

Wooden Study Guide

Wooden by John Wooden

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Plot Summary

Wooden is a book that was written by legendary basketball coach John Wooden, with help from Steve Jamison. The book describes Wooden's personal philosophies that have been the basis for his life on and off the basketball court.

John Wooden starts out describing the importance of family, virtues and the values he has found to be important. He describes his background that gave him the basis for his ideals and values described in the book. He explains what he has found in his life to be the things that have made him so successful in basketball have also made him very successful in his marriage. He describes what he thinks has changed in the home in recent decades and what should be important to everyone.

The next part of the book describes Wooden's take on success, achievement and competition. He talks mostly about the necessity for preparation and how you will succeed when you give all you have toward the goal you have set. Wooden tried to live his life by the principles he describes in his book and he tries to relay how they have made his life better. He describes his achievements and disappointments and how they are described by him. He doesn't find that losing a game counts as a failure if you made the decision with the right information at hand. He also talks about details being necessary for success. He also says that personal goals and individual recognition should come second to the teams goals.

The third part discusses coaching, teaching and leading. Wooden's parents helped to put him on the path to teaching and he gave up an opportunity to play ball with the New York Celtics in 1932 to continue his teaching even though teaching paid far less. He puts high value on mentors and being a role model to those around you. He feels that it is everyone's job to be a good role model because you never know who is watching. He believes in motivating more than punishment and that you should always set attainable goals that you will have to work very hard to reach.

In fourth part of the book Wooden discusses his pyramid of success that he spent fourteen years developing. He states that many people, including Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, have found the pyramid corny but later found that it was true and has influenced their lives in many ways. Wooden talks about the levels of the pyramids and how they are all formed together with faith and patience being the mortar that keeps the pyramid together. He also describes his own definition of success that allows for failure as long as you are at peace with yourself knowing you tried your hardest and prepared to the best of your ability. He says the two people that were responsible for him developing the pyramid were his father and Mr. Shidler, his former teacher.

Part 1

Part 1 Summary and Analysis

Wooden is a book that was written by John Wooden with help from Steve Jamison. The book describes Wooden's personal philosophies of life that have been the basis for his life while on the basketball court and off.

John Wooden was born in Hall, Indiana in 1910. His parents, Joshua and Roxie Anna, worked hard to instill him with a set of values that they themselves lived by. Wooden explains all the hard work that his father and his mother did without complaining. He learned about life by watching them. Wooden believes that the greatest teachers and coaches children can have are their parents. That if you wait until they are in school that it is often too late to teach them. His parents also instilled a love of literature in him and his brothers. Wooden considers himself more a teacher than a coach and his other brothers all grew up to be teachers as well. Wooden's father would read poetry and the Bible to them on a regular basis. Wooden explains that he believes that such practice is very important in helping a child succeed in school and quotes poems throughout the chapters to illustrate his thoughts.

Wooden was married to his wife, Nellie, for more than fifty years. He has several places in the book where he gives his personal views on why his marriage was so successful and how it helped his family. He also discusses the differences between passion and love as well as things that can weaken a marriage. He talks about how important his wife was to him. In addition to Nellie being important in his life he explains about his family and the importance they should play. He makes references to the fact that he ran his basketball team like he ran his household. He wanted his children and his players to want to please him more than fear to disappoint him. This is the same relationship he had with his father and as a child he remembers wanting his father's approval much more than he was afraid of what would happen if he was disappointed.

Wooden discusses the importance of always having a positive character and the fact that most people are some type of role model whether they know it or not. He talks about the people that were mentors to him in his life that influenced many of his decisions. One person even helped him make a decision about becoming a teacher instead of playing ball. He discusses the fact that the goals in life are the same as they are in basketball. He says that the goal for perfection is what is important. A person can never reach perfection but reaching for it is what matters in life. If a person makes the effort to the best they can in life, marriage and their job, they will be successful. He ends part one by discussing how he felt when he lost Nellie and the fact that he has found peace in his life. Wooden states that he is at a point where he is not scared of the thought of dying.

Wooden discusses the importance of not focusing on your faults but realizing that they are there and the struggle to do better everyday of your life. That while you live you have



a chance to do better and be better and to not work twice as hard tomorrow to make up for today. To give everyday everything that you have and tomorrow will be that much easier because of the extra effort you give today. His father taught him to make each day something special. Wooden stressed that not only in his own life and to his family but to his basketball players as well.

