

THE LEADER'S PLAYBOOK

5 Steps to Growing Great Leaders

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(The SCORE Principles)
JEREMY KINGSLEY

“Having spent years as a leader in the world of athletics, I really appreciate how Jeremy Kingsley understands the leadership parallels between sports and business. He has identified five critical principles that leaders must understand, adopt, and live if they truly want to be champions in their field. This workbook will help you develop who you are so you can be the most effective with those you lead. If you apply the SCORE principles, you will be successful in your career, but more importantly in life.”

LOU HOLTZ

COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME COACH, ESPN ANALYST

“I’m a big fan of Jeremy Kingsley. Not only do we share a love of basketball, we also share a vision of helping to make a difference in the world. In *The Leader’s Playbook*, Jeremy’s thoughts about Sacrifice, Character, Opportunity, Respect, and Excellence come through loud and clear, through his own personal recollections as well as stories of great leaders in sports, business, and government. An enjoyable read with valuable lessons for all.”

KEN BLANCHARD

CO-AUTHOR OF *THE ONE MINUTE MANAGER* AND *GREAT LEADERS GROW*.

“*The Leader’s Playbook* is a leadership gem based on the characteristics we learn in sports and through the issues of life. It’s a workbook designed to help leaders really succeed.”

PAT WILLIAMS

ORLANDO MAGIC SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUTHOR OF *LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE*

INTRODUCTION

You live in a competitive world. While young children may play sidewalk games for the sheer joy of it, you don't have that luxury. You keep score. Whether you're a quarterback trying to take your team to the end zone in the last seconds of a game, a salesperson hoping to break the single-month company record, a manager attempting to inspire your group to meet a deadline, or a CEO reporting on the budget to the board of directors, the score matters. You have to score to win.

The score matters to me too. It mattered during my high school basketball career in Washington D.C., where I was Conference Most Valuable Player my senior year. It mattered when I was earning credits for undergraduate and master's degrees at Columbia International University in South Carolina. It matters now when audiences and organizational leaders count on my insights as a public speaker and consultant. These people look for more than nice, encouraging words from me. They want wisdom that will change their lives and their bottom lines. They—and I—are paying close attention to the score. We want results. We want to win.

That focus on scoring in your field of expertise, no matter what it may be, is vital. The ability to score and win takes talent, knowledge, experience, and refined skill. What I have found after more than a decade of closely observing organizations across the country and conversing with their staffs and leaders, however, is that scoring consistently at the highest level involves even more.

It's true in the sports world and it's true in business. Nearly every team or group has talent, experience, and skill. They are almost always made up of smart people—but a high IQ is not enough. Great leaders—and great organizations—rise to the top because of a different kind of IQ, the “inner qualities” that lead to lasting success.

My experience has shown that five emerge above the rest:

- **An attitude of SACRIFICE.**
- **A strong CHARACTER.**
- **Creativity and flexibility that lead to OPPORTUNITY.**
- **RESPECT for clients, customers, and colleagues.**
- **A commitment to EXCELLENCE in every endeavor.**

Put them together, and you are ready to SCORE...and win.

This workbook will help you develop and incorporate these five inner qualities into your leadership approach. It is filled with stories, tips, quotes, and informative exercises, offered in a practical and easy-to-digest format.

Are you ready to grow into a great leader? Let's begin.

LEADING BY SACRIFICE

Principle #1 (S.C.O.R.E)

Great leaders understand the value of sacrifice.

Sacrifice is almost a forbidden topic these days. Political candidates avoid the word out of fear of offending potential voters and losing elections. Marriages break up because a partner “didn’t meet my needs.” Ads in the media promote a me-first culture, telling us we deserve the “best.”

Our culture does not teach us to value sacrifice. We seek and expect immediate returns, with no cost to us. We are easily frustrated when plans go awry and we end up detoured and delayed. We sometimes even abandon our goals if the wait seems too long.

Yet no individual or organization can thrive without sacrifice. Successful sports teams are made up of people who give up their time and comfort in order to develop their skills to the highest levels. Profitable companies invest in their people and products, trading short-term gain for long-term growth. Managers deflect praise and recognition, sharing it with their staffs for the good of morale.

Great leaders are people who understand the value of sacrifice. If we want to be like them, we need to understand it too.

At its heart, sacrifice is about serving others. It involves doing what no one else can do so that others can participate and benefit. Sometimes you must become the bridge to help your people overcome an insurmountable obstacle. As a leader there are things only you can accomplish; there is permission only you can give; there is initiative only you can take. For example, parents delay retirement to financially support a child attending college. A friend lets go of a grudge to reestablish a lifelong relationship. A nation’s leader forfeits a private life to serve the people. You may need to give up your time, money, resources, or ego to help your team succeed.

By its nature, sacrifice is not easy. The thesaurus associates sacrifice with phrases like *give up, forgo, and forfeit*. These words carry negative connotations in today’s world.

Sacrifice is a risk that demands fortitude, perseverance, and commitment. Your peers and those you lead may not appreciate, understand, or reciprocate your sacrifice. The sacrifice may not yield an immediate, tangible return. But if you sacrifice the right thing at the right time with the right motivation, you will help your team develop essential skills, expand your influence, and help create a culture of service in your organization.

SHARED SACRIFICE

We sacrifice for what we want. We sacrifice to achieve. Yet sacrifice also creates buy-in among those who are watching. What at first seems like a leadership weakness is in fact a strength, and a principle of powerful leadership. Every leader wants dedicated, motivated followers, but that happens only when followers see their leaders sacrificing first. It's a counterintuitive idea. We associate leadership with strength and command. We picture the tough platoon leader taking the point in the jungle with a cigar in his mouth, giving orders to subordinates in a commanding voice. We somehow get the idea that sacrifice is a weakness. Yet it's the leader that is willing to give up something for the people on the team that inspires us.

