

Teamwork



KEYNOTE SPEAKER ROBYN BENINCASA

Welcome to World Class Teams

For the last 20 years, Robyn and her teammates have been competing at the front of the pack in the most unique and compelling classrooms on earth: the jungles of Borneo, the Himalayan peaks of Tibet, the rivers of Fiji, the rainforests of Ecuador and the desert of Namibia.

They studied the good, the bad, and the not so pretty of extreme teamwork. They mastered the skills required to inspire a group of semi-exhausted people through a seemingly endless series of checkpoints while working against crazy deadlines in constantly changing conditions—all in pursuit of a huge, hairy, and audacious goal. Sounds a lot like your life as a business leader, right?

Who better to share strategies for becoming a World Class person while building a World Class Team?

CNN named Robyn a 2014 Hero for the Project Athena Foundation

Project Athena is a 501c3 non-profit foundation that encourages women who've endured life-altering medical setbacks to unleash the Adventurer within and complete the journey of a lifetime—whether that's to climb Kilimanjaro, cross the finish line of an Ironman Triathlon, or fall into the arms of a proud family member at the end of a local 5k.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER ROBYN BENINCASA



The 8 Elements of Human Synergy

Total Commitment

Empathy & Awareness

Adversity Management

Mutual Respect

We Thinking

Ownership of the Project

Relinquishment of Ego

Kinetic Leadership

T = Total Commitment

Planning

You MUST have a clear and easily understandable plan (direction, methods, check-points, and destination) that is consistently communicated to the rest of the team. Ensure all team members understand their role within that plan and the ways in which they can help one another get to the finish line. In my experience, there are two key ways to inspire more Total Commitment via Planning:

1. **Add more "Checkpoints" to your plan.** Checkpoints are interim touch-points between a starting line and a goal and should be no longer than 12 weeks apart in order to retain your teammates' focus and effort. Imagine running a marathon without mile markers to chart your progress and food/aid stations for that rush

of happiness that comes with support for a job well done. Bottom line is that people are inspired and motivated by reaching that next checkpoint and will appreciate more ways to measure and celebrate their success!

2. **Get the Team Involved!** If you are a strong, pacesetter leader whose primary leadership style is "follow me," you have a big opportunity to create greater commitment from your teammates. Get them on board for not only the planning phase but also the ongoing analysis of the plan and updates to the plan along the journey. People tend to embrace and have a greater commitment to that which they help create. In the long run, teams who follow a leader who has sole possession of the map (and the plan) rarely get to the finish line first. Because none of

KEYNOTE SPEAKER ROBYN BENINCASA

Purpose

Inspire yourself and your team by focusing on and reaching for something greater than yourselves. Money is powerful as a goal, but people are also drawn to doing “well” for themselves and “good” for others around them and their communities. Give people a bigger reason than money to work with your organization and work for you. Watch them rise to the occasion, personally and professionally.

Perseverance

Great winners always find a way, every day, to move forward toward their goals, mentally, spiritually, and physically. Make sure you reward people for their consistent, small, day-to-day steps, not only the big leaps. Success is often based on consistency. Ultimately, small steps have more long term impact than the big ones when it comes to reaching huge, hairy, audacious finish lines. In the fire academy, we learned water is extremely hot at 211 degrees, but it boils at 212 degrees. You never know when that 1 degree of extra effort is going to

change outcomes. Perseverance and going the extra step every day (versus occasionally going the extra mile) is the key!

Preparation

Luck = Opportunity + Preparation

All consistently high performing teams have one thing in common: World Class Preparation. How do you think they got so “lucky”? Not only are they out-preparing their competitors, but they are also scanning the horizon for opportunities. They constantly create opportunities by understanding, mining, and capitalizing on their unique strengths and core competencies. What do you do better than anyone else in the industry? Are you preparing every day to capitalize on those strengths?

