

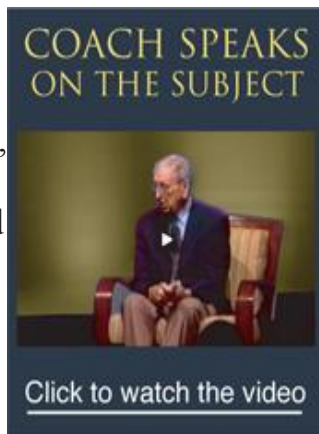
Wooden's Wisdom - Volume 1

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## THE PYRAMID OF SUCCESS

When Coach Wooden coined his definition of success in 1934 (“Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to do the best of which you are capable.”) his philosophy was clear: He had defined the goal for which he wanted his students to strive.

As a teacher, Coach Wooden quickly realized he was only halfway there, however. “The definition was not having the desired effect on the students who were under my supervision,” he once explained. “It was abject, just a definition.” He



## COACH'S FAVORITE POETRY AND PROSE

MYSELF

recognized that his students needed something more – a diagram, a guide, a map – something they could see and follow to their ultimate destination. He remembered the “Ladder of Achievement” that his own high school coach, Glen Curtiss, had used to inspire his teams. But Coach Wooden wanted something unique to embody his own personal coaching philosophy.

While he was a student at Purdue, Coach had studied the Great Pyramid of Giza. Built on a strong foundation with huge cornerstones that were the most important part of the structure, it rose to an apex that gave it its distinct shape. The symbolism fit. For the next 14 years, Coach chose 15 blocks and 10 pieces of mortar for his Pyramid of Success that he believed represented the qualities and characteristics an individual or team would need to meet the definition he had established.

Coach made many changes to the Pyramid over the years he spent developing it. Only the original cornerstones of industriousness and enthusiasm, and the mortar of faith and patience at the apex were never altered from his first draft to its finished form. But as he perfected his design, each block was strategically placed.

Consider Coach Wooden’s thoughts as he was designing the Pyramid:

*“Any structure must be built on a solid foundation and the cornerstones of the foundation are the most significant part of it. You will note that the cornerstones of this structure are **industriousness** and **enthusiasm**.*

*The heart of the body is extremely important and since architects have been known to stress the*

*I have to live with myself, and so,*

*I want to be fit for myself to know.*

*I want to be able as days go by*

*Always to look myself straight in the eye.*

*I don't want to stand with the setting sun*

*And hate myself for the things I've done.*

*I don't want to keep on a closet shelf*

*A lot of secrets about myself*

*And fool myself as I come and go*

*Into thinking that nobody else will know*

*The kind of man I really am;*

*I don't want to dress myself up in shame.*

*I want to go out with my head erect*

*I want to deserve all men's respect;*

*But here in this struggle for fame and self,*

*I want to be able to like myself.*

*I don't want to think as I come and go*

*heart of buildings that they have created, I selected three outstanding essentials: **condition**, **skill** and **team spirit** to compromise the heart of the structure.*

*Although a greater amount of space could be devoted to any individual heading in the pyramid, I believe that the very brief comments under each should suffice and encourage the person to give the particular point additional thought.*

*Before discontinuing the explanation I should like to call attention to the top of the structure. The apex is **success** and it must be remembered that it is success according to my definition.*

*Furthermore, success is not easy to attain and the connecting points, faith and patience to the apex are meant to indicate this.*

*Also, the connecting blocks, **poise** and **confidence**, upon which **competitive greatness** rest are vitally interwoven in the process of reaching the apex. Confidence and poise both come from being prepared and are vital requisites for being a good competitor. Those who lack confidence in themselves are certain to be lacking in poise and will be pressing when the going gets tough. The front runners are easy to find, but all coaches are constantly searching for those individuals who excel when excellent performance is necessary.”*

*That I'm bluster and bluff, and empty show.*

*I never can hide myself from me*

*I see what others may never see*

*I know what others may never know*

*I never can fool myself – and so*

*Whatever happens, I want to be,*

*Self-respecting, and conscience free.*

*~Edgar Guest*



Coach's persistence paid off. His 14 years of work and refinement culminated in precisely the right tool that his students needed to help guide them on their own path to success. Over the course of his lifetime, Coach would send out more than 75,000 pyramids just responding to requests he received personally.

It is just one way that Coach Wooden positively affected the lives of millions of people in the last sixty years and will for generations to come.

Yours in coaching,

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