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SAY THANKS

QUOTES OF THE WEEK:

MONDAY:

"Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns; I am thankful that thorns have roses." Alphonse Karr

TUESDAY:

"I'm thankful for my struggle because without it I wouldn't have stumbled across my strength." Unknown

WEDNESDAY:

"When we choose to accept the invitation to grow by saying Thanks, adversity can become for our benefit." Coach Mackey

THURSDAY:

"Keep your eyes open to your mercies. The man who forgets to be thankful has fallen asleep in life." Robert Louis Stevenson

FRIDAY:

"Because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude." Ralph Waldo Emerson

WEEK 25

SAY THANKS CONTENT OVERVIEW



COACHES

Give purpose to adversity.



CAPTAINS

Encourage teammates to say Thanks.



ATHLETES

Turn bad days to growth days.



FAMILY

Say Thanks for adversity and challenges.



SAY THANKS

The common response to adversity, challenges, or bad days is to blame others or to say something like: Why me? This isn't fair! But when we instead decide to be uncommon, we say Thanks to adversity, challenges, and bad days. Life is happening for you, not to you. When you choose to believe that, when you choose to say Thanks for the hardships that come your way, you open yourself up to growth.

Think about running. Running is hard, but you will never get better at running if you don't run. The adversity and challenge of running are what make you into a good runner. It is only by challenging yourself that you are able to grow.

But how is a bad day to your benefit? Why should you say Thanks for a bad day?

It's because bad days are an opportunity to be your best self. Anyone can have integrity and treat others with kindness when the weather is nice and they just found \$20 on the street. But how many people do the same when they've spilled coffee on themselves and gotten into a fender bender?

How you behave on your worst days says as much about you as who you are on your best days. A bad day is an opportunity to take the adversity or unfortunate circumstances and turn it into a chance to show yourself (and others) that even on a bad day, you can be your best.

It's common to avoid adversity because it's uncomfortable. But so is a growth spurt. You have to experience the stretching and growing if you're going to get taller. In the same way, you've got to experience the discomfort and hardship of adversity if you're going to grow as a person.

Instead of avoiding adversity, challenges, and bad days, be uncommon and say Thanks for them instead.

WEEK 25

SAY THANKS FOR COACHES



SAY THANKS: FOR COACHES

Saying Thanks to adversity and challenges is not a common thing. It takes intentional practice and effort to become good at it. It takes a desire to grow and become who you can be. When our student-athletes stop looking at challenges as against them and start seeing how adversity is FOR them, then they will accelerate their growth as players and as people.

So how do we encourage athletes to Say Thanks to adversity?

It's all about casting a vision for the team and connecting practice to the vision. To make that clearer, think about conditioning. It's easy to just say "Hey, do this really hard thing" because we can be reasonably confident that our athletes will do what we say. We are even justified in having them do challenging things because we know it's going to pay off in the long run.

But do our students know that, too?

When we communicate what the conditioning or the drill is going to allow them to do, it helps our athletes connect the dots between today and tomorrow. Some students are clear on their personal goals, and that helps them support the team goals. But many student-athletes are unclear about their goals; some are more likely to live moment-to-moment, without thinking too much about how what they do today will help them to do greater things tomorrow.

Personal and team goals help to guide athletes in their growth. If they don't know where they want to go, they won't be able to get there. Without a goal to strive for, it's harder to see how adversity is FOR them, not against them.

THIS WEEK, BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR:

- 1. Opportunities to PROMOTE team and personal goals.** Goals help us stay focused on our purpose. And purpose is what gets us through challenges and adversity. Encourage athletes to set goals for themselves, and make sure that you know what those goals are so that you can tie practice and conditioning to those goals.
- 2. Opportunities to TALK about where players will end up because of what they are doing now.** They have personal goals and team goals to keep them focused, but they might not see how this particular drill relates to their goals. Make it clear how their current actions are helping them gain the skills needed to reach their goals.
- 3. Opportunities to PURPOSE pain.** Adversity, pain, or challenges don't have to be things that just happen to us. There can be a purpose to them. But we are the ones who give the tough times purpose. Look for the ways that your pain is actually useful to you.

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WEEK 25

SAY THANKS FOR CAPTAINS

C SAY THANKS: FOR CAPTAINS

One of a leader's main roles is to be a great encourager for their team. This is particularly important when the team is facing challenges together. It's all too easy for your teammates to become discouraged when confronted with adversity. To prevent that from happening, be proactive about encouraging your teammates even when you aren't facing challenges.

Let's look at how you can encourage your teammates before, during, and after a struggle.

BEFORE: Get to know your teammates. People need to feel like they're more than just a numbered jersey. They need to know that their leaders see them as real people who can do more than pass a ball or run fast. Being included is a very encouraging feeling. So make sure you take the time to get to know your teammates, even the ones who are younger or that don't play a position related to yours.

DURING: Believe in them. Show and tell your teammates that you believe they can do this hard thing. If you aren't sure what to say, try phrases like "You can do it" or "We're going to beat this." Show your belief by supporting and assisting them without trying to do the thing for them. You also show your belief in them by staying on their side through the challenge.

AFTER: Celebrate their success. Success feels pretty good on its own, but it's even better when the people who went through the trials with us recognize and praise our efforts. Let your teammates know how well they did. Be specific and honest with your praise and encouragement. Save the analysis of what they could do better for a few days later so the high of the win has time to wear off.