The reader sees that while Wooden was a man that loved basketball it was not his primary drive in life. It appears to the reader that he was able to take what life gave him and try to make the best out of it. Wooden was given the opportunity to play professional basketball when he was younger but chose not to because he wanted to be a teacher. The reader sees how much it meant to him to continue his education to become a teacher. It appears the thoughts the parents instilled in John were instilled the same in his brothers since they all became teachers.

It appears Wooden loved his wife and family very much. The reader gets an idea of the caring loving relationship they had. John seems to consider his marriage and family relationships to be more of a standard of the success he has had in life rather than the basketball he coached for so many years. The reader sees a common theme in Wooden's life with the respect he seems to have for his parents, mentors and his family. This seems to be the thing that John has focused on and John appears to put extreme emphasis on how much better children turn out if they have a strong support in their family.



Part 2

Part 2 Summary and Analysis

Wooden discusses the Webster's dictionary term for success and why he disagrees with it. He states that the attaining of possessions doesn't mean that you have been successful in life and he knows many people that do not have many material possessions and he finds them to be very successful in life. He finds that his father, Joshua Wooden, had a much better definition of success. Wooden discusses the fact that the destination, the working towards a goal should be the first concern. He states that if you aren't working as hard as you can for thing that you want then you will never fully achieve the thing that you want or it will be less worth it because you did not prepare fully for it.

Wooden talks about the desire to win and how it hasn't changed through the years, but media coverage and the way the loser is portrayed has changed in his opinion. He also talks about the danger of success if a person takes it to much to heart. He says sometimes people get so caught up in the fact that they can win that they believe they will every time without trying and that you can let it diminish your preparation for the future. He believes when a person lets this happen they have been infected by the success and will most likely fail. He talks about underdogs, pressure and other aspects that have been not only valuable in his years as a coach but in life as well. He calls himself a realistic optimist. He states that a persons goals should be hard to attain but not impossible. When a person has impossible goals he says they begin to have a feeling that there is no use in trying. Wooden also believes that details will create success in any aspect of a persons life.

Wooden believes there is a necessity for hopes and dreams but that a person must mix that with a willingness to do what he calls "paying the price." Wooden states that most people know how to get the things they want before hand but just aren't willing to do what it takes to get the things. He puts a high value on a worthy opponent because it gives you a greater sense of achievement once you have faced that opponent. He also says a person should be able to follow their bliss but to make sure that whatever it is that gives you bliss is something that will not harm you.

Wooden believes a person shouldn't compare themselves to others because you can't be like someone else. You can give all you have to give and you have to be happy with giving all you have. Wooden puts high value on the team and personal glory should come in secondary. He states that his ball players were made to have the same short hair cut and look uniform anywhere they went. He felt that the people that gave the most were the ones that were willing to sacrifice their own glory for the team. He states that many of these people were never given the proper recognition but knows that they were crucial. Wooden says that he has always found that persistence is greater than any failure because failure is sure to come if you try at anything.



Wooden talks more about his team this time but appears to the reader to still show things in his writings that point to his father and the love he had for him. There are several places that the reader will see Wooden put in different poems. Perhaps they came from his father's reading to Wooden but you are never told. Wooden talks about different players on his team and the contributions they made. Some made it famous but it appears that Wooden was no prouder of the ones that are famous than the ones that went other directions with their lives.

Wooden seems to feel that taking money for endorsements may be wrong. He seems to feel that putting your name on something just because you are given money to do so may be a violation of moral for him. He states that he supports Special Olympics and seems to think that they have remained more honest in their goals than the regular Olympics. He seems to find a connection between gold metals and money that he talks poorly about. It seems no matter what aspect of life Wooden discusses he finds no use in cutting corners or doing things that may be immoral or illegal. It appears to the reader that he doesn't mind the fact that he wasn't paid large amounts of money to coach.

He makes many references to Abraham Lincoln. It appears to the reader that Wooden viewed the sixteenth president's life as a good example for what could be considered success even though there were many times that Lincoln failed in the things he was undertaking. Wooden links together Lincoln's life with persistence and staying the course. He appears to find the final score not as important as the path to get the final score.



Part 3

Part 3 Summary and Analysis

Wooden talks about the importance of being a teacher or coach and the impact that you can have on the lives that you instruct. He talks about the fact that being a coach is like being a leader. You have to direct your team and convince them that you are all working for the same goal and in addition to that the players have to know that they have accomplished something themselves. He says that a leader doesn't motivate with violence or anger. He makes a distinction between a person that motivates with fear of discipline to a dictator. That while you can win with that motivation it comes at a much higher price. A person's pride must be kept in tact. He also states that a leader must make decisions not just have an opinion or suggestion. Wooden says that leaders must be fair but realize that being fair doesn't mean everyone is treated the same. He says that being fair means that you treat people equal to what they earn.

