

Next Grounder



"Coaching is all about relationships. It doesn't happen on chalkboards, with titles, or in newspaper articles. Transformational coaching occurs only when people believe in you and choose to follow you because they know that you believe in them, too."

Joe Erhmann

InSideOut Coaching

Robbie,

I hope all is well. Here is another good letter from my father to me. Hope you enjoy.

My best to you and your family.

"Respect the Game!"

Bruce

Robbie read the letter.

August 30, 1948

Dear Bruce,

I was fortunate to have played lacrosse (and football) with some really great players and

coaches. My coach at Johns Hopkins, "Father Bill" Schmeisser, was certainly one of the major influences upon my life. He is the namesake of the Award that recognizes the most outstanding defensive player in the country. Tyler Campbell of Princeton University, a Gilman graduate, was the first recipient in 1942 and, as you know, perished in the service of our country.

As you begin your junior year, let me beg you to become the type of person and leader we would hope for—like Tyler and Coach Schmeisser.

Coach Schmeisser used to have a little mantra he called, 'Next Grounder.' Simply put, it means to focus on the task at hand. As it applies to lacrosse, of course, the ground ball or, as he called them, grounders, were (and still are) the most critical element of the game. But the phrase is symbolic of every aspect of the game—grounders, passes, shots, dodges, rides, faceoffs, saves, defensive stops—everything. So, 'Next Grounder' could really mean 'Next Play' or the next few seconds in any particular situation.

As you grow into more and more challenging and important leadership roles, I would ask you to think about the value of constantly focusing your thoughts and energies forward and specifically to the immediate task at hand.

You will obviously benefit from retrospective analysis on certain aspects of your

performance. You will also benefit from designing and developing long-range plans and goals. But the overwhelming majority of your focus should be on what is coming just ahead. I have seen so, so many people become crippled by negative thoughts of events and experiences that have long since passed. Others have become frozen by the dread of what is going to happen tomorrow. I have tried hard to teach myself to focus on what is happening now and in the very short future.

In a lacrosse game, you certainly want to think about the outcome of an entire game. But I think great teams and great players win each individual play over and over again. They are able to exercise and execute great fundamentals under pressure and when they are fatigued. I've always thought that if your team leads by, let's say, five goals at any point in the game there can be a natural tendency to let down some and lose your edge. Conversely, if your team trails by those same five goals, you may become dejected or try to do too much to recover. In either case, the best course of action is to play as if the score is tied—or zero-zero, as our coach used to say—in order to apply the appropriate attention to each little play that, added together, turn into big plays for your team.

My coaches would frequently remind us that the same tactics were applicable in all phases of their lives. Break big challenges (winning games) into small parts and working hard to conquer each one. Athletics, academics,

business (Coach Schmeisser was an attorney and a *volunteer* coach), marriage—all of them.

I think one of the great accomplishments known to history was that of the 'Corps of Discovery,' better known to most people as the Lewis and Clark Expedition. (I won't get into the debate of what the exploration of the West meant in terms of displacing Native Americans, etc.—it certainly could be argued that it had a direct and detrimental effect on those peoples.) Based only on the sheer difficulty of what the Corps accomplished—a trip from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean and back with only the provisions they could carry on their specially designed 'keelboat' to help navigate up the Missouri River and their own skills, strength, patience, and moxie—is truly amazing—at least to me. In the journal kept by Army Captain William Clark—the co-leader—he frequently wrote simply, "Continue on." I think that the pragmatic and iron-willed Clark balanced the somewhat melancholy and perhaps more brilliant Captain Meriwether Lewis. It seems that Clark knew that the Corps was tasked to move through unknown and uncharted territory for about two years by simply taking on the monumental task one day—perhaps one mile or even *one step*—at a time.

Or how about the old adage that goes something like, 'A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step'? I would add that that journey also includes many, many more steps almost none of which is any more or any less

important than any other.

So this year, I would ask you to work on teaching yourself to break each challenge you encounter into its fundamental smaller parts and go about attacking each one with focus and determination. I think you'll be very pleased with the results.

