

Nuggets and Bright Lines

- *Choose your mentors wisely*
- *Develop your emotional intelligence*
- *Develop your subject specific knowledge*
- *Learn to organise*
- *Relate*



Steve Rutter's Prerequisites Of Coaching Excellence

The world is full of information to seeming overwhelm with even the considered essential absolutes of excellence and attainment. In a detailed and kindly given interview Steve Rutter extrapolates his own views on what he considers to be the four underpinning pillars of being a great coach and leader.

He talks freely of how he chose his own personal mentors and allowed not only their subject specific knowledge to diffuse into him by association but also and more importantly, according to his own philosophy, their personal characteristics and way of being in the world. As he says the reason they stood out was not because of their magnificent subject specific knowledge but because they were simply 'good men. Neither Brian Hall and Dick Bate were what you would call A list celebrities or household names. What people can teach us has little to do with what the apparent majority of the world thinks of them. The lesson here is maybe [choose your own mentors wisely](#).

Steve's next prerequisite is [emotional intelligence](#). He talks about Daniel Golman's best selling book of the same name and discusses why having self awareness, self management skills, empathy and an ability to relate are of paramount importance to success. There is an almost archetypical Rutter logic here beginning with a Shakespearian knowing of yourself in terms of what you are about, your likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. This leads on to managing this complex being, guiding it through the required negotiation of the world to progress with a degree of 'success.'

This negotiation through the infinitely chaotic social systems we operate in requires significant empathy to enable selfish gene 'a' to gain an outcome alongside selfish gene 'b' whilst maintaining the system and relationships. The failure of the latter step is often why what is seen as a success is only short term and fundamentally an undesirable result. So finally and logically we have the ability to relate to traverse our path and live another day with sufficient intact good will to hopefully gain another small victory tomorrow.

The third prerequisite is *subject specific knowledge*. No surprise here. Any master of any description surely has a vault of knowledge to draw upon and use. Napoleon Hill stated it clearly in 'Think and Grow Rich' in the chapter on specialised knowledge. It comes as a result of earning your spurs, time served, hours on the plateaus of seemingly mundane activity hopefully tilted towards sufficient micro challenge to get in the flow and hit the sweet spot of neurological expansion. There is a confidence that goes with knowing. Such underpinning from reading, listening, study and experience instills an ability to inspire, educate and facilitate change in others. In truth it comes from an internal and genuine desire to know and discover, not to impress.

Number four for Steve is *organisational and logistical ability*. Can you plan and think ahead, to prepare and prevent chaos? Many inspired creative types fall at this hurdle as it is a facet of character that naturally eludes them. No matter how genius the session if it is disorganised outcomes will be below par. Knowing thyself and outsourcing to another team member is maybe the answer but whatever the solution, planning and organising is key.

Finally Steve talks of *pedagogical ability*. Being a great coach requires almost by definition the ability to successfully communicate and educate. An enormous vat of water is of little use to thirsty desert travellers unless there is a way out for the life giving fluid. Have you ever experienced a magnificent master of their craft who just cannot hold the audience or create that link for whatever reason. You have to be able to relate and dial in to those you wish to influence. It can be about learning styles and methodology but for me it is more about getting the first prerequisite sorted, knowing yourself. Get this right and you will hit the spot with those you need to.

Steve is an eminently respected coach in the professional game. As he freely admits his coaching expertise was born out of a playing career where he had to think about the game to compete. He developed a tactical understanding and desire to learn whilst playing and with the help of his mentors became an esteemed coach educator.

Heavily influenced by the late Dick Bate, in addition to leading coach education at The English FA Steve has managed and coached at Panathinaikos, Yeovil Town and is currently assistant manager at Luton Town.

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, The USA, Asia and Africa; at International, Premiership, League, Non-League and grass roots levels with both World Cup and European Championship experience.



Website <https://www.robryles.co.uk/>
Podcast: <https://apple.co/2OaaMRh>
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