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YOUR BEST

QUOTES OF THE WEEK:

MONDAY:

"A problem is a chance for you to do your best." Duke Ellington

TUESDAY:

"The only person who can stop you from reaching your goals is you."
Jackie Joyner-Kersey

WEDNESDAY:

"If you persevere long enough, if you do the right things long enough, the right things will happen." Manon Rheaume

THURSDAY:

"Continuous effort—not strength or intelligence—is the key to unlocking our potential." Liane Cardes

FRIDAY:

"Being consistent at giving your best is the key to unlocking your goals."
Coach Mackey

WEEK 23

YOUR BEST CONTENT OVERVIEW



COACHES

Encourage athletes' best, not perfection.



CAPTAINS

Take steps to help teammates give their best.



ATHLETES

Avoid the traps of comparison, perfection, and ego.



FAMILY

Value doing your best.



ELITE ENCOURAGER

We live in a world that's obsessed with being THE best. And that can make you forget that what really matters is being YOUR best. Comparison to others and expecting perfection from yourself are traps that will try to prevent you from achieving your best. But your best is enough to reach your goals and dreams, so long as you consistently do the required and unrequired work.

There are two traps you've got to watch out for on the journey to your goals: the comparison trap and the perfection myth. Let's look at those quickly.

Comparison Trap. This can show up in one of two ways. Either we see someone else's best as better than ours, so we think our best isn't enough, or we see someone else as not better, so we don't give our best because we don't need to. This is a trap because you will always find someone who can inspire one of these two mindsets that will talk you out of doing your best.

One of the ways to avoid the comparison trap is to encourage others. When you focus on helping others become their best; it's easier to let yourself become your best, too.

Perfection Myth. This is the idea that if your work isn't perfect, then it's worthless. This if/then mindset is a trap because perfection isn't possible. You can chase perfection, and in that pursuit achieve excellence, but you can't actually BE perfect. Don't let the pursuit of perfection trap you into thinking your best isn't good enough.

One way to avoid the perfection myth is to keep track of the things you do as you work towards your goals. When you feel like your work isn't worthwhile, look back at the list so you can see how far you've actually come.

Being consistent at giving your best is the key to unlocking your goals.

WEEK 23

YOUR BEST FOR COACHES



ELITE ENCOURAGER: FOR COACHES

We know that no one is perfect. We know that no game plan survives first contact with the opponent. But even knowing this, we can still fall for the myth that our athletes should be perfect.

The truth is that they're kids. They are still in the process of becoming who they will be. They aren't going to be perfect, and they shouldn't expect themselves to be. As coaches, we can encourage them to do their best and help them avoid feeling worthless when they aren't perfect.

One way to encourage them is by teaching them to **continuously assess** where they are and ask: What is my best in this moment? If they can get into the habit of identifying their best, even in difficult situations, that will help them gather a foundation for what their best is. So when they struggle, they have that foundation to fall back on.

Another way to encourage them to do their best is to have them **track their progress** towards a personal goal. When they have a log of all the things they've done to reach a goal, it can help them see that their time hasn't been wasted, even if they still have a long way to go. The day-to-day record of their achievements can serve as a reminder of how capable they are when they want to give up.

The perfection myth can wreak havoc on our athletes' self-esteem. To guard against that, we can encourage our athletes to give their best to whatever is right in front of them without worrying whether or not the performance is perfect.

THIS WEEK, BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR:

- 1. Opportunities to ASK "What is your best right now?"**
This can be a question for self-reflection or a surprise question for athletes during practice. Ask it often so they get used to thinking about and identifying their best quickly. Is their best in the effort they're giving? Is it in the way they're encouraging their teammates? Is it in the way they've improved over yesterday?
- 2. Opportunities to RECORD a personal log of achievements.** This is a great tool for athletes and coaches alike. The log serves as an encouragement when you feel you aren't making headway, and the blank spaces ahead serve as a reminder that there's still time to do all the things you need to do to reach your goal.
- 3. Opportunities to IDENTIFY a perfect person.** Have athletes make suggestions for what a perfect person is like and make a list. When it's all together, ask: Do you know anyone real that fits this description? The answer will naturally be "No" but if someone gets cute and throws out an example of a person, have them walk through explaining how that person fits all of the criteria. They won't be able to—not while being honest.

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YOUR BEST FOR CAPTAINS

C ELITE ENCOURAGER: FOR CAPTAINS

If your teammates are giving less than their best, that's really frustrating. To help them snap out of it and give their full effort to the team, there's a three-step process you can follow. Let's take a look.

