



Habits Coach

Leadership Conversation with Brad Dancer

What were some early leadership influences for you?

For me it all started with my parents. Seeing them as role models and looking up to the way they conducted themselves. I always loved seeing my dad interact with employees of the company where I felt there was great respect toward him, but each employee could laugh and joke with him anytime. Other great influences in my life have been the Patterson family in Aspen, CO - their incredible passion for living life to the fullest. From a coaching standpoint, Billie Jean King. Her ability to read students and engage them on such a deep personal level - she is able to connect with people on such an intimate level because she is so raw and honest.

What are 2-3 key lessons you've learned as a coach that have direct application to the world of business?

No question - what comes around goes around. I struggled recruiting a bit at first at Illinois, but now I feel it's those people that were part of our program when I first started that are out spreading the word about 'what we do'. Everything comes back to you at some point. Celebrate the victories - everyone has to enjoy the process and taking time to celebrate the wins and goals met is an important part - it let's people get excited about the next set of goals to attack.

In the recruiting and hiring process, what type of qualities do you look for in players and coaches?

You are always trying to find people that want to grow. It's such an important component of a healthy environment. Having people that are looking to get better. With that said, sometimes that means our student-athletes turning pro early or assistant coaches leaving for the next opportunity in their career. Those are positive steps - it's part of their growth process.

When you mentor people (on and off the court), what advice do you typically give them?

That is such a unique and individualized question. No two people are alike - especially when you consider different social and economic backgrounds. Mentoring our student-athletes is the essence of what we do as coaches, but I've never treated any two players the same.

What's your definition of success?

A tremendous question that is constantly evolving in my mind. As humans we tend to justify where we are and where we want to be. There are so many circumstances in life that can affect those paths. I've been incredibly lucky in my life to have people looking out for me and helping the process. At this stage, I think the definition of success is determined by the attitude people take each day and the ability to consistently dream about the future.