

THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP

Coach had a great appreciation for the value of friendship. In the 1960's Coach received a letter from his elementary school principal and coach, Earl Warriner, requesting tickets to the upcoming game UCLA was to play at Notre Dame. Mr. Warriner also included a signed and dated check but left the amount line blank. When the tickets arrived in Warriner's mailbox, he found that the check was with them, and on the amount line Coach Wooden had written: "Friendship far too valuable to be measured in dollars."

APPLICATION EXERCISE

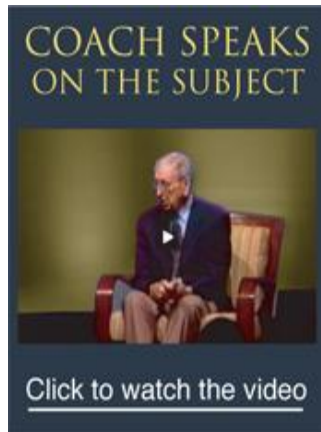
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COACH'S FAVORITE POETRY AND PROSE

AFTER YOU KNOW IT ALL

*At times when I am feeling low,
I hear from a friend and then*

Coach often emphasized that we can accomplish a lot more if we open our lives to others. He often commented on friendship in speeches he gave after retirement from coaching by urging his audience to “Work at it. Don’t take friendship for granted. If you do it may not last. And don’t just work at it from one side. Friendship comes from mutual esteem, respect and devotion. Just as in a successful marriage, both sides must work at it.”



When speaking about friendship, Coach often emphasized the importance of initiating the effort to make friends; in his own words, “You may have to prime the pump first.” Perhaps his favorite illustration was the experience of a friend named Bob, who had traveled to California from Indiana to visit the Wooden family.

“Johnny, these people in California aren’t as friendly as they are back home,” Bob lamented. “Coming over here this morning I met a lot of people and not a single person spoke to me. That would never have happened back home.”

“Did you speak to any of them?” Coach asked.

“Well, no,” Bob said. “I didn’t know them.”

Coach was also inspired by historical examples of the power of friendship; he especially admired Abraham Lincoln’s philosophy on the subject. After the Civil War, many of Lincoln’s constituents felt that he was being far too generous in his offers of reconstruction and

*My worries start to go away
And I am on the mend.*

*In spite of all that doctors know,
And their studies never end,
The best cure of all when spirits fall
Is a kind note from a friend.*

~John Wooden

FRIENDSHIP

*If someone does a kindly deed
For someone else who had a
need,
Although a million he may lend,
That person still is not a friend.*

*If someone sees your heavy load
And bears your burden down the
road
Though hills and mountains you
ascend,
That person still is not a friend.*

*Friendship is a fine, fine art
And loyalty has helped both
know,
We make it build and shape and
grow.*

*There’s shared respect, just like a
team. Devotion, love, regard,
esteem
It will take time, but on the course
A friendship pulls a powerful
course*

*A force so strong that when it’s
done,*

reparations to the Confederate states. One man admonished him, “Mr. President you are supposed to destroy your enemies, not make friends of them.”

Lincoln replied, “*Am I not destroying an enemy when I make a friend of him?*”

This was a lesson Coach took to heart. He chose kindness, instead of anger, as his reaction towards critics in the media, referees he felt were unfair, rude fans of rival teams, and even the rare disgruntled player or assistant coach.

Two of his favorite maxims addressed this very subject. The first was a simple reminder: “Be more concerned with: Loving than being loved, Giving than receiving, Being a friend rather than having a friend.” The second was a kind of proverb: “There is a wonderful mystical law of nature that the three things that man craves the most in life - happiness, freedom, and peace - are always attained by giving them to someone else.” Both are lessons we can all live by.

Yours in coaching,

Craig Impelman

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*It turns the two into a one
And one plus one's no longer
true,
When two become much more
than two.*

~Sven Nater