



## SUMMARY:

One reason we love to watch sports is because of the unique leadership lessons that play out on and off the field. In this episode, recorded at the 2018 GLS, Rasmus Ankersen shares his experience from the world of sports, as the chairman of two successful football clubs—one in Denmark and one in England. Ankersen talks to Jeff Lockyer about the importance of questioning success as well as failure. He also shares take-aways from his book *The Gold Mine Effect* which explores the reasons why certain coaches, clubs and countries produce disproportionate numbers of professional and Olympic athletes.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- “Owning your own ambition” is a key characteristic of leadership.
- If you want to inspire others, you’ve got to be inspired yourself.
- We can learn about leadership from sports because sports compress and intensify life challenges.
- In successful organizations, different leaders focus on different critical timeframes. Clock analogy: The second hand focuses on the short-term, the minute hand focuses on the medium-term and the hour hand focuses on long-term.
- There are many ways of being a good leader, but authenticity is the most important.
- Great leaders create environments where people can grow.
- The birthplace effect: Towns of 50,000–100,000 people produce disproportionate numbers of professional athletes. In these towns, the environment is one of the reasons for athletic success.
- Role models in close proximity are key to creating a high performance environment.
- Successful coaches focus on performance not comfort.
- Leaders need to be skeptical of success. Many leaders mistake good results for good market conditions.
- Leaders should ask **insurgent questions** like: *What would our most critical skeptic say? How would our best competitor beat us?*
- In order to be able to question success, humility is a must-have.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Think about your organization in terms of a clock: Do you have different leaders who focus on short-term, medium-term and long-term goals? Or do your leaders focus on all at once? What are strengths and weaknesses of your current structure?
2. Ankersen advocates questioning success by asking insurgent questions. Does your team regularly ask insurgent questions? Why do you think that is?
3. Think about your organization and self-reflect on Ankersen’s insurgent questions. *What would your most critical skeptic say about your product or service? How would your best competitor beat you?* What implications do your answers have for your current project?

## RESOURCES MENTIONED:

[Toronto Maple Leafs](#)  
[Kingston, Jamaica](#)  
[Coach Stephen Francis](#)  
[Starbucks](#)  
[Iten, Kenya](#)

## RELATED LINKS:

[Rasmus Ankersen](#)  
[The Gold Mine Effect](#)  
[Hunger in Paradise](#)



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