When Lee Iacocca took over a struggling Chrysler corporation, he soon reduced his salary to \$1 per year. He then went to executives and convinced them to take a pay cut, and followed that by approaching the United Auto Workers union and asking them to reduce employee salaries. Over the next nineteen months, union members made \$2.5 billion in concessions.¹ The shared sacrifices helped Chrysler turn around its financial straight; the company became profitable again and paid off a government loan seven years early. Would the changes and concessions by Chrysler have happened if Iacocca had not first demonstrated he was willing to sacrifice? I doubt it.

THE LEADER'S LIST

Write down five ways you might respond if your boss reduced his or her salary for the good of the company.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

DIGGING DEEPER

- What does a sacrifice like Lee Iacocca's say about a leader?
- What does your list above tell you about how people respond to a leader's sacrifice?
- What sacrifice could you make to help motivate your team?

ADOPTING A TEAM EGO

Bill Russell, the former center and captain of the eleven-time champion Boston Celtics, recently told a group of current players that he was the most egotistical player they would ever meet. “Do you know the difference between your ego and mine?” Russell said. “My ego is not a personal ego, it’s a team ego. My ego demands—for myself—the success of the team. My personal achievement became my team achievement.”²

Bob Cousy, a Russell teammate, was one of the game’s great players and passers. When Cousy retired, Russell considered his goals for the following season. At first he thought about raising his scoring average a couple of points. But then he decided it would be more important to increase his assists. With Cousy gone, everyone on the team would be looking to score more. Russell chose instead to lower his scoring average so others could fulfill their goals and stay involved on offense. The Celtics would be a better team that way.

Russell’s ego was focused on one thing: winning. If any player on the Celtics scored, he felt as if he himself had scored. The sacrifice he made to give up scoring more points himself didn’t feel like a sacrifice at all. Great leaders often have a big ego—but it’s an ego based on the success of the team.

THE WHOLE TRUTH

Circle **T** for **True** or **F** for **False** for the statements below.

1. **T F** You are most satisfied when your group succeeds, not when you receive personal recognition.
2. **T F** You are more interested in pursuing personal goals than company goals.
3. **T F** You are quick to credit team members for their achievements.
4. **T F** You admire leaders with a large personal ego.
5. **T F** You would like to develop a greater team ego.

DIGGING DEEPER

- What do your answers above tell you about your ego and its relationship to your group’s goals?

- What steps could you take to cultivate a team ego?

- How might a greater team ego change the culture and performance of your organization?

SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION

Just as important for leaders as demonstrating an ability to sacrifice is acknowledging and appreciating the sacrifices made by those under their authority. Would you want to work late hours, give up a vacation to meet a deadline, or rework your contract for less money because the company is struggling and then feel ignored or taken for granted? I don't think so.

No one knows more about the potential consequences of sacrifice than those who serve in the military. Many of these men and women put their lives on the line for their country. Robert Gates, U.S. secretary of defense from 2006 to 2011, made it a priority to let members of the armed forces know he appreciated their willingness to do what was necessary to defend their country. One of his first orders was that 2,225 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles be assembled and distributed to deployed troops, many of whom were patrolling Iraq in Humvees. Gates cut through the red tape, putting the defense industry and Congress on notice in his first year.

Gates also made it a priority to speak with small groups of troops whenever he traveled. One of those meetings was with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines deployed at Forward Operating Base Sabit Qadam in Helmand province's Sangin district. No other unit had taken more losses in the Afghanistan War.

"Every day, I monitor how you're doing. And every day you return to your FOB without a loss, I say a little prayer," Gates said. "And I say a prayer on the other days as well. I'm the one that signed the orders that sent you all here. I visit your wounded brothers at Bethesda. I write the condolence letters to the families of your fallen. And so I feel a tremendous personal sense of responsibility for each and every one of you. And I will, for as long as I'm secretary of defense."

"I feel your hardship and your sacrifice and those of your families more than you can possibly imagine." Gates sincerely cared and was concerned for the troops under his command. They knew he was doing what he could to make their job more effective and safe. They realized that their sacrifices were not being ignored.

YOUR TURN

Rank (1–8) the following according to how effective they are or would be at motivating members of your team:

- ___ **Salary increase**
- ___ **Bonus**
- ___ **Regular updates on the significance and effectiveness of the team’s work**
- ___ **Employee-of-the-month program**
- ___ **Employee award for service time**
- ___ **Employee award for exceptional performance**
- ___ **Thank you note from the team leader for extra effort**
- ___ **Personal “thank you” visit by the team leader for good work**

DIGGING DEEPER

- How many of these appreciation methods do you or your organization use?

- Which ones could you consider trying?

- What other ways could you show appreciation to your team?

- How do you feel—and perform—when your boss makes the effort to demonstrate his or her appreciation for your work?

A CULTURE OF SACRIFICE

One of the amazing benefits of a leader (or employee) who promotes a spirit of sacrifice is that it can permeate an entire organization. One small, seemingly innocuous act can be the tipping point for an entirely new attitude and culture.

For leaders, this includes the act of mentoring. Tony Dungy, former head coach of the NFL champion Indianapolis Colts, describes mentoring as “intentional, direct service to others.” He says that this kind of leadership is the key for organizations that enjoy sustained

success. People who are served tend to serve others. These mentors produce other mentors. Before you know it, a firm is filled with people who are mentor leaders, all actively seeking to serve those around them.

Dungy says his picture of mentor leadership is the opposite of how most companies view leadership. A typical organizational chart shows a CEO or board at the top, managers in the middle, and rank-and-file employees at the bottom. Dungy turns that image upside down. He views the CEO at the bottom of the chart, with lines of responsibility and reporting spreading upward and outward. In a sense, the people at the bottom of the chart—those with the most authority—are lifting, equipping, and encouraging those above. Those at the bottom are influencing the rest through their example of service and sacrifice.

