you're done swimming.



The National Association of Interscholastic Athletics (NAIA)

COLLEGIATE SWIMMING IN THE NAIA – A COACH’S PERSPECTIVE

BY CHRIS CONLON



60,000

The number of men and women who compete in intercollegiate athletics as a part of the NAIA.

450 million

The amount of scholarship monies given out per year by NAIA member institutions.

Swimmers' lives revolve around numbers - best times, Trials cuts, intervals, and on and on. Top level high school and club swimmers are all looking ahead to swimming at college and, to many, collegiate swimming = NCAA swimming.

However, the NAIA provides some surprising numbers that swimmers and coaches may not be familiar with:

60,000 The number of men and women who compete in intercollegiate athletics as a part of the NAIA.

450 million The amount of scholarship monies given out per year by NAIA member institutions.

There are a tremendous amount of collegiate swimming opportunities for men and women that have gone relatively unnoticed within the NAIA. The swimming field is fast, deep and getting better every year.

The NAIA is a collection of nearly 300 Colleges and Universities throughout the United States and Canada with a distinctive model for collegiate athletics: A character-driven competitive focus - Winning the "right way." NAIA schools offer a small school feeling, allowing for a better connection between student-athletes and coaches because of less stringent rules regarding contact time, coupled with big school resources and competitive opportunities.

NAIA institutions hold a unique niche in college athletics. NAIA teams compete in dual and invitational meets with nationally ranked teams from within all divisions of the NCAA and the NAIA. Conference championships can be solely comprised of NAIA teams or be blended conference meets -

bringing together top schools from the NCAA and NAIA.

The NAIA National Championships offer a unique experience in the world of collegiate swimming. Participation in the National Championship meet is solely based on a swimmer meeting qualifying standards. Different from the growing complexity of the selection process for the NCAA championship meets, an NAIA team's preparation can remain in focus approaching the National Championships. Teams may carry up to 18 men and 18 women for the National Championship meet.

Do not be misled by the qualifying times. The NAIA National championship meet is fast and deep. In fact, at the 2011 Championship, 21 national records were set by swimmers from 7 different teams. Eighteen of this year's individual swims and 4 relay swims were fast enough to make NCAA Division I championship qualifying times.

The NAIA takes academics seriously. Each student-athlete must achieve a specific GPA in order to maintain eligibility. Student-athletes can find schools with every kind of academic focus imaginable, from traditional liberal arts to universities that focus on arts and design.

NAIA rules allow for 8 full men's and 8 full women's scholarships per team. The NAIA financial guidelines provide motivation for teams and individuals to perform at high academic levels by exempting some or all of their aid based on academic performance.

One of the most important programs ever initiated by the NAIA, the Champions of Character

program, is designed to instill an understanding of character in all aspects of sport. The Champions of Character initiative is structured to provide student-athletes, coaches and parents hands-on training to know the right thing, do the right thing and value the right thing inside and outside of the sports setting. The program supports performance-driven athletics while defining expectations and standards that drive successful teams and athletic departments. Taught from start to finish in each collegiate season, the 5 characteristics of the champions of Character program are: Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Servant Leadership, and Sportsmanship.

A complete list of NAIA schools that compete in swimming can be found at www.naia.org. Not every school will have the academic profile or swimming program for every swimmer. Take the time to find colleges that fit the academic profile and level of competition your swimmers are looking for. Begin the recruitment process by contacting the coach at desirable schools to learn more about that university and their swimming program.

There are amazing academic and athletic opportunities out there for swimmers who want to compete at the collegiate level. Be sure to check into every option - many of you will find a home in the NAIA! To learn more visit www.naia.org or contact a coach directly. •

Chris Conlon is currently the head swimming coach at Savannah College of Art and Design. His swimmers set 5 national records at the 2011 NAIA National Championships. He is ASCA certified Level 5 and also coached for 12 years in the NCAA, Division III, prior to his current position. Chris resides in Savannah with his wife, Elizabeth, and their two children.