Wooden says the he always tried to care about his players, their lives, problems and listen to what they had to say. He may not have always liked all of his players but he cared about everyone of them. He believed that punishment was necessary but could almost always be done in private and almost always should be done in private. He also says that the worst punishment was taking away the opportunity to work hard toward their goals. He discusses the important of not listening to what others say about you. Listening to someone say that you will definitely win or absolutely loose doesn't make it true. Wooden says he saw many times they should have lost and came out winning and many times the opposite was true. Wooden stresses that you can only do your best every time.

Wooden says that he had his players in physical shape that would push the other teams to the limit. He wanted them to have to call time out first to catch their breath. He refers to this as "physiological warfare." He would make sure that his players paid attention to the little details. They were made to inspect their socks as a ritual to make sure that they had no creases on their socks that would cause blisters. He would start their conditioning to make sure their feet were tough enough to handle the stopping, starting and pivoting that would happen on the floor and that the feet were measured so that the shoes bought for each player would be the correct size. Wooden stated that in addition to physical conditioning he made sure that every player knew that the reason they were at UCLA was to get an education so that was the first priority. The second priority was basketball. Their third priority was social interaction but if they put the third priority above the other two they would no longer be a student at UCLA and loose the option to play basketball and possibly the option of finishing their education. Wooden states that at least 90% of his students got their diplomas.

Wooden states that it is important for athletes to remember that they are role models but he doesn't think it's a good idea for them to be set up as heroes. He continues by saying that a person should always be careful who they follow. He states that he has tried to



not let the championships go to his head and with that has tried to not let the criticism hurt his feelings. He believes that many people let this happen. He states that he knew it was time to retire when he was dreading talking to the press about a championship game they were going to play. He told his players and decided it was time to move on with his life.

Wooden appears to the reader to have taken an interest in his players that went beyond being their basketball coach. He recalls many times where players had things going on in their lives that he wanted to help him with. The reader sees that Wooden took measures to ensure that he was a role model to the students around him and it appears that he cared for them in a manner that would equal a family connection. He talks about the methods used to motivate a team and it appears that he believes strongly in pushing someone to be better by helping them in their weaknesses and praising what they have done correctly. The reader sees that Wooden cares about players by the fact that when he had to correct or criticize one them he would make sure to do it in private if possible. Wooden appears to not like some people that he describes as a dictator style coach.

Wooden seems to think himself an average basketball tactician. The things that helped his team win were more than just his knowledge of the game itself but also how he brought the guys together. It is easy to see how much Wooden enjoyed his time at UCLA when reading about his time with the team. The reader gets the sense that he is more trying to teach the reader of the things he learned as much as he is telling about facts.

You see that he feels he learned several things from the young men he taught. The reader has several insights into the type of traits Wooden holds high within a coach or a player. He seems to feel strongly about the game and the spirit of the game. You feel like he still holds the game as a special part of his life even though he no longer coaches at UCLA. He recalls the moment he decided to quit coaching. It appears as if he was not sad about it or happy about it. It seems as though it was just the moment in time where he was supposed to start a new direction and he was following where he was supposed to go.



Part 4

Part 4 Summary and Analysis

Wooden begins to discuss his time as a teacher and the parents that would come to him and be upset because their child wasn't making high grades. Wooden states that there are many people who are average and if you are truly trying your best there is no shame or failure if you have lower grades. He states that many of his ideals on this subject came from the words of his father and years of thinking of the true definition of success. Wooden came to a realization about success and developed a pyramid over fourteen years that describes his ideals on it. His definition of success being that you have peace of mind that is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming. Wooden goes on to explain how the pyramid works and the significance of each part.

The foundation of the pyramid started with only two blocks. These two cornerstones are Industriousness and enthusiasm. Industriousness is not only a willingness to work hard but Wooden describes it as a love for the work you are doing. He calls enthusiasm enjoying what you are doing. Between those blocks John put friendship, loyalty and cooperation. Wooden explained that these are important even if you are not talking about a team. That no matter what you do you have to be loyal to something or it is not worth working towards or for.

