



30 Years in College Athletics: 30+ Lessons Learned

Ann Walker
Director of Events & Communication

MY JOURNEY

- Tomboy – neighborhood of boys
 - 4 brothers – all athletes
 - Dad who pushed and encouraged
 - Mom who supported
 - Sports was a family thing
 - Love of athletics
 - Role Models
 - Mentors
 - Youth – HS – College – Pro – Coaching – Admin
 - Uneven path, turns, chances, opportunities
-
- College Basketball Coach
 - Assistant Commissioner in conference office
 - Associate Athletic Director
 - Director of Athletics
 - National org. – Alliance of Women Coaches



LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

1. Know Yourself – Self-Awareness

- **Understand your emotions, moods, strengths, weaknesses**
 - How do they affect others?
- **Practice affirmations**
 - *“I am confident in what I am doing”*
 - *“I can achieve anything I set my mind to”*
- **Value Your Strengths**
 - Know what you are good at.
 - Write them down.
 - Share your talents with the world!

“It’s impossible,”
said pride.
“It’s risky,”
said experience.
“It’s pointless,”
said reason.
“Give it a try,”
whispered the heart.



Unknown



LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

2. Know / Establish Your Culture

- Prioritize & communicate clear expectations, vision, mission, values
- Emphasize responsibility, loyalty, commitment
- **Model behavior & attitude you want others to establish**
- Hold people accountable
- Provide feedback
- Reward



SERVANT LEADERSHIP

“Having a personality of caring about people is important. *You can't be a good leader unless you generally like people.* That is how you bring out the best in them.”

-Richard Branson, billionaire entrepreneur who founded Virgin America which controls more than 400 companies



LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

3. Motivation

- Energy, Passion, Persistence
- Go beyond \$\$, title, status

4. Show Empathy

- Effort to understand others, their situations
- Widen your world
- Know your people!

“Empathy is the elixir that makes things happen”

Abraham Lincoln said, *“I don’t like that man. I must get to know him better.”*

Leadership is about empathy. It is about having the ability to relate to and connect with people for the purpose of inspiring and empowering their lives.

Oprah Winfrey



LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

5. Treat Yourself & Others with Respect

- *"Kindness and courtesy are the currency of dignity"*

6. Surround Yourself with Positive People

- Reduce the impact of "Negative Nellies"

7. Build Relationships/Partnerships

- With?

