

Leadership in Cinema



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

MIRACLE

Submitted by: John Wood..... E-mail: BLM_FA_Leadership_Feedback@blm.gov
Studio: Walt Disney Pictures Released: 2004
Genre: Drama..... Audience Rating: PG
Runtime: 136 minutes

Materials

VCR or DVD, television or projection system, Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles handouts (single-sided), notepad, writing utensil

Objective

Students will identify Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles illustrated within Miracle and discuss leadership lessons learned with group members or mentors.

Basic Plot

Coach Herb Brooks is tasked with coaching the 1980 USA Olympic Hockey Team. This movie, based on a true story, takes place during the cold war. A time when the Soviets dominated in many international sports and fields—the best hockey team in the world. Coach Brooks departs from the standard U.S. approach to coaching hockey and meets great resistance both from within the team and from the United States Olympic Committee.

Cast of Main Characters

Kurt Russell	Coach Herb Brooks
Eddie Cahill	Jim Craig
Patrick O'Brien Demsey	Mike Eruzione
Michael Mantenuto	Jack O'Callahan
Nathan West	Rob McClanahan
Kenneth Mitchell	Ralph Cox
Eric Peter-Kaiser	Mark Johnson
Bobby Hanson	Dave Silk
Joseph Cure	Mike Ramsey
Billy Schneider	Buzz Schneider
Nate Miller	John "Bah" Harrington
Chris Koch	Mark Pavelich
Kris Wilson	Phil Verchola
Steve Kovalcik	Dave Christian
Sam Skoryna	Steve Janaszak
Pete Duffy	Bob Suter
Nick Postle	Bill Baker
Casey Burnette	Ken Morrow
Scott Johnson	Steve Christoff
Trevor Alto	Neal Broten
Robbie MacGregor	Eric Strobel
Joe Hemsworth	Mark Wells
Noah Emmerich	Craig Patrick
Kenneth Welsh	Doc

Facilitation Options

Miracle illustrates an abundance of leadership values and principles. Students should have few problems identifying those that correspond to the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles. The objective is not to identify every leadership principle but to promote thought and discussion. Students should be less concerned with how many principles they view within the film and more concerned with how the principles they do recognize can be used to develop themselves as a leader.

The film can be viewed in its entirety or by clip selection, depending on facilitator intent and time schedules. Another method is to have the employee(s) view the film on his/her own and then hold the discussion session.

Full-film Facilitation Suggestion

1. When opting for the full-film method, the facilitator should determine a good breaking point near the middle of the film.
2. Review the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles with students.
3. Advise students to document instances within the film that illustrate/violate the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles on the handout provided.
4. Break students into small discussion groups.
5. Show students Miracle.
6. Break. (Suggestion: After the Christmas scene)
7. Begin the guided discussion.
8. Provide a short synopsis with some “ticklers” to pay attention before beginning the rest of the film.
9. Resume the film.
10. Have students discuss their findings and how they will apply leadership lessons learned to their role in wildland fire suppression. Facilitate discussion in groups that have difficulty.
11. Wrap up the session and encourage students to apply leadership lessons learned in their personal and work lives.

Clip Facilitation Suggestion

1. Review the Wildland Fire Leadership Value or Principle targeted for discussion. (May be given or ask students to identify the value or principle being illustrated after viewing the clip.)
2. Show the clip.
3. Facilitate discussion regarding the selected clip and corresponding value and/or principle.
4. Break students into small discussion groups.

5. Have students discuss their findings and how they will apply leadership lessons learned to their role in wildland fire suppression. Facilitate discussion in groups that may have difficulty.
6. Wrap up the session and encourage students to apply leadership lessons learned in their personal and work lives.

Mentor Suggestion

1. Use either method presented above. The mentor should be available to the student to discuss lessons learned from the film as well as incorporating them to the student's leadership self-development plan.
2. Encouraging individuals to keep a leadership journal is an excellent way to document leadership values and principles that are practiced.
3. Suggest other wildland fire leadership toolbox items that will contribute to the overall leadership development of the student.

Hyperlinks have been included to facilitate the use of the [Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website](#). Encourage students of leadership to visit the [website](#).

Miracle

The following clips illustrate the Wildland Leadership Values and Principles. These are only guidelines and may be interpreted differently by other views; they are presented as a guide for facilitation.

