

# Empowerment and Expectation...

## - Energy Efficient E's"

by Stephanie Cherney

Over the last few months, my husband and I have been looking at houses. The real-estate search and numbers game is mind-boggling. Much more confusing to us is the fact that a newer home, although larger than older homes, is more energy efficient due to newer processes and technology. It made me wonder if there is a new, more energy efficient way to run our drill teams? Are we still using the 1970 energy-guzzling leadership models called 'delegation' or 'dictatorship'?

As I write this article, I think about the name that we call ourselves, 'drill team'. Yes, some of us are a 'dance team' or a 'pom squad'; however, the word 'team' and 'squad' are synonymous and appear in all of our names. BUT, who are we really? There are thousands of books written on teamwork, but only one that I have found that clearly defines it. The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork by John C. Maxwell distinguishes the boundaries of what it means to live inside a team, whether it is your marriage, your work, or your local volunteer work (who has time, when you are a coach?). Remember, like the Coca Cola bottle boldly says, "no deposit, no return". So let us deposit some time and energy into contemplating these seventeen laws and how they might help us fortify our team and save energy in the process. The best part about these laws is it allows all of us to start on a new page with our teams no matter what season we are working.

At first glance it would seem as though more rules would be "tired", and structure is the word that sends your team reeling back to the 80's. But these laws are not about informing a member of what they cannot do, or how to do a task; they are about EMPOWERING the team members by informing them of the range that they can work within. There is a big difference. Strict structure, yet total freedom to excel and be involved in the process, is an opportunity for teenagers today. Remember, it takes time to learn about empowerment and change how you do business; it also takes a tremendous amount of trust. Do they trust you? Going through this process is also helpful, as you will realize you have some team members that do not seek empowerment in your organization. These children simply desire to be a worker.

As coaches we love the empowerment and autonomy that is given to us by our principals. I work for the greatest principal on the planet, and I enjoy the empowerment he grants me with drill team. However, if he were to empower me with the physics club, we would have a problem. Identifying whom to empower with what task is an essential part of making these laws work. According to Ken Blanchard, in his book The 3 Keys to Empowerment, you must:

- (1) Share information with everyone;
- (2) Create autonomy through boundaries;
- (3) Teams become the hierarchy.

### 3 KEYS TO EMPOWERMENT

#### **1. SHARE INFORMATION WITH EVERYONE.**

This is the good and the bad. Tell them the team weaknesses and share with them the good of the goal that needs to be achieved. By sharing information, the students feel more involved in the building. Remind them to trust you and trust the process.

#### **2. CREATE AUTONOMY THROUGH BOUNDARIES.**

Have structure, define higher expectations and be very clear when communicating your goals.

#### **3. TEAMS BECOME THE HIERARCHY.**

This is not just every team member pitching in an idea, but the team becomes accountable for the results of their ideas. For example, when talking about John Maxwell's the Law of the Bad Apple, have the team, under your guidance, decide the consequence for breaking that law and hold them accountable to it. Discuss why that punishment may or may not fit the crime. We do not get capital punishment for speeding, nor do we receive a ticket for robbery.

Some ways I empower my team is by letting them be the creative force behind their banquet, while I am the creative force behind our Spring Show. Ownership equals empowerment. The book studies we do are incredibly powerful. The book mentioned above, John C. Maxwell's The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork, is a phenomenal book to catapult a team to the next level. These laws are easy to break into sections that can be done one law per week for a great semester/year. Remember that this will take time! Separately, I have referenced each law by citing my expectation that would accompany the law. The students must read the laws on their own which encompass the 3 Keys to Empowerment.

Just as it takes money to change the processes and the technology in our home, it takes time and energy to change the processes on our team. Empowerment is a scary topic if you are unsure how to do this without losing control. Rely on the trust that your administrators put in you and rely on the trust that the students give you. We no longer can use the old technology, for how will that train them to compete in the global market? Maybe you don't care to focus on the global market; you are simply focused on the market of a contest trophy. Fine, change the way you empower your team and they will produce more efficiently at rehearsals. Here's to a hot topic and a great way to cool it off!

"Character may be manifested in the great moments, but it is made in the small ones."

-Winston Churchill



# Expectations

## Contest Season 2006

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Autograph please: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. The Law of Significance

I expect you to realize that you cannot be a great drill team member alone. Your talent alone is not enough. I expect you to practice alone, but also and most importantly, practicing and talking through with other people.

### 2. The Law of the Big Picture

I expect you to understand that your role is dynamic. One routine, you may be in the center, another routine, you may be our bench player. Your role may be to chorale attitudes, or simply play the mediator.

### 3. The Law of the Niche

I expect you to find your niche on our team. Example: You may play the role of center stage dancer, but you easily fit the role of being counted on for other things like helping to write our Spring Show script.

### 4. The Law of Mount Everest

I expect you to help conquer our challenge: technique, power in our dance movements, and burnout.

### 5. The Law of the Chain

I expect you to find our weak link and strengthen her. Losing a member is our last alternative. This in turn will lead to my next expectation: Strengthen yourself as a link in our chain. NTN (Nip the Negative). Think about the movie 'Rudy'.

### 6. The Law of the Catalyst

I expect you to determine which team members in which numbers are catalysts.

### 7. The Law of the Compass

I expect you to understand what makes us improve. For example: the technique of talking through the routine. I expect you to keep focused on that technique.

### 8. The Law of the Bad Apple

I expect you to read this closely and as a result, have a positive outlook toward all aspects of this semester.

### 9. The Law of Countability

I expect you to have integrity and be a dependable member of Troyanns who shows up for practice and can be counted on to do her part. I also expect you to define your part and write it on the back of this sheet of paper.

### 10. The Law of Price Tag

I expect you pay the price of practicing outside of practice.

### 11. The Law of the Scoreboard

I expect you to know where you stand with me and with the team. If you don't know, you need to ask.

### 12. The Law of the Bench

I expect you to be healthy and positive about being a bench player for our routines. Everyone is in one routine. You are only promised one routine. Three missed rehearsals will put a regular player on the bench and a bench player in the routine.

### 13. The Law of Identity

I expect you to be a moral, positive, young lady. I also expect you to be able to finish this sentence: A Troyann is: \_\_\_\_\_ . Tell about the reputation that you have built with the staff and students of Newman Smith High School.

### 14. The Law of Communication

I expect you to interact with your parents, me, other teachers, and your peers about drill team practice. You must keep up your academics as well as notify me of ANY missed days of school and or rehearsal.

### 15. The Law of the Edge

This will deal with the officers and polishing. I will polish and appoint the officer best suited for the role in my absence, or to assist me. How can this law apply to the team?

### 16. The Law of High Morale

Just like any guest to our team is privileged to see when they come to a NSHS Troyann practice: Upbeat, friendly, energetic, lovely and hard-working drill team girls. You are a rare find! I expect you to stay that way!

### 17. The Law of Dividends

No Deposit. No Return. I expect you to invest in making you the best you for contest season and beyond. I expect you to ALWAYS dance full out. You are never to mark anything.