Remember: *COMMITMENT STARTS WHEN THE FUN STOPS! You don't find out if your team is truly committed until they're faced with times of great challenge and change. For World Class Teams, these times are a catalyst*

KEYNOTE SPEAKER ROBYN BENINCASA

E = Empathy and Awareness

Connect to the Person Before the Point

When interacting with another teammate during the day, take 30 seconds to let that person know you SEE THEM (e.g., friend, co-worker, wife, dad, etc.) before you dive into what you need from them. :) It doesn't take much. Ask something simple like "How did your son do on his final exams?", "How was your daughter's soccer championship?" or even "How ARE you?" Then wait for the answer. Communication strengthens the bridge with our teammates. It shows we care about THEM, the human being. When times are tough or huge hairy goals lie ahead, those interpersonal bonds are the key to success. When it comes to motivation and perseverance, we'll drive harder for our "friends."

Coaching Versus Criticism

When we need to address performance with a teammate, always err on the side of coaching versus criticizing. How can you ensure your teammate can tell the difference? When you criticize, you are perceived as "pointing a

finger" at your teammate. When you coach, you are extending a hand and asking how you can help. A slight difference in intent and delivery makes all the difference. You will get a heck of a lot more buy-in from your teammate when they understand you believe in them, are in their corner, and are offering to help them succeed.

Remember We Work for "People," Not for "Companies"

World Class Teammates are constantly demonstrating and inspiring, in their words and deeds, how to be the kind of leader/team member other people want to work WITH and work for. When the best path/response/action isn't clear, think about the best, most motivating leader or teammate you have had in your life. Ask yourself "What would X do right now?" You can never go wrong when you consistently DWR (Do What's Right). It's a simple code to live by. You will never have any regrets, and you'll inspire others to DWR along the way!

KEYNOTE SPEAKER ROBYN BENINCASA

A = Adversity Management

See Challenges Versus Roadblocks

Your response to times of great challenge and change dictates your longterm success. The best of the best inspire themselves and their teammates to see challenges—not roadblocks. Our spirit is wired to rise to the occasion!

Be Ruled by “Hope of Success” Versus “Fear of Failure”

When faced with a difficult challenge or times of change, observe yourself in action. Are you driven to do what it takes to WIN or are you simply doing what it takes to NOT LOSE? Where you set your focus completely changes who you are and HOW you operate, leading you down two different paths to two vastly different finish lines. Try focusing on and planning your next moves based upon where you WANT to go instead of focusing on all the things you are worried might happen. This works for mountain biking too, btw! :) Every time I’ve found myself lying in the dirt next to my bike, it was because I was focusing on the dreaded obstacle in the trail instead of the clearest path to success!

Embrace Setbacks as a Springboard to Future Success

One of the many hallmarks of a World Class Team is their ability to realize, in the moment, their challenges will lead them to something much better in the future. They embrace those times of change and uncertainty as a chance to get a jump on future success. Pain brings progress. They have the right attitude and a certain fierceness to tackle challenges head-on. Often, they look back a few years later and say to themselves, “In a lot of ways, that crazy time was the best thing that ever happened to us.” And it’s true!

Never Let the Pursuit of Perfection Hinder Progress

Conditions are rarely perfect. Results we envision are often at odds with reality, but don’t let that stop you from moving forward; doing your best with what you got—every minute, every day. Success is a journey; not a destination. The best teammates inspire others to persevere, make the best of crazy situations and do “what it takes” to finish together.