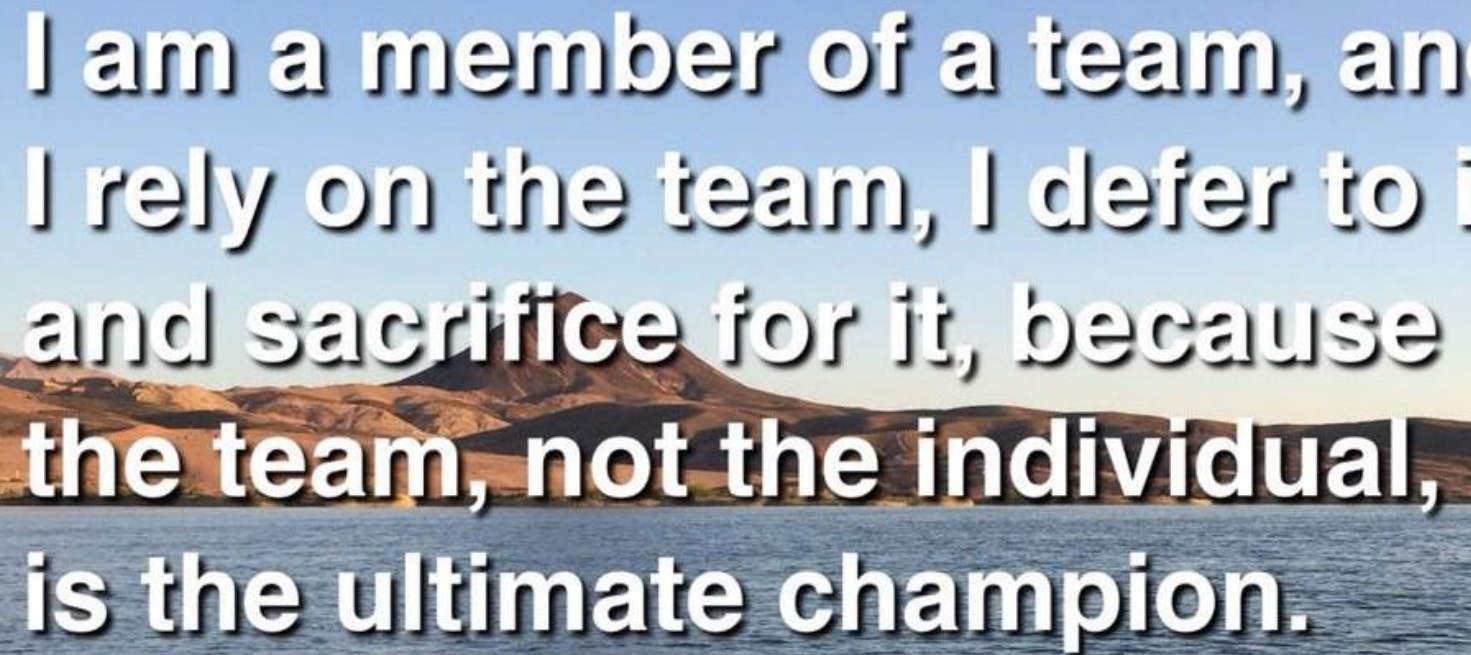


LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

8. Learn to Manage Up

- Develop a relationship with your boss
- **Get to know her/him**
- **Learn** how your boss likes to:
 - Get information/communicate
 - Make decisions
 - Structure the day
- Make your boss look good
- Want to help, but **NAKA!**
- **Eliminate surprises**
- Negotiate timelines and expectations
- Under-promise & over-deliver
- COMMUNICATE effectively but do not overcommunicate





I am a member of a team, and I rely on the team, I defer to it and sacrifice for it, because the team, not the individual, is the ultimate champion.

Mia Hamm

LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

9. BE A
TEAM!!



WJBK



BO SCHEMBECHLER

MICHIGAN FOOTBALL COACH (1969-89)

LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

10. **Honesty**
11. **Do The Right Thing – always**
12. **Do Things the Right Way**
13. **Be Flexible**
14. **Be Prepared**
15. **Follow Your Gut**
16. **Unleash Your Anger,
Strategically**

Success

is liking yourself,
liking what you do,
and liking how
you do it.”

– Maya Angelou



LEADING, LEARNING and LOVING

17. Always Have a Sounding Board

- People you trust (B.O.D.)

18. Build Trust (psychological safety)

* in yourself, your staff, your team

** crucial to a team's effectiveness

- Be authentic – keep it real
- Be helpful – wherever & whenever you can
- **Listen**
 - Look people in the eye
 - Ask questions & work to understand answers
 - Must send a message that what is important to them is important to you
- Set the example (back up words with action)
- Be humble
- Be transparent
- Commend sincerely & specifically

"We rise
by lifting
others."

-Robert Ingersoll

fullife.org



DOUBT KILLS MORE DREAMS THAN FAILURE EVER WILL.

SUZY KASSEM



LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

19. **Surround Yourself with People You Trust and Share Your Vision/Philosophy**
 - important that the person challenge you (but not in front of others)
 - no “yes” people allowed
20. **Stay Committed to/Fight for What You Know is Right**
21. **Follow Your Gut**
22. **Pull Your Weight**
23. **Share Your Passion**
24. **Keep Your Cool**



LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

25. Never Stop Learning

- Stay committed to learning: your area, your people, society
- *“when you stop learning, you need to stop leading”*

26. Fire Fast & Hire Slow

27. Be Prepared to Deal with Crisis

- Know who to report to and do NOT try to handle on your own
- Who are the people that must know?
- Expect the unexpected!
- It's not the of “if” but “when”

Dear Past,

Thanks for all the lessons.

