



# **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## WHO DO YOU ADMIRE AND WHY?

1. Write down the names of three people you admire or look up to.

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2. What is the quality or characteristic you admire most about each of them?

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- 
- 

3. Why do you think you admire the 3 characteristics mentioned above? Why are you drawn to these qualities?

4. How well do you possess the qualities you admire in others? (1 Not Really – 5 All the Way)

- Quality One: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5
- Quality Two: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5
- Quality Three: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5

5. List one or two ways you can further develop the qualities you admire in others.

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## Secrets to Building a Championship Basketball Program

Don Meyer

Notes Prepared By David Preheim

### General Notes

- Write down everything you can, but you can only use the things that fit your philosophy to the game, your players and your league.
- When running a camp, have everyone do the following 3 things
  1. Everyone takes notes
  2. Everyone is courteous – says please, thank you, yes sir, yes ma'am
    - a. The very first McDonalds restaurant had a contract with Pepsi
    - b. A McDonalds employee called to order more Pepsi and the Pepsi employee told them that they “do NOT” deliver Pepsi on Saturday’s
    - c. McDonalds called Coke to see if they would deliver on Saturday and Coke representative said Yes
    - d. McDonalds dropped Pepsi
  3. Everyone picks up trash

### Keeping an Edge on Your Program

- If you have to “try” hard to “try” hard, you are already beat
- You can’t jack around all season long and then decide to get serious when playoffs start
- As a coach you have to “clean the hog house everyday”
  - If you don’t, it will get to deep you won’t be keep up
- If you except good you will never get great
- Wooden: “I never let our players get satisfied, never let our coaches get satisfied, never let myself get satisfied”

### Keeping a Personal Edge as a Coach

- Need to have time by yourself where you can reflect, pray, study
- “Wise people are humble”
- You can never retire, you have to have something to occupy yourself
- Leadership at the top of your program
  - Morgan Wooten: It all starts at the top
    - If you don’t have it, you never will
  - Talent rises to the top, but having a team stays at the top
  - If you are coaching for paybacks, that means you have to lose first
  - Navy Seals: It pays to be a winner
  - Wooden said this to his leaders:
    - Have to be our hardest workers
    - Take care of stuff of the floor
    - Leave everything else to the coaches
  - Have each team complete the Fox Hole Test
    - Don’t let the players know who is selected

### Building Your Staff

- One of the most important things that you will decide
- Assistants and staff need
  - To have loyalty
    - Someone who gossips about you behind your back
    - Someone who flatters you to your face but won't do the same behind your back
  - How do they treat other people (disabled kids, custodians, little people...)
  - Many coaches would rather have smoke blown up their butt, rather than have the honest truth told to them
  - Warren Buffett: I look for 3 things in hiring
    - Work ethic
    - Intelligence
    - Character – the first 2 (work ethic, intelligence) without the last one will kill you
  - Who you need to hire on your staff
    - A Paul – older, more experience, someone who you can bounce ideas off of
    - A Barnabus – someone about your age, morally a good person who won't let you do something stupid
    - A Timothy – younger guy who has a lot potential and energy
  - Staff needs to learn about points of contacts (don't talk about yourself on first contact)
    - Where did you coach
    - How long you been coaching
    - Where did you play in college
  - Who is helping you when you are not there
    - Who is going to stick up for you when you aren't there to do so
    - Who is buying time for you

#### 4 Types of Coaches

1. Unconscious and Incompetent
    - a. Does not have a clue and does not know better
  2. Conscious and Incompetent
    - a. He knows that he does not know
  3. Conscious and Competent
    - a. Everything is anal
    - b. They will have good teams, but never great
    - c. Over involved
  4. Unconscious and Competent
    - a. He knows and it flows
    - b. It is engrained
- Tiger Woods every workout with 100 consecutive 9 foot puts
  - 3 Rules from Jerry Krause
    - Find your unique talent or gift
    - Develop that talent or give the next highest level
    - Give that gift away everyday
  - Dealing with Administration
    - Read "War and Peace"
      - Lesson 1 – Can measure a person by how they respond to a challenge
      - Lesson 2 – All great empires are destroyed from within
    - Only 2 types of coaches
      - 1's that have been fired

- Sometimes it is good to be fired because it meant that you had the courage to stand when the administration would not
        - 1's that will be fired
- A good administrator never gives a good coach a reason to leave
- A bad administrator always gives reasons for a good coach to stay
- Sometimes you have to work around road blocks
- Tough times
  - Grass is always greener over the sewer
  - No matter how bad you have it someone always has it worse
  - Still need to treat other people with kindness because you don't know what is going on in their lives
  - "Keep Alert, Stay Calm, Don't Be Afraid"
  - "Be thankful for tough times"
    - Makes you come up with solutions

### **F Words**

- Faith
  - The assurance of things not seen
- Family
  - Need to have a support group
- Friends
  - Players and coaches that help you out, build you up
  - A team of left tackles who are looking out for your blind spots
- Fitness
  - Exercise, need to be physically fit to be mentally fit
- Finances
  - Need to support your family
  - Don't be extravagant
- Figure it out for yourself
  - Teach your kids this
  - "When the game is over it all goes back in the box" ---- Must read book

### **Discipline**

- "Nothing is more harmful to the team than the neglect of discipline, for that discipline over talent gives one team superiority over the other team"
- Take notes, be courteous and pick up trash

### **Planning and Organization**

- "Plan, prepare, practice and play like you lost your last game"
- Website: [www.plannerpads.com](http://www.plannerpads.com)
- Plan the week on Sunday
- Plan the next day the night before
- Book: Getting Things Done – David Allen

### **Team Building**

- TEAMS – Vertically on T Shirt
  - T = Tough
  - E = Effort

- A = Attitude
- M = Motives
- S = Servant Leaders
- 4 things you need to build a team
  - Shared ownership
    - Need owners on your team, not people who are renters
    - must invest
    - Must put something back into the team
  - Shared suffering
    - Brings team together
  - Individual responsibility
    - Test kids and hold accountability
  - Collective pride
    - Don't want to hear I, me, my --- want to hear we, us, ours (especially from the coaches)
- Internal leadership
  - You can pick captains, but you can pick leaders
    - Captains don't mean leaders
    - Leaders emerge on their own
  - All players sign into practice
    - Check mark by name
    - Resting heart rate
    - Test scores
- Running a program
  - Do a needs assessment of the program
  - Be visionary
    - See the picture
    - Sell the picture
    - Paint the picture (everyone, not just the coach)
  - Lamar Hunt – Kansas City Chiefs
    - Decide what you want
    - Find out what it will cost to get it
    - Decide if you will pay to get it
  - Pick battles big enough to fight, yet small enough to win
  - 1 minute assessments
    - Here is one thing you doing well and why
    - Here is one thing we can do better and how
  - Don't give your teams answers, ask them questions
  - Wooden: Don't whine, don't complain, and don't make excuses
  - "Those who can't or won't complain make excuses"
    - "It's the sissies who won't do it"
  - NBA – Next Best Action ---- What do we do know? Not WHY ME????
  - "A coaches job is to simulate game situations"
  - "You must practice the game in the manner it is played"
  - If your players are complaining to the referees, is a big sign you have a sick program
  - Look for teachable moments
    - Use informal learning (retreats, office, watch some tape, BBQ)
    - Have a meeting without having a meeting

- Try to touch 1/3 of my team each day
- Douglas MacArthur: Don't give instructions that players can understand, only give instructions that cannot be misunderstood

### **Career Stages**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Stage – Survival
  - No philosophy
  - Don't know the game
  - Stress when parents call about playing time
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage – Success
  - Win a state tournament,
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage – Satisfied
  - Go through the motions
- 4<sup>th</sup> Stage – Significance
  - Most dangerous stage, everyone is dangerous
- 5<sup>th</sup> Stage – Suspense
  - No more juice in your tank

### **On the Floor Coaching**

- Ask every year
  - Are we tough enough, athletic enough, mature enough, skilled enough
- Mass practice
  - Get lots of reps
- Distributive practice
  - Fundamental work, special situations
- You must run the floor every time
  - Does not mean you run and gun
- Defense
  - Stance –
  - Vision –
  - Position – vision allows this
  - Talk your position
  - Anticipate
  - Move according to our rules
- Keep your notes where you can retrieve, review, and reinforce

### **Fundamentals and Drills for Shooting Improvement**

- Use 4 shooting devices
  - The Gun
  - Noah Machine
  - Toss Backs
  - Reduced Rims
- Shooting progression
  - Wrist extensions so your wrists are loose
  - Lay on back – form shoot without a basketball; hold 1 second follow throw
    - Keep elbow in tight and down
    - Don't spread your hand too much, causes unnatural wrist movement

- Lay on back – same procedure, add the basketball



## **10 DEMANDMENTS OF GREAT ASSISTANT COACHES-by Brad Oringer**

1. **Over Riding Purpose** - We are all on the same team! Great teams Don't let ego's get in the way. The minute your feelings start to get hurt think about the finish line and where you are going.
2. **Servant Leadership** - Every fish tank needs a scum sucker, why not you? On a good staff one assistant does dirty jobs, on a great staff all the assistants do the dirty jobs. It's not glamorous, but they have to be done.
3. **Small Victories** - If you have enough small victories in your day, you will win your share of days. These will be different for every individual, but they have to be things you take pride in accomplishing.
4. **Backup Support** - You must be there in full support no matter what -open hand vs. a closed fist. United and unified front.
5. **Emotional Tennis** - You must, balance your emotions with your head coaches and play off of theirs. Sports by nature are emotional and the head coaches matter the most - recognize this. Everybody can't be the dictator and everybody can't be the clown. Find the balance that works within the staff.
6. **Opinionated Opinions** - There is nothing wrong with having your opinion and you must be prepared to give it, but you must know ultimately it is not your decision to make. "I will tell you what you NEED to hear, not what you want to hear!" We don't get paid to be wrong...
7. **No Surprise Parties** - The less surprised your head coach is, the better the quality of life you will live. Surprises are what we try to avoid daily, and the way to avoid them is to organize and re-organize. You cannot be prepared enough.
8. **To Kill Time, Work it to Death** - There is always something to be done, or something to improve upon - no idle time in great programs. Work ethic has to be a given. Have a calculated method to your madness.
9. **Silence is a Virtue** - Don't dominate every meeting. If you don't have anything to say or don't need to say anything then don't! If you do have something to say, know how to say it and choose your words and tone carefully.
- 10: **Bottom Line Mentality**- Who cares who gets the credit! We have to Have great production and great results everyday!



