

Character Building

Based on the lifetime of observations and reflections on and off the court by the
greatest basketball coach of all time - John Wooden



Coach John Wooden

“Make each day your masterpiece.”



Basketball is one of the world's most popular sports, and John Wooden is widely regarded as the best basketball coach of all time. While coaching at the University of Los Angeles (UCLA), he built one of the greatest sports dynasties humanity has ever seen. He navigated his basketball players to what is likely the greatest championship record in sports history. His teams won NCAA national championships in the following years:

1964, 1965, 1967, 1968, 1969,
1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, and 1975.

Altogether, his teams won ten championships in twelve years. His teams won seven of those championships in a row! Coach Wooden's teams set a standard of supremacy that has not been matched in all of sports.

Coach Wooden's teams shattered several records while on their championship journey. His team had 88 consecutive victories. The previous record was 60. His team had 38 straight NCAA tournament wins. The previous record was only 13. His team won eight consecutive Pacific Conference (Pac-8) titles. Not only did he win several Coach of the Year awards, but he was selected as *Sports Illustrated's* "Sportsman of the Year" in 1972. Upon his retirement, he had a lifetime winning percentage of 80 percent.

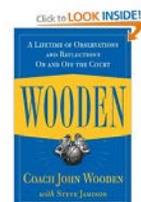
This story isn't yet complete. Before becoming a coach, John Wooden played basketball at Purdue University. He himself was a three-time All American while playing there. He is the only man to ever be inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame as both a player and a coach. The extent of his achievements truly boggles the mind.

Coach Wooden's players say that while he was indeed the greatest basketball coach of all time, what they really learned from him had much more to do with living life than with playing ball. Bill Walton says that Coach Wooden taught about teamwork, personal excellence, discipline, dedication, focus, organization, and leadership. These are all the same tools that you need in the real world. Coach Wooden didn't teach about basketball, he taught about life. Wooden was a "philosopher-coach," and his wisdom and advice on success goes beyond the basketball court. He ultimately teaches us how to be the very best in all areas of life.

Sadly, John Wooden died in 2010 at the age of 99 years old. However, his advice is timeless. The following lessons will take a closer look at what Coach Wooden taught about how to lead a successful life. Topics include:

- ✓ honesty
- ✓ dealing with adversity
- ✓ self-confidence
- ✓ friendship
- ✓ reflection
- ✓ self-evaluation
- ✓ sports and life
- ✓ teamwork
- ✓ character
- ✓ failure vs. mistakes
- ✓ dealing with pressure
- ✓ dealing with worry and anxiety
- ✓ setting goals and paying the price
- ✓ dealing with adversaries
- ✓ peace of mind
- ✓ suggestions for success
- ✓ persistence
- ✓ leadership
- ✓ pyramid of success

Much of the information in the lessons was gleaned from the book *Wooden*, by Steve Jamison. I have included page numbers next to each lesson which correspond with the book, however, the book is not required in order to study the lessons.



The following links provide sources of more information about Coach Wooden:

1. <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/john-wooden-dies-84109.aspx> (3 minute video about Wooden)
2. <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/wooden-quotes-84178.aspx> (Wooden’s famous quotes)
3. http://www.ted.com/talks/john_wooden_on_the_difference_between_winning_and_success.html
(17 minute speech from Coach Wooden about success)
4. http://youtu.be/cZ358_YrFAM (5 minute memorial montage)
5. http://youtu.be/_sgLFGf8UTA (5 minute ESPN “Outside the Lines” video with Wooden’s best players- Part 1)
6. <http://youtu.be/jZjgplaJNCE> (6 minute ESPN “Outside the Lines” video with Wooden’s best players-Part 2)
7. http://youtu.be/o7sCTI83_2o (1 minute Kareem on Wooden video)
8. <http://youtu.be/AN0YfF-e3Ws> (6 minute John Wooden-Sportscentury)
9. <http://www.coachwooden.com/index2.html> (The official John Wooden site with many resources)
10. http://www.uclabruins.com/ViewArticle.dbml?DB_OEM_ID=30500&ATCLID=208274583 (Pyramid of Success)



Lesson 1: “Two Sets of Threes” (Pg. 7)

Coach Wooden’s father, Joshua, passed along these “Two Sets of Threes.” The first set deals with honesty and the second set deals with adversity or hardships. Coach Wooden says that these lists were a compass for him in trying to do the right thing and behave in a proper manner. Navigators use a compass so they know which direction to go. Similarly, these sets of three will guide you on how to make the correct decisions when life presents you with the choice.

