

**ELITE**

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**ENCOURAGER**

**QUOTES OF THE WEEK:**

**MONDAY:**

"Elite encouragers don't stop at their word, they let it carry on to their example, their belief, their support, and even confronting their teammates." Coach Mackey

**TUESDAY:**

"Encouragement closes the gap between a person's potential and their self-imposed limitations." Daniel Eckstein

**WEDNESDAY:**

"The kindest thing you can do for somebody is tell them the truth." Jack Welch

**THURSDAY:**

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Maya Angelou

**FRIDAY:**

"Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be."  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

# WEEK 22

## ELITE ENCOURAGER CONTENT OVERVIEW



### COACHES

**Broaden** your definition of encouragement.



### CAPTAINS

**Encourage** through confrontation.



### ATHLETES

**Set** the example for your team.



### FAMILY

**Use** various encouragement methods.



### ELITE ENCOURAGER

When someone gives up, it's usually not because they are incapable of continuing, but because they become discouraged. As Daniel Eckstein said, "Encouragement closes the gap between a person's potential and their self-imposed limitations." To be good teammates, we need to help our teammates close the gap. To do that, we've got to become elite encouragers.

Encouragement is more than mere words. Make no mistake, words matter. Encouraging words that are honest and accurate can make a huge difference in helping someone keep going rather than throwing in the towel. But words aren't enough. The rest of this lesson will focus on four types of encouragement other than words. For now, let's look at WHY it matters.

**It changes the way you think about your teammates.** When you look for ways to encourage your teammates, whether that's through your attitude and actions or through your belief in and support for your teammates, you start seeing them in a different light. It's hard to dislike someone when you're actively looking for ways to help them become their best. It's hard to hold onto anger from a past slight when you're thinking about how you can best serve your teammates.

**It allows you to call them out when they drift from the standard.** If you are known as a voice of encouragement, that gives you a special ability to call others out without it being taken personally. Encouraging your teammates during practice, in the locker room, or even in the halls at school, puts you in a position of trusted teammate. That means your teammates will be more likely to listen to you when you encourage them to be better by calling them out for poor behavior.

Giving up comes not from a lack of ability to go on, but from a lack of encouragement. We can only encourage ourselves so much. At some point, we need outside encouragement that we're on the right track. You can be that for your teammates.



# WEEK 22

## ELITE ENCOURAGER FOR COACHES



### ELITE ENCOURAGER: FOR COACHES

Encouragement is more than just the words that we use. Encouragement also comes across from our actions and attitudes, our belief in our athletes, and our willingness to call them out when they mess up.

Perhaps the most impactful tool in our encouragement toolbox is our belief in our athletes. Teens have a lot of voices telling them who they are not and what they can't do. We can be the encouraging voice that helps them see who they can be and what they can do.

Belief is shown through the way we speak, but it also comes through the directions we give, the critiques we make, and the standards we hold athletes to. Let's look at those really quick.

**The directions we give.** There's a difference between guidance and command. Each has its place in coaching, but the thoughtful use of each determines the impact we have. Think about how you tell athletes what to do. Does it show respect for and belief in their abilities?

**The critiques we make.** Feedback is crucial if our athletes are going to improve, but the way we deliver that feedback can be either encouraging or discouraging. Keep your belief in their ability to become better at the front of your mind, and that will help guide the critiques.

**The standards we hold them to.** The team standards exist for a reason. If we don't hold athletes to those standards, then they become useless. Holding athletes accountable to the team standards shows that we believe in their ability to follow through on their word.

When we start to think beyond words and look at encouragement in broad terms, we find that there are so many ways we can encourage our athletes to do hard things.