Self-Reflection. First, you've got to make sure that there's not something about your own behavior that can be thrown back at you. Are you giving your best to every practice and every play? Are you upholding the team standard even when you're not on the field or in the locker room? Think about the example you're setting and how your behavior might be influencing your teammates.

Observation. Next, you want to make sure that what you see is the true picture. Is your teammate just a slacker, or are they going through something tough outside of sports? Do they have a bad attitude, or are they just having a bad day? Talk to your teammates. Find out what's going on with them beyond the team. Build a relationship with them.

Celebration and Call-Outs. Once you have the full picture and you know that you've been doing what you need to do, figure out if you need to celebrate or call out a teammate. If it turns out they really are giving the best they can right now, despite appearances otherwise, then celebrate them for giving their best despite how hard it is. If they really are giving only part of their best, then call them out for that while lifting them up to do better.

Leaders have to be willing to give their best, otherwise they can't in good conscience call out their teammates for failing to give their best. Reflect on your own behavior, get to know your teammates, and then celebrate or call them out as necessary. With these three steps, you can lead yourself and your teammates to always give your best.

/// CAPTAINS' LOG ///

"LEADERS ALWAYS LEAD"

What are some things about your actions or behavior that teammates could potentially call out about you?

What do you need to do to adjust your behavior to align with the team standards?

How does reflecting on your own behavior help you to assess your teammates' behavior?

Why is it important to talk to teammates about their lives before calling them out for not giving their best?

Who is someone that you think might need an encouraging call-out on your team? What do you need to do before making that call-out?

WEEK 23

YOUR BEST FOR ATHLETES



ELITE ENCOURAGER: FOR ATHLETES

There are lots of obstacles on the road to your goals, and some of those come in the form of traps. Let's look at the traps of comparison, perfection, and ego, as well as the one antidote that will help you avoid all three.

Comparison makes you too big or too small.

When you compare yourself to others, you're going to come out ahead or behind. In either case, the comparison will lead you to change your behavior to grow either bigger or smaller to compensate. A big ego will get in the way of your learning and growth, and a small ego will prevent you from giving your all to what's in front of you.

Perfection makes you think nothing you do is enough.

When you expect to perform perfectly, nothing will ever measure up. There will always be some little thing that could have been better. The pursuit of perfection can be a positive motivator, but only if you understand that you won't actually attain perfection. Your work has worth because you give it worth. You are enough, and you are doing enough, even if the work isn't perfect.

Ego makes you worry what others think about you.

This is an issue because it affects the effort that you give. When you're too caught up in how you appear to others, you can't focus on doing what needs to be done. It's distracting. It can be hard not to care what others think of you. It can be hard not to seek out praise and affirmation from others. But when you free yourself from the need to please, you free yourself to become the person you want them to see.

The antidote to all three of these traps is the same: giving your best. When you give your best, there's no reason to compare yourself with others, to try to be perfect, or to worry what others think of you.

ATHLETE'S EXERCISE:

1. Which of the three traps have you fallen into?
2. How can giving your best help you escape from that trap?
3. If you find yourself comparing your work to someone else's work, what can you do to remind yourself that your best is enough?
4. What gives your work worth or value?
5. Do you care about what others think of you? Why or why not?

WEEK 23

YOUR BEST FOR FAMILY



ELITE ENCOURAGER: FOR FAMILY

Sometimes as caregivers, we worry that our children's performance will reflect poorly on us. This is a natural fear, but it doesn't serve us or our kids. When we have that fear at the back of our minds, it can twist our words. For example, we might say, "Just give your best" when we really mean "do well enough that I don't look bad."

Even if we don't realize that's the subtext, our kids can pick up on that. To avoid giving them mixed messages, we can do our best to truly value their best. Let's look at two ways to do that.

Offer encouragement. Effective encouragement is truthful, specific, and genuine. Sometimes, encouragement is also challenging. If they aren't giving their best, don't pretend they are. Instead, encourage them that they're doing pretty well, but then challenge them to really give their all. It does no good to tell our kids we expect them to give their best when we just accept whatever effort they decide to give. Get to know what their best looks like, and then hold them to that standard.

Focus on the controllables. Kids can't control their grades. They can do their best on each assignment and test, but in the end, the grade is out of their hands. Instead of measuring their effort based on a letter grade or GPA, pay attention to when they're actually working on assignments and take an interest in how they prepare for exams. These are the things they can control, and when we pay more attention to that than the outcomes, it shows that we really do value when they give their best.

