



Build transformational character as you coach

I have had a growing concern lately about the lack of character shown in so many parts of our society. Forget politics and entertainment, we've seen lots of that. Like many, I am a big fan of the World Cup, so followed it closely this summer. While I was thrilled by some of the skills and game play (plus I loved Norway's 'viking row'!). I also witnessed many flagrant acts of unsportsmanlike conduct culminating in what happened at the end of the championship game. How do we change this disturbing trend? In the world of sports, a coach's influence extends far beyond the pitch, court or field. We can do something about this trend, we can use our platform to build athletes and teams of character. Welcome to the latest issue of FCA Canada's Coaching Matters newsletter!

We, as coaches, have a unique opportunity to shape the lives of our athletes, not just in terms of performance but in their character and values. For Christian coaches, this responsibility takes on an eternal perspective: to model Christlike character and help athletes grow into individuals who honor God in all they do. Here are a few key ways to build transformational character in your team or athletes.

1. Lead by Example

As a coach, your actions often speak louder than your words. Your athletes will notice how you handle wins, losses, and challenges. Do you exhibit humility in victory and grace in defeat? Are you patient and compassionate when dealing with difficult situations?

In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul encourages believers to "imitate me, as I imitate Christ." As a coach, you have the privilege of demonstrating Christlike behavior daily. Let your

integrity, work ethic, and attitude reflect God's character. When athletes see these qualities in you, they are more likely to emulate them in their own lives.

2. Cultivate a Team Culture of Respect and Accountability

A transformational coach fosters a culture of mutual respect and accountability among their athletes. This means establishing clear expectations for behavior and holding everyone—including yourself—to those standards. Teach your team to value one another's contributions and to encourage each other in their strengths and weaknesses. Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

Encourage your athletes to build one another up, offering constructive feedback and celebrating each other's successes. This culture of respect and accountability lays the foundation for strong character development.

3. Prioritize Character Over Performance

In competitive sports, it's easy to focus solely on winning. However, as a Christian coach, your ultimate goal should be to develop athletes who exhibit integrity, perseverance, and humility. Emphasize the importance of character over accolades. When athletes prioritize character, they learn to value effort and improvement more than outcomes. They'll understand that their worth isn't tied to their performance but to their identity as children of God. Remind them of Colossians 3:23: "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men." This perspective will help them approach both sports and life with Jesus at the center.

4. Integrate Faith into Coaching

One of the most powerful ways to build transformational character is to integrate faith into your coaching. This doesn't mean preaching sermons at practice, but it does mean being intentional about weaving spiritual principles into your interactions with your team. Use biblical principles or examples from the scriptures to guide your lessons on teamwork, perseverance, and resilience. Share personal testimonies of how your faith has impacted your journey. These practices create opportunities for spiritual growth and remind your athletes that their ultimate purpose is to glorify God. I found when I was able to integrate this into my coaching practice it changed so much. Not sure how to do this? Please ask me, I would love to help!

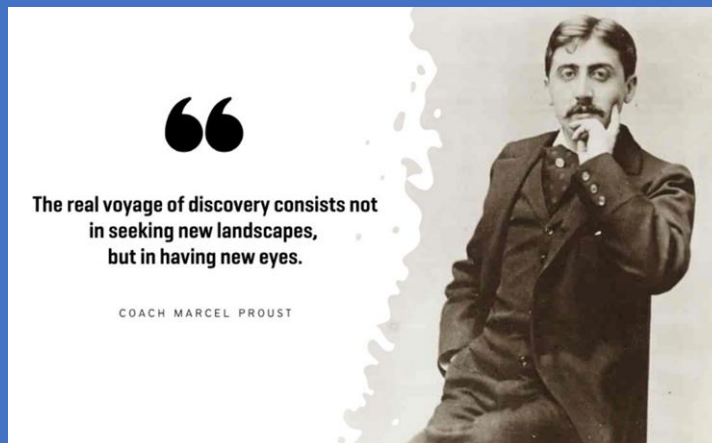
5. Teach the Value of Perseverance and Adversity

Sports are full of challenges: injuries, losses, and tough competition. These moments are opportunities to teach your athletes the value of perseverance and how to rely on God's strength in difficult times. James 1:2-4 reminds us, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

Help your athletes see challenges as opportunities for growth. Encourage them to lean on prayer and scripture when they're struggling. By teaching them to view adversity through a biblical lens, you're equipping them with tools they'll carry for the rest of their lives.

