

## Field of Dreams

Thank you for this invitation. Good day.... a chance to learn and do some team building as you bring different groups together for a common goal.

I think your conference is about celebrating ordinary people doing extraordinary things. I think I know a little bit about that concept - because of my adventures with my three friends, my teammates - four very ordinary women from Saskatchewan who went on to the extraordinary heights of conquering the world of women's curling.

You may be wondering why a curler might be invited to your meeting ....

I think a curling team is the closest sport to real life because it is:

- a small group of ordinary people;
- a workplace with clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- constant performance feedback and personal accountability;
- a family of relationships and hierarchy;
- a whole that is so much greater than the simple sum of its parts....

Being on a successful sports team has a profound effect on all the areas of my life.... Our team's incredible success – with four very ordinary women from Saskatchewan - was an example of the power of goal setting, of dreaming, of teamwork, of the unlimited possibilities .... The **field of dreams** that lie before all of us in life.

**Today, I would like to share my perspective on the attitudes and principles that help ordinary people to build extraordinary lives..... that help ordinary people rediscover their own field of dreams. Before I begin that topic, I want to have some fun and share some Olympic stories.**

Life changes drastically when you become an Olympian. Mostly the change is on the outside – in how others view you or treat you. Suddenly, you become “talented”, “special”, “gifted”. You can't be ordinary if you are an Olympian, can you? Let's start with dispelling that myth!

Our first Olympic experience? Drug Testing!

Olympic athletes...I remember the cellulite just falling off my body...I mean what an oxymoron, a curler becoming an athlete.... We asked, how does that happen? Do they start putting vitamins in our post game beer or what?

Second experience? Gender Testing: pictures of our kids?

Best experience? New Wardrobe: do you like red and white? 50 items, contract.

All I can tell you is that something happens to you when they put those Olympic team jackets on you. When you become equal with all the famous athletes.....when you begin

to pretend that you're one of them and work up the courage to speak with others.....and realize that they are as ordinary as you are.....and you start to believe that you can achieve whatever dream you dream. **Medal Display.**

I have been so fortunate to have travelled the world with my sport of curling and met so many famous, extra special people - athletes, business people, politicians, actors, musicians. From the media, mostly tv, many believe that those that become successful are better than us – smarter, prettier, stronger, richer, more talented.

For a time, I believed that successful athletes were lucky or rich or possess some sort of predetermined genetic advantage over the rest of us. I used to believe that. I don't anymore.

Truly, us curlers did not feel like we belonged....

This was reinforced by our Olympic experience in 98 where we had a chance to meet well-known people - athletes, musicians, actors, politicians, etc: Jann Arden, Terry Clarke, Elvis Stojko, Wayne Gretzky, Don Wittman, Jean Cretien - all ordinary - no predetermined genetic makeup or stroke of luck made them.

What has made them special? What has helped them achieve goals and become successful?

Their attitude. A healthy, positive, never-say-die, no-excuses attitude.

**1. Attitude is everything.** In life, in sport, in business, attitude determines the level of success you will perceive and achieve.

Many believe that attitude is something that you are born with - set and unchangeable. I believe that attitude is something that each of us chooses, something that can be taught and learned; changed and modelled after. It's never too late to have a role model...to say, "when I grow up I want to be just like you!" (pretending to be Sandra).

HS attitudes - fake it until you feel it....fake a smile or a positive attitude....negative stuff does no good.

**Ideal Performance State (the ultimate fake job):** energized, low anxiety, enjoyment, mental calmness, automatic, effortless, in control, self confident, optimistic, alert and ready, focussed.