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## 418 Mistakes Later

*My Transition From Assistant Coach to Head Coach;*

*18" is further than you think!!*

*- By Mike Neighbors, Head Coach, University of  
Arkansas*

Everyone who knows me well, knows I am a “lister.” I make lists for almost everything. I have my Top 1000 Movies of All-Time ranked in order. I have my Top 1000 Songs of All-Time on a playlist. I have my Top 500 this and my top 25 that. I guess it stems from my love of baseball statistics growing up. Over the years, my lists have helped me grow in many areas and reach a rhythm with life on the court and off.

So, it should come as no surprise, I kept a log of the “Mistakes I Made” in my first year as a head coach. I kept it in a running list format in the Villa 7 Notebook that I received at the Nike event the year before. The Nike event that finally inspired me and gave me the courage to break out of my comfort zone of being a 14 year assistant coach. I kept it handy wherever I went because it was very apparent, very early that mistakes could take place anywhere, anytime. Some were small and probably went unnoticed to anyone watching. Others were huge and were obvious to everyone. Regardless of the size or the impact of them, I kept the record from Day 1 to Day 365. Grand finale total... 418!! An average of 1.14 per day.

In the end, my conclusion... The 18” you move over from Assistant to Head Coach, is a lot further than you think!



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On day 366 of the job, I spent the entire day with the list. By the end of the day, I was able to categorize them into a dozen areas of similar reasons that I felt I had made them. I will list those 12 areas below and then once every now and then, update this document and go more in depth on each area.

1. I assumed being an assistant coach would prepare you to be a head coach
2. I told people the TRUTH before I had earned their TRUST
3. I got out of shape
4. I got out of alignment between Process and Results
5. I tried to do too many “things”
6. I was afraid to do “what I thought best”
7. I exhausted my daily decision energy on stuff that didn’t affect winning
8. I stopped confronting things that needed to be confronted
9. I let the Urgent overcome the Important
10. I forgot to keep myself “charged”
11. I didn’t realize how tight my friend circle would become
12. I had no idea how to manage a staff or how to “manage up”



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## I ASSUMED BEING AN ASSISTANT COACH WOULD PREPARE YOU TO BE A HEAD COACH

We all know the saying about assuming (ASS-U-ME)... if you haven't, asked one of your kids to explain. Well, it was never more true than in the case of me assuming that my 14 years of being an assistant coach would have me fully prepared to be a head coach. While those years certainly helped and probably kept me from making 936 mistakes, it just isn't that simple.

The job description of a Head Coach is ***completely*** different from being as assistant.

So many of my actual mistakes fell in this category and some will overlap with later topics we discuss. I believe simply knowing that would have saved me from the first mistake I made that fall under this header. Over the course of 14 years I had accumulated resources that allowed me to be productive in my day. I had forms for this and that. I had a routine that led to an efficient day. So on Day 1 as a head coach, I expected that to be the same. But it wasn't. Not even close.

I didn't have a form for keeping up with people contacting me for jobs.

I didn't have a form for what to do when a recruit didn't want to come to Washington.

I didn't have a plan for delegating assignments to my staff.

I didn't have a plan for what do to when one of my "recommendations" didn't work.

For my entire professional career, I had been making suggestions. Some were used. Some weren't. Some that were used worked. Some didn't. None of them however ever came back across my desk to explain to the media or administration. Now my decisions had consequences. We will cover Decision Making much more in detail in a later piece.

For the last 14 years my decisions pretty much just directly effected me and maybe my immediate family. Now my decisions effected the lives of every player, coach, aide, manager, strength coach, athletic trainer, etc.

My biggest mistake was just ASS-u-ming again that "things would slow down" or "you'll get adjusted to the new demands"... I wish I would have gone in knowing that it was okay to be overwhelmed. That is wasn't going to slow down. That it wasn't going to just adjust. I needed a better plan. I needed support. I needed help. I wasted valuable time waiting for things to slow down or adjust.

What would I do differently: I would have spent "free" time as an assistant reading up on the area. I would have paid more attention to the job my head coach was doing. I would have picked their brains about how they manage their time. I would have asked to sit in on meetings with marketing, facilities, administration. I would have not kept expecting what I knew in the past to be good enough.



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I ASSUMED BEING AN ASSISTANT COACH WOULD PREPARE YOU TO BE A HEAD COACH

My last observation concerning this category of mistakes is also a reminder of my PaPa Neighbors and his sayings. He always said:

***“Someone who is good with a hammer always makes everything into a nail.”***

I know it wasn't an original quote of his, but he was the one who best illustrated it to me over my childhood. And it certainly had application to me and to this situation.

When I was an assistant coach, I believed it was all about Player Development, Scouting, Defense, and scheduling . Recruiting was over rated. Give me a player that wanted to be there and I could make them good enough through skill development sessions. Give me enough tape on an opponent and I could help us win a game regardless of the opponent. Offense was for fans, defense wins championships. Give me the time and I could put together a schedule that would get us a good seed for a deep run into the NCAA Tournament. NOTHING else mattered. Nothing.

Well, guess what? Those happened to be areas I was in charge of and “had a hammer for.”

I didn't think all those other duties I had been doing on my way up the coaching ladder really mattered anymore. Since I wasn't in charge of them, they weren't important. Some other coach needed to worry about Academics. Not me. Some other coach needed to be interested in Community Service. Not me. Housing? Please, don't bother me with that mess. Per diem on travel? Don't interrupt my film session.

That type of thinking can't happen for a head coach. Everything matters. You need a hammer, a screwdriver, a wrench, a saw, a shovel, a level, a tape measure, etc. You can't just be good with a hammer.

If I hadn't been narrow minded in this area, there is no doubt we might have won a game or two more. There is no doubt my staff would have been much more sane. And, there is no doubt I would have been a better leader.

In the end...

Just know that your previous experience in the game will help, but it's not a guarantee your successes there will carry over.



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## I TOLD PEOPLE THE TRUTH BEFORE I HAD EARNED THEIR TRUST

Again 'assuming' got the best of me. I had assumed the trust I had earned with the players as their assistant coach would directly carry over to the new office and the new title. Not true.

So, when I began from Day 1 with TRUST as one of our three core values, I told players the truth. The truth about their situation at UW. The truth about how I saw them fitting in with the change of staff. The truth about my expectations for them moving forward in their career.

Mistake category #2 was born!!!

Have you ever noticed in your life you don't listen to people you don't trust? Think about it for a second. Friends. People you are in relationships with. Strangers. Enemies. You listen to people you trust. As always this comes back to a Papa Neighbors quote:

***“Don't listen to anyone who doesn't have a dog in the fight.”***

I am betting after you thought about it, you realized your life long learning advice came from someone who had earned your trust.

Look at it from another perspective. Do you tell people the 100%, truth and nothing but the truth, nothing held back TRUTH to people you don't TRUST? Betting that's a no again.

Read in a book that if you want to find out if someone trusts/likes/respects/gives a crap about you, simply ask them for feedback on something. If you get ALL positives...they don't!!! So true. We have all given a presentation or a talk in which everyone tells you what a great job you did. But you know you fumbled some words. Or you had a ton of "verbal graffiti" like, you know, um, um, um, um. Only people that love you will tell you your fly was open. Only people that care about you will tell you that you have something in your teeth.

Not saying you don't listen to others. Not saying you don't consider their input. Saying that when it comes down to it, you only tell the truth to people you trust and you only listen to truth from people you trust.

As my first year was unfolding, my desire to be transparent, to be an open book, to be 100% honest was well intended, but not so well executed.



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## I TOLD PEOPLE THE TRUTH BEFORE I HAD EARNED THEIR TRUST

Will share will you the best example...

My team was struggling with shot selection early in the year. We had a strong returning group of players who had been our leading scorers for two years with an incoming McDonald's All-American who could also really score. I wanted it to be very clear what we viewed as an acceptable shot and what wasn't. We showed film. We pointed in out in practice. We charted every shot take in our pre-season and posted for everyone to see.

My intention: That our team driven, high basketball IQ kids could see the results and realize who needed the most shots and why.

Result: Through first 30 practices, a scrimmage game, an exhibition game, and our first two regular season games, we still didn't know.

My solution: Get everyone in the film room in front of a whiteboard. Break down for them that we get on average 70 FG attempts per game. Some games a few more. Some games a few less. But 70 on average. With that in mind, Player A needed between 12-17 of those. Player B needed 10-15 of those. Player C need 8-12 of those. The remaining shots would be available to those other players based on each game and need in each game.

All based on evidence from shooting in practice, in games, and extra shooting each of them put in. Evidence mind you. It was crystal clear to me that our team would want our best shooters taking the most shots therefore we would have a chance to win more games.

It was pretty much straight from the Don Meyer clinic on shot selection. How could it fail.

Well it failed. And it failed miserably. It completely backfired. It separated the team more. The players I said needed the shots even hated it. They felt extra pressure. They felt their teammates were counting their shots. For the next month, we were in recovery mode from my brilliant idea.

But you know what happened about ten games? My exact shot distribution began to happen. And everyone was completely fine with it. In fact, they could be heard during timeouts saying Player A needs a couple touches. Or Player A saying to player B, you're hot tonight I am looking for you!!

