

Autobiographical Notes

Last Day in the Varsity Locker Room

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At this point, several other high school teachers besides Doc come to mind as having convicted me to do more with my life than I had been willing to pursue up to that point. The first was John Plummer, otherwise known as Coach. As I was cleaning out my locker at the end of my senior year in high school, Coach came in and sat on the locker bench across from me. We were pretty much alone as most everyone else had already packed up their gear.

Before Coach came in I had been sitting next to my locker slowly packing and reflecting on a collage of memories associated with that locker room: PE classes, cross-country and track practices and meets, MOTAC (our letterman's club) and freshman initiations, a set of starting blocks falling off of the lockers onto my brother's, etc. After he sat down, Coach started telling me something, but being deep in my own thoughts I missed it at first. I assumed he had come in to remind me to pick up something from his office, or to make sure my locker was clean. But he had actually come in for a different reason, one that I never would have guessed.

Coach began telling me that he had been impressed with me and my efforts, describing how I had contributed in a unique and special way to the athletic program. He noted how, even though I had not been the best, or strongest, or fastest, I had given my all in whatever I had participated. And that, even though never officially one, I had actually been a leader that encouraged and inspired others. He went on to say that I was not like the others he had coached, but that I was going to make a difference with my life in this world and that he wanted to encourage me to do so.

I was a little embarrassed by what he said and tried to downplay it while commending him for all that he had done for me. But tears welled up in Coach's eyes as he got rather emotional. While I do not recall his exact words now, he told me that I had made a difference in his life as well as others, and that I should and would continue to make a difference in the lives of others in whatever I did beyond high school. Coach just wanted me to listen and to receive his gratitude and commendation. I had always viewed myself as a sort of happy-go-lucky person, someone of little consequence and significance. Now this person, my coach, was challenging that view. He was determined to get me to view myself differently, to grow-up in my understanding of my ability to affect others and their circumstances. I was, and am deeply indebted to you, Coach, for all you did in my life, especially what you told with me that last day in the locker room. Thank you.