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# Ideas & Tips to Support Character Building

CIAAA - 2022 National Conference

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# Background

As a new teacher-coach I found myself ‘missing the boat’ when it came to discussing topics of good character with my team.

After my first season as a teacher-coach I started to compile screenshots or video clips that served as the ‘hook’ to catch the attention of my student-athletes and introduce a topic for us to consider.



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# Goal

The goal of this presentation is to give you ideas on how you can engage your audience (student-athletes, and coaches) in conversations or topics that relate to good character and team development.

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## Resources

You will leave with my library of resources. All I ask is that you ‘pay it forward’ and share this slideshow with youth coaches in your communities and invite them to consider how they might incorporate character messages into their programs.

I have included a range of examples for today, I will include a link to my document that has 60 plus messages.

# Why does this work? How do I know? Disclaimer

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Personally, I believe that engaging young people with video clips of their heroes or coaches who are at the highest level of the sport is a powerful way to 'change the voice'.

You will see that I can talk until I am blue in the face, and I dont think that my student-athletes listening to me for too long is beneficial. They get tired of hearing me talk and the message fades.

But when we add in a video clip or a picture as a 'hook' to capture their attention we are letting someone else share an important message.

You have to hold your program accountable to 'walking the walk'. Culture is not a poster on a wall or watching a video.

I am not sure that these messages do work, I have no data to support the work that we have done as it relates to these character messages. However, anecdotally, my coaching staff and I have noticed an attention to detail from our players and seen our program culture take positive steps towards being the best version of itself. If you are not trying to get better...

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# Examples -- Being a good teammate



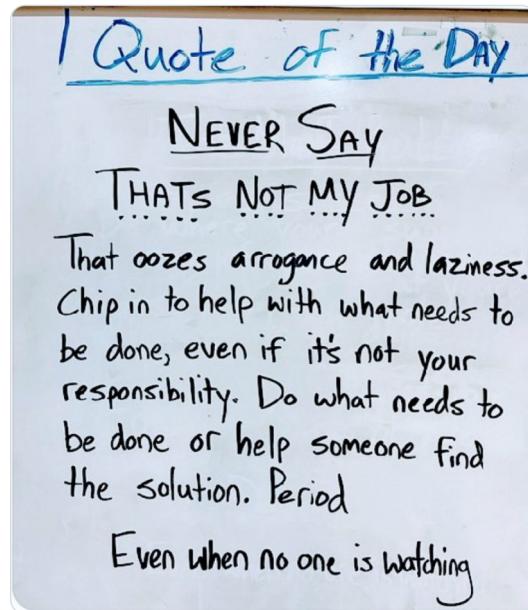
Arete Hoops  
@AreteHoops

Real Toughness is:

1. Cheering for a teammate when you're stuck on the bench
2. Giving effort and enthusiasm at practice when you don't feel like it
3. Having positive body language when you're disappointed
4. Having a face to face conversation when you want to just text

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Do what needs to be done !



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## Examples - Focusing on Practice Habits

Anything that you or anyone else has done before is in the past. [Talent & Habits](#)



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## **Examples -- Process Oriented Mindset**

Our Process...daily  
rhythm...communication...body language



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ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

## Examples

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If you want to be a winner, do  
what winners do.

There's a name for people who:

- Hold teammates accountable
- Don't take excuses
- Don't make excuses
- Prepare meticulously
- Won't compromise their standards
- Won't settle for mediocrity
- Strengthen the culture
- Build their teammates up
- Fall in love with the process
- Take full responsibility
- Never stop improving
- Learn from mistakes
- Don't quit when it gets hard
- Are comfortable being uncomfortable
- Aren't afraid to fail

Winners.



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## Examples

- You must have Standards of Performance
- You must hold people accountable to those standards
- The standard is only as strong as the accountability to the standard
- Everyone must be held to the standard
- If you have different standards for different people, or different levels of accountability for different people, you will destroy trust and love

**\*\*ACCOUNTABILITY IS LOVE\*\***

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## Examples -- Pre-Practice Mentality

- Put in the Work - Who are you when no one is watching you?
- It's not comparing yourself to anybody else, it's maximizing who you are as a person and as a player.
- Are you willing to put in the extra work to make yourself great? Herm Edwards, what are you willing to do?
- "Talent may be given but success must be earned"
- Kobe Bryan Story...4 AM

"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the ax."

