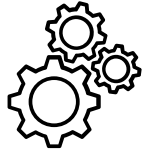


**'CHANGE YOUR GAME' SERIES**

# **THE GAME CHANGERS LEADERSHIP PLAYBOOK**

The Ultimate Guide to Developing  
Leadership one resource, activity  
and conversation at a time

**GAME**  **CHANGERS**  
MENTAL PERFORMANCE COACHING



# HEY COACH!

I'm so glad you're here!

Leadership is one of the most impactful skills an athlete can develop and it's **not just reserved for captains**. Strong leaders influence their teammates through actions, attitude, and accountability, no matter their role or year on the roster.



That's why I created this **Leadership Playbook**.



This isn't a **"one and done"** leadership seminar. It's a set of practical tools, activities, and conversations you can use to help your athletes lead themselves, lead each other, and lead within your program. It's about developing leaders who are **confident, self aware, and capable** of making a positive impact on and off the field.

It's here to work with you, not add to your to do list.

Use it your way. Make it yours. And watch how empowering athletes to lead can transform not just the team's performance, **but its entire culture**.



I can't wait to see the leaders your program develops through this work.



You ready? Me too. Let's get started.

**-Coach K**

Kristyna Bertolone  
Owner, Founder



Kristyna Bertolone, M.Ed. Owner/Founder & Performance Consultant of Game Changers Mental Performance Coaching, where she partners with athletes, coaches, and teams to strengthen the three game changers that transform potential into performance: mindset, leadership, and team culture.

A former Division II college athlete with a Bachelor's in Exercise Science and a Master's in Education (Curriculum Development concentration), "Coach K" brings over 15 years of teaching and coaching experience to her work. She spent more than a decade developing K-12 curriculums and leading high school athletic programs in Connecticut before launching Game Changers in 2021 to make a deeper, wider impact in the world of sport.

Since then, she has worked with hundreds of teams and thousands of athletes and coaches nationwide delivering workshops, presentations, and virtual sessions that break down big mental and cultural concepts into practical, teachable moments. Her approach is deeply rooted in education, connection, and clarity with a signature ability to meet people where they are and move them forward with confidence.

Through every conversation, interaction, and resource, Kristyna's mission is clear: To educate, equip, and empower individuals to lead with confidence, perform with purpose, and change their game.

# HOW TO USE THE PLAYBOOK

This playbook is here to make leadership development easier to integrate, more intentional, and more impactful for your athletes. It's a resource you can revisit throughout the year to keep leadership growth consistent.

## **STEP 1: GET FAMILIAR**

- Skim the table of contents to see the variety of leadership tools available.
- Read the short intro for each activity to understand its purpose.
- Highlight the activities that match your team's current needs or leadership gaps.

## **STEP 2: START SIMPLE**

- Pick 1-2 activities you can easily work into your schedule this week.
- Keep it manageable so leadership work doesn't get lost in the shuffle.

## **STEP 3: BUILD IT INTO YOUR ROUTINE**

- Integrate short leadership moments into existing meetings or practice time.
- Use travel days, downtime, or team meals for deeper leadership conversations.
- Rotate leadership topics to develop a well rounded skill set across the team.

## **STEP 4: ADAPT & MAKE IT YOURS**

- Adjust examples, timing, or formats so they resonate with your athletes.
- Involve athletes in facilitating activities to give them ownership.
- Keep track of standout moments so you can revisit and reinforce them.

## **STEP 5: KEEP THE MOMENTUM**

- Revisit leadership activities often; leadership skills grow with practice.
- Celebrate leadership wins out loud so others are inspired to step up.
- Remember, leadership isn't a title, it's a daily choice.

## **PRO TIP:**

These activities aren't meant to be a lecture. A five minute leadership moment done consistently will develop more leaders than a single talk at the start of the season.

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- **If another team, school, or program would benefit from these tools, please connect with me to arrange additional access or licensing.**

Your cooperation helps me continue creating high quality, practical resources for coaches and athletes everywhere.

Thank you for respecting the work that went into creating The Game Changers Leadership Playbook and for keeping it where it belongs, **with the people you purchased it for.**

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Kristyna Bertolone / [info@thementalgameisthegame.com/home](mailto:info@thementalgameisthegame.com/home)



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## QUESTION 01

### **WHAT IS THE ‘LEADERSHIP PLAYBOOK’ AND WHO IS IT FOR?**

This playbook is a ready to use collection of activities, conversation starters, and resources designed to help athletes develop their leadership skills. It’s built for coaches of all sports and levels who want to empower their athletes to lead themselves, their peers and their teams, without adding hours to their workload.

## QUESTION 02

### **HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER LEADERSHIP RESOURCES?**

The Leadership Playbook focuses on practical, everyday leadership. It’s not just theory, these tools are designed to be implemented in real team settings. They help athletes build confidence, communication skills and accountability, as well as being flexible enough to be woven in to your existing practices, meetings and team activities.

## QUESTION 03

### **HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE TO USE?**

You can implement most activities in 5-15 minutes during practice, team meetings or even bus rides to games. However there are longer activities you can use to take up a classroom session or even work to be done at home/in the off season. The structure allows you to pick and choose what fits your schedule.

## QUESTION 04

### **DO I HAVE TO USE EVERY ACTIVITY, SECTION OR GO IN ORDER?**

Not at all, however the Leadership Playbook was created in a layout that provides flow for you and your athletes to discuss personal leadership qualities and characteristics, then move on to team leadership. But how you put this playbook in to action is ultimately up to you and where you feel your athletes are at.

## QUESTION 05

### **IS THERE A RIGHT TIME OR SECTION TO START WITH?**

There’s no wrong time to start. You can begin during pre season to set the tone, mid season to reset and refocus or post season to prepare your leaders for next season. My advice? Start small and just START. Try one activity, one conversation prompt, one reflection activity and see how your athletes respond. The more consistently you use these tools, the bigger the overall impact.

**WANT HELP OR GUIDANCE? THAT’S WHAT I’M HERE FOR. [BOOK A CALL!](#)**





# A MESSAGE FROM **COACH K** TO THE **ATHLETES** USING THESE RESOURCES



Hey kid -

This playbook isn't just for captains, upperclassmen or the loudest voices on the team. It's for anyone looking to make a difference in **their own life first**.

Leadership comes in many forms, and sometimes the most powerful kind is by someone who simply shows up, works hard, and lifts others up along the way.

Inside, you'll find activities and reflections to help you understand what leadership looks like **for you**. Whether that means speaking up, supporting a teammate, holding yourself accountable, or stepping into a bigger role, leadership is about influence and **everyone has the ability to influence**.

Remember: leadership isn't about having a title, it's about the choices you make daily. The way you carry yourself, the effort you bring, the standard you set, **those things matter more than any label**.

So take it one step at a time. You don't need to have all the answers right now. **Leadership grows with practice**, just like any other skill.

You got this and I'm here to support you every step of the way.

