THE FUNDAMENTALS OF FATHERHOOD

HIGH-POTENTIAL COACHES



4

MODULE

SIZING UP YOUR TEAM

Every season sportscasters and pundits spend considerable time speculating about the potential of various teams and their ability to produce a winning season. They comment on the strengths and weaknesses of players and coaches. They compare previous seasons and size up the competition. They make predictions about who will go the distance and who will fade into the background as the season progresses.

In a similar way, people have plenty of observations and predictions when a child enters the world. "Look at those eyes," they say. "He's just like his daddy." Or, "He may have his mother's hair, but his chin is just like his father's."

We love to make predictions. We are also aware that a coach can have a lot of ability on his team but fail in his efforts to bring it together to accomplish the goal of a winning season. He may have the best raw talent in the world, but a lot rides on his shoulders. In this module we'll address the attributes that are fundamental to good coaching and fathering. We will explore what kind of dad has the most potential.

Directions: Coaches from the clip listed **six** characteristics of a high-potential coach. In the space below each term, define it in your own words. Think: *How do each of these traits relate to being a good father?*

1. **Make people do what they don't want to do so they become who they want to become.**

2. **Know someone is always watching.**

3. **Work well with different people.**

4. **Practice consistency in character with competitive humility.**

5. **Consistent communication style.**

6. **Control your effort and attitude.**

What other attributes or attitudes are characteristic of good coaches?

SPECIAL TEAMS

Directions: No family situation or circumstance is perfect, but some are more challenging than others. Consider the stories of the two dads described below and answer the following questions as a group:

1) What challenges does each man face in being a good dad?

2) How easy is it to relate to each of their situations?

3) What specific things can each do right now to become better fathers?

SCOTT

Scott barely remembers his father, Steve, who left his mother when he was five years old. He does recall the men his mother dated—who sometimes lived with them—after his dad left. Some of the men were okay, but others yelled a lot and threw things. Mostly Scott remembers being afraid they might hurt his mom. Now Scott is the father of two boys himself. He works hard to support his family, and he loves his wife, Nan. He struggles, though, to connect with his sons, Tom (10) and Tim (12). When they argue with each other or complain about doing chores, he frequently overreacts and says, "You think you have it bad. You don't know anything. You kids are so lucky." Then he storms off and leaves Nan to handle the rest. His reaction doesn't really work, but he doesn't know what else to do.

ANDREW

Andrew was a star athlete in high school and earned a full scholarship to play football with a Division I school. He excelled in school, relationships and athletics. In fact, there was very little Andrew was not good at. Following college graduation he settled into a job with excellent prospects and married, Cassie, the girl of his dreams. The honeymoon phase lasted for at least a year and then the romance began to fade as both Andrew and Cassie became more and more involved with their work and climbing the ladder of success. Even so, in their first five years of marriage they managed to have two children and focused the little time they had left from their demanding careers on them. When the children were three and five, Cassie suddenly appeared more distant than usual. She spent even more time at work and appeared to find ways to avoid being at home together with Andrew on the weekend. She insisted it was so their children could be with at least one parent, i.e. she would be there when Andrew could not, but he began to have doubts. Eventually his worst fears were realized. Cassie announced she had been having an affair with one of their friends, and she wanted a divorce. Scott was crushed, angry, disillusioned, and depressed. He once thought he was able to handle anything the world might throw at him. Now, he wondered how to handle being a single-parent dad to children who spent more time with other caregivers than with him.

THE DAD WITH THE MOST POTENTIAL

Directions: Read the examples below and decide which father you think has the **greatest potential** for being a good dad. In your small group, pick one father and be prepared to explain why you selected him.

CANDIDATE 1

Travis recently lost his job in sales. He and his fiancée, Molly, are parents of their first child, Carter, who is six months old. Travis has been very supportive of Molly throughout her pregnancy. He took time off work to attend every doctor visit with her. He regularly offered to rub her feet and do household chores to make her life easier. Travis attended all the childbirth classes with Molly and was present when Carter was born. Travis spends a lot of time helping Molly care for Carter. He gets up during the night with the baby, changes diapers and does what he can to assist. The biggest problem is the couple's lack of income. Molly's maternity leave is over, and she has returned to work. She resents Travis for getting to spend more time with the baby than she does. Her parents also think Travis should "man-up" and get a job. Molly appreciates the attention Travis gives to her and their baby, but she wonders if he's really trying very hard to find a job.

CANDIDATE 2

When Aaron learned he could make a good living as an over-the-road driver, as much as $30,000 more a year than he was currently making, he decided to give it a try. He and his wife, Mandy, knew it would mean a lot more time apart, but they agreed it might be worth the sacrifice when they considered the economic benefits it meant for their family. With three young children, they very much wanted to get out of their rental housing and move into a home of their own—something that would build equity as opposed to draining their bank account. Moreover, Aaron's previous job meant both he and Mandy needed to work to make ends meet. Given the cost of child care and the stress of being a dual-income family with three children, Aaron convinced Mandy that a change was needed. Six months into his new job, Aaron and Mandy are discovering the reality of life as a driver, i.e. you have to drive to make money. This means Aaron is only home for two days every three weeks or so. The money is good, and the couple have made an offer on a house of their own, plus Mandy was able to quit her job. Even so, Aaron can see that the strain of being a mostly single parent is wearing on Mandy. She misses his help with the kids, they miss seeing their dad, and he's beginning to see how much of his family's daily life is lost to him when he's on the road.



Coaching with flexibility

"A good coach is able to understand different circumstances and diversify his ability to connect with different team members."

