

The Winning Team



Welcome to our 2015 Arthroscopy Association of North America annual meeting. It has been my distinct pleasure and honor to have served as the 33rd president of AANA! It has been a quick year and one filled with great people, great teams, and no insurmountable challenges. In today's address, we will focus on teams and how we might improve our lives and the lives of our patients through teamwork and unity.

First, I'd like to share a piece of advice I received from my friend and mentor Terry Whipple regarding the topic of public speaking. He would always say, "My interest in this talk will be inversely proportional to the number of times this guy says 'I.'" So Terry, please pardon me while I break your rule for just for a few minutes.

The truth is, I'm more than happy to focus entirely on AANA during today's address because we have a *great* story to tell, a great story we *need* to tell. However, Walter Shelton, past AANA president, asked me to talk a little bit about what is really important to me. And Gina Papa asked me about my "trajectory" to the role of AANA President. So blame Walter and Gina for this part!

What is important to me is 100% attributable to the way I was raised and the people who have surrounded me throughout my life. I am *Who* I am and *Where* I am because I have been blessed with great teammates.

I was raised in a small rural town, Johnstown, Ohio. Johnstown had a population of 2,500. We had 4 traffic lights and no fast food. We had a movie theater for a short period of time. There was a small drug store on Main Street, where my father-in-law was the owner, pharmacist, and quite often the deliveryman. Johnstown did have a tennis court, but there was no net. The tallest building in our entire county was the grain elevator at the "chicken farm." Despite Johnstown's small, country nature, or perhaps because of it, Johnstown provided the perfect playing ground for me, and I'll always be proud that I grew up in "God's Country," Ohio.

As I mentioned, teammates have played a major role in shaping me and defining my path. Three people in

particular have had the greatest influence on my life: my father, my brother, and my wife.

First, my Dad. Elsworth Lynn Beach was a giant of a man, or so it seemed when I was growing up. At 6'2" and more than 300 pounds, he wore a 54-inch coat (I know – what happened to me? – totally unknown). He was the high school principal, and his students adored and feared him in equal measure. In Dad's opinion there were rarely shades of gray; there was right and there was wrong.

We were taught to take pride in our family, and ourselves and we knew better than to embarrass ourselves (and, more importantly, *Him*).

Lynn Beach never confused his role as the undisputed Captain of the Beach team, teacher, and disciplinarian with his desire to be anyone's buddy. Although my dad and I would become close friends later in life, as children, my brother and I were spanked appropriately, fairly, and frequently. In our house, you were entirely responsible for your own actions. You were rewarded when you earned it, and punished when you deserved it (which was often the case!). Looking back, I am grateful for the sense of accountability and teamwork that he so consistently instilled.

My dad passed away in 1998. He has had a life-long impact on me, my brother, my wife and children, and his students. For better or worse, he was a man who had an unwavering belief in family, clarity, and accountability. To this day, no matter what choices I make, I always know what choices I *should* make!

Next, my older brother Doug. Born only 14 months apart, we were almost identical, inseparable, and incredibly competitive. Growing up, every kid in Johnstown knew that the Beach Boys were a team. You couldn't take on one without taking on both. I can remember the bully of the neighborhood saying, "can't you stick up and do this yourself?" And I happily said, "I don't need to."

As my father would say, "blood is thicker than water and I expect you to stick up for your brother." We took that very seriously, and while we had more than our fair share of disagreements and fistfights, we were always a great team.

From the time we were young, we showed cattle together and played sports together. Each summer at the county and state fair, Doug would groom the cattle and I would show them. On the high school football

field, we were middle linebackers together. Selfishly, I talked him into lining up directly over the center so the center couldn't block *me*. I made lots of "easy" tackles, and Doug took lots of tough hits. That was an excellent example of the sacrifices that teammates make for each other. No "I" in team! Doug was a great teammate!

