

## *The Coach's Son*

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I believe a person's character is shaped by the people they encounter. Some may produce positive experiences; becoming role models as they guide one on a better path. These mentors may be a friend, parent, coach, or teacher. Over the course of my life, there have been countless people who have positively impacted me. However, I believe my father has had the greatest influence on my life.

Sports have taught me many life lessons. As long as I can remember, I have always been participating on a team. Over the years, I have had several outstanding coaches, made numerous friends, and learned countless life lessons that continue to impact me to this day. In the early years of my playing career, my father was the head coach of the teams that I played for. On the surface having your dad as the coach may seem great; as some may think that a parent may treat their child with special privileges. Others may view it as a burden, because of the insurmountable expectations that may be placed upon a child. For me neither of these extremes held true, as my dad always tried to improve each member of the team both as a player and a person. My teammates and I remember how he would always begin practice with a quote from John Wooden regarding life lessons, however, I believe my dad's actions spoke much louder than his words.

My father suffers from the rare autoimmune disorder, erythema multiforme. Throughout the year he usually experiences four outbreaks that last for three to four weeks at a time. During this period lesions accumulate on his tongue and mouth causing them to swell to the extent in which he can no longer eat or talk. Even through his discomfort and weakness he believed that he was responsible for coaching the team. He holds the belief that anything is possible and any challenge can be overcome through teamwork and believing in others. When he was suffering from his condition he would write down what he wanted to cover in the practice and he would challenge me to carry out the drills. This was demanding at first at such a young age; however, it

helped me to develop several leadership qualities. From this I have developed a strong belief in others, as my dad trusted me with leading the team.

Through the years I have witnessed first-hand the hardships that my dad encounters when battling erythema multiforme. The large fluctuations in weight and being unable to communicate freely with others are just two of the difficulties he experiences. However, I have never once heard him ask the question, "Why me?" He accepts the problems and tries to make the most of each day while putting the needs of others first. This is fundamentally the basis of all my beliefs as I try not to question why certain things happen to me and attempt to make the most of my abilities.