

Don't Call Me Coach

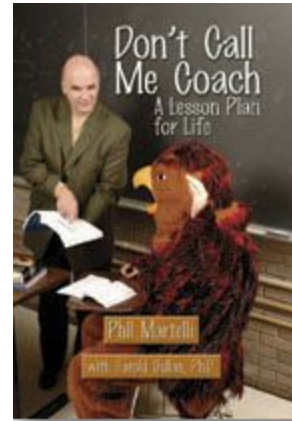
A Lesson Plan for Life

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with Harold Gullan, Ph.D.

CHAPTER ONE

WE ARE ALL COACHES



Yes, I really do talk to hawks. If not in costume or in the classroom, they're around me all the time, and always on my mind. What they represent, Philadelphia's Saint Joseph's University, is special to me in so many ways. "The Hawk Will Never Die!" has been our rallying cry for as long as I can remember. But, unlike every other college mascot in America, the Hawk also never quits. Somehow the student inside flaps at least one wing, and generally both, throughout every second of every game—something like 3,500 times. Running those figure eights around the court, he (or she) certainly earns a scholarship as much as any player. To me such tenacity not only says a good deal about a person and a school, but a lot about life itself.

I suppose that's why I wanted to write this book. At fifty-three (is that really possible?), I'm not quite ready for an autobiography, but there may be something in my experiences on and off of Hawk Hill, and on and off the court, that will resonate in your life, as well. Anyway, that's what I hope. Wherever you are, whatever you do, this is my conversation with you—life lessons we can share.

Having the title of head coach is very flattering, and when you factor in that there are only 336 jobs like mine—Division I head men's basketball coaches—when you think of how small a portion of the population that represents, you could easily get full of yourself. There's no question that coaching is egotistical. To be successful, I have to believe that I can do it better than the guy at Temple or the guy at Villanova or the guy at Saint

Bonaventure or the guy at Wyoming. There has to be some ego involved. Still, it's important to take your job more seriously than yourself. It happens that I'm an ordinary person with an extraordinary job. But when we have opportunities, we need to take advantage of them. And, at some point, don't we all have opportunities—and, ordinary or not, don't we all have some talents we can make the most of?

Successful coaching, like success in any other setting, is all about building relationships. It's about being organized, and energizing people. A lot of coaching comes down to maximizing people's skills. And so, when you consider all these things, just about everyone who reads this book is a coach. Everyone who reads it is on a team. If you're part of a family—that's a team; business—that's a team; school—that's a team, as are charities and churches. Whatever you do on a day-to-day basis—you're on a team. And if you're part of a team, then you coach. There's no butcher, there's no baker, there's no candlestick-maker (are they still making candlesticks?) who doesn't build relationships, doesn't organize, energize, maximize the people and the skills and the tools that they have around them. How well do you do it?