Honesty

1. **Never lie.**
2. **Never cheat.**
3. **Never steal.**

Dealing with adversity

1. **Don’t whine**
2. **Don’t complain.**
3. **Don’t make excuses**

- I. How can lying, cheating, and stealing be harmful to a person’s success?

- II. Have you ever had to be honest about something even though it seemed at the time like the hard thing to do?

- III. Is it easier to be honest or to be dishonest?

- IV. Why do you think that many of us tend to whine, complain, or make excuses when things don’t go our way?

- V. Is there anybody who NEVER has to deal with adversity?



Lesson 2: “Seven Things to Do” (Pg. 9)

Coach Wooden’s father gave him this creed when he graduated from school. Coach Wooden says that this list would go on to shape his entire life: his work, his marriage, his goals, his entire philosophy.

1. Be true to yourself.
2. Help others.
3. Make each day your masterpiece.
4. Drink deeply from good books.
5. Make friendship a fine art.
6. Build a shelter against a rainy day.
7. Pray for guidance and count and give thanks for your blessings every day.

I. What does it mean to “be true to yourself?”

II. How can you be helpful to others in your life?

III. What does it mean to “make each day your masterpiece?”

IV. How can reading lead to success?

V. Why is friendship so important?

VI. What does it mean to “build a shelter against a rainy day?”

VII. What are specific things in your life that you are most thankful for?



Lesson 3: "Six of Life's Puzzlers" (Pg. 15)

The following questions are a puzzle because it's so easy for all of us to do these things. However, all of these things are extremely counterproductive and detrimental to success. So why do we do them?

1. Why is it easier to criticize than to compliment?
2. Why is it easier to give others blame than to give them credit?
3. Why is it that so many who are quick to give suggestions find it so difficult to make decisions?
4. Why can't we realize that it only weakens those we want to help when we do things for them that they should do for themselves?
5. Why is it so much easier to allow emotions rather than reason to control our decisions?
6. Why does the person with the least to say usually take the longest to say it?

I. Why is it better to compliment than to criticize?

II. Why is it better to assign credit rather than blame?

III. Is it really helpful to you when people always boss you around? Should you be quick to be bossy?

IV. How does it weaken people when we do things for them that they should do for themselves?

V. Have you ever done something that you regret because you were angry or upset?

VI. Why should we listen and think carefully before we speak?



Lesson 4: “A Parent talks to a Child before the First Game” (Pgs. 23-25)

This is your first game, my child. I hope you win.
I hope you win for your sake, not mine.
Because winning’s nice.
It’s a good feeling.
Like the whole world is yours.
But, it passes, this feeling.
And what lasts is what you’ve learned.

And what you learn about is life.
That’s what sports is all about. Life.
The whole thing is played out in an afternoon.
The happiness of life.
The miseries.
The joys.
The heartbreaks.

There’s no telling what’ll turn up.
There’s no telling whether they’ll toss you out in
the first five minutes or whether you’ll stay for
the long haul.

There’s no telling how you’ll do.
You might be a hero or you might be absolutely
nothing.
There’s just no telling.
Too much depends on chance.
On how the ball bounces.

I’m not talking about the game, my child.
I’m talking about life.
But, it’s life that the game is all about.
Just as I said.

Because every game is life.
And life is a game.
A serious game.
Dead serious.

But, that’s what you do with serious things.
You do your best.
You take what comes.
You take what comes.
And you run with it.