ANALYZING THE LAST 15 YEARS OF NCAA SWIMMING PARTICIPATION

(from the NCAA 2009-2010 participation report)

BY JOHN LEONARD

OVERALL

1994-1995 - 400 women's teams, 368 Men's teams

2009-2010 - 512 women's teams, 399 Men's teams

D I - 94-95 - 165 women's teams

09-10 - 194 women's teams

D I - 94-95 - 157 men's teams

09-10 - 138 men's teams

D II - 94-95 - 53 women's teams

09-10 - 78 women's teams

D II - 94-95 - 45 men's teams

09-10 - 60 men's teams

D III - 94-95 - 183 women's teams

09-10 - 240 women's teams

D III - 94-95 - 166 men's teams

09-10 - 201 men's teams

Participants

D I - 94-95 - 3,854 women

09-10 - 5,392 women

D I - 94-95 - 3,768 men

09-10 - 3,877 men

D II - 94-95 - 875 women

09-10 - 1,519 women

D II - 94-95 - 770 men

09-10 - 1,163 men

D III - 94-95 - 3,221 women

09-10 - 4,858 women

D III - 94-95 - 2,689 men

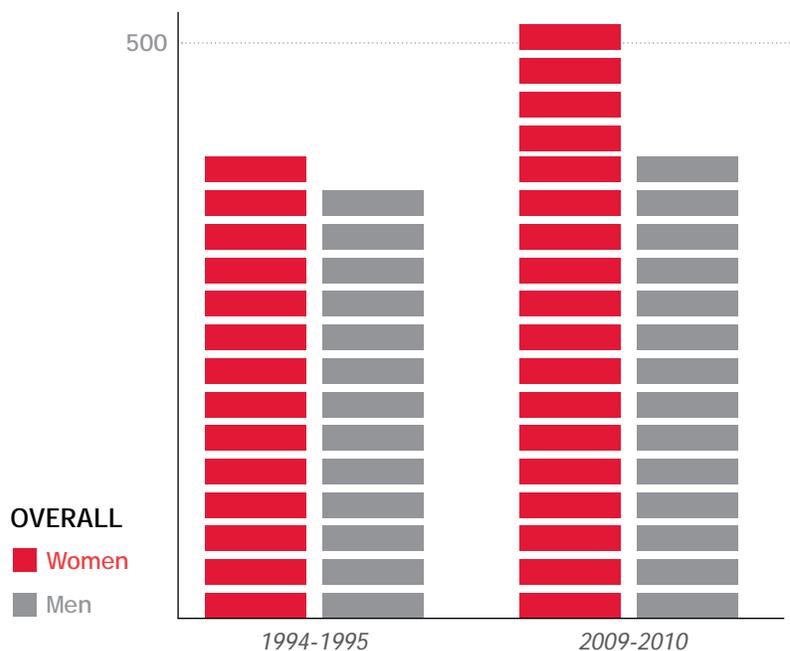
09-10 - 3,985 men

Clearly, at the D I level, we've continued to lose some programs that are high level and replaced them with "lower level" DI programs.

Clearly, we have reduced some "expected" opportunities for elite development.

Clearly, we have lost some scholarship support money. It would be valuable to know that data for the past 15 years. How many scholarships lost over 15 years, at the D I level.

But when it comes to PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES, the NCAA facts seem to point to more opportunity to participate today, than 15 years ago. •



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BE GREAT – PERSPECTIVES

Inside Indiana Business with Gerry Dick

BY TONY FANNIN - PRESIDENT, BE BRANDED

This article leans more toward business philosophy than branding or marketing, but it is related. In my experiences with Fortune 500 companies and small businesses, there's one quality that I notice that seems to be missing in a number of them.

That's the quality of being great. Ultimately, people want to be a part of something great. Great causes, great services, great brands. Now, there are many companies that are building something great. Apple - to simplify technology and deliver a wow experience. Southwest Airlines - to democratize the skies giving people freedom to fly by providing low-cost travel that almost anyone can afford. Bello Romance Photography - a small entrepreneur whose mission is to capture the romance that every woman wants to see when she looks at photos of her special events. These are just a few examples from large to small of companies that are striving to achieve greatness.