M = Mutual Respect

Remember the Aluminum Can Theory

The Aluminum Can Theory is an entertaining concept created by Alan Brunacini, one of the most inspiring and engaging Fire Chiefs in history (and one of my personal heroes. He said, "When you have a disagreement with someone on your crew and you're compelled to go right to the one terrible comment you know will take them to their knees...Remember that comment is an aluminum can...It's going to stay in the environment forever." World Class Teams never let aluminum cans come between teammates. They consistently avoid gossip, criticism and backstabbing, as those behaviors will destroy a hard-won trust. Conversely, there are Positive Aluminum Cans (i.e., telling a teammate how impactful, amazing, or talented they are and why), and great teammates will share them in abundance. Encourage your teammates to throw out at least one positive aluminum can to another teammate each day, and watch the magic happen. :)

Mentor Unselfishly

World Class Teammates understand "Knowledge SHARED is power." They are consistently bringing one another up to speed on best practices, latest techniques, new discoveries, etc. Everyone gets better...together. A rising tide raises all ships! Always be wary of "teammates" who derive their power by knowing things you don't know.

Act Like a Team Always...And The Feelings Will Follow

Let's face it! We're not always going to feel like fluffy and purple dinosaurs ("I love you; you love me") about each other! But World Class Teammates will always ACT like great leaders or teammates, regardless of their feelings. Bottom line: Acting like a team is more important than feeling like a team. :). This works for marriage too, by the way. Acting like you're in love is so much more important than feeling like you're in love. Just sayin'.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER ROBYN BENINCASA

Believe in Teammates Beyond Reason

What happens when someone believes in us? It makes us want to rise to the occasion and prove them right! And if someone doesn't believe in us? We tend to want to prove them right as well. Believing in someone is a powerful force—and a gift we give to one another. Bring that gift to your teammates every day and be amazed.

Give Respect as a Gift—Not a Grade

Building and leading a World Class Team inherently means giving everyone 100% respect for their experience, opinions, contributions, knowledge, etc., right off the bat. Avoid creating an environment in which little respect is given and must be constantly earned. Trust my experience. As a firefighter, I lived in a world where respect was always earned and could be withdrawn at any moment. It's definitely not conducive to World Class Teamwork or results when teammates are constantly battling one another for recognition or pride. When respect is given as a gift—not withheld as a grade—teammates feel valued, worthy, engaged, free to learn, and have increased ownership of outcomes. Respect is also the super glue that bonds teammates together in times of great challenge and change.



W = We Thinking

Nobody Wins Alone

The best of the best in any challenging endeavor didn't get to the finish line alone; they had mentors, great teammates, sponsors, supportive families, and surrounded themselves with people who could push or tow them to the next level. In our business lives, we should always be reaching out to others in pursuit of our goals for ourselves, and, most importantly, our clients and customers. Just like a tree, we can only grow so tall before we need to widen our base and extend our roots—only then can we grow even taller. No individual can have all the answers. Create a team that will launch you and your clients to the next level of success. It's not a weakness to seek teammates when faced with a big challenge or a huge hairy audacious goal. It's a strength!!!

Find Ways to "Suffer Equally"

This is a funny term that one of my teammates came up with to describe how a World Class Adventure Racing

team operates. World Class Teams are always finding a way to "suffer equally" during the race—whether that means taking some weight from a struggling teammate's pack when we feel strong or grabbing a tow line from a teammate when we're at our lowest point. Teammates who are consistently sharing their strengths AND their weaknesses/challenges will always get to the finish line before a team of soloists in the long run!

Seek Synergy Everywhere

The best leaders have a knack for creating synergy in every interaction because they consistently operate with the intention of a teammate. Good leaders always try to find the win/win. They bring more value than they take. They walk out their front door every day and see a world full of teammates versus one full of competitors. This energy draws people together and brings out the teambuilders. It's amazing how much people will give when the person across the table isn't trying to take.

O = Ownership of the Project

Hire the Inspired

When you bring new people on your team in your business or life, make sure they are not only capable of performing at a World Class level, but they are also truly inspired at a deep level by your vision, mission, values and the people served by your organization. Many jobs can be learned, but inspiration is an inside job. In many cases, that real sense of purpose and ownership of outcomes is of equal importance to the technical side of the job.

