

TEAM SPIRIT

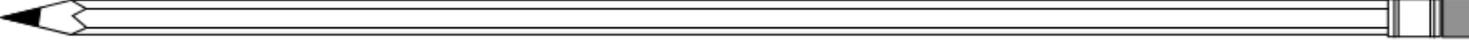
Wooden's Wisdom — Volume 1, Issue 25

Team Spirit is defined on the Pyramid of Success as: "A genuine consideration for others. An eagerness to sacrifice personal interests of glory for the welfare of all."

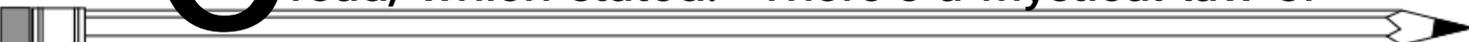
Building team spirit is the responsibility of a leader. It is the ability to get everybody in a group eager, not simply willing, to put "we" ahead of "me." Team spirit is not always an automatic trait. Here are some suggestions, based on Coach Wooden's philosophy, for developing it:

1. **"Be a humble leader."** The group must know that they work with you, not for you. If something good happens as a result of a suggestion you received, give credit to the person who made the suggestion. If something bad happens as a result of a suggestion that you received, take the blame. As coach liked to say: "The star of the team is the team."
 2. **"Have some rules or suggestions** regarding how team members communicate with each other." One of Coach Wooden's three rules for practice was "Never criticize a teammate." In the workplace, try
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using Napoleon Hill's advice: "If you have something to say to somebody or about somebody, think if it will help them or hurt them. If it will help them say it; if it will hurt them, don't." Create a culture where negative criticism and gossip are not accepted.

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3. **“Praise publicly and criticize privately.”** When you praise, give praise to those who are seldom acknowledged. Coach Wooden did this when he spoke to the media about his team. In the workplace, for example, praise your “backbone team” (clerical staff) or “first contact team” (receptionists). Coach used the analogy of a race car and pointed out that a bolt that keeps a wheel on the car is just as important as the powerful engine that runs it. Everybody should know why their job is important and feel that their effort is appreciated.
 4. **“Let team members know that their personal goals** only have a chance of being accomplished if the team accomplishes its goals.” You can’t get a pay raise if the company goes out of business.
 5. **“Share with your team the joy and importance of giving.”** Coach Wooden described it this way: “Winning teams are characterized by unselfish team play. I believe that teaching our players to look for the pass first, and the shot second, helps build team spirit. I try to build this concept off the court too.” Coach Wooden often encouraged his players by reminding them that “You cannot live a perfect day without doing something for someone without the thought of repayment.”

Coach also liked to quote a passage he’d once read, which stated: “There’s a mystical law of



nature that the three things that mankind craves most — freedom, happiness, and peace of mind — cannot be attained without giving them to someone else.” Team spirit results when the leader inspires those same traits within his or her team, and in so doing, unites all of the members to work towards their shared goal.

“I try to emphasize to my players that you must give to receive,” Coach wrote. “This is something that holds true in basketball and in life.”