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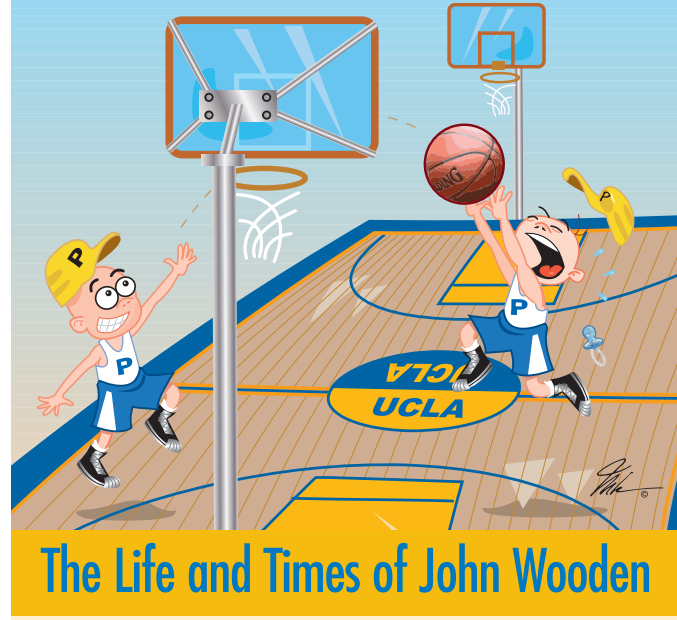
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The Life and Times of John Wooden

By Jim Stavis

This past month the world lost a legend. John Wooden's passing at the ripe age of 99 left many who remembered him with a great memory of a special man—not just as a fabulous basketball coach, but also a wonderful and special human being.

I attended UCLA during the glory years of 1972-1976. These were the final years of coach Wooden's basketball legacy at UCLA. It was at that time when UCLA won three national championships and had a record 88 consecutive wins, a feat most believe will never be achieved again. The challenge in college basketball is that

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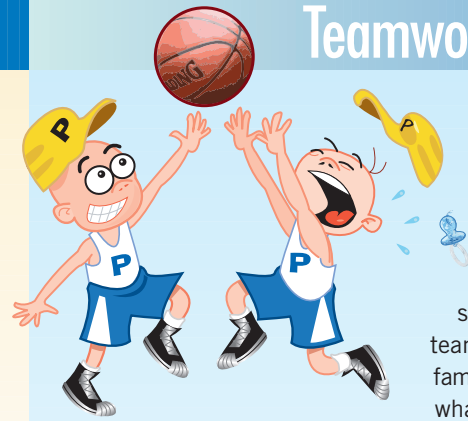
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every year the players change, so it is more and more difficult to establish a consistent winning dynasty. This is different than with professional basketball where someone like Kobe Bryant can play his entire career of 15 or so years as a Laker. In college, each year the players pass through from high school hopefully through to the pro ranks. So to establish a winning tradition each and every year is truly remarkable. At UCLA, Wooden won National Championships 10 out of 12 years, which was unprecedented. How did he do it?

First and foremost, Wooden attracted the best players who wanted to play for him. Within six of those amazing 12 years, he had Lew Alcindor (later Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) and Bill Walton, two of the best players to ever play basketball. But many coaches have had good players and still have not been as successful. Wooden had a system of teaching good players how to play the fundamentals of basketball, but he also taught them about life itself. He preached to them about how to live their lives, how to achieve success and how to overcome adversity. His quotations are well documented.

My exposure to Wooden occurred as a student at UCLA. He was often seen around campus, back then in his 60s, speaking with students about just about anything. Even after he retired from coaching, Wooden would often come to basketball games as a spectator to cheer on UCLA. He was never critical of the teams or the coaches that followed him even though they could never measure up to his accomplishments. His presence was always felt on campus, even up to the day he died. He was just four months shy of his 100th birthday.

I think, for me, what I will always remember most is the way he conducted himself. When Wooden retired he was making just \$32,000 a year, a paltry sum compared to the coaches of today. Yet his life was never about material success. It was the way he led his life that people admired the most. And his quotations on life, team building and success are unmatched today.



Teamwork in the Workplace

John Wooden will forever be remembered for his understanding of teamwork and what it took to build a successful team. Business organizations have tried to use some of his teachings in their own teamwork development. Wooden's famous Pyramid of Success defined what attributes were necessary in building a successful team. Here, we will explore the importance of teamwork in the workplace.

Can you imagine yourself working on a project alone in the office and no one out there to support and assist you? Definitely not! We all love to be a part of a team and accomplish things through teamwork. Teamwork can be defined as an activity or a set of interrelated activities done by more than one person in order to achieve a common objective. Teamwork is not followed only in the corporate world today, rather it is one of the oldest things known to man. Mankind has been working in teams and groups since the primitive days of civilization. Hunting and wandering together in groups is an apt example of teamwork during those days. It is only in recent times that it has been developed as a 'concept' in management jargon.

T - Together E - Everyone A - Achieves M - More

◆ FAST LEARNING

You tend to learn things at a faster rate if you are working with a team. The experiences and the knowledge of the older team members help you to grasp new concepts quickly. At the same time it proves to be an additional bonus for you as you avoid mistakes at work.

◆ WORKLOAD DISTRIBUTION

Working in a team has an advantage of the workload getting distributed amongst all the team members. With work properly distributed, you can concentrate on a single activity until the time you gain expertise in it and you do not feel stressed out due to work.

◆ BUILDING BONDS

Continuous interaction with the team members, working with them for the whole day, having your meals with them and sharing joys and sorrows helps in building a bond of friendship and unity between each other. Some of them turn out to be friends for a lifetime.

◆ HEALTHY COMPETITION

Just think of a situation where people are competing with each other and trying to excel better than the other. At the same time they are helping and assisting each other in work related as well as personal difficulties and problems. Well, this is possible when you work as a team, as everyone is emotionally bonded to each other.

◆ EXPLORING CREATIVITY

While working in a team you will never be alone, you will always have someone to suggest you good things. Suggestions and advice can help you in generating new ideas and bring out the creativity in you.

◆ JOB SATISFACTION

Teamwork is one of the most important reasons for employee job satisfaction. This is because working in a team improves employee performance and motivation.

◆ INCREASED SPEED OF WORK

With many people handling a single project and doing the assigned work properly, the overall work speed increases and your team can complete the project well within the given timeframe.