1. **Coachable**
Accept coaching at all times. As coaches, it is our job to identify technique flaws, low effort or bad attitudes. You should never have earmuffs on. Listen and absorb what your coach is communicating.

2. **Effort**
Maximum effort leads to maximum results. When training your effort level shouldn’t waver. It’s not an easy thing to do but it is tremendously important to your long term development.

3. **Championship Culture**
The weight room is where high amplitude energy and positive attitudes reside. Radiating negativity or low energy only puts a damper on things. We want an elite culture filled with smiles, cheers, clapping, words of encouragement in each of our weight rooms at GW. “Champions behave like Champions before they’re Champions. They have a winning standard of performance before they are winners.” - Bill Walsh

4. **Nutrition**
One thing you must understand is that you can’t out train bad nutrition. High quality fuel leads to high level results. Low quality fuel leads to low level results. As athletes, you must train yourself at the table before training in the weigh room. If not, you are just spinning your wheels. You apply effort to the gas pedal but your poor nutrition is the e-brake holding you back.

5. **Sleep**
In order to train hard you must recover harder. Sleep is one of the oldest and most effective recovery modes there is. Best part is it’s FREE! Make sure you are getting your zzzz’s so you can gain those lift lbs.

6. **Technique**
Our motto, “Quality not Quantity” should ring through your ears. No matter the lift, we want you to execute it with precision. Poor technique is detrimental to your development as it alters the strengthening of muscles we are trying to target. More importantly, you can get injured! Take pride in your reps!

7. **Supplemental Training**
We will never turn you away if you want to do extra work. Working hard and smart is a proven recipe for success. Doing extra work may be counterproductive to your training focus. For example: your strength coach has implemented a max strength phase. On your active recovery days you run 5 miles. The physiological impact of aerobic training will erase the max strength work. My word of advice is to seek the advice of your strength coach. If you want to do extra work we can set up a supplemental plan for you. We are the experts- use us!

8. **Training Frequency**
“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” Improvement is a byproduct of many sets, reps and sessions. You must train consistently and follow the plan we have outlined. Make sure you complete “make ups” if a conflict arises that prevents you from attending scheduled sessions. Lapses in training will only slow your momentum.

9. **Trust**
You must trust the training plan. Any skepticism will skew the outcome. We want you to believe in the process. We can get you where you want to be. However, you must trust our direction. If you are uncertain about your training it is okay to ask questions. Let us know, we will break down the science and timing of your performance model.

10. **Have Fun!**
In my experience, athletes that have a blast in the weight room always improve. Be excited and find enjoyment in your development. You are getting better, hanging with your teammates/friends and preparing to win a championship. All are reasons to put on a smile and go to work!

**Train Hard. Fuel Smart. Work Your Plan.**

by Matthew Johnson
The NSCA Coaches Conference was a great professional development experience for our staff! Going to the conference confirmed for me the incredible work that the NSCA does to build up our profession. One presentation stuck with me the most for a special reason. One of the primary reasons I began pursuing the field of strength and conditioning was because of the inspiration I gathered from reading about coaches all around the country in a newsletter by a young coach named Adam Feit. That was years ago. I had never met Adam or really read anything from him but I met him for the first time at the conference before listening to his presentation about what it takes to be successful. Really, I can say that I am here at GW because of the opportunity extended to me to read from some of the best strength and conditioning minds in the country through that newsletter and the inspiration I gained from their insights and wisdom. I just think it is amazing the impact people can have on your life by their service and dedication and they don't even know it.

Adam’s presentation prompted me to ask myself, who am I helping through my service? Coach Feit used a unique illustration to prompt the professionals in the audience to consider the meaning of their life, everything that makes them who they are, why they are, what they are. Towards the end of his presentation, he became candid and made the point that we are all mortals and our lives will conclude with something that looks like the following: Birth: Dec. 8th 1987 – Death: ?. He intentionally drew our attention to the dash mark between the 2 dates that will encapsulate our life. “What’s in your dash?” he asked, before giving the audience of strength coaches the charge to “Fill in the Dash”. How do we as strength and conditioning coaches, who spend most of our weeks working with athletes “fill in the dash” and achieve life fulfillment? I believe the answer is clear if we haven’t lost sight of the unique position that we have. Billy Graham, a pastor who served as a spiritual adviser to many past presidents, understood this position best and once said “One coach will impact more young people in a year than the average person does in a lifetime.” At this early stage in my career that is something I need to start asking myself.

