



COACH K



Teaches Value-Driven
Leadership



MasterClass



MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR

COACH K

DURING THE four-plus decades he was head coach of the men's basketball team at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, Mike "Coach K" Krzyzewski built one of American college basketball's most storied

dynasties. He led his team to five National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) championships and 13 Final Four appearances (the tournament's semifinals). He also served as head coach of Team USA's men's Olympic basketball team during six

gold-medal-winning runs. In this class, Coach K will teach you about value-driven leadership, the principles of which he's applied in his own remarkable career filled with numerous achievements. Keep reading for a look at notable highlights.



ONE-ON-ONE: A Q&A WITH SHANE BATTIER

The former player shares leadership
lessons from Coach K

SHANE BATTIER IS one of Coach K's all-star former players. During the years he played at Duke—1997 to 2001—the four-year starter was a two-time captain, a national player of the year, a national defensive player, and a national champion. When he graduated, Battier was selected sixth overall in the 2001 NBA draft and went on to have a storied career with the Miami Heat (among other professional teams); he'd go on to win back-to-back championships with them. Here, the basketball legend, entrepreneur, and father of two discusses his time and experience with Coach K.

What was your first impression of Coach K?

From the beginning, what struck me about Coach K was his authenticity. You could just tell he had this integrity, directness, and passion.

What transferable skills did you acquire playing basketball that have traveled with you into your post-NBA career?

You gotta show up every day. We all have stuff we deal with in everyday life and some days you're fatigued, some days the kids are sick. Things aren't going your way, right? But you can always be present. When Coach K came to practice, he was always energized. He always had the attitude of "Okay, we're here, let's work." And so that's what I try to do, whether I'm delivering a speech, meeting with my mentee—it doesn't matter. I try to show up and give my best, always.

How would you define a winning culture and success?

Coach K's most underrated trait was he empowered people to have own-

ership in the team. He did a phenomenal job of laying the groundwork for developing a culture of confidence, trust, and communication. Coach K also empowered the senior leadership to take ownership of the team to teach the young guys. So as great as Coach K was, you'd get the message from all angles. That's how you create tradition. It's how you create a legacy.

Do you have a formula for overcoming obstacles?

It's the "next play" ethos. Coach K used to tell us, "Never make an error out of omission. Always make errors of aggression." So if you are trying to make a play, trying to do the right thing and it doesn't work out—you turn over, you foul a guy or miss a shot, but you're being active and aggressive? We can live with that. I mean, you learn from your mistakes,



Shane Battier at a
Miami event in 2021

obviously. But it's the errors of omission, omissions of energy, of thought, making careless plays, those are the real killers in any team setting, in sports and in life. Things don't happen when there's no effort. It's probably the best way to overcome the fear of making mistakes in the face of adversity.

How do you assess the value of a business venture?

I use a simple framework with every opportunity, business or otherwise. Does it fall into my bucket of the three Cs—contribution, challenge, and community? Contribution: Can I help? How can I help with my experiences and the things that make me who I am? Challenge: What am I going to learn? I'm always endlessly curious, in the words of [former U.S. Secretary of State] Colin Powell. I don't want to get involved with any business venture if I can't learn. Lastly, community. I want to be valued and part of something larger than myself. So what's the aim of this venture? Is it just to turn a profit? Or is it to impact people in our world in a positive way? And so I've developed that framework to help me think about all my relationships and business ventures, and a lot of it comes from my time with Coach K.

Some of these answers have been lightly edited for clarity.

Coach K's 5 Lessons in Leadership

According to Shane Battier

1. CONSTANTLY CONSIDER YOUR PEOPLE AND YOUR TEAM

"Coach K spent a vast majority of his energy thinking about his team, whether it's players, coaches, support staff, managers—what do they need to be at their best?"

2. EMPHASIZE CULTURE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

"There wasn't one day we showed up to the gym where we didn't know what our expectations were, what it meant to play for Duke basketball and to be associated with the program. You have to constantly remind people what the culture is—why are we here? What are our principles? What are the nonnegotiables every day?"

3. TAKE COMMUNICATION SERIOUSLY

"Whether that was verbally or physically huddling and connecting with each other. People get fatigued when they communicate too much, but we were encouraged to connect and communicate every day."

