

THE PROGRAM

LETTERS ON LEADERSHIP

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- LETTER ON LEADERSHIP #99 -



“It’s ALL about Hard Work!” Untrue.

“You *just* need to work hard.” Nope.

“There is no substitute for hard work.” Okay, this one I agree with... to a point.

My son, Axel, and I go to our community YMCA almost daily. A lot of kids go during the week to shoot around after school. On weekends, not so much. We’re there when the basketball courts open at 9 AM, though. We’re often the first to arrive, but shortly thereafter, without any previous coordination, three or four more young men show up: Joxel, Big D, Little D, and T.J.. The boys shoot, do a few dribbling drills, and then play. They play all morning. Literally, ALL morning. After hoops, they lift weights. After that, they leave sweaty, sore, and exhausted.

Weekend mornings at The Y always remind me of a conversation I had with Sacred Heart University Head Men’s Basketball Coach, Anthony Latina, about what it takes to be a Division 1

basketball player. I want to share his insights with you, as it holds true for being top-tier in any endeavor. Without hesitation, when asked, Coach Latina responded, “It takes a lot of talent... and it helps if you are also really big, fast, and strong.” Talent matters. Top Tier on any battlefield requires it. Top Tier also requires great skill. We are all born with innate talents. We aren’t born with great skills. Those, we can and must develop if we are to become top-tier. To do so, there is no substitute for hard work, but it is not *just* about hard work.

Most corporate teammates work hard during normal business hours. As Coach Latina reflected, so too most athletes at their regularly scheduled work (i.e., practice). Really good athletes will then stay after practice to get a few more shots up and/or work on that part of their game that might need some attention. This is true for high performers in the corporate world, as well. Coach Latina stressed, though, that Top Tier demands something else. Again, you must have talent and work hard (i.e., put in a little bit extra at the end), but Top Tier demands sacrifice. Many teammates show up on time, give great effort when required, and may even put in a little bit extra at the end of their practice or workday, but do they truly sacrifice? Do they show up on weekends when no one is watching?

You can find five young men at our Y almost every Saturday and Sunday at 9AM when the gym doors open. They still find time to be kids, but often they don’t go out the night before or sleep at a friend’s house. They don’t stay up all night playing video games or on their phones. They sacrifice. Unsurprisingly, all these young men are the best basketball players in our community. By a lot!

“It’s ALL about Hard Work!” Untrue. “You *just* need to work hard.” Nope. “There is no substitute for hard work.” Okay, this one I agree with... to a point. Hard work is the price of admission, but to be truly great, on any battlefield, we must sacrifice.

Commit to doing so.

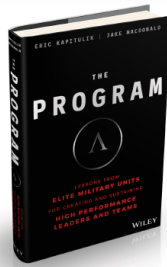
Attack!

Eric Kapitulik
Founder and CEO

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