



# ***The Smallest Good Deed is Better than the Best Intention***

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**T**his favorite quote of Coach Wooden was a cornerstone of the way he approached life and leadership.

Coach described the person he admired most his father Joshua Wooden, this way: *He was consistent in word and deed a model of the strength and confidence that comes with character*

At the core of Coach Wooden's leadership model was honesty. It could be said that when intention = deed, a firm foundation of honesty is established.

In his book *Practical Modern Basketball*, Coach described the critical importance of intention = deed (honesty) as follows:

A coach must be sincere and honest in every phase of his/her work. He/she might lack something in knowledge and technique and still get along but his/her fate is failure if he/she is lacking in honesty and sincerity. Reliability. Your team members must know that they can depend on you and so must all of your co-workers.

Coach's commitment to total honesty (his intention = deed) changed the pre-season speech he gave his team. Steve Jamison, in one of many excellent books he did with Coach Wooden, described the change:



### *Wooden's Leadership Game Plan for Success*

In the early days of his teaching, Coach Wooden started each season by trying to express his intention to be impartial with the following statement "I will like you all the same." And then he would add, "And, I will treat you all the same. This turned out to be false.

There were some players on the squad that Coach Wooden did not like as well as others and it troubled him because he felt strongly that a leader should be "friends" with those under his supervision.

Furthermore, he recognized that he did not treat a hardworking player the same as one who was less so. Treating everyone the same, he soon realized, was unfair.

During his period here read a statement by Amos Alonzo Stagg, Chicago's legendary football coach that helped him reformulate his perspective on the relationship between a leader and the team. Coach Stagg said, "I loved all my players the same, just didn't like them all the same."

By the time Coach Wooden arrived at UCLA his message to the players at the beginning of each season was as follows: "I will not like you all the same but I will love you all the same. Furthermore, try very hard not to let my feelings interfere with my judgment of your performance. You will receive the treatment you earn and deserve."

Coach Wooden's pre-season intent matched his deeds. A rock-solid foundation was built.

Yours in Coaching,  
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