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Relentless Pursuit, Pure Mind

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Leadership is a recently researched topic that reflects a variety of different fields. In this study, theories, philosophies, and various definitions of leadership will be explored to answer one main question: Is leadership unique in terms of philosophy, theory, and practice as it pertains to athletics and academics? To answer this question, research within two prominent leaders in each realm, athletics and academics, will be explored. The four figures are: John Wooden, Jim Mora Jr., Warren Bennis, and Steve Covey. Moreover, life philosophies of Jimmy Valvano and Charles Swindoll will also be explored to serve as characteristics of common leadership attitude and mindset. The findings show that leadership is in fact similar regardless of field, and as a result, synergy brought by this understanding could allow for growth in both departments.
The thesis of Michael Awni Ghobrial is approved.

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Introduction- Statement/ Importance of the Problem

Significance of Leadership within Academics vs. Athletics

Leadership is such a loaded term that it is often hard to give one simple definition. Moreover, the topic of leadership has recently begun to be explored and scholarly material has started to pave way for the topic to be legitimately considered as a highly regarded subject for various reasons. From multiple philosophies of leadership style, to various definitions that have come about, many ponder what effective leadership looks like, and whether leadership is unique to certain occupations. At times it is often easier to explore a topic at first by studying the broadest definition of what is being studied/researched. For this reason, let us define leadership as “a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task” (Chemers 1997, 1). The significance of such a rich topic as a result may have a countless, yet completely appropriate, list. Let’s explore some of these.

The significance of leadership stems from the individuals of a group, organization, or student body’s ability to take on the personality and the lessons of that leader. Abraham Lincoln once said, “Most anyone can stand adversity, but to test a person’s character give him power” (Freedom INC. Book). Not all people in power are considered to be leaders. Some who have been given power in fact carry their role as that of a dictator. However, leading with the intent of instilling fear amongst those under your supervision restricts a person’s growth and their ability to become better at whatever they may be doing. True leaders possess certain qualities that prove them to be people of good character and integrity. Over the course of this
study, I will examine specific individuals who exemplified various qualities of leadership within athletics or academics. Moreover, I will compare the examples of these respective individuals and conclude that leadership is not unique to athletics and academics individually, but rather follows the same principles regardless of occupation or area of study.

The question arises as to why it is even important to show leadership in two separate realms, athletics and academia, and to prove whether or not leadership is unique to each of those fields. I argue that answering this question will give greater insight into how leadership may create a valuable synergy amongst academics and athletics alike, with the understanding of what leadership looks like in two distinct realms. We often see a huge disconnect between athletics and academics. Within the realm of athletics, the importance of sports is exemplified through a paid education through a collegiate scholarship, the ability to grow strong bonds of being part of a team rather than self-made success, and as a lesson of quieting one’s mind to all external factors and distractions. The importance of academics as it pertains to scholars, professors, etc. is exemplified through the notion of achieving higher education at various institutions and what it provides for the future of one’s life, and the ability to gain and coin new found knowledge through various resources. A more focused example would be how the connotation of success in athletics can be quite different than success in academics. Ultimately, can one compare wins and championships in athletics to published literature and Nobel prizes in academics? As a result, common misconceptions of the two come about, which causes confusion concerning the pros and cons of careers in both athletics and academics.

I plan to debunk the theory that athletics and academics are so different in terms of leadership. In order to do so, I will demonstrate that leadership within athletics and academics
carry many similar traits as successful leaders have had not only common ideologies, but common pedagogies as well. Showing the similarity of effective leadership within athletics and academics will allow greater understanding of how each realm is ultimately attempting to strive for one common goal: success through growth.

The specific individuals within the athletic realm whom I will closely analyze are John Wooden, Jim Mora Jr., and Jimmy Valvano. Within academia, I will outline those who embody certain leadership characteristics such as Steve Covey, Warren Bennis, and Charles Swindoll. Both Valvano and Swindoll will serve a different purpose within this paper. The objective of using both Valvano and Swindoll will be to discuss common philosophy of effective individual attitude and mindset. The importance of this discussion will allow an understanding of how some effective leaders develop as influential individuals throughout their life. Finally, I will illustrate how the specific individuals discussed in athletics and academics experience parallels that of my own throughout. However, before I can fully elucidate whether the above examples personify true effective leadership, and whether there are similar characteristics of leadership within athletics vs. academics, or not, it is necessary to fully define the theories of what effective leadership entails.

Literature Review

Literature on various Leadership Theories

Research within a leadership framework has not been a highly explored topic until recently within the 20th century (Cherry 2014). There have been various definitions and theories that have begun to take shape on what exactly defines how leaders are developed, and how
they excel in the positions they are in whether they are a CEO of a company, an army general, a youth sports coach, or a teacher. This section will serve to explore the eight main theories of the different types of leaders that exist: “Great Man” theories, trait theories, contingency theories, situational theories, behavioral theories, participative theories, management theories, and relationship theories. Of these eight, a description of each theory will be explained, as well as the practicality and effectiveness of using some of these theories to prove whether a person in power is an effective leader or not.

The first theory that has been explored is known as the “Great Man” theory (Cherry 2000, 1). The “Great Man” theory focuses on the notion that essentially leaders are born not made. In essence, these types of leaders are born with internal characteristics such as “charisma, confidence, intelligence, and social skills that make them natural born leaders” (Cherry 2000, 1). This idea that this type of leader is born and not made/developed has allowed many to view this type of leader as mythic and heroic. As a result, the “Great Man Leader” is not formed by external factors in history but rather by internal factors. Moreover, internal characteristics thus lead historians, such as Thomas Carlyle, to believe that "The history of the world is but the biography of great men" (Princeton Education 2014, Introduction). Common examples of leaders that fall under the “Great Man” theory include Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Charles de Gaulle. The “Great Man” theory has brought forth much debate against it, as there have been many arguments expressing the feasibility of having a born leader, therefore, for this research, the criteria of effective leadership will not include the “Great Man” theory. Some of the criticism has been stated from famous leaders such as Vince
Lombardi who stated, "Leaders are made, they are not born; and they are made just like anything else has ever been made in this country - by hard work" (Dowling 1970, p. 179).

The second theory of eight that has been mostly developed in the psychology field is trait theories. Trait theories closely resemble the “Great Man” theories as it assumes the notion that these leaders inherit specific traits that make them more ideal leaders. Trait theories, just as it sounds, revolve around “particular traits or behavioral characteristics” (Cherry 2014). Some of these traits include confidence, heroism, integrity, and sociability. The issue with trait theories on leadership is that there is no explanation of people who possess these qualities that are not effective leaders. As a result there has been a hole in research on the matter: “Leader behaviors tend to explain more variance in leadership effectiveness than leader traits, but results indicate that an integrative model where leader behaviors mediate the relationship between leader traits and effectiveness is warranted” (Derue et al. 2011, 1). As a result, trait theories alone do not provide sufficient information to rate effectiveness of leadership, but does provide valuable insight as it compares to other theories presented.