Duty

- Brooks given the head coaches position. (Takes charge when in charge.)
- Brooks clearly sets expectations. (I can't promise that we will be the best team at Lake Placid next February, but we will be the best conditioned team.)
- Brooks sets expectations with the statement. (I won't be your friend, if you need one of those take it up with Craig or Doc.)
- When deciding to keep or cut Mike Eruzione (Rizzo). (Considers individual skill levels and developmental needs when assigning tasks.)
- Brooks delegates to Patrick the responsibility of being close with the team and keeping him informed.

Respect

- Brooks has the team take a psychological test so he knows how far he can push them. (Put the safety of your subordinates above all other objectives.)
- Brooks helps resolve conflict on the team by having the team focus their anger at him.

- Through out the movie Brooks makes many decisions based on what the players have shown him. Putting the “Coneheads” on the same line or cutting Cox. (Consider team experience, fatigue and physical limitations when accepting assignments)
- Coach Pattrick questions Brooks when players are reaching their physical limits after the Oslo game. “Doc I mean this is madness, right?. . .” (Consider team experience, fatigue and physical limitations when accepting assignments.)
- Brooks knows that Jim Craig (the goalie) is not performing up to his ability. (Observe human behavior as well as ...)

Integrity

- Brooks asks “Where are you from and who do you play for”. Brooks knows that old rivalries are hindering cohesion. (Know yourself and seek improvement.)
- Brooks takes time to listen to concerns form some of his players after the IHL All-star game. (Actively listen to feedback from subordinates.)
- Walter confronts Brooks about the shortened tryouts “ This puts me in a hell of a bind...I sure as hell hope you know what you are doing”
- Brooks shares the hazards and hardships. The players can not be at home with their families so Brooks chooses to spend Christmas eve with the players instead of his family.
- At the start of the third period of the 2nd game with the Soviets, Brooks says “We have come from behind in every game of this tournament and we can do it again. We can beat these guys!” (Don’t show discouragement when facing setbacks)

Miracle

Guided Discussion – Possible Answers

1. At the beginning of the film, what does Coach Brooks do to establish himself as the leader of the team?
 - He knows who the players on the team will be before the tryouts. He has done all of the scouting work and reviews of player performance to determine which players will be successful with his new system.
 - Brooks does not let the Olympic Committee have any influence on his team selection.
2. Past rivalry between the players on the U.S. Olympic team causes conflict within the team. What conflicts do members of the wildland fire community experience? How can those conflicts be mitigated?
 - Race, culture, egos, management, Agency, resource type etc.
 - Answers will vary.
3. What two players are used to demonstrate this conflict? Why is there conflict between them? Do they remain in conflict?
 - Jack O'Callahan (OC) and Rob McClanahan (Mac).
 - OC and Mac played against each other in the 1976 college final; OC was taken out of the game by Mac and OC feels that if that did not happen his team would have won.
 - No, they do not remain in conflict. Even though they play the same position on different lines they show great cohesion after Tim Herrer is brought back on the team. (the scene after the IHL All-stars game)
4. What leadership style is Coach Brooks using throughout most of the movie? What style does he use at the end of the movie?
 - Directing.
 - Delegating.
5. Is this the best style? Is it effective?
 - Answers will vary. Should be dependent on the situation.
 - It is very effective in the way he uses it to help him shape the team and set the tone for his interaction with the team.
6. What technique does Coach Brooks use to bring the team together? Is this intended for the players only?
 - Brooks knows that the players have brought past rivalry to the team with them (OC and Mac) and this is the biggest barrier to building team cohesion. Brooks uses

himself as a focus point for the players' aggression so they will forget their past differences.

- No, Coach Pattrick and Doc need to be convinced that Brooks is making sound decisions. (The scene after the Oslo game.)
7. What is the effect of adding a new player (Tim Harrer) three months before the Olympics?
- It lets the players know that they need to continue to perform to stay on the team.
 - It continues to help cement the teams' cohesion.
 - It demonstrates that Coach Brooks is dedicated to accomplishing the mission.
8. What drives Herb Brooks so hard to make this team as good as they can be? Does his determination get in the way of his ability to make sound decisions?
- Herb Brooks was cut from the 1960 Olympic hockey team. That team won the Gold medal and the Soviets have dominated the sport since then.
 - Answers will vary.
9. Coach Brooks keeps himself emotionally distant from the team. Does this make him a better coach? Is this the best approach?
- Answer will vary.
 - Answer will vary.
10. What does this allow Brooks to do? Does this approach have drawbacks?
- Brooks can interject emotion when he wants to get the team fired up and because of the distance he has established the team reaction is intensified. (The locker room scene during the Sweden game)
 - Answers will vary.
11. Why did Coach Brooks schedule a game with the Soviets three days before the Olympics?
- Brooks wanted the U.S. team to know that they could play hockey with the Soviets, regardless of what they had heard about how good the Soviets were. Brooks wanted to give them a reason to play hard during the Olympic tournament.
12. Thirteen days later when the U.S. team plays the Soviets again, what are some ways the U.S. team has changed?
- They have experienced success as a team.
 - Because of their conditioning and team work they have been able to fight back from behind and win games.
 - They are playing as a team to win, for their teammates and their country
 - Many other answers.

