

Dear ASFM community,

Two important athletic events happened this past week:

Kipchoge recorded, again, the fastest marathon ever in Berlin and Roger Federer retired. Did you happen to see the photo circulating on social media over the weekend?



HERE’S MY FAVORITE KIPCHOGE QUOTE:  
“Only the disciplined ones in life are free. If you are undisciplined, you are a slave to your moods and your passions.”



MY FAVORITE ROGER FEDERER QUOTE:  
“Once you find that peace, the place of peace and quiet, harmony and confidence, that’s when you start playing your best”

I’ve written about Kipchoge before so I’d like to just focus on this photo of Federer and Nadal for a moment. I find it so impactful. I’ve loved watching Federer and Nadal battle over the years.

What feelings and thoughts does this photo evoke for you?



You all know I love the Cicero quote, “gratitude is the parent of all virtues.” This photo of these two titans of tennis putting on display their emotions and connection to one another is the picture of gratitude. Gratitude for each other because without their rivalry they would never have reached their full potential. When Serena Williams says there “wouldn’t be Serena without Venus” she too was saying that no great athlete or really any great accomplishment is fulfilled without the help of others.

**This photo also makes me wonder about their coaches.** I would argue that Federer and Nadal, in part, found their superpower because they were able to make themselves vulnerable enough to identify, with the help of their coaches, the areas they most needed to fix in their games. It takes a coach to help an athlete truly understand themselves and their flaws in order to be able to reach new heights. Despite the discomfort, Federer and Nadal made their careers out of courageously dedicating themselves to continuous improvement. **The story not told is that in order to relentlessly focus on improving your craft, you must first be willing to expose your weaknesses.**

Two men, holding hands, crying together, directly facing the world. Nothing to hide. **Respect.**

But who were their coaches? Who helped them become the best versions of themselves? The story behind the photo is that they had help.

At ASFM we are super fortunate to have to have a team of coaches helping our teachers become the best version of themselves as teachers.

**I’m proud** of the fact we have a team of academic coaches for our teachers, just as we have athletic coaches for our sports teams. I’m even happier with the fact that so many of our teachers are opening their classroom doors, making themselves vulnerable and in so doing commit to continuous improvement with the help of our coaches. We are asking for greater academic results from our teachers, just as we are asking for greater academic commitment from our students. Putting your practice on display, sharing the learning results of your students, and asking for help is intimidating.

I love the fact that we have a culture of collaboration and a commitment to continuous improvement. Our coaches will help us win more sets (tennis metaphor!)

*This is the mission statement of our instructional coaches:*

**“We partner with teachers to continuously grow instructional practice to have a transformational impact on learning.”**

I like the metaphor that tennis offers. The only thing a player really controls is the serve. The ball can be returned in a million different ways. A good coach can help a player figure out a million different ways to see more clearly so they hit a better return of serve. Our academic coaches are trying to help each of our teachers manage the million questions being hurled at them as they lead their students to deeper levels of understanding. Every successful athlete has a coach—love that fact that our teachers have them too! Please meet them.

Meet our coaches:

ELEMENTARY



DIANA LISA KATTINA HEATHER

MSHS

NOLA JACOB



EMILY DOUG

AT ASFM WE BELIEVE THAT

Coaching brings opportunities to work closely with teachers and collaborate with them to reach their goals!

Coaches support teachers in order to maximize student achievement.

We are smarter together and collaboration is critical.

Teaching is a calling, and everyone deserves to have thinking partners that support their success.

I’ll end with Marcus Aurelius’s opinion that you first have to take control of your mind in order to have strength.

*“You have power over your mind – not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength.”*

**We may all not be professional athletes, but we can all get better—have the strength to be vulnerable, the courage to ask for help, and the poise necessary to play every point with your best effort.**

Onward, George