



BE A LIGHT

A GUIDE TO TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHING

TJ Rosene

FORWARD

by Mano Watsa, President of PGC Basketball

Every once in a while, a resource comes along that captures the heart of what coaching is truly about. *Be a Light: A Guide to Transformational Coaching* is one of those resources.

Over the past two decades, I've had the privilege of traveling the world as a coach, trainer, and speaker to help over 250,000 players and coaches from middle school to the NBA, WNBA, and every level in between. And time after time, I've seen something profound: the most impactful coaches aren't just teaching the game; they're shaping lives.

They're not driven by the scoreboard. Instead, they're driven by a calling.

A calling to use coaching – one of the greatest platforms for influence on young people in today's world – to transform the lives (and trajectory) of athletes who are struggling mightily in their quest for connection, acceptance, confidence, and a true identity of self.

And while coaching might just be one of the toughest, most underappreciated jobs in today's society, we have the extraordinary opportunity to be a light in these kids' lives. **We GET the opportunity to model character, leadership, hard work, and how to live a life filled with purpose and integrity.**

IN MY OPINION, THERE IS NO GREATER CALLING IN LIFE.

And there is no greater mentor on the subject than my good friend, TJ Rosene.

This eBook is a powerful reflection of those truths.

TJ Rosene poured his heart, experience, and wisdom into these pages. With authenticity and conviction, he unpacks what it means to coach for transformation, not just transaction. His words will remind you why you first picked up a whistle. They'll encourage you to keep going on hard days. And they'll



challenge you to lead with clarity, care, and conviction.

You don't need a championship banner to make a difference. You need heart, vision, and courage to lead differently: to invest in the person before the player, choose love over fear, connection over control, and purpose over pressure.

As you read this eBook, I hope you're inspired, equipped, and more than anything, reminded of this:

The coach you become can impact who your players become.

Let's keep leading. Let's keep loving. Let's be a light.

With gratitude and belief,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mano Watsa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mano Watsa

President, PGC Basketball

1. WHY COACHING NEEDS A NEW STANDARD

Today's teenagers and adolescents are facing more than just pressure on the court. They're navigating a world that's full of noise—social media, anxiety, isolation, and constant expectations. Many of them are trying to figure out who they are, where they belong, and whether they matter.

That's where we, as coaches, come in.

Over the years, I've come to believe coaching is one of the greatest callings in the world. We don't just teach the game—we shape lives. And for some of our players, we may be one of the few consistent, caring adults they have in their corner.

That's why transformational coaching matters more than ever.

When we coach with purpose and lead with love, we create an environment where players feel seen, safe, and significant. We help them grow not just as athletes, but as people. And in a world that's often uncertain and overwhelming, I believe we have the chance to be something powerful:

A LIGHT.

We can be a light that guides. A light that encourages. A light that brings out the best in every young person we coach.

“When you coach with clarity, care, and conviction, you become a light in the lives of your players—someone who shows them what's possible, and who they can become.”

That's the heart behind this eBook. It's not a playbook—it's a reminder of why you started coaching and how your impact goes far beyond the scoreboard. My hope is that these pages encourage you, challenge you, and remind you: You matter. Your coaching matters. And the way you lead could change someone's life.

LET'S GET TO WORK.

2. WHAT IS TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHING?

To me, transformational coaching is all about purpose over performance. It's about developing young people and young basketball players.

I've seen both sides of it—coaches who lead with fear and control, and coaches who lead with trust and connection. The ones who make the biggest difference are the ones who focus on who their players are becoming, not just what they can do on the court.

Here's the key difference: **transactional coaching is focused on what players can do for the coach**—win games, score points, execute plays. It's built around outcomes and often relies on fear, control, or rewards to get results.



Transformational coaching, on the other hand, is focused on what the coach can do for the player. It's built on relationships, purpose, and long-term growth. It values the person over the performance.

Transactional coaches ask, "What can I get out of this player?"

Transformational coaches ask, "Who is this player becoming because of me?"

Here's how I define a transformational coach:

- Someone who shows up with intention every day
- Someone who listens well and builds trust
- Someone who holds high standards while leading with empathy
- Someone who remembers that we're coaching hearts, not just hoops

I often say, "Transformational coaching is what happens when you lead with who you are, not just what you know."

And it's not about being perfect. It's about being present.

3. COMPARING COACHING APPROACHES: TRANSACTIONAL VS. TRANSFORMATIONAL

Use this table to reflect on the mindset, methods, and impact of your coaching style:

TRANSACTIONAL COACHING	TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHING
Focuses on outcomes and performance	Focuses on growth and relationships
Asks: "What can I get from this player?"	Asks: "What can I give to this player?"
Uses fear, control, or rewards to motivate	Uses trust, connection, and purpose to inspire
Sees mistakes as failure	Sees mistakes as learning opportunities
Values wins over well-being	Values long-term impact and player development
Coaches the athlete	Coaches the whole person
Gives feedback to correct	Gives feedback to grow
Relies on compliance	Builds commitment
Short-term focus	Legacy-driven mindset

Every coach leans into both styles at times. The key is being aware—and choosing transformation more often, on purpose.