4. FOCUS ON THE NEXT PLAY

"The most important play in the game is the play that's right in front of you. Whether you have success or failure in the previous play or plays or game or weeks or seasons is totally irrelevant. That's how you attack the moment: how present you are. Can you do what it takes for the team to win in this single moment?"

5. SET CLEAR STANDARDS

"I don't remember a time when Coach K said, 'We have to win this game.' He never talked about wins in the classic sense. Wins were always a by-product of the standards that we set. If we played to the standards of Duke basketball, wins would flow from that."



LEAD WITH YOUR VALUES

Establishing principles helps your team win

RECRUITING A GROUP of talented individuals isn't enough to guarantee success. To help your organization reach its goals, Coach K emphasizes the importance of instilling values that define its character. "To me a value-based team or a value-based organization are the ones that stand the test of time," Coach K says. They are the ones that win.

While studying at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York, Coach K says he was inspired by the institution's honor code, which would go on to shape his own leadership philosophy: "A cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do." Another key value that Coach K took from his education there was the idea that "you're never alone...there's somebody who has your back all the time."

When defining your own organization's values, it's important to get input from as many people as you can. By allowing each member of your group to be involved, you make the values feel personal for them. And, as Coach K says, those principles become a way of life.

So, what values work best? Don't make them overly complicated—your goal should be to create values that your organization can easily internalize, understand, and personalize. If you're struggling with where to start, check out the five values Coach K has used with his teams:

Communication

"We look each other in the eye, and we tell each other the truth all the time," Coach K says. You want to create an organization where everyone, no matter their role or position, feels empowered to speak up and knows that they'll be heard. Clear and open communication both to, and among, your team will help generate respect all around, leading to Coach K's second value: trust.

Trust

Coach K defines trust as being able to look at your teammates and say, "I value your word, and I believe you in an instant" while they say the same about you (more on page 32). Fostering trust, in turn, promotes honesty, leading to a more accurate assessment of the group's goals, challenges, and opportunities.

Care

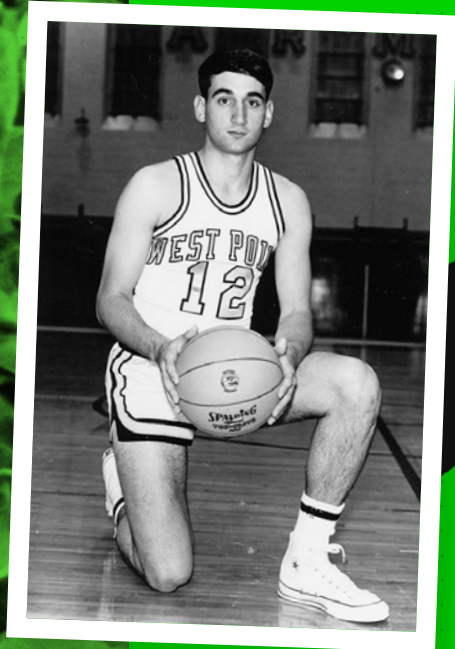
Does your team know how to support each other when the going gets tough? How about when you have a major breakthrough? Coach K's "Go for it, I got your back" approach is about cultivating empathy throughout an organization. If each member of the group feels cared for, they will be more likely to give their best and admit to one another when they need help.

Collective Responsibility

You win and lose together. No one achieves greatness entirely on their own, and you should strive to validate everyone's efforts. Doing so will help manage egos, absorb the impact of failure, and put the focus on improving.

Pride

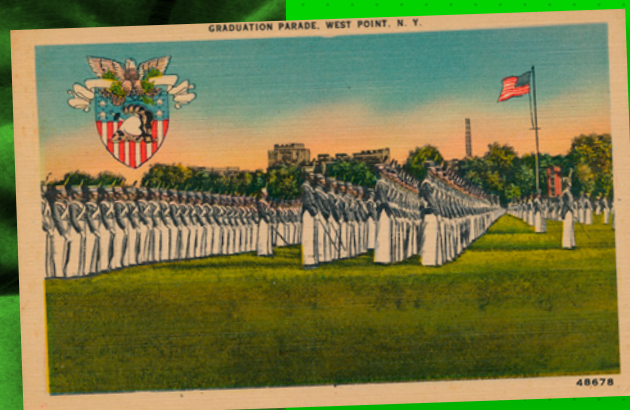
For Coach K, pride, in this case, is not directed toward one person but rather toward an organization. For example, when coaching the 2008 U.S. Olympic basketball team, he was able to channel individual pride from team members into a unified identity: USA Basketball.



