

ADAPTABILITY

“We do what we do.” I used to hear that everyday when I was coaching football. The coach I worked for always said it. He meant that we were going to stay with what we were doing regardless if it was good for the team or not. Unfortunately, it didn’t always work and we lost some games just because we were stubborn. How can we adapt to be a better team?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

As a point guard at West Point, I had the privilege of playing for the legendary Bob Knight, a tough coach and probably the best of all time. There was one particular drill, called “Zig Zag,” that we did in practice every single day. It was a defensive drill that was difficult and physically exhausting. Though it’s a great and effective drill, my teammates and I dreaded it, but we always knew it was coming. Five years later, I was able to reunite with Coach Knight as a graduate assistant coach at Indiana for the 1974-75 season. At our very first practice of the season, I was so excited just to be there. But I couldn’t help but notice that we did not do the “Zig Zag” drill. Surely we would do the drill tomorrow. The next day we had a great practice, but again, no “Zig Zag.” That day, Coach Knight seemed like he was in a pretty good mood and I was feeling sure of myself. “Coach,” I said, to get his attention. “What?” he responded. “Well, at Army, we did the ‘Zig Zag’ drill every single day, often multiple times. How come we haven’t done it with this team?” Coach Knight walked calmly over to me, put his hand on my shoulder, and said, “Michael, there is a big difference between you and Quinn Buckner.” He was right. Drills like “Zig Zag” that are a necessity for some teams, might not be appropriate for others. You have to adapt what you do based on who you are. From Coach Knight, I learned passion, commitment, persistence, and intensity. But I also learned adaptability.

1. Why is something that is good for one person, not always good for another?

2. What actions show that you are open to change?

3. How can being a team that is adaptable help us be successful?

ADVERSITY

In the movie “Finding Nemo,” Nemo’s dad is very overprotective of him. He tries to eliminate any form of adversity from him. In one line of the movie, he says that he doesn’t want anything bad to happen to him. His friend Dorie shows him that if nothing bad ever happened to him, nothing would ever happen to him. The majority of the things that happen in this life aren’t good ones, but life is measured by how you react to those things. How can we overcome adversity in this program?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

What I believe separates good teams and individuals from great ones is the manner in which they handle adversity. Do you let it beat you or do you use it to make you better? Adversity can teach you more about yourself than any success, and overcoming an obstacle can sometimes feel even better than achieving an easy victory. One of the greatest comments I ever heard about adversity came from the current Duke University president, Richard Brodhead. He said to me, “You outlive your darkest day.” In other words, failure can never be your destination. In adverse circumstances, you must remind yourself that this day is not your last. In the summer of 2003, after doing a speaking engagement in Colorado Springs, I heard on television the frightening news that my former Duke point guard Jason Williams had been in a horrific motorcycle accident. The initial prognosis was that he had a chance of losing his leg and never being able to walk again. One thing that had always blown me away about Jason is that he was never afraid to make mistakes. In the 2001 National Championship game, Jason had hit only one three-pointer in ten attempts, but going into the last few minutes of the game, I called a play for him to shoot another three. He was not afraid to take that next shot. I have always known that Jason has the heart of a champion and with him it is best to let him follow his instincts. Winners expect to win. And Jason expects that he will come out a champion again.

1. What adversity have you faced in your life?

2. What adversity do you foresee us facing as a team this year?

3. How can we help each other to become better because of it?

BELIEF

As a kid, I was certain that Santa Claus was real. I believed in his existence, so much so, that I did all the things that kids do. Cookies, going to bed early, etc. were part of the Christmas routine. I wish that I had the same fire of belief in other aspects of my life today. What if we believed in each other the way we used to believe in Santa?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

In all forms of leadership, whether you are a coach, a CEO, or a parent, there are four words that, when said, can bring out the best in your team, your employees, and your family. “I believe in you.” Those four words can mean the difference between a fear of failure and the courage to try. When someone believes in you, it helps you overcome the anxiety that comes as a result of feeling alone. Belief raises your confidence level and allows you to try new things that are impossible to do by yourself. On a team or family, belief makes each individual stronger and also fortifies the group as a whole. You know that there is somebody there to catch you if you fall, and someone to give you that extra push when you need it to overcome an obstacle. When I think about belief, the first person that comes to mind is Johnny Dawkins. Johnny Dawkins was a highly touted high school standout from Washington D.C. Recruiting in those days was more difficult for me because I had no resume to show. I didn’t have a winning record and we had not won any championships. So, in recruiting Johnny Dawkins, who was being pursued by all of the top schools, I was really asking him to believe in me, even though I didn’t have any tangible reasons to offer as to why he should. I needed someone to believe in me. Johnny did that and I am so thankful that he did.

1. Who do you believe in the most? Why?

2. What shows someone that you believe in them?

3. What steps do we need to take to believe in each other as a team?

CARE

Caring for someone can mean many different things. When my kids were babies, my wife and I took care of their every need. We also care about them and genuinely want what is best in their lives. On this team, we must care for each other in the same ways. Creating an atmosphere in which each person in this program cares for others and knows that they are cared for is what we are trying to achieve here.

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

When you care about someone or something you show genuine concern for that person or thing, in good times and bad. In the development of our basketball teams, care is as crucial an aspect as any. You want to care about one another as individuals, have empathy and compassion. And you want to care about each other’s performances on the court. Care is so important to a team because, if you want to change limits, there are going to be times when members of the team make mistakes. When you make a mistake, and you know it, you become very vulnerable. The immediate responses of those on your team, those you trust the most, will determine how you perceive your mistake. After our 1999 season in which we played in the National Championship game, I was at home recuperating from hip replacement surgery. From a team that was one of the best in the nation and won 37 games, we now had only three veteran players returning. In many ways, I began to feel down and alone. The team captains for the next year came to visit me. They were asking how I was doing after my operation but also how I was doing in coping with the loss of so much of the team. My answer was a completely honest one. “I am okay now that you guys are here.” I looked at them and said that we were going to be good and then asked them, “Do you believe it?” The response I received from Chris Carawell is one of the greatest things a player has ever said to me. He said, “Coach, if you say it, I believe it.” After a difficult time for me and the Duke program, those three players showed me that they truly cared.