Dear Future,

I'm ready...

LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

28. Fake it Until You Make it!

- Even if you don't feel confident and powerful, practice behaving that way. Soon it will become your habit

29. Stand Tall / Walk Tall (but don't be cocky)

Posture is important. It tells the world what you think of yourself.



LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

30. Learn Conflict Management

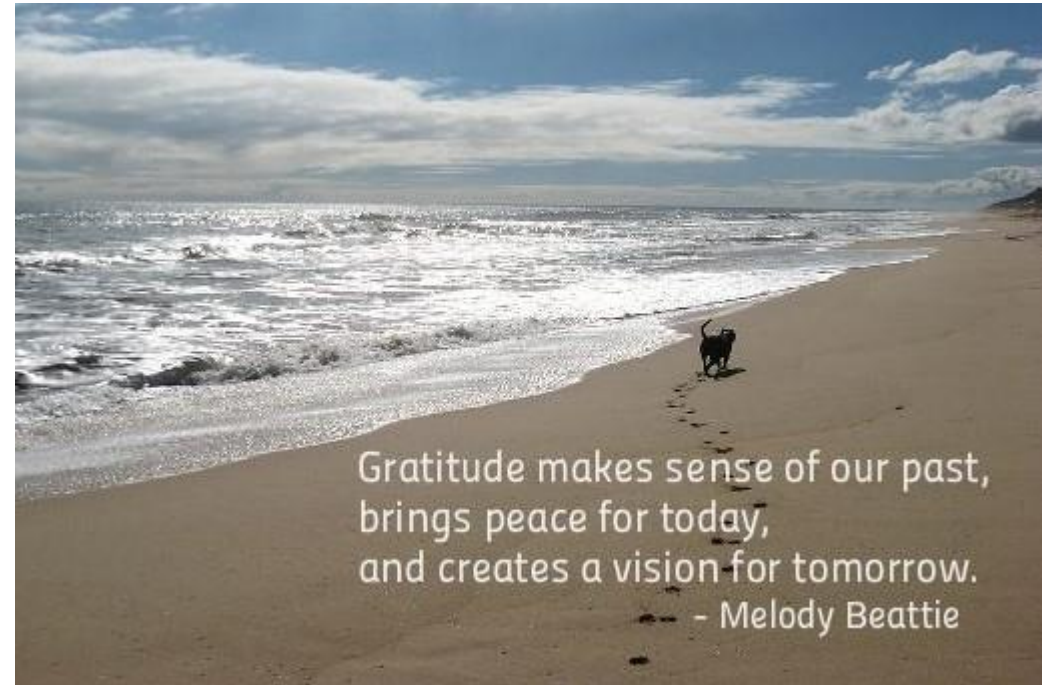
- ***Inevitable*** – it happens. How you respond to conflict will limit or enable your effectiveness as a leader
- More people you manage, the more that conflict is part of your daily routine
- Be prepared for difficult conversations
- Don't wait – address issues as they arise
- Be candid
- Be receptive
 - Let all know that they have a safe space to express their opinions and that it's okay to disagree with you
- Learn to listen
- Depersonalize
 - View conflict as a solvable problem, not a personal issue.
 - Reason over emotion or ego



LEADING, LEARNING, and LOVING

31. Gratitude

- ❖ NEVER forget how you got where you are!