**-Coach K**

Kristyna Bertolone  
Owner, Founder

# LEADERSHIP

## LEADING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

**ARE YOU A LEADER?**

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**WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?**

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# LEADERSHIP

## LEADING YOURSELF AND OTHERS!

### Why it Matters

Strong leadership sets the tone for a team's standards, communication, and resilience. Whether it's a captain, a coach, or a quiet role model, leadership shapes the culture more than any drill or strategy ever will.

### What it Really Is

Leadership isn't just about titles or speeches, it's the daily actions that inspire trust, create accountability, and help others rise to their potential.

### How to Build It

- Self Leadership; Lead yourself first, show discipline, integrity, and consistency.
- Communication - Speak with clarity, listen with intention.
- Connection - Know your people, relationships fuel influence.
- Responsibility - Own both successes and mistakes.

### How to Use This Section

- Choose activities that build both individual and shared leadership skills
- Rotate leadership opportunities so different athletes can grow.
- Pair skill work with reflection so lessons sink in.

**Coach's Corner:** Give athletes the chance to lead in small, safe situations before expecting them to lead in big ones. Provide feedback that focuses on how leadership impacts the team, not just the outcome of the task. And model the behavior you want to see.

**Leadership is caught more than it's taught.**

# ADDING LEADERSHIP TO PRACTICE

## ✓ LEADERSHIP WARM UP

Give a different athlete the responsibility to lead warmups each day or week. **Builds voice, presence, and peer respect.**

**Have them choose a quote, word or challenge of the day to kick off practice.**

Putting athletes in front of their peers, even briefly, helps develop confidence, ownership and leadership presence in low pressure moments.

## ✓ PEER CHECK INS/ ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER/BUDDY SYSTEM

Assign athletes to check in with a teammate before/after practice using a prompt or communication starter. **Promotes empathy, communication and emotional leadership.**

**Example Prompts:** “what’s your focus today?” “how can I support you this week?”

Leadership starts with awareness of others. These micro moments teach athletes how to support, listen and build relational trust.

## ✓ LEADERSHIP “WHAT IF” SCENARIOS

Pick one scenario per week to discuss as a team. **This can help to build critical thinking and decision making.**

**Example Prompts:** “what if a teammate calls you out in front of everyone?” “what if you disagree with a coach’s decision?”

These real world scenarios teach athletes how to lead through uncertainty, handle adversity and manage conflict with preparedness and maturity.

## ✓ LEADERSHIP MOMENT DEBRIEF

Take 2 minutes post practice for one athlete to share a leadership takeaway. **Helps players recognize teachable moments and reflect out loud.**

**Example:** “what did you notice today about how we handled adversity?”

Reflection strengthens leadership muscles by encouraging athletes to observe, process and articulate what matters most in team dynamics.

## ✓ ROTATING LEADER HUDDLE

Let different players lead team huddles, breakdowns or film insights. **Encourages communication under pressure and thoughtful direction**

**Try these prompts:** “what we did well...” “what we need to do better...” “what’s next for us...”

Leading in front of the group builds clarity, courage and influence which are core traits of leadership that translate directly to in game communication.

## ✓ LEADERSHIP LADDER

Create a visual or written “leadership ladder” showing traits to develop over time. **This helps to give athletes a growth path instead of a fixed example.**

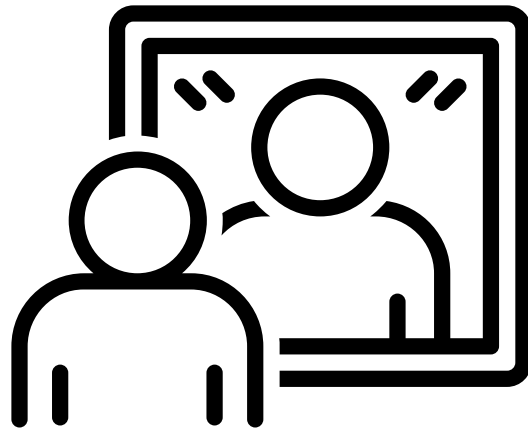
**Example:**

- **Level 1 - Communicates Consistently**
- **Level 2 - Leads by Example**
- **Level 3 - Holds teammates accountable**
- **Level 4 - Inspires others through action/words**

**\*Make sure YOUR ladder reflects the leadership characteristics YOU want to see in YOUR leaders.**

A “ladder” shows athletes that leadership is earned and built, not handed out. It reinforces effort, intentional growth and personal responsibility.

# ARE YOU A LEADER?



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# ARE YOU A LEADER??

## LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS/PROMPTS

**TO HELP NAVIGATE LEADERSHIP CONVERSATIONS**  
**Athlete to Self // Athlete to Athlete // Coach to Athlete**

Can also be used with coaching staffs to set standards for their team leadership to follow

1. WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES I BELIEVE A LEADER SHOULD HAVE, AND WHAT DO I DO TO CURRENTLY DEMONSTRATE THESE QUALITIES?
2. HOW DO I HANDLE SETBACKS OR CHALLENGES, AND HOW CAN I USE THESE EXPERIENCES TO INSPIRE AND LEAD MY TEAMMATES?
3. WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIONS CAN I TAKE TO WORK ON DEVELOPING TRUST AND RESPECT AMONGST MY COACHES AND TEAMMATES?
4. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME I SUPPORTED OR UPLIFTED A TEAMMATE? HOW DID IT MAKE THEM (AND ME) FEEL?
5. HOW DO I RESPOND TO CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM, AND HOW CAN I MODEL OPENNESS TO FEEDBACK FOR MY TEAM?
6. WHAT COMMUNICATION HABITS CAN I IMPROVE TO ENSURE I AM CLEARLY AND EFFECTIVELY SHARING MY THOUGHTS WITH OTHERS?
7. WHAT VALUES DO I WANT TO REPRESENT AS A LEADER, AND HOW CAN I EMBODY THESE VALUES BOTH ON AND OFF THE FIELD?
8. HOW CAN I BALANCE HOLDING MY TEAMMATES ACCOUNTABLE WHILE ALSO SHOWING EMPATHY, FAIRNESS AND ENCOURAGEMENT?
9. IN WHAT WAYS DO I CURRENTLY LEAD AND HOW CAN I IMPROVE IN SETTING A POSITIVE STANDARD FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW?
10. HOW DO I DEFINE SUCCESS FOR MY TEAM, AND WHAT ROLE CAN I PLAY IN HELPING US ACHIEVE IT TOGETHER?

