



Friendly Friday

During the Covid quarantine, I have been my son, Axel's PE teacher. Since March, we have done it twice per week and then finish every week with *Friendly Friday*. Friendly Friday is the toughest P.E. class of the week and we invite his friends and their parents to participate.

We have core values and standards that reinforce them:

- 1) Selfless; Do what your team needs you to do to be successful. Hold each other accountable. It is how we make each other better.
- 2) Tough; When you are tired, keep going. Persevere. Give your 100% and share positive energy with your teammates while doing so.
- 3) Disciplined; Do what you say you are going to do and say what you did do. Have integrity. Be truthful with others and most importantly, yourself.

Friendly Friday is long, tough, competitive, and incredibly challenging...kids (and their parents) love it!



Just not *every* kid. And just not *every* parent. Some kids (and their parents) come *once* and we never see them again.

My wife often tells people that I “made kids cry.” Other regular participants joke about the kids (or parents) that I “made quit.” They came once and never came back. Untrue. I hate seeing any child cry for any reason and I abhor quitting. As a leader though, ensuring that neither occurs is not my goal nor my focus. My goal is to help the members of my team become the best versions of themselves. I do so by creating a great challenge (complete *Friendly Friday*), communicating our core values (Selfless, Tough and Disciplined) and the standards that reinforce them, and then holding everyone accountable to achieving them. Our *standards* are my focus.

When participants are meeting them, I make a big deal about their doing so; a kid who has never jumped rope might give their 100% and still only get over the rope 10-15 times in a minute. So long as they gave their 100% and shared positive energy while doing so, I highlight it consistently and transparently. It is a *standard*. The same is true, however, for those who do not put the team first, don’t share positive energy, lack integrity, or don’t give their 100%. I highlight that consistently and transparently, as well. It is a *standard*.

If you do not want your child to be held accountable to the standards, in the tone, volume and frequency that, as the leader of Friendly Friday, I feel most appropriate, do not bring them. Quit, do not come back, because if you participate, you will be held accountable. Consistently and transparently.

I appreciate that many teachers, coaches, and business leaders don’t have the option of telling members of their team who are not meeting the standards to just not come back. They must keep them on their team due to certain school, team, or corporate restrictions. I do not. Is this harsh? Absolutely. Except for all the children (and their parents) who want accountability. And most children (and their parents) do, in fact, want it. It is how we become the best versions of ourselves.

Further, children neither quit when they are held accountable nor when challenged. Just those whose parents, teachers and coaches have allowed them to do so. At the first sign of adversity, it is already a habit for those children to quit. It is a habit that will remain with many of them throughout their life. However, for those children whose parents challenge them to keep fighting through the adversity and/or allow teachers and coaches to challenge them to do so, they make *it* a habit instead. Unfortunately, quitting is a habit. Thankfully, so is perseverance.



Many of the kids who participate at Friendly Friday tell their parents that they “can’t wait” for it! It is “the most fun thing they do all week.” Parents see how adverse and challenging an environment Friendly Friday is and share with me how surprised they are when their child says things like this. They should not be. All of us love the feeling of accomplishment that is a byproduct of overcoming a great challenge. To become the best versions of ourselves, we need them! And we must hold each other accountable while overcoming them. Telling someone that they are doing a “great job,” when they are not, benefits no one. It does not make anyone truly feel good about themselves nor does it make them better unless they are truly doing a great job; a great job of meeting the standards. “Getting through” a challenge does not provide us with a feeling of accomplishment. Doing our very best while doing so, does!

Structure provides stability and we all perform best within one. Structure allows us to become the best versions of ourselves. Not left-foot, right-foot, militaristic structure and not a structure whose foundation is based on a thousand “rules,” but rather one within which everyone knows what they are expected to achieve and how they are expected to behave while doing so. A structure built on core values and the *standards* that reinforce them. A structure that rewards the meeting of those standards and carries consequences for not doing so. Consistently and transparently.

Leaders must provide that structure.

I promise you that I will at Friendly Friday. You (and your children) are invited...

Attack!

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