

From: Dave Severns jymratt@gmail.com
Subject:
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To: Dave Severns jymratt@gmail.com

3 Ways to Cultivate Team Connection

Teams with connectivity will understand members' personal experiences and ideas.

(<https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thedaily.coach%2Fp%2Fconnection-bill-walsh-49eea>) (<https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Teams+with+connectivity+will+understand+members%E2%80%99+personal+experiences+and+ideas.%C2%A0&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thedaily.coach%2Fp%2Fconnection-bill-walsh-49eea>) (<https://www.linkedin.com/sharing/share-offsite?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thedaily.coach%2Fp%2Fconnection-bill-walsh-49eea>) We're excited to announce that we're accepting new applications to join The Daily Coach Network until February 29th. Learn more below.

Before this year's Super Bowl, a large collection of media assembled in a convention hall to conduct interviews, talk about the upcoming game, the future of the league and the newest members of the NFL Hall of Fame. In one of these sessions, Steve Young, a Hall-of-Fame quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, was asked about what he learned from legendary Hall-of-Fame Coach Bill Walsh.

Young instantly and in descriptive terms said Walsh was always talking about connectivity. Walsh would tell Young, when it's third-and-ten with a minute to go and our team is losing by four points, and we need a touchdown as the pouring rain is coming down and the wind is hollowing, you need to look into the eye of a man across from you in the huddle, who you have a love for, whom you have a shared common experience with and make that connection.

Walsh believed true and personal connection was what separates great teams from good teams. The shared experiences mattered — the understanding of the human being — not simply the name on the back of the jersey. Walsh believed one of the strengths of the United States Marine Corps was the love of shared experiences, often saying, "Marines fight for Marines."

Walsh didn't want his team to love him as the leader, he wanted them to love one another, to connect with each other on a personal level. He believed the greatness of any team was their ability to execute perfectly under pressure. For Walsh, unless a team was connected to one another, nothing else mattered. Often, we hear the term "team chemistry," but Walsh preferred team connectivity.

What is the difference between a team that is connected and having team chemistry?

Teams with good chemistry will relate to one another harmoniously. Teams with connectivity will understand team members' personal experiences and ideas. For Walsh, he wanted more than chemistry, he wanted to make sure each player understood the background of one another, understood their past experiences to ensure their bond so that when all the chips were on the table, they would fight for one another.

So, how do we as leaders get our teams connected? Walsh used simple methods to create this bond.

1. He introduced fun activities, such as a fishing contest, with different team groups working together to connect different groups who might not work together. He wanted a connection, a bond strong enough to hold a team together when facing tough times.

2. Walsh talked openly about the importance of a connected team; he taught players what connectivity means. In the story Young shared, he reminded everyone daily about the importance of being connected and always create a situation to trigger the connection. Walsh was teaching a class in connectivity each day.

3. Walsh wanted to demonstrate he could connect with others from different backgrounds than his own. He made it a priority to understand the social element of each team member to then bridge the connection. He often said: "The secret to managing well and motivating those you manage is to understand the fine line between losing sight of the big picture and letting others lose sight of you. If you're there when the action gets hot, the results can be spectacular. Stay in the rear echelon too long, peering through binoculars, and you'll find the competitors taking the high ground.

For us as leaders, understanding the difference between team chemistry and connectivity is the biggest hurdle from being a good team to becoming a great team.