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### Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success

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**Book Review: *Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success* By John Wooden And Jay Carty**

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Taylor University

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Professor Amy Stucky

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**Book Review: *Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success* By John Wooden And Jay Carty**

John Wooden is one of the most accomplished coaches in the history of sports. He won 10 National Championships as head coach of the men's basketball team at UCLA. Establishing the Bruins as one of the best college basketball programs in the country. If a survey was sent out to people asking if John Wooden was successful, the overwhelming response would be yes. However, in his book *Pyramid of Success*, he seems to think that those championships aren't why he was successful. He defined success and detailed how someone gets there differently than most people would.

Wooden defines success as a peace of mind knowing that we did our best at becoming what we are capable of. Success has a lot more to do with the process than the outcome to Wooden. Every game may have a winner and a loser, but in his eyes, there are games where both teams were successful or neither team was. He uses a pyramid to show the process of success by starting with a foundation and moving up in the pyramid from there.

The first building block is industriousness. We must work hard at what we are doing and have a plan for how we are going to work. God wants us to work for him. He has given us a blessing of a job and we do not work for man, we work for him. The gifts that God gives us should motivate us to work hard at our craft. We have to be intentional about our work. We must commit our work to the Lord and we will succeed. After industriousness is enthusiasm. We need to find something that we are enthusiastic about and have enthusiasm for it while it is what we are doing. We are going to face challenges in our life and we can handle those much better if we face them with Godly enthusiasm. Our enthusiasm about the gospel is a great gift.

The next three building blocks all have to do with relationships as they are, friendship, cooperation, and loyalty. For friendship, he makes the case that others makes us better. Friendship is a joint effort and there needs to be accountability in it. A group of Christian friends

can help each other in their faith. They can push each other closer to God. When one of them stumbles, the other is there to help them back up. If no one is there to help them back up they will continue to fall. Cooperation is needed as well. We must be able to work with others as we are not meant to do everything alone. It takes listening and trust. On the best teams, everyone on the team knows their role and executes it. We need cooperation in the body of Christ. Everyone has their own role in the Church. Loyalty, we should be loyal to those around us by keeping our word whenever we interact with them. This takes devotion and commitment. All three of these building blocks show how we should interact with others for success. WE need to have trust and be trustworthy.

The next group of building blocks is the mental challenges we have. We need self-control for success. It is a good thing to have emotions but it is wrong if they control us. We need to have good judgment and common sense in all that we do. A lapse in self-control can be detrimental. Jay Carty brought up the story of Joseph and the self-control he had for God's kingdom. We also need to be alert of those around us. If we stay open-minded and alert, we are able to learn much more than we could have previously. God tells us that we need to always be alert of what the enemy is trying to do to us. The devil is trying to catch us napping. To be successful it is important to take initiative. A fear of failure is a roadblock to success. Instead, we should choose to learn from failures when they come. We are not perfect so they will inevitably come. Sometimes taking initiative can lead to mistakes, but the biggest mistake may be not trying at all. Wooden shared a story of why he chose a certain player for the last shot of the game and he said it was because the miss would be a surprise to the player and he would move on quickly.

There is a certain level of intent needed for success. We must resist temptations and distractions that we will have while going up the pyramid. Setting proper goals and showing perseverance helps put someone over the top. When adversity comes, it makes us stronger if we are intent on it doing so. God has a plan in our lives and intentness is having the faith to persevere and know that truth. Our conditioning is key. We must be mentally, physically, and spiritually conditioned for all the life throws at us. This is the preparation for our biggest moments. We condition ourselves spiritually to become the person God intended us to be.

The finding of our skills and talents and developing them leads to success. Skills perform under pressure when they have been developed. The proper timing and training should hone our skills to be great for our niche and can make us successful at what we are doing. Team spirit is needed because we need to be willing to sacrifice for the good of the team. We should have team spirit in the body of Christ for advancing the gospel. God calls us to different roles and doesn't view one role greater than another. Poise is another building block Wooden believes in which is essentially saying that we need to be ourselves. If we aren't ourselves we are not going to be successful even if the world tells us we are. Poise has us confident in ourselves and who God has made us to be. It does not care what others think as is well prepared.

Confidence is the fourteenth block. Confidence is not being self-centered or arrogant. Rather, it is a focus we have of being the best we can possibly be. Just like many of the other blocks, it comes with great preparation. We are confident in the gospel and that we are going to heaven. We can use that confidence to show God's love to others and also handle any persecution coming our way. The pinnacle of the pyramid is competitive greatness. People who exhibit competitive greatness love a tough challenge. They are people who rise to the occasion when it is needed. Having a competitive minded against the enemy leads to success. When we

are tempted or believing lies, it takes competitive greatness to recognize that. Simply put, competitive greatness is being our best when it is needed.

Qualities that are needed for success are also detailed in the book. Those qualities are: ambition, sincerity, adaptability, honesty, resourcefulness, reliability, fight, integrity, patience, and faith. Ambition is something that we need because it is the drive to succeed. If we don't have ambition we won't want to succeed in the way that we should. We need to be sincere to those around us. People can notice when we aren't sincere. The most successful leaders show sincerity which motivates people to follow them more. The world is always changing around us so adaptability is necessary. Life is going to throw us some curveballs, but we need to be ready to adapt to these circumstances. We experience lots of changes in life when we are going through it and we need to adapt to those changes if we want success.

Honesty is always needed. If we are dishonest, our credibility and reputation are scarred. Lying to ourselves, others, or God is never going to lead us to success. Resourcefulness looks at our judgment. We need to know how to use the gifts God has given to us. If we fail in doing so we are going to struggle to succeed. Similar to sincerity and honesty, successful people are reliable. Wooden talked about a player that he could almost pencil his stats in before every game. He challenges us to be that way in every way of life. If God calls us to something, can he pencil our stats in?

A contained fire and fight is another quality. Being determined to fight through our difficulties and situations the right way, we will be more likely successful. Integrity is needed because it looks at our hearts. What is our intention with our actions? If they are not pure, we are not showing integrity. Patience and faith go together because they show hope. The best things are the ones that we wait on. God shows us more patience than we deserve and it is a quality we

should strive for. Faith gives all of this meaning. Work with our faith is dead and not having this aspect tears all of this down. We have faith that God is in control which is better than if we were in control.

My reaction to this book is that it was very motivating for me. I agree with him when it comes to what success is. Success is not what the world defines it as. We need to follow this pyramid to feel that peace of mind that Wooden talked about. I personally think that loyalty is needed in our relationships outside of the workplace but I am not sure if it is necessary in the workplace. I think that sometimes God calls us to be disloyal depending on the circumstance. He also mentioned that some people aren't successful if they didn't live up to their whole potential despite winning championships. I am not sure I totally agree. I believe there is a lack of success involved if character is compromised for winning. However, if someone had the potential to be win multiple championships and only win one, that are still successful in my mind because they achieved the main goal of that season. Success seems to be a moving target. We can be successful one day but not the next.

The critical thinking skills I used were: Asking questions, thinking through other solutions and conclusions and considering other schools of thought.

### **References**

Wooden, J., & Carty, J. (2010). *Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success*. ReadHowYouWant.com.