Be a leader. It is not going to be easy—but you have your mother's and my faith that you will rise to every challenge you face this year.

Next Grounder!

With Love and Pride,

Dad

The Penny



"Everyone needs to realize that they set an example for someone.

It is so very important to be the best example you can be. The lives of young people can be changed forever by seeing people do what is right."

Stanley Tyron

WW II Prisoner of War

Prisoners of Hope

On the next full moon, Red Hawk and Robbie went to see Jack at the Mount Washington Lacrosse Club in Baltimore, Maryland. May 1937.

"Robbie," Red Hawk began, "we are back at Mount Washington. A few months ago we were here watching Jack and Doug play when Jack was still at Poly. Now it is just Jack.

"This is just a practice, but I thought you should see this. The Mount Washington team just finished practice a few minutes ago. Most of the guys have gone home but Jack and Oster 'Kid' Norris—remember him from the game of ten years ago?—are still here throwing around with their ball boy, Brooke Tunstall. At this point in time, Brooke is a ninth grader at Poly, which isn't far from here. He rides his bike to all of the Mount practices after he finishes his practice or game at school. He just shags balls for these guys but sometimes the old guys will stay and throw or shoot with him for a while. Let's just watch for a little bit from here."

Robbie watched as the two Mt. Washington stars threw in a triangle, changing hands and skills, with young Brooke for about fifteen minutes. Then they had Brooke cut to the cage and fed him passes. Brooke absorbed every second he was with Jack and 'Kid.' After about one hundred shots from both sides of the goal, Jack had Brooke dodge against him while he played dummy defense on him. After a few dodges, Jack offered some pointers to the boy and then asked Norris to play defense for a few sets.

"Here, Brooke, keep your stick tight to your head when you go through that dodge," Jack counseled as he tipped Brooke's stick closer to his head.

Jack then helped Brooke with his defensive—or riding—skills. "Brooke, a lot of people forget how important riding is in lacrosse. I can tell you that every one of my coaches worked with us really hard on this and it always paid off. Let's go through a little of that, O.K.?"

Without even verbally responding, Brooke took his defensive position on Jack who carried the ball at half speed as if he were attempting to run past the youngster.

Jack continued, "So here is the critical point, Brooke. Make sure that you get the proper angle to what our coaches call the 'front' side. Most players will try to fake you at this point. Don't buy it. Just keep working to stay on the front and you'll be amazed at how effective this is. You'll need to display some strength, toughness, and persistence, but your team will benefit a lot. Here try to turn me as the ball carrier."

Jack jogged slowly with the ball to give Brooke a target. As Brooke improved his angle and strength, Jack moved a little faster and with more strength each time. Brooke made the appropriate adjustments. Then 'Kid' offered himself as the target for a few sets while Jack inspected Brooke's technique.

"Great, Brooke. Great! You are doing it right. There is always room for improvement, but that is great. I'm telling you—this is a game-changer!" Jack crowed.

'Kid' and Jack worked through some groundball drills with young Brooke as well, demonstrating proper technique and offering critiques as the youngster worked on his skills.

"We can't say enough about ground balls, either, Brooke," 'Kid' offered as he demonstrated.

"You have to work hard to get all the way down on the ball. If you don't get your whole body through the scoop—you'll be checked and lose the ball again. So drive your hips and entire body through the ball—don't reach for it or rake it backwards. That won't work against good players or good teams. The real key is to make sure you get the ball on the first try—our coaches in the old days used to call them 'first-time grounders.' It's really important!"

The whole lesson took about an hour and it was now almost dark as Robbie and Red Hawk watched.

Red Hawk shared, "Robbie, Jack and 'Kid' worked with Brooke a lot in this fashion. Just staying after practice for a while and helping him with his fundamental skills. There is one more part I would like for you to see."

Red Hawk moved the scene to a similar night a few weeks later. After another set of drills that Jack and 'Kid' helped Brooke with, Jack took off his lacrosse gloves and pulled his lucky penny from the crease in the left index finger and handed it to Brooke.

