

Nuggets and Bright Lines

- *Humility*
- *Proactivity*
- *Empathy*



Lou Macari

Yesterday I spent two hours in the company of Lou Macari. The experience was so meaningful that I wish to share it as best as I can. The story goes something like this. A year ago I began a podcast called Leader Manager Coach. You can check it out by following the link at the end of the article.

I decided after some due diligence to use podcasting as a way of telling my story, sharing what I am passionate about, with the aim of sharing information and serving leaders, influencers, managers and coaches. The idea was to provide a condensed and accessible source of relevant information, knowledge and distilled wisdom from a myriad of sources.

Of course I wanted it to be successful but actually, because it was part of my journey, I didn't have any anxieties about it. I just wanted to do it. There was the usual vulnerability and the 'committee of they' to deal with but in my sixth decade I have managed to overcome much of what held me back in previous years.

The podcast has also evolved to use interviews with relevant influencers and industry professionals as a part of the process. My hometown city is Stoke on Trent and one of more its recent footballing heroes is Lou Macari. Lou is known for his career as a player with Manchester United, Celtic and as a Scottish international, as well as for a successful career in management with a multitude of clubs, promotions and silverware.

The thought came to me that Lou would be a perfect guest, not just because of what he had achieved in the game but for what he has done since retirement from it. You should really listen and let Lou tell you the full story, As well as being extremely poignant, it's a major part of the many wonderful tales in the interview.

So after putting off the call a number of times I eventually, one afternoon, called the place where I thought he would be. Who indeed should answer but Lou himself. I recognised his voice but asked if it was him. "Yes speaking," he replied and just said with no hesitation for me to come to see him.

On the particular day we had arranged I turned up to find Lou 'chopping wood and carrying water' or more specifically taking refuse to the recycling centre, known locally as 'the tip', with his car packed to the rafters with refuse sacks.

Essentially, getting to the point, around three years ago Lou started on a journey of helping homeless people in Stoke on Trent. The upshot of this has been the formation of The Macari Centre where Lou and his staff provide food and shelter, for currently, around forty homeless people. As i entered the centre for the first time I witnessed first hand a genuine football great, in one of the cities where he is genuinely idolised, doing the daily necessities in his centre for the homeless.

Lou invited me in. We sat in his office with a cup of tea and chatted for over an hour about his life in and after football. After this Lou took me on a tour of the centre where he treated me to continuous 'banter' with all the residents, talking to each by name and telling me a little of their stories. Let it be said I was in the company of greatness here, witnessing a man giving to those in great need and in dire situations in one of the cities where he is a legend for his achievements in the game. Believe me, Lou is idolised here. What he has achieved, in the city that means so much to me is wonderful. It is a place, like many others of a similar nature, that needs all the help it can get to tackle its issues.

I came away humbled to the core. It is one amazing story, packed with so much beautiful content. If you are passionate about football you will love it. if you have a heart you will also love it and if you have both prepare for something special. Thank you Lou, you are a special man and long may what you have started flourish.

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.



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