A leader encourages their teammates so they won't become discouraged by challenges. That encouragement needs to happen before, during, and after the challenges you face together as a team.

/// CAPTAINS' LOG ///

"LEADERS ALWAYS LEAD"

What is a tough challenge that your team has faced together?

How did overcoming that challenge impact the way your teammates interact?

How well do you know your teammates?
Which ones could you make more effort to get to know better?

How can you show belief in your teammates?

Who is someone you want to praise for overcoming a recent challenge and what do you want to say to them?

WEEK 25

SAY THANKS FOR ATHLETES



SAY THANKS: FOR ATHLETES

The difference between a bad day and a growth day is your attitude. If you think the day is awful and the world is against you, then that's what it's going to feel like. But if you think the day is just a day that's trying to teach you something, then you're going to learn.

The power in either situation doesn't lie in the day itself; the power is within you. Whatever you choose to believe about the day determines what you're going to get out of it. So how do you go from saying "No thanks" to saying "Thanks" for the bad day?

It's actually fairly simple: Keep your goals at the forefront of your mind and act accordingly. Let's look at that a little closer.

Think about your goal. What is the number one most important goal that you are working towards right now? How can this bad day help you achieve it faster? At first glance, you'll probably find a bunch of reasons why the bad day is NOT helping, but dig deeper. Look at it from a new angle. Think about all the pieces that have to come together for you to achieve your goal. How does this challenge fit into that?

Decide on an action. Bad days are tough because the things that happen in them often feel out of our control. One way to say Thanks to a bad day is to look at what's happening and decide what you can do about it. For example, if you're having a bad day because you forgot your homework and gym shoes, you can figure out a way to remember those things in the future and take action right now to make that happen.

When your goals are in focus, it's easier to figure out what actions will help make a bad day into a growth day. Instead of saying "No thanks!" when bad days come, say "Thanks!"

ATHLETE'S EXERCISE:

1. Think about a recent bad day that you had. What made it "bad"?
2. How could shifting your mindset to "growth day" have helped you say Thanks for the bad day?
3. What is your number one goal that you're working towards?
4. How could your bad day have been used to help you reach your goal faster?
5. What have you learned from that bad day that you can use the next time you have a bad day like that?

WEEK 25

SAY THANKS FOR FAMILY



SAY THANKS: FOR FAMILY

A common response to adversity is to run away from it. While that might save us some discomfort or hardship, it doesn't help us to grow. When we avoid adversity, challenges, or bad days, we prevent ourselves from learning from those situations. But when we say Thanks for adversity, we open ourselves to growth.

There are three phrases that get used a lot when adversity strikes. Let's look at what they are and how we can make the shift to say Thanks instead.

This isn't fair. When we work really hard, but things still don't go our way, this is a favorite comfort phrase. We know that life isn't fair, but we still complain about it not being fair. Instead of focusing on what is "fair" try to think of what is "helpful." What about this situation is (or can be) helpful to you?

Why me? This is said as if it's a negative thing. But what if we think about the challenge we're facing and really ask: why is this happening to me? We don't ask to find a negative answer like "because I'm unlucky" or "because the universe hates me." Like with the first phrase, look for helpful answers. Why me? Because I need this to help me get better. Because I can handle it.

It's their fault. Blaming others for the things that happen to us might feel good, but it doesn't help us change anything. If we're focusing on some made-up "enemy" as the source of our problems, then we're not going to take action to face the problems. Instead of looking for someone to blame, look for people who can help you overcome this challenge.

Instead of avoiding adversity, challenges, and bad days, let's be uncommon and say Thanks for them instead.

/// BEST 5 ///

THE BEST FIVE MINUTES OF THE WEEK

What is a challenge or adversity that you are facing now or have faced recently?

How can that situation be for your benefit? How might it be helpful?

Who can help you as you face this challenge? How?

What is a past challenge or adversity that you would like to say Thanks for? Why?

How can your family help you most when you are facing a challenge?

WEEK 25

SAY THANKS

Team Activity - Thanks for Nothing

Team Activity - Thanks for Nothing

The goal of this activity is to help student-athletes look at seemingly “bad” things from a new angle to find something to be thankful for.

Steps:

1. Pair students with random or pre-selected partners.
2. One student will choose an item or action to offer their partner. The list in the sidebar provides some examples.
3. The second student will respond to the offering with thanks. The thank you should be specific and honest, rather than vague and sarcastic. A couple of examples are provided below.
4. Students will switch roles and then switch partners.

Response Examples:

Item:

- Student 1: Hey, look what I got you! It's a broken clock!
- Student 2: Oh wow, thanks! This is great because even a broken clock is right twice a day. Also, I could just put a new battery in it.

Action:

- Student 1: I filled your gas tank for you. E-10, right?
- Student 2: Usually I go 100% gas, but thank you so much! That's really going to save me time later.

/// BAD GIFTS ///

- A pair of dirty socks
- A food or beverage that you don't like
- A wrecked car
- A deflated ball
- The wrong answer to a homework question
- Tickets to see a band you don't know or like
- Signing you up for a marathon
- Volunteering you for a weekend of community service
- A three-legged cat who hates other cats
- A very boring book