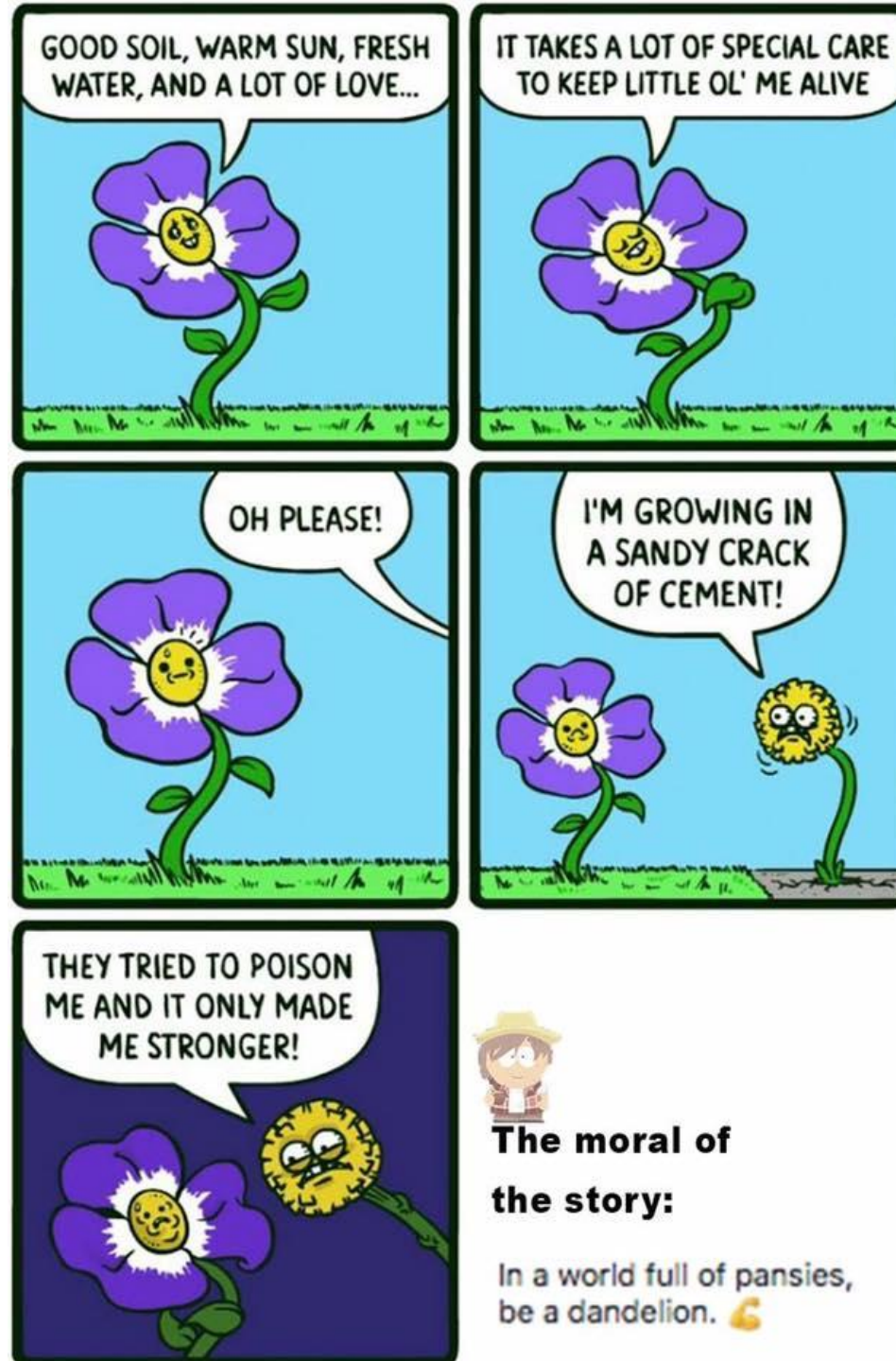


32. Take Care of Yourself – physically, mentally, emotionally

33. Be FUN. Have FUN.



34. BE STRONG!!



The moral of the story:

In a world full of pansies, be a dandelion. 💪



35. Know That Successful, Confident, Persistent Women Intimidate Most Men

Be successful, confident, persistent...
anyway!!

BE THE KIND OF
WOMAN
THAT WHEN YOUR
FEET HIT
THE FLOOR EACH
MORNING
THE DEVIL SAYS
"OH CRAP, SHE'S UP!"



"Don't judge each day by
the harvest you reap but by
the seeds that you plant."

- Robert Louis Stevenson

Thank you!

Ann Walker

ann@gocoaches.org

www.gocoaches.org