"Brooke, I found this penny on the field of Olympic Stadium when I walked out for the first faceoff of the 1932 Olympics. I have always considered it to be good luck for me. I have carried it with me everywhere I have gone. See how it slips

in and out of the glove pretty easily here," Jack demonstrated. "I keep it in my pocket all the time. I took it with me to Berlin for the 1936 Olympics. I think I have gotten quite a bit of good luck from it these last few years. I'd like you to have it."

Brooke stood quietly and wasn't sure how to react.

"Here, try to slide it into your glove. It should go in like on mine. It'll stay in there while you play and you can take it out easily, too," Jack offered.

"Thanks, Jack," Brooke said gratefully. He could only gather the response, "I hope it brings me the same kind of luck it has brought you. I'll do my best to take care of it."

Robbie continued to gaze on in amazement of what he had witnessed—yet another incredible gesture that he had witnessed courtesy of Red Hawk and these magical journeys.

"I think it would be impossible to overstate what Jack meant to Brooke all those years. He was a perfect role model for Brooke. Jack tracked Brooke's progress throughout his career and offered him support and encouragement all the way. Jack told me frequently that he felt an obligation to pass on all of the support that he had been given by his teammates—particularly 'Kid' and the others from Mount Washington. Brooke was lucky to be one of those beneficiaries.

"I'd like for you to see one more piece of Brooke's story, Robbie," Red Hawk said as he shifted scenes in their time travel.

The boys were now at Homewood Field at Johns Hopkins during halftime of a game in 1977.

As the scene began, Robbie immediately noted that the event taking place on the field looked exactly like the one Red

Hawk had taken him to see Captain Lewis' Hall of Fame induction ceremony—and the person about to speak looked like Doug! Robbie looked at Red Hawk, "Is that Doug?"

"Yes, Robbie, he had the honor of presenting Brooke for induction into the Hall of Fame! I guess you could include this in the 'Circle of Life' category."

Robbie and Red Hawk listened as Doug began.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am Douglas Turnbull, junior, and I have the honor and pleasure of inducting W. Brooke Tunstall into the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame. Most of you remember Brooke's brilliant playing career here at Hopkins in 1947 and 1948. He played the game with great spirit, talent, and reverence. If you every saw Brooke play, you would be inclined, I think, to compare him to an orchestra conductor, bringing out the skill and beauty in all of his teammates. He was a joy to watch. He may have also had one of the more interesting careers of anyone I know.

"You may not know this, but Brooke went to Union because he was offered financial help for his participation in lacrosse and football. Brooke was a member of the North team in the Annual North-South All-Star Game in 1942 while a freshman. Then while playing football at Union, he suffered a complex broken leg—they said he may not ever play sports again. They didn't know Brooke, did they?"

"When World War II began, Brooke knew he wanted to serve as a Marine. While waiting for an opening at Boot Camp, Brooke attended a Marine pre-training unit at Cornell University. It just happened to be during the spring, and the Cornell Lacrosse team was delighted to have him! He was chosen as an All-American in the 1944 season.

"From there, Brooke completed Marine Corps Boot Camp at Paris Island, South Carolina, and then Officer

Training at Quantico, Virginia. He then shipped to Hawaii to prepare for the Invasion of Japan. Fortunately for all of us, and particularly Brooke, the war ended after the dropping of the atomic bombs in Japan. So Brooke and his comrades were spared the likelihood of Invasion. Brooke left the Marine Corps as a First Lieutenant and, much to our delight, enrolled at Johns Hopkins, where he became a two-time First-Team All-American, two-time national champion, participated in the North-South Game twice, and was a two-time recipient of the Jack Turnbull Award, named in memory of my late brother.

"Brooke, therefore, is probably the only player in the history of lacrosse to play in the North-South Game three times, while playing for both teams!

"Brooke has enjoyed a successful career in the business world in New Jersey with his wife, Peg, and their three daughters. It gives me the greatest possible pride and personal joy to present W. Brooke Tunstall for induction into the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame. Brooke,"

Brooke beamed as he approached Doug to receive his Hall of Fame plaque.