Left: West Point cadets in uniform in the mid-1930s

Above: Coach K as a young West Point college basketball player in 1968

Below: A 1940s-era postcard depicting a West Point graduation parade





01

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

LEAD WITH YOUR VALUES

Now that you've seen Coach K's creative approach to team building, follow his example to help your organization determine what values best define and suit your goals

OPEN DISCUSSION

Coach K shared his team's five core values (communication, trust, care, collective responsibility, and pride). Which value do you most identify with? Which do you think you should work on?

SELF-REFLECTION

What values are you most passionate about? How can you apply them at work every day? How can you guide your team to apply them in their roles every day?

Is there a specific area of your work where your values are most visible? If so, what opportunities exist within your organization to be an example for colleagues on how to live out these values?

ACTIVITY

Hold a Values Meeting

A values meeting is an informal gathering where every participant gets to engage with—and contribute to—the values for your organization. Coach K has held these values meetings with his Duke University and Olympic teams throughout his career. Having teams play a role in creating the values they will uphold helps establish buy-in and ensure members will abide by them. Set up a values meeting with your team or organization and make sure to solicit ideas and input from every member present. Once you've created a list of all of the proposed values, you may want to narrow it down to the top five values that most reflect your group's mission and goals. Go around the room and discuss which values will make the cut before finalizing your list.

ASSIGNMENT

Create Your Own Practice Plan

One way to ensure you're embodying your organization's values each day is to be intentional about how you structure your schedule. "Time is really your most important resource," Coach K says. "And we don't want to waste it." To make the most effective use of his time, Coach K would draw up a plan the night before a practice. He'd outline goals, ideas, and drills he wanted to go over with his team. Spend a week drafting your own daily practice plan. The night before, write down your goals, meetings, and priorities for the next day. Your plan could be an agenda for a workday or time with family or friends—anything that's important to you! Share your plan in advance so your team can come prepared.

Analysis Template

To help spur ideas, consider the following questions Coach K would ask himself:

*How was today?
Was there anything I didn't
get to today that I felt I
could've?*

What else do I need to do?

*How do I feel?
Am I mentally fresh?*

PRO TIP

**Preparation does not
equal rigid structure**
Always leave room for
the unexpected.

COACH K'S TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

A look at Coach K's best practices

TO COACH K, communication is the lifeblood of an organization. And in order to become an effective communicator, you must be a superb listener. Additionally, employing a personal touch—acknowledging your team members as individuals with lives outside of your organization—helps to foster an environment where an open exchange of ideas is encouraged. Coach K puts it this way: “The most interesting thing on Earth is a human being. The most important thing is a human being.”

Strive to develop a **culture of empathy** and know your audience. Some communication styles—direct, succinct—might work best for one person while others—anecdotal, detailed—may have a bigger impact on another.

Coach K likes to use storytelling and humor to make a point, and he says self-effacing moments can lighten the mood and create an environment where productive conversation can thrive. **Body lan-**

guage (more on page 22) is also key. Your gestures, posture, facial expressions, and general attitude can transmit just as much, if not more, information as your words.

Finally, sometimes the best thing you can do is to recognize when to step back and **let someone else speak**. Coach K recalls when his former Duke player Shane Battier (more on page 14) would give pep talks to the team before practice that had a huge motivational effect on the players. Battier was the team's captain during his senior

year, and Coach K realized that Battier, as both a leader and a player, could connect and communicate with the team in ways that he couldn't. Battier “talked to the team before every practice,” Coach K says. “My key leader was given permission to speak in all those moments...that was one of the reasons we won.”

Ultimately, all of these practices are in service of the same goal: making sure that each team member feels heard, supported, and empowered.

THE COACH K WAY

No Phones Allowed

Coach K invokes the “no cell phones rule” during meetings to avoid distractions, and he believes the meetings are elevated without the constant pinging from devices. “It's amazing how many better ideas and better solutions occur as a result.”



BODY LANGUAGE 101

A beginner's guide to decoding common nonverbal cues

Most often, nonverbal communication, like facial expressions and gestures, can reveal more than you realize (or, sometimes, intend). The following nonverbal indicators are likely to pop up during conversations with colleagues, but remember: Every interaction is nuanced and distinct. When it comes to body language, no two situations (or people) are exactly the same.

