AN OPERATING SYSTEM:

On court coaching is aiding in discovery and mastery. However, any head coach knows the job comes with so many more responsibilities than just being on the court with players. In reality the position requires more responsibility away from the court than it often does on. The best coaches embrace this responsibility because it frequently comes with impacting so many lives internally and outside the organization.

The higher the level we go, the more the profession turns into an entertainment business and becomes completely results driven. Your win-loss record is what matters and quickly can become your identity and the narrative of your very public career. You either won the game or lost the game. There is no in between. Media requirements, guest appearances, meetings unrelated to basketball become more the norm than the game planning and practice prep. Maybe rightfully so? Coaches are paid higher salaries than ever. Earning potential is through the roof if you strike gold at the precise time on the right opportunity. Thus, if you don't win enough, you're out of a job faster than it took for you to get there, but at least you were paid and set yourself up with financial freedom.

However, for many of us. We don't coach for the paycheck. It's actually for the love of the game. Remember, embracing the responsibility of so many lives? What makes these coaches also so special is that they constantly are getting back to the root of what the job is. Helping people. Developing people. Serving people. Building lifelong relationships of genuine appreciation and admiration.

How do the best coaches continue to teach, lead, and inspire? It's all in how they build their programs.

For a coach and organization to have sustainable success they need create a cycle of positive momentum that's built from three main abstract categories.

1) **Development**
2) **Culture**
3) **Winning**

Development: We have an innate need to feel like we are improving and our time is valued. We want to feel like there is a genuine investment in our development for the purpose of forward progress. For an organization, development strengthens the foundation, fundamental after fundamental, value after value, brick by brick.

Culture: We have an inherent need for a sense of belonging. We must feel like we are part of something greater than ourselves. We need to feel safe and empowered by the organization's values around us. Culture sets the stage for how we interact with one another, how we learn and problem solve together. Culture is what we do every day.

Winning: When we put forth time and effort, we need something in return. It doesn't always need to come back to us in terms of wins, but we must see and feel progress towards our goals. Additionally, in this profession if we aren't demonstrating a level of progress, we will no longer be employed.

Remember, positive development won't exist without culture. Winning won't occur without development and culture. Sustained development and culture won't happen without winning. It's like Jim Collin's Fly Wheel example from the book Good to Great. Exceling in one category may slightly move the needle in favor of your organization's success, but it won't create long lasting sustained success. An organization needs all three categories operating together in harmony, one moving the other, ultimately creating positive momentum.

As coaches, we need to create systems within each of these three categories to organize ourselves and get everyone moving in the same direction together.

For example, with a sport like basketball that is highly technical and tactical on the floor and has tons of moving parts off of it, we must incorporate a variety of systems into our programming to help create structure and processes. Any good program has the following systems.

1) **Offensive System**
2) **Defensive System**
3) **Development System**
4) **Language Systems**
5) **Operating System**

Offensive System: On the court, a good offensive system has structure that curate's creativity. It empowers strengths and conceals weaknesses of individual players. It's interlaced with concepts that help bring individuals together so the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It's sound but flexible.

Defensive System: A defensive outcome often times can be the result of what we put into it. A concoction of desire, effort, competitive spirt and technique can provide a potent result any coach would dream of. Regardless, there must be a system in place. Without a system in place, this sounds like a perfect example of "don't mistake activity for achievement", a quote from legendary Coach John Wooden. A good defensive system has a strong foundation of principles and techniques but is flexible in strategy. With purpose, it adapts to the strengths of an opponent but not at the expense of compromising the integrity of the system.

Development System: A good development system consistently fills, refills and overflows three buckets. We can only train and improve our mind, body, and craft. For players, all three buckets must be constantly filled and refilled if we are going to maximize their opportunity to get bigger, stronger, faster, and be able to pass, dribble,

and shoot better. Mentally, we must assist players in finding meaning, connection, and control of emotions and even thoughts.

Language System: A good language system allows a team to self-organize and communicate with one another efficiently and effectively. Language should be used to drive a team's sought-after goals and outcomes. A communication system develops a sense of belonging for its members, bringing our team together and speaking in only a way that we would understand. The more efficient and effective the language is, the greater chance of maximizing the team's winning potential.

Operating System: A good operating system has checks and balances. There are procedures in place counterbalancing influences by which an organization faces every single day. These procedures are persuaded by our values and help develop our culture. For example, if our team's scheduled flight departure is at 2:00pm we should know to arrive at the plane at least 90 minutes before departure. Security checkpoints, the handling of luggage, etc. all influence the outcome of departing on time. If we have no operating system in place, something as simple as knowing when to arrive at the plane with plenty of time so the team can depart on time suddenly becomes a challenge.

Use technology…

For all of these systems, the use of technology can help automate simple tasks. For example, diagraming our offensive and defensive systems helps speed up the learning process. By capturing our systems on paper or in video we provide our staff and players tangible examples of our systems. This empowers us to have basketball conversations that can help us develop and problem solve.

With our development system, we can use technology to capture infinite amounts of data. This data can be used to influence how we develop skill workouts and even monitor the health and wellness of staff and players. Using cameras, we can capture different angles of a player's movement pattern. Thus, speeding up the decision-making process on how to improve a player's technique for a skill like shooting.

Technology at times can make the complex task simple. Technology can help organize everyone on staff, for example with aiding in the organization's communication. Need to get word out quickly to everyone in the organization? Different applications will send push notifications for a schedule event change and keep read receipts so you know everyone is aware of the change in schedule. Using a digital calendar with alert features allows a staff to quickly view where staff members and players are at all times of the day. Existing video editing platforms allow for coaches to overlay the video with text, drawings, and even spotlights to help communicate a message to viewers.

As an organization, once we've established our systems to help aid in culture, development, and winning, look for ways to integrate technology into your systems. Doing so will make us more efficient and effective with our time and energy. This is

important because it provides us as coaches more time to focus on the most important part of the job…The human element.