"Thank you, Doug. This is nothing less than a boyhood dream come true for me. I can't thank the Hall of Fame Committee, you, or your family enough for all of your support for what has been, in effect, my whole life. You know that none of my modest success on the field would have been possible without you, Jack, Kid Norris, my teammates and coaches at Union, Cornell, and Hopkins.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I must tell you that the only reason that I stand before you today, is because of the goodness that was directed toward me by countless people. But Jack Turnbull was the most influential person in my life. He was my idol and I think of him every day, hoping that I can be a

fraction of the person he was. I very much share this honor with Jack and many others. Thank you all."

"I hope you enjoyed that trip, Robbie," Red Hawk closed.

"Wow! Great. Thanks. See you soon."

The Greatest Asset that I Possess



Be Strong. Be Accountable. Never Complain.

motto of LT (SEAL) Brendan Looney, USN

Robbie,

I hope all is well. I have enclosed several letters from Jack to his mother in 1944. I thought you might like to try to get a sense of some of his more routine concerns but there are a number of very compelling observations scattered throughout (at least in my mind). I hope you'll be as struck as I have been by Jack's sense of gratitude to his mother and family.

Not all of these are dated—so we did our best to try to arrange them in what seemed to be the proper sequence. The woman, May, of whom Jack frequently refers is his mother's sister, who moved in with them after her husband passed some years earlier.

Jerri wanted me to include the last letter that Jack wrote to his sister Anne—it has always been her favorite. She considers it the most beautiful letter and a true testament to what a little sister means to an older brother. Enjoy.

Best, Bruce

[Sunday in March 1944]

Dear Mother,

It has been a long time and a busy one. We have just finished our final inspection and we passed with the highest mark of any unit that has ever gone overseas. That makes the hard work seem worthwhile. We have really been at it the past few weeks and now sending everyone we can on final leave. That makes our work now doubly tough because it makes us shorthanded for the packing. It looks as if we will go out on schedule, which leaves us very little time to do a million details. I tried to call you all on the telephone today but they were announcing a four hour delay and I couldn't wait that long. Our new aircraft are coming in awful fast now and they are really beautiful. No paint and just as shiny as a new bicycle. They are really equipped to do the job that I know we can and will do very shortly.

Our unit is really starting to be a good one and we are looking forward to one good feature of war. That is the good fellowship, self-sacrifice, and teamwork that comes from fighting for a common goal. I'm confident that we are well on the way now and that this year should nearly finish up the European Theatre. Anyhow, I pray so.

I'm on my way to El Paso tomorrow for a much needed day off and a little visit to Mexico. Then back to packing and finishing the training that we are all eager to have now that

the time is near.

Give my best to all the folks and say hello to "Mac" and "Dan" for me. Tell Anne not to worry about Marsh, that the Army will take care of him.

Sure glad to hear of Henry's back. He will make a good officer.

All my love,

Jack

Friday

Dear Mother,

It was swell talking to you and Anne today. It only took about thirty seconds to get you, which was a pleasant surprise. I have just finished packing and loading my airplane and we are all set. I'll send you my APO # as soon as I learn what it is.

I have sold my car at a profit and sent the check to the bank for deposit. I am canceling the insurance on it and asking them to send the check to you. Starting May 1st you will receive \$300 per month and I'll receive the remainder overseas. Each time a bank statement comes let me know what the total is and I'll keep my checkbook straight that way. I'll probably not write any checks overseas but instead will send money orders home. I would like to keep my bank balance above two thousand dollars so feel perfectly free to use all the money you need for anything you need. If I start getting too big a balance once in a while either buy me a

savings bond or send some to Choice to invest for me. (Also a few presents for my god-children.)

I'm sending a lot of clothes home that I won't need. The wool clothing you can give away. The cotton you better save for me. Also in the box will be an envelope with lots of different things in it. Feel perfectly free to go through it at will.

I am really eager to go now as I know we are well trained and have the best equipment we can get. Therefore, the quicker I go the sooner I return. I am taking along a little prayer book and expecting to use it, but the greatest asset that I possess is the body you gave me and the training and upbringing that you have instilled in me. I feel perfectly confident that with this and the good Lord's help I'll never meet a situation that I won't be able to cope with successfully. I'll never stop being grateful to you for the love and care you have given me.