Our kids' behavior and performance doesn't really reflect on us as parents, but the fear that it will can be very real. Instead of giving into that fear, let's work to value when our kids do their best regardless of the outcome of their performance.

/// BEST 5 ///

THE BEST FIVE MINUTES OF THE WEEK

What is an example of a time when you gave your best?

How would that situation have looked or felt different if you hadn't given your best?

What is an encouragement that you wish someone would give you?

What is an encouragement that you want to give to a family member?

Think about an upcoming exam, game, or other important event. What are the things that you can control?

WEEK 23

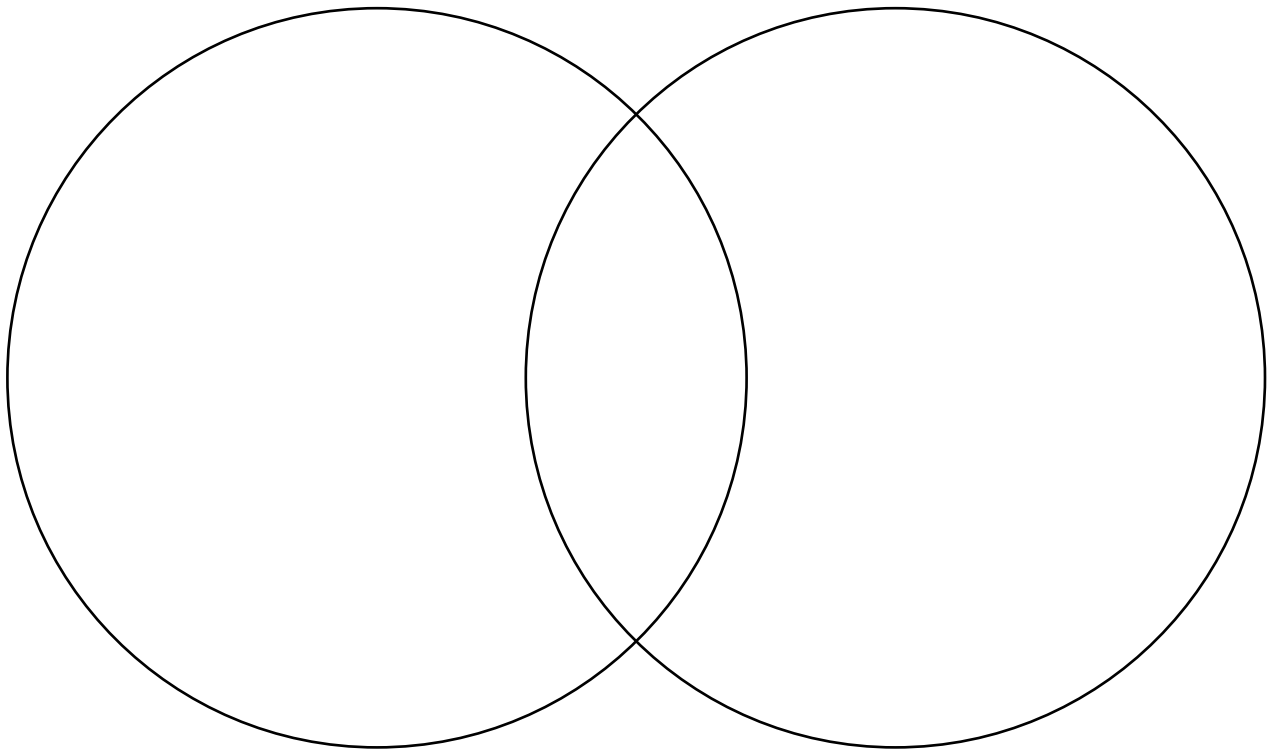
YOUR BEST

Captains/Athletes Venn Diagram Worksheet

Captains/Athletes Venn Diagram Worksheet

Use the circles below to write down things that your teammates do and the things that you do. In the center, write the things that you both do. Think of both positives and negatives.

Examples: Listening to Coach
 Showing up on time
 Hogging the ball



Reflection Questions

1. Which actions or behaviors from your teammates are positives? Which are negatives?
2. How do you want to be more like your teammates?
3. How do you want your teammates to be more like you?
4. Which shared actions and behaviors best serve the team? Which ones most hurt the team?
5. How can you help yourself and your teammates to lean into the positives and phase out the negatives?