### THIS WEEK, BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR:

- 1. Opportunities to FOCUS on strengths.** Athletes are usually painfully aware of their weaknesses, but they might not realize all of their strengths. By focusing on what they do well, we build a sense of trust and belief. Of course, we still need to talk about their weak points, but by leading with strengths, we establish that we're on the same side.
- 2. Opportunities to SAY athletes' names.** The use of a name is really important for establishing relationships. If we aren't addressing them on a personal level, then how are we supposed to coach them at that level? Notice how and with what tone you use the athletes' names.
- 3. Opportunities to VALIDATE the effort athletes are putting in.** Coaching only works if the athletes are putting in the effort to improve. We can talk all day about what they should do, but ultimately, they have to actually do it. Recognition that they are trying is a powerful form of encouragement.

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# WEEK 22

## ELITE ENCOURAGER FOR CAPTAINS

### **C** ELITE ENCOURAGER: FOR CAPTAINS

There are many ways to encourage your teammates beyond using encouraging words like “you got this!” One of the most powerful forms of encouragement that a leader can use is confrontation. That might sound weird at first, so let’s break down why this is true.

First, let’s clarify what confrontation means in this context. As a leader, sometimes you will have to confront your teammates when they aren’t upholding the standards that everyone agreed to. You might use the phrase “call out” instead of “confront.” When somebody isn’t giving their full effort or when they’re being late to practice or not being prepared, those are moments where you need to call out your teammate.

This need to confront or call out your teammates shouldn’t come from a place of dislike or anger. Instead, it must come from a place of love and compassion. You want your teammates to be the best they can be, and when they aren’t living into that, your love for them demands that you speak up about it.

The motive matters because it affects the way that you call out your teammates. When you’re doing it from a place of anger or frustration, your words will be sharper, but they won’t make the impression you want, and you could even end up discouraging your teammate. When confrontation comes from a place of love, you speak in a way that encourages your teammate to be better going forward.

But confrontation as encouragement doesn’t stop at the call out. You’ve got to follow up with your teammate to ensure that they really get what’s expected of them and how to fulfill the commitments they’ve made to the team. The confrontation has a limited shelf-life without the follow through.

When a leader calls out their teammates with love, it is a powerful form of encouragement.

### /// CAPTAINS’ LOG ///

“LEADERS ALWAYS LEAD”

Have you ever had to call out a teammate?  
What was that situation about?

What are some things that you might need to  
confront a teammate about?

How would you handle calling out a  
teammate?

How do you ensure that you have the right  
motives when calling out a teammate?

What can you do to make sure your call out is  
encouraging rather than discouraging?

# WEEK 22

## ELITE ENCOURAGER FOR ATHLETES



### **ELITE ENCOURAGER: FOR ATHLETES**

When we see other people working hard and doing well, we see in them what could be possible for us. But it works the other way, too. When our teammates see our example, that shows them what is possible. So, if everyone on your team followed the example you are currently setting, what kind of team would you have?

If you don't like the answer to that question, there's good news: You can change the example you're setting. You can decide today to become an elite encourager, not just with the words you use, but also with the example that you set. Let's look at three ways you can set an example, just to give you some ideas.

How you support your teammates. Being there for your teammates through thick and thin creates a bond that extends beyond the game. It matters how you treat others when they're having a bad day or when their negative self-talk is getting them down. If you're a shoulder to lean on during tough times, then you give your teammates permission to do the same for others.

How you work for your team. Giving your best effort to whatever is in front of you is a great example to set for your teammates. Motives matter, though. When you work hard for your teammates and team goals, you behave differently than if you're just working for yourself and your goals.

How you behave outside of practice. What you do outside of practice reflects on your team. The standards are just for when you're on the field or in the locker room. They're meant to be a guide for life. When your teammates see you upholding the standard, no matter where you are, that encourages them to do the same.

You get to choose the types of examples you reflect and the examples you set. Encourage your teammates to be their best by being your best.

### **ATHLETE'S EXERCISE:**

1. What example are you currently setting for your teammates?
2. What example do you want to set for them?
3. Other than by example, how can you encourage your teammates to work like you do?
4. How does your behavior outside of practice reflect the team standards?
5. Whose example do you want to follow? Why?

# WEEK 22

## ELITE ENCOURAGER FOR FAMILY



### ELITE ENCOURAGER: FOR FAMILY

As parents or guardians, we are role models for our kids. They look at us to figure out how to live. We want to use that so we can help them become their best. That means encouraging them, not just with our words, but with four other types of encouragement. Let's take a look.