Winning is fun.
Sure.
But winning is not the point.

Wanting to win is the point.
Not giving up is the point.
Never being satisfied with what you’ve done is
the point.
Never letting up is the point.
Never letting anyone down is the point.

Play to win.
Sure.
But lose like a champion.
Because it’s not winning that counts.
What counts is trying.

-Unknown

What is your favorite sport? What life lessons have you learned from this sport?



Lesson 5: “Character” (Pg. 28)

Be more concerned with your character than your reputation. Character is what you really are. Reputation is what people say you are. Character is how you react to things – sensibly, without getting carried away by yourself or your circumstances. A person of character is trustworthy and honest, and for a dollar he or she will give you a dollar. The other kind of person looks for the easy way out. How hard you work at correcting your faults reveals your character.

I. How is your “character” different from your “reputation”?

II. Why should we care more about our character than our reputation?

III. Can we completely control what people think and/or say about us?

IV. Why do we put so much overemphasis on what others may think or say about us?

V. What are the traits of a person with good character?



Lesson 6: “Five More Puzzlers” (Pg. 35)

Once again, all of these things are extremely counterproductive and detrimental to success. So why do we do them?

1. Why is it so difficult to realize that others are more likely to listen to us if first we listen to them?
2. Why is it so much easier to be negative than positive?
3. Why is it so difficult to motivate ourselves when we know that results come only through motivation?
4. Why is so difficult to say, “Thank you,” to someone when those are two of our own favorite words to hear?
5. Why do we dread adversity when we know that facing it is the only way to become stronger, smarter, and better?

- I. Do you like being around people who constantly interrupt and talk about themselves? Why or why not?

- II. Take a moment to list some good things going on in your life right now.

- III. How should you change your outlook regarding schoolwork, chores, and practice?

- IV. List those who you’ve thanked for something specific yesterday or today. Is the list big enough?

- V. Adversity, or hardships, can be difficult. What is a hardship that you are going through right now or have gone through recently? How can you use it to make you stronger, smarter, or better?



Lesson 7: “Five More Puzzlers” (Pg. 42)

Yet again, all of these things are extremely counterproductive and detrimental to success. So why do we do them?

1. Why is it so hard for so many to realize that winners are usually the ones who work harder, work longer, and as a result, perform better?
2. Why are there so many who want to build up the weak by tearing down the strong?
3. Why is it that so many non-attainers are quick to criticize, question, and belittle the attainers?
4. Why is it so hard for us to understand that we cannot antagonize and positively influence at the same time?
5. Why is it so much easier to complain about the things we do not have than to make the most of and appreciate the things we do have?

- I. Generally speaking, do you believe that winners are just lucky, or do you believe that they have worked hard to earn it?

- II. Inequality of outcomes surrounds us. However, is the poor man made any wealthier if the rich man loses all of his money?

- III. Do you tend to dislike people that have more than you do? Why or why not?

- IV. Have you ever had someone who yells and screams at you when you do something incorrectly? How did it make you feel? Did that person losing their temper cause you to improve very much?

- V. All of us tend to focus on what we don't have, but wish we did. Take a moment to reflect upon and list those things that you do have that you are most grateful for.



Lesson 8: “Six Ways to Bring Out the Best in People” (Pg. 44)

- 1. Keep courtesy and consideration for others foremost in your mind, at home and away.**
- 2. Try to have fun without trying to be funny.**
- 3. While you can’t control what happens to you, you can control how you react. Make good manners an automatic reaction.**
- 4. Seek individual opportunities to offer a genuine compliment.**
- 5. Remember that sincerity, optimism, and enthusiasm are more welcome than sarcasm, pessimism, and laziness.**
- 6. Laugh with others, never at them.**

I. What are specific things you can do to be courteous and considerate?

II. What does it mean to “have fun without being funny”?

III. Why is it that reacting with manners shows power, but losing control shows weakness?

IV. Think of at least 3 people who deserve a compliment. List their names below along with why they deserve the compliment.

