

SHAD MARTIN & DUSTIN SMITH

Especially for
ATHLETES

LEADERSHIP ON AND OFF THE FIELD



FOREWORD
BY

TY DETMER

HEISMAN TROPHY WINNER

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Chapter 1

DO THE WORK

Pregame Pep Talk

“I have been impressed with the urgency of doing.
Knowing is not enough; we must apply.
Being willing is not enough; we must do.”

—**Leonardo da Vinci**

“Without ambition one starts nothing.
Without work one finishes nothing.
The prize will not be sent to you. You have to win it.”

—**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

“I firmly believe that any man’s finest hour, the greatest fulfillment of all that he holds dear, is the moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle
—victorious.” —**Vince Lombardi**

“The heights by great men reached and kept,
Were not attained by sudden flight.
But they, while their companions slept
Were toiling upward in the night.”

—**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

One of the great blessings that comes from playing sports is the opportunity to learn to work. In a world where many young people are not learning this valuable lesson, you have the chance to learn it and reap the blessings from it. Playing sports provides you the occasion to push yourself and find out what you are really made of. Because you play sports, you are blessed with coaches

that push you and help you discover abilities and energies that you may have never discovered otherwise. It is no accident that this is the first of the five principles covered in this book, for without this principle the others won't matter much either. Why? Because these are not easy quick-fix principles. Mastering each will require work on your part. You are probably going to have successes and failures with each one, and you are going to have to do the work to accomplish them and reap the blessings.

What Does “Do the Work” Mean?

You may think that to “do the work” means to simply go through the motions and mandatory drills required of you to be on the team. That is doing the bare minimum, not doing the work, at least not the way that *we* define doing the work. We love the word “extraordinary.” Look at that word closely. It's a combination of the words “extra” and “ordinary.” Simply going through the motions is what an “ordinary” athlete would do. We want you to think about being “extra-ordinary,” or in other words, we want you to think about how you can go beyond the bare minimum. To really do the work you must set lofty goals and then be steady, energetic, passionate, and determined, with your “eyes up” continually focused on accomplishing them.

Learning to Do the Work Brings Independence

When we use the phrase “do the work,” we view it as a very personal thing. It is easy to pretend to work hard, to pretend to “leave it all on the field.” You can contort your face or strain your muscles in such a way that those around you think you are giving it your all and leaving it all on the field. When all is said and done, only you and God will really know whether you gave your full effort or not. Learning to do the work on your own brings independence. How? Some players make great strides when they have a coach who demands a lot of them but then digress when they have a coach on the opposite end of the scale who does not demand as much or when they are in the off season and a coach is not allowed to have as much contact with them. It is an awesome thing to learn to grow regardless of your circumstances. It is a wonderful thing

to set a personal goal and then do the work necessary to accomplish it. That feeling of conquering the goal you set out to conquer will become contagious, and you and those around you will want to feel it again and again. What a great experience that is! That contagious feeling of accomplishment will lead you to become a self-motivated person who seeks to be your very best at everything you do and someone who will not settle for being mediocre, average, or ordinary. That is how champions become champions. Average athletes put forth ordinary effort. Those who become great put forth extraordinary effort.

Twenty-Second Time-Out



What goal have you set and then worked toward accomplishing with an extra-ordinary effort? How did it feel?

Stars and “Benchwarmers” Need to Work

It is important that you understand at a young age that to be your best as an athlete—and in all the other areas of your life—nothing worth much will ever come to you without you working for it. Champions must earn that title, and it is earned as much, if not more, before the game than during it. Your efforts early in the morning while others sleep, or on the days you don’t “have to practice” but choose to do so anyway, are what will help you become an extraordinary athlete. During the off-season, most can’t wait to get away from the grind of workouts. Champions, on the other hand, can’t wait to get back to work because they understand the title of “champion” must be earned and that good old-fashioned sweat and hard work is the price to be paid.

