

Great Minds Discuss Ideas

Wooden Wednesday! [The Wooden Way]
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*Great Minds Discuss Ideas;
Average Minds Discuss Events;
Shallow Minds Discuss People.*

This favorite quote of Coach Wooden's, from Eleanor Roosevelt, is a real key to understanding how John Wooden became John Wooden.

The single greatest influence on John Wooden's character and what he taught was his father, Joshua. This influence had two components: his father's example and discussions his father had with him.

Shallow minds discuss people. These discussions never occurred in the Wooden household because his father would never say an unkind word about anybody. In his book *A Game Plan for Life with Don Yeager*, Coach described it this way:

"My father refused to speak an unkind word against anyone. I know, I tried to get him to do it. My older brother Maurice especially liked the game. He would start a conversation and then ask my father for his reaction or response, but my father knew that we were trying to lure him into a slipup, so he would just laugh and refuse to take the bait."

Great minds discuss ideas. Joshua Wooden had a great mind and consistently discussed great ideas with his four sons. In the book *John Wooden* by Pat Williams, Coach recounted some of those experiences:

“We had no electricity, plumbing, or conveniences and for entertainment Dad read books to us in the evening by the light of the coal-oil lamp. Sometimes we’d hear Lord Alfred Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King*, Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘*The Raven*,’ or even William Shakespeare. Before we were sent off to bed, he’d always include a verse or two from the Good Book.”

In addition to the Seven Point Creed (discussed in Wooden’s Wisdom Issue’s 3-8) here are just a few other ideas Joshua Wooden discussed with his sons:

“Remember this; you’re as good as anybody. But never forget, you’re no better than anybody, either. Don’t look down on anybody.”

“Never try to be better than someone else, but always be learning from others. Never cease trying to be the best you can be. One is under your control, the other isn’t.”

“You’ll never know a thing that you didn’t learn from someone else.”

“Don’t whine, don’t complain and don’t make excuses. Just do the best you can. Nobody can do more than that.”

“Great leaders give credit to others and accept the blame themselves.”

As Coach often said: “I’m just a man who was provided with great leadership as a youngster by a remarkable father.”

The next time you are in a conversation, it may be beneficial to be mindful of what is being discussed – people, events or ideas.

Yours in Coaching,
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