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Preface

When I think back on our youth days on the sports field with my former teammates – I have done several sports but in particular I have played a lot of soccer – we become aware of how wonderful and educational that time has been for us. That is what I wish for every child. Probably your wish too. It's my dream, and maybe yours too, that kids who do sports now later have fond memories of their sports experiences during their youth. That they have a clear idea of what football, or sports, to them is all about and that they think back to you, the coach with a smile. When I started my career as a coach at PSV Eindhoven, I had no experience as a soccer coach. I also had no coaching badges. Perhaps you are a novice trainer with no experience and are you in the same boat like I was then. Or maybe you are already fairly experienced, but would you like a better substantiation for what you do. Any soccer coach, certainly with little or no experience, has uncertainties and questions.

What is it all about as a coach? What do you want to achieve with your team and players? What are the best training exercises? How to select players for a team or match? How do you ensure that your players develop and perform optimally? These questions are still relevant to me as a coach, even now that I have more experience and coaching badges. Only now I have answers from a clear vision that I would like to share with you.

Why this book?

In recent years I have discovered something. As a coach I was looking, probably just like you, for ways to make a difference for my players. I gained experience in doing training sessions and coaching during

matches. In the same period I read scientific studies and I learned from experiences of famous and lesser known football players and coaches by talking to them. If it wasn't possible to talk to those men I read their book or I watched a documentary about them. That gave me a lot of new insights.

In doing so I discovered how managers make a difference. The way they do was different than I expected. Exemplary for that discovery is what I learned about Sir Alex Ferguson. Ferguson was the manager of Manchester United, one of the largest soccer clubs in the world. In a period of around 25 years under his spell, United became national champion thirteen times, won the FA Cup five times, won the Champions League twice and twice the world cup for club teams. How did Ferguson do that? Van Nistelrooij told me, "He (Ferguson) never talked about tactics with us (the players)."

The other side of training

A good soccer manager has football know-how. He knows the tactics, has good training exercises and is aware of the football trends. That's how we see the manager. Just look at the coaching badges courses, at least in the Netherlands. During these courses, you learn to devise the best training exercises for every level and make match analyses and annual plans. In addition, the internet is full of websites for soccer managers. These websites offer the best training exercises, match tactics, and the latest match analyses. That specific soccer know-how is important to a manager.

But do you make a difference for your players with that know-how? Just think back to the managers you have had yourself. How did your favorite

manager differ from others? Was it the technical knowledge, one particular exercise or the match tactics or was it something else?

I have discovered that for most players their favorite coaches make the difference in another way. This concerns things such as: How does a manager react when his player makes a mistake? How does a manager motivates his players? Does the manager contribute to his players' self-belief? Does a manager show interest in the person behind the player? How does a manager coach his players? The way the manager interacts with his players is how he makes the difference. That is how managers differ from each other I found. And with that, your favorite manager probably made the difference for you.

In summary: most managers make the difference in the way they interact with their players. So did Ferguson. He was a real people manager. "Ferguson knew perfectly how to deal with his footballers," the Portuguese soccer player Nani tells *Tribuna Expresso*. "He always felt how he could best guide us professionally and humanely. Thanks to him I have had some unique experiences."

In this book I want to talk about how you interact with your players, mostly children and young people. How do you respond to the motivation of your players, how do you get and keep their attention, how do you create a bond with each other and within the team? Of course it is also about how you deliver training sessions and coach the team during the match. In short, this book is about how you can connect with your players and how you can pass your knowledge and experiences on to your players. So that they have fun playing soccer, learn and become better soccer players. In other words: this book is

about how you can make a difference for your team and each individual player.

Sharing experience

I believe my experiences can help you answer these kinds of questions and to make a difference for your players. Why do I think so? Let me tell you.

