



## Champion Coach Note: Transactional vs. Transformative Coaching: Year End Reflection

In his book, *InSideOut Coaching*, Coach Joe Ehrmann describes two types of coaches: transactional and transformative. Transactional coaches, he writes, “use players as tools to meet their personal needs for validation, status, and identity” (5). In contrast, transformational coaches use “their coaching platform to impart life-changing messages.” They are “other-centered. They use their power and platform to nurture and transform players” (6).

The question is: what kind of coach are *you*?

With summer on the horizon and the school year winding down, it is important that you take time to reflect on this question. Evaluating your own performance as a coach is an invaluable learning tool that will help you grow and better serve your athletes.

American author, Robert Collier, wrote, “Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.” As a coach, you are a lifelong learner, and your journey to be both a technically proficient coach and a role model in the lives of your athletes is largely a result of your commitment to improving. Seek out feedback by engaging in conversation with your players. Find out what has worked and what hasn’t. Be open to constructive feedback and demonstrate a willingness to make changes. You may often tell your athletes that they must constantly work hard in order to improve – as a coach, the same holds true.

Excellence is the result of working every day to



“The journey is greater than the end,  
greater than the victory. Make each  
day of your journey a masterpiece.”

- John Wooden

Watch Joe Ehrmann's TedX talk:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVI1Xutc\\_Ws](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVI1Xutc_Ws)

Reflect on the following questions:

1. Why do you coach? What is your purpose?
2. How do you want to make a difference in the lives of your athletes?
3. Why do you have the coaching style that you do?
4. Who is your coaching role model? Why do you want to be like them?
5. After thinking about these questions, what more do you think you can do to become a better transformational coach?

become better. Conduct exit interviews with your players and staff. Let them tell their own stories from the season – you will learn more if you don't ask leading questions. Ask your athletes about their comfort in your team environment, their level of trust for coaches and other players, and their suggestions for improvement. Distribute both anonymous surveys and hold in-person individual meetings to foster honest feedback. Communication is key! Your athletes should always be your #1 focus, and engaging them in conversation empowers them and builds deeper trust.

You may be surprised by some of the feedback you receive. If your desire is truly to become a transformative coach, you must be open to change. You are not bigger than your athletes, your program, or your school. Reflect on your motivations, your strengths and your weaknesses, and your adherence to your values over the course of the season.

American writer, Joseph Campbell, wrote, "The job of an educator is to teach students to see vitality in themselves." As a coach, you must never forget that your job is to serve your athletes. You must help each unlock his or her potential and believe in his or her own gifts and talents. If you seek ongoing feedback and have a desire to improve, you can become a role model that has the capacity to make a positive difference in the lives of your athletes.