EYE CONTACT

Too little or too much sustained eye contact

can have negative implications, but if someone maintains eye contact for a few seconds at a time, it can suggest sincere interest.

GOOD POSTURE

When someone sits or stands upright and leans forward, it suggests receptiveness and an eagerness to engage.

GENUINE SMILES

Anyone can force a grin, but if you take time getting to know someone, it will help you spot when they're displaying sincere enthusiasm.

PHYSICAL PROXIMITY

If people position themselves close to you, it's often an indicator of comfort. But getting too close may read as aggression or indifference to someone's personal boundaries.

EXCESSIVE NODDING

This behavior might indicate that your counterpart wants you to stop talking and give them a turn to speak. Perhaps they're too nervous to do so. Pause and check in. Do they need reassurance? Do they need an opening to start talking?

FURROWED BROWS

This microexpression can suggest confusion or uneasiness. If you see it in someone you're speaking with, ask if they want clarification on something you've said or if they want to express discomfort with any of your points.

FIDGETING

Small, nervous hand movements, or messing with clothing or nearby objects, may mean that a person is disinterested or anxious. Remember to pause and check in.



***“USE QUICK READS TO
ADAPT IN THE MOMENT
AND LONGER READS
TO INFLUENCE ACTION
OVER TIME.”***

—Coach K

Jayson Tatum of the Boston Celtics
NBA team attempts to make a pass
during a 2022 game

DECISION-MAKING IN THE MOMENT

Coach K's advice on "making reads"

NOW THAT YOU'VE established your organization's values and started cultivating effective communication, you're ready to put both to good use when it comes to making important decisions in the moment. When confronted with the need to choose something quickly, you'll have to analyze the context and all of the factors in play. Coach K describes this as **making reads**—or reading situations and reading people. Doing so means you can adjust your decisions based on what's happening in the moment. "You're adapting by listening, by asking for input, knowing the goal, and knowing the time frame that you have," Coach K explains.

Get Input

While some reads might require one individual to make a split-second decision, in many cases you'll have the opportunity to gather people together to hear their thoughts and opinions. Take advantage of that. A

diversity of perspectives will allow you to see more aspects of a situation and make a better decision. Plus, being open to your group's input increases transparency and reinforces the notion that your team is encouraged to share their ideas and speak openly.

Align on Your Goals

Make sure that everyone understands your organization's mission, values, and goals. If necessary, reiterate all of them simply and directly, and take time to answer questions. You want to eliminate confusion over a decision whenever possible, and alignment on what your organization ultimately hopes to achieve will go a long way toward avoiding a potential misunderstanding.

Understand the Time Frame

Which deadlines are flexible? Which are more rigid? How will you stay organized to complete your objec-

tives in a timely fashion? Knowing which decisions and deliverables to prioritize is key.

Account for Your Resources

What's your team's bandwidth? What resources (time, tools, budget) are at your disposal? Don't make assumptions—ask about capacity and needs in order to influence your decision (or adapt it, if necessary).

Assess What Kind of Read Is Needed

Are you making a quick read or a long read? Quick reads lead to instantaneous action, while a longer read is an analysis done over a period of time. Also think about whether you're making an individual read designed to elevate a particular person's performance versus a group-level read. A successful leader will make each of these types of reads and tailor any particular one to the situation at hand.



02

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

DECISION-MAKING IN THE MOMENT

Developing your ability to make reads
will strengthen your agility as a leader

OPEN DISCUSSION

Think about moments when you were faced with an important decision and the context of why these decisions needed to be made. (For example, did a new piece of crucial information emerge? Did something not go as planned? Were you given an unexpected opportunity?) Next, reflect on whether these decisions required making “quick reads” in the moment versus “long reads” over time. How did the process change depending on the situation?

SELF-REFLECTION

A major factor that impacts decision-making is what resources are available. Think about the resources you and your team possess, both tangible (budget, materials) and intangible (skills, institutional knowledge). Are there other groups in your organization faced with making a quick or long read that will require resources they lack? Could these teams benefit from your resources and are you in a position to share them?

ACTIVITY

What's Your Bandwidth?

Sit down with your direct reports or colleagues and take a look at their project calendars. Are there any periods with competing deadlines where team members will be short on bandwidth? Make a long read and identify as many potential challenges as you can before developing action plans to successfully navigate these upcoming hectic timelines.

