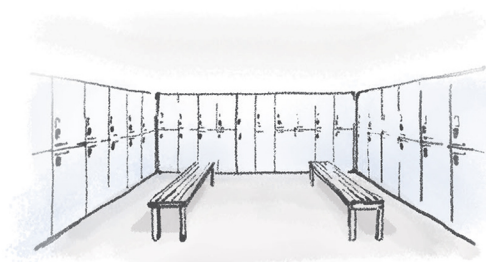


THE  
**LOCKER  
ROOM**



How Great Teams  
Heal Hurt,  
Overcome Adversity,  
and Build Unity

**DAMON WEST**

Bestselling Coauthor of *The Coffee Bean*

**STEPHEN MACKEY**

Player Development Coach

**WILEY**



## Praise for *The Locker Room*

“Occasionally, a book comes along that really impacts you and really makes you think, feel, and want to act differently going forward. This book is a roadmap for how we can progress towards healing, unity, and overcoming the ugliness that is racism. West and Mackey are onto something here, and we should all pay attention because the current game plan isn’t working.”

—**Rhett Power,**  
*Forbes* columnist

“*The Locker Room* comes at a highly contentious time in our country and delivers a powerful and much needed story whose overriding messages of teamwork, unity, and respect for one another are most welcome in the face of increasing social and political divisiveness and a racial reckoning. Set in the inner sanctum melting pot of a football team locker room, former athletes Mackey and West draw on their experiences to present a story that illustrates how teams with players and coaches from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities ‘come together around a common goal. They work together, sacrifice for each other, and use their diversity as a strength to make each other better.’ The glaring conclusion is that our families and neighborhoods, indeed our country, could benefit

from practicing the story's locker room principles and lessons for the betterment of us all. This is a timely, moving, and thought-provoking read."

—**Michael Hurd**, historian and author of  
*Thursday Night Lights: The Story of Black  
High School Football in Texas*

**THE  
LOCKER  
ROOM**



**THE  
LOCKER  
ROOM**

**How Great Teams  
Heal Hurt,  
Overcome Adversity,  
and Build Unity**

**DAMON WEST**

**STEPHEN MACKEY**

Bestselling Coauthor of *The Coffee Bean*

Player Development Coach

**WILEY**

Copyright © 2022 by Damon West, LLC and 2W International, LLC. All rights reserved.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.  
Published simultaneously in Canada.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 750-4470, or on the web at [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com). Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permission>.

**Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty:** While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Further, readers should be aware that websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read. Neither the publisher nor authors shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

For general information on our other products and services or for technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic formats. For more information about Wiley products, visit our website at [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com).

***Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is Available:***

ISBN 9781119897842 (cloth)  
ISBN 9781119897866 (ePub)  
ISBN 9781119897873 (ePDF)

COVER ART & DESIGN: PAUL McCARTHY



*I dedicate this to my father, Bob West. As a sports writer, you used sports to teach me many valuable life lessons. I still look up to you today, just as I did when I was a kid.*

*Love,  
Damon*

*I dedicate this to my bride, Teresa. Thank you for your love, support, humility, and grace.*

*Love,  
Stephen*



# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Prologue The Lifetime Achievement Award</i>	<i>xv</i>
<b>1 Eyes on the Prize</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 You're Better Than That</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3 The Locker Room Is Broken</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4 Growth Takes Place Outside of Comfort Zones</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>5 I Believe in You</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>6 Canceling the Cancel Culture</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>7 A Culture of Character</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>8 All In</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>9 The Six Pillars</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>10 In the Zone</b>	<b>67</b>

<b>11 Vulnerability Is a Strength</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>12 Team Meeting</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>13 Humility and Grace</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>14 I Want the Ball</b>	<b>93</b>
<i>Epilogue: A Legacy of Impact: The Lifetime Achievement Award Acceptance Speech</i>	<i>101</i>

# Preface

**A**t the heart of coaching is a deep-rooted commitment to helping people become the best versions of themselves. The role of a coach is to see the potential in people and then do everything within their power to help them get there. As a coach, you're less concerned with the end goal—although *every* coach wants to win!—and more concerned with the progress your athletes make.

Great coaches, as with other great leaders, must be willing to give the best of themselves to set the example for the cultures they wish to build. In that spirit—to give our best to help you become your best—we have created a short story about a team, hurt and divided, which needed the Locker Room to help them heal, unite, and overcome.

Before entering the Locker Room, we would like to offer some insight into a few of the choices made.

We chose the Locker Room as the location of this story because we both have experienced the power of the Locker Room in sports. We are both former athletes (we won't talk about who was the *better* athlete) and have seen the Locker Room break down barriers and transform lives. While the Locker Room