V. Does it make you feel good when others make fun of you? Why is it so harmful to make fun of others? Will you promise to never make fun of others?



Lesson 9: “Failures vs. Mistakes” (Pg. 55)

Winners make plenty of mistakes, but they have no failures. You never fail if you know in your heart that you did the best of which you are capable. Winners do their best. That is all you can do. Are you going to make mistakes? Of course you will. But it is not failure if you make the full effort.

Coach Wooden frequently reminded his players that, “Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.” If you prepare properly, you may be outscored but *you will never lose*. You always win when you make the full effort to do the best of which you are capable.

There’s only one person on Earth who knows if you made your best effort – you. You can fool everyone else.

- I. What is the only way to truly fail at something?

- II. Do you always fail when you lose?

- III. What is the only way to always win according to Coach Wooden?

- IV. Can you think of a time when you may have lost at something, but you knew that you tried your best?

- V. What does Coach Wooden mean when he says, “Winners make plenty of mistakes, but they have no failures.”?



Lesson 10: “Blaming Others” (Pg. 55)

You can make mistakes, but you aren’t a failure until you start blaming others for those mistakes. When you blame others you are trying to excuse yourself. When you make excuses you can’t properly evaluate yourself. Without proper self-evaluation, failure is inevitable.

- I. How can blaming others for your mistakes or hardships actually hurt your success in the long run?

- II. Why is it so important for winners to constantly self-evaluate?

- III. What do you think the first step is in fixing a mistake?

- IV. What area(s) in your life are you going to take control over and work hard to get better at?



Lesson 11: “The Opinion of Others” (Pg. 58)

Do not become too concerned about what others may think of you. Be very concerned about what you think of yourself.

Too often, we care more about a stranger’s opinion of us than our own.

Your opinion of yourself begins on the inside with your character. What do you believe in, and are you willing to stand up for it despite what others may think or say?

This is what Coach Wooden meant when he said, “Be true to yourself.” This comes first, then the opinion of others.

- I. How do you think you need to live your life in such a way that you are happy with who you are?

- II. What is your best quality?

- III. What are some negative ways that you can think of in which kids do things just to win the approval of their peers?

- IV. Have you ever been pressured into doing something that you knew was wrong, but you did it anyway just to win the approval of your so-called friends? How did it make you feel?

- V. How can caving in to peer pressure hurt your own personal success?



Lesson 12: “Pressure” (Pg. 58)

The only pressure that amounts to a hill of beans is the pressure *you* put on yourself. If you’re trying to live up to expectations put on you by the media, parents, fans, peers, your employer, or whatever else there may be, it’s going to affect you adversely because it brings on worry and anxiety. This is a tendency of people who choke under pressure. They’re thinking of living up to the expectations of everybody else instead of just doing their job the best they can.

- I. Who’s the only person that *should* be putting pressure on you?

- II. Are you putting enough pressure on yourself? Are you putting too much pressure on yourself?

- III. How can worry and anxiety be harmful to success?

- IV. Do you think that successful athletes worry about what the millions of fans may think about them?

- V. How can you avoid worry and anxiety in high pressure situations?



Lesson 13: “Hopes and Dreams” (Pg. 63)

Having a dream is often like hoping for something. It’s easy to let our dreams and our hopes get away from reality.

Youngsters are told, “Think big. Anything is possible.” I would never go that strong. I want them to think *positively*, but when you think big you often start thinking too big, and I believe that can be very dangerous.

Wanting an unattainable goal will eventually produce a feeling of “What’s the use?” That feeling can carry over into other areas. This is bad.

A youngster may dream of being seven feet tall. Hoping for something of that nature is not productive. We should keep our dreams within the realm of possibility – difficult but possible – and make every effort to achieve them.

Mix idealism with realism and add hard work. This will often bring much more than you could ever hope for.

- I. Coach Wooden says that thinking too big can actually hinder success. What are a few examples of thinking too big?

- II. What positive goals can you set for the next few years which, if accomplished, will set your life on a successful path?