- Coach Dave Collins

CANDIDATE 3

Martin was at the top of his class when he graduated from college with an MBA. He quickly rose through the ranks in his company and went on to purchase a business of his own much earlier than many of his peers in business school. When he met Louisa, he felt certain he could offer her and the family they wanted a secure future.

After moving into their dream home, Louisa quickly became pregnant with twins. Two years later they added a third child to their family and two years after that a fourth. Now their house is bustling with activity, but Martin is rarely present. Louisa spends her days shuttling children from one activity to another—music lessons, sports, play dates, private schools. Martin's job makes it all possible, but Louisa and the children rarely see him. He leaves for work early in the morning and doesn't return until 6:30 or 7:00 at night. Even when he is home, he's often on his phone. Martin says this is the price they have to pay for the life they live, but Louisa wonders if this is really so.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which father has the most potential for being a truly great dad?

2. What positive qualities make him the best candidate?

3. What concerns do you have about his ability to be a good dad?

4. What changes would each of the dads need to make to improve their fathering ability?

ANALYZING YOUR OWN

POTENTIAL

Every man has the potential to become a great dad, but that doesn't mean men don't face challenges. Their work, the way they were brought up, their priorities and their communication skills all impact men's potential to be good dads. But there's good news: Men who work hard are always better off than those who don't make the effort.

In the space for Coaching Potential Takeaways, think about the men you read about in the lesson's scenarios and answer one of more of the following questions.

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What are my strengths as a dad?

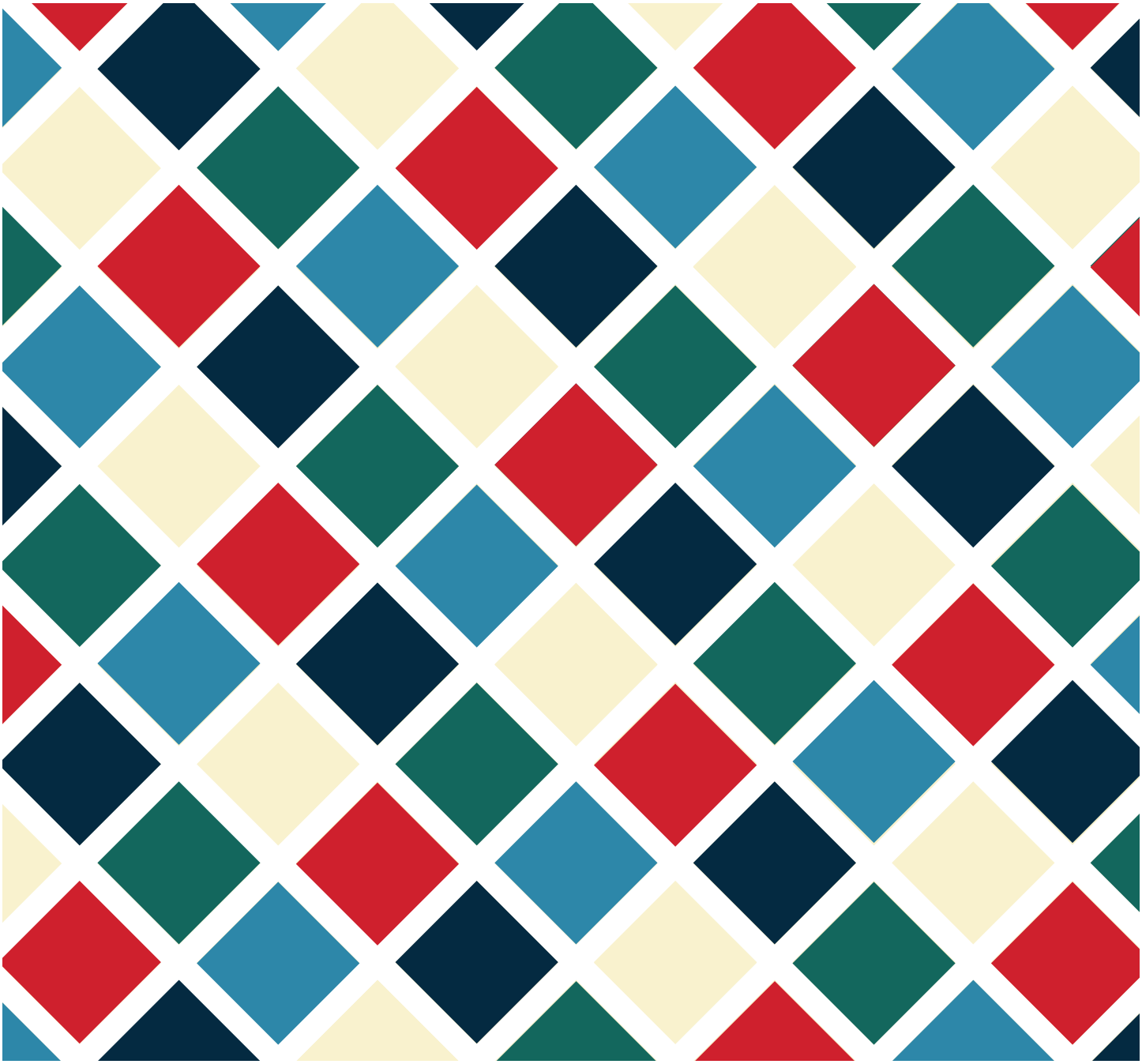
In which scenarios did I see myself? To which men can I relate?

What barriers do I face? How can I overcome them?

How challenging is my family situation?

What sorts of predictions might a stranger make about me?

Use the space below for your Coaching Potential Takeaways.



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