1. Why is it important to care about one another?

2. How do you show someone that you care?

3. What makes you care about this team?

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

This is probably the hardest lesson for any group or team to achieve. Those who master this concept can never fail, but why is it so hard to attain? My Dad used to tell us as we got off of the bus for a game, “You just play and all of the mistakes are mine.” What he was trying to get across was that if you worry about doing something wrong, you hold back a little bit, collective responsibility allows you to know that all your mistakes and victories are shared. How can we gain this thought?

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We win and we lose together. The best way that I can describe collective responsibility is to point to the scoreboard. At any point in the game, when you look up there, there is no one individual’s name. Instead it shows the team name. This means that in no way does a single individual win or lose a game. Each game, and indeed each moment within a game, is the responsibility of the entire team. On a team that wins and loses together, there is no such thing as blame. Blame is a destructive force within a group and has no place in the locker room of a true team. Just imagine: what could you do if you believed you could not fail? Being on a team that embraces collective responsibility puts you in that position. You, individually, cannot fail. J.J. Redick was able to pass the lesson of collective responsibility on to one of the younger members of our team. He embraced being part of a team and, though he was very hard on himself, he knew the importance of collective responsibility. Our first loss of the season was to Georgetown in late January by a narrow three-point margin. With six and a half seconds left on the clock, we had a chance to tie, but our freshman point guard, Greg Paulus, dribbled into a bad situation and was unable to get the ball to J.J. for a shot. When the buzzer sounded, J.J. walked off the court with his arm around Greg. “I told him it’s okay,” he said afterward. “We win together, we lose together.”

1. Why should blame be considered a bad word in our program?

2. What would happen if we never used the word “I” and replaced it with “we”?

3. What does it mean for you to be a member of this program?

COMMITMENT

When I think of commitment, all I have to do is look down at my hand and see the ring that my wife gave me on our wedding day. In our lives we agree to do a lot of things and after those things become boring, we drop them. Commitment means sticking with something even after the “new” has worn off. How can we be committed to each other as a team?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

Aside from the vows I took with my wife thirty-seven years ago, the most life-altering commitment of my life came from my first athletic director at Duke, Tom Butters. In 2004, representatives from the Los Angeles Lakers came into my living room and offered me \$40 million to become their coach. In the days that followed, my family and I did our best to evaluate who we were and where we were going. In that time of self-analysis, I called my former AD. When it comes time to make important decisions, I always seek Tom’s advice. His commitment to me, even after my first three seasons with a 38-47 record, is why I was able to get things going at Duke. I never doubted his support. And because he was committed to me and never doubted me, I never doubted me. His commitment made me better because I was never afraid of losing my job. It is easy to be committed to someone or something during good times, because when you are winning, your commitment is never challenged. But loyalty and dedication during more difficult times can be tough. Tom never waived, and when commitment doesn’t waiver, that’s when you have the greatest chance of winning. Tom gave me the same advice on that summer day in 2004 that he always had. He told me to be myself, to make sure that I continue to do what I love, and to follow my instincts.

1. Why is it easy to be committed when things are good?

2. What are you most committed to right now?

3. What actions show that you are committed to this team?

COMMUNICATION

We communicate everyday in many different ways. Talking, texting, gesturing, even the way that we move can communicate. We also communicate differently with different people. For example, I talk differently to my wife than I do to my kids. How can we communicate better as a team?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

Effective teamwork begins and ends with communication. The word, of course, means to convey a message. On the basketball court, there is very little time to get your message across. In the heat of a game, a basketball team speaks a different language; it is not a language based on long sentences, but it is a language nonetheless. When you talk, your body reacts, your hands get ready, and your mind becomes prepared to respond, even under pressure. On our Duke Basketball teams, I never want to be the only communicator. In order for a message to get across, it must be echoed by every member of the group. I remember a few years ago I gave my team a motivational speech in our locker room before practice. At the time, I thought it was a great speech, one that would surely inspire an energetic and passionate practice. So as we left the locker room to take the court, I was proud of myself. But as we stepped onto the court, there was no pat on the back from my assistants or surge of excitement from the team. I asked my assistants, searching for a compliment, “How do you think it went?” Instead of the praise I had expected, my assistant Steve Wojchiechowski said to me, “Coach, I don’t think they understood anything you said.” At first I was angry with that response because it was not what I expected. However, it was honest and made me realize that my message did not get across to my team.

1. How do we talk, how do we listen?

2. Why is it important to talk/listen to each other?

3. List some ways to include communication on our team.

COURAGE

I coached with a man in San Angelo named Branden Clark. During our time there he became diagnosed with cancer of the stomach. At the time, Branden was around 500lbs. He took treatment for 3 years and only missed work on days that he had to fly to Houston for treatment. When I attended his funeral last year, he weighed around 95lbs, but he had still attended work everyday. I wish I had the same courage that Branden had; how do we take that type of courage on the court with us?