# ARE YOU A LEADER??

## LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS/PROMPTS

CONTINUED

1. HOW DO I SHOW CONSISTENCY IN MY ACTIONS AND ATTITUDE, AND WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR BUILDING TRUST AS A LEADER?
2. HOW DO I HANDLE MOMENTS WHEN I DISAGREE WITH MY COACHES OR TEAMMATES, AND HOW CAN I COMMUNICATE THOSE DISAGREEMENTS IN A CONSTRUCTIVE WAY?
3. WHAT DO I DO WHEN I NOTICE A TEAMMATE STRUGGLING WITH CONFIDENCE OR MOTIVATION? HOW CAN I SUPPORT THEM WITHOUT OVERSTEPPING?
4. HOW CAN I BETTER RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE THE SMALL WINS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF MY TEAMMATES?
5. HOW DO I STAY COMPOSED UNDER PRESSURE, AND HOW DOES MY RESPONSE IMPACT THOSE AROUND ME?
6. WHAT ARE SOME WAYS I CAN ACTIVELY LISTEN BETTER DURING TEAM CONVERSATIONS, MEETINGS, AND HUDDLES?
7. HOW DO I HANDLE MOMENTS WHEN I FALL SHORT AS A LEADER, AND HOW CAN I TAKE ACCOUNTABILITY AND GROW FROM THEM?
8. HOW CAN I HELP BRIDGE GAPS BETWEEN DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES OR CLIQUES WITHIN MY TEAM?
9. WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE NEW TEAMMATES OR YOUNGER PLAYERS FEEL WELCOMED AND INCLUDED?
10. HOW DO I CONTINUE GROWING MY LEADERSHIP SKILLS OUTSIDE OF PRACTICE AND COMPETITION?

# MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

**REFLECT ON WHAT YOU KNOW/HAVE  
EXPERIENCED WITH LEADERSHIP UP UNTIL TODAY.**

## **GREAT LEADERS BRING OUT YOUR BEST**

Think about the leaders you have respected in your own life. Who are they? Why do you respect them? What about them made them someone you wanted to follow?

## **LEADERSHIP IS BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN OTHERS**

How are you making those around you better?? What are you currently doing to lift up those around you? Those younger than you? Those older than you? Your fellow classmates? Your coaching staff?

# MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

**CONT.**

## **NOW LET'S THINK OF THE OPPOSITE**

Have you ever been led by someone who was NOT a great leader? Someone who talked the talk but didn't walk the walk? Someone who you didn't really want to follow? What was it about their leadership style that you didn't like?

## **HISTORY IS MEANT TO BE LEARNED FROM**

Think back on your experiences, whether good or bad, and think about how you want to "leave the place better than you found it" either by making things better and improving them or by honoring those who came before you...

# WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?



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# WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

**IF YOU WANT TO WALK THE PATH OF LEADERSHIP, START HERE. LEADERSHIP STARTS WITH THE SELF, WAY BEFORE INVOLVING OR INCORPORATING OTHERS. GET IN TOUCH AND IN TUNE WITH YOU!**



## SELF AWARENESS

- Understanding **why** you do the things you do.
- What motivates you? What frustrates you?
- Knowing your strengths and weaknesses.
- Asking questions of yourself and others.

**"BE CURIOUS, NOT JUDGMENTAL"**



## SELF CORRECTION

- Identifying strengths and weaknesses.
- Using weaknesses to build more strength.
- Taking action when necessary.
- Being prepared and ready to go.
- Making changes before being told to do so.
- Using your **\*mantra\*** to redirect yourself.

**"WHERE YOUR ATTENTION GOES, ENERGY FLOWS"**



## SELF ACCOUNTABILITY

- Goal Setting: **Vision and Missions** to work towards.
- Committing to the things you said you would do.
- Walking the walk **FIRST** so you can talk the talk **SECOND**.
- Holding yourself to standards/no excuses.

**"IF YOU WON'T, WHO WILL?"**

**USE THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES TO SELF REFLECT AS A LEADER, ENGAGE IN MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHERS AND START WALKING THE PATH OF LEADERSHIP FOR YOURSELF.**

# HOW TO CREATE SELF AWARENESS PART 1

**LEADERS REFLECT, PERIOD.** Take the time to think about each of the following steps to Self Awareness and when you're done, find the **ONE** area that needs your attention **RIGHT NOW**.

- **DEFINE WHO YOU ARE AND WHO YOU AREN'T.**

Questions that you can ask of yourself; Who are you? How do you want others to describe you? What words, phrases, characteristics do you want to portray to those around you? Sit with these questions and when you are done, compare them to who you actually are and what you are currently doing in real life. Do your words and actions match up? And last, do you know who you do NOT want to be? Are there specifics that you know you want to avoid attaching to your name? Knowing who you don't want to be is just as important as knowing who you do want to be. **REFLECT BELOW.**

- **WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR AND WHAT WON'T YOU ACCEPT?**

What do you allow in to your life? What energy do you bring in? What do you want from the people in your life? And then think of the opposite? What don't you allow? What energy is not accepted? What will you not take from others? Knowing what you stand for will allow you to start understanding what environments you want to stay in and what rooms you may have to leave. It will also help you create healthy boundaries to keep the peace in your life. **REFLECT BELOW.**

# HOW TO CREATE SELF AWARENESS PART 2

- **WHAT THOUGHTS WILL YOU ALLOW AND WHAT THOUGHTS HAVE GOT TO GO?**

Our thoughts become our words, our words become our actions, our actions are how we are perceived in this world. It all starts in our mind with our thoughts. Spend some time noticing the thoughts you are allowing inside your head, whether they are your own or influenced by others. Once you get a sense of your thoughts, you can actively take over control of the ones you want to stay and the ones you need to replace. **REFLECT BELOW.**

- **UNDERSTAND HOW YOU THINK.**

Our brain is constantly working hard to keep us safe. And sometimes that means reacting instead of responding. Reacting is a skill triggered by your fight or flight mechanisms. Responding is actively thinking of how you want to handle a situation and how you want to be perceived by those around you. Responding is a skill that often involves taking a breath and thinking before doing. Acknowledge which one you do more of, and if you like that version of you that's showing up. **REFLECT BELOW.**

## HOW TO CREATE SELF AWARENESS PART 3

- **BE MORE CURIOUS THAN YOU ARE JUDGMENTAL**

How many times a day do you judge others, or worse, judge yourself? In this world it is really easy to judge a book by it's cover, assume the worst, and make fun of what we don't understand. Before allowing your brain to subconsciously attack others, or even yourself, take a breath, and ask yourself "why" you feel the need to judge in that moment. I often speak about this with athletes who are concerned about taking "rest days". Instead of getting mad at yourself for wanting a rest day, ask yourself "do I need a rest day?", "Is my body trying to tell me something?", or even "By giving my body a rest day I will be more capable of tackling hard skills tomorrow." **REFLECT BELOW.**

- **EVERYDAY AIM TO BE THE HERO IN A VICTIM MINDSET WORLD.**

It is real easy to allow yourself to walk through life like a victim. We often think of things happening "to us" instead of things just "happening" and we are experiencing them. But in reality, everyday we have a choice of how we perceive and receive information. If we look at situations through victimless lenses we are able to see things for what they are, not so much for how they are making us feel. You are the main character of your story. Don't allow someone or something else gain power over how your story pans out. Best part about the main character is they always find a way to learn a lesson and move forward. **REFLECT BELOW.**

# HOW TO CREATE SELF CORRECTION PART 1

**LEADERS REFLECT, PERIOD.** Take the time to think about each of the following steps to Self Correction and when you're done, find the **ONE** area that needs your attention **RIGHT NOW**.