**Ted Nolan** - "learn to win with what you got." No excuses.

**2. Attitude toward: Success is a journey not a destination.** When we win awards, championships we feel that we have reached the goal and therefore our destination. We have reached success, now we are on easy street. My opinion is that the journey is not

over unless we choose it to be over. Ex: Curling in the fall after the Olympics - do we cruise recognizing that we are the best and thus, don't have to do that hard work anymore?? (Result, getting our butt kicked) Or ,do we continue to do the things that made us successful - attitude, work ethic, commitment to goals - ?? We made a list of resources that we needed to make us better: fitness trainer, physio, nutritionist, technical adviser, sports psychologist, yoga instructor, etc. **Winners believe that they haven't reached their ceiling yet.**

### **3. Attitude toward: Pursuing Excellence (Building the Field of Dreams):**

**a. Opportunity:** What you make of it (Jim Hunter story). Unfortunately, great facilities can breed complacency.

**b. Encouragement:** Support from parents or coach or spouse.

**c. Motivation:** Usually a given in hp athletes - never met one that didn't want to win. BUT, too much motivation results in fear and choking.

**d. Confidence/Belief:** Walk tall. You must be an actor if you are a hp athlete. Read body language before looking at score.

**e. Work Ethic:** Usually the best determinant of performance excellence. Is under one's control, thus effort. 10,000 hours (Erikson research) to achieve excellence. But, in many cases, several thousand hours came from other sports/performances. Ex: Steve Nash, Michael Jordan, Grant Connelly, etc.

### **4. Attitude toward: understanding teamwork.**

No one achieves anything worth achieving without the help of others.

Teams are everywhere. Not just in sport. They are in family, community, marriage, business, etc.

I am part of a team, not just its success - but its failure too. There is no such thing as "I am a team player, but my colleagues are not." You are personally accountable for learning how to make the team better or understanding your role in team problems.

Example: CBC broadcast team.

"Whether you think you can or think you can't – you are right." Henry Ford.

**Goals:** "History will be kind to me for I intend to write it." – **Churchill.**

**Dream a dream. Dream a great dream. And dream it greatly.**

Sport teaches us to have flexible goals – variables, factors, room for error. Apply.

Get away from outcome goals = out of one's control (everything from opposition play to field conditions to bad luck). Get to: Performance Goals: how you work. Process Goals: skill based.

These goals are under my control, tied to my self worth. Thus builds confidence and success experiences.

Thinking ahead, brings in outcome, then fear and choking. Learned to relax and slow down.

Thinking behind, brings in anger. Learned to name the demons, rewrite how the situation may be different in the future and throw it away.

Think in the moment. Thus, REFOCUS on the process working on.

**Communication:** Be aware of the hierarchy. Create the forum. Easier to fix over-talking than under-talking. Goals are nothing unless spoken out loud or written down.

**How can I bring out the best in my teammates?** Give them what they need and not what you need. **Steven Covey:** Treat the people on your team like they are volunteers - like they don't have to be there! Treat them with kindness, loyalty, respect so that they stay there!

**Who makes it fun?:** Our team motto is that you had better learn to laugh at yourself before someone else beats you to it. (Top ten list; underwear chain, Berne thong, Sandra's fly)

## **TOP 10 REASONS WHY CURLING IS BETTER THAN SEX**

10. Don't have to fake that you're having fun.
9. When it gets out of hand, you can quit.
8. You get to do it in front of millions of people and on national TV.
7. You can score up to ten times in one night.
6. A really good curling game lasts 2 ½ hours.
5. Size, looks and age are all irrelevant.
4. You don't regret a mistake in curling 9 months later.
3. When you're finished, someone else gets to clean the sheets!
2. You are expected to yell, "Hurry, hurry. Hard, all the way!"
1. There's only four positions to know. But, you only have to be good at one.

## **CLOSING:**

As a teacher, many of my students have watched my journeys in curling. They noticed how much time, effort, dedication and sacrifice that achieving in amateur sports takes. On my return from my third World Championship, my grade 8's quizzed me on what I had won: more jewelry... a new car....lots of money...Then what? I showed them my third lovely, shiny prize: a silver pickle tray!! Why would you go to so much effort if that is all that you win? Because..." The greatest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it." We have learned how it feels to be a champion and that is priceless.

Many of you know all about hard work and sacrifice. For your toil, you have not become rich or world renowned. But, you know the feeling of giving unselfishly and of giving all that you have. You have become role models, community leaders, hard workers, team players; extraordinary people (from Sask.). And those qualities are priceless.