

Win Forever: Live, Work, and Play Like a Champion (Carroll, Peter N.;Roth, Yogi;Garin, Kristoffer A.)

I set about structuring a football program strictly based upon my core belief. Competition would become the central theme of the program, and our day-to-day thinking would be driven by this single thought: to do things better than they had ever been done before.

One of the keys to success lies in knowing and believing in yourself. When you are confident and you trust in who you are, you can perform to the best of your ability, and that is exactly what I plan to do.

She used to say: "Something good is just about to happen." I still believe that today.

What I learned about Maslow's insights challenged me to start asking: What if my job as a coach isn't so much to force or coerce performance as it is to create situations where players develop the confidence to set their talents free and pursue their potential to its full extent?

What if my job as a coach is really to prove to these kids how good they already are, how good they could possibly become, and that they are truly capable of high-level performance?

helped me put into words what I'd known instinctively back then: that the simple act of making thoughtful, affirmative statements about who we are and what we want to achieve can be an incredibly powerful tool for getting the best possible performance out of ourselves.

In order to be successful, you must have a consistent philosophy. If you change who you are from year to year, he explained, you're never going to be great at anything.

I had been operating with a multitude of ideas without a comprehensive philosophy to bring them all together.

When players know that they have mastered the rigors of training, whether on the football field or in the weight room or classroom, then their confidence leads to an unusual focus, free from distractions, doubt, or fear.

Think of young children playing. They don't worry about being judged, and they are only concerned with having fun. In those moments, it's easy to observe true, uninhibited play. We witness a level of concentration where the children are totally immersed, unaware of the world around them. This fascination and ability to be supremely focused are essential for their development, much like an athlete.

We needed to trust, we needed to focus, and we needed to get off to a good start by playing well early.

With that in mind, I have always felt it is my duty to show my players exactly how they can develop their confidence. They have to prepare in a manner that will promote their skills. They have to be in great condition in all areas. They have to know the responsibilities of their positions. They have to know how they fit into the overall scheme of the team's design. Basically, they should leave no stone unturned in terms of preparation and readiness. All of these factors contribute to an athlete's feeling of supreme confidence and the ability to perform with a "quieted mind."

**Win Forever Working to Maximize Your Potential IF YOU WANT TO WIN FOREVER, ALWAYS COMPETE**

What Win Forever means to me is aspiring to be the best you can be, or as I like to refer to it, "maximizing your potential." But Winning Forever is not about the final score; it's about competing and striving to be the best. If you are in this pursuit, then you're already winning.

Do things better than they have ever been done before. This level consists of a variety of philosophical beliefs for any organization I would build.

We would perform with great effort, great enthusiasm, and great toughness, and play smart, all while respecting everything and everyone involved in the process.

My programs would be built on the concept “Always Compete.” In line with this, every member of my program would have no choice but to perform in a relentless pursuit of a competitive edge. That concept would carry over to our practice field, where we would compete to find new ways to raise the level of competition in practice each day.

The third level of the pyramid is about the importance of practice.

“Practice Is Everything.”

For us to do things better than they have ever been done before, I believed that we had to practice at the highest level, the most competitive level.

I promised myself that I was going to be absolutely relentless in pursuing any competitive edge I could. With consistently competitive practices, players would ultimately reach a point where they could perform in the absence of fear, due to the confidence they had gained by practicing so well. Ideally, they would then learn to trust the process, themselves, and their teammates.

Competition to me is not about beating your opponent. It is about doing your best; it is about striving to reach your potential; and it is about being in relentless pursuit of a competitive edge in everything you do.

It is a mentality, an outlook, and a way of approaching every day. The traditional definition of competition requires having an opponent.

The real opposition is the challenge to remain focused on maximizing their abilities in preparation for the game.

My competitive approach is that “it’s all about us.” If we’ve really done the preparation to elevate ourselves to our full potential, it shouldn’t matter whom we’re playing.

But what we do is try to understand their makeup and nature. We want to center our focus on what we can control, which is us. We have no control over what our opponents do; we can only control what we do. We want to maximize our potential, and to do that we must focus our energy and efforts on ourselves.

You can compete to be a good student, compete to be a good friend, compete to be a good dad, or a husband or wife. My point is to make conscious choices about what you compete at, and always compete to do your best at whatever that is. The idea is that you can be a great competitor at whatever you’re doing.

To me, practice is not just something that is necessary for a team to prepare itself for game day. Rather, practice is one of the many places where we compete to be the best.

It is my belief that how we practice makes just as important a statement about who we are as how we play the games. How we practice defines who we are. It is not only something we have to do in order to compete, but our practice is a competitive activity in and of itself.

Practice is something we want to be the best at for its own sake. As I began to develop my thoughts about this and to write them down,

It was there in the Bronx that I realized that coaches are ultimately responsible for maintaining a high level of intensity for every practice session.

Once I realized it was our responsibility to establish the tone and energy of practice, I had a newfound vision about how important it would be to motivate my next staff on a daily basis. I learned that if you want to have great practice sessions, you have to prepare your staff to have great days.

I declared forevermore that in my coaching career, we would practice with more energy and more excitement than anyone else in football.

At USC I introduced “Three Rules,” which became foundational elements for our program. They may not have translated exactly into all situations but they offered a basic framework that would apply to almost any organization seeking to establish a culture that gets the most out of its people. Here is how we laid it out: Rule 1. Always Protect the Team Rule 2. No Whining, No Complaining, No Excuses Rule 3. Be Early

Protecting the team was all about our players’ consciences. We wanted them to be fully aware of what they were doing at all times and to understand that for every decision they made there would be a result that affected the team and ultimately everyone who depended on our success. We wanted them to seek outcomes that would protect their family, their teammates, and their university. It’s a great rule, I think, because it’s both open-ended and uncompromising.

It is easy for a young athlete to lose focus or fail to comprehend the importance of his assignment on each play, but it was our job as a staff to tap into each player’s conscience. Rule #1 allowed us to do that.

The third and final rule in our program, “Be Early,” was all about being organized and showing respect. At USC, we wanted our players in meetings before they started, and more important, we wanted them there with their playbooks open and minds ready to learn. To be early, you must have your priorities in order.

We wanted them to understand that by being organized they demonstrated respect for the coaches who called the meeting, for their teammates, and ultimately for themselves.

Right down to the core of our being, we believe that our success depends on ensuring that everyone is completely engaged, committed, and in a relentless pursuit of a competitive edge. A big part of my job is creating an environment where this will happen.

Perhaps the most powerful weapon in the Win Forever philosophy is the drive to constantly be looking for ways to improve.

If a leader is clear and consistent about his philosophy's core values, it frees everyone up to do their best.

One of the reminders for our coaches was to "critique effort first," meaning they were to look at the effort the players were demonstrating before critiquing assignments and techniques.