

How Good Do You Want to Be by Nick Saban

1. Focusing on what it takes to get there, and not on getting there.
2. We all rededicated ourselves to the little things.
3. A clear sense of commitment.
4. There was no letup.
5. The seniors presented me with team goals.
6. These goals were about performance, on and off the field.
7. We shared a purpose.
8. You are often more optimistic than realistic.
9. It's about being relentless in the pursuit of your goal and resilient in the face of bad luck and adversity.
10. We are responsible for what we create, not the other team. (*Don't fear them; only fear we won't do it right.*)
11. Dominate their opponent for sixty minutes.
12. We never talked as a team or as a staff about championships. And that meant approaching every day with the focus and attitude we had sustained for the previous year.
13. Every time you think of winning the national championship – stop. Instead, think of what you have to do to dominate your opponent for sixty minutes.
14. All we got to be is us.
15. The process is much more important the result.
16. Our commitment, character, conviction, and attitude allowed us to do what we needed to do as a team to achieve at the highest level. There were so many ingredients that contributed. We had some of the best players in the country; we had remarkable leadership and team chemistry; we were resilient when we needed to be, and competed with consistency; we got a few breaks on the field and stayed relatively healthy throughout the season; we succeeded when we needed to, and other teams failed when we needed them to; and we had conviction and commitment that kept us focused, determined, and dominant.
17. My philosophy for success. Terms like conviction, dominate, adversity, perseverance, commitment, attitude, teamwork, road map, pride, relentless, and intensity.
18. Think of yourself and your family as organizations. You are in charge. You are responsible. Now, how good do you want to be.

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19. So what's the secret? What is the hidden game plan that turns average into great? Well, it's actually not that complicated.
20. Starbucks coffee.
21. The following six guiding principles will help us measure the appropriateness of our decision.
22. Provide a great work environment and treat each other with respect and dignity.
23. Embrace diversity as an essential component in the way we do business.
24. Apply the highest standards of excellence to the purchasing, roasting, and fresh delivery of our coffee.
25. Develop enthusiastically satisfied customers all of the time.
26. Contribute positively to our communities and our environment.
27. Recognize that profitability is essential to our future success.
28. Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream – another extremely successful company – divides its mission statement into three parts: Product Mission, their Economic Mission, and their Social Mission.
29. The primary goal is to give the group direction in decision-making, a good mission statement can also positively affect an organization's reputation.
30. They make clear to employees, shareholders, and customers the organization's values, goals, and game plan.
31. Our product is our players, and our players need to know where we are going.
32. We created a four-step mission statement for LSU football:
33. To create an atmosphere and environment for all players to be successful as people; their involvement in the program will help them be more successful in life.
34. To provide academic support for each player to become successful student and earn their degree.
35. To help each player reach their full athletic potential and to have the opportunity to win a championship.
36. To help each player launch their career so that when they leave LSU, they can use all the resources our institution has to get the best opportunities in life.
37. It is how we act, what we say, and the decisions we make that shape the character of those in our charge.

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38. We know that every player is one injury from retirement and no one plays forever.
39. Reach their potential consistently.
40. So while we cannot guarantee a championship, we do promise our players we'll do our best to help create an opportunity for them to compete for one. *(Part of this serious personnel)*
41. What it does say is that we have a vision for our organization and, more importantly, for the people within our walls.
42. Think hard about what means the most to you and what you are trying to achieve.
43. The major by-product of creating a mission and vision for you or your organization is that it creates a culture of expectations.
44. In any organization, you must set out guidelines and provide the support for behavior that adheres to those guidelines. There must also be defined consequences for action that go against him.
45. If a player has been messing up.
46. When it reaches a certain level, he must come before the Peer Intervention Group, which devises a plan that their teammate must follow. Further delinquency and he will meet with me and may face a game suspension. The Peer Intervention Group also deals with nonacademic issues such as player behavior in a dorm.
47. To be in concert with the culture.
48. The peer intervention motto is "What you do, you do to everyone in this room."
49. The 4th Quarter Program, which defines the values that we expect our players to adhere to. Five simple words: Discipline. Commitment. Toughness. Effort. Pride.
50. Out of yourself and into the team.
51. If we win the game, those players who believe that they contributed sign the block, and it is hung back up in the pyramid.
52. Previous year's records and goals are encased in the very same hallway.
53. And success is a direct result of making a commitment to a task, having the conviction to follow through, and having the character and attitude to make the kind of choices that will allow you to have success.

