

# Purpose-Driven Coaching: Leading with Impact and Meaning

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**REMEMBER THESE TWO WORDS:**

**INTENTIONAL**

**RELATIONSHIPS**



“A coach will impact more people in a year than the average person will in an entire lifetime.” Billy Graham



# **Why leadership development in coaching matters more than ever?**

**The ripple effect:**

**AD → Coaches → Athletes → School → Community**

**Leadership Behaviors Multiply**

**Small Improvements = Big Outcomes**



**“Why did you get into  
Coaching or Athletic  
Leadership?”**



**MYTH: Teams that focus  
on being impactful are  
not successful in the  
competitive arena.**



# **PURPOSE-DRIVEN COACHING:**

**“Coaching that intentionally aligns actions, values, and relationships to create meaningful impact beyond wins and losses.”**



# **CONTROL WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL**

**As a high school coach, you have very little control over wins and losses, but you do have control over the hidden curriculum of having an impact by teaching life skills.**





# EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETICS

**GOAL  
VS  
PURPOSE**



# GOAL



# PURPOSE



# PURPOSE

“I didn’t start playing the game of softball to win a national championship. I started playing because I love the struggle that it brings. I love, like my Coach has taught me, to become an overcomer. I love the memories, I love my teammates, I love that it’s brought me a family.”

Montana Fouts



# **THE POWER OF PURPOSE**

**Teams led by purpose-driven coaches have higher athlete engagement, lower burnout, and stronger school culture.**



**“If someone walked into your athletic program, could they tell what you stand for?”**

**Do your sport programs emulate your vision for your department?**



FOR THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR:

YOU SET THE TONE BY DEFINING YOUR  
PERSONAL & ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE



# PERFORMANCE CHARACTER SKILLS

Hope

Competitiveness

Perseverance

Resiliency

Responsibility

Self-Control

Ambition

Grit

Work Ethic

Focus

Courage

Punctuality

Commitment

Positivity

Diligence

Reliability

Discipline

Determination





# MORAL CHARACTER SKILLS

Trustworthiness

Patience w/ Others

Responsibility

Concern for Others

Integrity

Generosity

Fairness

Respect

Kindness

Moral Courage

Honesty

Care

Honor

Service

Selflessness

Empathy

Compassion

Loyalty



“I lead with integrity and a strong work ethic to build better leaders in our school community.”

Leadership Story...INTEGRITY

Leadership Story...WORK ETHIC



My name is Kevin Simmerman. I served the students and community of Blue Valley West High School as an assistant principal and high school athletic director.

I start my day by reviewing my leadership Transformational Purpose Statement. "I lead with integrity and a strong work ethic to build better leaders in our school community."

We provide Purpose-Based Athletic / Activity Programs.

- Winning is the goal...not our purpose.
- We consider the court, course, and field another classroom similar to a traditional classroom.
- The athletic arena is the most important class for many of our students.
- We utilize our athletic programs to serve as the curriculum to teach life lessons.
- Our athletic program serves as the front porch for the school which can tell an impactful story.
- It is important that our coaches teach with a purpose.
- We are all better when we focus on our four cornerstones of Family, Pride, Grit, and Excellence



Successes in our Athletic Department will be determined by....

1. Purpose Over Winning: While it is important for us to win on the scoreboard, ultimate success will be measured by how well we help our student-athletes to develop character, personal growth, and leadership skills.
2. Learning Environment: Success means creating an environment when student-athletes can learn and grow, both athletically and personally.
3. Life Lessons Curriculum: Our athletic programs serve as a curriculum for teaching life lessons. Success is evident when our student-athletes apply these lessons in their daily lives.
4. Community Engagement: Success is defined by the connections we build with families, alumni, and local organizations, and the stories we tell through our student-athletes achievements.
5. Purposeful Coaching: Our coaches will teach with purpose, guiding student-athletes in their development and instilling values that will serve them beyond high school sports.
6. Embracing our Cornerstones: Success is achieved when we focus on our four cornerstones of Family, Pride, Grit, and Excellence.
7. Lasting Impact: Success means leaving a lasting impact on our students and the school community. We strive to inspire future generations of student-athletes to carry forward the values and lessons learned through our athletic programs.



# WHEN HIRING COACHES:

- Why do I Coach?
- Why do I Coach the way I do?
- What does it feel like to be Coached by me?
- How do I define success?