- a. academic goals

- b. sports goals

- c. career goals

- d. religious/family/life goals



Lesson 14: “Paying the Price” (Pg. 64)

People usually know what they should do to get what they want. They just won’t do it. They won’t pay the price. Understand there is a price to be paid for achieving anything of significance. You must be willing to pay the price.

In Lesson 13, you should have listed specific goals which are difficult yet possible. Here in Lesson 14, Coach Wooden has reminded us that achieving these goals won’t simply happen by magic. Achieving any worthwhile, difficult goal requires hard work and sacrifice. Often times the price we pay in order to achieve a goal is time, money, work, and lost opportunities. In the space below, take the goals you listed in the previous activity and determine what price you will need to pay in order to turn those goals into reality.

Goals	Price to be Paid



Lesson 15: “The Worthy Opponent” (Pg. 65)

Can there be any great enjoyment or satisfaction in doing what everybody else can do? What joy can be derived in sports from overcoming someone who is not as capable as you are? But there is great joy and satisfaction in competing against an opponent who forces you to dig deep and produce your best. That is the only way to get real joy out of the competition itself. The worthy opponent brings out the very best in you. This is thrilling.

- I. Describe an occasion in which you easily achieved a simple goal with little effort. It may be any goal: sports, academic, work, etc. Did you really feel any great sense of accomplishment by achieving such a simple goal? Is it something that you are still truly proud of?

- II. Describe an occasion in which you accomplished something which took all of your effort and concentration. Were there times when you doubted yourself while in the pursuit of the goal? How did you feel upon the grand achievement of such a hard-fought goal?

- III. During any competition, we tend to dislike or hate our opponent. However, a worthy opponent can actually make us stronger. How might a worthy opponent actually be more beneficial to us than a weak opponent? Keep in mind that the “opponent” isn’t just a person; it can be any obstacle which stands in your way of the prize. It may even be a classmate that you compete with for top grades.



Lesson 16: “Peace of Mind” (Pg. 67)

Without peace of mind, what do you have? Many people go through life unhappy with what they have, regardless of how much they have. No matter how much they accumulate, they never achieve peace of mind because they want more. It never ends for them and they are forever unhappy. Usually it’s a result of comparing themselves to others, of trying to keep up with the Joneses.

Did I find peace of mind by winning a national championship in basketball in 1964? Then a second, a third, a fourth, and so on? No. I had my peace of mind as a coach long before a national championship was ever won.

- I. Reflect upon your life and try to remember a time that you got something that you really wanted. It might be a thing, or a grade, or a pet, or a victory, etc. How long did this keep you truly happy? Did you find that the happiness and satisfaction wore off after a while, and you began to want even more?

- II. If money, material possessions, and great victories won’t bring you peace of mind, then what will? What is the secret to a person being truly happy and at peace?

- III. How might comparing yourself to others cause you to be dissatisfied and unhappy?

- IV. True happiness and peace of mind is lasting, not temporary. Successful people are at peace regardless of life’s circumstances. Are you happy and at peace? What is the biggest challenge to your happiness right now? What can you do about it?



Lesson 17: “Eight Suggestions for Succeeding” (Pg. 72)

If the most successful coach in the world is going to give us his eight suggestions for succeeding, we should probably examine them very carefully and figure out how to apply them to our life.

1. **Fear no opponent. *Respect* every opponent.**
2. **Remember, it’s the perfection of the smallest details that make big things happen.**
3. **Keep in mind that hustle makes up for many a mistake.**
4. **Be more interested in character than reputation.**
5. **Be quick, but don’t hurry.**
6. **Understand that the harder you work, the more luck you will have.**
7. **Know that valid self-analysis is crucial for improvement.**
8. **Remember that there is no substitute for hard work and careful planning. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.**

- I. Carefully read and copy your favorite suggestion from the list above. Why do you like this suggestion?

- II. An oxymoron is a statement which seems to contradict itself, such as *jumbo shrimp*. Suggestion #5 seems like an oxymoron, but Coach Wooden is famous for repeating this frequently. How can you be quick without hurrying?

