

Nuggets and Bright Lines

- The Process
- Love
- Just Presence



A Path With A Heart

Someone once told me that the only paths worth following are those with a heart. I thought when I heard it that it was a beautifully expressive way of stating something. Everyday we are faced with many decisions. Each may be judged as having a different magnitude. Each will contribute to our lives, some in ways we know not of. Asking such a question is a way of being guided by your higher self. I am no expert but like many of us, I think I recognise a path with a heart. The rest of this article is a little story about that path. Looking back, did I know it would be a path with a heart. In as strange way yes. The reasons for that are as follows. it came as a surprise. It involved doing something that many would not do. It involved loss and risk. It excited me. it challenged me. Now a path with a heart does not have to involve any of these. I just share them in case it helps your recognition process.

You know when you are in love with the process and the relationships when your team win a championship and your preference is to leave them to their deserved and young celebrations while you get on with your normal routine with a sense of satisfaction at a job well done. Then when the energy has lulled the next morning, the journey has come to an end and you have to say goodbye to the boys you have spent months and weeks with and you cannot hold back the tears as you hug them, some for the last time, as they come to say good bye again before they go their own separate ways home through the thronging city. That's when you know you have found your path of meaning. It is when you know you were meant to do this, to be here and that your work is just love.

There were times in the past few months when, as we were going to work in the mornings I sat and felt filled with this almost overwhelming love inside me. A love for everything and everyone. All I had to do was turn up and be present a training. What we did or what happened was not relevant. I felt at those times that the love I was feeling and was running through me was the end in itself.

Sixty days ago the heart of my work was seemingly taken away by circumstance, I lost this love and was sure it would not be returning. I really thought that we had something unique that was irreplaceable. The plateau of grind through which was created a second group has not been as easy or as effortless. However the feelings, although of a different intensity, grew and were, I am sure, a big part of our success. I cared genuinely about the boys and hoped they knew so. I am sure this is what some coaches feel and get to. No wonder it is a calling. It is a privilege a wonderful experience. It comes through time, endeavour and from living and working for a common cause.

This Bangladesh experience has been so rich in so many ways. All those days spent out on the grass with assistants, balls, bibs and cones, a group of players willing and respectful, the sun shining and complete freedom, No coach could wish for more. In fact you could take away everything but a ball, the players and the grass and it would still be wonderful. This has been added to in no small way by so much off the pitch. The sharing of meals and time with the boys, visits to the mosque, flights, tournaments and games as well as simple Friday sweets and loads of hugs and smiles have been special. I have no other way to describe this experience than to use the word, love. It has truly been, thus far, a path with a heart.

The Author

Rob is a UEFA qualified coach with a League Managers Association qualification and a science and medicine background. He has worked in the football industry in Europe, USA, Asia and Africa; at International, Premiership, League, Non-League and grass roots levels with both World Cup and European Championship experience.



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