How do I/we impact young people? By making their 40 yard dash time faster? While that part of the job is certainly a lot of fun and necessary, I don’t think that is where the ultimate impact is made. I’m starting to believe the impact is made in the way we teach them and encourage them to respond to the performance development process. This is important, because if we take a step back we would realize that in many respects, developing the body through painful and challenging exercises is very much analogous to our character development as human beings. By reinforcing to them the need to respond to the challenges and adversities of sport, we teach them how to respond to life. At GW, I’ve seen athletes who have been injured and mentally coached through to keep a good attitude, come back to practices and the weight room with a renewed vitality for their sport and the developmental process. They became some of the hardest workers in the department. What did we help them learn? We helped them learn and remember that in both life and sport “your breaking point is really your making point”, when you keep a good attitude.

But how would we ultimately conclude the lessons that we teach our athletes through their development in sport and exercise? With help from a popular quote from Lou Holtz, we can conclude the lessons like this, both life and the performance development experience is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you respond to it. If we help our athletes go through the performance development process as a champion would, we’ve demonstrated to them that they have some raw resources to develop in life as a champion would as well. We teach them how to be champions by reinforcing truths like with no struggle their is no growth, so embrace the struggle, and many times you should seek it out. We also tell them, that without rest there is no growth either, so if you are so “passionate” that you become a workaholic, what you probably have is an obsession.

Passion is something that you have; an obsession is something that has you, so learn to distinguish between the two. If you don’t see the results you’re waiting for, remember, that most failures in life are because people didn’t realize how close they were to a break through and quit. “Hard work beats talent, when talent doesn’t work hard” sometimes, in life people simply make it by sheer grit, not because they were the most qualified or the most well prepared. If we help our athletes live by these lessons during their athletic experience, they are better prepared to live by them in life as well. That is a privilege, an honor, and a major responsibility.
National Eating Disorders Awareness Week takes place this month (Feb 21-27) and I am taking this opportunity to further increase eating disorder awareness in our own student athlete community. Eating disorders are complex medical and psychiatric illnesses, and the athletic community is not immune to their occurrence. In fact, athletes are often at higher risk for developing an eating disorder than non-athletes. Examples of eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and several others. While the behavioral and medical symptoms of eating disorders revolve around food (avoiding food, purging, etc), at its root an eating disorder is a coping skill and is best treated with the support of a medical team, which includes counseling.

Left untreated eating disorders can have serious medical consequences. Anorexia nervosa has the highest rate of fatalities of any psychiatric condition. Fortunately, early recognition and intervention can save lives. As such, it is beneficial to recognize general warning signs of an eating disorder. While it is not your responsibility to treat the individual, your awareness may be the first step in ensuring they do receive adequate treatment. The George Washington University provides a variety of professional resources, which can compile the recommended treatment team for an individual suffering from an eating disorder.

Possible Warning Signs of an Eating Disorder:
1. Behavior or attitudes that indicate dieting, weight loss, controlling food, and/or body image are a primary concern.
2. Avoiding mealtimes or eating with others.
3. Evidence of binge eating, such as finding large amounts of empty containers or wrappers, or disappearance of a large amount of food in a short period.
4. Evidence of purging behavior.
5. Excessive or rigid exercise for the purpose of burning calories or despite being injured, sick, etc.
6. Withdrawal from usual activities or a change in mood or behavior.