Now, what I mean by great is not a mushy, sentimental idea. Greatness takes a huge amount of effort, commitment, and focus, all grounded in the reality of the marketplace and an honest view of yourself and competitors. To be great takes courage over the long haul and that's why so many companies fail to achieve it. This courage takes place when, at times, you will be standing alone, going against the trends, and staying true

IT TAKES JUST ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT OF EFFORT TO BE GREAT THAN TO BE JUST GOOD

to the core mission of why your company is in business in the first place. Greatness also requires you to lead, not follow. That's why when I conduct a brand session, I require companies to think why they do what they do beyond making money. If it's just making money, I don't think you can achieve greatness in its truest form.

By striving to be great, here are a few concepts that seem to be consistent in that pursuit. One is you attract the right employees. You get people who believe in your company's mission and cause. By getting the right people, management is made easier. You don't have to motivate. No silly corporate, motivational games. People work and contribute as if they owned the company. In a sense, they own the cause your company sets out to achieve. Whole Foods have largely been able to attract passionate people to work there all because of their mission - to nourish the body, the community and the planet. As I've heard before, "If you have to manage someone, you made a wrong hire."

Another benefit is you no longer become a commodity, but a cause. Customers become emotionally loyal to your brand, not primarily because your product is better. It

may or may not be. The real move from commodity to uniqueness is that your brand stands for something beyond making money. Apple has been able to harness this quality because consumers see them unleash the power of creativity into their hands. Because of Apple, they too can create and show the world what they can do.

One other thing about being great, it takes just about the same amount of effort to be great than to be just good. This may seem counter-intuitive, but to be good takes a large amount of effort and commitment. To be great doesn't take much more. The difference is in the mindset of being willing to lead and not follow, to not get lazy and settle on the small details while pursuing the big picture, and to always remember why you're in business in the first place.

Being great isn't really about being altruistic. A cup of coffee can be great. An online music service can be great. An airline can be great. It just takes a mission that is beyond making money and making a difference in your customer's lives. Greatness leads, it never follows. To me, that is one standard you can hold your company up to while striving to be great.

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At the 1936 Olympics, known as the Berlin Games, seventeen-year-old Adolph Kiefer brought home the Gold for the USA and joined the list of Swimming's Olympic Heroes.

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- 1935 Illinois HS State Championships - sets a world record, 100-yard backstroke.
- 1936 Wins the gold medal for The United States in the 100-meter backstroke at the 1936 Berlin Games at 17 years old.
- 1944 First instructor for U.S. Navy SCUBA Divers.
- 1947 Adolph Kiefer and Associates is founded.
- 1948 As aquatics supplier to the U.S. Olympic Swim Team, Kiefer debuts the nylon swim suit.
- 1965 Inaugurated into the International Swimming Hall of Fame.
- 1966 Kiefer patents the first design for a non-turbulence racing lane.



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HARD WORK

BY JOHN LEONARD

We believe hard work is its own reward.

We believe that everyone benefits from hard work. It teaches all of us that nothing is given to us, it has to be earned. It teaches us that life is not fair; sometimes those who work the hardest are not rewarded the most. But without hard work, there is reduced likelihood of reward. Hard work “feels good.” It makes us feel valuable, capable and self-sufficient. One of the few things we can control in the world is the level of our own effort. When we work harder than we thought was possible for us, we open new doors or possibility in our lives.

We believe that children need to be TAUGHT to work hard. Role models from parents, from coaches, from teammates are the best teachers. Young people learn when they say “I’m tired” from sitting around all day in front of a computer, that they have to learn that SPENDING ENERGY in hard work, BRINGS MORE energy to your body and mind. Want to feel great? Get up and work hard. Sitting around does in fact make you tired. Children need to be taught that. It is counter-intuitive.

We believe that Resiliency is THE great trait to learn from swimming.

Everyone gets knocked down in life. The critical thing is to learn to bounce back up immediately and re-double your efforts. When I speak to parents, they always tell



me that they attained the position they have in life by overcoming all the obstacles that fate placed in their way. Then, they often say “I don’t want my kids to have to go through that.”