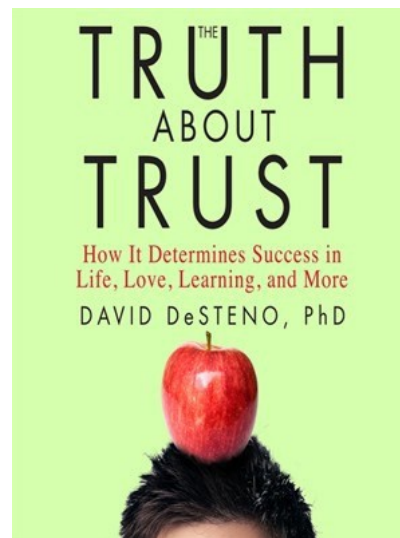
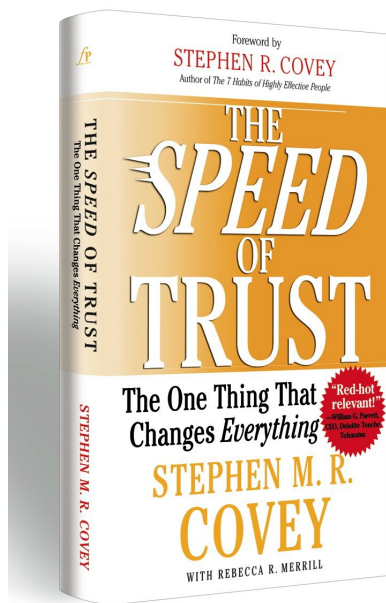
Conclusion: Once I had earned their trust and had earned each other's trust, it was easier to accept. They believe in before they buy-in (as Kevin Eastman told me at a recent clinic.) That could be restated... The Believe in after they Trust In...



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## I TOLD PEOPLE THE TRUTH BEFORE I HAD EARNED THEIR TRUST

Have written in our Newsletter release about the impact becoming an avid reader has had on me personally and professionally. These books I have listed below were some of the best that helped me identify and correct the errors I was making in this area. Just like with set plays you can't use all the good ideas, but you must 'get' all the good ideas. Then make the ones work for you that fit you.



While I continue to still make this mistake from time to time, I have eliminated the frequency greatly. More importantly I believe I have learned how to utilize the knowledge of this concept to my advantage. It also further illustrates the genius of my Papa Neighbors' wisdom. He always said "No one knows how you know, until they know how much you care." That is the essence of Trust.

Spend your energy in the area of Trust early than I did. Don't assume Trust is automatically given to you in conjunction with your job title. Don't assume if you have earned their trust in one capacity that it will automatically transfer to another.

That knowledge would have saved me about 65 of the 418 mistakes I made.





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## I GOT OUT OF SHAPE

This one will be the most embarrassing one to speak about... but was clearly the easiest one to see occurring!!!

Call it happy weight. Call it stress eating. Call it what you want. Bottom line. I got to an all-time high weight of 236. At 5-11, it's not morbidly obese, but for someone who played at 185, the 53 extra pounds was not a good thing.

I was snoring uncontrollably and verged on sleep apnea. I didn't get diagnosed but based on my blood sugar level urges, I had to be getting close to some form of diabetic situation. I wasn't sleeping well. I obviously wasn't exercising. Good thing I inherited good DNA or I might have been 266!

I could include some before and after pictures but no one wants to see that I can assure you!!

I could give you a ton of excuses and even a few good reasons it happened.

But none of them should have mattered.

It was affecting my efficiency for certain and also my teams. They weren't getting the best of me. And you can only sell "Do as I say" so much before it falls on deaf ears.

With my energy levels lower than ever, I didn't watch as many films as I could have. I didn't have the energy to continue confronting all the issues that arise on a daily basis. I didn't have stamina to make it through a tough practice then still get in a car and drive to recruit... and even if I did, was I at my best when I got there? Probably not.

The list gets longer and more embarrassing.

So, I made a change. I didn't do anything crazy. Didn't have gastric bypass. Didn't take a single supplement. Didn't starve myself. I simply followed my own advice to my players... MAKE BETTER CHOICES...

On Day 1, I made one better choice. It was breakfast. For that last few years I had lived on a diet of Coca-Cola and Reese's Cups double packs... told ya it was embarrassing. So on Day 1, I just had the Coca-Cola and two cup Reese's instead of the Jumbo pack.



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## I GOT OUT OF SHAPE

On Day 2, I made two better choices. I ditched the Reese's all together and went with a protein bar.

On Day 3, I made three better choices. Ditched the Coke (went with water) and the protein bar.

On Day 4, I dropped the Coke at lunch.

On Day 5, I dropped the Coke at dinner.

And so it continued. After about 10 days, I had powered through the caffeine headaches and actually began to feel like exercising a little. So, I started slow. As more pounds shed, I felt better and better.

It only took about 30 days before there was a noticeable difference. My goal was to get below 200 lbs by our first game. A goal I was able to make with a week to spare.

Now the challenge is to stay below 200 during the long season... I'll keep you posted but so far so good.

When you go back through the list of 418 mistakes, I wonder if I would have made any of them if I had felt better. So, in a way I attribute almost everyone of them to this category in some form.

The sad part, is that this one was THE MOST controllable. It was totally on me. Nothing to do with my "readiness" for the job. Nothing to do with lack of experience as a head coach. Nothing to do with my team. It was controllable and it was on me.

There are lots of distractions that can nab you. As I mentioned in the opening, happy weight. The increased salary afforded me to buy the "good" Pork and Beans, then the "good" steaks, then the "add a shrimp skewer"... The increased demand on time forced me to eat later than normal... only thing open late around me Taco Bell, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and McDonalds... the triumphant of healthy meals!!!

In year two, I can already count the times being in better shape has helped me make better decisions, confront an issue with staff or team, watch and extra film that gave us an edge in preparation, or have enough energy to write that last recruiting letter.

Stay in shape if you are in shape. Get in better shape if you are out of shape.

Don't make the same mistake with your health that I did.



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## I GOT OUT OF ALIGNMENT BETWEEN PROCESS AND RESULTS

When you get your opportunity to be a head coach after years of being an assistant coach, you have a mountain of ideas on who you think you want to be. You have been watching your mentors for years making mental notes of ways you want to be like them and ways that you don't want to be like them. You have been attending clinics hearing speakers filing away bullet points of this you are going to do some day. You have observed, studied, researched, and compiled. You have most likely put together some form of portfolio for a hiring committee that details everything you have been thinking about. Probably took it to Kinko's and had it bound even. It's yours, but is it YOU?

I am not saying any of the above is a bad idea. But, I am saying, be careful of who you say YOU ARE, before you know who you are.

My biggest mistake in this area was talking about Process, process, process but in many causes becoming reactionary to Results. When that happens it alienates the people you are trying to lead.

You can't preach process then turn around and speak about results. The very second you do this, the process loses its punch.

It's okay to be results driven. It's okay to be process driven. It's not okay to teeter back and forth between the two.

If I had to do it all over again, I would have been a little more patient in announcing to the world who we were and what our identity was going to be. My mental image that had been conjured up over the years simply wasn't doable in the timeframe that I had all worked out in my mind.

I didn't understand how time consuming things can be. I didn't understand how long it takes to assemble a staff. I didn't understand budgetary issues. I didn't understand many aspects of the position of being a Head Coach. As a result my alignment between process and results was often a blurred line. Creating confusion and uncertainty among the people I was trying to lead.

Don't give you team three goals that they need to achieve to win a game, then lose your mind in the locker room afterward only to realize later that night they had met all three. Don't set standards that are met yet don't produce results. Don't celebrate good results that were not reflective of the process. All these things are easy to do because of human nature. And are very easy to do as a young head coach.

Be patient in deciding who you are and who you want your program to be. But when you decide, stick to it and don't get out of alignment with your team, your staff, your administration, and your loved ones.



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I TRIED TO DO TOO MANY THINGS

This mistake shares a lot of crossover with the previous one we just talked about. It stemmed from years of observing and collecting ideas. I wanted to start this. And implement that. Wanted to have this and that. Wanted to promote our program in this way and that. I wanted us to travel this way and that. I wanted our locker room to have this and that. You get the picture.

What I quickly found was that even if you implement them all, you can't keep track of them all.

A few examples... At Xavier, Sean Miller gave a special colored practice jersey to the practice player of the week. Those guys fought like warriors to earn that jersey. It was amazing to watch them compete for it. Tried it. Complete and utter failure. Our girls didn't want to be different. They would actively avoid it. What worked for Sean Miller didn't work for me.

At Tulsa we had great success sitting our team down and explaining our shot selection process. We had adopted the Don Meyer method of evaluating our shot efficiency. It led us to unprecedented success with the program. Complete and utter failure with my first team. It, in fact, hurt us. It caused more problems than it did good.

We had team goals, game goals, position goals, four minute war goals, etc... The result was that no one knew what to really focus on. Didn't know what was important and what wasn't.

It carried over to our X's and O's too. We had too many actions. Too many defensive thoughts. Too many "what ifs"... again creating confusion with our team.

It was the same with my staff and support staff. We had so many things we were trying to do that we weren't very good at any one thing. It was difficult to even keep up with the projects we constantly had on-going. I lost track of who was doing what, when I had expected them to be done, and ultimately even what the purpose of the project was.

The solution was to SIMPLIFY...Once we started to strip away and get to what WAS important, we improved. Our theme of ONE was born and from that point on, we all focused on ONE thing at a time... and now the second that we begin to look ahead, someone in our basketball family is quick to point out that we are getting ahead of ourselves.

You have to try things for sure. You have to make mistakes to learn from them. But don't be stubborn and don't be afraid to change or be different... That leads us into the next category.



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I WAS AFRAID TO DO WHAT I THOUGHT BEST

For 14 years as an assistant coach, I never had a bad idea exposed. Although many of my suggestions were unsuccessful, there was never one time I was asked to comment on it by a reporter. My name was never attached on a message board when one of my scouts wasn't spot on or when my breakdowns didn't actually prepare us for the big game. But the second you move into that new chair in the new office, that all changes.

Now all eyes are on you. It's your call. And that's scary.

I allowed that fear to keep me from trying some things. I think we all have our mentors that we bounce ideas off of. Problem with that practice is that those people usually care deeply for us but have no actual knowledge of our situation. They offer great advice based on similar experiences they might have encountered. They are there to talk us out of bad ideas and into better ones. But at some point, to be successful, you have to trust YOU!!