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I often share with my Duke Basketball teams a Winston Churchill quote: “Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees all the others.” In other words, you can possess countless good qualities as an individual, but if you don’t have the courage to proceed, you may never see those qualities come to fruition. It takes courage to put what you believe to be the best of you on the line, to test it, and to see how far it takes you. Courage means daring to do what you imagine. For the most part, people do not attempt things because they fear the consequences. But the greatest consequence of all comes in not attempting to do the things that you believe you can. Having courage means boldly pursuing your dreams, no matter what the consequences may be. The most courageous player I ever coached was Bobby Hurley. In the 1991 NCAA semifinal game against UNLV, we were a considerable underdog. With under two and a half minutes remaining, UNLV jumped to a five-point lead and it seemed the momentum was going their way. I recognized that UNLV had switched from a man-to-man defense to a zone. Just as I got to my feet, Bobby took a three-point shot and knocked it down. The following year, in the national semifinal game, Bobby hit four three-point shots in the first half to keep us within striking distance of Indiana. Courage is the capacity to confront what can be imagined. As President John F. Kennedy once said, “Courage is an opportunity that sooner or later is presented to all of us.”

1. Describe what it looks like to be courageous.

2. How can you help someone to be courageous?

3. Why is so important for us to have courage as a team?

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

There are certain people who just handle chaos well. Policemen, firemen, EMT's all have to be good at crisis management, it's part of their jobs. But is it just something that you are born with, or can it be learned? During every season that I have been a part of, there is a moment of crisis. The thing that made the good teams good and the bad teams bad was how they handled that moment. What can we do to push through our moment of crisis?

From "Beyond Basketball" by Coach K.

Crises are not handled in the instant they occur but are prepared for in all of the moments that you and your team spend leading up to that one. You prepare for the crisis well ahead of time by establishing trusting relationships among all members of your team. Crisis causes people to think and act as individuals rather than as part of a team. In difficult situations, it is human nature to feel alone, and you may start worrying about your personal plight as opposed to the unit as a whole. When you truly trust and rely on one another, you find strength in your unity and can face challenges with the courage and confidence that comes with knowing you are not in it alone. One of the great basketball stories during my time at Duke was the 1992 NCAA regional championship game against the University of Kentucky. Many still refer to it as the greatest college basketball game ever played. With a trip to the Final Four on the line, I and my team found ourselves in overtime, down by one point with 2.1 seconds remaining on the clock. We had possession of the ball on one end of the court and had to score on the opposite basket, 94 feet away. It all went according to plan. Grant Hill threw the ball to Christian Laettner, as promised, and Christian caught the ball, dribbled once, turned around, and took our team's last shot. Pandemonium. A lot of people say that we were lucky that day. I say, luck favors those who have spent their preparation time building effective systems of communication and trust in one another.

1. Describe how you have acted previously in a moment of crisis in your life.

2. Why do we become selfish in a moment of crisis?

3. What are we doing now to prepare for our crisis?

CULTURE

When I think of culture, I automatically think of the Brownwood football program. I have seen first hand many times where Brownwood was by far the lesser team, but came out of the game victorious. The only way that I can describe it to people is they don't know how to lose. It is their culture. Where most teams try to find a way to win, Brownwood football teams already know that they are going to win. And most of the time, they do. What culture are we creating here?

From "Beyond Basketball" by Coach K.

Developing a culture means having a tradition that maintains the standards you want to define your program. Culture is established by the people who compose your team and is carried on through those people. In other words, culture can only exist through the relationships among the people who make up your group. Culture is a continuum. This means that it is not merely a matter of creating a culture, but perpetuating it. Those who have been in the organization for the greatest amount of time pass on the values and the message of the organization to those who are just entering. Culture is passing on the values and teaching the standards that you have learned as an upper-classman to the young players on the team. I can remember many practices during the 1986 season when my starting backcourt of Johnny Dawkins and Tommy Amaker would completely dominate our second team. Quin Snyder was a freshman on that second unit and would leave a number of practices feeling down and defeated. Johnny and Tommy would take Quin off to the side and tell him about when they had gone through those experiences as well. They reminded Quin to work hard and keep listening to the coaching staff and that eventually it would all work out. Quin became a starter the next year and a captain on the 1989 Final Four team.

1. What is the difference in a winning and losing culture?

2. What do you think the culture of this program is right now?

3. What do you want the culture to be like when you leave here?

DEPENDABILITY

Do what you say you are going to do when you say you are going to do it. Tongue twister isn't it. Those words still ring in my head today after hearing them over and over when I got in trouble with my parents. They wanted me to be dependable; something that is a hard lesson for a teenager. I always tried to be dependable, but when something better came up, I was off to do that. How can we be dependable to each other on this team?

From "Beyond Basketball" by Coach K.

Dependability is the ability to be relied upon. To always be there and do your best. I have always admired Cal Ripken. Playing in a record 2,632 straight games, he earned a reputation as baseball's "Iron Man." What that means to me is that Cal played when he was sick, injured, tired: times when many other people would not have. I try to encourage in my teams the importance of showing up and being at your best each and every day. Being able to depend on one another gives us the greatest chance of collectively achieving our goals. My brother, Bill Krzyzewski, is the Iron Man of our family. He retired recently as a captain in the Chicago Fire Department, after thirty-seven years of service. In all of those thirty-seven years, my brother never missed one day of work. Dependability is not only about being there physically, but being there at your best. It is about loyalty and commitment, about being someone on whom your teammates can count. You don't have to have a master's degree to teach dependability; you teach it by example. I learned it from Bill.

1. Who is someone in your life that you depend on the most and why?

2. What actions show to others that you are dependable?

3. What would happen if we could depend on every teammate on this team?

ENTHUSIASM

At the end of everyday, no matter how good or bad, I tell myself that I get paid to coach basketball. In the grand scheme of things, it cracks me up that someone actually pays me to do what I love so much. Whatever you do in life, do what you love to do and enjoy doing it. How can we have enthusiasm about our program?

From "Beyond Basketball" by Coach K.

