

## THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK

## TRUST, MISSION FOCUS, AND GLUE GUYS AND GLUE GALS

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January 31, 2025

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We work with some of the world's most successful entrepreneurs, and we're fascinated by what makes them tick. And over the years we've observed amazing entrepreneurs who also have great personal relationships and great families...and some who have had rougher roads in those arenas...and we've wondered why? Which is why a fireside chat at our recent Morgan Stanley Private Wealth Advisor Conference with Shane Battier and Ravi Gupta was so fascinating.

Good friends, and fellow Duke University grads, Battier and Gupta's thesis is that we all play on multiple "teams" throughout our lives - to create a successful marriage, raise our kids, build a business, stay close with family and friends, engage with community, or start a successful non-profit. And the probability of success for those teams dramatically increases if we focus less on our individual stats and more on being better team players.

Gupta's and Battier's views of the world are informed by their own journeys. Gupta, a partner at venture capital firm Sequoia Capital, was COO and CFO of Instacart through a period when they were losing \$12 million dollars per month, and through their subsequent turnaround (they now have a \$12 Billion market cap). Battier, the National High School Basketball Player of the Year in 1997, played four years at Duke for "Coach K", finishing with a 133-15 record and an NCAA Championship in 2001, before going on to win 2 NBA Championships with the Miami Heat during his 13 year NBA career.

Battier and Gupta argue that teams thrive when there is a shared Trust and Mission Focus, and when they have "Glue Guys & Glue Gals", unsung heroes who execute the selfless day-to-day blocking and tackling that doesn't win accolades but is critical to success.

Trust and Mission Focus are critical because their interplay determines a team's trajectory. Over the course of his career, Battier developed what he calls the "Coherence Quadrant" to gauge team effectiveness:

- Disastrous teams: Low trust and mission focus, leading to collapse under stress.
- Lagging teams: High trust but low mission focus, fostering camaraderie but underperformance.
- Brittle teams: High mission focus but low trust, resulting in chaos during conflicts.
- Coherent teams: High trust and mission focus, achieving shared accountability, resilience, and success.

Coherent teams have stars, but they always also have Glue Guys or Glue Gals. Battier was the ultimate “Glue Guy”. In fact, Michael Lewis, one of our favorite authors (Moneyball, The Big Short, Liar’s Poker, The Blind Side), wrote a New York Times article about Battier, “The No Stats All-Star”, profiling how Battier, a heady but not particularly gifted player, soaked up Coach K’s fine points for creating a winning team culture. Battier was always first to the gym and last to leave, the guy who always defended the opposing team’s best shooter, boxed out other team’s best rebounder, sprinted back on defense, dove for loose balls, drew offensive fouls, and was a positive force in the locker room. Battier brought this mindset to the NBA, where he started his career on a lackluster Memphis Grizzlies team before eventually joining LeBron James, Dwayne Wade, and Chris Bosch in Miami, and winning two NBA Championships, despite only averaging only 8.6 points and 4.2 rebounds per game over the course of his NBA career.

If you’re reading this, you know who your Glue Gals and Glue Guys are. We certainly do. Mike, Scott, and Willis get most of the headlines, but it’s our operations team of Cate Rachford, Suzy Shin, Oscar Castillo, and Westley Cai who play critical, if less visible, roles in keeping a large, complex, practice humming. Our ops team is simply the best - motivated by getting better, doing outstanding work, finding joy in the grind, and creating success for the entire team. Our 2024 recognition by Barron’s as one of the Top 250 Wealth Management teams in the country is testament to our Glue Crew, and the Trust and Mission Focus that we’ve developed together over the last twenty-five years.

If you’re interested in strengthening the teams you play on at home, in business, and in your community, we highly recommend checking out the Glue Guys podcast series (link below). Every week Gupta and Battier join their close friend Alex Smith (#1 pick in the 2005 NFL Draft and 3-time NFL Pro-Bowl Quarterback), to share stories about their collegiate and professional lives, shining a light on life, business, sports, leadership, resilience, and what makes great teams, businesses, families, and relationships work.

Enjoy your reading, your listening, and your weekend,

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Mike, Cate, Scott, Willis, Suzy, Oscar and Wes

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**Source(s):**

Instacart Market Cap, as of 1/27/2025, <https://stockanalysis.com>

Glue Guys (Podcast) – Alex Smith, Shane Battier, & Ravi Gupta, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/glue-guys/id1766327534?i=1000668888317>

*What Makes A Glue Guy? (Podcast)* - Alex Smith, Shane Battier, & Ravi Gupta, *September 10, 2024, Invest Like the Best with Patrick O'Shaughnessy*, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/alex-smith-shane-battier-ravi-gupta-what-makes-a-glue-guy/id1154105909?i=1000668992538>

*The No Stats All Star, Michael Lewis, The New York Times, Feb. 15, 2009* <https://srkaufman72.wordpress.com/2009/02/15/michael-lewis-the-no-stats-all/>, [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/15/magazine/15Battier-t.html?\\_r=1&ref=magazine&pagewanted=print](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/15/magazine/15Battier-t.html?_r=1&ref=magazine&pagewanted=print)

**Awards:****2024 Barron's Top 250 Private Wealth Management Teams**

Source: [barrons.com](https://www.barrons.com) (Awarded May 2024) Data compiled by Barron's for the period Jan 2023-Dec 2023.

**2024 Forbes Best-In-State Wealth Management Teams**

Source: [Forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com) (Awarded Jan 2024) Data compiled by SHOOK Research LLC based on time period from 3/31/22-3/31/23.

**Mike Burbank | 2019-2020 & 2022-2024 Forbes Best-In-State Wealth Advisors**

Source: [Forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com) (Awarded 2019-2020 & 2022-2024). Data compiled by SHOOK Research LLC based 12-month time period concluding in June of year prior to the issuance of the award.

**Mike Burbank | 2017-2024 Barron's Top 1,200 Financial Advisors: State-by-State** (formerly referred to as Barron's Top 1,000 Financial Advisors: State-by-State)

Source: [Barrons.com](https://www.barrons.com) (Awarded 2017-2024). Data compiled by Barron's based on 12-month period concluding in Sept of the year prior to the issuance of the award.

**Mike Burbank | 2013-2020 Financial Times 400 Top Financial Advisors**

Source: [ft.com](https://www.ft.com). Data compiled by the Financial Times based the following time periods:

Awarded 2013-2020; data 12/31/12 - 6/30/19

[Awards Disclosures](#)

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