

## Commitments - Oath/Agreement



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### From oath to agreement

"We stand here and join hands. One will, one goal unites us: free we will be! In deepest need we promise to help each other, to stand together in the fight against the reeves, and to bow to no violence."

Admittedly, Stauffacher's words on the Rütli were long ago and unproven. But in terms of the idea, they have lost none of their relevance.

When people meet, different values and different behaviors inevitably collide. Whether in sports, at work or in leisure time - norms, agreements and laws determine the togetherness. The legal framework of marriage is regulated in a contract, an organic farmer must adhere strictly to legal regulations if he wants to receive subsidies from the state, and even children and young people are subject to compulsory education and must abide by school rules. These regulations and laws are needed for an orderly coexistence in a society.

### Create identification

All these externally imposed conditions are decreed by an authority and can create a feeling of powerlessness. It is the nature of human beings to feel more comfortable when they themselves can determine their own actions. In smaller, social groups this is also quite possible. Provided that all members adhere to certain jointly made agreements and can identify with the group goals and agreements. In a small company, for example, this could mean that all employees decide to have smoke-free workrooms. Together they make a "commitment". Commitment means the attitude and obligation one has towards a cause or an organisation. It says how great identification and commitment are to a particular cause. In business, this term is a fixed measure. It is a measure of how committed employees and managers are to the company. The higher the level of commitment, the more motivated they are to represent the company's goals.

### New Leadership Style

Commitments, then, are nothing fundamentally new. They are mutually agreed upon understandings of behaviors, beliefs, and intentions. A married couple doesn't just legally hedge their bets by means of a contract. They also make a joint commitment to care for each other and to show respect and humanity to their partner. A research team defines moral and ethical standards for itself that it adheres to in its daily work. And the Federal Office of Sport launches the "Doping-free elite sport" project to involve athletes in the responsibility for combating doping. These are just

three of many possible examples.

Commitments by no means replace applicable laws and rules, rather they complement them. If they are to have a lasting effect, they must be entered into voluntarily and worked out together. This often requires a new management style, because "prescribed agreements" demotivate more than they help. Supervisors, trainers and parents must therefore allow their employees, players and children to participate in the development of the agreement. They must be able to help decide which behaviour is desirable. This is the only way to achieve the necessary commitment and accountability to the agreed resolutions. It is important that the commitments made in a group are binding and will be kept by all. Therefore, consideration must also be given to what to do if agreements are broken.

## **Bad role models**

Sports thrive on interaction with others and therefore provide many opportunities to gain experience in dealing with emotions. Opponents and teammates, fans and referees, rules and ambition bring emotions into the "game". Sport can connect people, bring them closer together and facilitate interpersonal contact. However, it is also a place where all the social conflicts can be seen: excessive consumption of stimulants, use of illegal addictive and doping substances, exclusion of those who think differently, transgression of boundaries, sexual assaults or unfair behaviour. The spitting and lying affair at the European Football Championships, for example, clearly shows that when, as in top-level sport, "daily bread is at stake", fairness is sometimes trampled underfoot. Lazy tricks and minor breaches of the rules are nothing unusual. On the contrary, they are often desired and accepted for the sake of success. For example, the "king of the swallows" cheats his way to the decisive penalty, the outfield player rolls around on the pitch with his face contorted in pain after a harmless foul, and the goal scorer celebrates the irregularly scored goal with his hand. The end justifies the means here too.

## **Look instead of look away!**

We don't have to go as far as top-level sport to find such offences. Every week on Swiss pitches, referees are verbally abused and opponents are attacked by unfair means. But it is not only the players themselves who frequently show misconduct. Coaches and spectators also set a bad example. What do you do when your opponents are treated as enemies and are verbally abused and jostled? Accept it when the rules of the game and the referee's decisions are constantly being lambasted? Watching when victories are celebrated with copious amounts of alcohol? Let's look instead of looking away! Commitments that have been worked out sensibly and are supported by everyone can help to counteract this and contribute to a greater awareness of basic values, to better acceptance of and compliance with rules and to a more positive handling of emotions.

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## **Source Notes:**

**Content:** Youth+Sport, mobile 1, Dec. 2004, COMMITMENTS

**Authors:** Ralph Hunziker, Hans Ulrich Mutti, Anton Lehmann, Barbara Boucherin

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