

WHY DO YOU COACH?

I coach to help athletes and coaches enjoy their journey through sports and life, so they will live with purpose, lead with integrity, and love others.

This is the reason why I coach. This is MY WHY.

Before we dive into the “how” of coaching goalies, it’s important to start with *why* you coach. It’s a question worth reflecting on—because your answer shapes everything you do. Think about it—nobody forced you to do this... well, maybe you were *voluntold*. Most of us, however, choose to coach. Maybe you love the game. Maybe you want to give back. Maybe your child asked—or your spouse volunteered you. Your *why* could even be as big as wanting to see lives changed through sports.

*If all I ever do is teach you about the game of lacrosse,
I have failed you as a coach.*

If you’ve been coaching for a while and haven’t given much thought to your purpose lately, take a moment. Ask yourself some tough questions.

- What’s it really like to be coached by you?
- Would you want your own child to have you as a coach?
- Do your players know what you value?
- What words would they use to describe you?
- What does a successful season look like to you?
- What are the three most important lessons you want your players to take away from the season?

The answers to these questions are incredibly valuable. They give you direction—they provide a framework for your decisions. They help you stay focused when things get chaotic. They remind you why you’re out there, on the field, giving your time and energy. Knowing your why isn’t just about you—it’s about the impact you have on your players, their parents, and your fellow coaches. It’s about shaping young lives, teaching values, and fostering a love for the game.

Understanding a Coaching Purpose Statement

A coaching purpose statement helps you refine your core beliefs. It serves as a guiding principle for your coaching style—and helps you stay focused on what you want to achieve with your athletes.

Steps to Create Your Coaching Purpose Statement

The process is simple, and its impact can be significant, even lasting for generations. Reflect on why you coach, identify your values, identify your gifts, write your statement, and live it out.

1. Reflect on Your Why

Consider why you coach. What motivates you? Think about the impact you want to have on your athletes.

2. Identify Your Values

Each coach operates with a unique set of values that guide their behaviors, decisions, and actions in daily life. These core values are important—they serve as guardrails, keep you on track, and lead you in the right direction. Look at the abbreviated list (yes, this is abbreviated) and circle the values that will best help you leave the legacy you desire. No more than three or four core values should be emphasized.

Authenticity	Achievement	Adventure	Authority	Balance
Beauty	Boldness	Challenge	Commitment	Competency
Contribution	Curiosity	Community	Compassion	Concern
Courage	Creativity	Dedicated	Determined	Durable
Empathy	Enthusiastic	Excellent	Faith	Family
Fairness	Freedom	Friendship	Fun	Generosity
Genuineness	Grace	Happiness	Harmony	Health
Honesty	Hope	Humor	Influence	Integrity
Innovation	Joyfulness	Journey	Justice	Kindness
Knowledge	Leadership	Learning	Love	Loyalty
Merciful	Neighborly	Noble	Nurturing	Objective
Openness	Optimistic	Organization	Original	Peace
Performance	Perseverance	Poise	Recognition	Respectfulness
Relationships	Responsibility	Security	Serenity	Serving
Spirituality	Stability	Success	Teamwork	Togetherness
Trust	Truth	Understanding	Unity	Victory
Virtuous	Wholeness	Wisdom		

3. Identify your gifting

What verbs listed below best describe how you most successfully interact with people?

Act	Coach	Construct	Create	Demonstrate
Develop	Educate	Empower	Encourage	Guide
Help	Identify	Initiate	Inspire	Lead
Love	Manage	Mentor	Model	Motivate
Plan	Prepare	Produce	Recognize	Relate
Serve	Study	Support	Teach	Tell

4. Write Your Statement

Getting your ideas out of your head and onto paper is important. This can be challenging, especially if you haven't taken the time to reflect on why you coach. Your first draft doesn't need to be perfect. Consider the following suggestions to help you write an effective purpose statement.

Be you—this is your personal statement. Write something in your own words that you will use as a filter for how to run your team or program.

Be brief—write a single sentence that contains twenty-five words or fewer, making it easy to memorize.

Be intentional—what relationships matter to you the most—parents, players, coaches? What is the outcome you desire to see? Be precise with your words.

Be structured—think verb, target, outcome. The verb describes how you most successfully interact with people according to your gifting. The target is the set of relationships you hope to impact. The outcome is what you are after and should incorporate your highest core values.

I coach to help (verb) athletes and coaches (target) enjoy their journey through sports and life, so they will live with purpose, lead with integrity, and love others. (outcome which incorporates core values)

Combine your reflections, values, and gifts into a concise statement.

Examples

- I coach to educate players in the skills needed to play lacrosse.
- I coach to inspire young athletes to develop their skills, foster a love for the game, and work together as a team.
- I coach to model authenticity, joy, and hope.
- I coach to help players build character, resilience, and a sense of community through sports.
- I coach to empower youth to achieve their personal best, both on and off the field.
- I coach to produce winners on and off the field.

Finalizing Your Statement

Once you draft your statement, revisit it regularly. Adjust it as you gain experience—and as your coaching philosophy develops. This statement will help you stay focused on your purpose and inspire your athletes.

5. Share it and live it out

Once you have your coaching purpose statement, share it with everyone—your staff, the players, and their parents. Be mindful that when you share, people will notice if your actions match your words. If you mess up, it's a chance to teach a valuable lesson. Sports provide opportunities to teach life lessons, but only if we seize them. Remember, there is a heart behind every number on the jersey.

A coach will impact more people in one year than the average person will in an entire lifetime.

—Billy Graham