Leadership can flow from the bottom up or the top down. In this model, anyone can lead through acts of service.

Mike Krzyzewski, one of college basketball's most successful head coaches, tells the story of Ross Perkins, a walk-on player for one of his teams at Duke University. During the 2004-05 season, the Blue Devils lost back to back games. Krzyzewski was unhappy with the performance and effort of his starters. To send a message to his team, he decided to start four walk-ons—non-scholarship team members who practice but rarely play in games—for the next contest.

Krzyzewski posted his lineup for the upcoming game. "Coach," Perkins said after practice that day, "when you put my name on that board, it was the proudest moment of my life."

"Ross, you deserve it," Krzyzewski said. "You are going to start against Wake Forest tomorrow."

Perkins' next words blew his coach away.

"Coach, thank you so much for the opportunity and for having confidence in me," he said. "But I think it would be better for the team if Shelden [Williams] starts tomorrow."⁵

Krzyzewski couldn't believe it. Perkins was so selfless and committed to the success of the team that he was willing to give up his one chance at individual glory. He cared more about seeing his teammates do well than accepting an opportunity to be rewarded for his mostly thankless efforts.

Williams did start the game. Perkins never played a minute. Duke hung on to win the closely fought game, finishing the season with a 27-6 record and a berth in the NCAA tournament. The Wake Forest game was a turning point in the season.

The first person Krzyzewski hugged after the victory was Ross Perkins. A walk-on had led his team to victory, not by his performance on the court but by his willingness to sacrifice off it. Leadership sometimes means doing less, at least from an outsider's perspective, so that others are put in a position to do more.

THE QUALITY OF YOUR CHARACTER

Principle #2 (S.C.O.R.E)

Great leaders develop strong personal and corporate character.

When someone mentions the word character, what does it bring to mind? You might think of quirky individuals who wear party hats to formal dinners or who break into song at random moments. But that's not the kind of character I want to talk about. Instead, let's examine the type of character that defines a person's traits and values.

Some people assume that character is an attitude that can be adopted whenever it's expected or advantageous. They see it as an outward display, a performance given to fit the situation at hand. A politician or CEO might praise a recently passed law that benefits the environment because she feels that's what her audience wants to hear, yet behind the scenes she works to repeal it. Or a foreman on a construction site may express outrage over salary reductions for his team while privately supporting the change.

Management guru Peter Drucker, as well as many others, has called this a skewed view of character. Drucker wrote that leaders with character worry about "what is right" rather than "who is right."¹ Character is a state of being—an essence—found at your core. It's not something you put on and take off as needed. It defines your life from the inside out. It is not what you do but who you are.

Bestselling authors Noel Tichy and Warren Bennis have written that character "means having values. It means having a moral compass that sets clear parameters for what one will and will not do. Character is all about knowing right from wrong and having worked these issues out long before facing tough judgment calls. It is about knowing what your goals and standards are and sticking with them."²

For people in positions of leadership, good character is more than just a nice quality that some may admire. It is essential to success in your field. Possessing character says to outsiders that they can trust you to consistently deliver the same product, excellence, and performance. It says that your team and your clients can depend on you to make the right decision in each circumstance—the decision that is best for everyone involved, not just you or the bottom line.

IT STARTS SMALL

It makes little sense to rely on someone who lacks character. You're bound to, at some point, draw the short straw in such a relationship. Even if such a person is in your circle of friends, you would counsel others to stay away. Who trusts people like that? Who wants to work for them or buy a product from them?

It begins with a small and seemingly insignificant choice. A corporate boss takes home a few supplies from the office. A manager notices and later does the same. Soon several people in the office are "borrowing" from the firm. One of those people is short on cash one night and slips a few dollars from the day's profits into her briefcase. Before long, someone is conducting low-level embezzlement. And a few years after that, the company is caught in a fraudulent scheme involving thousands, millions, or billions of dollars.

If we knew the whole story, I'm convinced that's what we would find at the root of most examples of corporate greed. Whether we're talking about Enron, Tyco, Martha Stewart, Stanford Group, or a host of other Wall Street scandals, the road to low character—and bilking others out of millions or billions—likely began with something as simple as a single person stealing a few pens.

CHARACTER CHECK

Let's say that someone on your team turns in an expense report that you know is a few dollars too high. Check the box that best describes how you would respond.

- Ignore it—it's no big deal.
- Casually mention it to your employee and ask him to check his report again.
- Sit down with your employee and explain that this is unacceptable.
- Fire the employee.
- Congratulate your employee for finding a creative way to supplement his income.

DIGGING DEEPER

- What is your attitude toward small lapses in character and integrity?

- When have you blurred the lines between right and wrong?

- How would your staff rate your character?

CHARACTER AND YOUR CUSTOMER

Ron Willingham, founder and CEO of an international training and development company, once described how living out good character led to greater customer satisfaction and an improved bottom line at Chevrolet.

Typically, when people bought a car and had problems that the dealer couldn't or didn't fix, they'd call an 800 number and register their complaint. Occasionally, the dealer wouldn't satisfy the customer, and the case would go to arbitration, with people pitted against each other. Nobody ended up feeling good. It cost Chevrolet around \$18,000 then just to settle a claim in this process. Customers were often left angry, vowing never to buy another Chevrolet. We designed a process in which a Chevrolet Zone person would call customers, listen intently, understand their situations, let them vent, and genuinely attempt to work out a win-win situation. The Zone person would call the selling dealer and work out a deal where the dealer took the car back and gave the customer a new one. The dealer would agree to repair and sell the used car for no profit, and Chevrolet would reimburse the dealer for any actual loss in the transaction. Customers were asked to pay only for the miles on the car that they'd driven.

