



POSITIVE COACHING ALLIANCE'S

# CARING COACH CURRICULUM



# LETTER FROM JIM THOMPSON

**THANK YOU** for being, or becoming, a Caring Coach. As Founder and CEO of Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) – a national non-profit developing **BETTER ATHLETES, BETTER PEOPLE** through youth and high school sports, I think of a Caring Coach as a Double-Goal Coach®. That is a positive coach who strives to win games and has an even stronger commitment to the more important goal of teaching life lessons through sports.

We at PCA are proud to partner with Dove Men+Care in an unprecedented way to provide this curriculum. It is a resource that offers you, as a youth or high school coach, ideas and practical tips to help you coach with care, enhancing your players' experiences on and off the field. By coaching with care, not only will you get more from your players as you help them grow and develop into stronger, healthier adults, you will also enhance your own experience as a coach. Additionally, if you are considering coaching but have not yet committed, we hope this curriculum will cause you to become a Caring Coach.

The concepts and advice here draw heavily from [PCA's National Advisory Board](#), comprising 100+:

- » Top athletes and coaches from the pro and college ranks
- » World-class academic researchers in sports psychology and sociology
- » Business and organizational leaders...

...who all understand peak performance and the amount of caring it takes to get people there.

Research by Dove Men+Care indicates that many youth and high school sports coaches perceive a lack of resources to help them prepare their athletes for off-the-field experiences.<sup>1</sup> However, in addition to drawing from our National Advisory Board, some of the best tips and tools among the 1,000+ free resources at [PCADevZone.org](#) and within the [workshops](#) we present for hundreds of schools and youth sports organizations throughout the U.S. come from people like you... the every-day grassroots heroes who commit their hearts and souls to coaching and caring for youth. And now, for the first time, this curriculum enables us to present to you many of the most relevant materials in one concise place.

**Jim Thompson** is the Founder and CEO of Positive Coaching Alliance. PCA is a national non-profit organization Jim started in 1998 to transform the culture of youth sports into a Development Zone™ with the goal to develop Better Athletes, Better People. He is the author of nine books on youth sports, and Jim has an MBA from Stanford University where he was the Director of Public Management Program.

Jim has recruited an outstanding team that has helped PCA grow into a thriving nationwide organization with 17 Chapters and an expansion plan that will reach 20 million youth athletes by 2020. PCA's vision of youth sports as a Development Zone has attracted the support and involvement of many elite coaches, athletes, academics and business leaders in this country. PCA's corps of more than 100 Certified Trainers has delivered over 3,000 live workshops in 2017 for leaders, coaches, parents and athletes.

<sup>1</sup> Dove Men+Care Deodorant Survey conducted by Edelman Berland in August 2015

NOTE: Light blue, underlined text indicate a clickable link for more information and resources.

# COACHING SPECTRUM

“ Sports are a tremendous place to learn how to connect, to learn how to relate... It's a critical place to teach relationships to young people. ”

## STEP 1 : IDENTIFY THE ROLE

Understand what it means to be a Caring Coach so you can determine how to be there for your team both on and off the field.

## STEP 2 : BE A CARING COACH

From being prepared to great feedback for your players, your example leads your team to becoming strong and caring adults.

“ The scoreboard shouldn't be your destination. Your destination should be about building young people. ”

## STEP 3 : REAP THE BENEFITS FROM YOUR PLAYERS

“ My greatest challenge as a coach was to get a young man to look back on his career and say, 'Coach pushed me as hard as he possibly could to get the most out of me, both as an athlete and also as a person.' ”

The more you care as a coach, the more fulfilling your experience will be.

# IDENTIFY THE ROLE

The origin of the word “coach” is tied to the centuries-old notion of a vehicle that delivers very important people to their destinations. Therefore, by definition, your responsibility as a youth sports coach is to deliver the children with whom you are entrusted – very important people, ages five to 18 – to their destination into adulthood.

While all of the athletes on your team may not become elite athletes, the final destination for all will involve them as members of society. The lessons they learn on the field today can impact their daily lives for years to come.

The only way to ensure your athletes’ safe arrival there is to be a Caring Coach. By striving to win, you lead your athletes to become their best, possessing the skill and knowledge needed to compete. By teaching life lessons through sports, you equip them with even broader tools – tools they will use in family life, their communities and maybe even as future Caring Coaches. These day-to-day elements of life, or “off-the-field” experiences, are influenced by the decisions that coaches make when they interact with their players each day during games and practices, and you have the opportunity to make a difference for your team every day.

