

BECOMING A MORAL EXEMPLAR COACH

Doing the Right Thing for the Right Reason

Nicole M. LaVoi, Ph.D.

University of Minnesota

@DrSportPsych





(Senn, 1995)

**What you do and
permit is what you
promote.**

©2023 Nicole M. LaVoi, PhD

THE TUCKER CENTER

for Research on Girls & Women in Sport



THE **TUCKER**
CENTER



for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

@TuckerCenter
TuckerCenter.org



**Tucker
Center
Talks**



GAME ON: WOMEN CAN COACH



[Tuckercenter.org](https://tuckercenter.org)

Be her reason to stay in sport.



CoachingHER.com



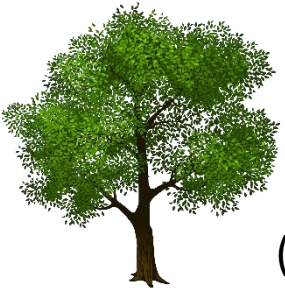


Moral Exemplarity

Who is a *moral exemplar*?

Someone who is:

- 1) Committed to moral ideals or principles
- 2) Driven to act consistently based on moral ideals
- 3) Inspires and influences others toward moral action
- 4) Humble and lacking concern for one's own ego or self-interest



(Colby & Damon, 1994)

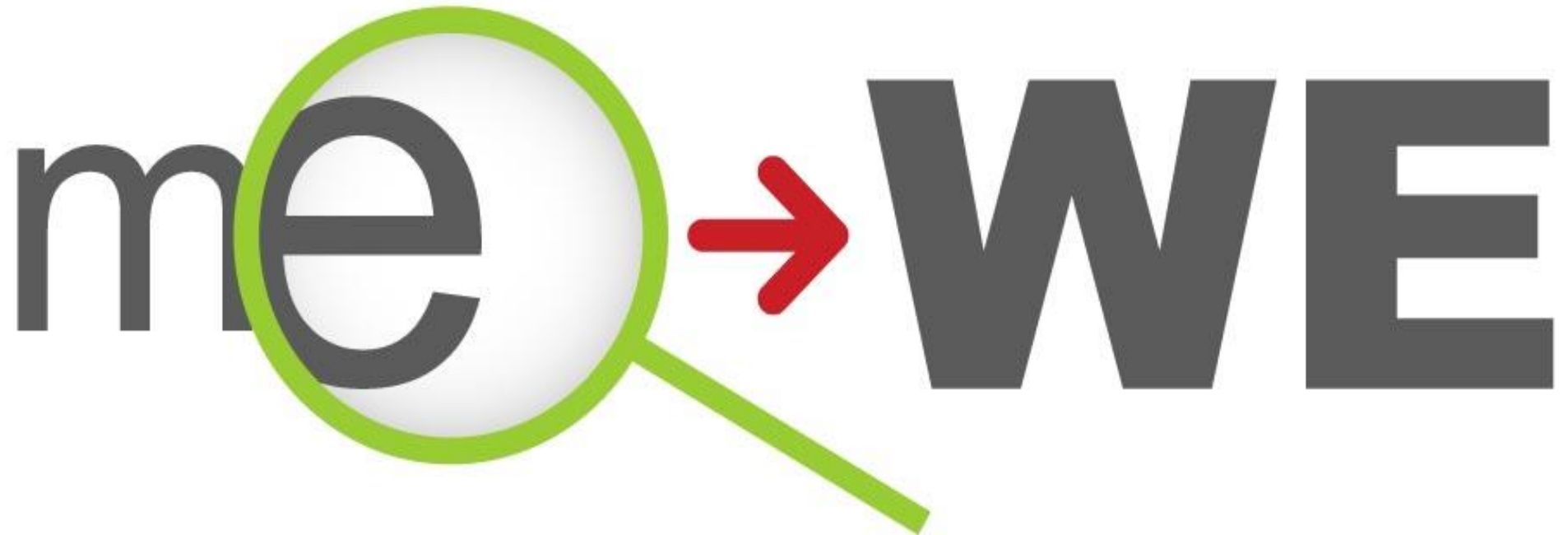
Moral Exemplar Coaches' Understandings of Professionalism

- Internal moral compass
- Coaching = Teaching
- Other-focused
- Care & Respect
- Always learning
- High internal standards
- Reconciles conflict/paradoxes
- Coaching is a calling

HOW TO COACH FOR MORAL CHARACTER?

- **Develop & foster your own moral identity**
- **Be intentional=Make it part of your culture**
 - **Every practice/game = consistent messaging**
- **Teach perspective taking & empathy**
- **Allow autonomy-athletes must self-regulate and choose**
- **Use teachable moments**
- **Provide time for discussion**
- **Set expectations**
 - **Set consequences & accountability collectively**
- **Model warmth, acceptance, support and care**
- **Be a role model on how to think and act “morally”**
- **Establish strong & collective team norms: “WE”**
 - **Opportunity to help & serve others**

Doing what is good and right for the team.



Degree of “WE”: collectiveness of the team norms

Moral Exemplars Teach...

The value of living a good life *in the community* (the team).

How should **WE** get along on our team?

How do **WE** treat each other on our team?

How do **WE** build up our team and teammates?

How do **WE** help one another flourish?

Team Norms = How **WE**...

- cast our shadow & lead (style)
- expect members of this team to act
- Respond to challenge/failure
- treat each other *
- onboard new people
- Communicate & talk to each other
- view power (power-over v. power-with)
- handle & deal with conflict
- value and talk about winning
- meet athlete needs
- understand and enforce expectations, rules & policies
- compete, practice and prepare
- hold each other accountable
- treat our opponents, officials
- act in public
- discipline members that don't follow rules or norms

0

- Do what rule says: Avoid punishment, obey

1

- Do as I'm told by an authority figure

2

- Do what is best for me: Eye for an eye

3

- Do as expected to be “good” or “nice”

4

- Do my duty and respect authority

5

- Do what is right and fair, for everyone

G R E Y

A R I E A

- 1. Work strictly by the rule book**
- 2. Work in the grey area, interpretation matters**
- 3. Work within “the spirit of the rule”**
- 4. Work consistently within personal/moral values**

(Kihl, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2009)

An ethical **dilemma** is a complex situation that often involves an apparent mental conflict between **moral** imperatives, in which to obey one would result in infringing another.