

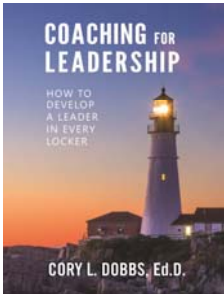


TEAMWORK INTELLIGENCE

THE EDULETTER FOR TEAM LEADERS
WWW.SPORTLEADERSHIP.COM
DR. CORY DOBBS

STUDENT-ATHLETE EDITION

LEADERSHIP
RESOURCES



Effective leadership development depends on powerful content designed for impact; content that reaches learners where they're at. Giving them the tools, skills, and knowledge they can apply in their coaching right now. **Coaching for Leadership** is a resource that inspires and empowers learners and sets the standard for leadership development.

Mattering and Marginality

People have an innate need to matter. Every member of your team has a yearning to matter. Unfortunately it's almost guaranteed that a teammate or two, on your team right now, feels like they don't matter.

Mattering is a motive. When we feel that others depend on us, we know we matter and respond accordingly. When others are interested in us, we feel like we matter and enjoy the benefits of their attention. And when others are concerned with our future, we feel like we matter and appreciate their guidance.

Mattering matters. Mattering is a powerful influence on our actions.

Draw a series of three concentric circles, expanding from small to large (you know, like waves moving outward), on a piece of paper. Place your name in the middle circle. In the next circle outward place the names of those on your team that you spend more time with. Then on the outermost circle place the names of those you spend little time with. This outer circle is the margin. These are teammates that might matter less to you. Do the same for playing time. Starters in the inner circle, bench players in the outer circle—on the *margins*. Often the patterns (of status?) reveal an in-group and an out-group, with those in the out-group excluded from close interpersonal relationships.

Marginality matters too. It's just that living life on the margin sucks. When we marginalize others they're likely to feel like they don't matter. In fact, they'll probably tell you they know they don't matter. Those on the margins usually have ample evidence that informs them that they don't matter. They come to see the world from a perspective that they have little to contribute. And this is very dangerous.

Like mattering, marginality too is a powerful influence on our actions.

When I speak to college teams I always ask the group of student-athletes if there was someone on their high school team (their senior season in high school) that did not play in games. Or if they did play, it was the "marginal" minutes when the outcome of the game was already determined thereby the playing time didn't really "matter." I've yet to find a group of collegiate student-athletes that isn't curious as to why the last player on the bench was glad to be there. It's common to hear, "Ya, I'm not sure why they stuck around."

Chances are, college or high school, you've got players on your team that are of lesser talent, perhaps "marginal" talent at best to qualify to be on the squad. It's easy for the star player to see that he or she matters. They know that others depend on them, are interested in helping them, and are concerned with their future. Their contributions to the success of the team are quite visible. They matter. And of course they should. We get that.

However, why is it others don't matter? Do you *really* want to marginalize people?

Sports participation involves many diverse interpersonal relationships. Whether you are a top player or a role player, you come into contact with many people. Developing quality interpersonal relationships with all of your teammates is a valuable team goal. When you relate to others in a positive way, they'll feel like they matter. And mattering does matter.

So, here's the big question you need to answer. Ask yourself "what in my world am I willing to notice?"

So often, those that are marginalized go unnoticed—that's why they're on the margins. If you want to accomplish something worthwhile this year, make sure no one on your team goes unnoticed. Set the standard. Let others know they matter.



Everybody Wants to Be Somebody

An Intense Team Building Exercise

Dr. Cory Dobbs
The Academy for Sport Leadership
www.sportleadership.com

Homelessness is a complex problem. Not just because a person without a home needs money and other essential resources—but because the psychological consequences are crippling. A homeless person must confront society’s perception of their worth. When an individual first encounters homelessness they experience a radical shift in their identity. They begin to struggle with basic life questions such as *who they are* and *what the future will bring*. The homeless person’s sense of self worth deteriorates quickly.

There isn’t a person in the world who doesn’t want to be someone, to have significance and be considered worthy and valued by others. Everybody wants to be somebody.

“One day I was in Tucson, Arizona putting gas in my car when I witnessed a homeless man asking if he could wash peoples windows for money and people would yell at him and push him away like he was some kind of animal. I felt for that man and even though I've never been homeless or put in the position he was in I could relate to him.”

—Steven Lopez, State Champion Wrestler

How do you treat the last person on the bench? Is it different from the way you treat the star player on the team? Why? Is a person’s worth determined by their value on the court or playing field? How do you treat every person you meet?

Everybody wants to be somebody. Once this becomes a fundamental way of viewing your teammates, classmates, and everyone you meet, you will become a person of influence.

As he walked towards me with his head down I was expecting him to ask me if he could wash my windows and I was going to say yes but he kept walking. So as he passed me I asked if he could wash my windows and he said “yes” so he began to do so. After he was done he started walking away not even asking for money which took me by surprise. But I felt he did a service and should be rewarded so I called him over and said I was going to pay him. His eyes opened wide and I could just see the joy on his face. I checked my wallet and all I had was a \$10 bill. My first thought was \$10 for a simple window wash seems too much but I looked towards the bigger picture; do I need that \$10 more than he does? And my answer was no, I felt he needed it more than I did. So I gave it to him and he said that it was too much and he couldn't accept it but I insisted and the look on his face will be something I'll never forget.

—Steven Lopez

Almost everyone knows what it feels like to be accepted, connected, trusted—a friend—and what it feels like to be rejected, judged, and outside the group. When people feel disconnected they feel a sense of worthlessness.

He told me it would take about 2-3 days worth of washing windows to make \$10 and was very grateful. He gave me a hug and I could see other people staring but I didn't mind, I helped the man out with what I

could. As amazing as that felt what happened after made me feel so much happier. People would go up to him and give him money without him doing anything and some of them were the same people who were yelling at him, so that's when I realized sometimes all it takes is just one person to start something and I could be that first person.

–Steven Lopez

To be a person of influence you need to truly care about people. Great team leaders are student-athletes that influence teammates by showing others that they care. The high performing team leader knows that everybody needs friendship, encouragement, and help. What people can accomplish by themselves pales in comparison to what they can accomplish working with others. Everybody needs somebody to connect with and help them grow.

I felt for that man and even though I've never been homeless or put in the position he was in I could relate to him.

–Steven Lopez, State Champion Wrestler

Everybody wants to be somebody. Today at practice take a long look at your teammates and identify somebody who needs you to build up their confidence and sense of self-worth. Let them know that they are welcome in your house.

Team Discussion Questions

- ★ Do you believe that luck plays a role in your life?
- ★ What do you think about luck? How might a little luck change a person's life?
- ★ Should empathy be a part of one's mindset? How can you show empathy through your designated role?
- ★ What role do relationships play in your personal success? Your team's success?
- ★ What can you do today to invest in the future of a teammate?

About The Academy for Sport Leadership www.sportleadership.com

The Academy for Sport Leadership's underlying convictions are as follows: 1) the most important lessons of leadership are learned in real-life situations, 2) team leaders develop best through active practice, structured reflection, and informative feedback, 3) learning to lead is an on-going process in which guidance from a mentor, coach, or colleague helps facilitate learning and growth, and 4) leadership lessons learned in sport should transcend the game and assist student-athletes in developing the capacity to lead in today's changing environment.