Contingency theories are the third theory under a leadership framework that has also been recently developed. This type of leadership stems from external variables that dictate what type of leadership style will be best suited for whatever situation they are put in. As a result, this type of leadership represents flexibility in terms of supervision depending on various circumstances. Moreover, contingency theories revolve around the fact that no leadership style is best fit in all situations, therefore providing a compromise in style. Ultimately, success with this type of leadership is a product of the “leadership style, qualities of the followers and aspects of the situation” (Cherry 2014). Contingency theories encompass adaptive leadership,
which reference a process rather than individual personal traits and capabilities. As a result, adaptive leadership is seen as extremely effective as it deals with a “focus on the specific problems at hand and to modify the way they have worked in the past. This type of leadership should compel all stakeholders involved to work towards a solution” (Randall and Coakley 2007, 327). Therefore, those who embody contingency theories of leadership tend to be effective due to the fact that those under their supervision buy in to a common goal to continue to find solutions for the betterment of their program.

The fourth theory of leadership is situational theories. Situational theories are quite similar to contingency theories as leaders that represent this model choose the appropriate course of action based on situational variables. Therefore, decision-making is dependent upon the best-fit style of leadership needed to produce the most effective outcome. Dr. Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, who coined the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory, base the most effective style of leadership on the maturity levels of those under the leader’s supervision. As a result of this philosophy they have stated four types of leadership styles: telling, selling, participating, and delegating (Hersey, Blanchard, Netmeyer 1979, 8-15). Each style may be appropriate for various situations, which all encompass the levels of maturity of their followers at a certain task or project given.

Unlike the “Great Man” theory of leadership, behavioral theories are based on the fact that great leaders are not born, but rather made and developed. This particular theory bases the effectiveness of leaders on their actions rather than internal factors, traits, and characteristics that they may have been born with. As a result, people can learn to be leaders through research and observation of others actions. There are multiple types of behavioral
leaders that include task-oriented, relation-oriented, change-oriented, and passive leadership. In each, there is a different model of leadership, which is taught and observed, and as a result is leadership based on a culmination of actions and findings. This type of leadership, although effective, is difficult to break down, as there are so many components to it. James B. Watson, an American Psychologist, and a major advocate of behavioral theories stated, “Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select – doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and, yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors” (Watson 1924, 82). In essence, Watson believes that the skills in nearly any occupation, regardless of the necessary traits needed are learned rather than being innate.

Participative theory is a democratic style of leadership as it takes into consideration the input of others when decision-making. This collaborative approach inspires and encourages contribution from various members of the program or group with a big-picture mindset. The contribution of the thoughts and ideas of a collective group is more powerful than that of just one man. Regardless, the leader always has the prerogative to restrict any of providing input at times. The benefits of participative leadership are simply stated from a psychological standpoint “people are more committed to actions where they have involved in the relevant decision-making [and] when people make decisions together, the social commitment to one another is greater and thus increases their commitment to the decision” (IAAP 2009, 18). Moreover, participative theories, although they have varied levels of participation, provide an
effective means to leadership, as they bind everyone in the group to have a common goal set forth under the guidance of that leader.

Management theories reveal leadership through productivity of those under their supervision. Also known as transactional theories of leadership, this form of leadership usually follows a system of rewards and punishments. This form of leadership explains that the leader of the group, whether they be a manager, principal, etc., has all the authority and when a task is given, the subordinate is expected to do exactly what is asked of them. This type of leadership is most clearly exemplified in a business model, as many businesses operate on a rewards/punishment philosophy. If employees have success with a task or in overall performance, they are usually rewarded with higher pay, promotions, or simply positive reinforcement. When an employee is lacking in productivity, the employee is usually punished by dock in pay, demotions, or merely admonished. This form of leadership assumes that work requirements, rewards, and sometimes punishments are very clear to those under their supervision. Transactional theories have proven to be successful, but the question that arises is what legacy are they leaving amongst their peers? Are they liked/disliked? In terms of relationships being built, there is a grey area of its effectiveness with those under their supervision.

The last theory of leadership is known as relationship theories. Also known as transformational leadership, this type of leadership follows the form of developing connections amongst the leaders and those under their supervision. There are many ways to approach building these relationships, whether it is by motivation and inspiration, or using a combination of management, situational, and participative theories. Regardless, transformational leadership
generally fills the need to help fulfill their follower's potential which usually stems from good moral and ethical motives. Leaders who use a transformational philosophy usually possess motivational skills with great energy that ultimately create a common vision to those under their supervision. By allowing his or her followers to have a common mindset, productivity with any task is raised as everyone is working toward a common goal to fulfill whatever necessary requirements are needed to carry out that task. Those who use relationship theories of leadership have proven to be quite successful as their followers go on to carry some of the same characteristics exemplified by the initial leader. As a result, their followers start to take on the personality traits of their leader that made them so successful. Paul Cohen and Frances Hesselbein, prominent individuals in leadership studies and founders of the Frances Hesselbein Leadership institute, claim, “Organizations that take the time to teach leadership are far ahead of the competition. By becoming familiar with the transformational leadership approach and combining the four I's (Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individual Consideration), managers can become effective leaders in the business world” (Hesselbein and Cohen 1999, 263).

It is evident that there are many theories in relation to the various types of leaders. The effectiveness of each theory varies but what exactly constitutes an effective leader and does each leader follow the form of one theory? After close examination of each theory, it is evident that leaders have the capacity to follow more than one theory. In fact, I believe the best and most effective leaders do not embody simply one theory, but rather a combination of theories. Depending on circumstance, the followers under their supervision, timing, and specific task expectancies, leaders must find a happy median within nearly all theories discussed. It is those
who understand the proper timing on when to exemplify each that seem to have the most productive careers and lasting legacies as effective leaders.

**Literature/ Philosophies on Athletic Leadership**

Karlene Sugarman has defined certain leadership characteristics that effective leaders embody. First and foremost, Sugarman states “Leaders must possess the qualities they are trying to incorporate into their team. For example, if you want members to be confident, have self-control, be disciplined, etc., then you must first possess all these traits. One of the most powerful things you can do is lead by example. You serve as an influential role model for your players and everything you do will be watched” (Sugarman 1999). A leader’s teachings are strengthened when that specific leader lives their life by what they are preaching. To allow any sort of hypocrisy to develop into a leader’s ideology would cause a strong following to diminish quickly as those under their supervision start to become aware of the various flaws present.

**Literature/ Philosophies on Academic Leadership**

Gary Yuki, a professor of Management and Leadership at State University in New York, states that the single most important attribute of effective leadership is that “influence is the essence of leadership” (Yuki 2012, 3). The ability to influence and motivate those around you to have a common goal will have a byproduct of success if the plan is feasible enough to reach whatever the common goal may be. As a result, effective leaders must find a way to motivate others in team-interest goals rather than self-interest goals. Obviously self-interest goals will come about, and be achieved, but it is crucial to share a common belief that the team ego
overrides the individual ego, regardless of the project, company, athletic organization, or classroom.

