

## 5 REASONS WHY COACHES MAKE THE BEST TEACHERS

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Reading	Notes
<p><b>1. Encourage Failure</b></p> <p>The best coaches encourage failure, and they don't harshly penalize students for making mistakes. Instead, they review with an athlete what he or she did wrong and move on with the next play. In the classroom, the permanent nature of grades and high-stakes testing damages moral and reinforces futility and despair. Too often, well-meaning teachers do too much to ensure that students never fail. But if kids never encounter adversity in the classroom, it's doubtful they will successfully manage it in real life. Like coaches, teachers should encourage students to try daring new things, and rethink how failure can turn into even greater, more meaningful success. Why is encouraging failure important in the classroom and on the field?</p>	<p>Why is encouraging failure important in the classroom and on the field?</p>
<p><b>2. Acknowledge Individual Progress</b></p> <p>On the field, coaches praise athletes for reaching their fullest potential—whatever that may be. In September, I spoke with legendary cross-country coach Joe Newton who over 50 years has led York Community High School in Elmhurst, Illinois, to 28 state titles. "I've got three guys on my team that are like 250 pounds," Newton says. "They're out there in front of the whole team at the team meeting. I said to two guys, I said, 'Look at their bodies. They're not made for running and they're out here every day busting their butt.' I said, 'I just love guys like that. That's what our program is all about.' Then I gave them the old shot: 'You choose to be average. You choose to be good. You choose to be great.' Those guys don't ever score a point for us, but in my eyes they're great because they come out and they give me what they've got.'" How many teachers would say as much of a math or history student, trying equally hard, but only managing to earn a D?</p>	<p>How can coaches and teachers acknowledge individual progress?</p>

<p><b>3. Affirm the Power of Hard Work</b></p> <p>Great coaches help players see real improvement. I coach varsity cross-country, and at the start of the season, I discuss fitness goals with my athletes. It's not long before many of them are sporting six-pack abs, along with impressive race times. Even my slowest runners revel in achieving new personal records, in turn motivating them to continue working just as hard—or harder. In the classroom, teachers should provide students with analogous goals and measurements for progress to encourage (rather than discourage) continued growth.</p>	<p>Are setting goals necessary in the classroom and on the field?</p>
<p><b>4. Affirm the Power of Teamwork</b></p> <p>On the playing field, no matter how talented an athlete, victory is impossible without teamwork. The best coaches cultivate productive relationships, and their athletes revel in accomplishing something they couldn't do alone. More still, the entire team is only as strong as its weakest player, and it's the job of that team to help that individual improve. In the classroom as well, pursuing individual academic competence must remain paramount, but teachers should encourage students to support each other. Too often, students compete against each other for high grades and standardized test scores. Just think of what happens when all of the players on the same team compete against each other for possession of the ball—they all suffer.</p>	<p>How can promoting teamwork in the classroom be as effective as on the field?</p>
<p><b>5. Teach the Value of Struggle</b></p> <p>During training, my varsity cross-country runners follow a strict diet. They aren't allowed to have sweets or soda, except on special occasions. If they show repeated signs of struggle or a lack of progress, I know they haven't kept to my workout plan and nutritional regimen. To ensure future compliance, I work them even harder. Eventually, those that stick with it quickly show signs of improvement, not just in their race times, but also in their overall health and appearance. With academic dishonesty reaching ever-greater heights, in the classroom we need to do a much better job of showing students the value of learning through struggle. Just as on the field, by taking shortcuts, they only cheat themselves.</p>	<p>Why is the value of struggle a critical factor of success?</p>