

# **Inner Vision Driven**

## *A Common Thread Among Champions*

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## **Introduction**

The game of fastpitch softball has become considerably more competitive over the past 10-15 years. Players, parents, and coaches who are serious about the game are all involved in “competitive” leagues vs. “participation” leagues. But in the quest to become the best, it’s so easy to lose sight of the ultimate reason for being involved with the sport. It’s easy to fall into a path that actually takes you AWAY from greatness instead of toward it.

In this report, I’m going to reveal ONE common thread among great softball coaches. I believe this commonality is essential if you want to experience your ultimate softball success.

But before we get to that, let’s take a look at some of the common problems you may be facing:

- Bad Decision Making**
- Lack of knowledge
- Not making progress**
- Skills not improving at the rate they should or not at all
- Lack the ability to lead your team effectively**
- Not reaching goals you set
- Trying lots new methods/strategies/ideas, but still struggling with the same problems**

All of these issues are common challenges that softball players and coaches face. So my first message to you is...

**Don’t beat yourself up! You are not alone!**

Don’t you feel better now? At least a little? What if I told you that all of these issues could stem, in some way shape or form, from ONE central problem? What if I told you that avoiding this commonly made

fundamental mistake can ensure that you are ready and most able to combat all the challenges you face?

The fact that you are reading this report tells me that you *want* to learn, grow, and improve your game. You may even attend clinics and try to keep up with the latest softball trends. However you may feel like you're doing everything you can to get better and reach your goals and yet something's missing. You aren't progressing the way you'd like. You try doing what others are doing with success and it's not working for you. You keep acquiring new knowledge. You keep working on new skills, but aren't able to effectively apply what you learn when it matters most. Maybe you even buy all the latest training aids and still you (or your team) just aren't performing to your full potential.

**Why are you falling short?**

**Why aren't you progressing?**

**Why do you feel like you're stuck even though you're learning new things?**

**I have two words for you INNER VISION.**

**What IS Inner Vision?**

Before we get into that, let me ask you one quick and very simple question – **jot down whatever pops into your mind first**. Quick, get a pen and write down your answer to the question below...

**Why do you coach/play softball?**

**I asked some top softball coaches this very question. You'll see what they had to say later in the report. For now, take a look at what you wrote...**

What was the first thing that jumped into your head?

To win?  
Be a champion?  
Be the best in the league?  
Break records?

It's fun?  
Love the challenge?  
Enjoy the competition?  
Want to help players?

One set of answers lists what Tom Hanson, PhD of [www.GetSoftballConfidence.com](http://www.GetSoftballConfidence.com) refers to as "Outer Vision" – championships, victories, breaking records, public recognition, etc.

The other reflects Inner vision: confidence, pride, accountability, integrity, etc.

Now everyone talks about vision and how it's crucial to success in anything and I completely agree. Every champion had a vision of what they wanted to accomplish, exactly where they wanted to be.

## **Why Aren't You Getting the Results You Want ?**

ONE PROBLEM that holds players and coaches back is LACK OF VISION or VISION THAT IS NOT CLEAR.

Obviously lack of vision is a fundamental problem in and of itself. If you have no vision at all, no idea of where you want to go as a coach, then I highly suggest going through the Coach of Action Academy where we walk you through the steps of creating, developing, and clarifying your own coaching vision. The clearer you are about where you want to go, the easier it is to get there. *Learn more at [www.CoachOfAction.com](http://www.CoachOfAction.com).*

### **But if you're reading this report....**

It's very likely that you have some kind of vision or at least some kind of dream of the future. That's definitely a great start! Of course, we all want to be "successful." But have you ever taken the time to sit down and really think about exactly what you want to accomplish? If not, if you can't tell me within seconds, with details where you are headed and what your big goals or objectives are, what your vision is, then you definitely need to take some time and develop or clarify your vision.

Again, coaches can get practical, useful help with this in the Coach of Action Academy. Get VERY specific and very clear on your vision. [www.CoachOfAction.com](http://www.CoachOfAction.com)

Creating and clarifying your vision can take you a long way and can certainly help make improvements in your game. BUT! (Yes, there's a but) You see, there may still be an underlying issue that holds you back even if you have a vision and even if your vision is clear. There is STILL one major, fundamental problem that can keep you from being more successful and experiencing the most fulfillment possible from this game.

## **So...WHAT IS THE MAJOR FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM THAT HOLDS PEOPLE BACK?**

Themselves. Yeah, I know you've probably heard that before. "The only thing holding you back is you." Well, it's true.