**The Gap**

Research within the field of leadership has been recently explored and regarded as a very popular topic to study. However, research of leadership within respective fields has really not been explored and as result will be the major premise of this thesis. With no major work on whether leadership is unique to occupation, or field for that matter, it is difficult to understand whether leadership is a prevalent and related topic across the world. This study will serve to elucidate leadership theories and characteristics of both athletic and academic personnel. As a result, I will be able to compare and contrast the similarities and differences of each, and really explore the notion of whether or not leadership is unique to various fields, and how the understanding of this can potentially provide newfound respect for leaders as a whole.

**Leadership Framework**

Effective leadership is measured by displaying various arrangements of characteristics and theories of leadership, regardless of occupation. In addition to the theories described above, I have developed a more focused combination of traits and philosophies that include: being scholars within their respective field; having the ability to destroy any of their follower’s personal threshold barriers while under their supervision; having and displaying confidence; having the trust and belief of those under their supervision; having the humility to adapt and be flexible for change when needed, and developing/obtaining respect and regard for what is trying to be accomplished. A combination of these attributes leads to success in whatever area
one is involved in, as we will see within the various case studies of this paper. The certain leadership qualities that will exemplify each leader’s worth, that I will be focusing on, which are represented within academics and athletics, are that of trust, motivation, humility, respect, applicable knowledge, imitation of ideologies by those under a leader’s supervision, and ability for a leader’s teachings to relate to subject matters outside their specific realm.

**Research Questions**

This study will serve to explore four major questions:

1) What are the most prevalent leadership theories and characteristics of a successful athletic leader?

2) What are the most prevalent leadership theories and characteristics of a successful academic leader?

3) Is leadership in fact unique to each respective field, athletics and academics? What does the understanding of leadership within each realm provide for scholarly work as a whole to leadership?

4) What does leadership provide to the common man or woman? How does one develop leadership skills, and how do they apply those skills to their everyday life?

**Methods**

In order to explain whether or not there is difference within leadership in athletics and leadership within academics, there is a certain format that I will follow to obtain consistent qualitative data. By following a specific format, it will allow me to elucidate effective leadership
of each case study, as well as ultimately formulate a sound conclusion from the respective analysis.

The first step is to select two prominent leaders within each realm, academics and athletics. These figures are: Warren Bennis (academia), Steve Covey (academia), Jim Mora Jr. (athletics), and John Wooden (athletics). Within each case study, I will provide a biography of each respective person, as well as include their most notable successes. Understanding pertinent background information of each respective personnel is imperative to understanding the effectiveness of each of their philosophies of leadership.

After explaining each of their contributions within their respective field, the second step will be to explore their personal philosophies by using appropriate literature and past interviews of them. The specific literature that I will use will be that of credited scholars work on the specific person. For each of the case studies, I have obtained literature specific to each of their lives and teachings. Interviews of each will also be taken and incorporated, as interviews will reveal some of their philosophies, and examples of how their successes took form.

Step three consists of an interview, which I will conduct, of individuals that had some type of relationship with each of the personnel within the case studies. The interview will consist of the following six questions:

**Case Study Interview**

1) What is your relationship to _____________? How did you meet ____________?

2) What was your impression, if any, of ________________ before you met them?
3) How would you characterize ______________’s leadership?
   a. “GREAT MAN” THEORIES
   b. TRAIT THEORIES
   c. CONTINGENCY THEORIES
   d. SITUATIONAL THEORIES
   e. BEHAVIORAL THEORIES
   f. PARTICIPATIVE THEORIES
   g. MANAGEMENT THEORIES
   h. RELATIONSHIP THEORIES

4) Is there an instance that stands out in your mind that exemplifies ______________’s leadership?

5) How has _____________ impacted your philosophy on life? Your life in general?

6) What qualities do you believe classify ____________ as an effective leader?

This interview will reaffirm some of the conjectures initially made from information given by the specific literature explored. It will also provide a more defined view of how each person within the case study exemplified leadership, by providing personal information from those that were under each leader’s supervision.

Including this three-step process will allow me to explain why each leader was effective in their respective realm. I will also be able to explore their successes as effective leaders from a broader sense incorporating leadership theories which will ultimately allow me to conclude whether or not leadership is unique to academics and athletics, or whether they are in fact
similar. Throughout the whole process of each case study, I will evaluate why the tools each leader used was effective and how it promotes and supports their form(s) of leadership.

**Athletic Personnel**

**John Wooden**

John Wooden was an American basketball player and collegiate coach who had much success in both segments of his athletic career. Wooden played college basketball at Purdue University where he was named an All American three consecutive years and had won a Heims Athletic Foundation National Championship in 1932. Having won 10 NCAA national championships as the head basketball coach of the UCLA Bruins, Wooden is still the most winning coach in all collegiate sports in the history of the NCAA. His 10 national championships came within a twelve-year coaching window in the following years: 1964-1973, and 1975. In Wooden’s twenty-nine year coaching career in the NCAA, he accumulated a winning percentage of 80% as a head basketball coach, untouched by coaches today across the nation (Wooden and Jamison 1997, XXIX). Due to his illustrious national championship winning seasons, he was awarded the *National Basketball Coach of the Year* 6 times, and *Sports Illustrated Man of the Year* once. His successful career, both playing and coaching, allowed him to be inducted into the NCAA Basketball Hall of Fame as both a player and a coach, the only one in history to receive both honors.

John Wooden’s success on the court may have been easily noticed in the public sector, but what has left his legacy to be that of one with tremendous character, integrity, and passion has been a result of his leadership skills that he embodied through his daily lifestyle. Numerous
former players of Wooden had all pledged that Wooden’s most valuable attributes as a coach had nothing to do with teaching of the game, but rather the teaching of life. Bill Walton stated that “John Wooden is the greatest basketball coach of all time, but what I learned from him had much more to do with living life than with playing ball” (Wooden and Jamison 1997, VII).

Walton, a former basketball player of Wooden’s at UCLA, went on to have tremendous success in the NBA and off the court. Walton’s greatest passion was immensely affected by Wooden’s mentorship and, as a result, allowed Wooden to be the second most influential person in his life, next to his father (Wooden and Jamison 1997, VII).

For example, Wooden emphasized his ideology on what success entailed to his players and students daily. He coined his own definition of what success is. It provided a completely unique way to view and define success, as compared to the definition in Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary. Wooden defines success as “peace of mind, attained only through self-satisfaction and knowing you made the effort to do the best that you are capable” (Ted Talks: John Wooden 2011). The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines success as “the fact of getting or achieving wealth, respect, or fame” (Merriam-Webster Online 2013). Clearly these two definitions of success differ immensely, mainly due to the fact that Wooden’s definition of success has nothing to do with material possessions or labels. Wooden’s view on success is that you are in complete control of true success. Giving your best effort is something an individual has complete control of in any aspect of life. When one of Wooden’s players were not giving the best effort which they were capable of giving, Wooden let them know that it was unacceptable.

A specific instance in which Wooden exemplified his care for exceptional effort came during a practice that he had ended early. Angrily, Wooden stated to his team that going twice as hard
at the next practice had no worth due to the fact that if his players can go twice as hard, then they should be doing that every day. Furthermore, Wooden stated that one has the incapacity of going “110%” because ones best effort is given at 100%, and simply that is all that is needed for success (Wooden and Jamison 1997, VII). In any facet of life, Wooden gave very valuable advice to his team on succeeding in life, as he firmly believed that an individual could be content with exceptional effort.

