



## High Performance Player Development

I came across this article by Coach Warren Nye. Nye is a Peak Performance Coach. I thought the article on character and its importance to becoming successful and reaching your full potential was applicable to any athlete; especially one that strives for “High Performance”.

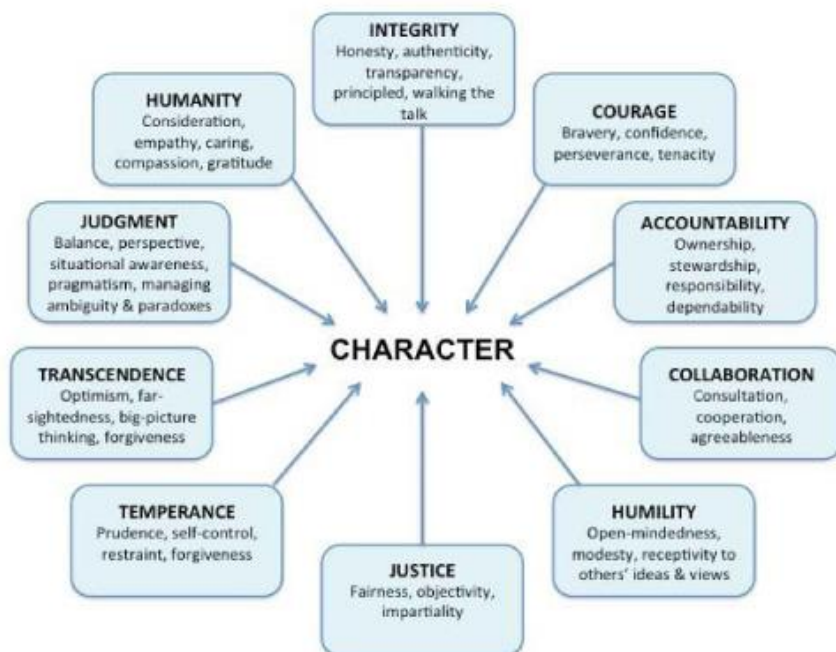
ATB – MAHA High Performance Liaison

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### Without Character You Cannot Reach Your Potential:

Have you ever heard of the saying, ***“You identify yourself by what you do when no one is watching”?***

You may have an athlete who is a great practice player, always hustling, first in line for drills and even will pick up the pucks. He could be the most selfless and responsible competitor going but then I ask.



*What is he like practicing when no one is watching? How does he interact with his teammates while out of ear shot of the coaches? You see this is when he defines himself; this is when he defines his **character**.*

I also am a big believer that athletic competition doesn't really teach character but of course it will reveal it in some cases. I am also a believer that character can be taught. If an athlete feels the task in hand is too daunting, then guess what he is correct. But if another athlete sees that it can be done, then he shall prevail.

You see positive character traits are those things that draw us to other people. When someone is generous, kind, energetic, or optimistic they exude energy that attracts others. Now, when we turn the mirror back on ourselves, many times we notice not-so-positive character traits...things like jealousy, selfishness, immaturity, or greed. These can all be changed. If you are not getting the results you want in life, the first place to look is at how you are interacting with the world. This is what I realized.

Positive character traits can be developed in ourselves. Over time I have come up with **10 Core Habits** for an athlete to work towards to help them through their playing career.

#### **10 Core Habits:**

- **Great Work Ethic** – These peak performers have a crazy work ethic, and are self-driven to get better each day. No one ever out-prepares them. They are constantly pushing themselves in training and practice to be their best.
- **Great Mental Focus** – These are true competitors who have cultivated the ability to stay in present moment awareness during crunch time. They have the unique ability to get into the zone and block out all distractions. These athletes are the ones who consistently play poised under pressure and seem to have ice in their veins in the biggest moments of competition.
- **Students of the Game** – These athletes never stop being a student of the game. Each game and each practice they observe what their teammates and the opponents are doing, always looking for ways to improve their game. They master the little things in their game and constantly look for ways to gain the edge.
- **Focus on Effort, Not Outcome** – These are consistent peak performers in part because they have learned to focus on the effort they give and not solely on the outcome of each play or game/match performance. They recognize that the game is a tough one to master, filled with adversity. By focusing on putting forth maximum effort in the moment and not being concerned with how others judge their outcomes they are able to frame mistakes as a learning opportunity and a challenge to get better!
- **Bounce Back Well from Adversity** – This ability defines top recruits. Because they have a high level of self-confidence, expect success, do not focus on outcome and have a plan of action these peak performers do not get “stuck” when adversity and failure hits. They know no one is perfect, shake off the mistake and bounce back to present moment focus and peak performance quickly.

- **Plan of Action** – These elite athletes all have clearly defined goals and purpose for playing the game. They have well rehearsed pre-game, in-game and post-game rituals to insure they will perform their best. They prepare themselves mentally, “seeing” their success in advance. They can summon intense concentration and focus on demand. After the game they reflect on their performance positively and look for things they can work on in practice to get better...always sticking to their plan of action.
- **Leaders Within**– Highly recruited athletes are always leaders on and off the field/court. This does not mean they need to be vocal but rather are respected by both teammates and coaches for “walking the talk,” and always leading by example. College and pro scouts love these

athletes for the “intangibles” they bring to the team. Leaders motivate their teammates and find a way to win regardless of the circumstances (think Mark Messier).

- **Bounce Back Well from Adversity** – This ability defines top athletes. Because they have a high level of self-confidence, expect success, do not focus on outcome and have a plan of action these peak performers do not get “stuck” when adversity and failure hits. They know no one is perfect, shake off the mistake and bounce back to present moment focus and peak performance quickly.
- **Love the Game** – These athletes work ethic is propelled due to their love of the game. Playing the game brings these elite athletes joy; they love the way they feel on the field/court and even smile after a mistake. It’s all good to them whenever they cross the white line and their love for the game is infectious!
- **Have a Highly Developed Level of Self-Confidence** – Because of their mastery with the other nine habits and traits on this list these athletes have developed a “rock solid” level of self-confidence; their emotional tanks are full and them on the field/rink success is predictably stellar. Without this trait your athlete will never be highly recruited because the game is simply too hard to master without it.

Defining what makes a champion is no easy feat, but the personality traits and characteristics considered here can be easily spotted in many of the sporting greats. Although there will always be differences among elite performers, it’s clear that there are a few stand-out personality characteristics that can determine success. Yes, superior skills and training hard are vital, but among the elite it’s the mind that is the winner.

As the great coach **Vince Lombardi** once said, **“Character is not inherited, it is something that can be, and needs to be, built and disciplined”**.

So I ask you the athlete and the coach, what are you doing to build your own character in your sport?

Coach Warren Nye

Peak Performance Life Coach