But what I'm specifically pinpointing is the trap many of us as fall into at one point or another. That trap, that mistake, that major problem is **overemphasizing your "outer vision."**

What is outer vision again?  
championships, victories, breaking records, public recognition, etc

## **What Type of Coach/Player Are You?**

**In all likelihood, you fall into 1 of 2 categories.**

The first category contains individuals that are *Fueled by Inner Vision* the other contains individuals that are *Reaching for Accomplishments*. If you're not in either of these categories it's likely that softball is "just a hobby" for you and you don't really have a care one way or the other how far you go. Of course, you probably still want to do well, but you probably won't lose much sleep over it. However, if you're ready this page, I highly doubt that's you, so we're back to one of the 2 categories above.

Which is better? Which is more important? Which gets the best results?

Clear outer goals are wonderful to have. I'm not discounting them by any means, but if that's all you've got, you're missing a HUGE piece of the puzzle. If you're just in it for "outer" goals and recognition, you're just a coach or player who's *Reaching for Accomplishments*."

But when you're fueled by a passion that runs deeper that means more than an inanimate trophy, you become inner vision driven which I believe is what launches ordinary people into extraordinary greatness. I once received an e-mail from Bobby Simpson of Higher Ground (I'm on his

mailing list) and he mentioned the fact that he interviewed over **500 top performers** from all areas of work, the arts, and sports. He talked about how they were ALL different, BUT the one quality they all had in common was PASSION!

It's very easy, as the season wears on, or after you've been in softball for a while, to get side-tracked. You probably started off your career with the best of intentions, but those "right reasons" and "good intentions" can get lost along the way when winning or becoming the best "gets in the way." When you first started, you probably had a great motivation for being out on the field; something more than just wanting to win. But 2, 3, maybe 4 years down the road, you'd be surprised how much this can change.

If you're a coach, you may have started coaching with the desire to help others, to share what the game has given you, to help young athletes reach their full potential, etc....but what did you jot down at the beginning of this report?

Is what you wrote down fundamentally the same as the good intentions you started off with? Did you ever have the right reasons behind why you coach?

It's not unusual to get a little too caught up in the competitiveness of it all. Now, there's nothing wrong with striving for the highest achievements, for wanting to go above and beyond, for making it a goal, for making it a point to be better than anyone thought you ever could, BUT never forget why you started. Why? Because I truly believe when you lose sight of this, you're direction becomes less clear. You may feel "scattered" from time to time not sure what you should work or tackle next. You may find yourself searching for the newest, most innovative techniques and find yourself lost in trying to figure out which method is best or right since there are so many resources out there and not all of them give the same advice. The belief system you started out with gets lost in the shuffle and is no longer there to guide your decision making process. As a player, the different input from all those different sources can make simple skills more confusing. As a coach, you can lose your effectiveness and your positive impact on your players.

**What are some of the negatives about being an individual who is “Reaching for accomplishments” instead of being “fueled by Inner Vision?”**

- You may become easily swayed by outside sources
- You may find yourself going in 10 directions at once because you're not sure which “advice” to follow
- The distinction between the “right” decision and the “wrong” one often becomes blurred
- You make decisions with doubt instead of with certainty in your beliefs/reasoning
- You lose direction and become unsure of how to keep moving forward (or keep your team moving forward as a coach)
- Difficult decisions and situations become overwhelming
- You may not truly connect with your teammates, players, parents, or coaching staff
- You may experience a higher turn over rate with your coaching staff

It's no way to live, it's no way to play, and it's no way to coach.

**So What's the Alternative?**

**Be Inner Vision Driven!** Coach/play for the “right” reasons. Be involved with softball because it’s fun, because you love it! Play because you enjoy the competition, because you enjoy being part of a team, and because you love the challenge of striving for excellence. Coach because you love the challenge and love seeing your players go above and beyond what anyone thought they could. Remember why you started coaching and stay true to that.

I don’t think there are a lot of coaches or players that woke up one day and said, “I’m going to get involved with softball so I can win a bunch of championships.”

If there are people out there that did have that thought, they’re probably not the type that would be reading my articles, downloading my reports, or reading these words that you’re reading right now. So, I’ll make a guess that you weren’t someone who had that particular thought the moment you got involved with softball. If you’re a coach, there were probably other reasons or thoughts that were going through your mind the very first time you ever even thought about becoming a softball coach. So again, think back to why you got started and why you stuck with it. This will go a long way towards helping you stay Inner Vision Driven.