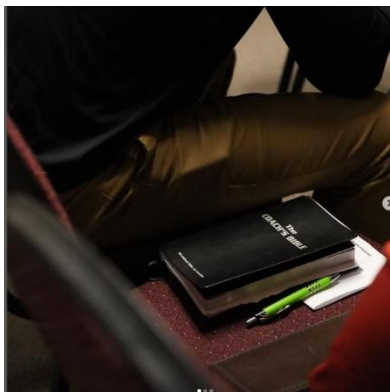
Pretty simple, huh? This really is the way of a 3D coach and continues to drive my own coaching practice. I love this way since it really is not overly complex. Yet it does take intention. We all have a profound opportunity to shape not just athletes but disciples of Jesus. By leading with integrity, fostering a culture of respect, prioritizing character, and integrating faith into your coaching, you can inspire lasting transformation in your team. Remember, the ultimate victory isn't found in trophies or accolades but in lives changed for God's glory.

Be faithful in your calling, and watch as God works through you to make a lasting impact. You've got this!



.....what eyes are you looking at your athletes through?

This Issue's Devotion:



Where are you choosing to pay attention?

I was struck by a quote I read recently from the poet W. H. Auden, "Choice of attention—to pay attention to this and ignore that—is to the inner life what choice of action is to the outer. In both cases man is responsible for his choice and must accept the consequences. Tell me to what you pay attention, and I will tell you who you are." Have you ever thought of it that way? We have a CHOICE of what we pay attention to. We live in a world with a lot of distractions and things that vie for our attention. More than

anything or anyone else, we who are disciples of Jesus need to pay attention to the one who pays attention to us.

Paying attention to Jesus throughout our day isn't just a nice idea, it's a practical action. Discipleship to Jesus is a learning way as he taught us consistently in the gospels. With Jesus' leading and the example of his people down through the ages, we make tangible plans to reorient our minds to Him and his Father's kingdom resources in the midst of daily life, regardless of what's going on.

So, then what does this mean for me? Where am I choosing to pay attention today?

It takes intention choosing what we pay attention to. Here are two things you can do today to help eliminate distractions and pay attention to what we should.

First, keep your eyes fixed on Jesus

The author of Hebrews writes, "let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, *fixing our eyes on Jesus*, the author and perfecter of faith, who...has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb 12:1–2). The Apostle Paul urges the same orientation of mind: "seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Col 3:1). We are encouraged to fix our mind's eye on King Jesus, who is seated in a position of rest, power, and all authority. Jesus is not pacing back and forth, wringing his hands, and wondering what to do. Our Lord, savior and friend is paying attention to us, the human situation, our needs, and the needs of those around the world. We need to pay attention to him—fixing our eyes, setting our minds, waiting—while we attend to the news, our needs and the needs of those around us. Take this perspective and when you get it, watch things change!

Next, when tempted to turn inward, turn your gaze to Jesus

Under threat, scarcity and stress we sometimes find ourselves understandably becoming self-protective. We turn inward, we think only of ourselves. And yet, the demands of these days call us outward, to the world around us. The needs of those around us—whether athletes, aged parents, neighbors, a spouse, those who are sick—require our time and energy. This puts us in a bind. We want or need to move outward in love to others, especially those in greatest need, but our own internal resources feel strained and thin.

How should we act as followers of Jesus in times like this? How do we 'pay attention' to the needs around us?

Paul gives us this advice: Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus (Phil 2:4–5).