ASSIGNMENT

Leadership Musical Chairs

Create opportunities for each member of your team to lead a project over the course of a given timeline. Look for ways to highlight potential quick-read and long-read moments along the way, and create time on the schedule to provide feedback.

Analysis Template

You can use the following template to celebrate wins and address targeted areas for improvement:

*Were potential challenges identified in advance?
How did each leader/team member adjust to any unexpected obstacles?*

What kinds of quick reads were required during the project? What kinds of long reads?

During times of duress, how did each leader/team member respond and uphold the organization's core values?

When the team suffered a loss as a result of not making a proper read, how did they bounce back?



American NBA star LeBron James pours water on Coach K to celebrate Team USA's gold medal win at the 2012 London Olympics

A WINNING CULTURE

It takes more than talent to succeed

YOUR TEAM'S RAW talent will only go so far. To achieve success—and to have it endure—a leader needs to create a framework that combines thoughtful recruiting, effective motivation, clear standards, and harnessed egos, among other elements. You'll also want to establish mutual trust with, and among, your players and create an environment where they feel like they're allowed to make mistakes. Cultivating a winning team isn't easy, but here are some of the ways Coach K does it.

Recruiting

Before you can be an effective leader, you have to find the right members for your team. If you have the opportunity to bring on new hires, do so with diligence and care. Share your values (more on page 17) and standards with potential recruits and assess whether they'll abide by them at the same time you're looking at their skills and qualifications. Explore beyond the sections on their résumé that most closely reflect the position you're looking for; consider the ways in which their background or extracurricular projects may have contributed to their skills, ideas, or perspectives. Coach K says, "Great employees can bring talent and experience from a variety of sources, such as work history, volunteering, or personal backgrounds."



Coach K and his Duke players celebrate after winning the 2010 NCAA tournament championship

Don't Lead With Fear (All of the Time)

According to Coach K, leaders should not seek to be feared or seek to be liked—they should seek to be respected. To command respect, you must develop trust, lead with integrity, and tell the truth. That said, fear can be a good motivator in the right circumstances. Coach K says to avoid using fear to motivate someone's performance but consider using it judiciously when there's a violation of standards.

Use Both Tactical and Emotional Motivation

In order to develop a winning culture, Coach K says he'd look for ways to

motivate his team every day. "You don't just wait for a big moment," he explains. "Motivation should be like a habit." This kind of tactical motivation is reinforced through practice. One of Coach K's favorite examples of this concept is the way American pop star Beyoncé carries herself during rehearsals. "She's in her dressing room, and before a performance she's belting it out. She's not half stepping. She's motivated before she goes on the stage with what she's doing." The singer's rehearsal time provides her tactical motivation, whereas the moment she steps on stage, she experiences a swell of emotional motivation, or the "big moment." For Coach K and his team, that emotional moti-

vation would typically come during a game—but there were also times when he'd have to spark an emotional response himself with a rousing speech or a poignant anecdote.

Harness the Power of Standards

Think of standards as how you will live your values. Gather your organization and decide together what they will be. Just like your values, standards are meant to be simple.

Reorient Egos

In 2008 when Coach K was in charge of the U.S. men's Olympic basketball team, he had the herculean task of wrangling the egos of some of the greatest NBA players in the world (including American icons like Kobe Bryant and LeBron James). He decided the best way to get the most out of each player was to ask them to

bring their egos into the arena instead of leaving them at the door. But rather than tap into their personal egos, Coach K told them to cultivate an ego for Team USA. "You're not playing for the United States. You *are* USA basketball," he told them.

Tiered Leadership

Many successful organizations contain several tiers, often arranged hierarchically by position, experience, or responsibility. Try to develop leaders within each tier and promote them to a more senior tier when they've excelled in their current role. Coach K also believes it's perfectly okay to stay in one tier—think of those individuals as specialists.

Confront Challenges With Empathy

When your team is dealing with friction among members or perfor-

mance is lacking, Coach K encourages you to address issues with empathy. Think about team members' insecurities, life obstacles, or even their fears of being let go. A holistic approach will help you better diagnose the root cause of any problem and craft effective solutions.