~ Abraham Lincoln

Don't attack a goal or a dream (championships, promotions, etc.) with a dull ax (lack of preparation). It'll likely get you nowhere...



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## Examples -- Growth Mindset

- The worst thing that can happen to you as a player is your coach quits on you and stops correcting your mistakes. You will be pushed. You can always improve. Believe that and your coaches will do the same.
- Our Standard of Excellence means that we have “High Expectations” and athletes with a desire to be pushed and coached.
- Run hard when it is hard to run...
- If you do not do the little things well then you will watch someone else celebrate...Nick Saban on effort
- Take it upon yourself to ‘protect the standard’...attention to detail on little things like running all the way off the field. Harry Ainlay no hat policy what is that about?

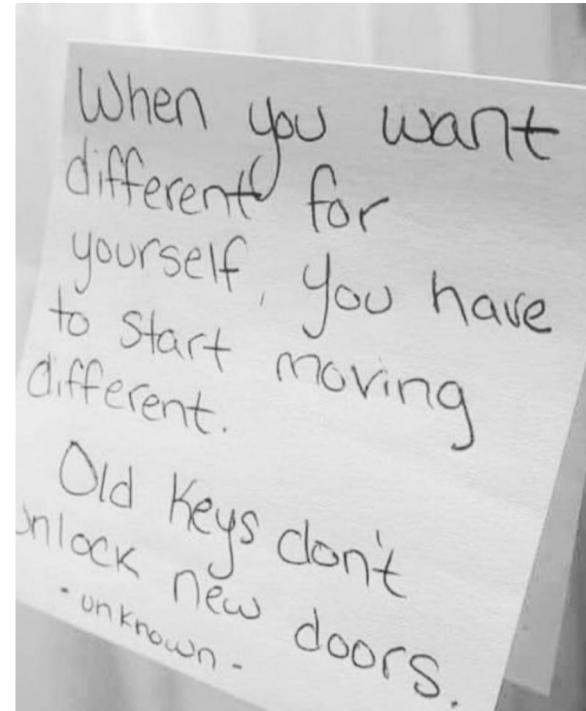


# Examples -- Practice Habits, Focus

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Davante Adams does this  
EVERY.  
SINGLE.  
DAY.

While the special teams are on the field, he works on his releases at the line of scrimmage. Talk about making your strengths even stronger. [es.pn/3icka9g](https://es.pn/3icka9g)



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## Examples -- Do the Work

Geno “If you want to be average, then just do average work. But if you want to be great, you got to do what the rest aren’t willing to do.”

Kobe Bryant worked like he had no talent, then he played like he believed he was the best player in the world. Prepare with humility; perform with confidence.



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# **Examples -- Humility -- No one *is* to 'big' to push a broom**

Giannis on Humility

Focus on the now

Sweep the Sheds...

UCLA Basketball Coach on Humility

Ed Reed

- It takes everyone on our roster from players, to coaches, to support staff digging in and doing the uncomfortable work to have success.
- The formula for success is not difficult to understand it is difficult to commit to



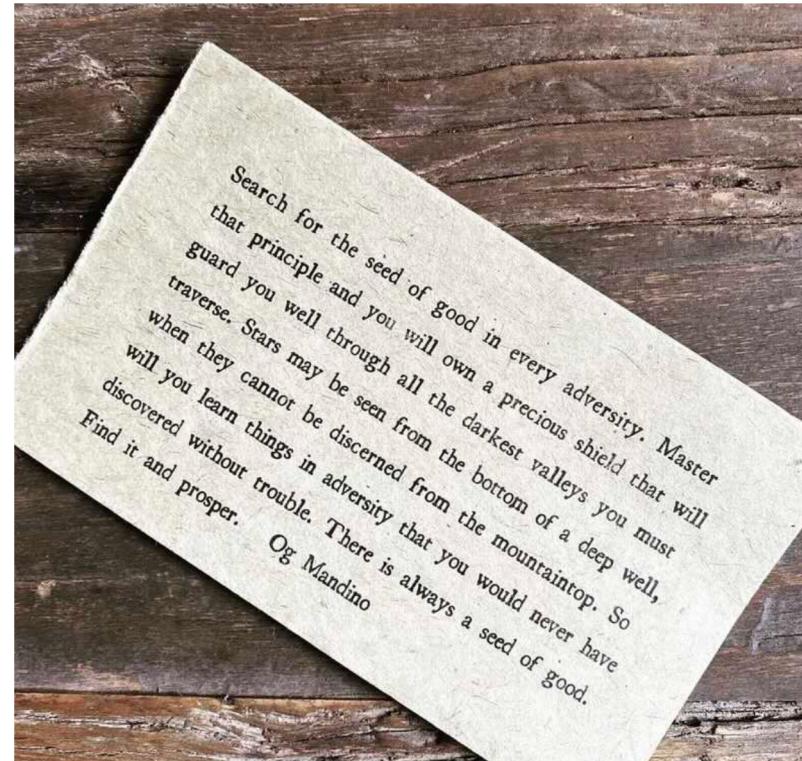
# Examples -- Growth Mindset, Resilience/Failure