It's important that we remember that we are disciples of the living, ascended, and enthroned God. When Jesus called his followers to go and make disciples, they did not make followers of themselves. Rather, Jesus called them to announce the availability of an ongoing discipleship relationship with himself. Every Christian is currently in an

intensive, interactive, discipleship relationship with the person of Jesus, and that school of discipleship is always in session. The Jesus who said, “And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age,” remains with us today by his Spirit. When we are tempted to isolate and turn inwards, we need to repeatedly turn our gaze to the availability of Jesus. Throughout our days we need to develop the habit—now more than ever—of finding encouragement and comfort in the real presence of Jesus’ love. So, pay attention to where God is moving through the spirit in your life and the world around you then let your light shine!

3D Coaching Corner:



FCA Canada is excited to provide world-class training for Canadian coaches through the 3D coaching method. We are the exclusive Canadian partner of the 3D Institute which has developed this unique coaching philosophy and methodology

2nd Dimension Strategy: Team Cohesion

Though I coach athletes who compete in an individual context the idea of team cohesion is one that I try to undertake in my training group. By definition team cohesion means a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency of a group to come together in the pursuit of its goal. The key here is that it is a dynamic process meaning it is strategic and in motion. This means that as coaches we need to be purposeful and thoughtful in how we approach this opportunity and challenge. The challenge is we live in a culture that struggles with entitlement and a “me-centric” way of thinking. We know that people though are 3-dimensional beings and so we need to create a sense of community within this reality. Despite the ‘me’ culture we live in there is still a yearning to be part of a team and something bigger than self. I know this in my own situation where while all my athletes have different goals and objectives we work together and celebrate together what the others have done.

So, how do we do this?

First, we remember that no matter our context, we coach individuals, and we coach a group. We need to be mindful and coach to both elements. Therefore, we need to be purposeful and have strategies for each facet. Don’t rely on luck here, be intentional and

purposeful in what you do to create that bond that not only overcomes adversity but grows in victory. In whatever our sport we coach in two areas: the task and the relationship. The task is evident- we do drills, we scrimmage and such. These are all 1st Dimensional. So, team cohesion here comes through having a good practice plan that develops our athletes and team on the path we're seeking. Next though is relational. This is where we as coaches show affirmation and value towards our athletes strategically, having a plan for the team to enjoy each other's company.

Here is a 3D Coaching principle: Develop a relationship strategy to work on your team's relationship with each other outside of the normal athletic environment. This could be a team outing to a trampoline park, or even better, coming together to do a service project in the community like helping with Habitat for Humanity or in a local food bank. Find ways for your team to work together inside AND outside the context of your sport and you will develop transformational team cohesion.

“Don't let what you can't do stop you from what you can do.” - Coach John Wooden

...if you're like me, there are lots of things going on in your coaching practice. There is a temptation to try to 'do it all'. Instead, be clear on what you can and can't do.

F I T 2 L E A D

Fit2Lead Tip

Moving forward

Are you feeling the mid-year blahs? Struggling with motivation? Part of being Fit2Lead is moving forward in the right direction through all circumstances. So here are a few tips to help you not only stay the course and move forward.

God gives us security from yesterday

While we may be eager for what the future holds, anxiety often overtakes us faster than we would like as we remember our yesterdays. Our present enjoyment of God can be checked by past sin. Yet God is the god of our yesterdays. He has paid for all past sins

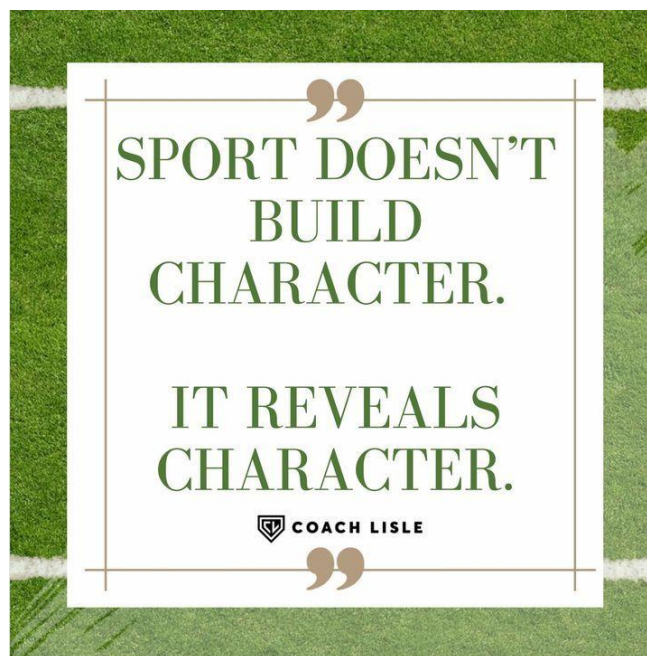
and failings through the cross. The past should have no bearing on your future. Mid-year is a great time to reflect and take stock on how the year is going. How are you doing on your goals and vision? Where are you maybe falling short and why?