Lunacy. You don’t want your children to learn from the same pieces in life that made you successful?

Children need hard challenges. They need to “fail” as often as they succeed. They need to learn to quickly and effectively bounce back up and get back to work. Parents protecting their children in the extreme are called “Curling Parents.” (Removing the obstacles from the path of the child.) SO MUCH BETTER to prepare the child for the hard path, than try to clear the hard path FOR the child. Each time you do something

for your child that they can do for themselves you make your child WEAK. Show your confidence in them by allowing THEM to overcome the obstacles. Resiliency.

It’s a Family Thing. Everyone in the family has a role in swimming.

The child does the work, the learning, the physical effort. The parents remind the child of their commitments made and of the life skills that will make them a success in life and in swimming. The Coach coaches. The friends support and cheer and encourage. The parent takes care of the “get the child there” logistics so critical to a child’s success and consistency. Everyone has a role. Play YOUR role and don’t interfere in another’s role. •

CLUB VOICE

ASCA Fellows Project

BY FELLOWS CLASS OF 2010 (KATHLEEN PRINDLE, SARAH SMITH, DANIEL DECKER, DEANNE PREYER, ALEX SILVER, DARIN SCHAEDEL, ANNETTE DUVALL, WILL BERNHARDT)

“THE HUMAN VOICE IS THE ORGAN OF THE SOUL.” – HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Executive Summary

It has been said that the “Voice,” or influence, of club swimming that was a roar in the 80s has dimmed to a whisper in the new millennium. Through the process of tackling specific club issues, the ASCA Fellows will become a larger part of a new, louder Club Voice. The 2010 Fellow Class has produced a year-long study into issues that appear to challenge the growth of swim clubs. This paper will take a fact-finding approach geared toward recording the opinions of other coaches without regard for speculation or interpretation by the authors. The aim is to share some of the views of great achievers in our profession and to provoke thought which will lead to future positive change in our sport. All conclusions are made on a basis corroborated with the accounts of coaches interviewed.

Methodology:

The Fellows identified six critical components of club voice: The Local Swimming Committee

(LSC) and how it serves clubs within the confines of USA Swimming (USA-S), Clubs’ role in the development of elite or professional athletes (including the collegiate swimmer), Hindrance to club growth in the new millennium, Validation of swim coaching as a profession (and the need for formal education in swim coaching), Coach retention (and factors that affect coach stability), and Disability Programming (promoting to mainstream club swimming).

A survey was created through a unique partnership with the USA-S Club Development division, and was electronically distributed to all 2,359 registered year-round Head Coaches. 20.8% of all coaches responded, with representation from all 59 LSC’s. The survey results were collected and analyzed using GoogleDocs programming.

To broaden our knowledge by narrowing our focus, the Fellows conducted 23 in-depth, one-on-one private interviews with known industry experts to further delve into the six critical issues. By speaking to the highest achievers, we hoped to understand clearly what works and what doesn’t about our sport.

Project Structure

This study had distinct phases: Phase I consisted of marketing the

Head Coach survey, communicating with all LSC’s, and quantitative information-gathering (Head Coach Survey results). Phase II saw the commencement of in-depth interviews with the industry experts for qualitative opinion-gathering. For the Final Phase, Fellows used our learnings from the industry experts to draw conclusions that were then compared and contrasted with the survey/consensus from the general coaching population.

Findings

This study deals with so many ideas and so much raw data that there is little room in this Executive Summary for it. Three larger themes emerged as follows:

1. USA-S does a lot but needs to focus on athlete development. As a national governing body, USA Swimming does many things really well that continue to improve club swimming, specifically in the areas of club support and education. Streamlining the current information available, specifically in the areas of club support and education. Streamlining the current information available, making it more specific, and making it more accessible, may help people use what is out there.