Ways to Address a Friend, Teammate, or Loved One You Are Concerned About:
1. Ask questions inquiring about their general state, such as “How have you been doing lately?”
2. Use “I” statements, such as “I’m concerned about you”
3. Be empathetic and accept your limitations. You may experience rejection at first.
4. Be prepared with information on resources for the individual. Here is a brief list of resources available within GWU:
   a. A walk-in visit or phone call (202-994-5300) to student Mental Health Services. Visits are confidential and counselors specialize in working with individuals with eating disorders.
   b. Submission of a CARE report
   c. Contact Chris Hennelly (henz@gwu.edu), Assistant Director of Athletics/Sports Medicine or Lauren Trocchio (ltrocchio@gwu.edu), Director of Sports Nutrition. Either can ensure the appropriate treatment team is in place to support the student athlete.
As athletes, a lot of times you feel the pressures of being “good” at a lot of things; school, sports, social life, clubs, volunteer work, etc. These commitments come with expectations and added stress, placed on you by yourself or maybe those in your life; expectations that you can handle it all and be good at it. And maybe you can, BUT… can you do all of those things well? Are you great at them? Or just good?

In the book, Good to Great, Jim Collins discusses what he calls “the hedgehog concept”, a concept that is very applicable to juggling the many facets of life as a student athlete. The basic idea is this… A fox is an appealing creature – smart, conniving, sleek, and beautiful. He spends his time formulating many crafty plans to hunt the hedgehog. The fox anxiously waits for hours for his prey to emerge from its den, ready to pounce the moment it comes out. Meanwhile, the hedgehog goes about his day in the comfort of his den, with not a single thought given to the fox. When the time comes for the hedgehog to leave his den to go get his food, he leaves his hole and immediately encounters the sneaky fox. The fox believes that all of his many plans of attack will surely end in success (and the hedgehog for dinner). However, upon the fox’s crafty attack, the hedgehog does one simple thing… he curls up tight into a ball, exposing his quills, shielding himself from the fox. Unable to get to the hedgehog, the fox gives up, leaving the hedgehog to go about his business.

The point of the fable is that while the fox was good at laying his strategic plans, he failed because he could not execute any one of them well, while the hedgehog escaped from the encounter due to his implementation of his one great plan. Be a hedgehog – not a fox. Plan to do only what you can be great at doing. Identify your priorities and stick to them. Eliminate the extra things that add stress to your life. When you do this, you may not be able to be involved with as many things, but you know that what you do will be great and that the time that you invest into the things you do will be successful. Train smart – be a hedgehog.
If you’ve ever had issues with procrastinating, you’re not alone. Whether it was a school project or improving your fitness, procrastination is something humans have long dealt with. Socrates and Aristotle even gave it a name—Akrasia. As productivity guru James Clear describes it, “Akrasia is the state of acting against your better judgment. It is when you do one thing even though you know you should do something else.” As Clear puts it, we do this because of something called time inconsistency—we value short term, immediate rewards, and save future goals for our “future self.” When that future becomes present, we tend to go with the instant gratification, rather than long-term benefits. So what can we do about it?

According to Clear, 3 things:

1) **CREATE A COMMITMENT DEVICE.**
2) **REDUCE THE FRICTION OF STARTING.**
3) **UTILIZE IMPLEMENTATION INTENTIONS.**

Commitment devices are ways to increase the cost of bad behavior, or reduce the effort required of good behavior (i.e. deleting a time wasting app from your phone to make you less tempted). It is basically engineering yourself and surroundings to maximize productivity.

Another point Clear makes, is that doing the task itself is not that difficult. The hard part lies in starting the task. For this, we need momentum. Create a ritual, and make it so easy to get started that you are guaranteed not to fail. If you struggle with push-ups, instead of aiming to do exorbitant amounts each day, strive for a small goal, maybe 5 or 10. It is easier to tell yourself to do 5 push-ups every hour, than to do 100 push-ups. Starting creates momentum. Lastly, implementation intentions are written declarations to work your plan to do on a certain date at a specific time. You set up a reminder on your phone that reads, “I will go for a 20 minute run on Sunday, February 28, 2016, before breakfast at 9:30am.” Procrastination can be difficult to overcome, but with these strategies, it is well within your reach. For more information, check out productivity expert James Clear’s work at Jamesclear.com.