

10 Life Lessons From Coach John Wooden

John Wooden coached the UCLA basketball team to 10 national championships, including seven in a row from 1967 to 1973. It is a streak in modern major sports duplicated by only the Boston Celtics.

The most striking aspect of the whole thing is that the championships were the least of his passions. John Wooden lived to teach. His insight and wisdom led to the publication of John Wooden's Pyramid of Success, which outlines behaviors necessary to achieve success in life. Let's take a look at some of his principles that every man should follow:

1. **Be true to yourself.** This is No. 1 in Coach Wooden's 7-point creed that was passed down from his father. We will look at them all among this list, but this one is first for a reason. Before we can become leaders of others, we must first understand ourselves. We need to distinguish our talents and strengths, as well as our weaknesses, and use each to their maximum benefit. Stay true to what you are best suited for and do not compromise your values.

2. **Always keep moving.** A former player of Coach Wooden said that he was always shouting, "Move, move, move!" He was not only referring to basketball, but to life in general. We must take action and we must always be progressing, building upon success and learning from failure. We must think and we must always be in motion. Coach Wooden would say, "Be quick, but don't hurry."

3. **Make each day your masterpiece.** *Carpe diem.* Seize the day. We are all familiar with this logic. However, we as a society tend to take the advice in a selfish manner. We seize what benefits ourselves most. The intent, and Coach's intent, was

to spend each and every day using your abilities to their maximum value for the good of others. This is a great life lesson, because it is so easily misunderstood. In the words of Coach Wooden, "Perform at your best when your best is required, and your best is required each day."

4. Help others. Develop a compassionate and understanding heart. As we move forward, we need to lift others up with us as well. When we are only out for ourselves, we will eventually gain what we set out to achieve. A lonely and singular existence. If the goal is a well-rounded successful life, then it is not possible by following only individual desires. Give wholly of yourself for the benefit of others to learn and follow. Here is a helpful All Pro Dad article on Raising Compassionate Kids.

5. Earned, not entitled. How often do we see this in life now? The fresh-out-of-college young person who wants a BMW and six-figure income right at the start. The rookie football player who demands a \$100 million contract before ever playing a down. The word 'earn' has been dropped from our collective vocabulary. Many people demand everything based solely on what they think they're entitled to. But to truly go far in life, realize you're not owed anything and if you want something, work unbelievably hard for it.

6. Drink deeply from good books, especially the Bible. This is to say, be careful what you pour into your brain. A man might read faithfully every single day, but what is he reading? What are we absorbing? In this day, propaganda is found everywhere we turn. Millions of dollars are spent each year on focus groups and think tanks coming up with new and improved ways to sway and form opinion. Coach Wooden was making the point to carefully filter and analyze the content and motives of your sources of information. Read well to live well.

7. Make friendship a fine art. We are all aware of the importance of friendships and the folks we surround ourselves

with. Cherish those relationships and work at them the same way you would with family relationships. Give more than you take, and help more than you receive.

8. Build a shelter against a rainy day. Such important advice, and so overlooked in our world today. We have constructed our society to only function properly if we are all doing the exact opposite of this age-old wisdom. We can see the results in our own national debt. As our friend Dave Ramsey says, "Live like no one else so, later, you can live like no one else." Save for the future so, in your later years, you can be a giver.

9. Gratitude. Gratitude is essential for a peaceful heart and a balanced life. Create a daily habit of taking a moment of solitude to humbly express gratitude for the great many blessings of this life. Let others know why you're grateful for them. Let thanksgiving be the narrative of your life.

10. Character matters. When examining the life of John Wooden, one finds a tremendous man who influenced millions in his lifetime. The trait that stands out is his rock-solid character. Strength to do the right thing at all times, and to teach others to do the same. Most of us will never reach the sphere of influence John Wooden had, but our character matters just the same as his.

Without realizing it, our actions and deeds spread far and wide. We may think our sphere is relatively tiny, but it expands greatly when we consider the effect of it moving from one person to the next. Consider this reality as you move forward. Live in such a way that Coach Wooden would say, "You're a winner in life." Do you reflect some of the Characteristics of Growing Dads?

"The main ingredient in stardom is the rest of the team." – Coach John Wooden

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