

[start box] "When I first went to the University of Notre Dame – I don't exaggerate any experience I tell you – Father Joyce said to me, he said, "Coach, I want to cover some things with you that are not negotiable. You're not gonna come here to Notre Dame and think you're gonna change these things, cause these are not gonna change while I'm here."

Now Notre Dame does not have great weather in January. He said, "Furthermore, we're gonna play the most difficult schedule we can find. We expect to compete for the national championship at least once every three years." And he said, "In addition to that, it's non-negotiable, the head football coach at Notre Dame is not allowed to make more than the president of the University of Notre Dame. The president's a priest."

That being said, we walked into press conference, Father Joyce said, "Coach, I appreciate it if you wouldn't mention anything about the salary." I said, "Don't worry, Father, I'm as embarrassed about it as you are. I won't say a word."

But see, he didn't say one thing that would keep us from winning. He presented some obstacles. But not one thing – he didn't say you could only play with five and everybody else eleven. What I found, no matter what situation you find yourself in, there's gonna be obstacles. And what I have found is there's usually going to be a solution to most things.

Father Hessberg said to me, he said, "Coach, I could name you the head football coach of Notre Dame, I could give you that title, cause title's come from above." He said, "What I cannot do, I cannot name you the leader, cause leadership is going to be determined by the people below." And I said, "Well, Father Hessberg, what is your definition of a leader?" He said, "A leader is somebody that has a vision and has a plan. That's all leadership is. It isn't about titles. If you have a vision, if you have a plan."

When you're down, you got two choices; you get up or you stay down. You can't count on anybody else to pick you up. Georgia isn't gonna call and say, "You don't have a quarterback, let me send you one. Twelve months later, a football team that had the longest losing streak in the country, went to a Bowl game and beat Ohio State on January 1 the following year, ended up 17th in the country. The following year, beat Ohio State again on January 1, ended up 11th in the country.

The point I make, you're gonna be down, you're gonna have difficulty and you could only count on yourself. That's why I hate to have people blame somebody else. I never allowed an athlete to blame somebody else, cause when you blame somebody else, you're saying, "I am not in control of my life. I can't get myself out of this situation." And the attitude you have is a leader's is by far the most important thing. Cause that attitude pilders down; it doesn't come back up.

That's what I'm saying about the attitude. That, to me, is the most important thing and that's where it starts. An attitude "I can do things."

I think you have to have a passion. You have to have a passion for what you're doing. I believe Charlie Weiss is gonna be exceptionally successful at the University of Notre Dame, cause he has a passion to be there. You have to have a passion for what you're doing, because if you have a passion, you're gonna make sacrifice.

I love to be around successful people. You show me a successful parent, businessperson, player, coach, I know the sacrifice they've had to make. Losers call it punishment. People want to be successful without making a sacrifice. You can't. And if you have a passion to do something, you're gonna make sacrifices willingly.

The great football teams are the ones that can block and tackle. Great students are the ones that learn how to read and write. People get bored with fundamentals. A guy walked into a pet shop, wanted to buy a bird. Had all these birds for \$1.25. The guy says, "You don't want that bird. I got the ideal bird for you. This bird over here is only \$718." The guy said, "Well the bird looks like the others." He said, "This bird talks and sings." The guy said, "Gee. I'm alone, it's a lot of money, but I love to have the company," so he bought the bird.

Came in the next day and said, "I paid \$718 for the bird. The bird don't talk or sing." The guy said, "What did the bird when he rang the bell." He said, "What bell?" He said, "Didn't you buy the bell where the bird can get the proper tune?" He said, "No." "The bird ain't gonna talk or sing unless he can ring the bell and the bell's only \$9."

Buys the bell, comes in the next day, mad as all get out. Said, "The bird don't talk or sing anything to the goddog bell." And the guy said, "That's impossible. I have the same type of bird as you. Just today, my bird get up, rang that little bell, ran up and down that ladder." The guy said, "What ladder?" He said, "Didn't you buy the ladder where the bird can exercise?" He said, "No." "The ladder's \$23."

This goes on four days. Guy comes in the fifth day and said, "I have \$819 invested in the bird. Today the bird finally talked to me just before he died." He said, "The bird got up this morning, rang that little bell, ran up and down that ladder, swung on the swing, looked in the mirror at all the things you sold me. Just before he died, he looked over at me and said, 'Did he sell you any bird seed?'"

See we get caught up in all these fancy things and we forget the basic fundamentals. Another thing about a passion to win means you get rid of all the excuses while you can. It's unbelievable how many people have an excuse. We can't do this or this. Look for solutions, not problems.

The third point in the plan that I believe in is understand what you are doing. Too many people get confused. See, all you're trying to do is help customers get what they want. I'm not very smart, as I said, but I do have common sense. And all I try to do is simplify things. All I wanted to do was graduate athletes and win.

Every decision I made was how could we graduate and how could we win. Nothing else. How could we graduate and how could we win. It's just common sense.

I was in the seventh grade, had a nun named Sister Mary Harry. She had a test one day, I didn't know many answers, so I started looking around on the board. Cause I was finished – most of my paper was blank. She hollered, she said, "Lou Holtz, don't you even think about cheating." She said, "If I even suspect you of cheating, I'm taking 10% off my grade." I got out the textbook and said, "90 sounds good to me."