- **DEVELOP YOUR SELF AWARENESS**

Regularly reflect: on your actions, behaviors, and decisions, on your strengths and weaknesses, on how you act, react and respond. What makes “you, you”? Take time to consider what you do well and what you could do better. Journaling either verbally, physically or digitally can be a helpful tool in this process, allowing you to track your progress and identify patterns over time. **REFLECT BELOW.**

- **SEEK FEEDBACK - FROM SELF AND OTHERS**

Actively seek out feedback to gain perspective on your actions and behaviors. This could be from coaches, teammates, mentors, friends, family members or from yourself via video. Constructive criticism can provide valuable insights that you might not notice on your own. Be open to the feedback, and use it as a learning opportunity rather than taking it personally. **REFLECT BELOW.**

## HOW TO CREATE SELF CORRECTION PART 2

- **BE MORE CURIOUS THAN YOU ARE JUDGMENTAL**

We already touched upon this in self awareness but it is also very much needed when you are self correcting. Stop judging yourself for your mistakes, emotions, feelings, reactions, how you “do you”. Instead ask yourself questions and be open to learning, rather than jumping right to judgement and disappointment in yourself. **REFLECT BELOW.**

- **CHALLENGE THE WAY YOU SEE AND THINK ABOUT “CORRECTION”.**

In order to correct yourself in a positive and proactive way, first you must identify what it means to you to be corrected. Do you fear it? Does it make you uncomfortable? How can you change the way you look at it in order to help push you and move you forward? Are you mean towards yourself? Or are you proud for taking risks and chances and are open to the idea of growing? **REFLECT BELOW.**

# HOW TO CREATE SELF CORRECTION PART 3

- **DEVELOP YOUR GROWTH MINDSET.**

Embracing a growth mindset is the belief that your abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work. This mindset encourages you to view mistakes as opportunities for learning rather than failures. When you encounter setbacks, analyze what went wrong, and consider how you can apply those lessons to future situations. **REFLECT BELOW.**

- **PRACTICE MINDFULNESS AND PATIENCE.**

Mindfulness involves being fully present and aware of your thoughts, feelings, and actions in the moment. It requires you to be patient and stop looking for instant gratification. Practicing mindfulness can help you catch mistakes as they happen, allowing for immediate self awareness and then self correction. **BUT PLEASE BE PATIENT** as improvement takes time, and it's important to be kind to yourself during the process. What is a word, phrase or saying you can use to help bring you back to the present moment when you feel your mind, body and emotions running off? Can you take a moment to breathe to reset and refocus yourself? Often the simplest things allow for the biggest growth. **REFLECT BELOW.**

# HOW TO CREATE SELF CORRECTION PART 4

- **CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT.**

Surround yourself with people who encourage your growth and self improvement. A supportive environment can provide motivation, accountability, and encouragement as you walk new paths in life. Make use of resources such as books, online courses, workshops and even personal coaches that can help you develop and grow as a person. Also make sure your learning environment is one that you feel good in. This may involve hanging up motivational quotes, posters, pictures, making sure to include positive and upbeat music as well as optimistic and helpful people around you. Your environment plays a part in you growing. **REFLECT BELOW.**

# HOW TO CREATE SELF ACCOUNTABILITY PART 1

**LEADERS REFLECT, PERIOD.** Take the time to think about each of the following steps to Self Accountability and when you're done, find the **ONE** area that needs your attention **RIGHT NOW**.

- **SET A GOAL/VISION/MISSION FOR YOURSELF.**

Establish clear, specific, and achievable goals by dissecting it in to two categories; VISION and MISSION. VISION is the big picture of what you are going after (bonus if you can attach a “WHY” to your vision) and MISSION is the small action steps you can begin doing TODAY to work towards your vision. By knowing exactly what you want to accomplish, you create a roadmap for yourself. **REFLECT BELOW.**

- **CREATE AN ACTION PLAN.**

Once your goals/vision/mission is set, develop a detailed plan to reach them. When will you work on your missions? How will you keep track of what you are doing? Outline the steps you need to take and prioritize them. Having a plan provides direction and helps you stay on course. Make sure to include “milestones” along the way to reflect and celebrate your process. This plan acts as a commitment to yourself and serves as a reference to ensure you are staying on track. **REFLECT BELOW.**

## HOW TO CREATE SELF ACCOUNTABILITY PART 2

- **MONITOR AND CHECK IN WITH YOUR PROGRESS.**

Regularly monitor your progress towards your goals. Keep a journal or use digital tools to track your daily, weekly, or monthly achievements. Reflect on what works and what doesn't, and adjust your plan as needed. Consistent monitoring helps you stay aware of your actions and decisions, making it easier to identify areas where you may need to improve your accountability. **REFLECT BELOW.**

- **DEFINE AND HOLD YOURSELF TO YOUR STANDARDS.**

What are YOUR standards? Write them down. What are YOUR expectations of YOU? What will you allow from yourself and what will you not? If you fall short, acknowledge it without making excuses. Instead, focus on understanding why you didn't meet your expectations and what you can do differently in the future. **REFLECT BELOW.**

## HOW TO CREATE SELF ACCOUNTABILITY PART 3

- **SEEK FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT.**

Sometimes, an outside perspective can help you stay accountable. Share your goals and progress with a trusted friend, mentor, or coach who can provide constructive feedback and encouragement. Being open to external input can offer new insights and keep you motivated. Additionally, knowing that someone else is aware of your goals can add an extra layer of accountability, support and growth. **REFLECT BELOW.**

- **PRACTICE SELF REFLECTION.**

Regular reflection is crucial for personal growth. Take time to reflect on your actions, decisions, and outcomes. Assess whether you are staying true to your goals and values. If you find areas where you are lacking, be willing to adapt and make necessary changes. **REFLECT BELOW.**

## HOW TO CREATE SELF ACCOUNTABILITY PART 4

- **TAKE ACTION.**

Quick activity to activate accountability: do what you said you were going to do, LONG AFTER you said you were going to do it. Set the alarm AND DON'T PRESS SNOOZE. Say you're going to do extra work AND SHOW UP. Set a day and time to journal and DO IT. Taking action requires you to show up and TAKE ACTION. **REFLECT BELOW.**

# **GAME** **CHANGERS** MENTAL PERFORMANCE COACHING

Now that you've taken the time to reflect, what area needs most of your attention right now? What area will you focus on today? What can you do to work towards this?