Don't Delegate—Empower

Give people autonomy and confidence to handle projects and issues on their own, rather than micromanaging a situation. Identify burgeoning leaders within your team and give those individuals the confidence to act as "captains" within a department or group. To determine who those people are, ask yourself: *Who embodies the values of the organization? Who steps forward to get the whole team on the same page? Who actively develops their skills?*

How to Give Feedback

The goal of providing feedback is to empower people with the tools to improve. When doing so, consider the following tips

DON'T WAIT

While many organizations have annual or semiannual review cycles, often you'll be confronted with a performance issue that needs course correcting immediately. Don't wait until the review period—address the issue as soon as possible.

GET SOME INTEL

Don't make assumptions about what happened and who's responsible. Get more information before coming to a conclusion and enter the conversation with an open mind and prepared to listen.

THINK OF THE MESSENGER

Sometimes feedback is best received by someone other than the leader. Use your judgment to determine the ideal person to speak to deliver a message effectively. For Coach K, that might be an assistant coach or captain, but for you, it might be your team's top performer.

BRING A PERSONAL TOUCH

Coach K believes acknowledging teammates as people and letting them know you care about their personal development and their well-being is one of the greatest ways you can show respect.

**“YOU DON’T
INSPIRE EVERY DAY.
YOU MOTIVATE.
THAT’S HOW
YOU WIN.”**

—Coach K





THE COACH K WAY

Hold Your Team Accountable

Coach K believes in addressing poor performance directly by asking for clarity from the individual. Partner with them to change the course, and find solutions to execute with them on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis. If there's no significant improvement, you may have to consider job termination.

Coach K huddles with members of the U.S. men's basketball team during a 2014 game in Las Vegas

4 WAYS TO BUILD TRUST IN THE WORKPLACE

Trust within an organization can lead to better decision-making, a decreased risk of burnout, increased rates of employee retention, and higher performance. Here are four ways to cultivate it

01

Be Honest

As Coach K sees it, trust is essentially saying to someone, “I value your word and I believe you in an instant.” In order to establish that kind of relationship, however, you have to demonstrate that you tell the truth, no matter the circumstance. Even when it might feel difficult to do so, be open about your opinions and concerns while still remembering to be respectful as you convey them.

02

Communicate Often and Openly

Encouraging honest conversations can increase employee engagement. People who feel comfortable sharing ideas and criticisms will have a stronger sense of security and psychological safety in the workplace. Your team should feel welcome to speak their minds regarding projects or their well-being. Establishing open dialogues and venues for sharing feedback can lead to better work relationships and a stronger environment of trust.

03

Fulfill Your Commitments

An essential part of teamwork is ensuring everyone is doing their part. Be a role model: Fulfill your promises and complete your tasks on time to establish a foundation of trust. Thank people for their hard work and celebrate when collaboration and high levels of trust between coworkers lead to successful initiatives.

04

Nurture Relationships

You can build trust with coworkers by building relationships, which, in turn can increase collaboration, innovation, and employee satisfaction. To do so, be kind and show people you are willing to listen to their concerns about things at work. Additionally, use positive body language and eye contact to indicate you care (more on page 22). Finally, encourage team members to build relationships with each other by making time for trust-building activities at your organization.



LOSING IT

How to move past failure





DURING THE FINAL coaching season of his career, Coach K got so caught up in the fanfare bestowed on his last game that he lost sight of the need to be present on behalf of his team. The lead changed 18 different times, including several times in the final couple of minutes. Ultimately, Duke lost. Coach K admits that he didn't handle his players well in the locker room after the game, and told them that he felt let down. Later, he regretted his post-game behavior and the fact that he placed blame on his players rather than himself or the team as a whole. The moment was eye-opening for Coach K; he realized he still had so much left to learn about what it means to be a leader.

Accountability Not Blame

Coach K cautions against pointing a finger at any one individual, and encourages you to shift toward collective responsibility instead. A loss is not the end of the world, but rather an opportunity for the entire organization to learn how to improve. In order to move forward, your organization has to have the infrastructure to discard what doesn't work and elevate what does.

Seize the Moment During a Loss

When your group gets knocked down by unforeseen obstacles or a collective failure, it's your chance as a leader to seize the moment. Help

everyone process. As Coach K puts it, your team will "listen more to you when you lose." You are at your most influential amidst a loss. Take the opportunity to remind your team of all of the things you're capable of together.