The countless compliments and admiration from others testify to the legacy Wooden had left on each of those individuals’ lives, regardless of how close and developed each of those relationships were. Steve Jamison writes that “John Wooden is a ‘philosopher-coach’ in the truest sense: a man whose beliefs, teachings, and wisdom go far beyond sports, and ultimately address how to bring out the very best in yourself and others in all areas of life” (Wooden and Jamison 1997, V). His teachings, such as his views on what true success is, always applied to on and off the court, which in essence, gave his players multiple tools to win in life.

One critical element that represents successful leadership is the followers’ attention to take on the personality of that of the leader. Wooden’s ability to have such a strong following within the sports world has extended far beyond the athletic realm and has spread across classrooms nationwide due to the depth of learning that nearly anyone may benefit from. Regardless of sex, race, occupation, stage in life, etc., Wooden’s teachings have the capability to reach anyone because his teachings were applicable to any stage in life and represented the development of the individual rather than the athlete.

True leadership does not stem from fear of others, but rather trust. That being said, there is an enormous difference between trust and belief, and leaders must have both trust and
belief in others. One may, in fact, believe that a leader has their best interest in mind when
guiding them, but do they trust that leader enough to allow themselves to be vulnerable
enough to learn from them? Wooden gained his credibility as a leader for multiple reasons; one
being his strong moral value of holding trust at the utmost importance. When describing
leadership, Wooden stated, “I consider it a sacred trust: helping to mold character, instill
productive principles and values, and provide a positive example to those under my
supervision. Furthermore, it is a privilege to have that responsibility, opportunity, and
obligation, one that should never be taken lightly” (Wooden and Jamison 1997, 111).

Furthermore, how does a leader motivate his followers to buy in with a common goal?
The answer to this is simple, respect. Respect is a fundamental component of effective
leadership, and is attained by the leader when he/she gives respect to those under their
supervision. Wooden states that a fundamental component to gain respect is that “You must
make it clear that you are working together. Those under your supervision are not working for
you but with you, and you all have a common goal” (Wooden and Jamison 1997, 114). Respect
is taken as much as it is given. In order to have those under your supervision follow what you
ask of them, you must give them respect. As a result, they will do above and beyond what you
ask of them within the framework of the team. Wooden’s ability to have such a strong
following with those in his program, allowed for the great amount of success that he was able
to attain coaching collegiate basketball.

Moreover, there are multiple methods to motivate. But what is the value of one’s
ability to motivate versus one’s mastery of the knowledge on the information being taught.
Wooden states, “there is a vast difference between leaders and their ability to teach and to
motivate those under their supervision. Knowledge alone is not enough to get desired results. You must have the more elusive ability to teach and to motivate. This defines a leader; if you can’t teach and you can’t motivate, you can’t lead” (Wooden and Jamison 1997, 122). The ability to motivate allows one to conquer personal barriers that individuals may create for themselves. Confidence and an efficient work-ethic are developed when inspiration is ignited. Ultimately motivation has the capability to inspire an individual to continually give the best effort that they are capable of giving.

Is this to say that a necessary quality of a leader is to have charisma? Not all leaders possess this quality, but charisma is not a necessary aspect of being able to motivate someone. Sometimes, a simple sign of caring for one’s feelings and their work is enough to drive them to continue to work hard for you. Is knowledge necessary to motivate others? To a certain extent, knowledge is useless when you can’t motivate those whom you supervise. John Wooden believed his most effective style of coaching was to motivate his players to work relentlessly hard. He explained that although many thought that the secret to his success was his hidden knowledge of the game, he believed that he did not know more than most division one basketball coaches, but, rather, had the capability to motivate his players every day.

To further exemplify Wooden’s persona as being an effective leader, I chose to interview Rick Neuheisel who is a UCLA alumni as well as former football player for the Bruins. Neuheisel also was the Head Football Coach for UCLA from 2007-2012. Neuheisel met Wooden as a student-athlete. Neuheisel spent a lot of time as a student in the athletic facilities and introduced himself to Wooden who, at the time, was the Head Basketball Coach. His first impression of Wooden was that Wooden carried himself as a professional, but never made you
feel like he was your superior. “A combination of a compassionate, sincere, and knowledgeable human being was sweating out of his pores and you could just tell he was great” (Neuheisel 2014).

Once Neuheisel’s playing career ended, he realized that his passion was to coach. Immediately following, a man who he respected and wanted to pattern his coaching style after was John Wooden. As a result, he continued to stay in contact and study his work on being a leader. Neuheisel noticed that Wooden’s leadership form closely followed relationship, situational, contingency, and behavioral theories of leadership. “His ability to make you know that he didn’t just care about you as an athlete, or fellow coach, but rather as a significant human being that had the capacity to affect not only a game, but others lives was something truly special” (Neuheisel 2014). One’s ability to connect to a person and to develop that relationship to something meaningful, drives the participant to strive to do everything in their power to fulfill whatever commitment or obligation they have. It is evident that Wooden excelled in this field as the admiration by others is consistent regardless of the relationship they had with Wooden.

Wooden’s persona allowed those around him to trust and believe him with his wise words and teachings. Moreover, in order to have a winning athletic program, it is necessary for every individual that is connected to your program (coaches, athletes, equipment managers, athletic trainers, alumni, etc.) to be one hundred percent bought-in to the cause and to what that leader deems necessary for the success of the program. Regardless of how outlandish some requests may seem at times, every participant within that program will give their best
effort to fulfill that obligation with the notion that every aspect that is being asked, is necessary to win.

Jim Mora Jr.

Jim Mora Jr. is most well-known for his successes as an American Football Coach, having coached in both the National Football Professional League (NFL), and college football on the division one level. Being the son of Hall of Fame Coach Jim Mora, Mora’s passion grew throughout his life as he moved many places along the western side of America from Colorado, California, and Washington. As a coaches’ son, Jim Mora Jr. grew up on the football field, learning from some of the greatest people that have ever coached the game on any level. Jim Mora Jr. went on to play football for the University of Washington Huskies where he soon began his coaching career after his graduation.

His most notable successes stem from his return to coaching, after a two year absence while he was in sports broadcasting, to the Head Football Coach of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The team that Mora had inherited had finished with 21 wins and 29 losses in four seasons finishing with a 42% winning percentage. In his first season, Mora took the UCLA Bruins to the Pac 12 Championship game and a Holiday Bowl appearance, finishing the season with a 9-5 record. During his second season at UCLA, Mora gathered a 10-3 win where he finished with a victory in the El Paso Sun Bowl. In two seasons, Mora has gone 19-8 with a winning percentage of 70%. As a result of his success with UCLA, Jim Mora Jr. was nominated for the Liberty Mutual Coach of the year award.

