CONSISTENCY CREATES EXCELLENCE

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Coach Wooden was consistent about: being on time, being open-minded, being a great listener, constantly trying new things, trying to improve, meticulous preparation and attention to detail that was coupled with careful planning, admitting his mistakes, being humble, not being judgmental, using the same words repetitively to teach the same fundamentals, always starting and ending practice on time, never talking to his players about winning, always insisting on their best effort, bringing his own, never using profanity and what he valued most: being considerate of others.

The above is just a short list of the many consistent behaviors you could expect from Coach Wooden.

Yet one of the most valuable lessons Coach learned, some may view as being inconsistent. When asked: *What is the one piece of advice that you wish you would have been given when you started your coaching career?* Coach responded:

> *Well, I know there are many things; to pick out so just one piece of advice would be impossible, because I knew so little and maybe thought I knew more than I did.*
>
> *I know some of the mistakes I made; for example, having too many rules. In my early years I had a lot of rules and a few suggestions. As time went by I had less rules and more suggestions.*

I learned to not say what the penalty would be for a rule violation, because there can be different circumstances involving it, and for different individuals the same action could be different for various reasons. I think I learned things like that along the way that helped me.

By the time Coach Wooden arrived at UCLA, his message to the players at the beginning of each season was:

I will not like you all the same, but I will love you all the same. Furthermore, I will try very hard not to let my feelings interfere with my judgment of your performance. You will receive the treatment you earn and deserve.

This approach was consistent, because it was clearly communicated up front and his players knew what to expect.

To some leaders, consistency means a statement that: *everybody will be treated the same*.

If this statement is made and not lived up to, it creates the worst type of inconsistency: *dishonesty*.

Whatever leadership style you choose, make sure your actions match your promises.

Yours in Coaching,
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