This process cost Chevrolet an average of only \$1,700 instead of \$18,000, and most important, the company kept loyal customers. It also allowed Chevrolet and its dealers to back up their promise of service excellence. Here was another way to actually deliver customer satisfaction, not just talk about it.³

So what do customers say about you? What do they say about your company? Most people will not distinguish between the two. If someone thinks poorly of you, they will most likely think poorly of your organization. You will lead with true confidence only when you have the character to back you up.

MISSION STATEMENT

Write down how you expect your team to show character in their interactions with clients and customers. Consider this a mission statement on customer relations at your company.

DIGGING DEEPER

- How well does your company actually fulfill the statement above?
- How about you and your team?
- What are you doing specifically that demonstrates good character to your clients?
- What could you do better?

BEYOND ACCEPTABLE

Displaying leadership integrity often means going beyond what is fair or acceptable practice. This attitude will resonate not only with your customers but also with your staff.

According to at least one recent survey, today's "millennial generation" employees ages twenty-one to thirty value a sense of accomplishment (24 percent) nearly as highly as pay (27 percent). These same millennials place "meaningful work" as one of the three most important factors in determining career success.⁴ When you go beyond what is expected, lead with character, and show that your company is about more than profits, both your clients and your employees will follow you with enthusiasm.

In 1995, Malden Mills in Lowell, Massachusetts, manufacturer of the Polartec polar fleece and other textiles, caught fire and burned to the ground. The "wise" business move for CEO Aaron Feuerstein would have been to take the nearly \$300 million in insurance money and retire. He was in his seventies, after all. Moreover, most businesses were looking for any excuse at the time to leave the New England area.

Feuerstein had a different idea, however. Immediately after the fire, he pledged to not only rebuild the plant, but also keep all employees on the payroll during reconstruction. Feuerstein "was hailed as a hero and received acclaim far and wide. He took this in stride,

saying that he had just done the right thing. It was not the right thing financially; the costs of meeting the payroll and reconstruction exceeded the insurance settlement.”⁵

A few years later, Feuerstein faced a financial crisis. Malden Mills declared bankruptcy. His employees had not forgotten the character of their boss, however. They refused to accept overtime wages and reduced their salaries in order to keep the plant running. In 2003, the company emerged from bankruptcy. Feuerstein’s character as CEO inspired his employees to display similar character in a crisis. It was a “classic case of leadership begetting leadership”⁶ — what we all hope to achieve when we are responsible for guiding a group of people.

THE WHOLE TRUTH

Circle **T** for **True** or **F** for **False** for the statements below.

1. **T F** Your company is about more than making money.
2. **T F** You would describe your work as “meaningful.”
3. **T F** You model good character by consistently going beyond what is expected in your interactions with employees and customers.
4. **T F** Because of your character, your team follows you with enthusiasm.
5. **T F** You are willing to do the right thing by your team even if it costs you personally.

DIGGING DEEPER

- When has your company—or you personally—demonstrated the kind of character that Aaron Feuerstein showed his employees?

- What would you do in a similar situation?

- What could you start doing today to better develop the character of a leader?

EARNING TRUST

We've all seen—and with the recent economic downturn, maybe experienced personally—the devastation of a job layoff. Too often, we've turned on the evening news and watched a crowd of furious employees protesting outside the gates of a factory or front door of an office building. These people are angry because they are shocked. They didn't see the layoff coming.

Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, says leadership candor and transparency are important keys to earning trust. He tells about a company that had the opposite experience of those described above.

Last year at a Q & A session in Orlando, Florida, I was introduced to the audience by the owner and CEO of a New England-based consulting and training firm. Before the session, I asked her about her business. She told me it had taken a real hit after the Internet bubble burst. She'd had to lay off half of her thirty employees.

“How did it go?” I asked.

“Incredibly well,” she answered, to my surprise. “My husband and I practiced open-book management. Our employees knew everything about the state of our business. When the time came for the layoffs, people were sad but they understood.”

Today, the business is flourishing, and many of the CEO's former employees have returned without bitterness.⁷

Clearly, the open-book policy at this company did more than prevent angry feelings when layoffs became necessary. Employees came back because they believed in the integrity of their leaders. They trusted them.

TRUST AND INTEGRITY

Write down at least three reasons why you agree or disagree with this statement by Jim Hackett, CEO of Steelcase: “You can't lead if you don't have trust and you can't have trust if you don't have integrity.”

1.

2.

3.

DIGGING DEEPER

- When has it been a challenge for you as a leader to maintain transparency with your staff?
- Would (or does) an open-book policy work at your organization? Why or why not?
- Why is trust so important and what does it have to do with integrity?

When you're trying to SCORE in business, developing your personal character and the character of your company are essential. Consumers are most likely to buy from and follow companies and organizations that show care, concern, and moral responsibility for those around them. They consistently buy into companies that exist not just for profit, but also to give back to their communities. Character and integrity—displayed by you as a leader and by your company—lead to trust. It simply makes good business sense to first develop your own character and then implement character-driven strategies in your organization.

It's also the right thing to do.

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY

Principle #3 (S.C.O.R.E)

Great leaders both prepare for and create new opportunities.

You're in bed. Your alarm clock is buzzing. Repeatedly. You have a choice to make—get up or hit snooze?

Your response at such a moment might easily be annoyance at the interruption of your beauty sleep, followed by another twenty minutes of tossing and turning before you actually start the day. But another way to look at this moment is that it is an opportunity, one that can lead to many more opportunities. If you get up early enough, you have time to swing by Starbucks for that morning double shot. At Starbucks you run into Mary Smith, who you've been meaning to contact. She just happens to be with Mr. Jones, who is the perfect connection for your proposed new product. You notice the man standing behind you in line is listening intently as you discuss all this. You introduce yourself and discover that he manufactures an important piece for your product. You've made another significant contact—and you're not even at the office yet!

