

Intro, Prologue and Forward

Intro summary: *The Score Takes Care of Itself* is dependent on doing all the right things to precision. The beginning of the book includes valuable accounts from the following men on what it was like to work with Bill, and the many strengths he possessed:

- Joe Montana - Standard of Performance
- John McVay - The Organization man
- Mike White - Problem Solver
- Bill McPherson - House Cleaner
- Randy Cross - The Fog Cutter



Quotes

- “His primary leadership asset was teaching people how to think and play at a different and much higher, perfect level.” - Joe Montana
- “Being good wasn’t good enough. It was more about hunger for improvement. His hunger for improvement was contagious.”

Notes

- According to Joe Montana, the talent of Bill Walsh really came down to three things:
 - 1) Tremendous knowledge and a visionary approach
 - 2) Hired great coaches and staff who complimented him
 - 3) Taught the team to hate mistakes*

- Bill Walsh communication style was very story-based. He would often tell a short, memorable story and then say: “And here’s the lesson I learned.”

Part I - My Standard of Performance: An Environment of Excellence

Overview (in one sentence): Bill Walsh was notorious for his *Standard of Performance*, a high bar for excellence in both actions and attitudes—big and small—which is propelled by a “ferocious work ethic” and relentless focus on details. The premise: if each member of a team commits and executes on the *Standard of Performance*, the score takes care of itself.

Quotes

- “The ability to help the people around me self-actualize their goals underlines the single aspect of my abilities and the label that I value most—teacher.”
- “Even when you have an organization brimming with talent, victory is not always under your control. Rather, it’s like quicksilver.”
- “Excellence is about intelligently and relentlessly seeking solutions to increase your chance of prevailing in a competitive environment.”
- “Let the opponent worry about the score.”
- “Focus less on the prize of victory but on the process of improving. . . obsess about quality of execution, and thinking [attitudes].”
- “Know-it-alls are a destructive force to your team.”
- “Success belongs to everyone. So does failure. At its best, a team is about connection & extension.”
- “That’s the toughest thing: constancy amid chaos or presumed perfection.”

Notes

- Bill Walsh’s 5 DOs for getting back into the game
 - 1) Expect defeat.
 - 2) Force yourself to stop looking backward and dwelling on recent defeat
 - 3) Allow yourself appropriate recovery/grieving time
 - 4) Tell yourself *I am going to stand and fight again* while knowing defeat precedes victory
 - 5) Begin planning for your next serious encounter
- Bill Walsh’s 5 DONTs
 - 1) Don’t ask *Why me?*
 - 2) Don’t expect sympathy
 - 3) Don’t bellyache
 - 4) Don’t keep accepting condolences
 - 5) Don’t blame others
- **Bill Walsh’s Standard of Performance (p.16) includes the following principles:**

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| ● Ferocious work ethic | ● Team before self | ● Treat success & failure |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect• Learning & teaching• Fairness, character• Leadership poise | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sacrifice & commitment• Focus on details• Positivity & attitude• Prize loyalty | <p>the same</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote open & substantive communication• Abnormally high focus |
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- [Here is a graphic](#) of the *Standard of Performance*
- p.21 - Bill Walsh looked for 4 character traits in his personnel: 1) Talent, 2) Character, 3) Functional intelligence, and 4) Eagerness to adopt my philosophy

Part II - Success is Not Spelled GENIUS: Innovation, Planning, and Common Sense

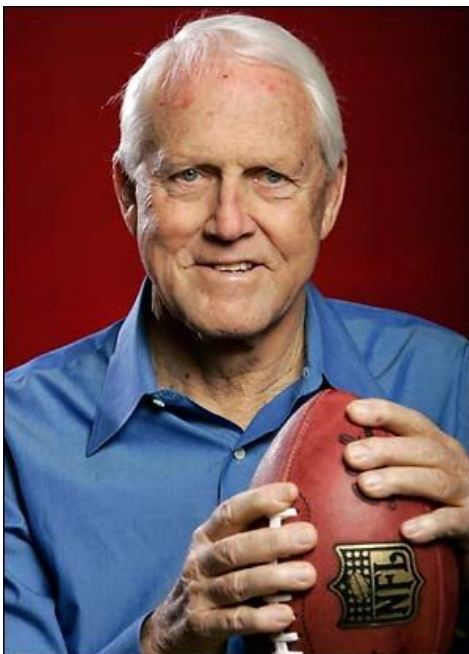
Overview (in one sentence): The process is more important than the play. In addition to an obsessive focus on iterative improvement, one must also envision and plan for the many competitive scenarios while empowering the team to execute accordingly with common sense.

Favorite Quotes

- “Success doesn’t care how you get to the doorstep. Embrace change. Be obsessive in looking for the upside in the downside.”
- “The difference between offering an opinion and making a decision is the difference between working for the leader and being the leader.”