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54. Commitment is your dedication to your task, your organization, and your teammates. It is an unwavering display of loyalty to the process and to achieving the desired result.
55. Conviction is your strong belief in what you are doing. It is the reason you are committed, the purpose behind your sacrifice, the belief that what you are doing is not only what you should be doing, but what you must do. Conviction makes sacrifice possible.
56. Character – that crucial blend of personality and values.
57. Character is telling the truth, even when the truth hurts. It is doing the right thing, when no one else is around. It is overcoming adversity, being resilient, and having courage to stand up for what you believe in.
58. Have an enthusiastic energy about how you go about and enjoy your work.
59. Standard of excellence.
60. It takes hard work to do it the right way.
61. Invest your time, don't spend it.
62. Some of the world's most successful men and women were not born with the skills that make success easy.
63. So many people spend so much time figuring out ways to beat the system, to get around the rules, to finish before others, that quality is often lost – and no one can ever have a real sense of accomplishment that way.
64. Lesson 1. Invest your time, don't spend it.
65. Investing time means spending it for a worthwhile purpose: to work toward something, to accomplish something that will help you achieve.
66. Some players – or teams – spend two hours in the afternoon doing drills, rehearsing plays, and going through the motions of practice. But others invest their two hours by working hard, correcting mistakes, and improving on each play. The difference between spending time and investing time can impact results dramatically.
67. It is the quality of time, not the quantity.
68. You don't always get what you want, but you always get what you deserve.
69. What you want should be something you've already earned.
70. If you invest your time, you can get what you deserve.
71. Do not let time set a limit on what needs to be accomplished.

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72. A survey conducted of 180,000 American workers found that 80 percent disliked their jobs.
73. We may work fifteen hour days and make many sacrifices, but we have the freedom to enjoy our work.
74. Expect it to be hard.
75. It's keeping obstacles in perspective and reacting to them with eagerness, not anxiety.
76. Make logical and rational decisions in reacting to challenges. Ask yourself: Is this really a big deal? How does it compare with other instances in my life? What are the consequences of action? What are the consequences of inaction?
77. Must take pride in their work.
78. There are so many ways in which we hold ourselves back, taking away from our potential successes.
79. Spend your time working on what you can control – your actions, words, and emotions.
80. There simply are too many options in today's world. Being able to focus is the key to success for businessmen, parents, coaches.
81. No matter what the mountain is in your life or organization, the closer you get to the summit, the harder it is going to be. The distractions, the pressure, the very human desire to relax. Champions can never relax.
82. Being inflexible above all else. Focus is an ability to zero in on what's important and being able to avoid distractions to complete the task.
83. You should evaluate success.
84. Focus on what is, not what was.
85. All of a sudden, the process that led to his getting the promotion takes a backseat to the consequences of success. He becomes comfortable with the material things and the accolades that come with success.
86. Success will continue only as long as the commitment to the process of being successful remains in place.
87. What is your capacity for success? What self-imposed limitations keep you from accomplishing tasks?
88. In fact, Jordan missed 12, 192 shots in his career! He made less than 50 percent of the shots he took.
89. I do. Some of us think we are too short, too dumb, too fat, too skinny, too ugly, too shy, too poor, too weak. (*Get rid of the "toos"*)