You get the picture. Opportunities can build upon themselves, creating a productive cycle that can eventually propel you to the top of your profession. Success for business leaders does not happen to the lucky or by happenstance. Those with vibrant, sustainable enterprises and reputations are those who recognize and position themselves for opportunity. To score and win, leaders must be prepared to take advantage of and create opportunity at all times.

PREPARING TO WIN

Preparing for opportunity takes many forms. John Wooden, the legendary UCLA basketball coach, compared each season to a theater play. The offseason was for evaluating and talking with potential players, as if he were assembling a cast for a stage play. When practices began, the players “auditioned” for the leading and understudy roles on the team. Each practice was like a rehearsal, where players performed the roles for which they were best suited.

Preseason and nonconference games were similar to dress rehearsals, giving Wooden and his coaches the chance to evaluate their casting choices and make adjustments. Finally, each January, the “play” opened—the conference season.

Wooden set the goal for his team each year of winning the conference championship,

then promptly dismissed it from his mind and insisted that his players do the same. To create a winning performance—and to capture the conference crown—Wooden had his team focus “like a laser” on producing the best possible rehearsal, or practice, each day.¹ You could say that the coach had one eye focused on the future and the other on the present.

PUT YOUR DREAMS IN AN ENVELOPE

Underline the passages that you agree with in the following statement by John Wooden: “Success is possible only when everybody is paying attention to their jobs. The best way to achieve dreams is to ignore them. The best way to attain long-term goals is to put them in an envelope. My first goal and priority was never long-term, it was very short term: helping the team improve right now in practice.”

DIGGING DEEPER

- As the leader of your team, how are you helping your staff improve today?

- Do you have the right people in the right roles?

- Have you explained and demonstrated what needs to be accomplished?

- Have you established the goal for your team, and then encouraged everyone to adopt an attitude of focusing on short term improvement rather than long-term glory?

AUDITIONING FOR YOUR FUTURE

A game from my years of playing high school basketball stands out in my memory. It isn't because we were playing a tough opponent. If anything, the opposite was true. I'd been pushing myself hard during the season and easily could have eased up a little that night; we still would have won the game. But that wasn't how I approached it. To me, every game, every

quarter, and every possession was important. I played just as hard as ever that evening, and my shots were falling. I ended up with the highest-scoring game of my career: thirty-five points. What I didn't know was that a coach from what is now Salisbury University in Maryland had come to the game to watch me play. He was impressed and met with me afterward. "I love your game and what you do," he said. "We'd love to have you come and be a part of our program after you graduate."

I remembering being so excited that on the drive home. Since I was little, I'd dreamed of playing college basketball somewhere. Whether I chose to go to Salisbury and play college hoops or not, the offer validated all the hard work I'd put in on my game. A college coach believed in me and that I had the ability to play at that level. What strikes me now, however, is how easily I could have missed out on all the excitement that evening. If I'd decided to coast in that game, I'd never have scored thirty-five points, and the coach may have never made the offer.

As a leader, you never know when you might be facing a new opportunity. Maybe the CEO is evaluating you for a promotion. Maybe a seemingly insignificant client is considering you and your team for a huge project. The point is that you are always auditioning for your future whether you're aware of it or not. If you consistently display the right attitude, preparation, and commitment, you may be on the cusp of a great new opportunity.

READY TO FACE THE FUTURE

Fill in the blank in each sentence below.

1. As leaders, we never know when we might be facing a new _____.
2. Whether we realize it or not, we're always _____ for our future.
3. We're ready to take advantage of opportunities when we consistently display the right _____, preparation, and _____.

DIGGING DEEPER

- When have you "auditioned" for a future opportunity without realizing it?

- How did that go?

- Why was it successful or not?

- What are you and your team doing right now to prepare for the unexpected moment that may never come again?

CREATING OPPORTUNITY

In 2008, Best Buy executives noticed that employees were using Twitter extensively, and that customers were talking about the mass market electronics company on the network. Best Buy's product development team began monitoring these conversations and forming a plan for engaging employees and customers via the social network.

It helped that Barry Judge, Best Buy chief marketing officer, was the example for his team. "Our leadership started to get very visible with customers, and that set the tone for the rest of the department," says John Bernier, the firm's social media manager. "Barry was the catalyst, giving us the green light to go experiment, so we had the luxury of leadership buy-in." In April 2009, the company decided that their new program, Twelforce, was a go. It would tap the wisdom of its own employees, encouraging existing and prospective customers to seek help whether their question related directly to a Best Buy product or not. The genius of the idea is that it would not rely on a select group of trained Best Buy staff, but would be open to everyone at the company, allowing them to share their expertise as they had time and interest. Best Buy did provide a set of guidelines for participants, but leadership showed an enormous level of trust in its staff.

The result? "Marketing that isn't marketing," as Bernier put it. In ten months, Twelforce attracted nearly 28,000 customer inquiries from 2,600 Best Buy employees across the nation. Best Buy achieved extensive public relations coverage, enhanced brand perceptions, and realized savings thanks to a reduced load at its call center. Participating employees also broadened their network of contacts inside and outside the company and gained additional knowledge and training from the process.² Thanks to leadership that fostered an atmosphere encouraging creativity and innovation, Best Buy created an opportunity with important and lasting benefits. You can do the same.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

When crisis hits your company, it takes a visionary leader to see beyond the issues and turn disaster into opportunity. One such leader is David Novak, CEO of Yum! Brands, whose chains include Kentucky Fried Chicken. In 2005, when the Avian flu outbreak struck in China, Novak faced a serious threat to the company's well-being. Many people in China were afraid to buy and eat chicken. The result was that KFC's fourth-quarter profit dropped 20 percent.

