

# TEAM THEMES FOR LIFE

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## Theme # 1

### Character/Integrity

Being a person of integrity is especially critical for people in leadership positions or those who aspire to become leaders. People will not follow leaders for very long who do not have integrity because they can't be trusted. The moment bad character and a lack of integrity are exposed, people start "heading for the hills" away from the supposed leader. This is because while the person said that s/he stood for certain things or certain standards, once it is found out that the person really did not live by those standards, s/he can no longer be trusted to be telling the truth.

However, integrity and great character are required of people in all walks and stages of life, not just leaders. No matter what you do in this world, if you interact with others, you must live with integrity if you want people to trust you. Trust is a key building block of any solid relationship, and trust starts with integrity.

Integrity is basically when your actions and your beliefs are in alignment. When you say you have certain standards and values, and then you go out and live by those standards and values, you show yourself to be a person of integrity and character. You are someone who walks your talk. Your word is good. Your signature has value. People know that what you say and what you do will be one and the same.

However, when you claim certain standards, and then when faced with a choice, choose to act in a way that is not accordance with your standards, you are living a lie, and you are showing yourself to be a person who lacks integrity.

For instance, student-athletes are often asked to sign an athletic contract. Their signature on that athletic contract is saying, "I will live by the standards and rules set forth in this document." However, the person who lacks integrity signs the contract and then goes out and does whatever s/he wants to do without regard to what the standards and rules have set forth as the proper behavior for them to exhibit.

As you make your way through life, choose to walk the path of great character and integrity. As Alan Simpson once stated, "If you have integrity, nothing else matters. If you don't have integrity, nothing else matters."

## Theme # 2 – Trust

Trust is a key piece to any relationship. In the last post, I discussed how important character/integrity are to the relationships that you have with people. I said that character/integrity are absolutely vital for anyone in a leadership position. Integrity is one of the key ingredients to creating trust in others, and leaders have to have the trust of the people they lead.

However, trust is not critical only for leaders. For any relationship you develop with someone, there must be trust for that relationship to thrive. Trust allows massive growth in the relationship. It allows people to speak openly, honestly, and freely with the other person. This is critical for the relationship to grow and develop and become something deep and meaningful.

The moment trust is broken, the relationship breaks down. Open, honest, and clear communication is stunted or halted completely. When people don't trust one another, they shut themselves off from the other person. A breach of trust stifles any chance for true growth to occur.

So how do you create trust? Bruce Brown of Proactive Coaching has an outstanding booklet called “**The Impact of Trust.**” In the booklet and the presentation based on the booklet, Brown discusses what I call the 3 C’s of trust – **Competence, Caring and Character.** To develop trust with others, you must be competent in your field, you must care about others, and you must be a person of character. I always add another C to the mix – Consistency. To create and develop real trust with others, you must demonstrate your competence, caring, and character consistently over time. (I have just scratched the surface here. To delve deep into these concepts, I highly recommend you pick up “The Impact of Trust” at the Proactive Coaching website – [www.proactivecoaching.info](http://www.proactivecoaching.info).)

Who do you trust? Why? When you think about the people you trust, chances are that the 4 C’s mentioned above are key elements to your level of trust in them. Now the big question becomes this – Who trusts you? Are you doing those same things in your relationships that those people you trust are doing in their relationship with you? If not, it is time to start. This is the best way to develop the trust necessary for you to have a trusting, fruitful, meaningful relationship with those people.

### **Theme # 3 – Toughness**

The kind of toughness we are focused on is a mental toughness, one that helps people persevere through tough times and stay positive and focused through all that life throws at them “**Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is to try just one more time.**” — *Thomas Edison*

One of the great things that athletics teaches us is to not be deterred by the “bumps in the road.” People with a toughness about them keep their eyes up and stay focused on visualizing the finished product. They are committed to continuous improvement, and they stay focused on it through any and all adversity that comes their way. As athletes and teams understand, practices and competitions are fraught with difficulties that they must work persevere through to stay focused on victory.

The same perseverance and mental toughness that is required for athletes to handle their competition will help them in other areas of life. All of us will be faced with all kinds of issues, dilemmas, and problems. Our ability to handle all that life throws at us will be affected by how “tough” we are. This mental toughness allows us to stay positive and productive in the face of difficult odds. A truly mentally tough person has a spirit that cannot be broken. No matter how many problems, roadblocks, or setbacks they face, mentally tough people stay the course and fight to the end.

Every day we are tested in various ways. How we handle each test determines our success or failure. But how we handle our failures is directly affected by our mental toughness. Those who are mentally tough bounce back quickly from mistakes and failures. They have created habits and rituals that help them move on from the failure and re-focus on the task at hand. From physical gestures to saying certain words, phrases, or acronyms to oneself, these rituals help bring the people back into a state that allows them to work to achieve their goals.

As we make our way through life, there will be bumps in the road. By preparing for and persevering through those moments, mentally tough people give themselves a greater chance of overcoming the obstacles they face and coming out on top. Their “toughness” helps them to become all that they are capable of becoming.

### **Theme # 4 – Passion**

**“There is no passion to be found playing small—  
in settling for a life that is less than the one  
you are capable of living.”**

— *Nelson Mandela*

Passion is a key ingredient of anyone's ultimate success. You can have success in some things without passion, but success without passion won't last for long. The reason is that in order to compete or perform at the highest levels for any length of time, you have to love what you are doing. You also have to love the process and the grind because the process and the grind are necessary for you to continue your success. No matter what you do in life, do it with passion.

Passion fires us up to go out, compete, perform, and give everything we have to whatever we seek to succeed in. That can be a sport, a class, a job, a family, or any other part of our life that is important to us. People with passion bring so much more to everything they do and everyone with whom they come in contact. When others see their passion, they often pick up on it and start displaying their own passion as well.

Passion is a key ingredient for anyone who has excelled and had success in some endeavor, especially for those whose success has been sustained over a period of time. Where would Bill Gates, Phil Knight, Steve Jobs, or any other successful entrepreneur have gotten to without passion? While they may have all had great ideas, passion drove them to heights they could have only imagined without it.

Life is so much more exciting for people with passion. Put your heart and soul into all you do and let it show to the world around you. You and the people who you touch in your life will be glad you did.