Value the Team's Efforts

Poor performance is often the result of a lack of preparation. But even with the best prep, people may still come up short. Coach K believes in encouragement anyway, recognizing every ounce of effort. Even incremental changes and improvements being acknowledged go a long way to helping shift everyone's mindset.

Who's Got Your Back?

How leaning on others builds stronger bonds

At the start of the 1994–1995 basketball season at Duke, Coach K wasn't able to stop pushing himself, taking on the emotional labor of coaching and micro-managing until a devastating back injury forced him off the court. Coach K had been so consumed with being the determining factor in Duke's success that he'd lost his work-life balance, and the team, ultimately, lost its culture.

The injury was a big wake-up call. Since 1980, Coach K had ushered his teams toward seven NCAA Final Fours (or the semifinals of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's annual tournament) in nine years, and he admitted to struggling to turn anything down. He had been spending so much time and mental energy on work that his body and his mind were both suffering. After his back sur-

gery, Coach K felt emotionally numb. Encouraged by his wife, he chose to get help: He spent four months in intensive cognitive therapy with Keith Brodie, the former Duke University president who had previously been the chair of the school's psychiatry department.

For Coach K, allowing himself to be supported by others was revolutionary. As he worked to rehab physi-

cally and mentally, he reemerged as a leader with a newfound perspective.

"You don't get through your dark times alone," he said. His community had lifted him up.

03

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

HOW TO MOVE PAST FAILURE

Over the course of your career, you're bound to encounter moments when things don't turn out as you'd hoped. When this happened to Coach K and his team, he wanted to avoid developing a culture of fear around failure. Instead, he'd encourage his players and assistants to embrace it as a teaching moment and be willing to ask for help in order to bounce back and succeed the next time

OPEN DISCUSSION

What processes are in place at your organization to analyze failures and create strategies to overcome them? Does your company have recurring retrospective (or "postmortem") meetings to discuss what worked and what didn't on any given project? How does your organization support colleagues who may be struggling and/or encourage team members to ask for help?

SELF-REFLECTION

Over the course of your career, how have you typically handled failure? Are you able to analyze what went wrong and apply those learnings in the future, or do you have a hard time moving on? Does a recent failure negatively impact the quality of your work on your next project? When confronted with a challenge, have you asked for help? After you've reflected on these questions, draft two lists: For one, write down significant moments of loss or disappointment; for the other, document what you did to push past them. Recall when you asked for support and when you didn't. In instances of the latter, what stopped you from reaching out?

When Coach K was navigating a difficult time in his career, he said his therapy sessions with Keith Brodie made a world of difference (more on page 34). Even if you're not a trained therapist like Brodie, you can still support colleagues in need by providing an empathetic ear. Think about your relationships: Do people consider you someone who's approachable and will listen? If not, what steps could you take to be more present and empathetic to your colleagues? At the same time, identify people who can play a supportive role for you.

ACTIVITY

Project Retrospective

Discuss a recent instance when a project had obstacles or did not turn out as you'd hoped. Analyze what went wrong and strategize ways you can improve the next time. Focus on holding the entire team accountable rather than singling out any one individual for responsibility. Additionally, celebrate what went well such as instances when your team values and standards were upheld or when colleagues supported one another.

ASSIGNMENT

Combat Burnout

Failure and burnout often go hand-in-hand. A failed project can contribute to stress and exhaustion—and that stress and exhaustion can increase the likelihood that mistakes will be made down the road. With your team, brainstorm strategies for avoiding burnout and dealing with it when it does occur.

Analysis Template

Consider the following questions included in the analysis template when you start developing processes:

Is there an open-door policy when it comes to team members sharing any concerns with their managers?

What processes exist if a team member needs to take a step back from a project (or is out of the office) and another must step in?

What are your organization's PTO (paid time off) policies and are they being communicated clearly? Do team members feel like they're encouraged and supported to take advantage of these policies?

Are there any resources available for your team to use when they're feeling burned-out? These might include both internal options (speaking to a manager or HR professional, requesting time off) or external options (benefits like access to therapy sessions, wellness stipends).

Credits

IMAGE OF COACH K HUGGING JABARI PARKER

Photography by Mark L. Baer

NCAA GAME FOOTAGE AND CBS MIAMI NEWS FOOTAGE

Courtesy Veritone

ACC GAME FOOTAGE

Courtesy Catapult Sports



MasterClass