

COACH BLOOM'S CLIFF NOTES

"You Win in the Locker Room First"

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Chapter 1 – Culture

- To develop a strong culture, we started to evaluate players on their character & attitudes in addition to their football skills.
 - We also looked very closely at the intangibles that each player would bring to the locker room. It was important that we had players who were going to be good teammates and citizens.
- All of the personnel moves they made were in line with the coaching philosophy, values, & principles that they had discussed as an organization.
- Culture drives expectations and beliefs. Expectations and beliefs drive behaviors. Behaviors drive habits and habits create the future.
- When you know what you stand for, you can find the right people who stand for the same things as you.
- "Focus on the root, not the fruit" – continue to care for the root of the tree by focusing on culture, processes, people, & purpose – will always have great supply of fruit.
- Build your culture – value it – live it – reinforce it – fight for it!
 - Make sure the new people joining the team know what you stand for
 - Focus on the process and don't let outside or inside forces sabotage your culture

Chapter 2 – Contagious

- Great cultures are built with positive contagious energy amongst coaches & players
 - Great leaders & teammates realize that their overall attitudes affect everyone in the locker room & on the field
- Research shows that people are most energized when they are contributing to a bigger cause beyond themselves
- Leadership is a transfer of belief – so it is essential that team leaders share positive beliefs with their teammates – especially from the beginning
- "People often call me an overachiever, but I'm not an overachiever. I'm an over-believer." --Dabo Swinney, Head Coach, Clemson Football

- Our attitude is reflected in our body language, facial expressions, demeanor, & the inflection in our voice
 - For leaders, every moment of the day there is someone taking cues from you
- Make certain to have the right team members to strengthen your culture instead of people who suck the energy out of it (energy vampires)
 - One person can't make a team – but one person can certainly break it
- To build a winning team, you must create a positive culture where negativity cannot breed and grow
- The **NO COMPLAINING** Rule – complaining is toxic to the team & the locker room
 - Instead, focus on gratitude & appreciation – for the chance to compete, to play the game we love, and for the opportunity to get better

Chapter 3 – Consistent

- As a leader you must be consistent in your leadership style, approach, attitude, philosophy, & tactics
 - The team must see that coaches/leaders will stick to their principles & philosophy through adversity and challenges
- Leaders must discipline themselves to be fully present in the moment with those they are leading
- To build a winning team, you want to be consistent in your attitude, effort, & actions
 - “It's not okay to be moody” – work to have a good attitude all of the time
- If you want to be great, you must have consistent routines that prepare you to be great
 - Complacency is a disease – stay focused on process, on what you need to do to improve – create urgency toward making adjustments & refining processes
 - Each year the best players commit themselves to being better than they were the year before
- **BE HUMBLE**
 - See yourself as a lifelong learner – see everyone as teachers & learn from everyone – don't ever think that you know it all
 - Be open to new ideas & strategies – even if they force you to admit that you were wrong
 - Live with humility – today's headlines are tomorrow's fish wrap!

- **BE HUNGRY**
 - Seek out new ideas & new ways to push yourself out of your comfort zone
 - Be willing to pay the price that greatness requires – become the hardest-working team that you know
 - Don't rest on past laurels – make your next work your best work!

Chapter 4 – Communicate

- Communication is at the foundation of every great relationship
 - Communication builds trust – trust generates commitment – commitment fosters teamwork, and teamwork delivers results
- Relationships are the foundation upon which winning teams are built
- The best communicator is the person who has the ability to listen, process the information, and use it to make decisions that are in the best interest of the program
 - The best communicators also leave their footprint in every area of the building – they make the rounds to connect with each member of the team
 - A big part of winning in the locker room is making sure you know what is going on down there and shaping the team & culture before it shapes you
- Every leader in the organization must be echoing the same beliefs and sharing the same message – especially the mentors & leaders in the locker room
 - The message must be consistent in both spoken words & actions
- Communication without collaboration can lead to underperformance
 - Collaborative teams are much better prepared to deal with the ever-changing dynamics caused by both internal & external factors

Chapter 5 – Connect

- When you have stronger connections among team members, you have a more committed and powerful TEAM
 - “Team beats talent when talent isn't a team”
 - The best teams often are the ones that really enjoy being around each other
- Group exercise: “Hero, Hardship, Highlight”
 - Team members share who their hero is, a hardship they had to endure, & a highlight (great moment) in their life
- When your team is connected, you will see and feel it in the way they treat each other

