



Alistair Smith is the Chairman of Alite Ltd, a UK based company specialising in human motivation and learning. Alite Ltd are the designated learning consultants to FA Learning. Alistair has helped the FA develop their unique approach to learning and coaching. To find out more about Alistair and Alite visit the website at [www.alite.co.uk](http://www.alite.co.uk)

## LEARNING

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### HOW TO GO OUT WITH A MODEL

Integrity has been defined as 'doing the right thing when no-ones looking'. Actually, it was my wife who provide me with the definition but it's a good reminder for any coach. How consistent are your responses to changes in circumstance? When your team of twelve year-olds go a goal down in the first ten minutes what do you do? What personal values shape your response? When the changing room door is closed, are you still the same role model you were when five minutes before hundreds were watching you and your young team out on the pitch?

At the core of the FA Learning approach to development are six clear and concise values. The values were researched through a series of interviews we conducted over the course of a year. The values provide a baseline for the FA Learning approach. We hope that FA Tutors and Coaches model these values when delivering programmes. They are:

- o Challenge
- o Inclusivity
- o Coherence
- o Creativity
- o Passion

What this means in practice is that anyone standing on the touchline or in the changing room on FA business demonstrates their integrity through modelling these values.

To be challenging means that the coach gives lots of opportunity to the players to understand and be responsible for their own development. A young player is stretched technically, intellectually and physically but through an informed understanding of what's best. The challenging coach encourages risk taking and problem solving and does so through without coercion.

A coach is inclusive what they think and what they do. To think inclusively shifts the emphasis from winning at all costs to involvement and growth. Most players will never perform at the higher levels but it doesn't mean they cannot get fulfilment from the game and remain with it throughout their lives. The inclusive coach leaves their ego in the car park.

A coach who models coherence recognises that they are only one part of the player's development. This coach understands the need for a balanced overview and the fact that social, psychological, technical and physical factors come together to influence success at all levels of the game. An Academy coach may have that young player for about 7% of their waking hours at most in any one

week. The coherent coach retains an appreciation of the factors which shape progress.

Creativity is what makes the beautiful game a joy. Creativity is stifled by high anxiety or a need to please. The creative coach is a student of the game who gives licence to players to develop the expressive side of their discipline. Creative coaches innovate at all levels. The creative coach is the future of the game.

The passionate coach lives and breathes the message. Always looking for ways to improve, they are the first to arrive and the last to go home. The passionate coach is not blinded by their enthusiasm. They reflect and regularly review for improvement and involve their players in doing the same. The passionate coach is the glue that holds together the smallest and the largest clubs in the land.

If as a coach you find yourself of any of the FA Learning programmes, you have a right to expect that whoever is at the front leading the programme they model the values.