I'll write, probably, more often now that all the training is behind me and it won't be long before this awful mess is behind us.

Take care of yourself and don't try to do too much. Be good to yourself. You are due a nice rest. I wish you could go to Florida with Anne.

All my love,

Jack

Sunday [March]

Dear Mother,

I just finished your nice letter and I'm glad to hear that spring at last seems to have arrived. The picture of Anne is good but Mac seems to be making faces. I guess Marshall thinks he is beautiful even though he looks a little like himself. The sleeping bag arrived O.K. and I'll soon be shipping my excess equipment home. They won't let me take my lacrosse stick or my bicycle so I'll ship the first and sell the latter. I've been offered \$1000 for it but I think I'll get \$1100 tomorrow. We have just about completed our training and are only flying the new aircraft to put a little time on them before the big trip. We gave the whole outfit two days off (today and tomorrow) but as usual, I have had to work. I am starting to get sunburned and we'll be leaving just at the right time before it gets too hot. I'll call you before I go and I guess the best place will be at Anne's. The lines are so jammed that it will probably have to be a morning call.

The way things look now we will probably be back in a matter of months. They are making so many raids that we will probably finish our 25-50 raids in a couple of months. I sure hope so.

I have sent Anne a pair of stockings but they say you can't tell whether they are any good or not so I only bought one pair for her.

We are going to have a big party to wind

things up on Tuesday night so from then on packing, etc. will really keep me hopping. I'll write at least once more and will give you a call before we leave.

We feel pretty proud being the only group that has been really ahead of time. We really have a swell outfit and I am sure they will really take care of themselves when the going gets tough. I wish I could fly with them every mission but I'm afraid the old desk weighs too heavy on me in the job that I have.

I'm sending you a book by Lin Yutang that really hits the bull on the nose. I sure wish there were more men like him to sit on the peace tables.

I'll write soon again.

All my love,

Jack

Friday [Postmarked 1 APR 1944, New Mexico]

Dear Mother,

I have no idea how long it's been since I have written you because I'm so busy I hardly know the day of the week. Yesterday and today, we had the Army Air Force inspectors, the 2nd Air Force inspectors, the 16th Wing inspectors, and the Air Base inspectors all here at once. After forgetting we existed for all this time they all wake up at once and realize we are due to go very shortly now. So they all flock around and

rush! rush! rush!

Spring has really arrived here now. The temp. is up to about eighty in the daytime but it still freezes nearly every night. I sure wish you and May could come out here for a few weeks. The sun would really do you lots of good. However unless you would fly the trip would be terrible.

I got a letter from Henry and I sure am glad to hear he got a commission. He would have more fun as a "gob" but he will be more useful as a leader.

Also got a letter from Fritze and he tells me he is the father of a 7 lb. 11 oz. son. He is something. Just mentioned it casually as if it was nothing.

I hope to get to El Paso Monday and do a little shopping, also get a price on my car so I'll be able to sell it when I leave. I have gotten a box together to ship all my loose ends in when I leave. I'll screw the lid on and send you the papers on it.

I flew today on a Wing formation, which is a combination of two groups. There are seventy planes to a group so you can see we had quite a formation. I led it and the general was quite pleased. We have a swell outfit here and I will be awful glad to get out of all this mess of training into a nice quiet war.

Well, give my best to all you see and take care of yourselves. Tell May if I thought it possible to ship it, I would sure ruin one of her

chocolate cakes. However, I'm afraid the mails would ruin it. A boy received a box of honey and jam the other day and the bottles were broken. You should have seen the mess. I'll write again soon.

Lots of love,
Jack

Wednesday, April

Herington Army Air Field Herington, Kansas

Dear Folks:

This is sure a cold place after Alamogordo. The wind just sweeps across these plains and really cuts right through you. I can't tell you where or when we leave here but I do hope to give you another call on the phone before we go.

Things are going swell and I feel much relieved now that our training is behind us.