Enthusiasm is a great interest or excitement. When you are enthusiastic, you are a catalyst to those around you. Your unabashed love and emotion for what you are doing is contagious. Chris Collins was the embodiment of enthusiasm. He loved to get the crowd into the game; he loved to slap the floor; he loved to get excited. Quite simply, he loved to play basketball. But my favorite part about Chris's enthusiasm is that it was not singular. It was plural. He would be even more excited about a great play made by a teammate than one he made himself. Chris was part of our Duke teams during a very difficult stretch, one in which we went from having a 28-6 season in 1994 to being 13-18 the following year. Chris Collins's undying enthusiasm set the program back on the right path. Despite the difficult times, Chris never allowed his spirit to be defeated, and as a result he was the catalyst for getting the Duke program back on the path to success. Being excited about playing and being part of a team is easy to do when you are winning 30 games a year and contending for championships. But it becomes more difficult when you are losing, when fans and the media are taking shots at you, and when it feels as if nothing is working. Chris's enthusiasm was particularly impressive because he showed it at a very high level even when it was difficult to do so.

1. Why is enthusiasm contagious?

2. What actions show enthusiasm?

3. How can we make each other more enthused about this program?

EXCELLENCE

Excellence means different things to different people. Most people associate it with perfection, but it only means perfection if that is your standard. Whatever your standard is, you achieve excellence when you meet that standard on a daily basis. Eventually, excellence is not something you strive for, excellence becomes your standard. What can we do to make it our standard?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

When I sign autographs for kids, I almost always put the same message; “Always try your best.” If they get nothing else from meeting me, I want them to remember these words. Excellence is not measured the same way for everyone. Define your own success and failure; only you know whether or not you have given your all. The persistent pursuit of excellence determines winners, not the score of the game. To be excellent, you must be yourself. Do the very best that you can do. In giving your best everyday, improvement will come naturally. Giving your all makes you better; it’s that simple. In the context of a team, there are many times when you are not the best individual on the team in a particular activity. Each person can be excellent, but one person may have more ability or expertise at a given time and in a given situation. In 1998, Elton Brand and Shane Battier were both freshmen and starters for us at Duke. Elton became one of the best players in the country his first year and was National Player of the Year the next. Shane was not at that level of play immediately, but still played excellent basketball. Shane averaged only 9 points a game as a sophomore far fewer than Elton’s 17. However, he always had a high opinion of his accomplishments and he was never jealous. Elton left Duke before his junior year and was the number one pick in the NBA draft. Shane stayed and became an all-conference player, and in his senior year was the National Player of the Year, just like Elton had been. They both ran different races, and achieved equal excellence.

1. Describe the difference between excellence and perfection.

2. Why does excellence mean different things for different people?

3. What does excellence mean in our program?

FAILURE

Most people see failure as an ending point, but I believe that it is truly a starting point. Most of the time, you must first fail before you can succeed. I am reminded of an old Michael Jordan commercial where he tells how many times he missed game winning shots. Of course, he is regarded as the greatest clutch shot maker of all time and possibly the greatest of all time, but he knew that missing those shots and failing was not the end, only the beginning. How do we view failure?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

Winning does not define who I am. Don't get me wrong—I am competitive and I love to win, but it does not define me. Growing up, I knew what I was good at and stuck to it. As a result, I became captain of my high school basketball team, a member of the national honor society, and vice president of my class. But going to school, playing basketball, and leading—these were all things that came naturally to me. My first real experience with failure came when I went to West Point. There, failure was a common occurrence for me. I didn't know how to tie a knot, I didn't know how to swim, and, growing up in inner-city Chicago, I had never had much experience with the great outdoors. At West Point, you were expected to either already know these things or learn them very quickly. I had to recall this lesson throughout my life and career because, like most people, I have failed time and time again. I can remember my third season at Duke. The group of freshmen I had that year was one of my top recruiting classes in all my years of coaching. We had an incredible amount of talent that year but not much experience. When we ended the season with 11 wins and 17 losses, I had to teach my team that what happened was part of the process. As Johnny Dawkins put it twenty years later, “We knew we were better than that, but that is where our journey began.” No one can be perfect. Failure cannot be your final destination; rather, you can use it to shatter limits. It is merely a stepping stone on your journey to greatness.

1. What causes us to fail?

2. Describe a time that you failed at something and didn't give up.

3. How must we treat failure as a team?

IMAGINATION

My favorite thing to do as a kid was play basketball in my driveway. I would be playing alongside Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen for the Chicago Bulls in Game 7 of the Finals. I could hear the crowd, hear the announcers, and see the clock at 3 seconds. Jordan would pass me the ball and 3...2...1...I would knock down the winning shot. And if I missed, I would start it all over again. What can you imagine yourself doing with this program?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

Imagination gives you a destination. When you dream, and you feel what it is like to be inside that dream, you feel inspired to make that dream a reality. You begin a process, a journey, toward making real those feelings that you first found in your imagination. Following the 1999 season in which we lost to the University of Connecticut in the National Championship game, several of our players decided to leave school early, either entering the NBA draft or transferring to another school. Shane Battier was one of the players who would return for two more seasons. Though he was a key player and starter on the team, Shane had averaged only about eight points a game and contributed to the team more as a role player than a star. My staff and I knew that in order for us to be successful in the coming seasons, Shane was going to need to maximize his potential and become our star. The only problem was that he had never thought of himself as a star; he had never imagined it. I told Shane after the 1999 season that he was going to have to spend the off-season imagining himself in a starring role. That summer, I called Shane and asked him, “Shane, this morning while you were shaving, did you look in the mirror and imagine that you were looking at next year’s conference player of the year?” He chuckled and began to respond, “Coach c’mon, I didn’t...” Click. I hung up the phone. Shane needed to imagine because, by doing so, when the time came and he actually found himself in those situations, he would feel as if he had already been there. A year later, he earned National Player of the Year and National Defensive Player of the Year honors and led our team to the 2001 National Championship.