### **What happens when your Inner Vision is what motivates you?**

- It’s easier to stay focused
- Your strong belief system is there to help guide you
- You find more fulfillment in your softball experience
- You’re less likely to be swayed by the “latest trend”
- You have confidence in what you do
- You’re team is more likely to connect with you and believe in you
- You become a stronger leader
- You’ll be able to build a team of coaches around you that have the same beliefs and passion and are more likely to stick with you
- Coaching/playing becomes simpler
- You’re naturally drawn to the methods by which you learn and grow best

When you do things for the right reasons and for what you strongly believe in, that passion behind your actions and the belief system you have helps guide all of the decisions you make, the words you speak, and the actions you take. The direction to take when you're faced with a "tough" decision often becomes clearer when you have a strong passion and belief system in place. Your course of action in difficult situations is often much simpler to determine as well.

You may not always get it right, because, after all, we are human and we *WILL* make mistakes, *BUT* you won't have reasons to regret anything you've said or done if you have the right reasons behind it and stay true to your inner vision and what you believe in.

**Am I saying that you will suddenly start winning every championship if you are inner vision driven?** No, not even Sue Enquist or Mike Candrea win *every* championship. Am I saying that you will *NEVER* find success if you're completely outer vision oriented? No, I believe that even those only focused on outer vision can experience success. Will it be sustained? I don't believe so and I can guarantee you, those types of coaches, even if they win a championship or two, will *NOT* experience the level of fulfillment that Inner Vision coaches do.

Don't get me wrong, championships feel great.....for the moment. Then it's over. Then there's next year, next season, and everyone gunning for your butt. Then it's back to the daily grind of preparing to try to do it again. Yes, championships are awesome, but experiencing the highest level of fulfillment in this game even better. The "wins" will come.

When you:

- Have a passion for what you do
- Love it what you do
- Enjoy what you do
- Welcome challenges

THAT'S when you excel and *that's when you will find the greatest fulfillment in what you do* - YOUR ultimate success in softball.

It doesn't matter if we're talking about life, work, or coaching. With the "right" reasons behind what you do, your efforts go beyond winning, beyond championships, beyond money, and you'll find a level of fulfillment those things alone cannot bring. With the time and effort softball takes, you owe it to your team and yourself to make that happen. Otherwise, you may as well be doing something else where you *can* experience that passion, enjoyment, fulfillment, and ultimate success.

## **So how do I avoid the trap of over-emphasizing Outer Vision?**

Here are some ideas for keeping you on track and making sure you're not getting caught up in the competition and over-emphasizing that outer vision.

1. Do a Self Check every now and then
2. Create a clear vision and re-visit it from time to time to keep yourself on track and to continue developing your vision as time goes by (*we go over this step by step in the Coach of Action Academy* [www.CoachofAction.com](http://www.CoachofAction.com) )
3. Develop a "motto" that reminds you of why you do what you do
4. Ask a family member, a teammate, or a colleague to help keep you in check
5. Remember why you started and why you stuck with this game

## **Specifically For Coaches**

1. Develop your coaching philosophy based upon what you believe are the most important fundamental principles to live and play ball by
2. Talk about your coaching philosophy and share what you believe in with your team in your first meeting of each season
3. Forget trophies, awards, and championships for a bit and write down some of the other things you want your players to get out of their softball experience
4. Remember that softball is a GAME and players often play because they enjoy it, not because they might get a trophy or medal
5. Remember that players don't care how much you know until they know how much you care
6. Remember the thoughts you had back when you first started coaching
7. Remember while that champions or wins may make you the "star" for the moment, your impact on a players life is forever. Make sure it's a positive one.

*Suggestion:*

Print out these lists and keep it somewhere you'll see it often to help keep yourself on track.

I just have one more thing I want to share before we get to the good stuff (aka What the Coaches had to say). I want you to think of the word “Champion” for a bit. What comes to mind?

What I discussed earlier in the report, Inner Vision vs Outer Vision, is basically a difference in **how you approach the game**. Often times it’s also accompanied by two completely different perspectives. Would you agree?

Back to my question, “What comes to mind when you see or think of the word “Champion?”

Let’s take a look at the definition below...

## **What is a Champion?**

According to Dictionary.com, one of the definitions of a champion is:

*“One that is clearly superior or has the attributes of a winner.”*

That definition has two parts:

“One that is clearly superior” (in other words the BEST)

“OR has the attributes of a winner.”