I have shipped home a box of excess things. Do what you want with them except for the envelope with all my papers. Keep that somewhere that will be safe.

I'll drop you a line every chance I get.

All my love,
Jack

April 11, 1944

Dear Mother:

Golly it is hot! This part of the world is really something. We have been awful lucky so far with the weather and happy to have the best until we complete our travel.

The world really gets big when you start moving around it. I feel like I am a million miles from home and as far as any similarity goes I guess I am. No troubles whatsoever so far and we are hoping things continue this way. I still don't know my APO # although I do know my destination. I'll send it to you as I know definitely what it is.

Take it easy and I'll write soon. I spent Easter all day in the air.

All my love,

Jack

April 14, 1944

Dear Mother:

Well, here I am in Africa and it is really some place. The weather is beautiful and I've run into lots of my friends. This is really an interesting city and fairly modern. The Arabs are an interesting people but the sanitation is really something. You see the donkeys and men all standing in the gutter drinking the same dirty water. There are thousands of beggars and also thousands of Jews that have left Europe. Our

mess and quarters are served and cleaned by Italian prisoners that seem pretty happy with their work. The mountains in the distance are very lovely and it brings back the old geography to me to make me realize that there are mountains in Africa. I've sort of thought of Africa as jungles and desert only.

We are all well and anxious to get the war over soon and if I have anything to do with it, we'll be home soon. I lost the lacrosse ball you sent me so if you can get me another and please send it to me at the above address. It sure is remarkable how quick the supply situation changes.

A few days' flight and it really makes you appreciate the plenty you have back in the U. S. Well, the first chance I get I'll write you again. There is quite a difference writing a letter when you have to think all the time of what you can't say. Give my best to all the gang and the family and I'll see you as soon as I can.

All my love,

Jack

June 2, 1944

Dear Mother:

Just a short one to let you know how lucky I am. I've just been promoted again and realize more as the time goes on that everything I

accomplished, with seemingly not too much effort, is because of what you and father have done for us kids. When I take time to think about things, I become pretty restless to get rid of this war and turmoil and settle down to the real job of my life which is to raise a family along the same lines that you have shown us. If I can get started and do the job you two have done I'll sure be satisfied.

I'm enclosing a snap, which I think is very flattering but most people think is good. I like it anyhow. We are still progressing pretty rapidly in getting set up but we are not near the perfection that I want. We have one great trouble, in that the crews make only thirty combat missions and then are replaced. That means we have a continual training program to train new crews for combat. You feel as if you never catch up.

You remember Jack who lived over Charley on the Blvd. He was killed when that transport ship was sunk in the Mediterranean. Another flyer killed by other than aviation. I sure feel sorry for Dottie.

As I wrote you last night and there is little I can tell you, I will close here.

It sure sounds funny to be called "Colonel." I'll try to write more often in the future.

All my love,

Jack

October 14, 1944

My Dear Sister,

I hope that you are well. Thank you for your recent letters and goodies. I share them with the men—so you are becoming rather famous here in our group. So many of our airmen are rather young—eighteen to twenty-three or so. I must remind them constantly that you are married!

Things here are about the same. We have flown five missions since I last wrote. Each mission is an incredible challenge to complete successfully—but our men continue to rise to every occasion.

There are constant reminders of how precarious our situation is over here. Our barracks are frequently missing many men from the previous day, as they simply do not return from their flights. Some crash, some are shot down, some are lost with no trace, some may have had to divert to neutral countries such as Switzerland due to mechanical difficulties. In any case, our emptying barracks tell the story of loss on a daily basis.

I think every boy should be blessed with a sister—not to mention three of them—like Doug and I have! If I had a magic wand to wave to make some sort of miracle happen, I would wave it first, I guess, to end this terrible war. Right after that, though, I would wave it to allow you to see yourself as I see you. Your wit, intelligence, talent, and grace exceed my ability

to convey what they look like to me other than to say that I am the luckiest brother in the world. Your love and support have meant everything to me over here.

I will do my best to get myself and my men home safely. Please give my love to Mum, May, Helen, Libby, and Doug.

Back to work.

Much love, Anne,

Jack