1. What did you imagine when you were a kid?

2. How can imagining things help you to succeed?

3. What do you imagine us doing this year?

INTEGRITY

I can remember as a kid being pressured into doing things that I didn't want to do. Really the only reason that I did them was to fit into the crowd and be popular. When I got older, being part of the crowd didn't mean as much as it used to and I found it funny that I used to do things just to impress others. What if you could feel that way when you are going through those trials as a kid? What are we doing now that needs to be eliminated in order to become a better basketball team?

From "Beyond Basketball" by Coach K.

Integrity means doing what is right whether you are alone or with a group, doing the right thing no matter what the rewards or the consequences may be. It takes strength of character to have integrity. If you have integrity, and you can count on the others around you, your teammates, to be ethical as well, imagine the strength that you can form as a team: an entire group of individuals committed to simply doing the right thing. Cheating means giving up on yourself. You lose a piece of yourself each time you violate your personal sense of what is right and what is wrong. Giving up on your integrity is a dangerous thing. One slip can lead to another, and before you know it, you may forget your ethics completely. With each violation, it becomes easier, and you feel less like what you are doing is wrong. However, if you stand by your code of ethics no matter what, your foundation becomes stronger and it becomes increasingly easy to follow your code though even the most trying times.

1. Why is it so hard to take a stand?

2. What are your thoughts on this statement, "Cheating means you are giving up on you"

3. Why is it important to be a team of integrity?

MOTIVATION

It can be incredibly hard to get motivated to run on a hot, July day, but I remember thinking that I was doing something that my opponents weren't. I wanted to be better than the guy guarding me and a lot of times I wasn't. But my motivation to do something extra that he wasn't doing, was what let me know that I could beat him that night. What motivates us as a team?

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Motivation: the extra push needed to reach a goal. You can't just write out a game plan of how to motivate people, you have to do it by feel. You have to know your people. One of the best ways to motivate is to be sure that you have surrounded yourself with great teammates. When you are on a team with good people, you and those people are mutually motivated simply by being around one another. There is an atmosphere and an attitude conducive to winning. Once you come to know and understand the people on your team as individuals, you will also come to realize that everyone needs to be motivated differently. There are times for patting on the back, times for hugging, and times for yelling. No one person can be the sole source of a team's motivation. Everybody on the team feeds off one another's excitement, belief, and commitment to the team. When we motivate each other, our team usually ends up at a great destination.

1. Why is having motivation important to achieving goals?

2. What motivates you?

3. List some things that you can do to motivate your teammates this year.

NEXT PLAY

The first football coach that I worked for always asked our team after a game, “What are you going to do next?” Whether it was a win or a loss, the same question came out every time. In basketball and in life this question is so true. You can’t go back and change what has happened, you can only change what is about to happen next. What are we going to do next?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

In basketball and in life, I have always maintained the philosophy of “next play.” Essentially, what it means is that whatever you have just done is not nearly as important as what you are doing right now. The “next play” philosophy emphasizes the fact that the most important play of the game or life moment on which you should always focus is the next one. It is not about the turnover I committed last time down the court, it’s not even about the three-pointer I hit to tie the game, it is about what’s next. To waste time lamenting a mistake or celebrating a success is distracting and can leave you and your team unprepared for what you are about to face. It robs you of the ability to do your best at that moment and to give your full concentration. It’s why I love basketball. Plays happen with rapidity and there may be no stop-action. Basketball is a game that favors the quick thinker and the person who can go on to the next play the fastest. If we work together to focus on this next play, we will all feel good that we have addressed the problem and not merely bemoaned what we should or could have done in the past. In our basketball season, the ultimate moment for “next play” is March Madness, tournament time. At this point, I always tell my team, “Okay, as of right now, we are 0-0,” meaning all of our wins and losses, any praise or criticism we have received, all individual performances and honors mean nothing now. All that matters is the journey on which we are about to embark.

1. What is something in your past that is still holding you back today?

2. Why is it so important to move on to what’s next?

3. How can we gain a “next play” mentality?

OWNERSHIP

My daughter knows what toys are hers. She has definite ownership of the things that are hers and she will defend them. We have ownership in this program and are charged to defend it like it is ours. This program was here and will be here long before and after your time. What will you do to defend it?

From "Beyond Basketball" by Coach K.

Whatever we have, let's take care of it. At Duke, my staff and I try to create a climate where everyone believes it is theirs. When our players, managers, and staff feel ownership they feel empowered and proud. But, most importantly, they feel inspired to take care of the program, uphold its standards, and defend its beliefs. The team belongs to all of us and it is the responsibility of all of us to sustain it and to defend its values, purely because they are ours. One of my favorite cheers performed by our students and the rest of the "Cameron Crazyies" in our home arena, Cameron Indoor Stadium, is a simple chant in which they merely repeat, "Our house...our house...our house!!!" Many students even have T-shirts that state this simple message. Our students actually feel like they are part of the team. They are not entertained by the team, they are on the team, it's theirs. They are truly our "sixth man." The message, "Our House," is that we need to protect what is ours. Our players, our staff, and our students have an obligation to Duke University to do whatever we do with utmost pride and intensity.