Notes

- Bill Walsh’s strategy relies heavily on scripting and contingency planning.
 - *What do I do if . . . ?*



Part III - Fundamentals of Leadership: Concepts, Concepts, and Conclusions

Overview (in one sentence):

Favorite Quotes

- “One of the great leadership challenges is to recognize when hubris has you in its grip before it is too late to change course.”
- “Don’t mistake activity for achievement.” - John Wooden
- “Be unpredictable; create uncertainty.” - Pete Newell, Cal basketball coach

Notes

- On Joe Montana’s brand of leadership:
 - He lead by example, believed in no special treatment due to reputation, status or credentials, and also remained conscientious about sharing credit.
 - “He didn’t have to talk the talk because he walked the walk.”
- **Bill Walsh shares the following leadership principles (inspired from Joe Montana) to help bring out the best in people:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat people like people • Seek positive relationships through encouragement, support, and critical evaluation • Afford everyone equal dignity respect, treatment • Blend honesty and “diplomacy” • Allow for a wide range of moods • Avoid pleading with players and adopting their vernacular | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make each person in your employ very aware that his/her well-being has a high priority in the org • Give no VIP treatment • Speak in positive terms about former teammates • Demonstrate an interest in and support for the extended families of teammates • Communicate on a first-name basis without allowing relationships to become buddy-buddy • Don’t let differences or animosity linger. |
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- Bill Walsh also drew inspiration from General George S. patton, specifically from his *Letter of Instruction Number 1, from War As I Knew it.*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that praise is more valuable than blame • Use every means before and after combat to tell troops what they are going to do and what they have done • Discipline is based on pride in the <i>profession</i> of arms, on meticulous attention to details, and on mutual respect and confidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers must assert themselves by example and by voice • General officers must be seen in the front line during action • There is a tendency for the chain of command to overload junior officers by excessive requirements in the way of training and reports (eliminate non-essential demands) |
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- p. 122 - Leadership, at its best, is teaching 1) skills, 2) attitudes, and 3) goals and a good leader has 1) passion, 2) expertise, 3) communication, and 4) persistence.
- p. 124 - a teacher gains expertise by seeking out great teachers, mentors, and other sources of information and wisdom in a relentless effort to add to his or her own knowledge.
 - In business, this means *actively seeking the counsel of those you respect in your profession, as well as studying printed material and publications that you determine will provide pertinent input.*



Part IV - Essentials of a Winning Team: People, Priorities, and Performance

Overview (in one sentence):

Favorite Quotes

- “Commitment and sacrifice are among the personal characteristics I value most highly in people.”
- The 4 most inspirational words a leader can say: **I believe in you.**
 - *I know you can do the job.*

- “Be unconventional to achieve unconventional results.”
 - *Example of how Bill Walsh dismissed Jerry Rice’s mediocre 40yd-dash time (4.6 sec) and saw his speed from 15 to 50 yards. Other coaches missed Jerry Rice due to conventional wisdom by fixating on Rice’s 40yd-dash time.*
- “Avoid enemies. Negative relationships have ongoing negative consequences; have a “no enemies” policy.”
 - “While you’re getting even, they’re getting ahead.”

Notes

- “Success Disease” is why most champions don’t repeat. Bill Walsh won 5 Super Bowls in 14 years (unprecedented). He combats “success disease” by methodically instilling in his team that the situation and competition are tough (and also improving), and it is evermore important to cleave to the Standard of Performance.
- p. 148 - example of Cedric Hardman to illustrate: Good Talent + Bad Attitude = Bad Talent
- “Situational character” involves having an attitude that mirrors the environment; this is particularly harmful when times are bad. True character is steadfast, not chameleon.
 - Crazy story: Ronnie Lott (whom Bill Walsh praises for strength of character) decided to amputate part of his pinky finger rather than not play in the season opener.
- Most of Bill’s great performers had “ego to spare.” He suggests looking for strong confidence, but meanwhile discouraging egotism via peer pressure.
- p. 156 - to recognize less visible members of the org, Bill created a “12th man award”
- Bill was always asking himself *How do you stretch people to help them achieve their full potential?*
- p.164 - on the balancing act between instinct & intellect
 - Instinct: “Go hard all the time.”
 - Intellect: “This is not sustainable.”
 - Challenge: Reconcile and balance the above two.

Part V - Thin Skin, Baloney, and "The Star-Spangled Banner": Looking for Lessons in My Mirror

Overview: Bill Walsh shares a litany of personal anecdotes that guided him throughout his illustrious career including his habitual focus before games to embrace the “gladiator mentality.” Bill Walsh was a tinkerer, and experimenter, always envisioning new plays in his quest to build a better mousetrap. He would also shake hands with every one of his players before every game.

Bill shares some final advice on what he would have done differently to prolong his career:

1. **Do not isolate yourself.** While executing at the highest level, your spouse and family may not be equipped to deal with the magnitude of your professional issues. Therefore, develop a small, trusted network of people whose opinions you respect. Keep your lines of communication open with mentors, professionals, or counselor to help you restore perspective, clarity and priorities.
2. **Delegate abundantly.** If you’ve done your job as a leader, you’ve hired top talent. Allow them to serve the team and lighten your load. Bill wishes he had done this more, especially on offense.

3. **Avoid the destructive temptation to define yourself as a person by the won-lost record, the “score”, however you define it.** Don't equate your team's won-lost record with your self-worth.
4. **Shake it off.** Bill shares the story of Marv Levy and Bud Grant who both lost 4 Super Bowls. They were both able to endure the pain/grieve and then get back to work after a few days/weeks.

Favorite Quotes

- “You never stop learning, perfecting, refining—molding your skills.”
- “For me, the starting point for everything—before strategy, tactics, theory, managing, organizing, philosophy, methodology, talent, or experience—is work ethic. Without one of significant magnitude, you're dead in the water, finished.”
- “Quick results come slowly.”

Notes

- Bill Walsh would never sing the national anthem. He would continue his ritual of embracing the “gladiator mindset” by removing all emotion, blocking out distractions, and entering a mental state of calm clarity to which he remarks: “as pleasant a sensation as any I ever got as a coach.”
- Paul Brown is the only man in history to have a NFL team named after him: the Cleveland Browns.