The next set on the pyramid are labeled self-control, alertness, initiative and intentness. Wooden states that self-control is the equivalent to discipline. He says that discipline isn't punishment but improvement. He describes alertness as being aware of the things that will influence your situation. He talks about Abraham Lincoln and says that Lincoln stated he was able to learn something from everyone he met. He talks about Initiative and says that when you take initiative there will be times when you may fail but if you are too scared of failing you will never be able to take initiative. Intentness, Wooden says, simply means determination. He says it is important to concentrate on your objective no matter what else is placed in front of you.

The next set in the pyramid are condition, skill and team spirit. Wooden states that you must be conditioned no matter what you are aiming for. He describes the types of conditioning as mental, physical and moral. Wooden says that they most often will go together. Wooden says that skill is at the very center of the pyramid. A person must be able to do all of their job, not just part of it. He talks about team spirit as thinking about others, and says that a person must be eager to do this not just willing.

When you get closer to the top of the peak you find Poise and confidence. Wooden states that these are the result of the blocks below put into practice. Wooden describes poise as being yourself and being comfortable with that. He goes on to call confidence when you believe in yourself and when you believe in yourself it causes others to



believe in you as well. Wooden states that both of these will happen naturally when you work on the others in the pyramid.

Above poise and confidence you find competitive greatness. Wooden calls this being your best when your best is needed and enjoying the challenge when things become difficult. Finally above these Wooden has placed patience and faith as the mortar that keeps the pyramid together. He says patience is required to properly prepare for any task. Wooden says a person should have faith that things will work out as they should. He also states that things will not always turn out like we want them to but we have to keep the faith that they will turn out like they should.

Wooden appears to have put a lot of thought into his pyramid of success stating that it took him fourteen years to finish. It seems to the reader that there are two men that are responsible for John Wooden developing the pyramid, Joshua Wooden and Mr Shidler. It seems to the reader that while Wooden knew the importance of winning once in a while he seem to have much more in a definition of success than the final score.

While it appears that Wooden thought out the pyramid with sincerity he spends much of the end of the chapter talking about people he cared about. It was easy to see that family, faith and his ideas on morality influenced the pyramid strongly. After the reader looks at the pyramid you may disagree with his thoughts on life and success but you may find it hard to argue with the results. Wooden appeared to have given much credit to these beliefs as to the reasons for his winning years at UCLA. He ends the book with the thought that God will call him home to be with Nellie and then a poem. His faith, his love for Nellie and his respect for his father seemed to have been a constant throughout his career.



Characters

John Wooden

John Wooden was born 1910 in Hall, Indiana. He graduated from Purdue and went on to be the coach for the University of California at Los Angeles. He coached teams that won championships in the years 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973 and 1975. Wooden had three brothers who all went on to become teachers, much like him. With his wife, Nellie, Wooden had two children, seven grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. Wooden puts a very large emphasis on family and faith. He strove to live up to the example that his father lived. He attributes the reason that he wanted to become a teacher to the way his father raised him. He states that his father read the bible and poetry to him.

He is the only coach that has ever won seven championship games in a row. He says that he tried to never let the winning go to his head and never let the losing get him down. He tried to instill that into his players. He considers himself a mentor and a teacher more than a coach. He believes that he is old fashioned by some standards but that the things that he believes in have never went out of fashion.

Nellie Wooden

Her name was Nellie Riley and she became the wife of John Wooden. They went to school together in Martinsville High School in Indiana. They met on a warm night at a carnival during Wooden's freshman year. Wooden stated that he believed they fell in love with each other instantly even if they didn't know it. She and John had two children together and he continually says that he ran his team the way he ran his home. They worked at their marriage very hard. They were married for more than fifty years.

Nellie passed away and Wooden states that he has a peace about death now in his later years, although he missed her very much and still does. He believes that one day when God calls him home he will go and see his Nellie again. When describing his relationship with Nellie, Wooden states that they had agreed to be agreeable and that he thought the best thing he could do for his children was to love their mother. He makes many references to his marriage in his book when explaining how a team works. He believes his own marriage to have been a great success. Nellie and John dedicated themselves to life together and she was happy when he succeeded.

Joshua Wooden

John Wooden's father. He often read poetry and the Bible to Wooden and his brothers while they were growing up.



Roxie Anna Wooden

John Wooden's mother. She taught Wooden that in life you had to work hard and no complain about it.

Mr. Earl Warriner

Mr. Warriner was John Wooden's country grade-school-principal, teacher, and coach. Wooden considered him a mentor.