It doesn’t say “or one that *IS* a winner.” It says, “has the attributes of a winner.” What does that mean? To me it means that you don’t necessarily have to be a “winner” to be a “champion.” By this particular definition, WINNER does not necessarily equal CHAMPION.

Yes, there are other definitions “*a person who has defeated all opponents in a competition or series of competitions, so as to hold first place.*” So in other words, a winner, someone who “won.” Right? How do you define a “champion?”

The two different definitions above again show me different perspectives. What are you striving for? Is all you want is a win? Or do you want to have the attributes of a winner?

I've commented on this before. Maybe you already know how I feel about this. If not, here's an excerpt from my fastpitch blog at [www.allaboutfastpitch.com](http://www.allaboutfastpitch.com).

***“When all is said and done, I wouldn't want people to remember me only for the championships I've been a part of, but hopefully also for positive qualities like integrity, honesty, determination, inspiration, etc. In fact, if they could know me for either championships OR those positive qualities - I would want them to remember me for having those positive qualities.***

*If I had to choose between being known as a coach with those positive qualities and no championships OR a coach with championships and but little integrity, little honesty, and little inspiration - I don't think I have to tell you which scenario I'd choose. What a shame it would be to be known for a championship or two and nothing else.”*

What about you? How do you want to be remembered?

One thing I've noticed about the truly great, the players or coaches that really stand out and set themselves apart, is that they often aren't "in it" for the outward recognition or for money or for trophies. These individuals go hard and do their best regardless of whether or not others are watching; regardless of whether or not there is a tangible reward for doing so. They play or coach for the sheer joy of being involved with the sport. They understand that the only way to play is all out. Anything worth doing, in softball or in life, should be done all out. If you can't go all out, you may as well find something else to do. Not necessarily because it's "wrong" or because it doesn't honor the game or because it's not fair to your team. All those things may be true, but also because you owe it to yourself to be involved with something, to be immersed in something that you CAN go all out in. I say "immersed" because you know how busy softball season gets and how much time and energy it takes up. If you're going to expend that much time and energy, it should most definitely be in something that you can go full force in because you absolutely love it; something with which you ARE Inner Vision Driven. Make sense?

## **The Answers**

Earlier in this report I mentioned that I asked top softball coaches that same question I asked you.

### **“Why do you coach softball?”**

Their answers are on the pages that follow along with my own observations about their answers.

## **Coaches Answers: “Why do you coach softball?”**

*“When I started to coach when I was a teen, it gave me something to do in the summer and I enjoyed the sport. It quickly turned out to be a something I really love to do because it brought a sense of fulfillment, and the feelings of belonging, being useful, appreciated and competent at something - things that teen needs a lot off.*

*Today, I coach because I just enjoy the contact with athletes. I love to share what I know and the biggest reward is to see the smile in the face of younger athletes when they finally experience success after working really hard. I love being able to make a difference in their lives. That makes feel better. And I love the feeling and the adrenaline of coaching games, especially at tournaments. Nothing beats that feeling.”*

Marc Dagenais, Softball Peak Performance Coach, visit his website [www.allaboutfastpitch.com/performance.html](http://www.allaboutfastpitch.com/performance.html)

*“Long story short, the game was a bond between my brother, father and I. And now... I owe all I have in the world to the game.”*

Bill Hillhouse, Premier Men’s Fastpitch Pitcher/Clinician  
[www.HouseOfPitching.com](http://www.HouseOfPitching.com)

## **Coaches Answers: Why do you coach softball?**

*“I coach softball because I love the sport and enjoy watching players accomplish skills that they have to work at. Athletics teaches lifelong skills and it’s so gratifying to see these young ladies grow into adulthood.”*

Larry Ray, University of Arizona Assistant Coach

*“I LOVE teaching and helping them through my experiences.”*

Cindy Bristow, former college softball coach and owner of [www.SoftballExcellence.com](http://www.SoftballExcellence.com).

*“I coach softball because I love the sport. The daily preparation of improving my student-athletes as people and performers is a great thrill.”*

Pat Murphy, University of Alabama Head Coach

*“The reason I coach is because I have a passion and love for the game. That passion is something that I enjoy passing along to other players and coaches so they can get*

*the enjoyment out of the game that I have. I love to prepare and compete.*

*Softball has given me and my family so many great moments but has also taught us allot about handling the ups and downs in life as well.*

*Stay positive, work hard and maintain a balance in your life between your family, profession and we all need to stay strong in our faith!”*

Mike Candrea, University of Arizona Head Coach, USA Women’s National Team Head Coach

## **What Did You Notice About Those Answers?**

What did you notice about the answers that were given by these coaches?