After leaving Johnstown, we both had the opportunity to play small-college football. He went to Kenyon and I went to Wittenberg. At Wittenberg University, you quickly learned the importance of individual sacrifice for the betterment of the team. As a college freshman and at the end of summer practice I, to my own dismay, found myself second on the "monster back" depth chart. Unfortunately, and again to my disappointment I didn't enter the season opener until late in the game. On my first play at Wittenberg I was lucky enough to intercept the ball and run it back for a 53-yard touchdown.

At practice on Monday, I was expecting a big fanfare of accolades from our coach, Davie Maurer, who at the time was the winningest active NCAA coach. He simply said, no stars and no stickers – that is what we expect from Wittenberg Tigers. Four years later when I was fortunate enough to be selected as a member of the Division II-III All-American football team, his gruff but sincere acknowledgement of my status as a "True Wittenberg Tiger" was perhaps the greatest sports award of my life.

Lastly, but most importantly, my wife, Betsy. We have been married for 33 years, but have known each for over 50 years. We started dating in high school and then went on to Wittenberg University together. We got married the December of our senior year and then moved on to THE Ohio State University Medical School. Abbey, the rose amongst the thorns (her brothers) was born in the summer after my first year of medical school. Blake, Ben and Sam were all born during med school and residency.

We are immensely proud of all our children and the people they have become: Abbey, Blake and his wife Dinelle, Ben and Sam are all here today and we thank them for being great teammates.

Now that I'm a grandfather, and having the chance to watch our children raise children of their own, I am reminded of the hard work that comes with raising babies. I credit Betsy's energy, determination and independence for a job well done raising our children.

As my dad wisely said, "show me a man who says he's the boss of his own home, and I'll show you a man who will lie about other things too." Since teams are the theme of today's address, the team I am most proud to be a part of is the Beach team. Betsy, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Now to my trajectory: My Trajectory is a result of three things – competition, work, and passion.

First, *Competition* – Growing up, my family never espoused the "YMCA notion" that everyone is a winner in every contest. We did espouse the philosophy that if it is worth keeping score, it is worth winning. My dad would always say, "show me a good loser and I'll show you a loser" and "we are with you, win or tie." From a young age, Dad was clear that he would never *let* us win any contest. Because when we finally did win, he wanted us to know we had "earned the right." As Hall of Fame coach Bill Parcells says, "you don't get medals for *trying*."

So with that as my motivation, I realized in sports and in life, that keenly focused effort and self-expectation would be major keys to any possible success. It was obvious that the level of commitment my parents demanded was the only path to victory.

Second, *Team Work* and *Hard Work* – As kids, my brother and I learned how to work together and how to work *hard*. We learned to enjoy hard work. We had a small cattle farm on the edge of town, and every morning we would get up before school to feed the cows. We would go back after practice (unless we could talk dad into doing the chores), then head home to have dinner and study.

During our college summers, my brother and I got construction jobs, in addition to the farm. We built houses and poured concrete. Our boss, affectionately nicknamed Lard, and the other skilled laborers laid the bricks and blocks that we carried. Ten hours of mixing mortar by hand in the hot sun paid \$42.50 a day.

That work ethic served me well during med school and the years after. As many of you remember, back in the days when men were men and giants walked the earth, interns took call every other night. I can remember being so tired, but I could always count on having just a little more energy when I really needed it.

And third, *Passion* – it is passion that makes life worth living. I have always believed in going all out when it comes to the things I really care about. Whether it's been my passion for surgery, for family, for the Wittenberg Tigers or THE Ohio State University Buckeyes (OH – IO), get excited about it! Have some passion! And have I ever mentioned my passion for golf? I'm ashamed to say that over the years, I've been guilty of the motto, "If 18 holes are good then 36 holes have got to be better – Right?"

Finally and most importantly, I have a huge passion for AANA.

And I keep coming back to this; what I really want to talk about is teams. How can we be more successful in our common endeavors as surgeons and people by being better teammates?

I'd like to share a story about the first and best medical teams I have ever witnessed. About two men who had a huge role in leading me toward this profession. Johnstown, our hometown, was lucky enough

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