From an early age I have had a passion for soccer and a passion for understanding and helping other people. On my thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth I played soccer in the youth academy of FC Eindhoven. Later I went to study Child and Adolescent Psychology at the University of Utrecht. In my bachelor research I investigated the effectiveness of different types of compliments on the behavior of children with behavioral problems. After that I studied Sports and Performance Psychology at the University of Amsterdam. In my master's research I looked at the role of mindset on learning and performance within PSV Eindhoven's youth academy. In 2014, after my studies, I co-developed the PSV FUNdament program, which at the time was very innovative.

Then I started there as a youth manager. After that I worked for Willem II's youth academy for two seasons. Again as a manager but I was also responsible for youth scouting, talent development and culture. In July 2020 I made a switch, since then I have been teacher in psychology at Fontys HR and Psychology. Besides teaching I have been involved in a cool project in which we conduct research into study success and supervision. In soccer I am still active at v.v. DBS Youth Under 19, have got my UEFA C and UEFA B license and soccer players come to me for personal assistance.

Theory in practice

For years I have been able to test the scientific insights regarding learning and performance – which I gained in my studies – on the soccer pitch, with experiences ranging from recreational teams to the highest youth level in the Netherlands. Because of this I have developed a vision on education, training and development. In addition, I bridged the gap between science and practice. On the soccer pitch you do not always have time to think about what you say or how you behave. You do what your intuition gives you and often that is good, but certainly not always. By acquiring knowledge, thinking about your role as a coach and gaining experience stimulates your intuition, so that you unconsciously say and do the right things on the pitch allowing you to connect with your players.

In this book

In this book, we will first discuss your leadership. What is your style to lead? What does coaching entail? What do you stand for? You learn to answer these questions for yourself in chapter 1. In chapter 2 we look at managing your team and the individual player. How do you motivate your team and players individually? I believe in the power of intrinsic motivation. What I strive for is that players play as much as possible from their own drive and I don't have to push them ahead. I especially teach practical tips and tools for motivating your players. In addition, I strongly believe in mindset. How does a player view things? What is his perspective? What beliefs does he have? Which beliefs help him in the process of learning and performing and which ones do not?

How you can change the beliefs of players, see Chapter 3. You will also discover in this chapter what you and your players can best focus on. In

chapter 4 I will discuss the selection of players for your team and match selection. How do most trainers do that? I will use scientific insights to answer questions such as: what is talent? Once you have the players in your club and in your team, in what kind of performance and learning culture do you want to work with them? Making appointments with the club, your team, and their parents is central to chapter 5. When your ideal culture is clear, we go to the pitch.

In chapter 6 I will give you direction for organizing and giving your training sessions. You get handles in the form of didactical principles, enabling your training session to run smoothly, so that you and your players learn, perform and having fun during your sessions. In this chapter you will also find a number of soccer exercises that work well in my experience and that underline my vision. In matches you would like to see what you are working on during the training sessions. In chapter 7 you get tools to help your players as well possible to guide and coach them during matches. Chapter 8 is about putting the ideas from this book into practice.

Then follows a chapter about the books and people who have inspired me. Do you need more information or training exercises? You will certainly find a number of concrete starting points here. Finally, you can see which sources I used. In this book I refer occasionally to inspiring videos. You can find the overview of all videos in this book on my website: www.bauer-vandelooy.nl/the-manager-makes-the-difference. Even after the release of this book I will keep adding inspiring examples here.

Football is for everyone

For the sake of readability, I have made the choice in this book to write "he" where you could also read "she". Because the youth players I trained are mainly boys, many examples from my own practice are about them. Also I use a lot of male football players and managers as an example, as many readers will know them. Unfortunately most female top players (at the moment) are less well known. That could give the impression that I regard soccer as a men's sport. Nothing is less true. I would urge anyone who likes it to play soccer. I am convinced that everyone - regardless gender, age, intelligence level or origin - can become a better soccer player.

Finally

The knowledge and experiences which I share with you work for me in my practice. I continuously improve my way of working through the knowledge and experiences that I keep on getting. At the same time, it remains my way, not *the* way. Just as you, I strive to be a good manager. There are several ways to be one. With this book I hope to get you thinking about that. Ultimately, only you yourself decide what to do with the knowledge and experiences from this book.

