



Stanford eCorner

Everyone is Essential on Great Teams

Kristina Johnson, *Enduring Energy*

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Dr. Kristina Johnson discusses why all roles on a team are vital to success, whether "you're the star or you're carrying the water." She shares a story from her athletic career at Stanford to illustrate this point and also encourages young leaders to focus on improving their written and oral communication skills.



Transcript

It's funny. When you asked what was my failure, the one that was the most difficult to get over really was my athletic one. So, I played field hockey here, and was on the Varsity team. I didn't play as much as I would have liked because, truthfully, I know I wasn't that talented. Having said that, it's taken me a long time to admit, but it's true. What I realized was that, and I realized at the time, and it's important, about knowing your role. So in different times and different places, you either will carry the water or you'll be the star, and what's important is to do each one of those jobs very well. And so, I knew what my role was and it was to make the kids that were Olympians better. And so, I did. And I worked hard.

And I made sure that every practice those kids didn't do it, because they couldn't be shown up by someone who wasn't as good. And so I think that was a lesson that the athletics taught me. And then I founded the women's lacrosse program here - co-founded it. So - and that was a sport I actually could play better. So - and that where I was little bit more a leader there, I had to learn how to lead in other ways in a sport that I was not as gifted at. So I think that's one thing I'd recommend everyone to do. And going back to your question again, is leadership, also, is having persuasive oral and written skills to communicate your ideas. And I wish - one of things I wish I had done is written for the Stanford Daily, or blog - or it was writing for the newspaper then. That's so 20th century! But just to start writing, right? Just get it published, get it written, do blogs, because that really will be something that will serve you well.