1. What is your most prized possession? Why?

2. If this basketball program was that possession, how would you treat it different?

3. What can you do to show ownership of this program?

PASSION

I tell my wife all the time, “Can you believe that they pay me to coach basketball!” I feel this way everyday that I come to work. Basketball is my passion and pursuing my passion has never felt like work. The long hours, tough games, and hard times don’t phase me because of the passion I have for the game. How good could we be if we had a passion about this team?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

I define passion as extreme emotion. When you are passionate, you always have your destination in sight and you are not distracted by obstacles. Because you love what you are pursuing, things like rejection and setbacks will not hinder you in your pursuit. You believe that nothing can stop you! No one who has heard one of his broadcasts can deny Dick Vitale’s passion for the game of basketball. I was surprised when I learned that Dick had begun his career as an accountant following his graduation from Seton Hall with a business degree. But for him, accounting was his job, not his passion. So he took a great risk in pursuing a coaching career and was initially met with many letters of rejection. However, because he never stopped listening to his passion and had the support of his family, Dick eventually landed a coaching spot at an elementary school. His passion continued to lead him to the high school coaching ranks, then to college, and even to the NBA before he became a broadcaster with ESPN. Dick has indicated to me that the reason behind his success in broadcasting is the fact that he’s never really felt like a broadcaster. He approaches the game with the passion of a player and a coach, and as a result he feels the necessary empathy for those he discusses on television. His contagious passion, quite frankly, is why he is the best in the business.

1. What are you passionate about?

2. How do people know that you are passionate about it?

3. How do you show your teammates that you are passionate about this team?

POISE

You either have “it” or you don’t. I hear that a lot in coaching circles. People say that only certain people have “it”. No one really knows what “it” is but I believe that it is poise. I also believe that it can be taught. I have watched a lot of teams that act like their coaches. When things go bad, if the coaches are going crazy, the kids go crazy. That is how I know that you can teach poise. What kind of poise do we have?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

Poise: keeping your composure in spite of the circumstances. Poise requires maturity. It’s about remaining mentally and emotionally balanced all the time, no matter what is taking place around you. In competition, the element of poise can make you appear much stronger in the eyes of your opponent than can your talent alone. I tell my players that you never want to show your opponent a weakness through your words, facial expressions, or body language. No matter what they are saying to you, no matter what the crowd is chanting, if you can show poise, you demonstrate to your opponent that they cannot rattle you. In moments of doubt, I tell my players to listen to that voice inside their head and to be sure that the voice is always positive. There comes a time when it is necessary for you and your team to show poise together. When the game is on the line and one play will decide whether you win or lose, the team that exhibits maturity and poise has the greatest chance of coming out victorious. Poise is not about winning and losing—you can show poise and still lose a game. However, you will have a much better chance of winning if you learn how to keep your composure in spite of the circumstances.

1. What does poise look like?

2. Why is it so hard to have poise in tough situations?

3. What must we do to have poise as a team?

PRESSURE

Pressure is a funny thing and different people handle it differently. Typically good people will find themselves in pressure situations more often than not. They learn to deal with those situations in one way or another and generally, they become better because of them. We deal with pressure situations a lot in basketball, but at the end of the day, our pressure situations are not as tough as some others that people deal with. How can we find success under pressure?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

Pressure is a compelling influence. It can be suffocating, stifling, and can cause individuals to resort to negative action or no action at all. The ability to handle pressure is all in how you look at it. I look at being put under pressure as an opportunity to show how strong and capable you and your team really are. Preparation is key if you hope to operate well under pressure. Another way to help cope with pressure is segmenting. When one of my teams goes to the NCAA Tournament, we do just that. If I went into the locker room and said, “Okay, here is what we need to do. We need to win six games and become National Champions,” that would put an undue amount of pressure on the team. Instead, I tell them to focus on one game at a time and to segment the NCAAs into three two-game tournaments. In all my years of coaching, no player has handled pressure more gracefully than Christian Laettner. Christian thrived under pressure. He loved it. When I asked him how he was able to handle pressure so well he said to me, “Because I had a responsibility to the people around me to do my best. I always knew that the only people I had to answer to were the people in the locker room. That was my responsibility and that is why I wanted to succeed.”

1. Name some situations that are pressure-filled.

2. Why is it so easy to crumble under pressure?

3. What can we do as a team to eliminate pressure on one another?

PRIDE

I hear a lot about pride and most people don't really understand the meaning of pride. You hear about pride a lot when teams are down and are still giving it their all, but is that the only time that we should have pride in what we do? Pride is an everyday attribute, not just something that kicks in when the times are tough.

From "Beyond Basketball" by Coach K.

Pride can come from many sources, but ultimately it can be defined as self-respect and a feeling of satisfaction over an accomplishment. It can also be a feeling you get from being part of something bigger than you. Pride means having an understanding that you put a signature on everything that you do and ensuring then that what you do is done in the best manner possible. You do not have pride in something because it earns you accolades or because someone gives you a trophy or tells you it's great. The pride comes not in the recognition you receive for something, but merely in doing that thing to the best of your ability. The greatest pride of all comes from being a part of something that you could never do alone—being a part of a team. In 2006, before a tough conference home game, I asked the team to join me on the Cameron court where the center circle is painted with a large "D" that is our Duke Basketball logo. Giving each member on the staff and each player a permanent marker, we all signed the "D" at center court, thus agreeing that we would play with pride and represent our team by defending our home court, no matter what. We won that night, and in his post-game interview, Duke senior guard Sean Dockery said, "It was something where you look down there and it's your house. Today I saw my own signature down there and said, Come on, you have to play hard." Pride means ensuring that anything that you do, anything that has your name on it, is done right.

1. What is pride?

2. Explain the difference in individual pride and collective pride?

3. What can we do to create pride in this program?

RESPECT

This is one of the hardest things to give and to receive. You hear people begging for respect all the time, but what are they doing to earn it. Respect comes in many different forms, too. I respected my parents, even though I didn't agree with them all the time. I also respect the game of basketball for what it has done for me. Imagine how strong we can be as a team if we respect each other.

From "Beyond Basketball" by Coach K.