Novak realized that with daily reports from the World Health Organization (WHO) and news stories about the flu scare circulating around the globe, something had to be done quickly. He and his team identified immediate "education and understanding" as the goal. WHO and other health organizations had already demonstrated that cooking meat at high temperatures destroyed the avian flu virus. The president of Yum! Brands International Greater China took this message to the public, explaining that chicken served at KFC outlets was safe because it had been cooked above the required temperature. Novak and his team provided detailed information about this research to their managers and staff worldwide so they could respond intelligently to customer concerns. Yum! management also had stickers affixed on the lid of every KFC bucket which assured customers that the chicken had been rigorously inspected and thoroughly cooked.

Within a few months, sales at KFC stores in China rebounded from the initial devastating drop, largely because of the fast and effective response of Yum! leadership. Yet Novak, with the help of his team, did more than blunt the effect of the avian flu scare. He also took advantage of the incident to prepare his team for the next crisis.

"When you're in a crisis, you don't hand off the problem to the rookie, because rookies haven't gone through it before," Novak said. "You show the rookie how to go through it when they have to go through it." Novak used the crisis as a means for on-the-job training, developing his staff's ability to respond to future problems. He took a business disaster and turned it into an opportunity.

TAKING THE TEMPERATURE OF YOUR TEAM

Circle the words that best describe how you and your team respond to a crisis.

Angry

Calm

Panic

React

Ready

Reflect

Research

Uncertain

Lead

Nervos

DIGGING DEEPER

- During a crisis, are you more likely to delegate responsibility or fix it yourself?

- How can coaching your staff through the crisis be a short-term nuisance but a long-term opportunity?

- In what other ways might a crisis also be an opportunity?

Goals in soccer contests are rare. Most games finish with low scores, tight battles that are neck-and-neck to the end. The players closest to the goal, the strikers, look for those few moments each game when a defender slips or finds himself out of position, creating an opening. Like a soccer player, great business leaders also watch intently for those rare moments when opportunity presents itself. The best leaders do more than watch, however. They prepare themselves and their teams to be in the best possible position to score when such a moment arrives *and* actively seek to create new opportunities to score.

A MATTER OF RESPECT

Principle #4 (S.C.O.R.E)

Great leaders foster an environment of mutual respect.

Respect is one of the critical elements for lasting success in any work relationship and organization. If you expect your team to stick around and perform at its best, you'd better foster an environment of mutual respect. According to data conducted by Sirota Survey Intelligence, 63 percent of employees who do not feel treated with respect plan to leave their company within two years.¹

It's been said that people quit people, not companies. It's true. Job seekers will want to join your organization for all kinds of reasons: the company's vision, its reputation, the work atmosphere, the pay and benefits, the location. But when something goes wrong, it usually has to do with people. It's rare that someone chooses to move on because they're uneasy about corporate policy or direction. The most common reason is a conflict with a direct supervisor. And the surest way to create dissatisfaction with someone on your staff is to disrespect them.

Subtle attitudes and behaviors communicate far more than we often realize. If you want to build a winning team, you must establish an environment that radiates respect.

SENDING THE WRONG MESSAGE

Here's a true story about an employee we'll call Don. It was February, and the deadline for performance reviews of the previous year had already passed. Don wondered if his boss was ever going to get around to his review. His wondering ended in a surprising way.

"I happened to be entering the men's bathroom at the same time as my boss," Don said. "Standing side-by-side at adjacent urinals, he remarked that he hadn't had a chance to go over my review with me, but now was as good a time as any." Don's manager reported that he and others in the firm were pleased with Don's work. But the timing and location of the "review" didn't match the boss's words. Don felt closer to insignificant and humiliated than encouraged.²

If you don't take the performance of each of your employees seriously, they'll get the message in a hurry: the boss feels I'm unimportant. Postponing or missing meetings, making seemingly innocent jokes about a colleague's work, and dismissing written or verbal feedback from your staff all move you down the road toward disrespect. Remember that your people are watching your every word and action for clues on how you rate their performance.

YOUR TURN

Write about a time when you felt disrespected by someone at work. What was your response? How did this incident affect your job performance?

DIGGING DEEPER

- Think about your interactions with your staff. What are some of the subtle ways you communicate respect?
- In what ways might you be sending a message of disrespect?
- How important do you think being treated with respect is to your team?
- How important is it to you?

GIVING THE GIFT OF RESPECT

To get respect, you need to give it. How? One critical way is to treat everyone in your organization with the same consideration. We've all worked with men and women who spend their time trying to impress the "important" people. They are the ones at office social functions who brighten up and tell their funniest stories when their manager approaches, and then quickly disappear as soon the boss moves on to another group.

If you find yourself behaving this way, don't. It's disrespectful to your colleagues and nauseating.

Dan McCarthy, director of executive development programs at the University of New Hampshire's Whittemore School of Business and Economics, has written about a leader who didn't make class distinctions at the office.

One of my all-time favorite leaders, Marty, was promoted to vice president. We were working on a project together, and we needed to pick a venue for an off-site meeting. Being a VP, he could have just picked up the phone or fired off an email, and some poor minion would end up having to drop everything and scramble around trying to figure out what he really wanted. Instead, he gets up, walks down two flights of stairs, finds the person responsible for that function, asks if she has a moment, then proceeds to pull up a chair next to her and collaborate with her on venue selection. No, he didn't just tell...he asked, and seemed to sincerely value her opinion.

I asked him about it later, and he told me that when he was a kid, his father was a stable hand at a horse-breeding farm. He saw how some of the rich and powerful treated his father, and swore that if he ever reached a position of power and status, that he would NEVER treat anyone like that. He made it one of his strongly held values to treat everyone with respect, to value each and every employee's contributions, and never get too full of himself.³

Doesn't Marty sound like the kind of leader you'd like to work for? Be that boss.

MEASURING YOUR METHODS

Check the box or boxes that best describe how you interact with your staff when you need something done.

- You issue the order by email so you can quickly get back to more important work.
- You issue the order by phone and ask if there are any questions.

- You personally sit down with your employee so you can gauge how well she understands your expectations.
- You ask for feedback on your decision.
- You ask if your employee has time to handle this for you.
- You work with the employee involved to make the decision together.