## Here are a few PCA resources pertaining to the topic:

### » [Double-Goal Coach Job Description](#)

Printable PDF that outlines the major principles of a Double-Goal Coach

### » [Bob McKillop: The Value of Caring and Coaching Stephen Curry](#)

Podcast with Stephen Curry’s Davidson College basketball coach

### » [Joe Ehrmann on Building Relationships Through Sports](#)

Video featuring former NFL player and Founder of Coach for America

## MORE INFO

Coaches also have an obligation to care for themselves. They must remain physically, mentally and emotionally fit in order to help youth achieve that fitness. Fortunately, coaching often pays back dividends in all those areas. A majority of coaches say that coaching makes them personally feel more involved, proud, happy and caring.<sup>1</sup>

Often, coaching may entail your working out or participating in drills with your players. Even a certain amount of pacing and moving from one practice station to the next keeps you active. Of course, mental sharpness is critical to any kind of success, and the fluidity of sport is bound to keep you alert and adaptive. And, in terms of emotional fitness, or real strength, there is perhaps nothing more intrinsically rewarding than watching youth develop under your direction. By showing your care on and off the field, you are able to help guide your athletes through their lives and enable them to feel more empowered when facing decisions with their friends, families and schools.

It’s no wonder that 70% of coaches identify themselves as a coach, which is just as many that identify as a husband, father or other key roles. Furthermore, 94% say that coaching has enabled them to be positive role models in their communities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dove Men+Care Deodorant Survey conducted by Edelman Berland in August 2015

<sup>2</sup> Dove Men+Care Deodorant Survey conducted by Edelman Berland in August 2015

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# BE A CARING COACH

The two key principles of a Caring Coach are:  
1) focusing on Mastery of Sport; and 2) Filling Emotional Tanks.

## Mastery of Sport

As opposed to the traditional concept of winning – by outscoring the opponent – winning can also be evaluated by the Mastery of Sport. To convey the concept of Mastery, PCA uses an acronym, ELM, for Effort, Learning and Mistakes are OK. Emphasizing those values and lessons with youth athletes gives them a sense of control, which increases confidence, reduces anxiety and frees them to be as aggressive and creative as possible with no fear of mistakes and an understanding that the scoreboard results are beyond their control anyway.

It's important to remind your athletes that winning in the Mastery of Sport is the most important kind, and it's good to incorporate these conversations into practices and team meetings as often as you can. Remind your team of ELM often, and feel free to play around with this [sample script](#) to make it mean the most for them. Some key conversation starters:

**E is for Effort** – It's more important to me that we try our hardest than if we win. If we try our hardest and lose, I'll still be proud of our team.

**L is for Learning** – Let's always continue learning and improving every time we come out here. Getting better than we are now is more important than being better than another team.

**M is for Mistakes** – No one likes making mistakes, but they are important for learning. To learn, you need to challenge yourselves and on our team, it's ok to make mistakes.

## Filling Emotional Tanks

The concept of the Emotional Tank equates with a car's gas tank: when it's full, we can go most anywhere, but when it's empty we go nowhere. Research indicates that coaches should fuel their athletes' Emotional Tanks with an average of five (5) pieces of truthful and specific praise for every one (1) piece of specific, constructive criticism.

Why that "Magic Ratio" of 5:1? The praise keeps athletes uplifted, energetic and open to learning, so that when correction is needed, they can accept and use it to continue improving. Look to this sample script to determine the best ways to fill your own teams' tanks. Of course, improvement breeds even more confidence and contributes to a virtuous cycle of Mastery.

The ELM Tree of Mastery and Filling Emotional Tanks are the basis for the emotional bonding with players that is the hallmark of a Caring Coach. Additional PCA resources on these topics include:

### Phil Jackson On The Magic Ratio

Video from 11-Time NBA Champion Coach

### College Football Hall of Famer Pat Fitzgerald on the Best Coaching Philosophy in Youth Sports

Video-based advice from Northwestern University Football Coach

### Importance of Filling the Emotional Tank From College Football Hall of Famer Ronnie Lott

Audio resource on the ways in which Filling the Emotional Tank can positively affect athletes and teams

### How To Build Athlete Confidence

A video-based anecdote from Northwestern University Basketball Coach Chris Collins

## STEP 3

# REAP THE BENEFITS FROM YOUR PLAYERS

As you care for and give to your players – offering advice, time and an open ear – you gain as much in return. The personal enrichment that comes from developing youth is incomparable.