Chapter 6 – Commitment

- Leaders must commit to doing everything in their power to make sure they have created the right environment for their team to improve and to enjoy the journey
 - Part of this commitment is being willing to make tough & unpopular decisions
- Commitment shows in your actions, in how you treat people, and how you interact with each member of your team
 - You will never get full buy-in from the team until you demonstrate your commitment to them first
 - You demonstrate your commitment every day with the time you spend and your willingness to serve each member and help them to improve
- Your team must feel your commitment – not just hear you talk about it
- A great leader sacrifices and serves in order to help the team members become great – you don't have to be great to serve, but you have to serve in order to be great
- To be a successful leader, you have to have an ego that drives you to be great – but you must give up your ego and serve your team in order for the program to be great
 - Humility doesn't mean that you think less of yourself – it means that you think of yourself less and think of your team more
- You have to care more about what your team thinks of you than what forces outside the locker room think of you
 - As a leader, you must own your weaknesses and then work to improve on them – check your ego and your stubborn pride at the locker room door
- When something goes wrong, the responsibility falls squarely on the coach – who is also responsible for getting it fixed
 - A team will function more effectively when it has leaders and team members who refuse to blame their teammates

Chapter 7 – Care

- The greatest organizations in the world care about the work they do, the products they create, and the services they provide
 - Example of Chick-fil-A employees saying “my pleasure” instead of “no problem”
- To work harder, you have to care more – care about the work you do and how it contributes to the team

- People who are a part of a team that cares will think, act, lead, & serve differently
- If you want to win, you focus on the culture, the people, and the processes that produce wins
 - You must have leaders who care more about everyone else and everything they do
 - A leader that cares will build a team that cares
- A strong leader will value all team members for who they are, not just what they do
 - Good coaches know X's and O's, but great coaches also know their players
- Relationships are the foundation upon which winning teams are built
 - All great relationships are based on value, respect, love, trust, & CARE
 - Caring is contagious!!
- When leaders show that they care – and the team members feel it – you will build a team that cares and plays hard regardless of their record

Chapter 8 – The Big C (Coaching)

- True leaders create more leaders – they don't just create followers
- Great coaches succeed not because they are great, but because they bring out the greatness in others

Chapter 9 – The Other Big C (Character)

- Talent without character is like an expensive car with no gas – it's useless without the fuel that it takes to drive it
 - Character drives talent toward greatness
- Leaders must see themselves both as developers of character as well as talent
 - Every person has a chance to develop into a high-character individual
- However, if you have someone on the team who is not willing to improved – and who is making decisions that are detrimental to the group – you must make the decision to remove that person for the betterment of the TEAM

Chapter 10 – Beyond the 7 C's

- When you lead with integrity, you won't always win, but you will always do the right thing

- **Passion** involves a belief about something, while emotions involve feelings about something
 - Be a leader who makes decisions based on beliefs/values and not based solely on your feelings
 - Emotions are hard to control and they are usually self-serving & illogical
- **Leadership** cannot be genuine if you are making decisions for your team based on the way that someone else did it or because that was the way it was done in the past
 - Leaders must be true to themselves and use all of the experiences they have had through their careers to mold and create their own style
 - A big part of leadership is leading from where you are and influencing people around you – regardless of your title, rank, or position
- Good leadership involves keeping a strong focus on the culture, your processes, your principles, the people, and on building the team
- **LOSS** = Learning Opportunity – Stay Strong
 - Your team's attitude and beliefs will determine how you deal with setbacks, challenges, & losses – every failure is an opportunity to learn & grow
- Culture Contamination – the quicker you transform or remove the energy vampires from your team, the faster you will transform your culture
- **Developing Champions** – rather than focusing on winning championships, work to cultivate leadership, character, work ethic, buy-in, & selflessness from each member of your team
 - Teach them how champions think and act
- **Moving forward** – mistakes will happen, so find the lesson and move on
 - Don't be bitter – work to improve and BE BETTER
 - The future that you envision won't happen unless you take action to create it!
- **Pressure not stress** – leaders put stress on their teams when they place expectations on them that are beyond the players' control (ex: focus on outcome)
 - Apply pressure when it comes the variables that your team can control
- Compete with each other on the practice field but **UNITE** on the game field
- **Life Lessons & Lifelong Learners** – you will not always win, but we should always strive to learn valuable lessons about teamwork, leadership, & humility
 - It is as much about the journey and preparation for life than about the game that you play – leave a lasting legacy