Inspire Your Hires

How do we inspire people who are currently on our team? Here are a few key ways to create real ownership of your mission and outcomes:

- **Discover your teammates' strengths.** Let them lead in those areas of strength, experience, and ability.
- **Find their Why.** Ask your teammates what they are hoping to get out of working with you, with your organization, etc. In other words, what is their "Why?" What inspires them to do their best? I guarantee you will get as many different answers as you have teammates. Everyone has a different reason/goal for why they do what they do, and it's not always the drive for more money. Some teammates want mentorship (someone who "sees" them and their potential and can help them move forward), while others want recognition. If you can discover the "Why?" for each teammate and help them get it, you'll create a great deal of ownership!
- **Use their expertise.** Ask for your teammates' input on strategy, tactics, and goals versus just handing them down from the top. People tend to embrace that which they help create.

R = Relinquishment of Ego

Ask for and Accept Help—It's a Gift to the Helper

One of the signs you've got great teammates is how willing they are to rely on one another and ask each other for help when they need it—without fear of appearing “weak.” They understand helping one another ultimately helps the team to succeed. This is easy in an adventure race, where we very literally need help to keep moving forward. In the business world, however, most of us are reluctant to ask for help for fear of looking incompetent. If asking for or accepting help is hard for you, think of accepting help as a “gift” to the helper. It always is! Don't you feel great when you're able to advise or guide a colleague? Give that gift to others; let them help you. You've also created a great bond between yourself and your teammates when you do.

Give Away the Credit

A great way to continue to inspire your teammates and build solid bonds with them is to consistently give away credit for success to everyone on the team. You've seen the best of the best do this in sports, ala basketball great Michael Jordan, who inherently understood that his teammates would work harder to set him up for success when they trusted him to share the credit. The same is true in business. When we gracefully share credit for our success with others, the right teammates will do the same in return. Ultimately the “team” wins when competitiveness is replaced by loyalty, respect, and the trust that all teammates' names will be on that symbolic trophy.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER ROBYN BENINCASA

Feed Your Ego With Team Success—Not Individual Glory

Our ego is a powerful force, but as is the case with all powerful forces, we must harness it for good versus evil. :) None of us got to a high level in our careers without a strong ego. But World Class Teammates feed their ego by helping the “team” succeed: When they are the strongest team member, they demonstrate that strength by helping someone else versus getting to the top of the mountain ahead of the pack. If they are the smartest or most capable teammate at the moment, they offer that wisdom and guidance to the team or mentor others. Most importantly, when they are the most challenged teammate at the time, they raise their hand and ask for help, knowing that accepting help is the best thing they can do to help their team get across the finish line first!



K = Kinetic Leadership

Change Leaders

There is a big difference between management and leadership. Being a manager implies you are the person formally charged with directing and facilitating the success of others. Being a leader means you INSPIRE others to be at their best, and you are prepared to step up to the plate, driving the success of the team based on each person's strengths, not their titles. Everyone on the team should be ready to lead (and be expected to lead!). The best managers allow those "informal" leaders to continually emerge. After all, the most important job of a leader is to create other leaders.

Give Away the Credit

It's poetic and powerful to watch a great leader step up to the plate and become exactly who their teammates need

at the moment. The best Teambuilders know their teammates well. They constantly listen, assess, and strive to understand the needs of each individual and the team as a whole, so they may maximize potential and team outcomes. When it's business as usual, a team sometimes needs a visionary, a coach, a friend, or to feel like they're part of the decision making. In times of great challenge or change, the team often needs a strong pacesetter to get out front and show them the way or simply tell the team exactly what to do and when (...to be utilized sparingly!) But as a firefighter, I appreciated those leadership styles when we rolled up on a house engulfed with flames. Bottom line: leadership styles should be used and interchanged similar to the way a golfer chooses his clubs. If we continually assess conditions, the lay of the land and choose just the right club for the job, we increase our chances of long term, consistent success from our team!

Notes

How Can We Improve Our Human Synergy?

[illegible]