



THE INSTITUTE OF
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Balance-Redefining Your Definition of Success

By Robert Andrews, MA, LMFT, CSC

The college football world was shocked this weekend when Urban Meyer the hugely successful and popular head coach of the University of Florida Gators stepped down due to health related issues.

In his press release he mentioned two things that jumped out at me. He said "I have neglected my health for years" and "I have given nearly every waking hour of my life to Florida football for the last five years."

Urban Meyer has done an amazing job of returning Florida to the top of the college football world. In his five years at "Gator Nation" he has won two national championships and coached a Heisman Trophy winner in Tim Tebow. But his comments make me think something was seriously out of balance in his life. His body has been screaming at him for years to make changes that might have enabled him to continue coaching, created a healthier life style, and prolonged his life.

Recovery is vital to athletes and coaches alike. Creating time and engaging in activities that help our mind and body recharge and revitalize is imperative. Going for long periods of time without recovery creates incredible levels of stress. The body will do everything it can to restore balance. Pain, anxiety, headaches, and low energy, are warning signs from the body. The body is telling us that we are out of balance. That it is time to make changes. If we ignore these warning signs they intensify resulting in serious physical and mental health related issues or breakdowns.

Years ago I worked with a Doctor on his golf game. He talked about how much he loved golf but he rarely got to play because he was always working. I asked him what his definition of success was. He told me he wanted to see so many patients a week, and make so much money. I asked why family, social time, and making time to play golf were not part of his definition of success. I saw the light bulb go off over his head. He had been living in a very narrow definition of success that only included work. He was missing out on time with his wife and kids, his friends, and golf. He started taking Fridays off to play golf in the morning and be with his family the rest of the weekend. Not only did his golf game improve, but his attitude, relationships, and health improved remarkably.

Urban Meyers daughter was quoted in his press release as saying "I get my Daddy back". I felt sad when I read this. He has been enormously successful as a head football coach and mentoring the young athletes under his care. But I wonder if he had a broader definition of success, a definition that included balancing his time and energy to take care of his own health, spend time with his family, and create social relationships that filled him up when he was empty would he have needed to step down.

Some might argue that he might not have been as successful at Florida. I know that being a head football coach on any level is demanding on time, energy, and resources. To coach at an elite program like Florida must be overwhelming on some days.

As leaders those we lead look to us as models for how to do life. By being a leader who models balance, working hard, and taking time to recharge and recover we teach those around us the power of self care, and personal integrity.

I believe Urban Meyer and others in the world of sports who "are stuck on the treadmill" can still be effective coaches and leaders by learning how to redefine their definition of success. I hope he returns to Florida to coach next season. He is a great man, a great leader, and a great coach. He is good for college football, and the young men he leads and mentors. I hope he returns with a new definition of success.



The Institute's founder and director Robert B. Andrews MA, is a certified sports counselor, and licensed therapist. Robert has woven his passion for sports and experience as an athlete, together with 18 years of experience in personal empowerment. He has created a dynamic facility for athletes desiring to break through performance ceilings, and maximize their athletic potential.

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