

## **12 LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP FROM THE WIZARD... by John Brubaker**

**1. Good values attract good people.** How are you recruiting? Are your organizational values aligned with your recruitment strategy? What is the ultimate decision maker when selecting which one of equal candidates to offer a position? Is it an assessment tool you utilize such as Profiles, Caliper or DISC to determine fit? Gut instinct? Employee feedback?

**2. Love is the most powerful four letter word.** How do you show your customers you love them? Don't tell them you love them by advertising a "customer appreciation day". Show them you love them "L.L. Bean Style" by taking that day and adding 364 additional customer appreciation days annually.

**3. Call yourself a teacher.** Webster's dictionary defines [coaching](#) as teaching and teaching as coaching. What are you doing to create teachable moments in the adversity that often accompanies work life? [Sales](#) managers-- are you just looking at numbers and projections or are you actively out in the field with your reps? You will learn more by spending a day out in the field than a month of reading spreadsheets.

**4. Emotion is your enemy.** Wooden actually expands on this in his book to define it as "extreme emotion is your enemy". He didn't want his team to get too satisfied with a victory or too down after a defeat. In this economy, Lesson #4 might be the most important one. Flat is the new up in today's economy, how are you handling it? Ask any financial advisor worth his/her salt and they will tell you don't get emotional about stock. I would add the same thing to fluctuations. Don't get overly emotional about fluctuations in the market or in your industry. Extreme emotion clouds judgment.

**5. It takes 10 hands to make a basket.** How many hands does it take to build your product, to make your service successful, to make a sale? Look at your org chart and after you answer that question, answer this....How do you communicate each team member's value to them and to the rest of the team? Wooden is often quoted as saying "the only star on the team is the team". Let that be your guide.

**6. Little things make big things happen.** Discipline for the sake of discipline leads to employee disengagement. Discipline with a purpose generates buy-in. Bill Walton thought Wooden was being unreasonable with his rule forbidding long hair and beards until Wooden explained to him why. When a player touches his hair or his beard during a game, oil gets on his hands and this creates slippery hands and fingers which leads to poor ball handling which leads to turnovers. What little things should you be paying closer attention to in your operation? If you focus on the details of your team's execution you will enhance the likelihood of success. Do you think Toyota wishes they would have paid closer attention to customer feedback about sudden unintended acceleration?

**7. Make each day your masterpiece.** Are you treating each day like the NCAA Championship or just another practice? To win the day, ask yourself the following...

Pre-game: What is the #1 most important thing I can do TODAY? This becomes your focal point of the day. In-game: Maintain your focus on that one thing, let it drive you. Post-game: Did I give 100%? What worked well? What did not?

**8. The carrot is mightier than the stick.** What's in your [leadership](#) tool box? One, the other or both? Punishment (stick) creates fear and there is enough fear in this economy. Create a carrot in your department that will cultivate a sense of pride and team cohesion.

**9. Make greatness attainable by all.** Do you know your employees' strengths? And equally important....Do they? Wooden was a master at finding a player's strength and playing to that strength on the court. The "role players" in your organization are just as important as the "starters" when they are placed in a position to demonstrate their greatness. Help them find their strength, feel good about it and want to do it well.

**10. Seek significant change.** Improvement requires innovation. How are you fostering creativity and innovation on your team? Consider eliminating the word NO from your vocabulary in department meetings and replace it with HOW.

**11. Don't look at the scoreboard.** How do you approach project [management](#) with your team? Many leaders, channeling their inner Stephen Covey, preach beginning with the end in mind. While that is admirable, even more important is everything you do and focus on between the starting gate and the finish line. Competitive greatness is best achieved by focusing on the process not the product. Channeling my inner John Wooden, I never discussed the goal of winning a National Championship with my teams, nor did we allow the players to speak about beating a particular opponent. Our singular focus was practice and collectively improving every day. Your effort is the only thing you have complete control over. What is your focus? How are you measuring success?

**12. Adversity is your asset.** How do you handle adversity and failure? (This is a topic I will delve into more in future blog posts.) I would argue adversity is opportunity and how you handle adversity determines its value. In 1978 after netting a \$2 billion dollar profit for the year Lee Iacocca was fired by Henry Ford II. Had this adversity not occurred Iacocca never would have been hired to head up Chrysler and make a name rescuing it from bankruptcy.

My favorite John Wooden quote is *"Whether in basketball or in business you must be able to perform all aspects of your job, not just part of it. You must be able to get open and shoot. One without the other makes you a partial performer, someone who can be replaced because your skills are incomplete."*

***In the sport of business, everyday is game day .... So get open AND shoot.***