Did you see the word “championship” or “win” in any of the answers?  
I didn’t.

What *DID* you see in the answers?

I saw coaches talking about enjoyment, fulfillment, and love of the game. They talked about passion, sharing, teaching, and helping. *This is INNER VISION* and these coaches are driven by it. It’s *why* they coach. It’s the driving force behind why they go out to the field day after day, year after year.

I wanted to get a quote from Sue Enquist as well, but I wasn’t able to get in touch with her. **HOWEVER**, when I went to her website, Sue Enquist.com, the very first thing that came up was an “Enter Site” page. What was on that page?

It was this quote...

*“Champions are measured from the inside out.”*

This simple 7 word phrase speaks volumes toward the main idea I’m trying to get across and the title to this report *“Inner Vision Driven: The Key to Championship Softball.”* It’s worth repeating...

*“Champions are measured **from the inside out.**”*

Check yourself every now and then. Why do you coach/play? Don’t get caught up in the almighty WIN – stay driven by Inner Vision and you’ll find greater fulfillment and success in your coaching career.

I recently got this message via e-mail and it basically illustrates exactly what I’m talking about. Take a moment to read it...

I couldn't resist anymore. The temptation was too great.

Coaching is like a drug. It's addictive.

So, after a year on the side lines doing mostly consulting and specialized work with Olympians, I pick it up again.

Yes, I'm back coaching a team. Again.

I've been coaching a long time. And at all levels of the game.

However, during the last decade, I've worked mostly at the elite level with athletes from 18 to 30 years old at the 18U, 23U, senior and college levels.

Now, for the first time in 10 years, I'm back at the 16U level.

What was I thinking?

Hormones, parents, discipline, small life events turned tragedies, etc.

I am sure a lot of you know what I'm talking about.

*Inner Vision Driven: A Common Thread Among Champions*

But guess what? I'm excited anyways.

Why?

It's fun.

I love challenges.

I love having a positive influence on the lives of younger athletes and help them grow both as athletes and as people.

I love the thrill of competition.

I love teaching skills and developing talent.

I love sharing my life experiences and mentoring.

I love giving back to the community.

Coaching is challenging. No doubt about it. It's often a thankless job. It can give you A LOT of headaches.

But It can be an extremely rewarding experience too.

Why are there so many volunteer coaches in our sport system?

Because it's fun, addictive and rewarding.

I just held my tryouts this past weekend and selected my team. I just embarked on a new journey with 12 talented, passionate, hard-working, and fun young ladies and my new coaching staff.

We'll have to get to know each other. They'll have to get to know my philosophy and my structure. We are in this together.

I am excited. It will be fun.

I had to share.

Who loves ya? ;-)

Marc  
"Your Softball Peak Performance Coach"

To Visit Marc's site go to [www.allaboutfastpitch.com/performance.html](http://www.allaboutfastpitch.com/performance.html)

Oh yes... *THAT* is what it's all about. Go in with that kind of perspective and softball will be such a wonderful experience.

No matter what the outcome you will be on your way to achieving your ultimate softball success.

Wishing you all the best this season and beyond,



Stacie Mahoe

[www.AllAboutFastpitch.com](http://www.AllAboutFastpitch.com)

*P.S. – If you haven't done so already, sign up to get free fastpitch tips via e-mail at [www.AllAboutFastpitch.com/members.html](http://www.AllAboutFastpitch.com/members.html)*

### **More Freebies by Stacie**

Softball Coaching Essentials from A to Z

<http://allaboutfastpitch.com/download/CoachingAtoZ.pdf>

25 College Recruiting Facts

<http://allaboutfastpitch.com/25Facts.pdf>

Special Coaching Report

<http://allaboutfastpitch.com/SpecialReport.html>

Speed Training E-Course

<http://allaboutfastpitch.com/GetSpeed.html>

### **Other Recommended Resources**

Mental Game Training

[www.GetSoftballConfidence.com](http://www.GetSoftballConfidence.com)

Secrets to Dominant Speed in Any Athlete

<http://allaboutfastpitch.com/Speed.pdf>

10 Tips to Improve Confidence and Success in Young Athletes

[www.allaboutfastpitch.com/kids.html](http://www.allaboutfastpitch.com/kids.html)

Free Softball Performance Newsletter

[www.allaboutfastpitch.com/performance.html](http://www.allaboutfastpitch.com/performance.html)