When I hear the word "respect," I think of treating everyone the same. I had the great privilege of being an assistant on the 1992 Olympic team, known as the "Dream Team." As part of that team, I learned a lot about the game, but I also relearned a lesson about respect. After a team practice, I stood by myself on the sidelines drinking a Diet Coke. Michael Jordan walked over to me and said, "Coach K, I would like to do about a half hour of individual work and I was wondering if you could please work with me." After our workout, Michael shook my hand and said, "Thanks, Coach." Michael Jordan had just called me "Coach," and he had said "please" and "thank you." This was at a time when he was at the very top of his game and was one of the most recognizable faces not only in sport but throughout the world. Michael Jordan had earned global recognition as a symbol of excellence. That day, I learned that everyone on Michael Jordan's team is treated with respect. One of my very best friends at Duke was a custodian named D.C. Williams. Many people think that I was merely being kind talking to D.C. and spending time with him, when in reality I valued his friendship and advice as much as anyone in my life. D.C. was responsible for the cleanliness and upkeep of our locker room area at Duke. But in addition to taking care of his responsibilities, he maintained a spirit that permeated through everyone in our program. During his eighteen years at Duke, it was D.C.'s locker room, not Coach K's locker room, or Grant Hill's locker room, or Shane Battier's locker room. D.C. took ownership and everyone benefited as a result. The simple act of showing respect can allow you to meet people like D.C. Williams, to let them come into your life, and to make you a better person.

1. Why is respect so hard to give and earn?

2. What actions show respect?

3. Why is it so important for us to respect each other as a team?

SELFLESSNESS

I think that selflessness can get confused with giving in to something or somebody else. It can be viewed as being weak or a push over, but to truly be selfless means that you are totally comfortable with yourself that you can be part of something greater than yourself. If everyone in this program became a little more selfless than how great could this program become?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

Selflessness means you will do what is best for the team. Being a part of something bigger than yourself requires selflessness and an understanding that there will be personal sacrifice for the good of the team. And most people desire to be a part of something bigger and to feel as if their actions are for the greater good. Non-scholarship players, known as “walk-ons,” have always been an important part of our program, serving as an ideal illustration of selflessness. They receive minimal playing time and virtually no media attention but are expected to work just as hard as any All-American. One of the greatest walk-on stories of my career came in the 2004-2005 season after back-to-back losses to Maryland and Virginia Tech. In a brief meeting following those losses, I announced to our team that those who had exhibited the best work ethic would be rewarded with starting positions against our upcoming opponent, Wake Forest. At our next practice, I put the names of four of our five starters on the board; they were all walk-ons. I then told my team that whoever played the hardest in practice that day would be given the fifth spot. A walk-on can expect to see only a few minutes of playing time throughout the course of the season, and so for a walk-on to start in a conference game has the potential to be one of the greatest days of that individual’s life. After our lineup announcement, Ross Perkins asked if he could come by my office and speak with me privately. “Coach,” Ross said, “when you put my name on that board, it was the proudest moment of my life.” Ross looked me in the eye and said, “Coach thank you so much for the opportunity and for having confidence in me, but I think it would be better for the team if Sheldon starts tomorrow.” Here was a kid who truly wanted what was best for the team and was willing to give up what could have been a very memorable personal moment in order for us, together, to be successful. Amazing!

1. Why is it so hard to be selfless?

2. Describe someone you know who is selfless.

3. What must you give up for this team to be successful?

STANDARDS

Many people confuse goals with standards and this can be the downfall of most programs. When standards aren't achieved, they make excuses by saying, "We set our goals too high". This is far from what a standard is. Instead of making excuses, let's establish some standards for this program.

From "Beyond Basketball" by Coach K.

Standards: a level of excellence that we consider a norm. After a particularly frustrating conference road loss in 2004, our second in a row, my team and I were riding back to Durham on our team bus. Typically after a loss, I have some idea of the next steps that our team needs to take. I often have a direction in mind-maybe not a solution, but at least a direction. For the first two and a half hours of the three-hour bus trip, I went through many options in my mind regarding the appropriate action to take. I finally came to the conclusion that on this occasion, I was lost. I said to my staff, "I have never told you this before and it may be a little scary, but I have no feelings or intuition on this one. My instincts have escaped me." Johnny Dawkins, a longtime friend and associate head coach, said, "Coach, it's all about standards." Johnny was absolutely right. It is not about losses; it is about standards. We needed to be playing at the level that Duke teams play. We were simply not doing that. As a team, we had allowed our standards to slip. It had become acceptable to not play every defensive possession with the utmost intensity, to allow offensive rebounds, and to play as individuals on offense. We thought that we could do less and still receive the same rewards. Standards define what is and is not acceptable for an individual or a team. When you allow your standards to slip, you are saying, "We do not have to be this good all the time," and as a result your level of success will decrease right alongside your team effort, work ethic, and sense of pride. After a tough NCAA tournament loss, a close friend of mine sent me this quote, "Only the mediocre are always at their best." If your standards are low, it is easy to meet those standards every single day, every single year. But if your standard is to be the best, there will be days when you fall short of that goal. It is okay to not win every game. The only problem would be if you allow a loss or a failure to change your standards. Keep your standards intact, keep the bar set high, and continue to try your best every day to meet those standards.