## **SELF AWARENESS**

## **SELF CORRECTION**

## **SELF ACCOUNTABILITY**

# TYPES OF LEADERS



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# 3 E'S OF LEADERSHIP

## EXAMPLER

**“Does what needs to be done”**

Committed  
 Self-motivated  
 Self-disciplined  
 Hard working  
 Care's passionately  
 -about self, team,  
 program success

Confident  
 Believes in self Thrives  
 in pressure  
 Risk taker  
 Sees own & teams  
 mistakes as growth

Composed  
 Emotions in check  
 Controls negativity  
 -self AND team  
 "Controls the  
 Controllables"  
 Sets the tone

Character  
 Does the right thing  
**Walks the Walk**  
 “Leads by Example”

## ENCOURAGER

**“Come with me,  
 let's do it together”**

**<- GLUE ->**

Confidence builder  
 Builds up others  
 Takes young/new  
 teammates under  
 wing  
**“come with me  
 teammate”**

Refocuser/  
 Keeps self and others  
 focused  
 Helps build mental  
 toughness/  
 resilience of self  
 and team

Team Builder  
 Unifies team around  
 goal/puts needs of  
 team ahead of own

Communicator  
 Knows HOW to  
 talk to and with  
 teammates  
 \*EVEN IF IT'S  
 UNCOMFORTABLE

## ENFORCER

**“Tells others what to  
 do/back up actions  
 with words”**

Courage to confront  
 self/others  
 constructively  
 Handles conflict in  
 a firm, fair, direct,  
 consistent way

Accountable  
 of self and others  
**Walks the Walk  
 AND Talks the Talk**

Communicator  
 Knows HOW and  
 WHEN to talk  
 to and with  
 teammates  
 Speaks up and out  
 \*EVEN IF IT'S  
 UNCOMFORTABLE

Calls teammates UP  
 to team standards

**VOCAL LEADERS**

## LEADERS BY EXAMPLE

These athletes lead not by what they say but more in **how they conduct themselves**. These are the athletes who consistently work hard in every drill, play with pride, keep their cool in pressure situations and do the right thing on and off the field. **THEY SET THE TONE AND PACE FOR PRACTICE AND GAMES.**

## VOCAL LEADERS

Being a vocal leader is all about **inspiring and motivating others** to be **their** best selves.

VOCAL LEADERS display the same characteristics of leaders by example, **but go a critical step further** in that they are **willing to step outside of themselves** by verbally encouraging, motivating, challenging and holding their teammates accountable. They have excellent communication and listening skills. They know when and how to encourage teammates as well as when and how to get tough and enforce the rules.

Vocal leadership comes down to you being an **Encourager** or an **Enforcer**

# HOW TO BE AN EXAMPLER

1. **Be consistent:** Consistency is key when it comes to being a leader by example. You need to consistently demonstrate the behavior and values that you want others to follow.
2. **Be accountable:** Take responsibility for your actions and admit your mistakes. When you hold yourself accountable, others will follow your lead.
3. **Walk the walk:** As a leader, you set the tone for those around you. By letting your actions speak for you through your work ethic and a positive attitude, you can inspire others to do the same.
4. **Lead with integrity:** Always act with honesty and integrity, even when no one is watching. Your actions SHOULD speak louder than your words.
5. **Show empathy:** Empathy is an important trait for any leader. Putting yourself in others' shoes and understanding their perspectives will help you connect with them on a deeper level.
6. **Be a lifelong learner:** Leaders who are constantly learning and growing are more likely to inspire others to do the same. Seek out opportunities for personal and professional development.

# HOW TO BE AN ENCOURAGER

1. **Use positive, optimistic and uplifting language:** As a vocal leader, the words you use can have a big impact on those around you. By using positive and uplifting language, you can inspire others to be their best selves and achieve their goals.
2. **Give constructive feedback:** When providing feedback, focus on the positive aspects of someone's performance and offer suggestions for improvement in a constructive way. This will help them feel encouraged and motivated to do better next time.
3. **Celebrate successes:** When someone achieves a goal or milestone, take the time to acknowledge their hard work and celebrate their success. This will help them feel valued and motivated to continue striving for excellence.
4. **Be approachable:** As a leader, it's important to be approachable and open to feedback and ideas from others. This will help create a positive and supportive environment where everyone feels valued and encouraged to contribute to the team's success.
5. **Do the behind the scenes work:** This may include reaching out to teammates via texts, locker room chats, team meetings, driving teammates to and from practice, reaching out to someone who hasn't seemed like themselves, checking in on everyone to know the tone of the group.

## HOW TO BE AN ENFORCER

1. **Have a vision:** It is important to have a clear understanding of your goals and objectives as a leader. This will help you to articulate your vision and communicate it effectively to your team.
2. **COMMUNICATE:** Enforcers enforce. This includes speaking clearly and persuasively, listening actively and empathetically and knowing what you and your team will and will not allow. You should be able to articulate team expectations clearly and hold your team accountable for meeting them.
3. **Be trustworthy:** This can be achieved by being consistent in your actions and decisions, demonstrating your commitment to your team's success, and being transparent about your thought process and decision-making.
4. **Make the tough calls:** Enforcers are willing to make tough decisions & take action when necessary. This may involve confronting difficult situations head-on, holding team members accountable for their actions, & making difficult decisions that may not be popular but are in the best interests of the team and the organization as a whole.
5. **Walk the Walk:** Enforcers' actions MATCH their words, and words BACK UP their actions.

# WHAT KIND OF LEADER ARE YOU?

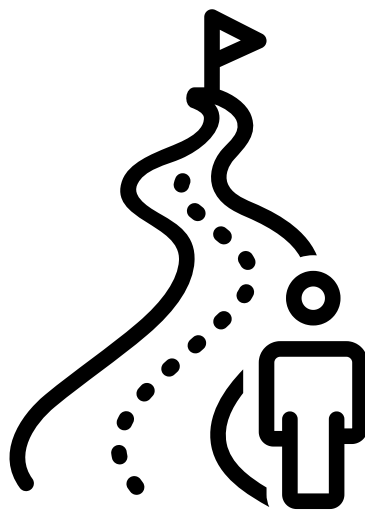
Using the previous descriptions, in what category would you put yourself in? Brain dump some examples and find where you fit/feel the most confident. It's OK if you are in only one category, it's also OK if you find yourself in multiple, but pick the ONE that makes the most sense for you right now to either focus on, improve in, or master.

**Exampler**

**Encourager**

**Enforcer**

# LEADERSHIP GOAL SETTING



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## WHAT'S NEXT?

**\*YOUR WHY\*** WHAT ARE YOU WANTING OUT OF THIS WHOLE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE??

**\*YOUR VISION\*** WHAT TYPE OF LEADER ARE YOU HOPING TO BE KNOWN FOR/WORK TOWARDS BECOMING?

**\*YOUR FIRST MISSION\*** WHAT IS ONE THING YOU CAN COMMIT TO TODAY TO START WORKING TOWARDS BEING THE LEADER YOU WANT TO BE?