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We do not expect you to be perfect but we do expect you to have a growth mindset and try to improve everyday. Everyone has bad days (work, sport, relationships etc.). Can you hit the 're-boot' button and get back to the basics?

## Nick Foles post SB Win

*"CHAMPIONS ARE NOT CHAMPIONS BECAUSE THEY DO ANYTHING EXTRAORDINARY, BUT BECAUSE THEY DO THE ORDINARY THINGS BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE"*



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## Examples -- False Energy/False Hustle--Cardinal Sin

My college coach Eddie Sutton (RIP Hall of Famer) had a term he called “false hustle”.

He used it when you went for a steal you knew you couldn’t get — which subsequently took you out of the play and put your teammates in a real bind.

This is false hustle...



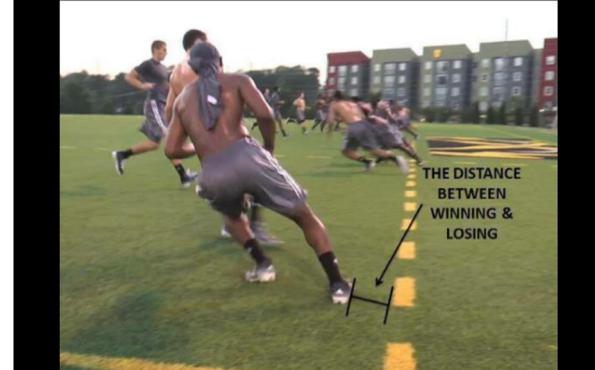
# Examples -- Little Things are BIG!

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Ask yourself,did this man walk on the football field once he crossed the white line?  
Now ask yourself,do you think the little things that your coach asks you to do  
matter? This is your answer. Little things are BIG THINGS!

Huge team chemistry killer - Poor Punctuality

Every time a player or coach is late it says "I'm more important than you."



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## Bad Weather, Unfavourable Officiating

A6) Another one of my favorite wisdom quotes & one I used in my book, "There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing." - German Proverb (p. 13, Chapt. 2 - Defending the Modern Spread)

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## Preparation

Navy SEAL's are often asked:

"Why do you put yourselves through such extreme circumstances?"

Their reply:

"Under pressure you don't rise to the occasion, you sink to the level of your training. That is why we train so hard."

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## What I have learned

If you can focus on separating the Xs & Os from Character Conversations and have a growth mindset in each area I have actually found that you will see greater alignment then when you try to combine the two.

We have a character portion of our meetings and then we get into football.

This is skimming the surface on conversations, if you want big impacts on character development I believe you need to make big investments in those conversations.



# Resource Bank

Embrace Consistency

Dabo Swinney - Importance of consistency and continuing to fight.

Kobe Bryant/Nick Saban 'The Necessary Work Behind the Scenes'

Nick Saban - Learn how to compete, attention to details (transitioning from being a big fish in a small pond to being in a big pond)

Saban - What if versus Only if? Pay the price for success up front!

PJ Fleck " Never Throughout history has a person who lived a life of ease left a name worth remembering" Theodore Roosevelt

Nick Saban - What can you control today?





# Resource Bank

Nick Saban - Discipline

Nick Saban - It's not human nature to be a champion - Preparation

Nick Saban - Outcomes can be distractions, focus on the process

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# Contact Information

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