Mr. Ward

John Wooden's coach at Purdue University. Wooden felt that Lambert was always true to his beliefs.

Swen Nater

John Wooden recruited him from Cypress Junior College. He joined San Diego in the American Basketball Association after UCLA.

Abraham Lincoln

John Wooden looked up to Abraham Lincoln and quotes him many times throughout the book. He was the sixteenth president of the United States.

Lewis Alcindor

Changed his name later to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Played for John Wooden, who said that he learned many things from Lewis.

Bill Walton

Played for John Wooden at UCLA and wore number 32. The jersey was retired when Bill went to the NBA.



Objects/Places

Hall, Indiana

Birthplace of John Wooden.

Pauley Pavilion

Built by UCLA when Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was considering going to play ball at UCLA. Completion was hurried as an incentive for him to go to UCLA.

Men's Gymnasium Building

The place the men's basketball team practiced before Pauley Pavilion was completed. It was referred to as the B.O. Barn because of the smell when it was in use.

Purdue University

The university where John Wooden got his education.

University of Minnesota

The school at which John Wooden wanted to teach when he was offered the UCLA job.

UCLA

University where John Wooden spent his coaching career and won ten national championships.

Carnival

Where John Wooden met his wife, Nellie.

Martinsville, Indiana

John Wooden's family was forced to move there when they fell on hard times when Wooden was small. Here, he learned most of his life lessons.



Card

Held philosophy that John Wooden has tried to live by. Was given to him by his father the day he graduated from Centerton grade school in Indiana and which Wooden still carries to this day.

New York Celtics

The team that offered John Wooden \$5,000 to join them on the tour. Wooden turned it down to teach, which paid only \$1,500 a year.



Themes

How To Achieve Success

John Wooden spends much of his book discussing success. He says multiple times that he believes the success he himself had on the court was a direct result of the practices he tried to use in his everyday life. The last part of the book is used to illustrate what he believes to be a firm basis for achieving any type of success.

Wooden is convinced that these practices are good in any aspect and constantly refers to the fact that they will be a useful tool in the office place. His pyramid of success is discussed throughout the book and he feels that there is a way a person that has success should conduct themselves. He doesn't believe that material things measure your success but can be an indicator. He has spent more than fourteen years developing the pyramid that he details in the book. He attributes his wonderful marriage and loving family to the same pyramid of success that he used on the court. He also points out that once you have success you are able to have peace. He points out that while you can't achieve perfection the push to get perfection is what matters and points to our own success. He admits that the only person that really knows if you are a success or not is going to be you.

Importance of Faith

John Wooden says in the book that he does believe in God. He never says that everyone should believe in God but he does say that everyone should believe in something. He explains that faith is important because every man should have something that they believe in and are willing to believe in. He also states that you should know why you believe it.

He explains that believing in something doesn't mean that you don't listen to someone else's opinion but that once you have listened you still know what you believe and are willing to stand up for it. John Wooden points out that faith is what will carry you through many times when you are down or up to high. He describes it as a thing that has the ability to keep you grounded while giving you hope. He says everyone should have faith that things are going to turn out the way that they should turn out even if it is not the way you want it to turn out.

Wooden's faith and beliefs come from his father most likely. His father read the bible to him when he was a child. John has many times in the book when he refers to the peace that his faith has given him and quotes poems that talk about God and life after death.



Striving for Perfection

Wooden talks about striving for perfection. He admits that no person can achieve it. He states that he has told all his players that you are never able to achieve perfection but that everyday that is what you should try to do. He talks about when people try twice as hard the next day to make up for the day that they didn't try very hard at all. John says there is no such thing as giving 110%. He says that everyday you should try to give your all, but that is all you have to give.

Wooden would sit his players down on the bench or cancel practice if they weren't giving it all that they had. He said that he gave every aspect of his life all that he had. He believes that when a person gives all that they have regardless of the outcome they have won. He describes times in his life when he feels like preparing for something and giving it his all made him more of a winner than times when they won championships because he knew they had tried harder to reach perfection on the losing days. John points out that there is nothing wrong with someone being better than you as long as you still gave all that you had to give. That no matter how much you try and how much you give that there will be someone who will be a little better at something than you are but your strive for perfection is what will ultimately count.

Style

Perspective

The story is written in first person. The book takes moments where John is remembering things and that is written in past tense. There are times when he is talking about current life aspects that are written in present tense and moments when he is talking about what will happen later on that are written in future tense. The book is based on John Woodens opinions on life, basketball, and other things.