DIGGING DEEPER

- Do you give respect easily or do you expect others to earn it?

- Do you treat people with authority over you with more respect than those under you?

- What could you change to show more respect for your staff?

ACTIVE LISTENING

One of the most powerful tools available to any leader—one that comes with the added benefit of communicating respect—is the art of *listening*. What does this mean? It starts with full, focused attention on the person talking. Being in the same room while keeping one eye on the clock, planning in your mind what you'll eat for dinner, or mentally debating who to choose in your next football fantasy draft doesn't count. You need to face the person speaking, maintain eye contact, and process what's being said. Summarize their statement in your own words to make sure you understand what they mean. Ask follow-up questions to explore the impact of what you've learned.

Active listening requires more than taking in the other person's words. When you're in a conversation with a colleague, listen for inflections that emphasize meaning. Pay attention to the messages behind body language. Is she smiling? Does he have his arms crossed? Is she leaning forward or pushing herself away? Every gesture may contain a message behind the words. Furthermore, ask yourself: What is he *not* saying to me? Why is he avoiding that issue? Sometimes the words left out are more important than the ones spoken.

Whether it's a customer complaint, a suggestion for improving a product, or a subtle warning that may prevent a crisis, listening well and correctly interpreting the importance of what you've just heard is the hallmark of a great leader. The added bonus is that your employees will notice the extra attention you give them. They will feel respected and will model your example by respecting you, each other, and your customers.

LISTEN FIRST, TALK LATER

Write down why you agree or disagree with the following statement by Steven Sample, author of *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership*: "Many leaders are terrible listeners; they actually think talking is more important than listening. But contrarian leaders know it is better to listen first and talk later. And when they listen, they do so artfully."⁹

DIGGING DEEPER

- How adept are you at active listening?

- Which of the techniques listed above do you practice?

- Which could you work on?

- Do you feel respected when your boss actively listens to you?

A WINNING ATTITUDE

Sometimes it's the little things that best show respect for your staff and customers. When you send your team to a conference, do you try to save money by having them stay in the cheapest motel possible? When you host a group of clients for an important luncheon, do you skimp on the choice of restaurant? Your decision might help the budget, but the tradeoff is the lack of respect your people and clients will feel from you.

Vince Lombardi, perhaps the most famous football coach of all time, understood this. Lombardi took over a team and organization in disarray when he arrived in Green Bay in 1959. The NFL's Packers had not had a winning season since 1947. They were used to finishing on the wrong end of the scoreboard and accepted it. Lombardi vowed to change that thinking. He gained financial backing from the team president so the squad could fly on better planes, stay in better hotels, and eat better food. The team adhered to a dress code on road trips, wearing ties and green blazers that Lombardi bought himself. Uniforms and offices were updated.⁴

Lombardi led his teams to five NFL championships, including victories in the first two Super Bowls. He knew that a winning attitude begins with respect, both from leaders and within. He wanted to show his players that he respected them and that they should look and act as if they respected themselves. These little details were the start of something very big—a team that learned how to score and win.

DETAILS, DETAILS

List three ways your organization shows respect for its staff and three areas it could improve.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DIGGING DEEPER

- How does Vince Lombardi's challenge with the Packers compare with your work situation?

- What small change would make a big difference in your performance at work?

- What "little" things could you do to communicate respect for your team and inspire a winning attitude?

Respect—the fourth element in our SCORE approach to leadership—is crucial for any relationship, whether personal or professional. It's like a currency that you can't afford to spend. Some leaders try to create a sense of respect in others through fear, intimidation, and their authority. But you can't force people to respect you. To get it, you must give it. When you foster an environment of mutual respect, everyone wins.

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

Principle #5 (S.C.O.R.E)

Great leaders achieve a level of excellence that goes beyond winning.

I heard someone say recently, “When you were a kid, you never dreamed of being an average athlete with average stats, making an average impact on the sport, and having an average career. When you were a kid, you dreamed of greatness.”

He was right. As a boy, I often imagined myself on the athletic field. In my mind, I played in the World Series, the Super Bowl, and the NBA Finals. Yet of all the times that I pictured myself on such a stage, my imagination never had me grounding out to the pitcher, running up the middle for a two-yard gain, or turning the ball over. In my dreams, I wasn’t average and I didn’t stumble. Instead, I hit the game-winning homer, threw the clinching touchdown pass, and launched the three-point shot that gave my team the title.

As I got older, I began transforming one of these dreams into something closer to reality. I found that I loved the challenge of competitive sports, and that I had some aptitude for basketball. It helped that my dad had been such an accomplished player and now was a coach. I wanted to be like him, and he knew how to pass on his knowledge to me. After I reached high school, I set my goals. I wanted our team to win and I wanted to score one thousand points. I wanted to be great.

If you are reading this, I’m guessing that you are a leader—or soon will be—and that you want to be great too. The last element that will enable you to score and win in your field is excellence.

FINDING YOUR SWEET SPOT

Leadership excellence takes more than strong desire and setting a goal. It requires understanding and implementing the steps that lead to truly exceptional performance. It also means combining two key approaches, a method I call “Now and Then.”

First, the Now. It starts with identifying your strengths and weaknesses as a leader and performer in your field. We all have unique talents and gifts, and the sooner we discover what these are, the more successful we’ll be. Your opportunities to thrive will emerge less from trying to overcome weaknesses and more from finding, staying in, and developing your “sweet spot.”

What’s more, the same is true for your staff. If you can determine and help them see what their strengths are, and then put them in jobs and give them assignments that play to these strengths, your team will be happier and positioned for rapid advances. You will have

taken the first steps toward excellence.

KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Ask yourself the following questions and write down your answers to each:

1. What am I doing well?
2. What do people seem to praise or admire me for?
3. What comes easy to me that seems to be a struggle for others?
4. What do I most enjoy doing?
5. What is difficult for me?
6. Am I investing significant time trying to improve in an area that always frustrates me?