DUTY

Be proficient in your job, both technically & as a leader.

- Take charge when in charge.
- Adhere to professional standard operating procedures.
- Develop a plan to accomplish given objectives.

Make sound & timely decisions.

- Maintain situation awareness in order to anticipate needed actions.
- Develop contingencies & consider consequences.
- Improvise within the commander's intent to handle a rapidly changing environment.

Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, accomplished.

- Issue clear instructions.
- Observe & assess actions in progress without micro-managing.
- Use positive feedback to modify duties, tasks & assignments when appropriate.

Develop your subordinates for the future.

- Clearly state expectations.
- Delegate tasks that you are not required to do personally.
- Consider individual skill levels & developmental needs when assigning tasks.

Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being.

- Put the safety of your subordinates above all other objectives.
- Take care of your subordinate's needs.
- Resolve conflicts between individuals on the team.

Keep your subordinates informed.

- Provide accurate & timely briefings.
- Give the reason (intent) for assignments & tasks.
- Make yourself available to answer questions at appropriate times.

Build the team.

- Conduct frequent debriefings with the team to identify lessons learned.
- Recognize accomplishments & reward them appropriately.
- Apply disciplinary measures equally.

Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

- Observe human behavior as well as fire behavior.
- Provide early warning to subordinates of tasks they will be responsible for.
- Consider team experience, fatigue & physical limitations when accepting assignments.

Know yourself and seek improvement.

- Know the strengths/weaknesses in your character & skill level.
- Ask questions of peers & supervisors.
- Actively listen to feedback from subordinates.

Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.

- Accept full responsibility for & correct poor team performance.
- Credit subordinates for good performance.
- Keep your superiors informed of your actions.

Set the example.

- Share the hazards & hardships with your subordinates.
- Don't show discouragement when facing setbacks.
- Choose the difficult right over the easy wrong.

RESPECT

INTEGRITY

Miracle

1. Document film clips illustrating the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles.
2. Discuss leadership lessons learned from the film with group members or mentor.

Duty

- Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.
- Make sound and timely decisions.
- Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished.
- Develop your subordinates for the future.

What scenes from the movie relate to “Duty”?

Respect

- Know your subordinates and look out for their well being.
- Keep your subordinates informed.
- Build the team.
- Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

What scenes from the movie relate to “Respect”?

Integrity

- Know yourself and seek improvement.
- Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.
- Set the example.

What scenes from the movie relate to “Integrity”?

Miracle

Guided Discussion

1. At the beginning of the film, what does Coach Brooks do to establish himself as the leader of the team?
2. Past rivalry between the players on the U.S. Olympic team causes conflict within the team. What conflicts do members of the wildland fire community experience? How can those conflicts be mitigated?
3. What two players are used to demonstrate this conflict? Why is there conflict between them? Do they remain in conflict?
4. What leadership style is Coach Brooks using throughout most of the movie? What style does he use at the end of the movie?
5. Is this the best style? Is it effective?
6. What technique does Coach Brooks use to bring the team together? Is this intended for the players only?
7. What is the effect of adding a new player (Tim Herrer) three months before the Olympics?
8. What drives Herb Brooks so hard to make this team as good as they can be? Does his determination get in the way of his ability to make sound decisions?
9. Coach Brooks keeps himself emotionally distant from the team. Does this make him a better coach? Is this the best approach?
10. What does this allow Brooks to do? Does this approach have drawbacks?
11. Why did Coach Brooks schedule a game with the Soviets three days before the Olympics?
12. Thirteen days later when the U.S. team plays the Soviets again, what are some ways the U.S. team has changed?