

# the **CrossFit** JOURNAL ARTICLES

## Good Coach, Bad Coach

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Much has been said and written about good coaching. This primer is therefore intended not as new information but rather as a collection of some elementary wisdom from that body of knowledge in a nutshell, to serve as a reminder and an opportunity for personal reflection on how we think about coaching and behave as coaches and trainers.

This document was originally designed as primer on behavior patterns for coaches of adolescents, where

the import of the coach's role as custodian of the athlete's whole person is particularly significant, but it applies just as well to coaches and trainers of all levels of athletes and teams.

Athletes will give, and grow, beyond imagination under the influence of someone who dares to be a Good Coach.

Good Coaching Behavior	Bad Coaching Behavior
Loves the game	Loves to win
Cares about athletes	Cares about wins and losses
Calls athletes to nobility	Calls athletes stupid
Focuses on excellence in fundamentals	Develops the showy before the solid
Uses intensity to build and encourage	Uses intensity to degrade and shame
Speaks well of athletes to others	Speaks poorly of athletes to others
Shakes hands with the athletes	Shakes head at the athletes
Encourages progress	Encourages favorites
Uses the coach position constructively	Uses the coach position to tear down
Is good at support	Is good at sarcasm
Talks to athletes directly	Talks about athletes behind their backs
Says "We'll work on that"	Says "What was that?!"
Honors athletes' past coaches	Mocks athletes past coaches
Supports the team	Supports own ego
With wins, boldly esteems the athletes	With wins, boldly esteems self
With losses, brutally examines self	With losses, brutally examines athletes
Expects 100 percent from athletes	Expects applause from athletes
Gives 100 percent of self	Talks about how much he/she gives

## Good Coach, Bad Coach (continued...)

Good Coaching Behavior	Bad Coaching Behavior
<p>Gives consistent message to athletes</p> <p>Shows loyalty to athletes</p> <p>Is strong in character</p> <p>Invites feedback from athletes</p> <p>Respects parents/family</p> <p>Earns respect</p> <p>Seeks to understand the athletes</p> <p>“Owns” the results of his/her coaching</p> <p>Apologies and forgives</p> <p>Cultivates confidence</p> <p>Embraces humility</p> <p>Is teachable and open-minded</p> <p>Seeks help and input</p> <p>Shares information</p> <p>Single faced and forthright</p> <p>Emotionally and intellectually honest</p> <p>Protects athletes’ weaknesses</p> <p>Admits personal weaknesses</p> <p>Inspires hope</p> <p>Brings joy to the game</p> <p>Releases athletes</p> <p>Channels passions</p> <p>Finds the best in every athlete</p> <p>Teaches and instructs</p> <p>Works for athletes</p> <p>Seeks acclaim for athletes</p>	<p>Gives erratic message to athletes</p> <p>Shows disgust with athletes</p> <p>Boasts of his/her strength of character</p> <p>Instills fear in athletes</p> <p>Disregards parents/family</p> <p>Expects or demands respect</p> <p>Seeks to undermine the athletes</p> <p>Blames results on athletes/staff/circumstances</p> <p>Holds personal grudges, seeks vindication</p> <p>Crushes confidence</p> <p>Parades arrogance</p> <p>Knows it all</p> <p>Seeks to block and isolate</p> <p>Withholds information</p> <p>Two or three faced and oblique</p> <p>Emotionally and intellectually dishonest</p> <p>Exposes athletes’ weakness to others</p> <p>Denies personal weaknesses</p> <p>Inspires hopelessness</p> <p>Robs the game of joy</p> <p>Stifles athletes</p> <p>Chokes passions</p> <p>Seeks only the best athletes</p> <p>Yells and shames</p> <p>Expects athletes to work for him/her</p> <p>Seeks acclaim for self</p>
<p>Final note: A Good Coach reads this and reflects on his or her style and motivations. A Bad Coach reads this and responds with contempt and cynicism. Gut check time.</p>	

Mark Eaton has a broad leadership history in both nonprofit and business venues. These include management at a major corporation, several successful nonprofit and business start-ups, and being president of a regional social agency that assists agencies nationwide with improving their leadership effectiveness. Over the years, he has been involved in baseball, wrestling, judo, mixed alpine climbing, skiing, triathlons, and mountain rescue and has coached a number of kids’ and teens’ sporting teams. He has been CrossFitting in a garage gym for almost a year now and gets more into it, and more out of it, every day. He can be reached at mark60180@comcast.net.