

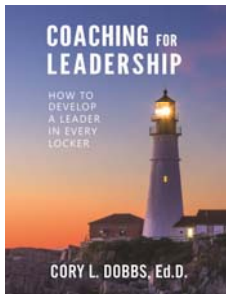


## TEAMWORK INTELLIGENCE

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.