



Great Leaders...Coach

2010© Aspire

Leaders are the coaches in our lives. They inspire us to believe in what we can not yet see and awaken our true potential. Leaders in our lives hide in many places. They may be the boss, the boss' boss, someone who inspires us, a peer, someone who works for you and maybe even someone in your family. Leaders are everywhere, inspiring us to be who we truly are.

Leadership is not in some of us. It is in all of us. The myth that leaders are born and not created is garbage. What is true about the myth is that we are all born with the power within us to lead. The fact is it just comes a little easier for some of us than others.

Growing up in a lacrosse-oriented world, I started playing when I was young. I initially went out for the team because everyone played lacrosse back east. It was part of the world I knew, so I tried out.

Initially, I stunk at lacrosse. I was and remain amazed I made the team and yet my Coach saw something within me and took the chance. She inspired me, ran me ragged to develop what she would know was an important ability - out pace your competition; and when you are small you better be able to run and run fast!

So what were the lessons of those endless practices and invigorating games?

- Rule 1: If you're not early, you're late
- Be prepared
- Show up and play full out – there is no room on a team for laziness
- Coaches are always watching, not just at try-outs (a.k.a. when you get hired or have your annual review coming up!)
- Work/leverage your strengths
- Consider the team first
- Mistakes happen. Your character is defined by how you react to them and then what you do about them.
- If you blame and shame, no one wants to hang with you!
- Be responsible. Know your job/position, what you are to deliver/responsibilities (offense, defense, scoring), practice to your full potential and play through the last

second of practice as well as the entire game (in business this is follow up as well as follow through)

- Momentum comes from positivity...find what is right and build on it

Then there was the biggest lesson of all:

There was a girl my age who was a tremendous athlete and unfortunately she had more ego than self-confidence. Our Leader/Coach knew this would only hold her back from her potential. I will never forget when she sat her out for a big game.

I thought at the time, does Coach know what she is doing? We can't win without our ringer! And there was Coach as she pulled the rest of us together and said we have what we need in the 12 girls going out to the field. She said, "You have prepared; you are physically and mentally ready; you know our strategy. It is time to lead us."

I remember the goose bumps that covered my arms as I stood tall and ready to do "my" job. How proud I was to take the field. How present I was to my teammates, their movements, our team's strategy and adjusting to our competition's decisions as we played.

Coach's leadership inspired me. Her coaching skills made me want to play better, smarter and run faster. She knew that her job went beyond knowing our competition, knowing our team's skills and weaknesses, building out a smart strategy to win. She knew that to win was to get the most out of her players and she made us all believe in what we did not see and play hard for what she did see.

By the way, we lost that day and yet our team went on to win big. Our star player "joined our team". We all aligned stronger than those weeks before. We all practiced harder, ran faster and found what was right about one another.

Coach taught me more than stick work and skills, more than how to listen to my competition to leverage our position. She taught me to persevere even when I thought I was too tired and had nothing left to give and that great coaching comes from the power of leading and inspiring. Coach set the strategy, worked our skills and made us train to our full potential. She pushed with compassion and aligned us to our higher purpose...and in the end we focused us on our weekly goal...to win games and win them with style.

If you would like to receive free leadership tips, join the conversation at Renie's blog, www.tipsonleadership.com. Renie writes regularly for Hotel & Motel Management Magazine, in which this article first appeared (October, 2010). **Contact Renie at renie@aspiremarketing.com or call 602-392-0700 or visit www.aspiremarketing.com.**