With my examples I could give you the idea that getting players in the first team is the sole purpose of youth soccer. That can be a goal, certainly. Ideally at the highest level, in the national team, one of the few sports teams that can fraternize a nation in such a way. But I think another goal is as least as important. That is to develop children by playing sports, in this case by playing soccer. They learn skills while playing soccer that will help them for the rest of their lives, such as working together, pursuing goals and persevere. In addition, soccer or

sports in general stimulate a fit and healthy body and friendships. The most important thing about playing soccer or exercising is having fun. Fun in football brings energy, with which future generations can be inspired.

Eindhoven, May 2022

Mauro van de Looij

1. The role and style of the manager

Who inspires players?

“If your actions inspire others to dream, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

Simon Sinek

Being a good manager is giving everything you've got. By doing what feels good and following your intuition, you will come a long way. To really make a difference as a manager, it's useful to be aware of your managing style. In this chapter I'll take you along the styles of four world famous managers: Louis van Gaal, Pep Guardiola, Jürgen Klopp and Guus Hiddink. You discover which style suits you and whether your style suits your team.

‘If your actions inspire others to dream, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.’ – Simon Sinek.

There is a team that appeals to the imagination of many people. Everywhere they come, people along the field start whispering to each other. The scope of these conversations is their awe for this team's spirit. Teammates help and coach each other, they cheer together as one team. They are the realization of the definition of team in the dictionary. Until suddenly something changes. The team no longer is a team. It no longer works together, teammates are blaming each other, the cheering has stopped. The whispering along the field is no longer about the team spirit, but precisely about the lack thereof. What has changed? The manager.

As a manager you are the leader of a team. With your words, behavior and body language you steer a group of players consciously and unconsciously. How you deal with success, failure, difficult situations, conflicts and other people, affects how your players behave. Especially in times of uncertainty, people tend to look at each other and especially to their leaders how to behave. You are a role model for your players, whether you like it or not. As a manager you bear responsibility and you play a certain role in your player's life.

This sometimes involves doubts, which every manager occasionally has. These doubts keep you on your toes. In addition, they remind you of your desire to fill in your role as manager properly, which is a great starting point. If you stop doubting, you should start worrying. It could be a signal that you are saturated as a manager. Are you then still in the right place?

It is also part of the deal that you do not get along well with every player. You were shaped by your parents, their genes as well as their upbringing, your friends, your managers, your teachers and the courses you have enjoyed, in short: you've been formed through all the experiences you have gained. This also applies for your players. Those experiences is why you have a better relationship with some players than with other players. That's fine. Do give each player the attention he needs no matter what relationship you have with him. A good connection does not mean that you are a friend to your players though. It is nice when they like you, but being friends with your players is more often not helpful in the process of learning and performance.

With soccer, or sports in general, come emotions. Just like your players on the field, you have emotions in your role as a manager. With your body language you radiate consciously or unconsciously what you feel, you cannot hide your emotions. So don't try to hide them, but be authentic and show them to your players. In worst case you express yourself incorrectly or too hard and you can come back to that later. In the best case scenario, your players understand your emotion, adjust their behavior if necessary and you have lost your emotion. Your players will also learn that it is okay to express emotions.

Being a manager is a craft which evolves with experience. You develop yourself over the years and for many managers, experiences make them a better manager. You don't have to be able to do or know everything right away, give yourself time and space to learn. As a manager you lead a group of players for whom you want all the best. It helps you in this if you are aware of your leadership style and how you can best connect your leadership style with your players.

Most importantly is for you to realize that you really can't go wrong as a manager. You always do well. Your players feel that you love interacting with them, or maybe soccer gets you enthusiastic and your players feel that or maybe both. That is worth a lot. Being a manager or interacting with young people is not an exact science. There are often several solutions to one problem. Do what feels good and follow your intuition. Stimulate your intuition with experiencing, listening to other managers and improve your knowledge about education and training.