God gives us security for tomorrow

The bible tells us 'God will go before you'. God is watching over us as we move through 2026 and we can rest in this. God will do his part but that also means we have to do ours. What is God calling you to do? Who is he calling you to be? He does not call the qualified rather he qualifies the called. Therefore, if he is calling you to do something, he'll give you the means. But be sure it is his voice, though, you are listening too. Not sure? Check with someone you trust. I'd be happy to help walk you through the process of discerning God's will if you would like. Bottom line though, whatever life or the world throws at us, we have God on our side.

Finally, I like what Oswald Chambers said about this subject. He wrote in "My Utmost for His Highest: "Our yesterdays present irreparable things to us; it is true that we have lost opportunities which will never return, but God can transform this destructive anxiety into a constructive thoughtfulness for the future. Let the past sleep, but let it sleep on the bosom of Christ. Leave the Irreparable Past in his hands and step out into the Irresistible Future with him."

Sound good? Move forward. Now let's plan our work and work our plan as the saying goes as we seek to be Fit2Lead!





Executive Director's Corner- FCA Canada Updates

My high school club season is almost done. I will have some time off and then we start the cycle all over again with the start of the new university varsity season. It's been quite the years. I have been blessed in so many ways and am thankful to God for the opportunities he has given me to not only coach some amazing athletes but also be a witness for Him and let my light shine. Yet as I have navigated the past year as a coach, and serving with FCA Canada, there are two things that have begun to increasingly concern me:

The monetization of youth sports

It seems more and more coaches are trying to 'make a buck' with their coaching. While I understand the desire to receive pay for what is for most of us an essentially part-time job, I am saddened by the results. As more seek to monetize their coaching, leagues and clubs are finding it harder to attract coaches. This means grass roots programs, where basic skills are being learned and character is built are struggling. The result is costs going up which is often disenfranchising the most vulnerable in our society who cannot afford this new paradigm yet sports could transform their lives and take them off a destructive path.

We as followers of Jesus in sports ministry, the church, and ministry groups, have a tremendous opportunity to fill in the gap with accessible, grassroots programs that allow for the transfer of valuable life lessons through sports. Interested in being part of the solution? Let's talk.

The 'professionalization' of youth sports

Another trend is what I call 'professionalization' of sports. This is manifesting in many ways, including the broadcasting of youth sports on pay-per-view streaming services. While I see the benefit of family members being able to watch if they cannot attend, I am also see players stats and other 'pro level' data being embedded into the program which only acts as another pressure point for athletes who already struggle with this. As well, travel tournaments and year long training/competing is filtering down to lower and lower age groups. It's not healthy. We at FCAC seek to give athletes a quality, life changing sports experience with age-appropriate competition.

What does this have to do with you? FCA Canada is still here to help your coaching practice, league, club, school or community group with programs, training and resources. Would you like to talk or dream a bit about how 3D thinking can be used to change the world around you? I've had the chance to work in several new situations that may just fit for you. All you need to do is ask. We're here to help!

Bottom line, we continue to desire to see Jesus impact the world through the influence of coaches. We're here to help and also to walk with you. Keep letting your light shine!



We're here to help!

www.canadafca/coach

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FCA Canada is a faith-funded ministry and so are always looking for people, churches or organizations that would be interested in partnering with us in our mission to engage, equip and empower coaches and athletes to experience the fullness of life offered through Jesus. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in exploring how you might be able to support us financially I'd love to chat with you about it.