Common sense. You show me any business that has a future, I'll show you one that's satisfying the needs of the customers.

I happened to be at the University of Arkansas and got to know Sam Walton pretty well. Sam Walton's whole philosophy – he first started a little store down in **West Teller**, Arkansas, in 1946. It was so successful. After one year, the guy did not renew his lease. Sam Walton went with this philosophy up to Bella Vista, Arkansas.

His whole philosophy was if we can buy low, we can sell cheap. And that was his whole philosophy. He started out in just clothing. Was dedicated predominantly to oversized dresses for ladies. He knew what he wanted to do; he knew what the customers wanted.

It's just like Starbucks. You look at any company – are you answering what the customers want?

You look at the top Fortune 500 companies 50 years ago, compare with the top Fortune 500 today, not many on the same list. Why? People's needs change and are you changing to meet the needs of the people? Then embrace change. Nobody likes change.

I want to tell you, when I was at Notre Dame, I was at Minnesota I didn't like to throw the football. I always wanted to run the ball. It's not hard to run the ball. You take the ball, you turn and you hand it to Ricky Waters and Jerome Bettis. That isn't hard – I can do it, anybody can do that. Throw the ball, now that's hard. You gotta drop back, read the coverage, throw the ball. That's hard.

So I go to South Carolina, we go to run the ball. First the quarterback takes the ball, turns to hand the ball and Ricky Waters and Jerome Bettis aren't there. The guy that is there doesn't want the ball. And we go 0-11. Well we had to change. We had to go to a shotgun-type offense, spread people out, throw.

Did I want to do that? No. But I had to do it if we were going to win. You have to embrace change. As long as you're changing to meet the needs of the customers.

Do you realize in 1878 they invented the typewriter? The problem with the typewriter is if you typed too fast, the keys stuck. The guy said, "We'll never sell a typewriter if the keys stick." So he put together a committee to keep the keys from sticking.

The guy came back and they said, "We got it solved." The guy said, "How'd you get it to type faster?" He said, "We can't do that." He said, "But we can keep the keys from sticking by forcing people to type

slower.” The guy said, “What do you mean?” He said, “All we have to do is hide the letters on the keypad. We’ll put A up here, we’ll put B down here, we’ll stick C up here. We’ll put Q there, we’ll put R there and nobody can type fast. They’re gonna have to hunt and they’re gonna have to peck.” Don’t you wonder why the letters on the keypad are screwed up? That’s so you couldn’t type fast. Now today you try to change the letters on the keypad – don’t change that; see, because I know that. Embrace change as long as you’re changing to meet the needs of the customers.

Winners are dreamers. Great things happen because somebody’s a dreamer. One of the ten greatest speeches known to man was Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Some of the other great ones – John F. Kennedy, “Ask not what this country can do for you, ask what can do for your county.” Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, Winston Churchill’s “Never so many owed so much to so few.”

Martin Luther King stood up in Washington in front of 100,000 people. He said, “I have a dream.” He motivated people and inspired people. Do you think that speech would have that same effect had Martin Luther King stood up and said, “I have a strategic plan that things gonna work that I want to share with you.” Strategic plans don’t excite anybody, but having a dream does.

There’s a rule in life that says you’re either growing or you’re dying. A tree’s either growing or it’s dying and so is a business, so is a marriage, so is a person.

Doesn’t have a thing to do with age, it has everything to do with whether you have any dreams, whether you have any aspirations. The four things people need in life: number one, you need something to do; number two, you need someone to love. You need something to hope for. You need something to believe in.

But that’s what motivates you. It doesn’t have a thing to do with age. At age 84, Winston Churchill, after being prime minister of England two different times, at age 84, he’s in the House of Commons. And the guy walks up and says, “Happy 84th Birthday, Mr. Churchill. Hope I get a chance to wish you a happy 100th. Do you think I’d get a chance to do that?” Winston paused for a minute and thought and looked at him and said, “Yeah.” He said, “You look pretty healthy to me.”

It’s that mentality. Remember the word win. Win stands for what’s important now. You decide what you want to do, ask yourself 25 times a day what’s important now.

Evaluating and motivating people is key. People make the difference. You cannot win if you do not have the proper people. Not everybody comes to your organization the right way. I just had three simple rules that I felt enabled me to evaluate people and enabled me to motivate them to be the best they could be. The three simple rules I’ve had all my life and I followed them is do right, do the best you can, show people you care.

Too many times we’re in a leadership role, we worry about being popular rather than having standards. I love Woody Hayes. I coached for Woody, we won the national championship and yet Woody was INSANE. And I’m giving him the benefit of the doubt. But there’s nobody that had a greater influence on my life as a coach than Woody Hayes did. Why? Cause Woody Hayes believed in his people so strongly so he set that standard here <put his hand above his head>. If you came here and I wasn’t good enough, he wasn’t worried about you being happy. He wanted you to be the best you could be and he pushed you and he drove you and he did whatever he had to do in order to get it.

But Woody Hayes believed in Lou Holtz more than I believed in myself. And it’s the same thing. They believe in people, set a standard. There are too many people that want to lower the standard.

Last, it’s good to think about what if you didn’t show up, who would miss you and why? If you didn’t go home, would your family miss you? And if they wouldn’t miss you, why? If your company didn’t exist, would anybody miss them? You always want to approach and say, ‘Am I important? Am I making a difference in people’s lives?’ [end box]