His success in college football, although very impressive, is not indicative of his total successes as a person. Jim Mora Jr., with his wife Shannon, has founded the Jim Mora Count on
Me Family Foundation for under privileged youth. The foundation’s mission statement states, “The Jim Mora Count On Me Family Foundation strives to lend support and to partner with charities and children’s organizations through grants, increasing community awareness, and empowering organizations to help children” (Mora 2010).

Mora’s successes on and off the field continue to grow, but the question arises as to what has Jim Mora Jr. been doing to gain notoriety and success in a high profile position where leaders are reveled and emerge. Having been part of his staff at UCLA for over two years, I am completely versed with his teachings/philosophies, and with the programs that he has implemented to ensure success for those under his supervision on and off the field.

Coaching in college is quite different than coaching in the NFL for multiple reasons. The most evident being the talent level. The most significant difference is that college student athletes are exactly what that title states; they are students first, athletes second. As a result, college coaching involves not only an athletic plan and a schedule in place, but an academic one as well. The head coach of that particular program must not only be well aware of the academic plan, but also be part of its development as a football program encompasses every aspect of a college athlete’s life. Therefore, at times it seems as if coaches are “baby sitting” their players, but in fact, coaches are there to serve as mentors to their players and help guide them to both academic and athletic success. Therefore, Mora felt the obligation to create an accountability system in which his student athletes were accountable to fulfill all the responsibilities expected of them which included: Attending every lecture, discussion, tutoring session, training appointments, team and position meetings, workouts, practice, etc. The accountability system
is simple, if a student athlete misses one of their responsibilities; they are punished via an extra workout given early in the morning before the general public starts their day.

At a time where accountability was not held with high regard in past years, Mora made it evident that everyone was expected to fulfill their obligation as a student-athlete. In a matter of his first two seasons, Jim Mora Jr. helped guide an increase in academic eligibility to 100%, and an annual passing rate to second in the Pacific 12 Conference. Both athletics and academics were held with the highest regard as Mora always claimed “football will end one day for everyone, but your degree will stay with you for the rest of your life. Make the most out of your college experience by fulfilling all your obligations as a student-athlete” (Mora 2013).

Jim Mora’s consideration for those who are under his supervision, and those who even simply work in the same building as him, is held with the highest regard. Mora stated during his first staff meeting that there will be “No elitism, make everyone in the building feel important to what happens on the field on Saturday. We may have different levels of responsibility but we all have the same level of importance to our success” (Mora 2013). This mindset closely resembles relationship theories of leadership as he focuses on developing relationships with everyone around his program. This approach allows everyone to buy-in to a common cause of winning on and off the field.

Mora’s core covenants of the way he operates his staff also reveals his passion to drive everyone around him to success. Mora states that “[our staff] must be consistently demanding, we as a staff and as individuals must always hold ourselves to the highest standards. We can lift the entire team to a higher level just by the way we operate, but if you demand it you must demonstrate it; be prompt; organized and detailed; honest; and respectful” (Mora 2013).
Mora’s ability to motivate and most of all monitor progress allows for his program to continually make strides forward. As a result, a level of trust and belief is built and held sacred amongst those within his program, as they know that the expectation to continue to raise the level of efficiency is high.

To further exemplify Jim Mora Jr. as an effective leader, I chose to interview one of his former players, Jeff Ulbrich. Jeff Ulbrich’s relationship to Mora extended beyond that of a player, as Ulbrich has coached with Mora and currently serves as UCLA’s Defensive Coordinator. Ulbrich was drafted in the 2000 NFL Draft to the San Francisco 49ers where Mora was the Defensive Coordinator for Ulbrich’s first three seasons as a player in the National Football League. Ulbrich went on to have an illustrious NFL career playing 9 seasons for the 49ers where he retired and immediately got into coaching. Ulbrich’s first collegiate coaching stint started with Jim Mora’s staff where Ulbrich was Mora’s first hire.

Ulbrich’s first impression of Mora was that he was exceptionally detail oriented which permeated through his defensive staff. “Meetings always started at exact planned times, formatting of the play book contained no mistakes and what was impressive about that was there wasn’t a lot of preparation time given so for Jim to put together these elaborate meetings showed his mastery of work and his passion to be great” (Ulbrich 2014). Ulbrich viewed Jim’s philosophy of leadership as one that resembled mostly situational and contingency theories of leadership. Mora’s education on “what the team needed to hear and when they needed to hear it” (Ulbrich 2014) drove Mora to have one of the top ranked defenses in the league. “He got the most out of everybody that was part of that program because you could tell he cared” (Ulbrich 2014). Ulbrich’s coaching style has been immensely affected by what he learned from Coach
Mora. Ulbrich reaffirmed that success does not stem from being lucky, success stems from maintaining a focused mindset to do everything in one’s power to take care of the necessary things. “What you deem necessary is up to you, but I know that when I’m trying for something, I’m leaving no stone unturned” (Ulbrich 2014).

Mora’s persona as an effective leader stems from a variety of qualities that permeates through his lifestyle. His authenticity and passion to be great is exemplified through his mastery of knowledge within the field, his situational form of leadership on motivating those under his supervision to be the best they can be, and his work of confidence and respect he believes everyone that is part of the “team” deserves. These qualities have nothing to do with the sport of football, but rather his relentless pursuit to be the best he is capable of being as a leader.

**Academia Personnel**

**Warren Bennis**

Warren Bennis gains notoriety through his influential work in leadership studies. An American scholar, and world-renowned author, Bennis has provided numerous books in regards to leadership. Bennis is currently a distinguished professor of business administration, and the founding chairman of the Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California. Bennis has authored over 30 books, was an advisor for four United States Presidents, and has worked influentially at MIT, Harvard, Boston University, INSEAD, and at the University of Exeter located in the United Kingdom.

Bennis was born in Westwood, New Jersey where he enlisted in the United States Army in 1943. Bennis is to be considered one of the youngest lieutenants to be given that title at age
19. While serving as an infantry officer in the European Theatre Operations, Bennis was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart, two very admirable honors given out to a select few by the military for heroic actions and courageous effort. His role as part of the 63rd infantry division is one that was very active in seasonal combat. Due to his title, and different attire that the lieutenant of a platoon obtained, Bennis noted that “people responded to you a certain way, but here I was a kid in a seasoned infantry division” (Hotaling and Bennis 2011).

Bennis goes on to say that everyone that was under his supervision was older than him, and due to his initial fear and anxiety he had of war, he saw his soldiers in his platoon as mentors of him; a reversal of roles to say the least, but this gives great insight as to how some leaders come about. For Bennis, he was taught how to be a leader from those he was considered of higher rank than. Bennis stated that as much mentorship he received, “I need them as much as they needed me” (Hotaling and Bennis 2011). Being forced in a position that sometimes is not readily accepted by that specific person allows one to be humbled and accepting of advice and criticism. True leaders must be able to accept criticism and warrant advice, and act accordingly with what decisions is deemed the best fit. Too often we find that the people who offer criticism and advice don’t necessarily contain the ability to make decisions. Making decisions is in fact immensely harder than simply suggesting them. Therefore it is important to understand that effective leaders, such as Bennis, are capable of accepting mentorship and are still able to make decisions for the betterment of the mass.