He has many opinions about things and is rather bold is telling about them. He is willing to name players, and coaches that he feels are either right or wrong in their behavior, coaching and playing. He names several coaches that he describes as being dictators. He admits that they have won championships but names them as men that he feels are wrong in their methods. He also names players that are well known stars of the game that he admits he would not want on his team because of their tactics on and off the courts. He mentions his own background to describe why he believes some of the things that he believes and why he believes himself to be so successful and even what he believes the definition of successful to be. All of this gives a good idea of what kind of beliefs John Wooden has and the overall feel of the book is an easy read.

Tone

The tone of the book is written in a partisan point of view. Not of one particular subject but of everything in life that John Wooden believes to be true. He is even loyal to the idea that everyone should believe strongly in some belief. He says that every man should have something he is willing to stand up and fight for. He talks about loyalty, character, and the importance of family. The thing that Wooden was most dedicated to was to teaching which was the main aim of the book was to teach something he felt was very important to all who read it.

The book talks about all the things that Wooden felt were important and he doesn't talk on any subject that he is not passionate about. One of the most passionate subjects he touches on is about his wife, Nellie. The book doesn't spend much time on marriage but the length wasn't as important as the tone and words he took to describe it's importance. The book even takes note of people that Wooden felt didn't have proper morals and convictions naming some of them by name. The tone of the book is calm but steadied by the words of a man who has tried to live what he believes.

Structure

The book is 201 pages. It is split into four parts with many different sections in each part. The different sections are named to give the reader an idea of what the short section is about. Some sections are as short as two sentences while others span



several pages. Each part is also labeled with the main theme of the sections that are included to give the reader an idea of what the theme is. There is also a preface written about John Wooden giving extra background information on him and his career as well as written comments from former players and other basketball personalities. At the end of the book Wooden gives some of his favorite maxims. There are many places in the book where he quotes poems to illustrate his thought on a subject.

The structure of the book jumps order chronologically and at points seems hard to follow but if you watch the overall theme of the parts and are able to read several sections you are able to see how they tie together. The section titles in the book at times will feel repetitive but break up points that the writer is trying to make. The overall flow of the book is easy to follow.



Quotes

"If you sincerely try to do your best to make each day a masterpiece, angels can do no better." Part 1: page 12

"And I tell people I definitely believe in God. I just hope God believes in me." Part 1: page 28

"I also believe that things turn out best for those who make the best of the way things turn out." Part 1: page 42

"Without proper self-evaluation, failure is inevitable." Part 2: page 56

"Goals should be difficult to achieve because those achieved with little effort are seldom appreciated, give little personal satisfaction, and are often not very worthwhile." Part 2: page 58

"Why is it that those who are the quickest to judge are often those in possession of the fewest facts.?" Part 2: page 71

"Adversity often produces the unexpected opportunity." Part 2: page 92

"A leader doesn't need a gun to motivate individuals." Part 3: page 112

"Abraham Lincoln said, 'Most anyone can stand adversity, but to test a person's character give him power.'" Part 3: Page 117

"Unless you're attempting to run through a brick wall, excessive emotion is counterproductive." Part 3: page 125

"Success is peace of mind that is the direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming." Part 4: page 170

"He once said that he never met a person from whom he did not learn something, although most of the time it was something not to do." Part 4: page 184

"What is so important to recognize is that you are totally in control of your success-not your opponent, not the judges, critics, media, or anyone else." Part 4: page 193

Topics for Discussion

Do you think that John Wooden was correct when he said that he was nothing more than average when it came to basketball tactics? Explain.

Do you think that John Wooden made a good decision when he turned down the New York Celtics to teach? Why?

John Wooden says that he thinks everyone should have a faith that they believe in and know why they believe it. Do you think that this is important for a person? Why?

John Wooden says that a person that can only make average grades when they are trying their best should be considered a success. Do you agree? Could you be happy if you or your own children were making lower grades as long as they were trying their hardest?

Wooden explains that he believes sports and the Olympics have been aimed to much toward getting money and that is not the spirit of the game. Do you agree? Why?

John Wooden was against retiring the jerseys of players that achieved post college success because it doesn't show team spirit. What do you think?

Do you think that John Wooden's ideals are old-fashioned?

John Wooden describes changes that should be made to the game in the year 2000. Do you agree with the general idea that the game should be made harder?

John Wooden says that he believes most people know what it takes to get what they want they are simply not willing to pay the price. Do you think he is right and most people realize what it takes?