However, there are very specific performances goals that USA-S hopes to achieve and not much programming is in place to accomplish those goals, according to experts. One of the biggest areas of improvement is helping with athlete skill development for Age Groupers. A strong direction on stroke progression should be provided from USA (NOT the LSC) to help clubs speak the same language. A stronger case for senior athlete support is made also: Here is a need to offer more, better, and smarter competitions for senior swimmers, especially the ones too advanced for JO-style meets, but not yet ready for Jr or Sr Nationals. The local competition structures are not often ideal for advanced athletes. There is competition for/loss of club elite athletes to collegiate or national team programming. Clubs without high performers sometimes have a quieter voice. When we talk about elite athletes there is an enormous disconnect between the survey results and what high level coaches tell us. 90% of coaches don't have any contact with national team staff or athletes. Yet 80% of interviewees do (or did) have national team athletes, or contact with those. We must pause to wonder if the USA-S approach to high-level coaching is working. It may be driving the elite swimmers away from clubs, and limiting our ability to produce stellar athletes.

2. The LSC is not necessarily the villain: The study confirmed that discontent with the LSC governance structure and competition schedule is widespread, but no one specific

“trend” showed clearly. Every expert interviewed has a different assessment of this situation. Over one-third of interviewees are not satisfied with the way the LSC serves their individual needs. This sentiment is corroborated by the quantitative data: Nearly 1/3 (29%) of coaches surveyed said LSC was not helpful, or it was hurtful, and another 15% were neutral. Therefore, close to half of the coaches surveyed did not view the LSC as a definite positive resource. But, are the LSC's really to blame? We are compelled to point out that frustration from coaches about their LSC's may be from their own lack of involvement in LSC governance. (58% of coaches surveyed were NOT involved in governance.) It may be that coaches themselves are to blame for their relationship (or lack of) in the home LSC. Yet it is acknowledged that USA-S plays a large role in the perception of LSC's effectiveness, and there is a responsibility to market their LSC and Club development programs to first earn the “buy-in” from club coaches.

3. There's an urgent need to make Swim Coaching a viable career. Is the swim coaching profession a Guild type profession where the trade is learned mainly from an experiential rather than a classroom model? The artisanal quality of swim coaching lends itself to learning through experience and exchange like many of the trades. There is a great deal of education required for mastery, and the body of knowledge is never complete. Perhaps the club voice, although sometimes unheard by greater governing bodies, is

quite strong after all, passing from coach to coach on the pool deck. However, we must establish the difference between knowledge (experiential) and formal classroom educations. All coaches are thirsty for knowledge. Both survey and interview results concurred that better education is needed all-around in the sport of swimming. Yet why doesn't our sport recognize or value a formal education? The hunger for practical knowledge about coaching is very different from the valuation of an advanced degree. It seems coaches long for more formalized academic training, but ONLY if it presents formal career advancement opportunities. 62% of coaches surveyed said they saw NO opportunity for advancement based solely on degree. USA-S and ASCA are trying to promote the importance of education, but baby steps must first be taken to redefine the culture of swim coaching. There is no immediate value added to an advanced degree until we can get all of today's coaches to the same level experientially or academically. Only then can we assign a real value to a degree that would bring salary incentive etc., attached. USA-S can help improve clubs by addressing this, for unless we change the culture of low pay, long hours, and lack of benefits, it is certain that swim coaching will remain an undervalued profession.

Conclusions

The scope of this discussion is huge; each one of the topics identified could have been its' OWN multi-year Fellowship project. Our biggest contribution towards progress will be to expose issues

worth addressing in longer-range exploration. We hope that by contributing to positive change we can help keep the USA Swimming Club system happy, healthy, and growing. As Coach Gregg Troy stated during his interview, "Clubs are the backbone of USA Swimming." This is the reason we must strive to protect and improve the front lines, where our sport begins and ends.

As the USA Swimming core objectives read: BUILD the base, PROMOTE the Sport, Achieve competitive Success. Let's Build. •

**The Fellows X Class implores you to really read the entire study. Although long, it is a really fascinating commentary on the state of club swimming in the USA today. We thank you all for this opportunity, and welcome any further inquiries.*

Mike Horgan

Coaches,

We lost a great and good colleague this morning. Mike Horgan passed away due to a massive heart attack and complications due to previous conditions.

Mike touched so many lives in the classroom and on the pool deck. His legacy and his spirit lives on in those young people he has impacted. Mike moves on to a better place free from the burdens of this world.

