

The Leadership Experience

For Team Captains and Team Players

Week 1

Theme: You Cannot Improve without Change *Making Successful Changes in Your Life*

Big Picture

To improve is to change.

Change happens. Let this statement settle in for a moment. As a student-athlete and a team leader it's necessary for you to recognize that improvement will only come through change. Change must take place for improvement to occur. So begin thinking positively about changing. You'll find it helpful if you take the time right now to write down your most important change and apply the ideas to this Leadership Brief. What specific changes are you thinking about?

You cannot improve without change, but you can change without improvement. You have to participate in some kind of change if you are going to get better at something or improve some part of your life. It doesn't matter if you want to be a better student, teammate, leader, or goalie; you have to change some aspects of your life to make an improvement. Change can involve areas of your life such as habits, knowledge, skills, allocation of time, mindset, expectations and many other characteristics. In order to succeed you must determine to what extent the specific change you have chosen represents improvement. Knowing what the improvement looks like will help you visualize your change.

A change should be planned in specific terms. Your thinking and goals should be specific. You don't want to think in general terms like, "I want to be a better leader," when you should be thinking of specifics like, "Every time I catch another teammate thinking negatively I am going to stop and help him find the positives in the situation."

It's better to have a small change than to have no change at all. Most successful long-lasting changes are built on realistic, smaller incremental steps rather than an all-or-nothing approach. The accumulation of small changes leads to bigger changes.

Sharpen Your Leadership Focus

Don't get upset by a temporary slowing of your growth and improvement. As you tackle your change program expect at times to take two steps forward and one step back. You will experience failure and setbacks. Learn to treat these setbacks as temporary but expected inconveniences.

Four Factors Necessary for Change

Any change you undertake is going to have to satisfy at least four criteria if that change is to be sustained and successful. To have a successful change, you will have to have the desire to change, the knowledge to change, you will have to expend the effort to change, and you will have to be in an environment which will encourage and support the change.

1. The Desire to Change. The desire to change starts with a dissatisfaction of the status quo. In some way you've identified or visualized that you need to improve and that you indeed can grow and develop into a more effective team player and team leader.

2. The Knowledge to Change. Many student-athletes fail to change simply because they did not have the knowledge needed to implement the change and to make it a successful effort.

3. The Effort to Change. No matter how much desire you have and how much knowledge you have, no change will be successful unless you apply an intense effort to bring it about.

4. The Environment Must Support the Change. This factor is necessary for implementing and sustaining your efforts to change and improve. You'll be able to control some of the elements of the environment while others will be outside of your span of control. Carefully craft your change environment as best possible.

Leadership Task: Make a list of all the things you can think of which are "Factors that Promote" your change. Also, make a list of "Factors that Hinder" your change. Try to reduce the factors that hinder your change, while attending to the factors that promote your change and improvement.

Point to Ponder

How successful might your change effort be if you don't have a supportive environment?

Quote

"Change always comes bearing gifts." -Price Pritchett

Reflection Question: Think of a time when you failed to make a change that you really thought you would be able to sustain. What contributed to not achieving your desired outcome?

Discussion Questions:

Do you agree with the statement, "You cannot improve without change but you can change without improvement"? Apply this statement to your athletic endeavors. Support your answer with an example.

Do you think that one of the *Four Factors Necessary for Change* is more important than the other three? If so, explain.

Action Step: Write down an action step you will take today towards a change you desire to make.

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