I spent my first three or four months on the job too worried that what we were doing around our program was the "way it should look." I'd seen Gary Blair lead teams to the Final Four. I'd seen Kathy McConnell-Miller resurrect a once dormant program into a tournament team. Witness Coach Gardner battle in the nation's toughest conference with less than most had. And then sit next to Kevin McGuff lead a small, mid-major to within a lay-up of the Final 4 before moving to Washington to start our rebuild. I knew what IT looked like. But it wasn't my plan. I was just a part of it. Those first 120 days were a continually situation of me asking myself, "What would (insert one of their names) do in this situation?" And each and every time it was usually a combination of what I thought I should do and what I thought they would do. None of the decisions led to disaster and many of them were successful to some extent.

It really had more to do with having the guts to do something that I thought one of them would do differently.

I was worried that I would try something that would so drastically fail that one of them would call me up in disbelief and disappointment that I had not learned better from them. I didn't want to let them down. I didn't want to be that "rookie" coach that was in over his head. I didn't want to be that first-year coach that people were making fun of around the profession.

It finally came to a head for me on a plane ride home from Christmas break with my family. Our team was off to an okay start. 8-4 overall but the problem was, we weren't getting better.

We had a depleted roster due to some injuries and for the first two months of the season our practices were disjointed. Three of our players had injuries that allowed them to practice for 20-30 minutes and still be available for games. Another couple needed extra



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I WAS AFRAID TO DO WHAT I THOUGHT BEST

days off all together. While we were able to field a team come game time, we weren't improving as a team and my healthy players were actually digressing...

For the first time as a head coach, I made a decision without consulting anyone. I came up with a plan and implemented it.

Since we were entering PAC12 play, our calendar was set. Our routine could be defined for the remainder of the season.

I mapped out this weekly plan:

- Monday: OFF day. Take care of studies and 'life'. If you have no training room stipulations you can workout out voluntarily, but if you have modifications you spend any extra time in re-hab not on the court
- Tuesday: SKILL DAY. Players with no injuries worked with position coaches on Skill. Players with injuries again spent the day in the training room receiving treatment.
- Wednesday: PRACTICE. If you couldn't practice full this day (after two off days) then you would be unavailable for the games that weekend.
- Thursday: PREP DAY 1... we prepared for our Friday opponent. Scouting, film, walk thru, shooting, offensive breakdowns.
- Friday: GAME 1
- Saturday: PREP DAY 2... same as Thursday but possibly lighter and maybe in sweats
- Sunday: GAME 2

We would follow this plan the rest of the season. Once I implemented it with my team, I finally shared it with some of my confidants. They told me I was crazy, it was a bad message to send, I might get fired if word got out, and some that I can't share in PG format!!

Now I was more scared than before. It was like the scene from Moneyball when Brad Pitt tells the Jonah Hill character, "This had better work!!!"



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I WAS AFRAID TO DO WHAT I THOUGHT BEST

From the implementation, we saw improvement. The uninjured players said they felt better than all year because we had focused on their skills, we had maximized our time together as a team, and they felt fresh.

A couple of weeks in, we went on the road and won for the first time in PAC 12 history at USC and at UCLA. We came home and lost a close game to #12 Cal before upsetting #3 Stanford. Needless to say the 'believe in' and turned to 'buy-in'.

We saw reduced injuries and need for re-hab.

We saw more energy in games than our opponents.

We saw more concentration and execution of the scout than when had spent more court time covering.

We saw a spike in our team GPA with extra time available for study.

We saw a surge of team togetherness.

Needless to say, it helped salvage our season that ended with 20 wins and a trip to Final 8 of the WNIT.

More importantly it taught me a lesson to trust my instincts. What I learned was that all those experiences of watching other coaches do their things what was the most important was they did what THEY believed in. It was them knowing their team better than any-one. It was them listening to the input, looking at all the information, and trusting themselves to do what is best.

That BIG decision made it much easier to pull the string on less high profile, but equally as important decisions.

It's your team. You will be held accountable for the actions of your team. So, you better do what YOU think is best and that YOU can put your head on the pillow at night feeling good about.



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I EXHAUSTED DAILY DECISION ENERGY ON STUFF THAT DIDN'T AFFECT WINNING

Ever wonder why the POTUS (President of the United States) doesn't choose his daily suit and tie? It's not because we are wasting tax payer dollars on needless things. It's not because he is fashion challenged. It IS because it has been proven that we only have so much ability and energy to make decisions. That energy can be diminished and ultimately exhausted on a daily, weekly, monthly, yearly basis. When you consider the sheer number of important decisions a day the POTUS makes, then you see why simply taking away the task of deciding which tie matches which suit and goes better with the back ground of the set and won't offend someone watching and, and, and... you quickly see why taking this decision away can pay big dividends as the President is deciding whether to give the "GO" order to attack Bin Laden!! Okay, maybe I have watched Zero Dark Thirty one too many times.

When making the move from assistant coach to head coach you will quickly realize you also go from making suggestions to making decisions. I am sure making suggestions would eventually become exhaustive, but I never reached that number as an assistant!!! I could suggest this and that and another and another and so on and so on and... never got tired of it.

When you are on the other end of those suggestions, people are looking to you for decisions. Correctly making them can mean the difference in the success of your first year and ultimately your success going forward. YOU ARE BEING PAID TO BE RIGHT... Great advice I got from Vic Schaefer at the Final 4 when he spoke about the transition. When you need to be RIGHT, you will find yourself agonizing over every detail and every decision you must make.

So, what do you do about it?

First... Let go of some of the "what tie am I wearing decisions"... in other words delegate decisions to don't affect winning to other people on your staff you TRUST. You hired em, so let 'em work. Does what travel suit you order from Nike really affect winning? Does where/when you eat a meal on off days affect winning? Does where you put recruiting files in the office really affect winning? Does the background color of your business card really affect winning? Even if you think some of those do affect winning, then educate someone on your staff what you want and let them make the decisions. This allows you to have a clear head when you get that call from across campus that a player is in academic distress or if you have to choose a tournament to play in over Christmas break.

Second... Understand you need to make decisions that DO affecting winning are made at your energy peak. We can all look back on bad decisions we've made. I would bet the vast majority of them were made when you weren't at your best in one way or another... sad, depressed, discouraged, angry... On the flip side, the best decisions probably were made when you were in a "good place."





# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I EXHAUSTED DAILY DECISION ENERGY ON STUFF THAT DIDN'T AFFECT WINNING

Third... Learn what affects winning and what doesn't. This is the hard part because experience is a great teacher. But it's a must do. You have to understand that because YOU think it is important, your players and your staff may not. And in the grand scheme that makes a difference. Your pulse on your program will be your greatest guide. This is where this mistake overlaps with some we have previously discussed about listening to advice and being afraid to do your own thing. Use your energy determining this more than choosing your tie or your pre-game meal locale.

Papa Neighbors always told me to makes decisions about myself with my head and decisions about others with my heart. That advice is always part of my checklist when dealing with discipline issues that arise.

There is also a great book by the popular author, Malcom Gladwell, title *BLINK*. Highly recommend it to anyone in a decision making position. It will teach you how to 'thin slice' and 'chunk' which in turn helps you BE RIGHT more often than you are wrong without the exhausting agonizing that we put ourselves through during the process.

This is not to say there aren't days you're going to finally crawl into bed exhausted. We all know that is part of being a coach. What I am trying to say is that you won't crawl in there exhausted from making decisions.

In the first 100 days on the job, everyone will naturally be looking to you to make decisions. As the new Head of the program everyone will be aiming to please you and do things in a manner you approve of. The quicker you delegate duties and responsibilities to others, the quicker you can point everyone in the proper direction.

I made various people HEAD COACHES in area's of responsibility. I then made a table which I distributed to everyone connected to our program with a COMMUNICATION CARD. For example, I put Adia Barnes in charge of community service. From that point on, every time someone reached out to our campus for a player to read to an elementary school, Adia was contacted. She reached out to our players. She arranged for them to participate. It didn't take more than a month of people reaching out to me and me referring them to their table of duties to know who to contact.

The little extra work on the front end is worth it.

If I had to do it all over again, that table and card would have been in effect from Day 1 instead of day 201!!

I obviously continued making some bad decisions throughout the year, but it wasn't because I had exhausted my energy.



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I STOPPED CONFRONTING THINGS THAT NEEDED TO BE CONFRONTED

This one occurred as a result of combining other mistakes... getting out of shape, exhausting my daily decision making energy on meaningless stuff, trying to do too much stuff. Those mistakes left me exhausted when issues that needed to be confronted arose. I had wasted my energy on things that didn't matter that I simply ignored areas that needed the most attention.

Some examples to help explain... poor body language during practice, staff missing "deadlines" on things that needed to be done, off the court actions that threatened our standards, cliques forming on team as result of long season together, sleeping/eating habits, studying hall and class absences... etc.

I would be have exhausted my natural body allotment of energy on things that didn't matter by noon and a matter come up after lunch that I didn't confront but should have.

It takes A LOT of energy to consistently CONFRONT. It is emotionally draining to talk to players about roles and role acceptance. It is excruciating to talk about and explain playing time. Many coaches simply refuse to do it as a result. And I believe that is a huge mistake too for coaches to make and could write up another full piece on that, but it's NOT one of the mistakes I made last year. I learned that one back as a high school head coach. You HAVE to talk to players (and their parent's) about playing time.

Back to topic...

When you stop confront, you start allowing—Papa Neighbors

Heard it said many times at clinics by many great coaches... you are either coaching it, or tolerating it!!

And if your players think you are tolerating the wrong things, you will lose them. You will lose your GOOD ONES. They see you allowing a player to exhibit poor habits, you lose their respect and run the danger of them doing it as well.

Feed your Eagles, starve your turkeys... another Papa Neighbors illustration right there. If you feed your "turkeys" you lose your EAGLES and none of us as coaches can afford to lose our few EAGLES.

So, you better keep your energy up. You do this by conserving your energy in wasteful areas and having the experience to know what to confront and what to tolerate.



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I STOPPED CONFRONTING THINGS THAT NEEDED TO BE CONFRONTED

You have to know what you will tolerate and what you won't... Know Your No's... That was a great topic that Kevin Eastman once covered. You need to make your list out. You need to KNOW your NO's... How can you expect your players to know if you don't even know yourself!!

You can't take Pat Summitt's Daily Dozen, or Coach K's Gold Standards, or Bob Knight's this, or Geno's that. It HAS to be yours.

