

# High Level of Care

*“Students don’t care what you know, until they know you care.”*

## Importance of Care...

One of the foundational beliefs of the Modern Coaching philosophy is to establish an elevated level of care with every student/athlete we work with. We believe this is fundamental principle in effective coach/athlete and teacher/student relationships. Our goal with this document is to give coaches and teachers a resource to use as they are intentional about establishing an elevated level of care with their athletes and students.

An effortless way to see the importance of caring is to think about a time you had a supervisor that you knew they cared about you. When they gave you feedback, you felt like it was for you to improve and grow. Think of a time when you had a supervisor that you felt did not sincerely care about you. When they gave you feedback, you felt like it was for them to look better and for them to gain position or advancement.

**“The greatest gift you can give someone is to give them unconditional care and acceptance.”**  
-Dr. Bryan Thomsen

*From Nel Noddings... “I do not mean to suggest that the establishment of **caring relations** will accomplish everything that must be done in education, **but these relations provide the foundation for successful pedagogical activity.***

*First, as we listen to our students, we gain their trust and, in an on-going relation of care and trust, it is more likely that students will accept what we try to teach. They will not see our efforts as “interference” but, rather, as cooperative work proceeding from the integrity of the relation.*

*Second, as we engage our students in dialogue, we learn about their needs, working habits, interests, and talents. We gain important ideas from them about how to build our lessons and plan for their individual progress.*

*Finally, as we acquire knowledge about our students’ needs and realize how much more than the standard curriculum is needed, we are inspired to increase our own competence (Noddings, 1999).”*



My contention is, first, that we should want more from our educational efforts than adequate academic achievement and, second, that we will not achieve even that meager success unless our children believe that they themselves are cared for and learn to care for others.

— Nel Noddings —

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### Administrator

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1. Greet students each day as they enter the school
2. Engage in conversation about interests – give time
3. Eat lunch with student one day
4. Have a special project for student to do that helps the school and one that interests the student. (i.e. student that enjoys repairing things, have student help repair broken bench)
5. Personally call student if late for school
6. Praise accomplishments in front of peer and/or staff (recognize students at staff meeting)
7. Meet with student and teacher to talk about goals
8. Have a student shadow you for a day
9. On a snowy day clean car windows before everyone goes home for the day
- 10.

*“When you make it a point to care for others, life somehow makes it a point to care for you.”*

*Anonymous*



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### Teacher

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1. Get to know the student's interests – engage in conversation about those interests each time you speak to the student
2. Greet the student every day, ask if they have had breakfast and if there is anything they would like to share
3. Praise and encourage the student for all tasks attempted and achieved
4. Sit with the student at lunch and talk about them and you... what inspires you about them
5. Call a parent with positive affirmations of their child
6. Offer to give time to help with a difficult assignment
7. Attend an event that the student is involved in
8. Include the student in classroom activities



*"The simple act of caring is HEROIC."*

*Edward Albert*

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### Administrative Assistant

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1. Greet student (by name) positively each time they come into the office
2. Be available to talk about things going on in the student’s life... make the student feel as though what they are saying is the most important thing to you at that time
3. Send positive notes to the student during the day (ex: attendance – so glad you are here.... you beat the clock, etc.)
4. Ask the student to run an errand
5. Talk to the student outside the office setting
6. When calling a parent for attendance.... tell them you miss the student and hope to see them soon
7. Make yourself available to answer questions
8. Make the student’s parent feel that their child and their well-being is especially important
9. Celebrate birthdays – announcing them or personally acknowledging them when they come into the office

***“One person caring about another represents life’s greatest value.”***

*Jim Rohn*

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### Bus Driver

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1. Smile and greet each student on the bus by name
2. Talk about special interests the student might share
3. Reinforce in a positive way why safety on the bus is so important
4. Ask the student what they did at school
5. Get to know the parents, wave, and talk to them when time permits
6. Give them choices about what they can do to help with bus safety
7. Have a special day where each student gets a snack



*“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”*

*Lou Buscaglia*

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### Food Service Staff

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1. Greet the student with a smile and ask how are you today
2. Find out what interests a student has and ask them about it as they go through the lunch line... (i.e.: How did you do at play practice last night?)
3. Make the student feel that you are there to help them
4. Ask the student what foods they like and why – get their feedback in how to make their lunch experience a positive one
5. Give a student a job to make the cafeteria inviting to everyone (i.e.: make posters, positive notes on tables, etc.)
6. Recognize teams and individuals for accomplishments with a special treat
7. Wear t-shirts that support a team/group/individual that are heading into a large competition or state event.
- 8.