In an interview led by the CEO of N2growth, an organization for leadership and organizational management, James Hotaling asked Bennis, what the single most important fundamental of an effective leader is. Bennis clearly stated that there is not just one but that he
could offer one of many with great value. “Really be proactive about developing warm, strong, deep meaningful relationships” (Hotaling and Bennis 2011). This is a very significant attribute of what great leaders should have the capability of doing. An effective leader, such as Warren Bennis, is able to get the most of who they supervise. In order to get the most of the people that work with him, there are rules that Bennis is adamant in following.

The first rule is that a good leader abdicates his own ego for the betterment of others. In essence, Bennis is proclaiming that as a leader, a cohesive work environment is how you improve what you are doing, not by authoritarian rule. Bennis stated, “None of us is smart without all of us. A leader has to bring all these voices together” (Hotaling and Bennis 2011). The most telling sign of a successful leader is the success of the group. As wooden emphasized, it is necessary to have the group feel as if they are cared about immensely. As a result, they will do above and beyond what you ask of them. Bennis is also an advocate of this approach, as he understands the success of the program is dependent on the group as a whole, whether it is a business, athletic team, or simply a group project. This notion of cohesive work really brings great insight into how leaders balance the concerns of all those under their supervision.

Another avenue that Warren Bennis stresses is the notion of respect between all members of that group. Bennis finds that respect has such a profound effect on a person and “even saying that word (respect) almost puts tears in my eyes” (Hotaling and Bennis 2011). The value of learning how to listen and learning how to respect defines a great leader. Simply letting someone know that you care enough about them to show them respect really shows how much regard you have for someone. If you appreciate what they do for your organization, you will show it through the respect you give them, granted they are carrying out their responsibilities.
Not all leaders possess this caring quality, but most in fact do, and those who do are the most effective. “Not all leaders have [empathy], but many do – and as Marty Kaplan said, ‘I’ve known leaders who have had none of it and nevertheless were leaders, but those who have had that quality have moved and inspired me more’” (Bennis 1989, 156). Warren Bennis’ illustrious and proven life has shown that he has a great understanding of this concept, which has proven to pay dividends for his success as a scholar and leader. The CEO of N2growth, Mike Myatt stated that “Warren is a perfect example of a truism that I’ve found in all great leaders - they are humble, kind and generous. They quickly shoulder blame, but rarely accept credit” (Myatt 2013).

To further exemplify Bennis’ leadership effectiveness, I chose to interview Gary Rhodes who was a doctoral student at the time when Bennis was a professor at the University of Southern California. Bennis was based in the business school where he was teaching courses on management and leadership. Prior to Rhodes and Bennis’ relationship, Rhodes was aware of Bennis’ work in the leadership field, but aside from that there was no knowledge on what kind of person Bennis was. Rhodes is currently the Director for the Center for Global Education at UCLA. Prior to that, he served in the same position at Loyola Marymount University, as well as the University of Southern California. Rhodes’ work in Global Studies and Study Abroad programs has really begun to develop that respective field.

Warren Bennis’ reputation was obviously that he was a true master in his field. To have knowledge of management and leadership provoked the right mindset his students needed to not only succeed in class, but in life. Rhodes stated, “at the time one of the issues I was looking at in the topics of higher education and administration was management and leadership, so I
knew at the time that everything he had said had value and useful information to what I was highly interested in” (Rhodes 2014). An important attribute of effective leadership is that leaders must have a mastery of the knowledge necessary to become proficient in whatever production or cause is the aim of that group. Those who do not have a strong background in the respective position they are holding often lead to disorganization, and an insufficient plan of attack.

Bennis’ philosophies of effective management provoked his students, and those under his supervision, to think about what is really important when setting up a project. Rhodes claimed that a valuable method he had gained from his coursework in the field was to understand what you want the big picture to look like. Rhodes stated, “If there was one philosophical underpinning, it was that there’s importance in looking at various concepts of management and leadership, which carries on to what I do now. Before you start doing things, it is critical that you start developing a vision and a mission in order to look at the broader picture” (Rhodes 2014). When a leader is in charge of a program or project, it is undeniable that there is so much value in developing a well thought out plan about where you should allocate your resources, and what your realistic goals and production will be as a result.

When asked what theories closely resembled Bennis’ leadership theories, Rhodes claimed that he epitomized a variety of them. Those theories include contingency, situational, behavioral, participative, and relationship theories. It is evident that Warren Bennis understood the big picture of leadership, and what was required to have success and attain goals. By understanding when to use each theory, Bennis was able to connect to a variety of people, and also understand the best fit way to guide those under his supervision to success in academia,
management, and life. Bennis’ mentorship of many has shown that his legacy will be that of a prominent figure not only in leadership studies, but leaders all around the world. Rhodes finished by stating, “He was a good listener, he was thoughtful, and he provided feedback to help me figure out what direction would be useful to go in. That’s something he’s done for others in the industry” (Rhodes 2014).

Steve Covey

Steve Covey was an American scholar, professor, author, and public speaker who demonstrated and educated people on effective leadership. Covey was recognized as Time Magazines 25 Most Influential People for good reason. His most recognized book was titled “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.” It was rated the #1 Most Influential Business Book in the 20th century. Its finest qualities of effective leadership will be elucidated in the following content.

Covey attended the University of Utah as an undergraduate, and graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration. He later went on to attain his MBA at Harvard University and also a Doctor of Religious Education from BYU. In his academic career, he achieved a total of 8 honorary doctorates. Covey sold over 20 million books worldwide and co-established a very successful business, Franklin-Covey, the leading global professional services firm with offices in 123 countries. His accolades are countless, but what allowed him to achieve such fame and positive notoriety? “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” reveals Covey’s ideology, as well as methods on leadership, which has proven to be successful for him.

The first habit, Covey describes is the differences between proactive and reactive people. Covey defines proactive as “taking responsibility for your life” (Covey 1989, 40). People
do not blame others for any circumstance that may arise in their life if they truly take control and responsibility of their own life. External factors do not inhibit people who are proactive, due to the mindset that they will fulfill whatever obligation they must to the best of their ability. Conversely, reactive people are greatly affected by external factors. Reactive people are constantly blaming others that may not have anything to do with their own well-being. The most telling point to decipher between proactive vs. reactive people is what these individuals say as their responses. “A proactive person uses proactive language—I can, I will, I prefer, etc. A reactive person uses reactive language—I can’t, I have to, if only” (Covey 1989, 41). Ultimately, proactive people develop their personality based on their control of life, and as a result have the power to influence those around them—key attribute of effective leadership.

The second habit explores the notion of envisioning your goals and aspirations in the broader sense. Simply, Covey defines this approach as “Begin with the End in Mind” (Covey 1989, 55). In essence, knowing where you want to be allows you to have a vision of what you want in life. If creating a Master’s program that is recognizable as being top in its respective field, this step may ask, what do you want the program to encompass, and how will it separate itself from similar Masters programs? In order to build a successful business, program, or team, leaders must understand what they want their end result to look like. A defined plan will follow, but aiming endlessly at a goal is often a struggle for those in a position of power.

