



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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Great Teams

March has come and gone, and yet "March madness" continues. While it is not viral, it often is contagious. It is that preoccupied state of mind when sports enthusiasts predict, watch, discuss, and occasionally wager on the nation's elite amateur basketball teams. Tournaments are played, and eventually a collegiate national champion is crowned. So many teams ... all striving to be their best! This basketball frenzy is an interesting piece of Americana, and also an opportunity to observe some examples of great (and not so great) teamwork. Typically, the teams who demonstrate great teamwork are the ones who excel.

And so it is with life, the ultimate setting for teamwork. Consider for a moment how many different types of teams we encounter in life. A team exists where there is a group of *interdependent* people working toward a common goal that is bigger than any one of them. We see teams in government, in business, in the military, in our churches, in our schools ... just about everywhere. Even our marriages and families are teams of a very personal nature. While some of these teams function well, many flounder and struggle to show the greatness they are capable of. Why is this?

Team excellence depends on much more than the qualities and skills of the members involved. It depends on the ability of the team members to form *and commit to* a union that is trusted and valued by all those involved.

Every team exists for a reason. In general, it exists to accomplish what each member of the team could not accomplish on their own. The specific reason is unique to each team. Many teams, however, are formed and maintained so casually that they fail to capture the purpose and significance of their existence. They exist because they were formed, not because they share a unified focus or coordinated effort. Each team member does what they do best or enjoy most, and the team shuffles forward on the backs of these individual efforts.

Great teams, on the other hand, have a clear understanding of why they exist and what they intend to accomplish together. Their members take time to know each other, developing respect for and trust in each other. While they have an identified leader, this leader inspires rather than dictates. Each member is valued and has a clear role on the team. And all the roles are designed to together accomplish the identified goals of the team.

While individual success and accomplishment is valued, it is clearly secondary to the success of the team. Members of great teams are willing to set aside their strong personal egos or needs and commit to achieving the goals of their team. To accomplish these goals, they communicate with each other - sharing, questioning, discussing, coordinating, encouraging, and holding each other accountable - all while keeping their focus on their team's success.

It is in this interaction that the power of the team emerges - a power greater than the combined individual powers of the team members. It is similar to the power seen when NASCAR race car drivers push each other to higher speeds by racing close behind each other. Like geese, the cars travel faster and further together than either one could by itself.

This is the power of teamwork - the power behind every great team.

How about the teams in our life? Let's reconnect with the importance of those teams, both personal and professional, and do the work to make them great!



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work..

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Who's on Your Team?

John Donne once wrote, "No man is an island." His words reflect the limitations of our own awareness, knowledge, and skills, and our need for others. What was true in his lifetime is even more true today. In today's complex society, none of us is equipped to expertly handle all of the intricate details of our life. Whatever our age or situation, we all need a team around us to support and assist us as we walk life's path. Life truly is the ultimate team sport!

To best serve us, our team should include those we know and trust. Whether spouse, family, friend, qualified expert, or coach, our team members should also know us well and care about us deeply. As they advise, encourage, and illuminate us, they need the freedom to speak frankly and share passionately.

Together, our team forms a support system that guides us through what we do not know or cannot do. It encourages us to face what we fear and grow where we can. And, it assists us to live fully our life of excellence.

By the way, whose team are you on?



"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

-Henry Ford