You are the person that knows you best. And you should also be the person that knows your team better than anyone.

Get the list... Confront any of your NO's

Keep your energy up by staying in shape, eating/sleeping the best you can as a coach, use your decision making energy wisely, and delegate things that don't pertain directly to winning and losing.

This mistake probably cost us a couple of games and without a doubt led to me not having our team peaked at the right time. I won't go into a ton of detail in this written piece, but grab me at a Clinic or the Final 4 and we can talk about it in more depth.

Of all the mistakes we have covered so far, this is the one that I HAVE NOT MADE in YEAR 2!!

I still don't eat like I should all the time. I am in better shape but not great shape. I still am afraid to try some things. I still don't always delegate well.

**BUT... I DO CONFRONT!!!**

A book that really helped me was **CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS** by Paterson-Grenny-McMillian-Switzer.



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I FORGOT TO KEEP MYSELF CHARGED

I was on day 145 of the job when this one hit me. We were eating as a staff at our favorite “working lunch” spot that happened to be next door to the Apple Store. The move to head coaches office also meant I needed a “personal phone” and a “personal ipad” due to the state ethics laws in the state of Washington. Needless to say, I need more chargers than I had outlets in my office!!! After my usual chicken lettuce wraps had been devoured, I snuck over to the store and bought 10 lightning cables. I thought it was the best investment I had made yet...and the smartest. I would have a set of chargers at home for nights, at the office for days, in my backpack for travel, and in my truck for travel. I wouldn't be wasting anymore time worrying about did I pack them. I wouldn't waste time unplugging and replugging. Good time management decision. Good investment.

Then it hit me. I had just spent more time, effort, and money to re-charge my technology in one afternoon than I had spent on “recharging myself” in the previous 144 days!!!

I hadn't picked up my guitar. I hadn't updated my Top 1000 movie list by watching a new movie in theaters or on the ipad I just spent money to keep charged. I hadn't been to a live music show. I hadn't read a book that didn't include the word “leadership”, or “Management”, or “Strategy”, or “Motivation. I hadn't played golf. I hadn't grilled out. I hadn't done anything to charge myself!!

Unlike the last few mistakes we have covered that dealt with WHY I didn't have energy, this mistake had everything to do with not paying attention to the toll a transition of positions takes on your body.

I will bet that you make sure you pack your phone charger everywhere you go. I bet most of you reading this have a mophie or some other form of backup battery. While it's certainly a necessity for coaches, you can't forget to pack something that will charge you as well!

You have to do things to stay in coaching rhythm. I have long given up on trying to find “balance”. It's impossible in this profession and people that try to find/have a balance are wasting valuable time. Find the rhythm. That comes by charging yourself every time you charge your phone. So, I started doing just that.

At night when I would charge my gadgets, I would pick up my guitar and play until my fingers hurt. If I charged my phone in the car, I would plug in a CD and listen to the latest Wade Bowen, Randy Rogers, or Josh Abbott Band CD. If I plugged my phone into an airplane outlet, I would pull out a book like Boys in the Boat, or Unbroken, or Let's Go Crazy (the Prince book about the movie Purple Rain.)



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I FORGOT TO KEEP MYSELF CHARGED

Just think about all the things you do or have done to keep your phone charged. Answer these truthfully:

- 1) Have you ever carried a charger into a restaurant to charge while you are dining out?
- 2) Have you ever sit on a nasty airport carpet just so you can be near a plug in?
- 3) Have you ever paid someone or offered someone money to borrow their charger?
- 4) Have you ever plugged your phone into someone's laptop without their knowledge?
- 5) Have you ever turned down your screen brightness just to save that last 5% of charge to make one last text?

I'm guessing you probably have some that I haven't even thought of!!!

We will delete apps, close open apps, and turn of roaming just to save that 1 or 2 precious %'s of charge.

Don't treat your gadgets better than you treat yourself.

Technology and equipment are a necessary evil in today's work place. They can make us more productive. They can get separate us from people who choose not to use them. They can be a resource. But never, are they more important to success than you.

The hours a coach spends to perform the many duties we are given must include things that bring joy to your life. The book "How Full is Your Bucket" is a great resource to cover this more in depth. We have long hours. We have hard hours. And we have unexpected hours. If you aren't charged, you aren't going to be as good as you can be.

You obviously don't have the available number of hours to do everything YOU want to do. So simply your life. Do the things that bring true joy into your life. Strip away the things that can wait until a later time. Strip away things that waste your time. And be sure to strip away things that drain your battery.

Charge yourself every time you charge a gadget!!



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW TIGHT MY FRIEND CIRCLE WOULD BECOME

Papa Neighbors said, "When you get to the top, you don't make new friends. So on the way up the ladder you better know who your true friends are and fight like hell to keep em."

I remember the lesson/lecture vividly today, but took me more than a 100 days to realize it when I went from assistant coach to head coach.

Some old "friends" were jealous. Some old "friends" didn't feel like I was one of them anymore. Some "old" friends were upset because I didn't hire them on my staff. Some old "friends" suddenly thought we were better friends than we really were.

Your circle of friends will shrink instantly.

You will have mixed emotions initially but in the long run, it's a good thing.

The short run however is a challenge.

People you have been sitting on those hard, wooden bleachers during the recruiting period as fellow assistants will look at you differently. Some of them were expecting their cell phone to ring with job offers. And when it doesn't, they will treat you differently.

People you have been hanging out with at the Final 4 in the piano bars and hotel lobbies will think that because you have shared a beer with them, that you believe they can organize your recruiting or handle your scouting.

You will feel alienated but along the way it will become clearer and clearer who your true friends are.

This mistake may NOT have been avoidable. It may be one of those necessary "learning opportunities" that everyone must endure. I do think, however, that I could have handled the disappointments better. The learning these people "aren't my true friends" experience.

I wouldn't have let it bother me as much or as long. I wouldn't have dwelt on the repercussions of losing friends. I wouldn't have spent as much energy and effort trying to follow my Papa's advice and fight to keep them as long.

Hopefully making you aware this happened in my situation could help you manage the inevitable better than I did.



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I HAD NO IDEA HOW TO MANAGE A STAFF OR HOW TO “MANGAGE UP”

Going from “being on a staff” to “having a staff” overnight is one of the greatest challenges I faced. It’s also an area that now, almost two years in, I continue to struggle with. It’s hard. My situation was particularly challenging because five of my staff members were co-workers, equals, and colleagues the day before my hiring was announced.

One day you are 100% focused on doing everything in your power to make your boss look good, do their job better, do their job easier, and being ready to do whatever is asked. Your world is focused on doing What You Do. The next day, you ARE the boss and your actions and decisions effect the lives and lives of families for other people.

As an assistant my actions reflected only on me.

As an assistant my decisions only had repercussions on me.

As an assistant my accountability was to one person.

As a head coach your actions reflect on numerous people... the people who hired you, the people who work for you, they people who you lead.

As a head coach your decisions impacts a pyramid of people that cascades down and down and down.

As a head coach you are accountable to more than one person. You have many people ‘UP’ the ladder now that you are accountable to.

The learning curve for making this adjustment is expected. Most people will give you some free passes as you learn to navigate the waters for the first time. But it’s NOT LONG ENOUGH... trust me.

You can read all the leadership books you want to. You can seek advice from mentors. You can have a plan. All that helps for sure, but nothing can actually prepare you for the daily dealings that you have signed up for until you live them.

So, with that said, I say, read everything. Have a plan. Talk to your mentors... AND then expect to get it wrong some. Don’t expect it to work perfectly. Be adaptable earlier than I was. Don’t be rigid. It’s NOT a my way or highway situation. It can’t be. There is a great book called YOU CAN’T FIRE EVERYBODY that I wish I had read before I made the move.



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I HAD NO IDEA HOW TO MANAGE A STAFF OR HOW TO “MANGAGE UP”

You have to surround yourself with people that you trust and trust you. This way there is an understanding that you are both working through the process of figuring it out. While there will be mistakes made on both sides, you can survive it all and in time will begin to thrive. It will become very obvious who believes in and who is faking it. You will learn valuable lessons along the way that will shape your identity and the culture that surrounds your program.

You need to know what inspires each member of your staff. From your “chief of staff” to your volunteer, you must have full understanding what inspires them to be a coach and drives them to excel in a profession that we all know can grind you down. Just like your players, each of them will be unique. You can't treat them all the same. For some it's good old money... incentives. Others it's future jobs and responsibilities. Others it's the being a part of the here and now. Other's will be inspired by the intrinsic rewards being a part of team provides. Some day I am going to write up a FIVE LANGUAGES OF COACHING in reference to the great book by Gary Chapman THE FIVE LANGUAGES OF LOVE (which is a must read for anyone in any kind of relationship.) Until then, just be aware that what inspires you, doesn't inspire everyone.

Sure you can get a staff of people that are inspired by the same things you are, but that is dangerous. Then you have YES people who may not tell you when you are wrong and when you are making these 418 mistakes!!!

Managing UP is a term I picked up from some reading. It's how you communicate with the people who hired you and the people who hired them!!!

These are the people who believed in you most. They wouldn't have hired you if they didn't. It's imperative you keep them in the loop. It's imperative you tell them things FIRST before they hear it from someone or somewhere else. People UP the ladder hate surprises. Don't YOU hate surprises from your players? Well, you are one of their players!!

It's okay to show them vulnerability. My direct supervisor told me from Day 1 it's okay to be a little scared.... It's a big deal to be a head coach and if it doesn't cause you a little anxiety, then you aren't really the person for the job and don't have a full understanding of what is at stake!! That message drove me. And why I didn't make many mistakes in this area, I put it on here so that you don't either.

I fully believe that this is what allowed us to survive my 418 Mistakes and actually find a way to win 20 games, keep our players off the front page and on the sports page, and raise our team GPA to unprecedented success.





# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## I HAD NO IDEA HOW TO MANAGE A STAFF OR HOW TO “MANGAGE UP”

While this wraps up the 12 categories I mentioned in the beginning, it segues nicely into the fact that WE DID ACTUALLY DO SOME THINGS RIGHT!!!