The third habit Covey notes is “Put First things First” (Covey 1989, 75). Too often, people get caught up with stress due to poor time management. But the question arises in regards to the value of time management skills—what is actually important with it? Covey states that “highly effective people do not manage time—they manage themselves” (Covey 1989, 79). As a
result, prioritizing one's responsibilities is key to efficiency because understanding what really is important to a program's success is predicated on always taking care of the important sections. Much like Bennis, Covey understands the model of where you allocate your resources by always having the big picture in mind. As a leader, understanding the composition as a whole helps with efficiency and productivity.

The fourth habit is known as "Thinking win-win." Win-Win sees life as a cooperative arena, not a competitive one. Win-Win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions" (Covey 1989, 110). Too often people base success on what others are doing in the same field. This thought process hinders one's approach to anything they are trying to obtain. As a result, it is necessary that people maintain a focused mindset to carry out all their responsibilities to the best of their ability, regardless of so-called competition. Integrity, maturity, and an abundant reality are a mindset that successful leaders attempt to preach to those under their supervision. By maintaining this thought process, the leader ultimately drives their followers to success regardless of outcome.

Habit five is "Seek first to understand, than to be understood" (Covey 1989, 113). Covey's philosophy of listening is critical to effective people's success. Covey states that people too often focus on excelling at the tools we learned growing up most: reading, writing, and speaking. Listening, however, is crucial to effective people as there are so many positives in understanding, whether it be understanding a person's motives or direction for a particular task. Too often people are quick to interject without fully understanding what is being communicated to them. Leaders, such as Covey, recognize that winning is found in the detail, and that listening, is a major component of that.
The sixth habit is “Synergize” which will be explored later within this paper, as it will propel the research given thus far to bring very important conclusions to place (Covey 1989, 130).

Lastly, the seventh habit discussed is “sharpen the saw” (Covey 1989, 143). Quite possibly the most important aspect of leadership, is not so much the ability to oversee and instruct, but rather the continued development of oneself as a leader. It is undeniable that you can go through a day and learn multiple new things about others, yourself, and life. Thus, having the ability to understand that learning is an ongoing process provides oneself with continued development. Covey states, “It’s preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have—you. It’s renewing the four dimensions of your nature—physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional” (Covey 1989, 143). By continuing to enhance and sharpen your tools as a leader, you will continue to raise your ability to reach a variety of people under your supervision.

To further exemplify Steve Covey as a leader, I chose to interview Val D. Rust who was a former colleague of Covey’s. Rust and Covey worked together at Brigham Young University, where Covey was a doctoral student at the time, and Rust was an undergraduate student. Both of them had been working with students who were struggling at the time in school, in essence as mentors who would speak to them about their difficulties. Rust is a current professor for the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. Rust’s contributions to the field extend to being an associate editor to the scholarly journal “Comparative Education Review,“ and also a co-founder and associate director of UCLA’s Center for International and Development Education.
Rust claims that Covey was an active member of the Mormon Church and as a result his view of leadership stemmed from some of the philosophy’s of Mormon faith. “Covey’s leadership orientation was very integrated with his Mormon background. His dedication to the Mormon Church defined his leadership perspective. He talks the language of fundamentals and ethics that human beings must align themselves with” (Rust 2014). Due to Covey’s familiarity with the Mormon faith, he was very comfortable when speaking to the public of any country, as he was in fact a firm believer of the virtues and ethics of living a good life. By living what Covey preached, there was never a sense of hypocrisy that was revealed, as he was a true believer in every facet of living a wholesome life. As a result, the relationships that Covey developed over the years were always meaningful as he had the power and persona to where “he could address 1000 people and make them all feel special” (Rust 2014). This type of leadership most closely resembles relationship theories of leadership, as Covey focused on the connections he formed with people. By doing so, Covey exemplified the passion of helping those around him to fulfill his or her potential. Leaders such as Covey who resonate relationship theories of leadership often have high moral and ethical standards.

When a leader such as Covey lives a life without hypocrisy, confidence in one’s message resonates more with people as they often see the passion he/she may have for helping a certain cause. It is evident that Covey’s successes and his reputation preceded him. With the high amount of regard that was given to his book, “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,” it is evident that many people who are familiar with success, efficiency, and leadership identify with his philosophies.
The Approach to Effective Leadership

How leaders develop and what skills are shown to be most promising within effective leadership stems from one’s approach to various situations in life. It is necessary to understand life philosophies of successful personnel in each realm, as a closer look into one’s view on life’s situations often reveal leadership tendencies.

Days Composed of Laughter, Thought, and Tears- Jimmy Valvano

James Valvano, better known as Jimmy V, was born in Queens, New York in 1946. He was the middle child of two brothers, who were extremely close and raised by loving parents. Jimmy V attended Rutgers University where he lettered in basketball for four years and graduated with a degree in English. As a player, Jimmy V led his team to a third place finish in the 1967 NIT tournament. As a senior, he received the Senior Athlete of the Year award in 1967. An outstanding player, dedicated to the game of basketball, Jimmy V sought a career in coaching where he had much success.

Directly following his graduation from Rutgers, he began his coaching career at his college alma mater coaching the freshman team. As a Head basketball coach of NC State, Valvano won two ACC Tournament Championships in 1983 and 1987 and the NCAA Basketball Championship in 1983 in a nail biter of a game. He also totaled two conference titles and was awarded the ACC Coach of the Year in 1989. His great amount of success was not restricted to playing and coaching. Valvano began a career within administration serving as the Athletic Director at NC State, and later went into sports broadcasting for ESPN.
Valvano was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 1992. At the first ESPY Awards on March 3, 1993, only 8 weeks before he lost his battle with cancer, Valvano was being awarded the Arthur Ashe Courage and Humanitarian Award. Upon receiving the award, Valvano delivered one of the most memorable speeches in sports history, which directly reflects his philosophy on life and the value he placed on leadership:

To me, there are three things we all should do every day. We should do this every day of our lives. Number one is laugh. You should laugh every day. Number two is think. You should spend some time in thought. And number three is, you should have your emotions moved to tears, could be happiness or joy. But think about it. If you laugh, you think, and you cry, that’s a full day. That’s a heck of a day. You do that seven days a week; you’re going to have something special (Valvano 1992).

It is important to understand that effective leadership stems from multiple attributes and not every leader is the same. Valvano epitomized a leader that was loving and caring to all, and was always going to wear his heart on his sleeve. That being said, as Valvano mentions that laughter should be a daily occurrence, we understand his ideology that making others feel happy and comfortable is of the utmost importance. Leaders do not always have to be serious and stern, as they lose a sense of trust through intimidation. Friendliness and affection show a side of a leader that comforts another. Laughter is a constant reminder that life should not be taken too
seriously, as we have heard all too well that life is way too short, so why waste the time you have not enjoying the present.