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90. I coached defensively, both literally and figuratively, in that I often coached conservative football because I was scared what others might think if my plays didn't work.
91. If you can control your voice of fear, your voice of reason will flourish.
92. To keep our poise, analyze the situation, and determine a strategy based on our training, so that we have a chance to avoid disaster. Our voice of reason can overcome all of our negative emotions.
93. Playing their best on the field; anything less was dishonoring their ability and their individual responsibility to the team.
94. Whether it be opponents in football or potential clients in a business meeting, it is critical to know as much about them as possible; their tendencies, goals, objectives, and philosophy.
95. We watch hours of our opponents previous games to see what they like to do when, and how they like to do it. Is the opposing defensive coordinator conservative or very aggressive? We look at statistics and personnel. We won't necessarily change our game plan, but we will make adjustments so we can properly prepare our team.
96. Proper preparation prevents piss-poor performance.
97. In critical situations don't think of plays think of players.
98. It is not enough to know your competition. More critical to success is knowing your own strengths and weaknesses and know when to use them.
99. I am asking if you know where you are going, if you have a road map for success. Most importantly, do you know how to get where you are going?
100. Nobody is free from weakness.
101. Know your strengths, play to them, and make the opponent beat you doing it.
102. The most successful corporations today are those that recognize what they do well and what they don't. You don't see Microsoft making copiers or McDonald's making sushi.
103. Profitable companies stick to what they do best and develop and expand that product into something special.
104. People bring the strengths and weaknesses to any organization.

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105. When I left the NFL to return to college, I had learned my lesson, and to this day I continue to find ways to coach each player in a style that suits him best and allows him to play to his strengths.
106. Anticipation and preparation are not only useful tools to help you succeed, but can also make your life a heck of a lot easier.
107. Failure to anticipate can have severe consequences. The better you prepare, the better you can anticipate.
108. Wayne Gretzky, one remarked, "I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been.
109. It sums up thinking of champions. You must anticipate and prepare for success. (Concept: "I know what he said.")
110. Notice what you don't notice.
111. It is our job to look at the task at hand, as well as what may lie ahead. The players simply focus on the here and now.
112. When did Noah build the Ark? Simple answer: before it rained.
113. Sometimes, by the time we see the problem, it can be too late to formulate a good solution.
114. Astronauts train for years – sometimes more than a decade – before they launch into space. And 90 percent of their training is for when things go wrong.
115. Elite men and women train day after day for failure.
116. No matter what your business or position in an organization, you must be prepared for adverse situations. Have confidence in the plan, but be ready if things fail. Have a backup copy of a report; take an earlier flight before a business meeting to give yourself extra time for delays; come into a meeting with secondary ideas if the first one doesn't fly.
117. What will we do if the quarterback gets hurt? What if we are down by 2 points late in the game?
118. Successful coaches and leaders do is continually reevaluate themselves and look for innovative methods. Instead of letting ego get in the way, they gobble up new ideas and shape them to fit their own organization. Being flexible can be a positive attribute – it does not have to represent weakness.
119. Be flexible enough to know if what you are doing is actually contributing value or are you doing it that way because you've always done it that way.

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120. But champions embrace change. You have to change to stay on top. Society changes, people change, and goals change, so the most successful people are able to adapt to the times.
121. McDonald's started selling salads.
122. Bill Gates took huge risks, but he believed in his ideas and was willing to accept that he didn't know how things would turn out.
123. Coaches take risks all the time. But it is important to remember that taking calculated risks is a lot different from taking unnecessary ones.
124. The better you prepare with good information, the better you can calculate your risk.
125. Those intent on change should be prudent in assessing its risks and rewards, but fear should not be a factor.
126. Regardless of whether change is expected or unexpected, or if a move is a great one or a bad one, learning makes it all worthwhile. If you and your family move, if your company merges with another, take a step back and see what lessons you can learn, even if you are resistant to the change. Most changes offer a tremendous opportunity to gain knowledge and experience, and that always helps you grow professionally and personally.
127. I don't look back with regrets on life; nor do I insist I know where I am going.
128. The key is making your decision work for you.
129. A team works best when everyone puts the group ahead of the individual and does what is best for the team.
130. Individuals must be responsible for their own performances for a team to be successful.
131. Everything you do, you do to the team.
132. Think about the major corporate scandals of recent years – Enron, Tyco, WorldCom. A few individuals' actions took down multibillion-dollar corporations, in the process costing thousands their jobs and many more their investments.
133. Everyone is equally invested and responsible to the organization.
134. It all comes down to credit and blame. I mean, that's what selfish is all about.
135. Inexperience dealing with sudden success. Often, the newcomers to success not only succumb to distractions and complacency, as I've discussed before, but they begin to accept too much credit and not enough blame. They believe that success has insulated them from

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future failures and that the success of the team is a direct result of their own effort.