That may become an off season project.

Until then, I hope this piece will help a variety of people. I hope it will help long time head coaches as well as young assistant coaches who may simply file this piece way for “their day”.

And yes, I do have a list of Mistakes I am making in year 2. For those of you scoring at home that lists stands at 57. Yes, I have made a few twice but only a few.

Some of the new ones of have been BIGGER while others are smaller.

Needless to say, making mistakes is part of the profession we are in. We are the ones who choose a profession where we invite people to (in fact beg them at times) to come into our workplace and watch us work. Can you imagine 250 or 2,500 or 25,000 coming into an insurance mans office and watching him settle a claim. Or a surgeon preforming open heart procedure in front of that many people AND being broadcast on the Pac 12 Network!!!

We choose this profession. We have to accept the scrutiny that comes with it. In fact, you must embrace it!

You’re not going to be perfect. You can try to be, but you’re not going to be.

While you certainly don’t have to keep a running list of your mistakes, I do think every coach can benefit from recognizing their faults. Moving on from their failures and rebounding from them improved.

# Informational Interviewing

**What is it?** Informational interviewing is a conversation (in person, on the phone, via email) with someone knowledgeable in a specific career field or industry to explore a career path and to build your network. These conversations provide an opportunity to gather career-related information and advice that is typically not available from written or internet sources. Informational interviewing also allows you create contacts and build relationships with people in your career field.

**Who Should I Interview?** Anyone who is knowledgeable about a certain career field and/or can provide networking sources. This is a very small world, and chances are you know more people that are good sources of information than you think. Brainstorm people you already know: friends, roommates, classmates, family members, professors and past supervisors. Think of how you can reach people you don't know that are in your career field. Try UNM alumni as great sources for information or professional associations in your field. Attending a regional or national conference is an excellent way to make new contacts. Ways to interview:

**How Do I Interview Someone?** Ideas: Ask the person out for coffee. Email them to set up a phone appointment. Conduct a Skype interview if they are out of town. There are lots of ways to reach out to people. Use social media such as LinkedIn. Don't be shy to ask for an informational interview. People like to talk about their profession—especially if they are passionate about their work.

**Do Initial Research.** Conduct research on the career field and/or industry before an informational interview. Remember, an informational interview is done to get information you can't find in career literature, trade publications, company information or on the Internet. Therefore, ask questions that go beyond the obvious. Also, try to find out as much as possible about the professional and his or her organization, as you want to appear knowledgeable, informed and interested.

**Develop Interview Questions.** Using your research, develop questions you would like answered in the interview. Think about what you hope to learn and the kinds of questions that will elicit that information. Most people prefer to answer questions that require them to reflect on their work. Open-ended, evaluative questions are often an effective way to start the conversation. Customize questions to fit your personality, interests, values, career goals and other criteria that are important to you.



## Topics for questions:

- **What the Job/Work is Like** - Challenges, frustrations, rewards encountered; kinds of decisions required; how time is spent on the job.
- **Motivation and Interest** - How the professional was attracted to this career and what advice do they have for you?
- **Essential Skills and Abilities** - Both necessary and desirable skills, education, experience required, training or preparation.
- **Lifestyle Implications of the Work** - Salary/benefits, travel, pressure, flexibility, security.
- **Work Environment** - Physical setting, people (colleagues and clients), organizational structure and culture.
- **Current Issues in the Industry** – Personal perspective that goes beyond what you have read.
- **Ways to Get More Information** - Professional journals, professional organizations, other contacts or networking sources.

## Potential Questions

- What is typical day like for you?
- What has your career path been like?
- What professional organizations do you belong to?
- What trends do you see influencing the profession?
- What is the biggest problem facing the profession today?
- What are the best sources for learning more about the industry?
- Is there anyone else you know that I should be talking to?
- May I let them know you referred me?
- What are the most effective techniques for getting a job in this field?
- Is there anyone else you know that I should be talking to?
- What is the preferred way to network within this field?
- What next steps might you suggest for me?

## The Interview

- Be clear and direct about the goal of the interview. Remember, you are requesting information, not a job.
- Always cite who referred you: “My aunt, Jennifer Romero suggested I contact you as a source of information in the field of biology.”
- Stress that you will meet him or her at their convenience. However, be prepared to settle for a phone interview on the spot.
- Indicate how much time you will require. Most interviews will last 30-60 minutes.

**Confirm the Interview:** Call or email to confirm the interview about 48 hours prior.

**Dress Appropriately:** While this is not a formal job interview, appearances matter. Wear appropriate professional/business attire.

**Arrive Early:** Arrive about 15 minutes prior to your interview. As with any professional meeting, never be late.

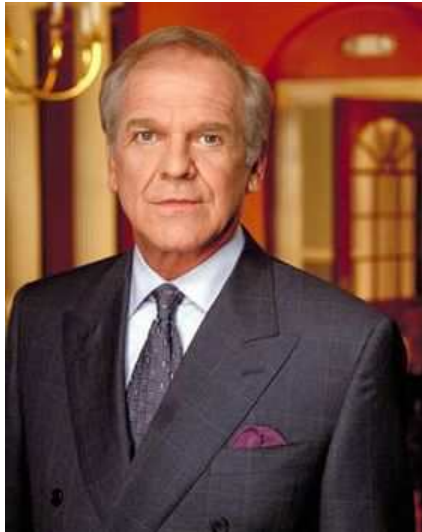
**Act Professionally:** Showcase your professional attitude and composure to make a good impression. Networking starts here.



# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

By Mike Neighbors

## TRUST, TALENT, TIME



**Leo McGarry (pictured to the left) is a fictional television character on the series THE WEST WING. He was portrayed by the late John Spencer as the President's Chief of Staff. Throughout the six season run, Leo was at the right hand of the President of the United States (the POTUS for you West Wingers). He was in the office every morning before the POTUS. He was in the office until the POTUS left for the day. He coordinated the daily functions of the office. He never let a problem get passed his office to the oval office. He provided the POTUS with input when asked. He had ideas of his own, most of which were never used, but never was off message with the message of the POTUS. He literally took a bullet for the POTUS and figuratively on many more occasions. And on most days, no one ever knew who he was.**

**In other words, Leo McGarry was the ultimate ASSISTANT COACH.**

**Although I never saw him with a whistle or a clipboard, I found myself keeping a notepad handy jotting down thought after thought about coaching as I watched the DVDs. I didn't watch a single episode of the series until it was actually off the air. But thanks to the wonders of modern technology (and lack of cable after moving to Seattle) I was able to watch the six year run in less than two months.**

**I took my West Wing notes and combined them with various notes I have gathered over the last 13 years as an assistant coach. From the backs of napkins to pizza box tops, I have been collecting various people's thoughts on the qualities and actions of good assistant coaches. Whether it was sitting on Vic Schaefer's couch watching him break down film or sitting in on Kelly Bond's recruiting meetings, I was observing and trying to learn. I have read as many on-line blogs from Bob Starkey and Kevin Eastman as I could get my hands on and randomly picked the brain of many other coaches from all sports and levels.**

# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

**This last season, I have been trying to organize them all into my own philosophy and a presentable format to share with others...taking all the anecdotes, sayings, tips, lists from others and merging them with many personal success and failures. Now, with the help of Newsletter members, I believe I have it down to the simplest BACK-OF-A-NAPKIN formula.**

**To be a good assistant coach, I believe your Head Coach needs three things from you:**

**TRUST  
TALENT  
TIME**

**Each of these have many facets. Each of them can be accomplished in many different ways. Each of them may carry slightly more importance to certain head coaches. Each of them may carry particular emphasis based on your job duties... but in my experience, all 3 are necessary if you want to be the best for your head coach.**

**We will begin with TRUST for two reasons. One, it is normally the first thing head coaches mention when they talk about the loyalty factor. Two, because to me as an assistant, TRUST is what keeps us from having to be perfect on a daily basis.**

**For each of these labels, I am simply going to list the various notes that I categorized under each. They are in no particular order of importance and some of the elements overlap.**

# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

## **TRUST**

**Loyalty is a common word when you begin picking brains of head coaches. I feel TRUST is the highest form of loyalty so I choose it as one of the three benchmarks. In today's times, TRUST is hard earned and valuable. When a head coach feels TRUST, you can make mistakes. You can have errors in a scouting report. You can miss evaluated a potential recruit. Because they TRUST in your intentions rather than your actions. So, let's list some ways you can earn TRUST.**

**REMEMBER IT IS NOT YOUR TEAM... The team belongs to your head coach. They are the ones who are responsible for every aspect of the program. While your investment is certainly valuable, it is NOT your team. In all your actions, you are valuable but never irreplaceable. You are important but not necessary. There are 100's if not 1000's of people who would love a shot at the job you have. Keeping this in mind in all your actions and decisions go a long way to earning TRUST.**

**MAKE YOUR POINT BUT NEVER ARGUE IT... The very best assistants understand it is their job to make suggestions and the head coaches job to make decisions. State your case, back it up with evidence, and then let head coach make the decision on it. And then move on. Don't allow your pride to be hurt if the idea isn't implemented. Don't sulk. Don't debate it with other assistants on your staff or friends on other staffs. MOVE ON. A great scene from the West Wing has a presidential candidate say to an "assistant coach"... "I will give you all the time you need to try to talk me out of doing something. But once we open that door and walk out, I'll expect your full support". That is pyramid messaging. And that is something every great assistant coach must master.**

**PYRAMID MESSAGING... From the simplest thing like calling a spot on the floor the same thing as your head coach to more in depth concepts such as enforcing the culture of the program, the message from the head coach must be echoed from the head assistant to the head manager. Each link must stay on message.**

# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

**ENFORCE THE CULTURE OF PROGRAM...** Once the Head Coach has established the culture of the program, it is the job of every assistant below to accept nothing less. We all know through experience, that we will get from our players what we tolerate from our players. So, you must never tolerate anything that is inconsistent with the culture of the program. We must get players off the fence and on point.

**BE THE HEAD COACH OF YOUR DUTIES...** Once you are given a responsibility, become the HEAD COACH of it in your thinking and your actions. Immerse yourself in that area. Become an expert in that field. Know the rules. Know the decision makers. Be aware of changes in the field. Have full knowledge and accountability when it comes to these things.

