

The Giving of Ourselves

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*Be More Concerned with Loving than Being Loved,
Giving than Receiving, Being a Friend than Having a Friend*

This favorite quote of Coach Wooden's represents the basic approach he took toward life on a daily basis.

In Pat Williams' book *Coach Wooden*, Frank Arnold, former assistant coach and lifelong friend, tells a story that demonstrates how Coach kept this attitude strong his whole life:

In the spring of 2010, when Coach was ninety-nine and a half years old, the twelve-year-old son of a friend of mine had a school assignment. He had to interview somebody of note. So I helped set up a meeting so the boy could interview Coach.

They met at VIP'S Coffee Shop, and Coach was in his wheelchair. The boy was scared to death! They were eating breakfast, and the boy had his tape recorder. He was all ready to go and had his questions ready. Then Coach said, 'Now, son, come over here and sit with me.' The boy sidled over a little closer. Coach reached out from his wheelchair and said, 'You're not close enough. You need to get closer.' Then he proceeded to do the interview with the young man.

As this went on, the restaurant began to fill with people, and they all wanted Coach to sign autographs. And he did. After a while, I could see that he was getting too tired to sign his name anymore. So I had to intercede and get Coach out of there, because he would not have stopped. One more thing — the boy got an A+ on his paper.

This story shows we are never too old to stop giving of ourselves. The following story from Dan Millman in *Chicken Soup for the Soul* is about a young man who didn't think he was too young to start:

“Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at Stanford Hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liza who was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her five-year-old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness.”

“The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, ‘Yes, I’ll do it if it will save Liza’.”

“As the transfusion progressed, he lay in a bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the color returning to her cheeks. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded.”

“He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, ‘Will I start to die right away?’”

“Being young, the boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give her all his blood.”

This young man's love and courage is truly inspirational.

Yours in Coaching,
Craig Impelman

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