**\*YOUR MANTRA\*** WHAT WILL YOU SAY TO YOURSELF AS A REMINDER TO STAY FOCUSED AND WORK HARD?

# MY LEADERSHIP

**WHY**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing the 'WHY' of leadership.

**VISION**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing the 'VISION' of leadership.

**MISSION**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing the 'MISSION' of leadership.

**MANTRA**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing the 'MANTRA' of leadership.

# OUR LEADERSHIP

**WHY**

**VISION**

**MISSION**

**MANTRA**

# L.E.A.D.ership LOOP

## LEAVE A LEGACY

All great leaders leave their mark. What is it you want to leave behind for others to follow? What is it you want others to say about you when you're gone. People are going to talk either way, might as well start putting effort in to "how" you'd like them to remember you...and not just "in one year" remember you...great leaders are thinking **decades** ahead.

## BE DETERMINED

### TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!

This links right back to leaving your legacy. Great leaders want to leave the place better than they found it. They want to leave their mark. They want their teammates to know they care. That they would do anything for them AND the team. Great leaders empower those around them, and **take care** of the people they've been asked to lead.



## ENGAGE WITH OTHERS

### GET. TO. KNOW. YOUR. PEOPLE!

Biggest mistake I see young leaders make is they forget that they're leading human beings, not followers on social media. Talk to your teammates. Get to know them. Understand what motivates them. Understand what makes them tick. Earn their **trust and respect**, just don't "demand it".

## ASK QUESTIONS

This obviously takes EFFORT too. Great leaders ask questions to understand, rather than just bark orders at people. Ask your teammates why they're here. Ask them what they want to accomplish. Ask them how their day is. Ask them to help you bring in the equipment instead of demanding they do it.

Asking questions is the **KEY** to developing relationships with the people around you.

**"BE CURIOUS, NOT JUDGMENTAL"**

# L.E.A.D.ership LOOP

## LEAVE A LEGACY

What legacy do you want to leave?



## BE DETERMINED

What difference do you want to make this season? What is something you hope you can influence to change?



## ENGAGE WITH OTHERS

How will you get to know your teammates better this upcoming season?



## ASK QUESTIONS

What is ONE question you can start asking your teammates today that will allow you to get to know them better?



# TEAM LEADERSHIP



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# CREATING LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ON YOUR TEAM

**Leadership doesn't happen by chance, it grows when we create space for it.**

Athletes want to lead, but they often don't know how. Coaches who create intentional opportunities give athletes room to practice leadership in ways that match their personalities, strengths, and roles. The structure you choose shapes how your athletes step up, **so think about what fits your program's culture and your coaching style.**

## WAYS TO STRUCTURE LEADERSHIP

### Captains (Assigned or Voted)

- Assigned Captains: Coach selected leaders based on trust, work ethic, or performance.
- Voted Captains: Team selected leaders who reflect peer trust and buy in.

### Leadership Groups / Councils

- Grade Level Reps: One athlete from each class (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior).
- Position Reps: Leaders chosen to represent different positions or units.
- Volunteer Based: Athletes step forward if they feel ready to lead.
- Coach Assigned: Strategic picks by coaches to develop potential leaders.

### Rotating Leadership

- Give different athletes the chance to lead warm ups, team talks, or film reviews.
- Builds confidence across the roster instead of relying on just a few voices.

### Situational Leaders

- Appoint leaders for specific contexts: "game day leader," "classroom leader," or "community service leader."
- Shows that leadership looks different depending on the situation.

## COACH'S ROLE IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- **Be Clear:** If you expect leaders to act a certain way, spell it out. Athletes can't meet expectations they don't know exist.
- **Be Present:** Leadership groups need check-ins, feedback, and guidance.
- **Be Flexible:** Every team is different. Some groups thrive with more freedom; others need structure and accountability.
- **Be Intentional:** Leadership opportunities should reflect your values. Don't create roles that exist just for show.

## COACH'S CORNER

- **Decide: Do you want athletes to grow into leadership on their own, or do you want to guide them intentionally?**
- Leadership structures should support your coaching philosophy, not compete with it.
- The best system is the one that gets more athletes to see themselves as leaders, no matter their title.

# COACH REFLECTION: CHOOSING YOUR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

These questions are to help coaches reflect, choose, and commit to a structure, instead of just copying what they've seen other programs do.

1. WHAT DO I WANT MY LEADERS TO MODEL EVERY DAY (ATTITUDE, EFFORT, HABITS)?
2. DO I PREFER TO HAND PICK LEADERS, LET ATHLETES VOTE, OR CREATE A HYBRID SYSTEM? WHY?
3. HOW MUCH FREEDOM AM I COMFORTABLE GIVING MY ATHLETES TO LEAD WITHOUT ME?
4. AM I WILLING TO INVEST THE TIME TO MEET WITH A LEADERSHIP GROUP OR COUNCIL REGULARLY?
5. WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO ME: DEVELOPING A FEW STRONG LEADERS OR CREATING LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE?
6. HOW DO I HANDLE MISTAKES OR MISSTEPS FROM LEADERS; DO I VIEW THEM AS FAILURES OR TEACHABLE MOMENTS?
7. DO I WANT LEADERS TO SERVE AS MY VOICE WHEN I'M NOT AROUND, OR DO I WANT THEM TO BRING THEIR OWN VOICE TO THE TEAM?
8. HOW WILL I MEASURE IF MY LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE IS "WORKING" FOR THIS TEAM?
9. AM I MODELING THE SAME QUALITIES I EXPECT FROM MY LEADERS?
10. HOW WILL I INTRODUCE THIS LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE TO MY ATHLETES SO THEY UNDERSTAND ITS PURPOSE AND VALUE?

# COACH LEADERSHIP DEBRIEF SHEET

## GUIDING CONVERSATIONS WITH CAPTAINS & LEADERSHIP GROUPS

### 1. TEAM PULSE/TEMPERATURE/VIBE

- What have you noticed about the team's energy and focus lately?
- Are there any athletes who may need extra support right now?
- Where do you feel the team is most connected?
- Where do you feel the team is least connected?

### 2. LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

- How have you stepped into leadership since our last check in?
- What moments felt strong?
- What moments felt challenging?
- Have you noticed examples of teammates stepping up in leadership roles?

### 3. FEEDBACK LOOP

- What's one piece of feedback you've heard from your teammates?
- Is there something the team needs more or less of from me (coach/staff)?
- How can I better support you in your leadership role?

### 4. PROBLEM SOLVING

- Are there any issues or conflicts bubbling up that we should address now?
- What's one solution or idea you think could improve our team dynamic?
- What's one challenge we're already faced that we solved well?
- If you had full control for one day, what change would you make to improve our team dynamic?

### 5. LEADERSHIP GROWTH

- What's a leadership skill you'd like to develop this season?
- How can I challenge you to grow in that area?
- What's one action step you'll take before our next check in?

# WHAT MAKES A GREAT **TEAM** LEADER?

Every team has athletes who naturally rise to the top, not just in skill, but in the way they influence those around them.