Legendary UCLA Basketball Coach John Wooden reportedly once was asked at the end of a season how well he'd coached, and he answered, "Ask me in 20 years and we'll see how successful these boys are. Then I'll be able to tell you if I succeeded as a coach."

That is the mindset, vision and long-term approach of a Caring Coach. Many measure their success in terms of wedding invitations they receive, the unforeseen letter or e-mail of thanks and acknowledgement of positive impact decades after the fact, and how often on the street or in the grocery store line they hear a cheery "Hey, Coach" from former athletes they may no longer even recognize.

Regardless of pay (if any!) and your win-loss record, you can rest assured that as a Caring Coach you worked wonders in the lives of youth and that many of them will grow into people who have that same effect on others... creating a ripple effect of caring that is your legacy.



NOTE: Light blue, underlined text indicate a clickable link for more information and resources.

## MORE INFO

Reaching your potential as a Caring Coach is a journey, more evolution than revolution. It is not easy. Occasionally, it will require some difficult looks at the mirror. But it is worth it, as coaching with care will enhance your life just as much as it does for the athletes on your team. Here are videos from ESPN Basketball Commentator and Former College Coach Fran Fraschilla about his journey to becoming a Caring Coach.

### [How to Get the Most From Players Without Demeaning Them](#)

Revelations of how a coach's insecurity can get in the way of caring

### [How to Get Emotionally Attached to Athletes](#)

Tropper Johnson, a wheelchair basketball coach, explains how natural it is to care about your players, and how becoming committed to them enables you to experience the most joy when coaching

### [Doc Rivers on Bonding With Players](#)

Video featuring past NBA Championship Coach

# HOW COACHING ENRICHES COACHES' LIVES

Coaches are fulfilled by caring for their teams. By seeing how they can affect their players' lives on and off the field, they are able to positively enhance their own. The results of the Dove Men+Care survey not only prove that coaching helps coaches in the same way it helps the athletes, but also that coaching makes them stronger. The research also shows that coaches set an example for their players, and feel more confident in their work, when they take care of their appearance.<sup>1</sup>

Sample included 1,087 men ages 25-60 who currently coach youth or high school sports, or have done so in the last five years.

## COACHES ARE FULFILLED - COACHES ARE CONFIDENT

**96%**  
OF COACHES SAY

Coaching enriches their life personally.

**98%**  
OF COACHES SAY

Ensuring players feel confident in themselves is a fulfilling part of coaching, and **95%** say they find fulfillment in teaching players to care for each other.



A majority of coaches say that coaching makes them feel **HAPPIER** and **INSPIRED**. Coaching also makes them feel more **INVOLVED, PROUD, CARING, MOTIVATED**.

Coaching has enabled coaches to support and encourage others (**98%**), strengthen their ability to teach and guide others (**96%**), and be a positive role model in their community (**94%**).

**84%**  
SAY

Coaching makes men more confident in themselves.

**9 in 10**  
(92%) SAY

Taking care of their appearance sets an example for how their players should act and present themselves.



Coaches identify as strongly with being a coach (**67%**) as being a father (**65%**).

## COACHES ARE STRONG

**78%**

of coaches credit coaching for helping them grow emotionally stronger.



Among coaches who are fathers, they say they have been able to teach their children to be a team player (**81%**) and be more confident (**79%**).

**9 in 10**  
SAY BEING A COACH

has helped them be a better father

has helped them not give up in the face of obstacles

<sup>1</sup> Dove Men+Care Deodorant Survey conducted by Edelman Berland in August 2015

## ADDITIONAL TOOLS & RESOURCES

### KEY PCA LINKS:

#### [PCADevZone.org](https://PCADevZone.org)

1,700+ free printable and audio-video resources for youth and high school coaches, sports parents, student-athletes, officials and school/organizational leaders

#### [PositiveCoach.org](https://PositiveCoach.org)

PCA's homepage

#### [PCA Workshops, Online Courses and Books](#)

Bring PCA's live and/or online training to your school or youth sports organization

#### [Ask PCA Blog](#)

Ask and answer questions about youth and high school sports

#### [Receive Talking Points E-mail Series](#)

A season-long weekly set of guides on topics for coaches to discuss with their youth athletes

#### [Subscribe to PCA's Monthly E-Newsletters](#)

Keep up with the PCA Movement and get monthly digests of our latest free resources

#### [Contact a PCA Chapter Near You](#)

We have 17 Chapters nationwide!

#### [Support PCA](#)

Contribute to our non-profit so we can impact as many youth as possible