4. WHAT ATHLETES REALLY WANT FROM A COACH

Players today don't need us to yell more or drill harder—they need us to show up differently.

They want to be seen. They want to be believed in. And they want to know they matter beyond the game.

As I grew in my coaching journey, I began to ask more questions and listen more closely. I became less focused on directing every moment and more focused on building genuine connection. That's when I noticed something powerful—players started trusting me more, and in turn, they began trusting themselves.

Here's what I've learned players respond to:

- Honesty that comes from a place of caring
- Conversations that go beyond basketball
- Environments where they feel emotionally safe

I always say, "You can't coach someone well if you don't know them well."

If we want their best, we have to give them our best. And that starts with presence, patience, and purpose.

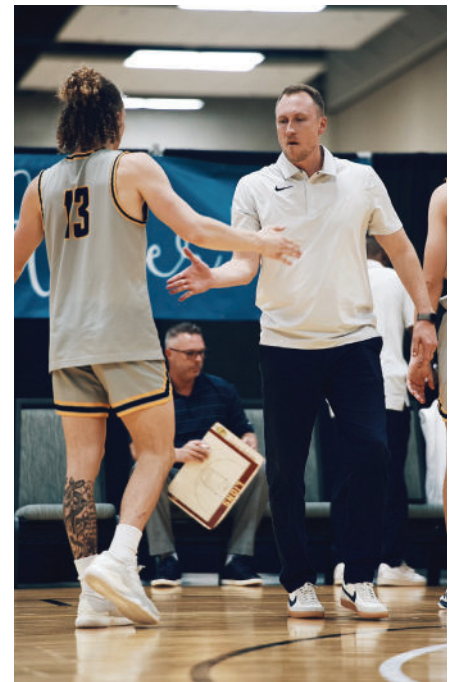


5: CREATING AN EMOTIONALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Creating an emotionally safe environment is essential for transformational coaching. Use this checklist to assess and strengthen the way you show up for your players:

- Greet players by name and with eye contact each day
- Check in with players individually—ask how they’re doing outside of basketball
- Respond to mistakes with teaching, not punishment
- Celebrate effort, progress, and attitude—not just performance
- Create team norms that allow for vulnerability and trust
- Avoid sarcasm and public shaming—correct in private when possible
- Model emotional regulation and self-awareness
- Encourage players to support each other verbally and emotionally
- Provide consistent encouragement and affirmation
- Make space for players to speak and be heard

When players feel emotionally safe, they’re more likely to take risks, push through challenges, and grow into confident leaders.



6: THE POWER OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Culture isn't created by accident—it's created by what we allow and what we reinforce. And I've learned over the years that the way we talk as coaches shapes everything.

Our words set the tone. They carry weight. And they either breathe life into our team or drain it.

That's why I'm so intentional about the language I use with my players. It's not just about motivation—it's about identity.

Here are a few tools I use consistently:



Identity Statements

"This is who we are."



Team Standards

"This is how we operate."



Daily Language

"This is what we value."

When we speak with clarity and consistency, our team starts to live it out. Culture stops being something we talk about—it becomes something that guides our habits, our relationships, and our performance.

The words you choose today will shape the kind of team you become tomorrow. And it won't just show up in your locker room or during warmups—it will reveal itself in the heat of the battle, in the biggest games, when pressure and stress are at their highest.

In those moments, your culture will either hold or break. The habits you've built, the standards you've reinforced, and the language you've repeated will shape how your team responds when it matters most.

7: THE TRANSFORMATIONAL PRACTICE PLAN

One of the biggest shifts I made in my coaching was realizing that every practice is an opportunity for more than just basketball. It's a chance to develop leaders, teach life lessons, and build habits that stick.

That's what I call a transformational practice.

Yes, we still work hard. We compete. We grind. But every drill, every rep, every moment is anchored in purpose. We don't waste time—we use it to grow our players inside and out.

HERE'S HOW I BUILD THAT INTO MY PRACTICES:

Start every practice with players expressing gratitude—something or someone they're thankful for that day.

Invite players to share examples of how they've brought our team values to life—on or off the court.

Design activities that build communication and trust.

Create opportunities for players to lead, not just follow.

We can coach at a high level and still care deeply. Those things aren't in conflict—they're connected.

We're not just building teams. We're developing people.



8: THE IMPORTANCE OF DEPOSITS

Something I'm deeply passionate about is coaching the person first.

Behind every jersey is a story. Every player is carrying something you may never see. When we recognize that, we shift from performance-only coaching to people-first coaching.

