

Adversity Lesson

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SPEAKERS

Paul Barnett, Jim Woolfrey, Lisa Alexander, Tom Ryan, Gordon Tietjens

Paul Barnett 00:00

Welcome to the lessons from the great coaches podcast.

00:04

I've learned that you don't do it alone, you learn so many different things from so many different coaches. That's an elite learning environment.

00:13

How you deal with how to be resilient, how important it is to infuse joy in the process of learning. To be a good candidate, you've got to do more than you take.

00:24

What an interesting way it is to be a leader.

Paul Barnett 00:28

My name is Paul Barnett, and you are listening to the great coaches podcast, where we explore leadership through the lens of high performance sport, by interviewing great coaches from around the world, to try and find ideas to help all of us be better leaders. We started this podcast because we wanted to have better conversations with our families around the dinner table. In a social media world with a goal is often to be the star of the show. We wanted to change the conversation and talk more about selflessness, leadership, and responsibility. And the people we knew who best exhibited these qualities were great sports coaches. As the podcast has grown, the great coaches we have interviewed have shared so much insight and wisdom that we decided to create episodes dedicated entirely to the ideas that have resonated with us the most. Today's episode is a short one, and it's on the topic of adversity. It features audio quotes from a selection of coaches that we have interviewed from around the world. Lessons from the great coaches podcast, I want to start this episode with some audio from Muhammad Ali. It's not the greatest quality, but if you listen closely, I think you will recognize what he is saying. When I heard it again recently, what I realized was how we use the words butterfly and rumble in the same paragraph. And as my daughter told me, not long ago, after completing a school assignment, a rumble is the same name given to what butterflies do as they leave their cocoons. As

butterflies struggle to break free. They release a chemical that strengthens their wings. It turns out that they struggle to break free prepares them for flight. The great coaches also talk about struggle, often using the word adversity and the benefits that can have in helping you grow and develop. The first example of this comes from wrestling coach Tom Ryan, from the highs of winning championships and coaching an Olympic gold medalists to the unimaginable loss of his own child, Tom Ryan is a coach with a deep appreciation for the pain that can either derail or elevate your life.

Tom Ryan 02:53

So I think, well, I don't think this I know this, that pain causes one of two things in us. Right? It caused us to run and hide and pretend that the pains not real, right. And sometimes that's pills, sometimes that's alcohol, sometimes it's drugs, sometimes it's a lack of communication, all those things will take us to a place far worse than we were currently. Right. So pain does that pain also can cause us to grow, and think and assess. We choose the hard way. And typically it's going to benefit us. And that's a chosen sorry, that's a beneficial chosen suffering, right, the more the more we find, we move away from comfort, the better chance we have of growing and then there's just unchosen suffering that I learned about as a 36 year old man. And that was the passing of my son, Teague. And that pain was far greater than any 15 mile run ever went on. Right, far greater than any loss I'd experienced as a competitor. It was it was, it was so refining in my life, it caused me to do something that nothing else had been able to do. And that simply right to dig in deeply.

Paul Barnett 04:18

When faced with an adverse situation, you learn new things about yourself and your team. And as iconic netball coach Lisa Alexander explains, it can encourage you to look for new performance indicators and refocus on your key processes, both of which can help you build a stronger foundation for the future.

Lisa Alexander 04:39

The point is, you know, you learn you learn a lot about yourself when you're under that sort of adversity of losing week after week, when you're coaching a team and at the time it was Gippsland and we had training at pekkanen Stadium that was about an hour away from my home. So you know I'm away from family, you know As the team's losing, and it's hard yakka it's hard work. But the team, you know, my, my team were terrific. They worked hard. We just didn't get the results. But the first half of the year was not enjoyable. And it was mainly because of me being, you know, ego driven, I guess, in many respects and thinking, I'm losing every game, this is horrible. It's, you know, it's going to wreck my reputation as a coach, all those sorts of things. I was thinking selfishly. And my captain came to me and she said, Lisa, what's wrong with you? You, you know, you're usually bubbly, and you know, it enthusiastic. And she just gave me a really good talking. That was a turning point for me. I said, You're right. So from that point on, I got to work on developing, I guess, statistics and goals for the team that were reasonable that we could achieve. And it wasn't going to be about the outcome anymore. It was going to be concentrate on the process. And so we went through and we worked really hard together again, together as a group. It's not the coach telling everyone what to do, but us working together as a team.

Paul Barnett 06:10

To close this episode on adversity, here is sick Gordon kitchens, the legendary All Blacks Sevens coach, reminding us that losing does not mean failure, as long as you are able to gain something from the defeat.

Gordon Tietjens 06:26

I think I always look at Roger Federer, and I talk about this a lot because in 2008, he played the greatest game of ceilings tennis I'd ever seen it when water had already won about five warm waters. He played Nadal on the final winter five sets. Fantastic game, the Delbridge Federer, I saw the interview afterwards, Federer was actually visibly on TV cry, and are always I'll never forget this. And he was a writer after this particular interview. Well, and it said, Nadella won the greatest game of tennis Federer gained and defeat, he showed us that losing although painful, there's not necessarily failure. That cannot be when you've given the role you have. And that says it all. You can go out, you're losing hurts, but it doesn't necessarily means failure. And you've got to tell your players that we're just going to put them out.

Jim Woolfrey 07:11

We hope you enjoyed our episode on adversity, and found one or two things that you can bring to your own dinner table, locker room, or boardroom table for discussion. The key lessons I've taken away on the topic of adversity from our great coaches, our adversity is necessary for growth. When met with that you can either run or dig in deeply to face it. It helps you learn about yourself as a leader and your team and can be the impetus to search for new solutions. And losing doesn't necessarily mean failure. If you gain something from the defeat. Here at the great coaches podcast we're always trying to learn so please let us know if you have any feedback. Just like Mark Zimmerman, who said, really enjoyed today's podcast after he listened to our episode on motivation. Thanks, Mark. It's the interaction with people around the world who listen that give us great energy. And so if you have any feedback or comments, please let us know. And all the details on how you can connect with us are in the show notes or on our website, the great coaches podcast.com