**Leadership isn't about a title, popularity, or being the loudest voice in the room. It's about consistent actions that elevate the team as a whole.**

The most effective leaders understand that their role extends far beyond personal performance. They set the tone for the culture, communication, and standards of the team. They lean into challenges, foster unity, and serve as a bridge between players and coaches.

The following resource provides key areas where great team leaders make an impact. **Use it as a guide to spark reflection, conversation, and leadership growth within your program.**

**Whether you're a coach building your leadership group or an athlete looking to level up, these are the behaviors that move a team forward.**

At the end of the day: leadership is earned through actions that serve the team, not yourself.

# GREAT **TEAM** LEADERS

## **“CALL TEAMMATES UP NOT OUT”**

Great team leaders set and maintain the standards/core values/team missions for everyone else to follow. They consistently give it their all and demand that their teammates do the same. They aim at calling their teammates UP, and rarely focus at calling someone “out”.

## **“HELP YOUR TEAMMATES FACE THEIR LIONS/TRIGGERS”**

Great team leaders help their teammates face the adversities and triggers that occur during games and throughout the season, aka our “lions”. When adversity strikes great leaders maintain their own composure which keeps their teammates calm under pressure. Great team leaders are a calming force who are able to help their teammates adjust and refocus.

## **“CREATE TEAM COHESION/UNIFY AROUND TEAM GOALS”**

Great team leaders promote a positive sense of team chemistry and prevent cliques from developing as they look to break down barriers, unify their teammates and rally them around a common goal.

## **“COMMUNICATE AND CONNECT TO AND WITH COACHES”**

Great team leaders help keep the coach connected to the team. They keep them informed about how players may be doing, who is struggling, the overall vibe heading in to important parts of the season as well as if there are any problems brewing amongst the team.

## **“MINIMIZE AND MANAGE CONFLICT IN A FAIR AND FIRM WAY”**

Great team leaders will help manage the inevitable conflict that occurs on every team. They can often handle and even solve a lot of problems before coaches even have to get involved. They are focused on solving the problem and not letting a small problem grow and get out of control. They keep their teammates and team on the same side, always vs the problem, never vs one another.

# GREAT **TEAM** LEADERS ON OUR TEAM

Who on your team, or within your leadership group, would you place in each category? Where would you say you each are the strongest? Where is each person at their weakness? Great leaders know their strengths & weaknesses and lean on one another to lead together.

**“CALL TEAMMATES UP NOT OUT”**

**“HELP YOUR TEAMMATES FACE THEIR LIONS/TRIGGERS”**

**“CREATE TEAM COHESION/UNIFY AROUND TEAM GOALS”**

**“COMMUNICATE AND CONNECT TO AND WITH COACHES”**

**“MINIMIZE AND MANAGE CONFLICT IN A FAIR AND FIRM WAY”**

# **GREAT TEAM LEADERS ON OUR TEAM** **OUR LEADERSHIP STANDARDS**

Think about what an effective team leader is responsible for on YOUR team. Do you have different standards than the ones I shared? What's important to your team may differ. Record them here, then discuss. Then again, ask yourselves where are you strong/weak as individuals and as a group?

# OUR TEAM LEADERS

Using the previous descriptions, in what category would you put yourself in? What about your other teammates? Fellow leaders?

**Example**

**Encourager**

**Enforcer**

# WHO'S THE **YING,** TO YOUR **YANG?**



**Great leaders compliment each other  
and work together towards the overall goal.**

**Use the following questions to ask of yourself and your  
fellow leaders to find how you each will assist one  
another on your leadership journey this season!**

- Who amongst your leadership group is your opposite?
- Who can help you work on your weaknesses as a leader?
- Who can you share your own strengths with?
- Who can help you when your leadership style isn't being well received?
- Who can help you walk the walk?
- Who can help you talk the talk?
- Who can you help step up and in to their leadership role?
- Who will add value to your leadership experience?
- Who can you add value to their experience?
- Who can you help discover their leadership style?

# CAPTAINS **VS** LEADERS

While both captains and leaders may seem similar, there are big differences between the two.

The title “**CAPTAIN**” is a “**given role**” where as “**LEADER**” is a “**taken role**”. This means that coaches and/or a team vote often **GIVE** someone the role of captain but choosing to be a leader is something someone **TAKES** because it is something they feel committed and compelled to doing.

True leadership is more than just giving orders or being in charge. It is about using your skills and experience to empower others and create a better future for everyone involved.

While a captain may focus more on the logistics of the team, a leader may focus on the growth and development of the program, the goal, the culture and each individual member.

## **WHICH ARE YOU?**

# CAPTAIN LEADER

As a coach or a team, define what your expectations and standards are for a captain AND a leader on YOUR team...

**Characteristics and qualities OUR TEAM looks for in a CAPTAIN**

**Characteristics and qualities OUR TEAM looks for in a LEADER**

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION



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# HELPING ATHLETES NAVIGATE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS TOGETHER



## WHY THIS MATTERS

Tough conversations are part of every team's journey, but how your team handles them is what sets you apart.

Too often, athletes avoid talking through issues because they fear conflict, confrontation, or saying the wrong thing. Others jump straight into blame or defensiveness, and the real issue gets lost. Either way, trust breaks down, and team culture suffers.

This following guide is designed to help your team shift their mindset: It's not about player vs. player. **It's about all of us vs. the problem.**

**Taking the time to sit down together as a team to build your own formula for navigating hard conversations does a few powerful things:**

- It sets a standard for how your team communicates.
- It gives your athletes tools and shared language to handle disagreements productively.
- It builds trust, accountability, and cohesion that will carry over into every aspect of how your team operates, on and off the field.

## HOW TO USE THE FOLLOWING RESOURCE:

- Set aside 30-45 minutes for a team meeting.
- Go through each section together.
- Encourage discussion, not just answers.
- Let your athletes help shape the language and approach so they feel ownership and accountable to uphold this standard.
- Create a visible team agreement or "conversation code" they can refer back to; hang in locker room, put in team binders, send home.



This is more than just a worksheet, it's a culture builder. Because championship level teams don't avoid hard conversations. They lean in, stay respectful, and solve problems together. Let's help them do exactly that.

# HELPING ATHLETES NAVIGATE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS TOGETHER

## **1. SETTING THE MINDSET BEFORE THE CONVO - Approach the problems as teammates, not opponents**

- a. What is the actual issue we are trying to solve together?
- b. What do we want to achieve in this conversation?
- c. How can we make sure this stays about the problem and not about attacking each other?
- d. What's one way we can show respect to each other even when we disagree?

## **2. ACKNOWLEDGE PERSPECTIVES & FEELINGS - Listening doesn't mean agreeing, it means understanding**

- a. Can you help me understand where you're coming from?
- b. What's been frustrating for you about this situation?
- c. What impact do you feel this issue is having on the team?
- d. How do you think I might be experiencing this situation?

## **3. IDENTIFY THE CORE ISSUE - When you define the real problem, it's easier to solve**

- a. What's the real problem here?
- b. What's something we both agree on?
- c. If we removed personal feelings for a second, what would we say is the root issue?
- d. What's one thing we both want for this team?