1.1 What is your style?

"You better go under with your own vision than with the vision of another."

Johan Crujff

What do Guardiola, Klopp, Hiddink and Van Gaal have in common? They all have won a European club prize, the Champions League or its predecessor. But, to what extent did they win it in the same way? Did they train, have their teams play, and guide their team and players in the same way? I have my doubts. I think they each have their own style and several styles can lead to success. Or to failure. Klopp has more often not won a prize as a manager. Also the other three managers have had seasons without a prize or championship. They were sometimes even fired.

Scientists have written books about leadership styles and which style would be best. Partly because of the above, I do not believe that one leadership style is best, that one style works for every group of players, at every club and in every culture. I do believe in a match between the style of a manager with the player, group and club. To have a match it is important first that you know what your style is; what is your own, unique way of playing soccer, doing training sessions, managing, coaching and dealing with people?

Therefore, some questions to think about. What's your view on the following matters?

- What have you learned from your coaches, teachers, and managers regarding leadership?

- What is your style in dealing with others? How do you manage others?
- What is your definition of learning? What role does motivation play in this? And talent? How do you think performance comes about?
- Which people inspire you and why? What do you find important in dealing with others? What do you stand for?
- What do you want to achieve with your team and players individually? What impact do you want to have on your players?
- Finally: they sometimes say a team is a reflection of the manager, what would you like to see in your team?

These questions have no right or wrong answers. Every manager has his own way of thinking and doing. That way of thinking influences how you interact with your players. What is your way?

1.2 Which leadership styles are useful?

"You can't force your will on people. If you want them to act differently, you need to inspire them to change themselves."

Phil Jackson

'In matters of style, swim with the current. In matters of principle, stand like a rock.'

Thomas Jefferson.

Scientists Hersey and Blanchard describe four leadership styles which I think are very helpful: instruct, explain, participate and delegate. Of course a manager uses - often unconsciously and dependent of the situation - all four styles, but each manager has a preference for one style. I have linked a manager to each style, which is probably his dominant style based on his appearance, documentaries and stories about him.

The instructive leadership style is characterized by a dominant manager. This manager directs his players by telling how and what has to happen. That style suits players who need steering. This style also works well with inexperienced or relatively incompetent players. The manager that fits this style in my opinion is Louis van Gaal.

Josep (Pep) Guardiola is a manager who seems to fit the second leadership style: explain. Managers with this style know just like the previous style what and how they want it, but also like to explain to the players why. This style suits players who need guidance and knowledge, but also have an opinion of their own. This style also works well with players who still have to learn a lot and be somewhat motivated.

Managers with a preference for one of these two styles usually have a lot of expertise regarding content. They are experts in soccer.

The third leadership style consists of managers who want to inspire their players by involving them in the plan. This type of manager provides frameworks and freedom. For example: this is our way of playing, this is the situation, what are we going to do to achieve our goal? This seems to be the most dominant style of Jürgen Klopp. Managers with a participatory style want to inspire and fit well with players who are highly motivated, whether they are experienced or somewhat competent.

Guus Hiddink is a manager who fits the fourth and final leadership style: delegate. Delegating suits well with players who are highly motivated and highly competent. They are able to work more independently. A manager with this style monitors the goals and assists the players throughout the process. Managers with a preference for these last two styles especially have a lot of knowledge of people. They are experts in coaching and strike a chord within the players they work with.

Of course every manager uses - Van Gaal, Guardiola, Klopp and Hiddink inclusive - any leadership style in various situations he faces. In fact, the top manager stands out because he masters all styles and uses the right style for the right player at the right time. One player needs a different approach than another player. And, of course a manager does not consciously think about which style to use as one of his players asks him a question during training. But it is nice if your (preferred) style matches the players you work with. In fact: it creates confusion and frustration if your leadership style doesn't match. Every player, every group of

players, every club, every culture and every manager is different. The degree of your success as a manager, whatever your definition of success is, lies partly in the match of your style with the team and club you have chosen to work with.