The second thought that Valvano stated we all should do every day, is spending time in thought. Too often people get caught up with external factors that have nothing to do with ones production. At that moment, they lose their focus and train of thought on whatever they might have been attentive to for that day. It is important to understand that spending some time in thought gives you the opportunity to be reflective, critical, organizational, and ultimately intelligent. As we think, we learn and “the second we stop learning, the second we cannot lead” (Hotaling and Bennis 2011). To yearn to learn something new every day allows for growth as a person, and as Wooden’s philosophy on life mentions, getting a little better every day accumulates to something quite larger.

The final component on living a full day that Valvano stresses is at some point during the day you should have your emotions move you to tears, whether it be happiness or joy. Valvano references a major, and maybe the single most important attribute of a leader, passion. Oprah Winfrey once said, “Passion is energy. Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you.” Passion is what drives one to succeed at whatever they may be aiming to attain. Leaders encompass such a strong passion for what they do, may it be athletics, academics, or running a business. To feel such a strong pit your stomach to succeed that it exudes directly off you through your actions and character is a powerful thing. Those under your supervision feel that passion and with the right motives and actions, that passion translates to success. To yearn to be great is something we all have the capacity to feel. What drives us to maintain that passion is his/ her attitude.
At the end of Valvano’s speech, he stated that with the help of ESPN, he would be starting the *V Foundation for Cancer Research*. In regards to the objective of the foundation, Jimmy Valvano said, “Cancer can take away all of my physical abilities. It cannot touch my mind, it cannot touch my heart, and it cannot touch my soul. And those three things are going to carry on forever. I thank you and God bless you all” (Valvano 1992). Valvano’s success on and off the court was further exemplified by how he carried himself, and how he reacted to anything that happened to him. To understand that his love, passion, and drive for anything he did was never compromised, is something many aspiring leaders should work to live up to. Exceptional leaders understand that there is no such thing as a “ready-made man,” and as a result are forever learning and building who they are.

**Your Actions and your Attitude- Charles Swindoll**

How would one approach lead a group toward a common goal, or even simpler, how does one approach anything in life? For this matter, I chose to explore the philosophy of Charles Swindoll, on an approach to life’s situations, which is explained in one of his more famously written books, *The Grace Awakening*. Swindoll is a “Christian pastor, author, educator, and radio preacher. He founded *Insight for Living*, headquartered in Plano, Texas, which airs a radio program of the same name on more than 2,000 stations around the world in 15 languages” (Wikipedia).

Swindoll’s philosophy of one’s attitude on life provides very valuable and thought provoking advice, on not only the development of a leader, but also the development of a person.
The longer I love, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company...a church.... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude....I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes (Swindoll 2006, 114).

The truth of the matter is there are two choices for how we view anything. We can choose to view something in a positive manner, or we can choose to view something in a negative manner. To understand that attitude reveals your ability to think positive or negative may provide a new found perspective on various situations. From the standpoint of leadership, it is undeniable that at some point in a leader's career, they will face some type of adversity. To me, adversity is just another word disguised as opportunity. In order to overcome any adverse situation, one must approach it with the proper mindset.

How does someone approach an adverse situation with the proper mindset? Swindoll’s piece on attitude has provoked me to understand any situation in two processes. The first being relentless pursuit. Relentless pursuit ultimately refers to maintaining the same drive and desire regardless of whatever situation is put forth in front of someone. The term relentless is
synonymous with the words unyielding and persistent for a reason. Nothing can phase your goals and aspirations of becoming a leader, or maintaining growth as an effective leader as long you follow the second part of this process, pure mind. Maintaining a pure mind refers to keeping a focus that is unphased by external factors. It is human nature for people to get caught up with a mindset consisting of what ifs and what could happen. To combat that, understanding that corrupting one’s mind with external factors that have no connection to your own success or goal aspirations inhibits you from maintaining drive to get there. Relentless pursuit and a pure mind allow you to control your attitude and maintain a positive mindset to attain any goal, become a leader, or lead a program to success.

Conclusion

Leadership Synergy

After reviewing the case studies of John Wooden, Jim Mora Jr., Warren Bennis, and Steve Covey, it is evident that there are a lot of the same recurring leadership theories present within each of their practices. The four most prevalent are relationship, contingency/situational, and participative theories of leadership. That being said, examining each of the case studies revealed that leadership within athletics, and leadership within academics are not unique in regard to leadership style and attributes within their field. Leadership within athletics and academics are quite similar, as the understanding of what constitutes effective leadership in both consists of similar philosophies and theories practiced.

Relationship theories are relevant to both fields due to the fact that psychologically, there is more of an incentive to perform at one’s best if they necessarily feel like they are an
integral component to the success of the group. Leaders who use relationship theories of leadership often develop the relationship from the moment they meet those under their supervision. As a result, the bond that is present between the leader and the follower will continue to grow in a positive manner. This positive relationship allows the leader to not only be satisfied with the production of his/her followers, but also the outcome of the development of the person.

Contingency and situational theories are present within prominent leaders of both athletic and academic leaders, as it is very important to understand when and how to treat their followers based on external factors present. A leader’s ability to motivate in a certain situation may provide the same productivity as a leader’s ability to reward/ punish in another situation. Therefore, the understanding of when and what type of leadership is most useful are extremely important to the success of a leader and their group, regardless of occupation.

Participative theories of leadership also were recurring in both realms of athletic and academic leadership. I believe the reason for this is that there is a range within participative forms. In athletics, levels of participation may be minimal whereas in academia, levels of participation may be high. Depending on the leader, the structure of the program, and certain situations, the capacity to use input from others to various degrees not only provides a different perspective, but also allows a more cohesive understanding of the goals and aspirations of the group. As we note in athletics, participative theories to a head coach may apply to their support staff of assistant coaches. For academics, a dean of a program might take into consideration the ideas and critique of the professors. In either case, participative theories
of leadership provides a stronger desire to complete expected responsibilities by the followers, due to the fact that they feel significant in part to the decision-making.

Regardless of field, athletics or academics, it is important to note that the qualities of an effective leader are characterized, in both realms, using similar leadership theories. The differences of each field are obvious in terms of specific goals and notoriety in their respective fields, but having the understanding that both academics and athletics display leadership in similar patterns should reveal that philosophies of productivity and success are dealt with the same. The importance of valuing synergy of any various tandems or sets of groups is discussed with Covey’s “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.” Covey reveals the sixth habit being the ability to synergize and its importance: “The essence of synergy is to value differences—to respect them, to build on strengths, to compensate for weaknesses. Once people have experienced real synergy, they are never quite the same again. They know the possibility of having other such mind-expanding adventures in the future” (Covey 1989, 130). An open mind in any regard has the capacity to reveal respect for various occupations, cultures, people, etc. To understand the goals and successes of effective leadership as a common practice regardless of field, will only provide you with more ideas and aspirations of being great.

This bond has the capacity to raise the level of academics, athletics, technology, the government, and relations as a whole. When we can understand the common thread between realms such as academia and athletics, we can better aid one another in reaching our goals. Further research should investigate the impact relationships between academic and athletic programs within a school have on the success of both the participants in both programs. That
is, do athletic programs with close ties to their school’s academic programs have more successful students/athletes than programs with disparities between the two units?

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