**WEED THE GARDEN...** When you show the leadership and confidence to handle things that don't need to be enter the door of your head coach, you will begin to earn TRUST. The hard part of this is learning the things your head coach wants to know about when they happened and the things they want to hear about after you have handled them. This one is a trial and error and no doubt you will learn quickly from your mistakes.

**DON'T BE A "YES" PERSON OR A "NO" PERSON...** If you have a different idea, express it. A former head coach once said to me "If we all have the same ideas, someone is obsolete." Have the confidence and the evidence to support your opinion. But you also don't want to take this to the extreme and all the sudden become that person that NEVER agrees and is always in the devils advocate position. While it is certainly wise to look at an issue from all angles, you will lose your effectiveness and the TRUST of your head coach if you are always on one extreme or the other.

**TAKE A BULLET...** Step up and admit a mistake that you make that could reflect poorly on your head coach. Maybe you miss handle an academic situation with a tutor. Before that tutor can contact their supervisor and tell them what an ass you are, reach out and take the bullet. Sometimes it might not even be your fault.

# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

**NEVER LET YOUR HEAD COACH BE SURPRISED...** This one goes hand in hand with WEED THE GARDEN. While you want to keep some things from making it down the hall to the head coaches office, there should never be an instance when you head coach is made aware of a serious situation in one of your areas. Keeping them in the loop is easy with the technology we function with in 2012. Shoot them a text and let them in on things. The last thing you want as an assistant in charge of academics is for your head coach to learn of an eligibility issue. Way easier to deal with the situation as it is occurring rather than after the fact.

**BE THERE FOR YOUR PLAYERS...** when all else fails around you, be there for the players. Be there when they need you most. They don't need you when they hit the game winner, they need you when they miss it. Be there when the head coach rips them a new one in film. Be there when they failed a test. Be there when they have a flat tire. Be there when they bounce their first check. But be there for them. Don't be the first person off the court after practice in a race to get back to something in your office.

**BE OVER PREPARED...** Whether you are ever called upon to speak in a meeting, be prepared to. Whether you are ever asked to lead a segment of practice, be prepared to. Whether you are ever asked to give input on a situation, be prepared to.

**IT'S OKAY IF YOU DON'T KNOW AN ANSWER...** While you always want to have the correct answer in every situation, that simply isn't reality. If you don't know something admit it. I followed that advice someone had given me in a Sweet 16 against Vanderbilt in 2010. Coming into a timeout with 26.7 seconds to play and the ball on the side in a tie game, I was asked what defense the Commodores would be in. Based on 12 game films and the previous 39 minutes, the answer was simple... I HAD NO IDEA!! They had given us five different looks and routinely throughout the year changed defenses in these situations. So the head coach drew up a play that would work against a man or zone. Long story short. The play worked. We advanced to the Elite 8 as a result and I had earned a level of TRUST.



# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

**NEVER USE THE PHRASE “I UNDERSTAND YOUR FRUSTRATION”... When you are meeting with a player, never let any words come from your mouth that would under cut the head coach. The second you do this in an effort to be-friend a player for some reason, you have lost TRUST. This speaks toward the staying on message with your head coach but is a specific situation that I see so many young coaches make as they are learning to separate themselves from the players. While you can say you see they are frustrated or share with them methods to cope, you can never let them for one second feel that the head coach is NOT making the best decisions for the team. Unfortunately, we all probably know coaches who have advanced in this game as a result of not doing this, I can assure you they won't last in the long run.**

**DON'T CHASE EVERY JOB THAT OPENS... As an assistant it is natural to have ambition. It is natural to want what is best for your family and your personal situation. It is NOT okay to go after every job that opens and especially those that might be perceived as lateral. In a perfect world, you have a clear idea of your path and you share that with your head coach. This way they are aware of your ambitions and will help you reach them. They are much more likely to pick the phone up on your behalf when they TRUST that you pursuing only the jobs that are consistent with your goals. Give them a list of schools that are your DREAM jobs and work from that. Obviously, they may change of your career but a yearly “check-up” with your head coach is healthy in developing the TRUST factor.**

**TWO EARS ONE MOUTH... God gave us one two ears and one mouth for a reason... to listen twice as much as we talk. Loose lips sink ships is a saying for a reason. You have to keep your team business within the team. So many young coaches get caught up in the gossip game. Those coaches rarely survive the long run.**

**Once you have earned the TRUST of your head coach, you are a big step toward having a great working relationship that is mutually beneficial. When you have this situation, only something out of that head coaches control will jeopardize your role as an ASSISTANT COACH... an alcohol related issue, violation of NCAA or school policy, or inappropriate relationship.**

# LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE

## TALENT

**TRUST alone is not enough. We all have friends we trust with our biggest secrets that don't possess the necessary talents to help us succeed. TALENT becomes our second point every ASSISTANT COACH needs.**

**LEARN YOUR CRAFT... When you are given an area of responsibility, learn everything there is to know on the area. Read books, attend seminars, seek out experts in the field, and then make them your own. If you are in charge of recruiting and don't have computer skills, you are behind. In today's world of technology, if you can't create a FACEBOOK page or a TWITTER account you are behind. If you can't organize a database you can't function. If you aren't comfortable on the phone with people you may not know, you are behind. If you are assigned PLAYER DEVELOPMENT and you don't understand the psyche of the players you are working with, you are behind. If you are in charge of film breakdown and can not operate your editing system without I.T. department by your side, you are behind. You MUST learn your craft. The best of the best are on the cutting edge of everything and are never in catch up mode. The best of the best are setting the trends that others are following. In today's world of technology there is no excuse for ignorance.**

**BE WILLING TO DO ANYTHING HEAD COACH NEEDS DONE... Too many young assistants rank the importance of duties in their own mind and are influenced as a result of their own perspective. If it is assigned, it is important. Being willing to things no one else is willing to do is a talent just like being able to do something no other assistant can do. This makes you valuable. The more indispensable you are to a head coach, the better your team will function and in turn the better your career will advance. No job is too small to be important to you. There is NO job outside of your "job description" as an assistant.**

# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

**ANTICIPATE THE NEEDS OF HEAD COACH... this is a talent that requires some experience and trial/error. Each year as things happen in our program, I make a note in a calendar so that when the next year rolls around I have a blueprint of when things happen. For instance, each year when a season is beginning, every player on the team has aspirations of playing time. Before you have played a game, every player is hopefully of a certain number of minutes they might play or maybe that they will be named a starter. As a result, as that first scrimmage arises, every team goes through a period where some players' hopes are not realized. For us that time is in late October. Therefore, we have a team building session each pre-season that helps us address this and better prepare our players for the situation. This can also be related to daily basis situations. I once worked for a head coach who always forgot their socks on road trips, so I learned to pack two. I also worked for a head coach who always forgot to bring a whistle to practice so we made sure managers sit one out daily. Most of the time, these are simple things you learn by just paying attention!!**

**ADD VALUE... Give your head coach/team something that adds value. Spend the off-season on a project that adds value to your program. Develop overseas contact. Meet with academic support staff and implement a plan to check classes. Spend time with experts learning how to better use ipads within your team. Have lunch with admissions department people who can make or break your life at the college level. Vacation near a coach you respect and spend a couple of days shadowing their every move. Work with marketing department on ways to increase attendance. Read books. Add value.**

**HAVE POSITIVE BODY LANGUAGE... This one was a personal challenge. As a young coach, I was so invested into the wrong things that sometimes my body language wasn't positive and quite frankly was distracting at times. I became so engrossed in games/practices at times that my body language didn't reflect well upon me as an assistant and hindered our team from progressing. This goes to Kevin Eastman's point of "evaluation vs emotion"... as an assistant we should be in constant evaluation mode. This is not to say there isn't a time and place of a well timed "explosion" but it certainly loses its effectiveness if it's the rule rather than the exception. The negatives of poor body language far exceed anything positive...**

# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

**BE AN ENERGY GIVER NOT A TAKER...** this is very similar to what we just previously discussed about body language. This is an over all energy though. If your head coach is constantly spending time pumping you up, that is wasted time and energy that could have been spent on a current player, a recruit, or some other area of your program that needs attention. **DON'T BE NEEDY!!!**

**WORK WITH THE RESOURCES YOU HAVE...** ask for what you need, but realize you're never going to have everything you want. Work with the resources you are provided and make the most of them. Your head coach will work to provide every thing in their budgetary ability. But those coaches who are always talking about what others have don't last long in this game. If you really need something the budget doesn't allow, buy it with your own money. When ipads were first introduced, it fell during a time that we had utilized our budget for that year. Rather than wait until the next fiscal year, I bought one with my own money. It hurt the discretionary budget personally but the value it added to our team was worth more than anything I could have used it on personally. If it's THAT important, make it happen. If you can't, at least don't complain about it.

**BE A CONNECTOR...** cultivate ability to connect with players, recruits, administration, parents, etc. Your head coach has so many "other duties as assigned" that your ability to connect with people key to your program can be extremely valuable. If you can build a relationship with a core group of people around your program you are improving the quality of your head coaches day as well as improving your own worth. The ability to serve as a buffer is valuable to every head coach. Many times this goes from being a "buffer" to being a "leader" when dealing with certain aspects around your team. Some people might call this brown-nosing or schmoozing... it's not, it's a necessary component of every successful program.

**HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF EVERY ASPECT OF PROGRAM...** while you want to be Head Coach of your main areas of responsibility it is also crucial to have a grasp of all aspects of the program. You don't have to have the depth of knowledge in these areas, but is important to know they exist and are valuable to the head coach. This can be done without stepping on toes of those in charge of those areas. The best of best do this.

# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

**WANT IT RIGHT NO MATTER WHO HAS THE IDEA... Being an assistant coach is very competitive even within staffs at times. But the very best staffs embrace this idea. You can't worry about who had the idea or who gets the credit. If you do worry about that, you will either drive yourself crazy on your current staff or burn yourself out of the game completely.**

**GROW THE GAME... the very best assistants find time to mentor younger, less experienced staff members. Although it is certainly not a must, the very best do. The most confident do. As with the above paragraph, some assistants are afraid to help others grow because they worry it will reflect poorly on them. That should never be the case for a good assistant. They should be confident enough to share their experiences. Has this backfired on people? Sure, but in the long run it is best to be out of those situations anyway.**

**Talent is ever changing and ongoing. Just like with our players, we want to constantly be striving to improve on our weak areas while continually growing stronger in areas we already excel. The very moment that a good assistant becomes content and feel like they'll know it all; somewhere, someone else is surpassing their efforts.**

**Who could have predicted in 2000 that the ability to build a FACEBOOK or MYSPACE page would be a valuable asset? Who could have predicted that we could build Aps on our phone to help organize our daily routines?**

**Stay on the cutting edge of technology. Maintain contact with a core group of peers who you can readily share ideas and thoughts with. Read the latest books on leadership, management, and psychology. These are all ways to ensure you are not left behind or stuck with a dead idea.**

# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

## **TIME**

**Once a head coach believes they can TRUST you and you have proven to have the necessary TALENT to accomplish the duties assigned, they want to be sure you have the TIME to do it happen effectively. You have to present a clear picture to your head coach that you have your life balanced in all aspects so you can meet the time demands that are often placed upon an assistant coach. You can be a single person with a fish or a married person with six children and do this equally as well... and every situation in between those two extremes.**

**Each presents unique challenges, but the head coach must know you can manage the TIME aspect of this profession. We have all seen unsupportive partners cost people jobs. We have seen single assistants with time consuming hobbies lose their jobs as a result. We have seen coaches young and old unable to find TIME to do the job.**

**There is no ideal profile. But one thing the best assistants have is TIME.**

**It just seems like they have more than the 24 hours everyone else does.**

**So, how do you go about proving you have created a lifestyle for yourself (and/or family) to your head coach?**

**WORK SMARTER... We are all afforded 24 hours in day, 168 hours a week, 8750 hours a year. It's what we do in those hours that separate us. You must find ways to maximize the hours you have to perform your duties while still maintaining your life away from the team. Lean too far one way on your job suffers. Lean too far the other and you risk burnout or losing your life outside the game. The very, very best have this balance. It's easy to spot the assistants who don't have this. They are work alcoholics and when they are on the job they don't even appear to be having fun!! As is true with all other areas of basketball, you must determine what works for you, have a plan of attack, and the discipline to execute it. Again, gather the best organizational ideas and make them your own.**

# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

**GET THINGS DONE IN A TIMELY FASHION...** when assigned a task, get it done. Don't stress over perfection because it never will be perfect. Do it to the best of your ability and let your head coach know you are ready for the next task. This gives your head coach confidence that you can function independently and do not require constant follow up or monitoring. We have assigned tasks to people who ask so many questions and for so much input that in the end, we feel like we did the project and could have saved the time just doing it our self. When your head coach sees that you can complete tasks in a timely manner they sense you have balance.

**TAKE THINGS OFF THE DESK OF THE HEAD COACH...** You can accomplish this a couple of ways. The best way is take them a completed task that wasn't even assigned. For example, I am a nut for stats. I used to memorize the backs of baseball cards and have my uncles quiz me on batting averages and rbi's. As a result, I am fascinated by stats and trends. A couple of years ago, I began tracking our line-up efficiencies... the points scored minus the points allowed for each line up we used in a game. Over the course of a single game it didn't yield much useable information. But after five games and then ten games, I saw specific trends that helped us better manage our substitution patterns and in turn win extra games because we played our most efficient line-ups accordingly. The second way, is simply to ask your head coach if there is something on their desk or during their day that they simply hate to do. It might be paperwork or it might be their radio show. But by asking and showing desire to help, you might find yourself voting on the Top 25 or sitting in on a post game interview.

**BE OVERPREPARED...** Maintain a list of ideas beside your computer for when you head coach seeks input on any aspect of the program. Think ahead of the game and "outside the box". Being over prepared will demonstrate that not only do you have time to complete your assigned duties but you also have time to perform more. If you consistently offer no new input, it appears that you are bogged down in the things you are assigned. This is not possible unless your main duties are covered but this is a sure way to show you are ready and capable of more. At the very least, it builds your head coaches confidence that you are capable.

# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

**HAVE A “TO DON’T” LIST... most of us make a TO DO list to help organize our day. A good piece of advice I also implemented was a TO DON’T list. For example, it might say, DO NOT open my email until I have been at my desk and written three personal notes to recruit. DO NOT open Facebook until I have return all the day’s emails. DO NOT return any phone calls an hour before practice. DO NOT leave for the day until I have communicated with three current players and checked on them for the day.**

**BE CONSISTENT... in other words, don’t be MOODY. Don’t be high as kite one day and down in the depths the next. Sure you are going to have good days and bad ones. But you can’t be a rollercoaster of emotion. This gives off the signal that you are not balanced. A consistent demeanor displays that you can handle the crisis mode days that often arise in this profession. It displays that no matter what happens, you have a response in mind and a plan to execute it.**

**GATHER INFORMATION... have a wealth of information readily available. Many times it won’t be used or asked for by your head coach. But having it in the times that they do makes a big impression. This is something that comes from observation. Have stats ready to back up a statement about offensive or defensive production. Have film clips ready to show if you want to implement a new inbounds series. Have access to more if more is needed. Don’t present an idea without evidence to support.**

**OVER PREPARE THE HEAD COACH... If they are going on a road trip, program the various directions into their GPS as well as hand them a file with printed off directions and confirmation codes. If they are married or have a partner, send a copy to them as well. They will appreciate this (might want to ask early on in your career as they might NOT want them to have it... haha) If they are off to do an interview on an opponent they have yet to watch film, hand them a very preliminary scouting report so they can speak intelligently about them. One of the best techniques I have used, is placing a card on the head coaches chair or computer after they leave for the day with something we have the following day. This is there in case they beat me into the office and start their day.**



# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

**FIRST ONE IN OR LAST ONE TO LEAVE...** I see too many inexperienced coaches worry about being the first one in AND the last one to leave. While I think that is certainly admirable, I don't feel it reflects directly toward their ability to manage time. Sure it shows dedication, but I have learned the very best head coaches want assistants who work until they are done. Very rarely if ever do I now set a time on what time I am going in the office or what time I am planning on leaving on days without set meetings or events. I have for the last ten seasons followed this one however... If one day the head coach beats me to the office, I stay until they leave that afternoon. If I beat the head coach to the office that day, then I work until I am done and check in with them to see if there is anything else they need for me for the day.

**ANSWER YOUR PHONE...** or reply to a text/email. Technology allows us to stay linked more closely than ever. That can sometimes be a challenge. But never be that assistant who ignores a call or delays a return call to your head coach. I see it happen every single year on the road recruiting and I just shake my head. What kind of relationship do you have that you don't take their calls??? Are there going to be times you wish you hadn't, surely. But by answering it when it rings or replying quickly, again you are showing that you have enough balance in your life to effectively function away from your desk. This also builds TRUST that we spoke of initially.

**CHECK IN WHEN YOU ARE AWAY...** Take a vacation. Get away from the gym. Do something totally non job related. But before you leave, make sure your head coach knows where you are and when you will be returning. While you are gone, check in with them just to see what's up. Upon return, hit the office and get back on task. Taking the time away will insure your head coach that you DO HAVE A LIFE. It will display to them that you can balance your life and are not nearing burn-out. This will reassure them that you are handling the responsibilities they have give you and may be ready for more.

# **LOBO INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE**

**Jacob Lew. Bruce Reed. Ronald Klain. David Addinton.**

**Any of those names ring a bell? Yeah, not to me either. Those are the last four White House Chief of Staff. They are the real live Leo McGarry's. These are the people who are closer to the President than even the secret service. These are the people who are behind the scenes making sure the most powerful man on the face of the earth is one time, prepared, and looking Presidential.**

**If you are reading this piece there is a chance you have chosen to be an Assistant Coach. A profession that much like the White House Chief of Staff goes unnoticed unless you screw something up. It's a career that is often under paid and over worked. It's a career that has about the same life expectancy of an NFL running back. Yet you still choose it.**

**So to survive in it, you better be one of the best.**

**Hope this piece helps you in your efforts. Again, I don't claim it should be the only resource you consult. Gather all the good ideas then make them into your own. Read a couple of new books. Google articles on the internet. Speak to other assistant coaches. Observe good and bad. Take your own notes.**

**Then go to your local Best Buy or used DVD store and watch season 1 of the West Wing. If you can't see yourself as a Leo McGarry or C.J. Crane or Josh Lyman or Donna Moss or Toby Ziegler, then you might want to rethink your career choice. If you can, then get to work being the best Assistant Coach you can be.**



*Moving Up The Ladder: Making Your Network Work - 2016 N4A National Convention*

**Activity 3: Action Plan**

<b>My Goals (be sure they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time related):</b>	
1.	
2.	
3.	
<b>Strategies to Achieve My Goals:</b>	<b>Obstacles in Achieving My Goals:</b>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
<b>Tasks to Execute My Strategies:</b>	<b>Tasks to Overcome My Obstacles:</b>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
<b>Who can help me complete my tasks? (Examples: mentors, coworkers, friends)</b>	
1.	
2.	
3.	
<b>How will I keep myself accountable and stay on track?</b>	
1.	
2.	
3.	



Moving Up The Ladder: Making Your Network Work - 2016 N4A National Convention

**Activity 1: Networking Tree**

Name	University / Role	Contact Info	Contact Strategy

**Activity 2: Elevator Pitch**

Who is the target for your pitch?	
Key 'Inventory': 1. The most important thing to know about me? 2. Other important information for to know.	
Additional 'Inventory' (Information to elicit dialogue): 1. What special skills have you acquired through current experience (assets and attributes)? 2. What else do you think it is important to get across? What separates you from the crowd?	
Elevator Pitch:	



**S T O P**

TRYING TO PROVE  
YOUR HATERS WRONG

---

**S T A R T**

TRYING TO PROVE  
YOURSELF RIGHT

---

YOU'RE NOT DOING IT FOR THEM,  
YOU'RE DOING IT FOR

---

**YOU!**

**FOCUS**

INKY JOHNSON