***“To make a difference in a student’s life you don’t have to be brilliant, rich, beautiful, or perfect. You just have to care.”***

*Mandy Hale*

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### Maintenance and Custodial Staff

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1. Greet the student with a smile, asking them how they are (use name if possible)
2. Find out the interests of the student.... ask them about those
3. Be available if the student should need something or needs to pick up something for a teacher
4. Use a student to help do an errand if applicable



*“Educators often use sarcasm as a way to show affection. You should not assume the student can handle it or even understand. Instead, give a sincere compliment.”*

*Dr. Bryan Thomsen*

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### Coach

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1. Find out what interests the student has, then during warmups stop and chat about those
2. Meet with the student individually
3. Talk to the student’s teachers to see how you can help
4. Set individual goals that the student can meet
5. Be available to talk outside the sport setting
6. Send notes of encouragement
7. Make a home visit, get to know the “whole” student
8. Have the student help organize a “team” dinner, pizza party, family night, etc.
9. Tell the student that you care more about them as a person than a player



*“A good coach can change a game; a **GREAT** coach can change a **LIFE**.”*

*John Wooden*





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### Counselor

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1. Greet student every day by name and with a smile – seek a student out if you do not see them
2. Tell the student how much you care for them
3. Be available to meet when the student needs to talk
4. Celebrate student birthday by sending a special card
5. Call a student if attendance is beginning to be a problem
6. Meet with the student and teacher to establish goals
7. Help student schedule & get to appointments
8. Help the student & family with food, glasses, clothes, shoes, hygiene products, etc.
9. Follow-up after visiting with student
10. Help family with gas, car repair, bills, etc.



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### School Board Member

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1. Send a note to a student from the board on an accomplishment
2. Recognize students at board meetings for excellence
3. Provide an individual or team that is heading into post season competition a token of appreciation (t-shirts, small gift, care package, special uniforms, etc.)
4. Participate in student led initiatives (FFA breakfast, Senior awards ceremony, fundraisers, etc.)
5. Create a board awards to present to students

*“Even the smallest act of caring for another person is like a drop of water - it will make ripples throughout the entire pond.”*

*Jessy & Bryan Matteo*

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### Supporting Material

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“The quality of the relationship deeply influences the hopefulness required to remain curious and open to new experiences, and the capacity to see connections and discover meanings (Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.* 1983: ix).”

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“Carl Rogers once wrote, ‘The facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal *relationship* between facilitator and learner’ (1990: 305). “

He highlights three significant qualities or attitudes that facilitate learning:

**Realness in the facilitator of learning.** Perhaps the most basic of these essential attitudes is realness or genuineness. When the facilitator is a real person, being what she is, entering a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or a façade, she is much more likely to be effective. This means that the feelings that she is experiencing are available to her, available to her awareness, that she can live these feelings, be them, and able to communicate if appropriate. It means coming into a direct personal encounter with the learner, meeting her on a person-to-person basis. It means that she is being herself, not denying herself.

**Prizing, acceptance, trust.** There is another attitude that stands out in those who are successful in facilitating learning... I think of it as prizing the learner, prizing her feelings, her opinions, her person. It is a caring for the learner, but a non-possessive caring. It is an acceptance of this other individual as a separate person, having worth in her own right. It is a basic trust – a belief that this other person is somehow fundamentally trustworthy... What we are describing is a prizing of the learner as an imperfect human being with many feelings, many potentialities. The facilitator’s prizing or acceptance of the learner is an operational expression of her essential confidence and trust in the capacity of the human organism.

**Empathetic understanding.** A further element that establishes a climate for self-initiated experiential learning is emphatic understanding. When the teacher has the ability to understand the student’s reactions from the inside, has a sensitive awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems to the student, then again, the likelihood of significant learning is increased.... [Students feel deeply appreciative] when they are simply understood – not evaluated, not judged, simply understood from their own point of view, not the teacher’s. (Rogers 1967)

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“I am often asked how they can ‘do this’——establish a climate of care——‘on top of all the other demands’. My answer is that establishing such a climate is not ‘on top’ of other things, it is underneath all we do as teachers. When that climate is established and maintained, everything else goes better”

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“Care ethics endorses this new spirit of global cooperation and advises that we should rethink much of what we do in schools to prepare students for this new world. Academic achievement, for example, should not be evaluated entirely by how much higher one scores than others on a standardized test or by one’s rank as measured by grade-point average (GPA).

Yet that is exactly the accepted measure of educational success today in the United States, and students often register for Advanced Placement courses to increase their GPA. It is appropriate that students receive college credit when they pass Advance Placement tests, but why should excellence in such courses gain more high school credit? Why is an ‘A’ in calculus worth more than an ‘A’ in metal shop?

We do a disservice to both students when we put a higher value on the calculus grade than an equally well-earned grade in metal shop. The future welder or metal craftsman is warned that his contribution to the world of work is not highly valued, and the calculus student is confirmed in his belief that few people would study calculus without some extrinsic reward.

To preserve and enhance our democracy, we must acknowledge our interdependence and teach our young people to appreciate it at both national and international levels. Suppose we stopped awarding extra points for Advanced Placement and Honors courses. Suppose, instead, we called them courses for the passionately interested? That would be a powerful first step in renewing integrity to the search for knowledge.

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"Children who are respected learn respect. Children who are cared for learn to care for those weaker than themselves. Children who are loved for what they are cannot learn intolerance. In an environment such as this, they will develop their own ideals, which can be nothing other than humane, since they grew out of the experience of love."

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