

Preparation and Effort: Tips on Applying John Wooden's Concepts

Dr. Michael Dean
Associate Professor of Clarinet & Saxophone
Southeast Missouri State University
www.clarinetmike.com

1. Focus on Preparation and Effort. Spend your time working on what is under your control: your preparation and effort.
2. Work Hard and Plan Carefully. The first block of the Pyramid of Success says, "There is no substitute for work. Worthwhile results come from hard work and careful planning." Wooden says, "I fully understood that the success of my leadership was directly linked to using time wisely." (*Wooden on Leadership*, p. 162)
3. Teach Good Habits. Steve Jamison says that the key to Wooden's winning championships is that he was great at teaching good habits. (*Wooden on Leadership*, p. xi-xii) A band director I know, Chris Stevens, says, "Practice does not make perfect, practice makes habit."
(<http://lbpolymusic.datacorner.com/>)
4. Focus Teaching Comments on How to Do Things Better. A study of Wooden's utterances during coaching found that only 6% were praises and 6% were reproofs. The study reported that 75% of his utterances were instructional in nature. (www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2004-06/uoc--usc052604.php)
5. Focus on Fundamentals. Constantly work on basics. "There is no replacement for sound fundamentals and strict discipline." (*They Call Me Coach*, p. 168)
6. Little Things Make Big Things Happen. Identify relevant details and accomplish them at a very high standard of performance. (*Wooden on Leadership*, p. 135)
7. Keep it Simple.
8. Model Expected Behaviors. Make every effort to match practice to precept. Wooden says, "Being a role model is the most powerful form of educating. Youngsters need good role models more than they need critics." (*Quotable Wooden*, p. 98)
9. Be Quick, But Don't Hurry. Wooden says, "If you hurry, you're more likely to make mistakes; but if you're not quick, you won't get things done."
(www.teamarete.com/10tipstomanagement.html)
10. Develop Mental Toughness. John Wooden is very disciplined. Beneath his grandfatherly exterior beats the heart of a lion. Wooden and his players' mental toughness made them great.
11. Balance is Everything. Life is complicated and it's easy to get out of balance. Keep things in proper perspective. (*Be Quick – But Don't Hurry!*, p. 92)
12. Be Patient and Persistent. Coach Wooden developed his ideas and concepts over a long period of time – he spent fourteen years carefully crafting his Pyramid of Success. Wooden says, "Good things take time and that's the way it should be." (Wooden DVD, *Values, Victory and Peace of Mind*)