# 4 CORE PILLARS OF MEANINGFUL LEADERSHIP

- CLARITY OF MISSION
- CONNECTION
- COMPETENCE
- CHARACTER



# CLARITY OF MISSION

## “CLEAR STANDARDS, EXPECTATIONS, COMMUNICATION”

- Help Coaches articulate their why?
  - What do you want every athlete to gain beyond the scoreboard?
- Encourage each program to develop a “coaching purpose statement”.



# CONNECTION

## “RELATIONSHIPS DRIVE RESULTS”

- PURPOSE MUST BE VISIBLE IN EVERYTHING YOU DO
- TRUST DRIVES COMMITMENT
- CONSISTENCY BUILDS BELIEF
- PRESENCE CREATES RELATIONSHIPS
- ATHLETES FOLLOW COACHES THEY FEEL CONNECTED TO
- MODEL CONSISTENCY AS ADS - PRAISE COACHES WHO LIVE THEIR VALUES





# CONNECTION

- CONNECTION THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS
  - Athletes thrive when they feel known, valued, and supported.
  - Coaching impact grows through empathy and trust.
  - Encourage coaches to connect before they correct.



## **'A little bit of brokenness'**

*"I think that each and every one of us approaches each day with a little bit of brokenness inside of us. Everyone has a little bit of brokenness inside of them, regardless of how you grew up, regardless of what your home environment was. Everybody has a little bit of brokenness and will to win. I want everyone to know that you can still achieve the level of success that you want, regardless of the brokenness that you have inside. These young men walking around here, they have issues that you would never know. I've been in this position, I've been in this office now for just over 24 hours and I already had a young man break down crying in my office. All of them are walking around with a little bit of brokenness, and I just wanted to help reinforce them that, no, you could have the type of success that you want to have regardless of that. So, that inspires me every day.*

*"I literally, it's funny, my wife gotta listen some days. I get up in the morning, I look in the mirror, and I say to myself, 'There's someone who needs you today, big dog. They need you. They need you now. They don't need you a week from now. They don't need you a month from now. They need you today. I don't care what's going on in your life right now. Go help them.' And that is what my life is all about. It's about helping people."*



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# COMPETENCE

## “CONTINUAL LEARNING & COACHING SKILLS”

- Not about wins—it’s about professional growth.
- Teaching, communication, conflict management = learnable.
- ADs can model learning through small, consistent development opportunities



# CHARACTER

**“WHO YOU ARE SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WHAT YOU TEACH”**

- Integrity
- Humility
- Accountability
- Behavior that matches values
- Character Drives Culture



# TOOL #1

## 15-MINUTE MONTHLY CHECK-IN

- What's going well?
- What's challenging you?
- What leadership behavior did you model?
- What one skill do you want to improve this month?



# TOOL #2

## COACHING STANDARDS

### Standards > Rules

- Be prepared
- Be consistent
- Be present
- Be athlete-centered

Create a **Coaching Standards Handbook.**



# TOOL #3

## COACH IN KEY MOMENTS

Where AD leadership matters most:

- **Conflict:** parents, players, staff
- **Confusion:** unclear expectations
- **Complacency:** “We’re fine” mindset  
Pressure creates growth moments.





# TOOL #4

## MICRO-LEARNING

Short, consistent development:

- 10-minute preseason “leadership huddles”
- Monthly leadership messages
- Quarterly workshops

*Short beats long when it’s consistent.*



# TOOL #5

## FEEDBACK CULTURE

Effective feedback is:

- Timely
- Specific
- Behavior-focused
- Growth-oriented

Model the process—you teach what you show.



# **RESOURCES/FOLLOWS**

**Greg Berge @GregBerge**

**Troy Urdahl @TroyUrdahl**

**Scott Garvis @PocketAD\_**

**Kevin DeShazo @KevinDeShazo**

**Proactive Coaching**



**“Are we willing to invest in coaches so they have everything they need to prepare students for success on and off the field of competition?”**

**Stephen Mackey**

Founder, 2Words Character Development





**I have come to a frightening conclusion,  
I am the decisive element in the gym or on the field.  
It is my personal approach that creates the climate...  
It is my daily mood that makes the weather...  
As a coach, I possess the tremendous power to make an athlete's  
life miserable or joyous.  
I can be the tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration.  
I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.  
In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will  
be escalated or de-escalated.  
And an athlete humanized or de-humanized**

**Haim G. Ginott**  
School Teacher, Child Psychologist