1. What is the difference between a standard and a goal?

2. Why is it important to set our standards high?

3. What are the standards of this program?

TALENT

I had the opportunity to meet the great sprinter Carl Lewis when I was in high school. Carl was only beaten in his career one time in a sprint race. At one time, he was the most decorated Olympic athlete of all time. He was given an amazing talent. I believe that every person has talent of some kind and they just have to find out what it is. How can we become better at finding our talents on the court?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

Talent is natural ability. It is important but it isn't everything. A team is a collection of individuals with varying levels of talent. When you talk about talent in the context of a team, you can talk about it both individually and collectively. The more talent you and your team have, the more room for error. I often employ the analogy that talent is really the difference between taking a superhighway and having to take side streets to reach a destination. In other words, if you have a lot of talent, the road is wider, it is easier. You can get to your destination faster if you do it the right way. But even if you do not have a lot of talent, you can still reach your destination. One of the key things to remember about talent is that it has to be developed. Developing your talents makes you strong. You can even lose your talent because it has not been developed. Chris Carrawell is a great example of talent development. In basketball, he was not the most gifted athlete, but he understood the game and how to work with his teammates to produce positive results. He was never the most talented player on my teams at Duke but he used his abilities to fit in with our star players. As a result, he kept getting better. And in his senior year, he was named the ACC Conference Player of the Year. Talent is a natural gift and it is a wonderful thing to have. The ability to develop your talent is a talent in itself. Whether we get to our destination on a superhighway or a side street is not the issue. The people who reach their destinations are the ones who develop their talents fully and effectively. A talent is a blessing, and it is our responsibility to develop it.

1. What are your talents?

2. How are you developing your talent?

3. What are the collective talents of this team?

TRUST

Trusting someone is incredibly hard to do. It means that you are placing your well being into someone else's hands. In sports, trust is earned through being together when the times are the hardest. In those moments, you find out who you can trust and who you cannot.

From "Beyond Basketball" by Coach K.

Trust is developed through open and honest communication and, once established, creates a shared vision for a common goal. Established trust among a group of individuals bolsters a feeling of confidence that only comes in knowing that you are not alone. In basketball, if you are defending an offensive player on the wing and that player is able to drive past you, you have two choices: one, you can foul that player, or two, you can trust that your teammate will be there to help play defense. On our teams, we prefer the latter. As a result of this trust, you play defense with a tenacious abandon. Trust brings you together and makes everyone more confident. Trust is a confident belief in your team, a person in your life, or a member of your family. Trust builds confidence, and with confidence, you and your team have a much greater chance of achieving at a high level. Elton Brand is an NBA All-Star and a member of the United States National Team. In 1998, he had just completed his freshman year at Duke, in which we had a great season. At the end of each season, many of the great players in college basketball are pursued by the NBA to forgo the rest of their college career and enter their name in the NBA draft. On the last day that an undergraduate was permitted to turn in his name for the draft, I received a phone call from Elton. Through his tears, he explained to me that he was being pressured by many around him to enter the NBA draft and that, this was not what he wanted to do. Elton trusted me enough to let me know that he was feeling pulled in another direction and to ask for my guidance. I wanted what was best for him, by the end of the day, Elton was still a Duke Blue Devil and at the end of the next season, Elton was named the National Player of the Year and he became the number one pick in the NBA draft.

1. Who is the one person that you trust the most?

2. What must be done to gain your trust?

3. How do we create trust on our team?

WILL

“If there’s a will, there’s a way.” My grandfather always said that to me when I would tell him that something was too hard for me to do. He meant that if I had the “want to” I could figure out the “how to.” A strong will can help people do extraordinary things that they probably didn’t think that they could accomplish. What are we willing to do to be successful as a team?

From “Beyond Basketball” by Coach K.

Even after reviewing the stat sheet and seeing that he had only scored one point, I knew that Wojo had won the game; he willed it. Steve Wojciechowski, nicknamed Wojo, was our captain and senior point guard for the 1997-98 season. It was our final home game and we were playing our archrivals, the University of North Carolina. The winner would be the Atlantic Coast Conference regular season champions. By our standards, the Duke program had been down the past couple of seasons and we were just beginning to get back on track. Needless to say, we wanted this one badly, especially Wojo. This was his last game in Cameron Indoor Stadium and he was determined that his senior class would go out as winners. His job was to ensure that all of us sustained that level of intensity for the remainder of the game. According to him, “It was one of those games where you’d rather die than lose.” When you invest in something at such a high level, you will do anything to make it happen. To Wojo, there was only one possible outcome of that game. And to achieve that outcome, someone had to have the will to lead our entire community for those final eight minutes. Will begins with a foundation of character, values, and standards. We came back from a 17-point deficit in the second half to win 77-75, in one of the most dramatic comebacks ever in Cameron Indoor Stadium. We won because of Wojo’s will.

1. What actions show that you have a strong will?

2. Give an example of a time that you willed something to work.

3. What are we willing to do to achieve success on this team?

WORK

Many people see work as a noun, a place that you go everyday to get a paycheck. To me, work is a verb, something that you do. The two meanings of the word can determine the success of the individual. Those that see work as a place or a thing, normally don't put a lot into it. But those who see work as something that they do, put a lot of effort into it and as a result, are normally successful. How do we make "work" a verb in this program?

From "Beyond Basketball" by Coach K.

Ambition alone is not enough. That ambition must be coupled with hard work for success to be achieved. I love hard work. It is a staple of all that I do and all that I ask of my teams. I want to coach kids who hear that they are going to have to work hard and then get excited about how much they will improve as a result. Work is a necessity if you want to improve. It is the road you have to follow to become better. Throughout my time as a coach, it is no coincidence that my best players have been the hardest workers. When I had the opportunity to serve as an assistant coach for the 1992 Olympic "Dream Team", I noticed that even these individuals, some of the greatest athletes in the world, always put forth extra effort. They embraced work as part of the process that you go through to become exceptional. John Wooden said, "Nothing will work unless you do." In other words, you can have the best plans, the most perfect offensive and defensive schemes, and even a great amount of talent. But if you and your team are not willing to put in hard work, your plans will never be realized. Hard work cannot be sporadic. It cannot take place only on the sunny days. If you want your best to become a habit, you must engage in intensive, intelligent, and persistent practice. I believe you play like you practice, so when you practice hard everyday, playing hard will seem natural when the game is on the line.

1. Why do we consider work to be a bad word?

2. What is the difference in work and play?

3. Describe what this team would look like if everyone "Did Work"?