- III. Sometimes it seems like life is all about luck. Some people just seem to be luckier than others. However, Coach tells us that hard work creates good luck. Why do you think that this is so?

- IV. According to Coach Wooden, what do we need to do in order to make big things happen? List some small things that you will work on perfecting within the next 10 days in order to make something big happen.

- V. What does Coach mean when he says, “Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.”?



Lesson 18: “Winners Make the Most Mistakes” (Pg. 73)

“The team that makes the most mistakes will probably win.” That may sound a bit odd, but there is a great deal of truth in it. The *doer* makes mistakes. Mistakes come from doing, but so does success. The individual who is mistake-free is also probably sitting around doing nothing. And that’s a very big mistake.

- I. The above statement sounds like another oxymoron. After examining the above statement, explain in your words why it is that winners make the most mistakes.

- II. Part of human nature is a fear of failure. Nobody likes to fail. If we let this fear become too big, the fear itself can actually harm our success. Explain why you think this is so.

- III. Which person will be more successful in the long run; the person who tries new things and makes many mistakes or the person who tries nothing and makes no mistakes? Why?

- IV. Is there something in your life right now that you’ve avoided trying because you are afraid you’ll make too many mistakes and fail?

- V. What is the best way to overcome your fear of making mistakes? What mindset would a successful person have about mistakes?



Lesson 19: “All-Time Best Starting Five” (Pgs. 74-75)

In the game of basketball, each team has five starting players. Great teams also have a good sixth player which can be substituted into the game to give other players a rest for a bit. Coach Wooden uses the imagery of a basketball team to describe six traits successful people choose to develop in life in general.

- 1. **Industriousness**
 - 2. **Enthusiasm**
 - 3. **Condition (mental, moral, and physical)**
 - 4. **Fundamentals**
 - 5. **Team spirit**
- A good 6th player on the bench is attention to details.**

I. Find the meaning of the word *industrious* and explain why successful people are industrious.

II. Find the meaning of the word *enthusiasm* and explain why successful people have enthusiasm.

III. Find the meaning of the word *condition* and explain why successful people focus on their conditioning.

IV. Find the meaning of the word *fundamentals* and explain why successful people have good fundamentals.

V. What is *team spirit* and why is it important for success?

VI. Why do you think that *attention to details* is an important element of success?



Lesson 20: “Nine Promises That Can Bring Happiness” (Pgs. 79-80)

Lesson 16 was about how happiness and peace of mind will have a large impact upon your success. Here, Coach Wooden shares nine promises you need to implement in order to bring happiness. While they might sound easy at first, some may actually be quite difficult.

1. Promise yourself that you will talk health, happiness, and prosperity as often as possible.
2. Promise yourself to make all your friends know there is something in them that is special and that you value.
3. Promise to think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best in yourself and others.
4. Promise to be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
5. Promise yourself to be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
6. Promise to forget the mistakes of the past and press on to greater achievements in the future.
7. Promise to wear a cheerful appearance at all times and give every person you meet a smile.
8. Promise to give so much time to improving yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
9. Promise to be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit trouble to press on you.

I. Which of these promises do you think will be the easiest to follow? Why?

II. Which of these promises do you think will be the hardest to follow? Why?

III. Which promise(s) stand out to you as particularly relevant to your life?

IV. Which promise will you begin implementing today in order to bring happiness and success?



Lesson 21: “Talent” (Pg. 83)

Many athletes have tremendous God-given gifts, but they don’t focus on the development of those gifts. Who are these individuals? You’ve never heard of them – and you never will. It’s true in sports and it’s true everywhere in life. Hard work is the difference. Very hard work.

- I. This might be one of Coach Wooden’s scariest observations. There are many people in this world who will never amount to anything because they chose not to develop their special gifts and abilities. The first step in developing a gift or ability is to 1) understand that you DO have special gifts/abilities and 2) recognize what specific special gifts/abilities you may have. If you don’t know what your gifts are, how can you choose to develop them? What are some special gifts or abilities that you possess?