I will miss him as a dear friend, his swimmers and students will miss him as a great mentor. I will pass on information in regards to services.

Gordon Andrews

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LESSONS FROM THE SANDLOT

What makes for a great swimming race?

BY ALLEN KOPEL

A fast start. Great entry. Explosive breakout. Correct stroke rate. Balanced splits. It is important to learn about, rehearse and refine all aspects of a race. It takes patience, persistence, focus, execution, correction, repetition, more correction and more repetition for each to become refined and part of one's race habits.

It all matters. They all play a role in a race. But how about also relaxing, trusting and having fun?

In the movie *The Sandlot*, the new kid, Scotty Smalls, is invited to play baseball with the other kids in the neighborhood; in *The Sandlot*. Smalls is excited but nervous since he never played ball nor had he learned how to catch or throw a baseball. When the first fly ball is hit his way, he stumbles trying to make the catch and then he runs the ball to the infield because he does not know how to throw it.

The best player in the group, Benny Rodriguez, is the one who invited Smalls to play with them. Benny takes a moment to reassure him. Benny is surprised when Smalls tells him he does not know how to throw a ball. Smalls is about to leave *The Sandlot* since he figures he can not play well enough.

Benny says to him - you think too much. I bet you get all A's in school (not that that is a bad thing but it is a suitable comment in this scene - in this teachable moment).

Benny says - Man, this is baseball. You gotta stop thinking. Just have fun. Benny then goes on to say:

"I mean, if you were having fun, you would've caught that ball. You ever have a paper route?"

Smalls says - I helped a guy once.

Benny continues trying to teach him:

"Okay, well, chuck it the way you would a paper. When your arm gets here (Benny gestures) just let it go. Just let it go. It's that easy."

Smalls then asks: "How do I catch it"

Benny: " Just stand there and stick your glove out in the air. I'll take care of it"

Learning to catch and throw, like learning to master swimming strokes and race strategy probably are a little more involved than that scene may suggest, but how about the idea of just trusting the moment and having fun with the activity; with the process and the doing?

Coaches - keep teaching what you teach and doing what you do to help athletes learn and improve, but maybe we can all learn a little about helping young people by

remembering how Benny Rodriguez helped Scotty Smalls play ball and feel like he belonged with the kids in *The Sandlot*

Be well. Be safe. Stay fit. Coach great. - Kopie (Allan Kopel)

PS - If you have not seen it, *Sandlot* is a fun movie and could be good for team movie night. And the big scary dog turns out to be friendly after all (despite all the stories and as legend had it). •

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THOMAS REYNOLDS LAMAR: SWIM COACH WAS MENTOR BOTH IN AND OUT OF POOL

BY JOSEPH FREEMAN, ORLANDO SENTINEL

The work ethic that would help coach Tom Lamar win dozens of high-school state swimming championships was formed decades ago in the South Florida town of Lake Worth. His early years were shaped by the Great Depression and a constant search for a job.

He took in a few dollars with a newspaper route. Then it was cutting meat in a grocery store. At one point, he ventured into the fruit business.

"He'd shimmy up coconut trees, harvest the coconuts and walk door to door selling them to tourists," said his son, Orange-Osceola State Attorney Lawson Lamar.

"Dad grew up without much, and he worked all the time from age 13 on."

Thomas Reynolds Lamar of DeBary died Wednesday of complications from a spinal fracture. He was 94.

Born June 20, 1917, in Manchester, Ga., he moved with his family less than a decade later to Florida, where his father worked for a railroad. He graduated from Lake Worth High School in 1934 as a senior class president who excelled at baseball, basketball and football.

But it was a job as chief lifeguard at the Lake Worth beach that fostered a talent for swimming. He felt comfortable near the surf, and in World War II he served in the Coast Guard.

"I LEARNED SO MUCH FROM THAT MAN,"

After the war, he received bachelor's and master's degrees from University of Miami, where he founded and coached the swimming program.

What followed was a high-school coaching career in which he won 29 state championships. He coached swimming at schools in Lake Worth and Fort Lauderdale, and eventually became the coach at Winter Park High School. Some of his swimmers went on to Olympic-level competition.