Some of the most powerful coaching moments I've had came not in the gym, but in one-on-one conversations, on bus rides, or sitting in the hallway after practice.

HERE'S WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION:

Ask players how they're really doing then listen.

Affirm who they are, not just what they do.

Create space for life talks, mindset work, and encouragement.

When players know you care more about them than what they do for you, everything changes.

One concept I've leaned on is the idea of making consistent "deposits" in the emotional connection bank.

Every time you listen, encourage, affirm, or show up for a player, you're making a deposit. And the more deposits you make, the more trust you build.

That trust is what allows you to occasionally make the necessary "withdrawals"—challenging them, correcting them, or holding them to a higher standard—without damaging the relationship.

It's one of the most powerful tools a coach can use to lead with both love and accountability. They play harder. They open up. They grow.

9: REAL COACHES. REAL IMPACT.

Over the years, I've had the privilege of walking alongside hundreds of coaches—many of whom have completely transformed how they lead.

One coach used our standards model to shift his team culture from selfish to selfless. Another coach told me they were ready to quit until they found new energy and purpose through transformational coaching. And I've seen entire programs rebuild trust after tough seasons—simply because a coach chose to lead differently.

These stories remind me that you don't need to be at a big school or win a state title to make a real difference. You just need to care deeply, lead intentionally, and stay anchored in your purpose.

Meet Coach Camille Cox



Coach Camille Cox's journey as a coach started like many others, she stepped up to coach her daughters. Fast forward 8 years and as a first-time girls Varsity High School Coach at Christian Homeschool Sports Ministries, her team finished 4th in the nation. Coach Camille attributes much of her team's success to NATO—a PGC acronym that means 'not attached to the outcome.' She leads her team to focus on what they can control.

Coach Cox emphasizes coaching in a way that will carry through life and impact players on and off the court. She has learned to instill a growth mindset in players—the most important thing they can do is grow and improve, everything else will come.

Meet Coach Bill Earley



Coach Bill Earley has been a girl's youth basketball coach for 4 years, and like many others, jumped in to coach his daughter. With a background in law and business leadership, Bill's guiding principle expands far beyond X's and O's. Instead, he focuses on instilling success in others, fully understanding that by doing so, his success is guaranteed. Bill's number one goal is to have a positive impact.

Coach Earley received 3 letters from players this year identifying him as a servant leader which both humbled him and touched his heart.

10: HOW PGC COACHING SUPPORTS TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHES

I'm proud to be part of a team that equips coaches to lead with purpose.

At PGC, we don't just talk about transformational coaching—we live it. Through our track sessions, online content, and clinics, we help coaches gain clarity, build culture, and coach with greater impact.

HERE'S WHAT WE OFFER:

Track sessions that challenge and refresh your approach.

25 courses on every aspect of coaching—including 250+ in-depth teaching videos.

A deep wealth of online content that help you lead more effectively.

A network of coaches who care about doing it right. We have trained over 15,000 coaches.

Want to dive deeper into how to become a transformational coach?

ENGAGE WITH THE FOLLOWING PGC COACHING MEMBER TOPIC AREAS IN OUR MEMBERSHIP PORTAL:

- How to lead your staff, players, and parents
- How to build your program
- How to build culture
- How to manage conflict
- How to connect with players
- How to communicate better
- How to correct players
- How to motivate players
- How to teach the game better
- How to develop a player's confidence



When coaches grow, everyone around them grows too. And that's what we're committed to at PGC.

11: START YOUR TRANSFORMATIONAL JOURNEY

So where do you go from here?

It starts with one step.

HERE ARE A FEW QUESTIONS I LIKE TO ASK MYSELF AND OTHER COACHES:

Who do I want to be for my players?

What kind of impact do I want to leave?

What's one small habit I can start that aligns with that?

You don't have to have it all figured out. You just have to start with intention.

If you're ready to grow, we're ready to walk with you. Learn more about becoming a PGC member at coach.pgcbasketball.com



Transformational Coaches:

Consider the following areas in your coaching today. Which ones are strengths, and what are some transformational coaching areas you wish to further develop:

- Lead with humility and purpose
- Communicate with clarity and compassion
- Coach the whole person, not just the player
- Build strong cultures grounded in values
- Develop leadership and ownership in their athletes
- Create emotionally safe environments that allow players to thrive
- Model what they teach
- Stay curious, reflective, and open to growth

12: FINAL WORD — THE COACH EVERY ATHLETE REMEMBERS

At the end of the day, our players may forget the scores and the plays. But they won't forget how we made them feel.

That's the heart of transformational coaching.

You have a platform. You have a purpose. You have a calling.

So coach with clarity. Coach with care. Coach with courage.

Let's be a light.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "TJ Rosene". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

TJ Rosene

PGC Coaching

“BE A LIGHT IN THE COACHING WORLD”