



Empowering Children To Succeed in Life

Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success.



Coach Wooden for Kids © • From the children's book *Inch & Miles: The Journey to Success (Perfection Learning)* by Coach John Wooden

“Success is happiness in your heart, because you made the effort, 100%, to do your best!”

THE HIGHEST GRADE - YOUR EFFORT . . .

What counts the most

John Wooden, one of America's most respected teachers and coaches, began his career shortly after graduating from Purdue University. As an English teacher at Dayton (Ky) High School he became frustrated with the conventional A, B, C, grading system.

Mr. Wooden believed that while traditional grading had its place, a more sensible approach would focus first and foremost on the *quality of effort* made by each student to achieve his or her own potential both in the classroom and in life.

Consequently, he sought a teaching tool that showed students (and parents) what it takes to bring forth their best. "Do that," he advised, "and you achieve the highest grade in the most important subject; specifically, *your effort*."

As a youngster his father, Joshua Wooden, had given him profound advice in this area: "Johnny, don't worry about being better than somebody else, but never cease trying to be the best that you can be."

Dad's message? What counted most, even more than the score or the grade, was how hard you worked and how well you prepared in all ways to bring out your best. The grade you receive, an A, B, C (or worse) was a by-product, a secondary result of one's effort.

For several years Mr. Wooden worked on defining the qualities he viewed as having primacy when it came to personal achievement. Ultimately, he called it the Pyramid of Success. It contained fifteen qualities Coach Wooden viewed as fundamental characteristics necessary to fulfill your potential.

Each block and the specific order of the tiers in the Pyramid of Success have specific importance starting with the cornerstones (Hard Work and Enthusiasm) and building up to the apex, Success – above the block of Personal Best, representing the culmination of all the qualities working together below.

Additional personal characteristics included Skill, Fitness and Team Spirit (in the heart of the Pyramid); Friendship, Loyalty, and Cooperation in the foundation; then ascending tiers with such powerful qualities as Self-Control, Alertness, Action and Determination; and when all those blocks are in place, Poise and Confidence result.

All blocks led to the peak, Mr. Wooden's definition of the highest kind of Success: Peace of Mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best you are capable of becoming.

Many years later in response to requests by parents and teachers he offered a definition that was more easily comprehended by younger children: "Success is happiness in your heart because you made the effort – 100% – to do your best."

In a nutshell, this explains the origins of John Wooden's Pyramid of Success – a time-tested teaching tool helping youngsters of all ages to achieve their potential and do their best.

Legendary basketball Coach John Wooden coached basketball at UCLA from 1948 to 1975 where he won a record 10 NCAA championships (including an unprecedented seven in a row). In addition to being inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame and the College Basketball Hall of Fame, Coach Wooden is also a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success

HARD WORK - "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail."

Preparing for Success means you must work hard. Are you preparing to Succeed or preparing to fail? If you are looking for the easy way, a short cut or trick you are preparing to fail because success requires old-fashioned hard work. Remember: Only you know if you are working as hard as you can.

ENTHUSIASM - "Make each day special."

You have to like what you're doing to do what you like at your highest level. Your heart must be in it. Without Enthusiasm you can't achieve your fullest potential. Hard Work *combined* with Enthusiasm is your powerful engine.

FRIENDSHIP - "To make friends, be a friend."

To make a friend you must be a friend. Friends are your family, teammates, classmates and workmates. They help you succeed and achieve your goals. Friendship is mutual. It is not a one way street. Good friends do good things for each other.

LOYALTY - "Be trustworthy."

Strive to be reliable and dependable. Keep your word by doing what you say you will do. When you have Loyalty others will be loyal to you! It means giving respect to those you work with. Respect helps produce Loyalty.

COOPERATION - "Be more interested in finding the best way, not in having your way."

Working together with others requires teamwork. If you wish to be heard, listen. Cooperation means working together in all ways to accomplish the common goal. It also allows individuals to move forward together instead of going off in different directions. Two horses pulling a wagon must move in the same direction or the wagon does not move.

SELF-CONTROL - "Control yourself so others won't have to."

Discipline *yourself* so others don't have to do it for you! Be in control of how you behave. Good judgment requires Self-Control of your feelings. Bad judgment comes from poor Self-Control. How can you perform at your best when you are using bad judgment?

ALERTNESS - "What you learn after you know it all is what counts."

Pay attention to everything that is going on around you all the time. Listen with your ears and your eyes. Listen with your nose! Your hands. Don't fall asleep on the job. Always be 'listening and learning' and you'll be heading to success.

ACTION - "Be quick, but don't hurry."

Do not sit on your hands doing nothing. Instead raise your hand and then speak up. Do not be afraid to fail. Instead be afraid of failing to act! If you are afraid to act because you fear failure you will never do the things you are capable of doing.

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DETERMINATION - "Slow and steady gets you ready."

Success takes lots of time and will bring lots of set-backs. Don't quit; don't back down; keep trying time and time again! You may have to start over. You may have to go around, or over, or under. But do not quit. Stay the course. Quitters will not succeed because success takes lots of Determination.

FITNESS - "Act, eat, and think right."

To do your best – 100% -- and succeed you must eat right, think right, and act right! True happiness comes from the things that cannot be taken away from you. Making the full effort to do the right thing can never be taken away from you. If you see others breaking the rules tell yourself, "They are hurting themselves but they are teaching me what not to do."

SKILL - "Practice makes perfect."

Be good at what you do! Learn the subject! Master the task whether its geography or gymnastics. You have to know what you're doing and be able to do it quickly and properly. To improve your level of Skill takes practice, study, and repetition, repetition, repetition.

TEAM SPIRIT - "Be eager to help your team."

When you are part of a team always remember that your job is to do what will help your teammates achieve success. The goals of your team come first. Figure out how you can help your team do its best.

POISE - "Just be yourself."

Who *you* are is a gift, so be yourself! Do not act or pretend to be something you're not. When you are yourself and make the effort – 100% – to be the best you can be you are a success. Your goal is not to satisfy the expectations of others but to satisfy your own expectation. So set them high! Give your total effort to becoming the best you are capable of being. It takes Poise to accomplish this.

CONFIDENCE - "You must believe in yourself if you expect others to believe in you."

Have faith in yourself and what you can achieve. Poise and Confidence are achieved with proper preparation: The Pyramid of Success! Every block is built with the others. When all are in place, Poise and Confidence result. They happen naturally from proper preparation.

PERSONAL BEST

You have achieved the highest kind of Success when you have made the effort – 100% – to do the best you can do. You and only you determine whether you achieve Success: Peace of mind knowing you made the effort – 100% -- to do the best you can do!

For more details, read Coach Wooden's best-selling book:

WOODEN: A LIFETIME OF OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON AND OFF THE COURT
(McGraw-Hill) by Coach John Wooden with Steve Jamison