136. Chronic feelings of underappreciation.
137. Constantly feel that they are overlooked in praise.
138. Paranoia over being cheated out of one's rightful share.
139. Resentment against the competence of partners.
140. Personal effort mustered solely to outshine a teammate.
141. They are more worried about being the best on the team than having the best team.
142. A leadership vacuum resulting from the formation of cliques and rivalries.
143. These cliques separate teammates and create a combustible climate.
144. Cliques form when there is a leadership vacuum.
145. Feelings of frustrations even when the team performs successfully.
146. Was the "poor me" syndrome.
147. I hit him with my best shot and it never phased him at all. I knew I couldn't win after that.
148. The idea that their best shot was brushed aside can be mentally devastating.
149. If all employees take care of their own area, the overall business will benefit.
150. I spoke to team about the difference between thinking *We have to go down to Florida* versus *We get to go down to Florida*.
151. Instead of seeing the challenge as *We have to*, we should see all challenges as *We get on*.
152. The most dominant teams in sports make other teams quit.
153. The sense of futility.
154. Keep on your team to push hard.
155. Dominant people don't care what the score is.
156. Just because you're in command.
157. Does not qualify you as a leader.
158. How you lead defines you as a leader.
159. I believe that it's more than being successful. Leaders are people who are willing to follow when it is called for. They are courageous and steadfast in their beliefs. They do what is right all the time, regardless of

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the consequences. They make difficult decisions that are the best for the masses, not for themselves, even if those decisions prove to be unpopular. They present a vision that their followers buy into and allow those same followers to control their destinies. There have been peaceful leaders like Ghandhi, violent ones like Napoleon, and those whose words change the world like Dr. King.

160. My toughest job? Being a leader. I must have integrity, if the entire organization is to follow my lead. I must reinforce the principles that we have set out in our mission statement and the values that we hold dear. I must have a vision of where I want LSU football to go; a vision for the next game, the upcoming season, the years to come. I have to communicate that vision to our staff and to our players and convince them that the journey will be beneficial to everyone in the organization.
161. Being a leader is about getting others to do things better than they thought they could. It is about setting a good example, interacting with people, communicating messages, anticipating problems, holding firm beliefs, and being flexible enough to evaluate and improve all aspects of your organization.
162. Channeled people's work in the same direction.
163. I prepare an agenda and a list of items to cover before all daily staff meetings so nothing is left out.
164. Organization is critical to efficiency.
165. Great leaders stand up when adversity arises.
166. They listen and allow the workers or players a say in how things are done.
167. Great leaders embrace future leaders.
168. I strongly believe that one of my responsibilities as head coach is to help those on my staff fulfill their potential and achieve their dreams.
169. I have an obligation to help them.
170. Great leaders lead the orchestra but let them play.
171. Attempting to control too much, distracting employees from their work, and inhibiting creativity are not traits of a true leader.
172. Great leaders pick their battles.
173. If you're familiar with your road map and know the priorities of your organization, then the decisions become easier.
174. As the head coach, my focus should be on player development, team chemistry, and recruiting.

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175. Great leaders do not rush to make changes because of failure.
176. But beware: Many times it is not the plan that failed but rather the implementation of it.
177. Great leaders hire good people.
178. The most effective leaders....know that accountability starts at the top.
179. Take the time every day to do something, if only for a second, that lets those around you know you care.
180. It's more important to take individual responsibility to fulfill your role without depending on someone else to lead you.
181. Leadership is about a consistent message of excellence.
182. If you're not teaching it that way, you must be allowing it to happen that way. If the leader doesn't demand it, then certainly everyone else won't expect it.
183. Great leaders don't have all the answers, but they find them.
184. You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't get you anywhere.
185. They must only be able to create a vision for the company, but also be able to communicate that vision to those around them.
186. I am not simply talking about how to speak to others, although that has a lot to do with it. I'm also talking about your ability to listen, your body language, your silence, your wardrobe, your overall experience.
187. Communicating with the team is more than just team meetings. It is my facial expression during games, my posture during practice, the level of my voice in a film session. These young men are smart, and they can get plenty of messages from me without me ever saying a word.
188. Identifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations is a necessity for leaders.
189. The things you do in front of other are what creates perception.
190. Of the four hundred thousand words in the English language, the average person uses less than 3 percent.
191. Remember, it is not only what you say that matters, but how it is perceived. You can't backtrack after the words leave your mouth, even if your intentions were different.
192. You never get a second chance to make a first impression.
193. I impress upon our players all the time that they make an impression every day.
194. I have always been a firm believer that you dress the part.