This principle is equally applicable to all athletes, whether you are currently the star of the team or a “benchwarmer.” Far too often physically gifted young

men and woman do not reach their full potential as athletes because they rely too much on natural ability and believe that those they are able to outperform now will never improve. They act as though being the best is something they have the right to and that they can simply wake up and head to the field or court and dominate because they have done so in the past. To those of you who are fortunate enough to be on top of the athletic mountain now, you must realize that without the focus and discipline necessary to do the work, you will find yourself on the bottom looking up at someone who outworked you.

Now for you “benchwarmers”—those of you who feel like you are on the bottom looking up to those who are more athletically gifted you—you only have one hope: do the work. There is not a fairy godmother who is going to come and wave her magic wand and turn you into an extraordinary athlete. If you do not have extraordinary talent you must have extra-extraordinary work ethic. No one is going to do that for you. You must choose to do the work.

Famous football coach Vince Lombardi once said, “The dictionary is the only place that success comes before work. Hard work is the price we must pay for success. I think you can accomplish anything if you’re willing to pay the price” (<http://www.leadership-with-you.com/vince-lombardi-leadership.html>).

Examples of Those Who Have Done the Work

There are numerous stories of successful men and women who made it a consistent habit in their daily lives to *do* what was necessary in order to accomplish their goals. Some people work hard to get a position on the team, some work hard to get more playing time, but the special ones are the ones who work without a final destination. This does not mean that they do not have goals; however, they view their goals as checkpoints. Once they reach their goal, they set another. They believe that they can always get better and they consider each day as an opportunity to do so. They refuse to settle for being or becoming ordinary and never become satisfied. These people crave improvement and work to achieve it. These people become champions. They become extraordinary.

To do the work, you will sometimes need to sacrifice the comforts of today for the prizes of tomorrow. It may mean sacrificing sleep or a warm bed on a cold morning to wake up earlier and exercise. It may mean sacrificing some foods that taste good for ones that are good for you. It means sweating and pushing yourself, sacrificing the comfort and relief that would come from sitting and resting. It means sacrificing some TV and video game time so that you can go to bed in order to be rested for more important things. It means sacrificing your pride in order to look for constructive criticism from those that are there to help you improve. This all should be kept in proper balance of course, which we dedicated a whole chapter to, titled “First Things First.” What we’re talking about is diligently doing the work in the proper time allotted you to do so. Keeping your eyes up will allow you to know when you may have crossed that line.

Consider Kobe Bryant as an example. His accomplishments are so numerous that they could make up a book in and of themselves. Some people are his biggest fans while others dislike Kobe, but love him or hate him, there is one thing that even his worst critics should admire about him: his tenacious work ethic. In a story written about Bryant, Jay Triano, an NBA assistant coach and an assistant coach for the U.S. Olympic team, shared an experience of watching Kobe in a high school gym well after practice for the Olympic basketball team had ended. While other athletes were out on the town or at home resting, Triano saw something he described as “amazing.” Kobe Bryant was in the gym doing the work. He explained it in his own words:

He’s not just going through the motions when he’s shooting jump shots. They’re game shots, at game speed. And the repetition . . . over and over and over. Like, three-point shots. There are a lot of (NBA) guys, you’ll watch them make 25 from each spot. He’s like, 100, 200 from the corner every night. And you’d think he’d be done and he’s going on to the next spot. And he goes back and he shoots fadeaways and he shoots ’em off the bounce. I was just like, “Holy smoke.” You get tired throwing the ball back, let alone shooting it. (Dave Feschuk, “If Hard Work Counts, Kobe League Best by Far,” *The Star*, Apr. 2008.)

Some players can shoot better, some jump higher, some are stronger, and some are faster than Kobe. How is it that he remained so extraordinary throughout his illustrious career? He does the work in an extraordinary way. One can only wonder how many other Kobe Bryants there are in the NBA who never became what he became because they never worked like he worked.

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