- II. How are you working to develop your gifts/abilities that you listed above?

- III. What additional steps could you take in order to further develop your gifts/abilities?



Lesson 22: “Act Quickly – But Don’t Hurry” (Pg. 94)

When you hurry, you tend to make mistakes. On the other hand, if you can’t execute quickly, you may be too late to accomplish your task. It’s a delicate but crucial balance.

- I. We also came across this statement in lesson 17. Try to explain what it means to act quickly without hurrying.

- II. Why is it important to act quickly in sports?

- III. Why might it be important to act quickly (but not hurry) in real life?

- IV. Can you recall a life situation where you unexpectedly did better when you actually slowed down just a little bit?

- V. How can hurrying too much hurt your success?



Lesson 23: “Adversity Makes You Stronger” (Pg. 98)

Most all good things come through adversity. There’s a poem that says:

Looking back it seems to me,
All the grief that had to be
Left me when the pain was o’er
Stronger than I was before.

- *Unknown*

We get stronger when we test ourselves. Adversity can make us better. We must be challenged to improve, and adversity is the challenger.

- I. Define adversity.

- II. Do you believe all people face adversity or just some of us?

- III. Winners view adversity in a different way than whiners do. How do you think winners view adversity?
How do whiners view adversity?

- IV. Reflecting upon your life, what was a time of adversity which seemed really difficult at the time, but now you realize that it has made you stronger?

- V. What or who has helped you deal with adversity and get through difficult times in the past?



Lesson 24: “Persistence Is Stronger than Failure” (Pg. 101)

Abraham Lincoln is acknowledged as one of America’s greatest presidents. Here is a brief summary of his career:

Failed in business	1831
Defeated for legislature	1832
Failed in business again	1833
Elected to legislature	1834
Sweetheart died	1835
Had nervous breakdown	1836
Defeated for speaker	1838
Defeated for elector	1840
Defeated for congressional nomination	1843
Elected to Congress	1846
Defeated for Congress	1848
Defeated for Senate	1855
Defeated for Vice President	1856
Defeated for Senate	1859
Elected President of the United States	1860

Another president, Calvin Coolidge, described it very well:

“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.”

- I. Lesson 18 was about how winners make the most mistakes. How does Abraham Lincoln prove this statement to be true?

- II. What qualities did Calvin Coolidge say were more important than talent, genius, and education?

- III. What was a failure that you made in the past that was really hard for you to get over at the time?

- IV. Now that you look back, have you been able to move beyond past failures?



Lesson 25: “Always Be Progressing” (Pg. 102)

You must never stand still. You’re either moving upward a little bit or you’re moving the other way. You can’t expect to go upward too quickly, but you can sure go down very quickly. The slide down happens in a hurry. Progress comes slowly but steadily if you are patient and prepare diligently.

- I. According to Coach Wooden, how is progress usually different than regress?

- II. You’ll find that many things in this world will try to promise “instant progress”. For example, you’ll encounter fad diets, get rich quick schemes, and sporting equipment promising to make you instantly better. Why do you think so many people fall for these schemes which are full of empty promises?

- III. Why might it be very unhealthy to expect results and progress to come too quickly?

- IV. According to Coach Wooden, how do successful people make sure that they are progressing?



Coach Wooden's Favorite Maxims:

- Happiness begins where selfishness ends.
- Earn the right to be proud and confident.
- The best way to improve the team is to improve ourselves.
- Big things are accomplished only through the perfection of minor details.
- Discipline yourself and others won't need to.
- Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there.
- I will get ready and then, perhaps, my chance will come.
- If I am through learning, I am through.
- If you do not have the time to do it right, when will you find the time to do it over?
- The smallest good deed is better than the best intention.
- The man who is afraid to risk failure seldom has to face success.
- Don't let yesterday take up too much of today.
- Time spent getting even would be better spent trying to get ahead.
- It is what you learn after you know it all that counts.
- Consider the rights of others before your own feelings, and the feelings of others before your own rights.
- There is nothing stronger than gentleness.
- You discipline those under your supervision to correct, to help, to improve – not to punish.
- Goals achieved with little effort are seldom worthwhile or lasting.
- Make sure the team members know they're working with you, not for you.
- Be most interested in finding the best way, not in having your own way.
- What is right is more important than who is right.
- As long as you try your best, you are never a failure. That is, unless you blame others.
- Tell the truth. That way you don't have to remember a story.
- Don't let making a living prevent you from making a life.
- If I were ever prosecuted for my religion, I truly hope there would be enough evidence to convict me.
- Although there is no progress without change, not all change is progress.
- If we magnified blessings as much as we magnified disappointments, we would all be much happier.
- The best thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.
- The worst thing you can do for those you love is the things they could and should do for themselves. (Abraham Lincoln)
- Do not permit what you cannot do to interfere with what you can do.
- Love is the greatest of all words in our language.
- Much can be accomplished by teamwork when no one is concerned about who gets credit.
- Never make excuses. Your friends don't need them and your foes won't believe them.
- Never be disagreeable just because you disagree.
- Be slow to criticize and quick to commend.
- Be more concerned about what you can do for others than what others can do for you. You'll be surprised at the results.
- The more concerned we become over the things we can't control, the less we will do with the things we can control.
- Don't permit fear of failure to prevent effort. We are all imperfect and will fail on occasions, but fear of failure is the greatest failure of all.
- Being average means you are as close to the bottom as you are the top.
- The time to make friends is before you need them.



- Nothing can give you greater joy than doing something for another.
- You cannot live a perfect day without doing something for another without thought of something in return.
- Do not mistake activity for achievement.
- You can do more good by being good than any other way.
- Forget favors given; remember those received.
- Make each day your masterpiece.
- Make friendship a fine art.
- Treat all people with dignity and respect.
- Acquire peace of mind by making the effort to become the best of which you are capable.



WOODEN ON LEADERSHIP™

THE ART OF SUCCESS

PYRAMID OF SUCCESS

"Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best of which you are capable."

John Wooden, Head Coach

FAITH

- COMPETITIVE GREATNESS**: "Perform at your best when your best is required. Your best is required each day."
- POISE**: "Be yourself. Don't be thrown off by events whether good or bad."
- CONFIDENCE**: "The strongest steel is well-founded self-belief. It is earned, not given."

PATIENCE

- SKILL**: "What a leader learns after you've learned it all counts most of all."
- TEAM SPIRIT**: "The star of the team is the team. 'We' supersedes 'me.'"
- INITIATIVE**: "Make a decision! Failure to act is often the biggest failure of all."
- INTENTNESS**: "Stay the course. When thwarted try again; harder, smarter, persevere relentlessly."

SUCCESS

- SELF-CONTROL**: "Control of your organization begins with control of yourself. Be disciplined."
- INDUSTRIOUSNESS**: "Success travels in the company of very hard work. There is no trick, no easy way."
- FRIENDSHIP**: "Strive to build a team filled with camaraderie and respect: comrades-in-arms."
- ALERTNESS**: "Constantly be aware and observing. Always seek to improve yourself and the team."
- LOYALTY**: "Be true to yourself. Be true to those you lead."
- COOPERATION**: "Have utmost concern for what's right rather than who's right."
- ENTHUSIASM**: "Your energy and enjoyment drive and dedication will stimulate and greatly inspire others."

12 LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

1. Good Values Attract Good People
2. Love Is The Most Powerful Four-Letter Word
3. Call Yourself A Teacher
4. Emotion Is Your Enemy
5. It Takes 10 Hands To Make A Basket
6. Little Things Make Big Things Happen
7. Make Each Day Your Masterpiece
8. The Carrot Is Mightier Than A Stick
9. Make Greatness Attainable By All
10. Seek Significant Change
11. Don't Look At The Scoreboard
12. Adversity Is Your Asset

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