



## Episode 167

# Dealing with Loneliness and Self-Doubt in Coaching

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**Follow JP:** [@jpnerbun](#)

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### Episode Notes

- **JP's reflection on his favorite sports movies:**
  - They neglect the internal forces that most coaches experience
    - Doubts, fears, past experiences, etc.
    - Self-doubt, isolation, loneliness, etc.
- **The secret challenges coaches don't talk about:**
  - Self-doubt
  - Feeling isolated
  - Anxiety about winning
- **JP's story:**
  - 5 years ago he was finishing out a season in Tennessee while his family had moved to Pennsylvania
  - The team was really struggling and he was feeling tons of heat from parents
  - He was lonely and isolated, especially without his family there
  - It makes the profession of coaching extremely difficult
- **Where these feelings come from:**
  - Sports are a unique arena
    - It's the norm for people to be critical of coaches
    - The vast majority of the feedback coaches get is negative
  - The unknown of what people are thinking or saying can really fuel that loneliness



- When there is silence, we start telling ourselves an internal story
  - Usually similar stories that we've told ourselves for our entire lives
- There's only so much negative feedback that a coach can take
- **The stories we tell ourselves:**
  - These stories impact our own confidence and ability as a coach
    - It's the same thing that happens to players
  - As transformational leaders, we want to make an impact
    - Too often we are solely judged by our wins and losses
    - Even when we're committed to more than just winning, it's hard when others aren't bought into that mission
  - It's hard to live out a transformational mission when you aren't winning because suddenly people aren't behind you anymore
- **The isolation coaches experience:**
  - Most coaches wonder who they can trust during a season
  - Walking out of the locker room post game is often a brutal moment for coaches
    - Feels isolating
    - Stories start going through your mind
  - Be deliberate about having a "board of directors"
    - A group of people that you can talk to without judgement
    - Have other coaches that have been through what you've been through
    - We need other to empathize with us
- **When you are experience loneliness and self-doubt:**
  - Cling to and be rooted in your purpose as a coach
    - "I'm here for the kids"
  - Realize that you are doing the best you can with the information that you have
    - Every decision we make is with incomplete information
  - Surrender the outcome
  - You're not alone in these feelings!