He was a mentor to many, in and out of the pool.

Apryle Nickson started coaching with Lamar in the 1970s, at the start of her career.

"I learned so much from that man," said Nickson, 57, now the swim coach at Dr. Phillips High School in Orlando. "He wanted you to make contact with every child, every practice. I still do that to this day."

She remembered that Lamar often donned a Panama hat and used an umbrella like a pointer to emphasize instructions and give advice.

Making a name in the sport created a unique opportunity. The State Department was trying to help Iran develop a national swimming program, and Lamar lived for about a year in the country as part of the project, his son said.

He lectured on subjects beyond the freestyle, breast stroke and butterfly. For a time, Lamar taught civics at Maitland Middle School. At home, he emphasized the importance of a just society. His son said those life lessons influenced his own career path.

"He liked to see people treated fairly and bad guys punished. I think that's the reason I've wanted to be in prosecution and law enforcement all my life."

Lamar loved all things Florida. In his later years, he lived along the St. Johns River and delighted in its flora and fauna, including the sight of alligators crawling in front of his property.

Lamar also is survived by three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Carey-Hand Cox Parker Funeral Home, Winter Park, is handling arrangements. •

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Aaron Peirsol



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SPREADING THE LOVE OF SWIMMING

BY LAURA S. JONES

From the unsung hero department comes Mike Roesch, 54 and a member of the New Jersey LMSC. Roesch, currently a passionate Masters swimmer, never swam at all until taking the plunge three years ago. Now, he is a veritable Johnny Appleseed of swimming. Although instead of apple trees, he plants the seeds of a lifetime love of the water in the hearts of as many children as he can. And it's all thanks to his own child.

"In helping out my daughter's team with officiating and timing, it dawned on me how much I enjoy helping children." (His daughter swam competitively through high school and is now contemplating attending a military preparatory college to prepare for the Coast Guard Academy.)

And Roesch wanted specifically to help kids in his community of Irvington, New Jersey, the majority of whom are African-American. Irvington is the birthplace of Olympian Cullen Jones and a very poor area. "When Cullen Jones won the gold medal, I knew it was an opportunity to do something."

Irvington had an outdoor pool, but it wasn't being programmed, not was it open for nine months of the year. In addition to offering summer lessons, Roesch wants to enclose the pool so kids - and their families - could swim all year long. He wants them to have the opportunities his daughter had.

"UNTIL YOU START DOING IT YOURSELF, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW HARD THE KIDS WORK. IT'S AMAZING HOW HARD MASTERS SWIMMERS WORK."

Roesch realized that in order to be the most help, he needed to learn to swim "the right way." He took lessons, joined USMS and became a Level 1 ASCA certified swim coach.

"Until you start doing it yourself, you don't know how hard the kids work. It's amazing how hard Masters swimmers work."

To make his dream of teaching more minority kids how to swim a reality, Roesch started a non-profit called Irvington Aquatics. He has become the de facto volunteer aquatics director and has had to negotiate a sea of red tape - all while running his own business - to get the program up and running and funded. "The city is all for it, but there is no money."

A chance meeting with the CEO of the American Red Cross' Northern New Jersey Chapter, Ray Shepherd, helped secure a \$10,000 grant from Danish health care corporation Novo Nordisk to fund instruction and use of the municipal pool. But the group

needs more money, about \$150,000 to enclose the pool and more of course to keep the programming going.

Roesch doesn't just want to teach kids to swim; he wants to give them a chance to become competitive. He's teaching them all four strokes so they can see all that swimming is. "It's taken a lot of my time, but I just have to do this for the kids."

In his spare time, he teaches swimming and water safety at the Freehold YMCA and is planning on competing in a couple of Masters meets this year. "I just like competing. It's so much different from what I do every day. And wherever I go, I talk to people about Masters. I've got a whole spiel. I hope to be swimming for a long time to come."

