

KAREN SAYS

CAN WE WIN TOGETHER?

I have a great deal to be thankful for in life, but I do regret not being more active in team sports in school. I swam, played tennis, and had the occasional run-in with a football (but that was more comedic than it was athletic!).

My father was a serious badminton and table tennis player, and I saw how the discipline and perseverance he must have developed from young translated into his work life. More importantly, my father stressed "sportsmanship" – something I hardly ever hear people talk about these days – perhaps because even in team sports, the focus appears to be on the individual rather than the team.

This week, in conjunction with SEA Games 2015, we look at how sports as well as the behind-the-scenes unsung heroes, contribute to the development of leaders, young and old(er).

Marshall Goldsmith likens leadership to a contact sport – addressing the conundrum of how leaders themselves can continue growing, while focusing also on developing the next generation of leaders.

Bouncing in next, Nedim Karaevli revisits the role of team sports in building young leaders, and how team sports can be an important and welcome activity at the work place. For those who aren't quite ready to don the company football jersey, new rituals like "walking meetings" have also shown a positive impact on creativity!

In a tribute to our sports greats, Prema Jayabalan tells the story of what impact their coaches had throughout their journeys to the top, while Joseph Tan spills the beans on the best kept secret in corporate coaching.

Skipping forward, Jonathan Yabut shares three life lessons from the Pacquiao-Mayweather fight, and John Baybay reflects on what the SEA Games means to all of us – Baybay however, could not help but also weigh in on the "Fight of the century".

On the surface, the next pairing seems to be at odds, but Majura Perashot's piece on "just say no" and Terry Small's *Brain Bulletin* on the effect of negative thinking on our brains are, in fact, in sync. Let us know what you think!

Last but not least, we have an instalment of HR Talk where two HR (human resources) leaders share their thoughts and advice on a question near and dear to our hearts – social media at the office – yes or no? O no!

Onward, upward!

KAREN NEOH
Editor
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GO CRAZY FOR GOLD

By NINA TI
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AS we celebrate the arrival of Asia's rising sports superstars to the opening of 28th SEA Games this week, let's not forget to save some applause for the tough band of supporters or "crazy" parents and coaches who perform the real show behind this marvellous parade.

It usually takes a team of dedicated supporters to produce a dedicated athlete. Each of these amazing sportsmen and sportswomen who you see in the marchpast most likely grew up with a family member who wanted to win more than they did. Hunger, the kind that can numb pain and dry tears, is inherited.

A person who can get up at 5am to train has the support and devotion of someone at home who is willing to get up at 4am.

"Crazy" parents are no longer the secret ingredient behind every sporting giant's success. As a parent of a national-ranked junior tennis player myself, I like to use the term "dedicated and disciplined" parent.

If you are a person who believes in becoming the best that you can be, remember, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

» TOUGH LOVE

High-level athletes start really young. For example, elite players in tennis, squash and badminton are introduced to their racquets at five to eight years old, which is really the age when they can count beyond their toes and keep score during super tiebreaks, the first milestone for children in competition.

Later on, coaches and other professionals such as nutritionists and

physiotherapists take over the role of the relentless parent, but by then the ground rules for discipline and excellence have been set.

In my experience travelling from one junior tournament to the next, I see parents showing tough love, which according to Todd Widom, a former ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) pro, "does NOT mean that you beat down the child mentally, but you explain and expect that certain things need to be done properly, and if they are not, what are the consequences."

» DISCIPLINE

For every young, up-and-coming athlete, there is a parent or a coach who is leading by example through patterns of willpower and discipline.

For those who wail in horror and ask *What about having fun?* I can only point to the examples that grown-ups use in work. Fun is something you do, when the results don't matter.

Success follows discipline, and if you pay your dues and put in your hours and your 100% focus into your job, there is a very high chance that you will win at this too.

Discipline is not punishment. Discipline is doing what needs to be done, at the right time, to the best of your ability.

» PARTING THOUGHTS

The young men and women proudly representing their countries at the SEA Games have physical prowess and mental strength, but beyond any doubt, they have been gifted with the right people in their lives.

They did not arrive in Singapore by themselves.

QUOTES

The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.



- 01 "An athlete cannot run with money in his pockets. He must run with hope in his heart and dreams in his head." – Emil Zatopek
- 02 "Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it." – Michael Jordan
- 03 "I would say that it is the explosiveness that I possess in my game. Like a crouching tiger waiting to pounce on its prey." – Datuk Lee Chong Wei
- 04 "I will tell myself not to think negative thoughts." – Pandelega Rinong
- 05 "This success did not come the easy way since hard work, a high level of commitment, discipline and physical conditioning is needed." – Sazali Abd Samad

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