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195. You never know when you are making a first impression and you never know who is watching.
196. Problems only get worse with time.
197. Instead of hoping the issue goes away or passing the buck, I immediately try to seek a resolution to the problem.
198. The longer I wait to solve a problem, the harder they are to manage.
199. Whatever my message, the players get a daily dose.
200. Opportunities are for motivating the team, but my staff and I also must motivate individuals.
201. Whatever the motivating factor, a good coach or leader will recognize it and use it.
202. Knowing what you want to accomplish is a key to being motivated. Good leaders are always aware of their charges' purposes for fulfillment and find ways to reinforce efforts by recognizing positive performance.
203. It's the repetitive motivating message given daily over the course of the week that has a real effect – not a few words before kickoff.
204. Your message should be constant.
205. Someone once said that a single word of encouragement in tough times is worth a dictionary of words during good times.
206. One aspect of motivation for coaches, business executives, and parents is trying to motivate the group as a whole, while also appealing to the personal motivations of individuals.
207. The lesson for leaders is that attitude development, not emotions, is important to motivation.
208. Passion is being committed, not just interested.
209. Having an interest is enjoying...finding time to do it when you can. Being passionate means being willing to sacrifice for it and making it a priority in your life.
210. Those who are successful are most often motivated intrinsically.
211. After all, the ultimate goal is to encourage self-motivation.
212. Compassion, compliments.
213. Motivated the masses through inspiration, not fear.
214. Discipline is an attempt to change someone's behavior. Punishment is a negative consequence for wrong behavior.
215. Punishment for the sake of punishment accomplishes nothing.

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216. Simply take away the privilege that has the most significant consequence.
217. As a leader of a team, a company or a family, make sure that you are handing out discipline not simply punishment.
218. Continuing education.
219. I firmly believe that leaders and managers need to lead the way, and often that means going beyond talk and into action.
220. What you do speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say.
221. Changing a culture and the attitude of an organization is not easy, especially when it comes to educational development. It is a time-intensive and all-consuming process, and the individual dividends often don't show themselves for many years. Our plan – good academic facilities, quality people ready to tutor and mentor student-athletes, and a strong relationship within the university commitment.
222. Boys do what they want to do. Men do what they have to do. Do what you have to do and make sure those you're responsible for do what they have to do.
223. It takes a lifetime to build a reputation, but only a second to lose it.
224. Character is what you do when no one else is watching.
225. It didn't matter what a person's religion was. What was more important was a good set of basic values and drive to be a good person.
226. You cannot be great because your partner or your partners want you to – you can only be a champion if you want to be one.
227. I have come to recognize certain traits that seem to be in every champion: passion, commitment, confidence, pride in performance, high standards of excellence, relentlessness, perseverance, and the ability to perform in adverse circumstances.
228. It doesn't matter what your endeavor – salesperson, teacher, athlete – you must take advantage of the gifts you were given and make the decisions to succeed.
229. Seven components of excellence: commitment, focus, confidence/trust/belief, positive imagination, mental readiness, controlling distractions, and constant learning.
230. Champions react with inspiration, not fear.
231. How often in life do you face adversity and then react with fear.
232. Mental toughness is the ability to keep adversity of all kinds from affecting your attitude and performance.

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233. Be prepared for opportunity and be willing to take it – your destiny may depend on it.
234. I do, however, believe that I have made a difference in the lives of the young men I coach and have helped them develop as people.
235. *The Men of March: A Season Inside the Lives of College Basketball Coaches.*