So in an effort to give the children of Irvington a chance to swim and compete, Roesch found his own passion for swimming. A win/win if there ever was one. •

Taking Responsibility For Coach Improvement

BY JOHN LEONARD

A recent survey of Head Club Swimming Coaches in the USA, done by the ASCA Fellows Class X, with assistance from USA-Swimming Staff, tells us that one of the major issues facing Club Coaching in the USA is the lack of good quality age group coaching.

Interestingly, the simplest and best way to improve age group coaching, is for the Head Coach to recognize their responsibility to actually TRAIN their age group coaches.

The CEO of any organization assumes responsibility for the success or failure of that group. That's the Head Coach. If the Head Coach is not considered responsible for their staff development, then exactly what are they "Head" of anyway?

For many decades, head coaches held "Coaches Meetings." Some daily, some weekly, some monthly. One of

the purposes of those meetings was to keep everyone on the same page administratively and also technically. From multiple conversations with even some very productive programs, that concept appears to be fading from club coaching. If head coaches want better age group coaches, then invest the time to train them, personally.

ASCA and USA-Swimming have a large number of courses and tools to promote coach education and provide a comprehensive framework to help educate and train coaches. None of them hold a candle to the importance of Head Coaches Training their Assistants. When the Head Coach speaks, the assistants will listen. But if the Head Coach does NOT emphasize the importance of training and education, don't be surprised if assistants don't take it on themselves. They may, but more likely they will assume that all is well and there is no

NEED for them to improve.

I have heard some Head Coaches say that training their assistants to be "too good" is counterproductive as they risk the coach going ten miles down the road and starting their own team in competition with the original head coach.

Wow. That's frightening. If you're that insecure and you do that little to gain the loyalty and appreciation of your staff, I question your suitability to be a Head Coach. A "Head Coach" has to coach the Heads of his coaching staff. It's one of the few ways to get better as an organization. And if you are the age group coach and you've been fairly treated, have the good ethics and behavior to NOT do something disruptive or disrespectful of the hand that helped you improve.

Better Age group coaches come from Better mentoring (coaching) of assistants. Let's Improve. •

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AN EXCERPT FROM THE BEST WAY OUT IS ALWAYS THROUGH

BY BJ GALLAGHER

It was 1962. Stephen Hawking was just twenty-one-years old when he received the awful news that would change his life—he had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. It's a devastating diagnosis: the disease is progressive, incurable and fatal. His doctors told him he had just a few years to live.

At the time, Hawking was a doctoral student at Cambridge, having already earned a degree from Oxford. But his research hadn't been going well; he was unmotivated in his work and bored with his life. His diagnosis was a turning point: He could either give up his studies and wait to die, or he could make the most of what time he had left. At first, he chose the road of despair and resignation. He wanted to give up because he didn't see any point in finishing his degree if he was going to die soon.

But he didn't give up for long. Through the encouragement and love of his girlfriend, Jane, he pulled out of his despair and found the fire and determination that had been missing before his diagnosis. He married Jane in 1965, finished his studies, and got a job at a university. True, he was afraid of dying, but even more, he was afraid that he would die without achieving anything in his life.

Hawking and Jane had three children together, and she devotedly cared for him year after year as his disease progressed.

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While his body was deteriorating, his career was blossoming. He was elected as one of the youngest Fellows of the Royal Society in 1974, became a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1982, and became a Companion of Honour in 1989. These acknowledgements and public honors were bestowed on Hawking for his contributions to the fields of theoretical cosmology and quantum gravity, especially in the context of black holes. He has published hundreds of research papers, as well as six books. His runaway bestseller was, *A Brief History of Time*, which stayed on the Sunday Times best-seller list for a record-breaking 237 weeks—unheard of for a science book.

It's been over forty years since Hawking got his diagnosis from the doctors. He defied their prediction of an early death, as well as his early impulse to give up. Now completely paralyzed, wheelchair-bound and compelled to use a computer voice synthesizer, he is a respected scientist, a world-renowned celebrity and an inspiration to millions.

In a 2005 interview, Hawking said, "It is a waste of time to be angry about my disability. One has to get on with life and I haven't done badly. People won't have time for you if you are always angry or complaining."

That's not a bad credo to live by. •



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