A manager can change styles over time, by the way, so that it continues to match what his team needs. Maybe he starts with the instructing style, but he delegates by the end of the year more, because the team has developed in such a way that that style is better with it suits. Toon Gerbrands, who has worked with Van Gaal, told me that this is how Van Gaal works. At first every player executes what Van Gaal wants and if that is the case, Van Gaal gives his players little by little more control. A nice process that could also be your practice.

My style also differs per player and per context, I experienced. During my time at the youth academies of PSV and Willem II I used all four styles, but I mainly worked in a participatory and delegated way. With DBS, a grass roots club, I also use all four styles, but I used explain most of the time. This had to do with the intrinsic motivation and game understanding of the players I suspect. These are relatively more present in players in the academies of professional academies than with the U19 players of this grass roots soccer club. Obviously, these differences are relative and they can differ per club and per player.

Ultimately, at DBS O19, during the season I used the participating and delegating styles more often. Because every player and every team wants their own choices on and off the field, provided they are able to do so. I estimate each times in how much freedom each player on my team can take and give him that degree of freedom. With the right

guidance, I am convinced, you can teach every player the skills so that he can make his own choices and he becomes independent on the soccer field and beyond. Finally it's all about the players and their independence, after all they are the ones who play.

According to Harvard Business Review (HBR) a shift in leadership takes place in business. Because the world changes so fast, the manager no longer has all the answers, but is he most effective when he listens to his team members and coaches them. In this way he enables his team members to work independently and perform. According to HBR, the manager of the future is more a kind of coach.

Dealing with players from grass roots or professional academies players is not such a day-and-night difference as people sometimes seem to think. Those player are much more alike than you might suspect. Of course there is a difference in quality, players in a professional academy generally play on a higher level. But, just like with players from grass roots, there can be big differences in qualities or characters within a team. A team from a professional academy has a best player and a worst player. There too are players with motivation problems, players who have difficulty with understanding the game, players who are insecure, players who get angry with other players, players that dislike the qualities of another player, players that need attention, players that need to learn to work together, you name it. Both at an amateur level as well at a professional level you as a manager lead a group of children who work together playing football.

1.3 What do (young) players appreciate in a manager?

"They may forget what you said, but they never will forget how you made them feel."

Carl W. Buehner

What do players actually like about trainers? How important is your bond with them? Studies in schools have shown that the bond between teacher and student predicts motivation, achievements and expectations of future relationships within children. In 2018, researchers from Australia asked children about their teachers: "What do you value in a teacher and what not?" All children, including children with so-called disruptive behavior, were unanimous in their answers: they don't appreciate a teacher that behaves unfairly, unreasonably or hostile. Think of a teacher who being overly angry for a minor offense, always picking the same child or yelling at children.

The teacher that is present for the student, listens to the student and makes jokes every now and then is the favorite. Teachers who behave kindly, caring and with humor are appreciated by children. It is striking that only 10 percent of children say they value a teacher for effective teaching.

Chances are, your players will find the bond they have with you important, and perhaps even more important than your soccer knowledge and training sessions.

This ties in with what some top managers, such as Guardiola and Klopp, say. They state that running a soccer team does indeed consists of

leading training sessions, devising tactics and making formations. But the most important aspect of being a manager, they find, is dealing with players. That a manager gets to know the player and the person behind the player so the manager understands him and can help him getting the most of himself.

SUMMARY

What's important about your way of leading?

1. WHEN THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE MANAGER MATCHES WITH THE TEAM AND THE CLUB, IT WORKS BEST FOR EVERYONE
2. BE AWARE OF YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE AND WHAT YOUR TEAM AND EVERY PLAYER NEEDS
3. OVERALL, PLAYERS APPRECIATE IT WHEN YOU TAKE A FRIENDLY POSITION, ARE PRESENT FOR THEM AND JOKE EVERY NOW AND THEN