## **4. PROBLEM SOLVE TOGETHER - Find solutions, not just more frustrations**

- a. What's one step we can take to fix this?
- b. What do you need from me to help this situation?
- c. How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?
- d. What's a compromise that would work for us both?

## **5. END ON A POSITIVE NOTE - Growth happens when conversations end with clarity, not conflict**

- a. What's something we can appreciate about each other in how we handled this?
- b. How can we check in on this later to make sure we're good?
- c. What's one thing we can do today to move forward as a team?

# **HELPING ATHLETES NAVIGATE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS TOGETHER**

note taking sheet

## **SETTING THE MINDSET BEFORE THE CONVO**

Approach the problems as teammates, not opponents

## **ACKNOWLEDGE PERSPECTIVES & FEELINGS**

Listening doesn't mean agreeing, it means understanding

## **IDENTIFY THE CORE ISSUE**

When you define the real problem, it's easier to solve

## **PROBLEM SOLVE TOGETHER**

Find solutions, not just more frustrations

## **END ON A POSITIVE NOTE**

Growth happens when conversations end with clarity, not conflict

# STRUGGLE WITH APOLOGIES?

**Vulnerability doesn't come easy to everyone, and sometimes saying "I'm sorry" is really hard. Try these to get the conversation going...**

- "I regret how my actions impacted you".
- "I see now that what I did hurt you and that wasn't my intention".
- "I take responsibility for what happened and I want to make it right".
- "I realize now that I should have handled that differently".
- "I value our relationship and I don't want my actions to cause harm".
- "That wasn't fair to you and I want to own up to it".
- "I understand why you're upset and I want to do better moving forward".
- "I recognize I made a mistake and I want to learn from it".
- "I appreciate your patience with me as I work on this".
- "I hear you and I acknowledge where I went wrong".

# DON'T THINK YOU WERE WRONG?

**BUT WANT TO MOVE THROUGH THE PROBLEM? TRY THESE:**

- "I can see this was important to you and I want to find a way forward".
- "I may not fully understand but I do respect you and your feelings and I want to make this right".
- "I hear where you're coming from and I don't want this to create distance or animosity between us".
- "I acknowledge that this affected you and I want to work through it together".
- "Let's find a way to move past this in a way that works for us both".
- "I don't want this to cause tension between us so let's talk about what we both need".
- "I get that we see this differently but I still value our relationship and I want to resolve it".
- "I'm willing to meet you halfway on this so we can move forward".
- "I respect your perspective and I want to make sure we're both good moving forward".
- "This situation isn't ideal, but I want to focus on a solution rather than staying stuck on the problem".

## COMMUNICATE BETTER, TOGETHER, USING THE SYMPATHY - SUPPORT - SOLUTION METHOD

“What do you need from this conversation?”

### ➔ SYMPATHY AKA JUST LISTEN

Sometimes people just want to be heard, want their feelings validated, or they need a safe space to vent and get things off their chest. Think of this like “catching someone’s word vomit”. No advice offered, no suggestions, just listen. You can ask questions like “tell me more”, “why do you think you feel that way” or “I’m ready to listen when you need me to”. When they’re done, take the vomit that you just caught and THROW IT AWAY, don’t throw it back at them, and absolutely do not spread it around to others. When someone wants sympathy, that’s all they’re capable of handling or receiving in the moment. Honor that and honor them.

\*Just because someone wants sympathy, doesn’t mean they should always get it. If all someone is doing is venting/word vomiting you have every right to draw a boundary and let them know you are not available for sympathy, but when they’re ready to move forward, you’re there to help them.

### ➔ SUPPORT EXACTLY WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE

Once you have offered sympathy and “listened”, you can offer up your support; in the form of a hug, thanking them/your appreciation, reminding them you’re there for them, or maybe asking more questions that will help create a way to work through their problem/ frustration. If they’re having a problem you can assist with or be by their side for, then do so if you feel comfortable. Please do not offer advice unless they are ready to receive it. Think about all the ways you like to be supported, or wish someone would support you and offer suggestions until you find the right fit.

### ➔ SOLUTION GREEN LIGHT FOR ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS, GO!

The more you “listen”, the more you create a safe and non judgmental space for others to go to when they need help, and eventually they will start asking for your advice or “how would you handle this situation?” By starting with sympathy and support first, others will feel more heard, valued, seen and ultimately more comfortable coming to you for solutions in the long run. When a person’s judgement is clouded, solution based thinking isn’t always accessible to the human brain. Allow humans to be human, and problem solve when they’re ready to do so.

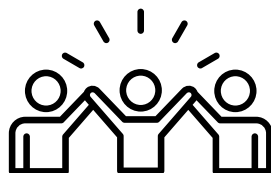
# WHAT'S NEXT ON YOUR LEADERSHIP JOURNEY?

Help guide your team towards success!!

Team Culture is not just a job for coaches, but for the athletes that make up that team, including those in leadership positions to help initiate and guide the conversations surrounding team culture; **who we are, what we want to accomplish, how we want to act, etc...**



The **Game Changers Team Culture Playbook** would be my next suggestion for you and your leadership (and team) to expand on discussions and conversations surrounding leadership and culture.



# GAME CHANGERS

MENTAL PERFORMANCE COACHING

# THANK YOU!

Thank you for trusting me and The Leadership Playbook to be part of your coaching journey. This playbook was created to give you practical, ready to use tools that build clarity, connection, and confidence in your athletes and your program.

Whether you used this as a pre season foundation, an mid season reset, or a postseason reflection, I hope you found ideas you can make your own and carry in to every season.

**Remember, the impact of this work grows over time.**

The more consistently you use these concepts, the more they become part of your team's identity.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

- Review & Reflect – Take a few minutes to note what worked well and what you want to try next season.
- Keep It Alive – Revisit sections throughout the year to keep your approach fresh and aligned with your team's needs.
- Reach Out – I'd love to hear how you've used The Game Plan and the impact it's had. Share your feedback, success stories, or questions as they help me create even better resources for you.

## WANT MORE?

If you enjoyed this workbook, you may also love:

- [The Game Changers Mindset Playbook](#)
- [The Game Changers Team Culture Playbook](#)
- [The Game Plan Playbook](#) – a full, all in one resource with mindset, leadership, and team culture tools in one place (available with a consultation).



**Email me for details or to set up a call to explore which option is the best fit for your program.**

## STAY CONNECTED

- Email: [info@thementalgameisthegame.com](mailto:info@thementalgameisthegame.com)
- Website: [www.thementalgameisthegame.com/home](http://www.thementalgameisthegame.com/home)
- Social: [@gamechangers](#)



You are shaping more than athletes, you are shaping people. The work you put into your team culture will outlast any season, score, or record. Keep showing up, keep leading, and keep **changing the game.**



## -COACH K

**THE MENTAL GAME**  
*is the game*