DIGGING DEEPER

British poet Samuel Johnson once said, "Almost every man wastes part of his life in attempts to display qualities which he does not possess." Has this been true for you? In what way?

PERFECT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Cal Ripken, the amazing Baltimore Orioles shortstop who set baseball's all-time consecutive games streak, never took his job or status for granted. At practices, if he was fielding ground balls alongside another player who wanted the same position, Ripken always remained on the field longer than the other guy. It was a rule Ripken stuck with, from the beginning of his days in the minor leagues and throughout his time in the majors. As he took those grounders, he remembered the words of his father, a longtime coach and manager of the Orioles: "You know that old saying, 'Practice makes perfect'? Well, it's wrong. Perfect practice makes perfect. I know that's a high standard to maintain, but it's the right way to do things. If you're taking ground balls, it's better to take fewer grounders and produce all the right repetitions than it is to take two hundred and just go through the motions."¹

Ripken's principles apply just as well in the world of business. As leaders, our chance to succeed is always greater when we work harder than the other guy. We also find success when we learn the correct way of performing a task and practice it that way each day, each week, each month, and each year. Execution is everything.

THE WHOLE TRUTH

Circle **T** for **True** or **F** for **False** for the statements below.

1. **T F** You and your team work harder than your competition.
2. **T F** You and your team model the idea behind "perfect practice makes perfect."
3. **T F** It's better to do something a few times the right way than many times the wrong way.
4. **T F** You sometimes take your job or position in the industry for granted.
5. **T F** You have an unquestioned commitment to high standards.

DIGGING DEEPER

- Where does your team most need to raise its standard of performance?
- Would "perfect practice" help you and your team reach a new level of excellence?

THE CRYSTAL BALL TEST

Excellence will not last if you are dedicated only to Now. To be great Then—that is, in the future—you must be a part-time crystal ball reader. This is especially true if you are in a position of organizational leadership.

In 2000, Tennant Company was the U.S. leader in power-cleaning equipment. CEO Janet Dolan knew that business had never been better. The company was expected to end the year with \$28 million in earnings. The publicly traded firm's earnings-per-share were reaching historic levels. Cash flow was healthy and debt minimal.

Yet Dolan was focused on the future. She recognized, correctly, that customer values were changing and a recession was on the way. Competitors were drawing away some of Tennant's customers. Other competitors had moved their manufacturing efforts overseas. And technology was about to make many cleaning solutions obsolete. To the surprise of many, Tennant summoned fifty of her top people for a two-day session designed to plan an overhaul of the organization.

Dolan's team revamped premises and processes while responding to feedback showing customers were more concerned about health and safety than clean floors. The changes worked. Though the 2001 recession reduced earnings by 86 percent, the damage would have been far worse if Tennant had clung to its outdated approach. The company remained in good standing and positioned for growth because its leadership correctly anticipated the future.²

WHERE DOES YOUR TIME GO?

- What percentage of your time do you spend dealing with day-to-day issues?

- What percentage do you spend planning and preparing for the future?

DIGGING DEEPER

- Would your organization pass or fail the crystal ball test? Why or why not?

- How about you?

- What could you be doing to better anticipate the future?

WINNING THE RIGHT WAY

Vince Lombardi, the Green Bay Packers coach, is famous for a phrase he once posted on a locker room wall: “Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing.” Lombardi’s thirst for victory was indisputable.

Yet for this renowned leader, winning was not enough. According to author David Maraniss, “[Lombardi] did not believe in cheating to win, and he showed no interest in winning the wrong way, without heart, brains, and sportsmanship.”³

Once, after an easy, 41-14 Green Bay triumph, Packer player Bob Skoronski lingered on the field talking to friends. An assistant coach grabbed him and ushered him to the locker room. “I walked in,” Skoronski said, “and there was Coach Lombardi standing on a chair, screaming at the top of his lungs. I thought I was in the wrong locker room. I thought we had won.”⁴ Lombardi was furious about his team’s lack of effort in the second half. Victory alone did not satisfy this coaching great. He wanted to win the right way—and so should you.

ALL THE TIME

Vince Lombardi once said, “Winning is not a sometime thing; it’s an all time thing. You don’t win once in a while, you don’t do things right once in a while, you do them right all the time. Winning is habit.” Do you agree or disagree with this? Why?

DIGGING DEEPER

- How is it possible to win the “wrong way” in your field?

- What does winning the “right way” look like?

- As leader of your team, how can you encourage an attitude that demands more than “winning”?

Most of the great coaches in the sports world are committed to a level of performance that goes beyond winning. They demand excellence from themselves and their teams. They understand that learning to do the little things correctly in practice is what leads to exceptional results in competition. These same principles will enable *your* team to succeed Now...and Then.

THE NEXT LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP

Adversity is inevitable. Sooner or later, all of us confront a problem that shakes our faith in what is possible. For leaders charged with the success of a team or organization, that responsibility in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles is especially daunting. At such moments, we wonder if we truly have what it takes to score and win.

Yet this is exactly when we must commit to and have confidence in our ability to SCORE. If we've adopted and applied the intangible inner qualities and themes that we've talked about throughout this material, we have what we need to persevere and triumph. Employing any one, two, three, or four of these factors will certainly help. But your breakthrough will occur when you synthesize all five elements. It's the combination of these factors working together that will invigorate your team and propel you to the next level of leadership. These critical elements help me today when I speak across the country to corporate groups, nonprofit representatives, universities, and elsewhere. They have changed every aspect of my life as a person, a husband, a dad, and a businessman.

They will be just as effective for you in your quest to be a great leader.

Sacrifice. Character. Opportunity. Respect. Excellence.

Put them together and you will become the leader you've always dreamed of. This is what winning is really all about.

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