**Encourage by example.** This is the way you do what you do. Do you bring intensity, focus, and work ethic to your responsibilities? Do you bring excellence even to doing the little things? This is also the way you treat other people. We are setting an example for our family, so it's worth asking the questions: What example am I setting? What example do I want to set?

**Encourage by belief in them.** We are conditioned by society to see the worst in others instead of the best. But encouragement requires seeing the best. Instead of giving the benefit of the doubt, let's give each other the benefit of the best. Let's believe the best of each other. We can show our belief in our kids by celebrating them when they make progress towards a goal.

**Encourage by consistent support.** Anybody can be a friend when it's easy, but a true friend supports us through the worst that can happen. Being a family means being there for each other whatever the weather. When they're having a bad day, don't withdraw because they're irritable. Instead, be there if they want to talk or help them find a way to improve their situation.

**Encourage by confrontation.** Jack Welch said, "The kindest thing you can do for somebody is tell them the truth." When our kids are hurting themselves or others, we need to speak to that and show them the truth of what they're doing. We do this, not we can put them down, but so we can lift them up.

Words are an important way to encourage others to be their best, but they aren't the only way.

### /// BEST 5 ///

#### THE BEST FIVE MINUTES OF THE WEEK

How do you prefer to be encouraged by others?

How do you prefer to give encouragement to others?

What can you do this week to practice encouraging each other in different ways?

Why is it important to encourage each other to be their best?

How do you support each other through bad times?

# WEEK 22

## ELITE ENCOURAGER

Seven Types of Encouragement Worksheet for Coaches/Captains

### Seven Types of Encouragement Worksheet for Coaches/Captains

["Types and Sources of Encouragement for Coaches"](#) by Daniel Eckstein, Phyllis Cooke, and Donna Eckstein, International Journal of Coaching in Organizations (2007) PDF file.

The PDF linked above provides a lot of information about encouragement. For this exercise, read the section titled The Seven Types of Encouragement on pages 5-6 of the document. Then, write down answers to the questions or discuss them with your coaching team. Alternatively, this exercise can be used with team captains.

#### Role Modeling

1. How do you serve as a role model for your athletes?
2. What exactly are you trying to model for them?
3. Do you see what you want to model reflected in athletes' behavior?
4. If not, what can you do more of (or less of) to encourage the changes you want to see?
5. If so, how did you reach that point with your athletes? How can you teach those things to other coaches and educators?

#### Seeing Strengths and Abilities

1. Do you tend to focus on athletes' strengths or weaknesses? Why?
2. Think about an athlete you've critiqued recently, what part of the critique focused on strengths and what part focused on weaknesses?
3. Why does it matter if we focus more on strengths or weaknesses?

#### Supporting Over the Long Haul (Consistency)

1. How have your actions over the past week or month showed consistent support for your athletes?
2. What are you doing to help athletes feel like they have your support?
3. What can you do going forward to ensure athletes know that you are there for them?

#### Seeing People as Special

1. What helps you to see your student-athletes as more than just students or athletes?
2. Why does it matter if you see your athletes as individuals rather than just members of the team?
3. What is something special about one of your athletes or fellow coaches?

#### How to Inspire Self and Others (Inspiring Others)

1. What words or actions can you use to inspire greatness in your athletes?
2. How do you encourage yourself when you're feeling discouraged?
3. What inspires you to give your best? How can you use that to inspire others?

#### Supporting What People are Interested in

1. How do you provide encouragement for someone when you don't actually see the value in what they're doing?
2. What are some interests of your athletes or fellow coaches that you can support this week?
3. What traits or behaviors have you seen in athletes that you want to encourage going forward?

#### Encouraging Career Choices

1. What do some of your athletes want to do after they graduate from high school?
2. How can you help prepare them to reach those goals?
3. What advice or encouragement would you give to a teen who isn't sure about their future career choice?