

Show Time by Coach Pat Riley

1. And a good team multiplies the potential of everyone on it, whether the team consists of a family, a school, a business, or an NBA squad.
2. The key to teamwork is to learn a role, accept that role, and to strive to become excellent playing it. "Act well your part," Shakespeare wrote. "There in lies the glory."
3. The coach has a role, too: to organize and direct, to create an environment where talent can flourish, to do everything possible to enable the team to win.
4. To bring you into the inner circle of our team to see the Lakers through my eyes, and to share the lessons of our championship team.
5. Except for the Lakers' inner circle, few people realize that, beneath the surface glitter, the players bring a fanatical depth of preparation for every game. Their apparently spontaneous creativity and effortless innovation are actually the product.
6. As a constant witness to the dedication and growth of my players.
7. Career Best Effort in '86-'87.
8. My statement was well thought out. I wrote it, and I spent time starting at the words, a week before we took the trophy.
9. There are two possible states of being in the NBA: winning and misery.
10. We would converse a while, then sleep, then read books and play cassettes.
11. An innocent climb. There was no expectation of winning a championship.
12. Success is often the first step toward disaster. I call it "the disease of more." People start thinking, "I'm really the key ingredient."
13. And they get aggressive and jealous about pulling in their "more."
14. You've come to grips with the loneliness and waiting and being misunderstood. That's the life of a superstar.
15. When you play lousy and you win, you lose perspective.
16. Start believing that lack of effort doesn't matter.
17. I hammered on the Dog Days mentality: the notion that you can turn your winning attitude off and on when you think you need it. I wanted to uproot that idea and throw it out of the team once and for all.
18. "We didn't respond on effort plays. We didn't go after the long rebounds and the loose balls."

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19. We didn't look committed. (*Committed and complacent*)
20. We looked complacent.
21. There's always a chance you'll forget how much better winning is than misery, and how much effort it takes to sustain a championship level of play. It takes hard work, psychologically, to overcome that mind-set.
22. Didn't want to hear any happy bullshit. Platitudes never sound good to an ex-champ. There was only one common emotion in the room and it was misery.
23. It doesn't matter what happens to us. All that's important is how we're going to deal with it.
24. I just said we had to deal with facts.
25. Getting angry is a last resort for me. I've always been known as a tolerant tyrant. There are times when it works out beautifully, but you can't afford to wear it out.
26. Just looked tired and empty.
27. This year the attitude was that we deserved.
28. Our attitude wasn't negative. But it wasn't the proper one. There's always the motivation of wanting to win. Everybody has that. But a champion needs, in their attitude, a motivation above and beyond winning.
29. We didn't have the emotional fiber, the mental toughness, that the team had a year before. It wasn't individual letdowns. It was the idea that somebody else would get the job done. It was forgetting that it takes continued hard work to stay on top.
30. Nobody in the NBA has it made – ever.
31. Effort is what ultimately separates.
32. The one year champs.
33. From the teams of lasting greatness.
34. Great effort springs naturally from great attitude.
35. Finger-pointing and blaming are enemies of teamwork.
36. Jumping in pursuit of every rebound even if you don't get it. Swatting at every pass and not whether or not you have a prayer of blocking it. Standing your ground when an offensive player comes smashing into you in order to get yourself, fresh bruises and all, up to the free throw line for a chance to make a difference in the score. Diving for loose balls.
37. We had to get back to the core Laker concept: speed and quickness.

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38. We had snookered ourselves into playing their game, the Twin Towers game. We didn't play Laker basketball.
39. I had torn down the old shed in back and built a cabana that served as an exercise room and office.
40. On May 27th we called a strategy meeting.
41. We all compared our notes and our gut feelings about what had gone out of sync.
42. Buss's philosophy as a businessman is to hire people he trusts and give them almost full rein.
43. That breeds continuity, which also breeds stability.
44. You dig down to your fundamental strengths and reassert them.
45. Some of them had the habit of drawing one foot back when they wanted to generate an explosive takeoff. It's an instinctive way to establish a base for a strong push, but it also tips off defenders that something is about to happen.
46. It's a tiny advantage, but accumulate enough tiny things and you can change a player's career – or a team's fortunes.
47. The key moves got the Lakers back on top. The first when we avoided any trades of core players. The second was when we set ourselves on a program to revitalize the team's attitude. The third move was to make some simple and profound changes in our offense and our defense.
48. You see, a great team isn't simply built by hiring the top talent. Just as in any other form of business, it also matters how those top talents combine with each other.
49. Attitude and chemistry are the factors that can kick people up to higher levels of winning, no matter what talent they have.
50. A great collection of talent with unbalanced chemistry and inappropriate attitudes can get knocked over by teams of lesser talent. *(Add belief to this)*
51. No one in the sport is above being traded or fired. Jamall Wilkes was demoted to the bench, and eventually traded, to make room for James's emerging talents. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was traded, as were Wilt Chamberlain and David Bing and Walt Bellamy and dozens of other great names.
52. I once had a conversation with Jerry West about this ultimate contradiction of loyalty versus the team's need to stay competitive.

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53. How do you keep motivation high, how do you keep goals in focus, when they already believe they're on top of the world? How do you keep the hunted moving always a few steps ahead of the hunters?
54. Career Best awareness was our strategy. The root concept was every player should aim for the best statistics of their career, in at least one – but ideally several – areas.
55. For Career Best, we extended the system. We programmed the computer to compare their play in every area, in every facet, to the best they'd ever done-current production versus life-time best.
56. The better you can see a target, the more likely you are to hit it.
57. The greatest ones, like Kareem Abdul Jabbar, persevere because of pride. On top of their physical equipment, the greatest ones have an attitude that says, "I want to come out on top. If somebody has to win and somebody lose, my choice is to win. I don't want anyone to take that away.
58. You look at those people and you say, 'There's that look.'
59. It's easier to back away from excellence than it is to give everything you've got. It's easier to let frustrations and distractions and fatigue of the long season erode your performance. But it's not satisfying in the long run. I want the Lakers to be always conscious of the long run. I want them to think about security a place in history, it separate themselves from those who are considered today's best and to become ranked among the greatest teams that ever played.
60. I have never questioned the fact that our players all want to excel. Our Career Best plan was just a mechanism to keep that desire up at the top of their minds.
61. For weeding out complacency.
62. We were like a track star who is ahead of the pack and who begins to run just hard enough to stay in front. If that runner was after his Career Best time, he'd try to widen the gap. What he's doing is allowing someone in the pack to keep his courage up and be inspired to give it a hard kick in the last turn.
63. Obviously it takes a higher kind of motivation to make people sustain their winning ways.
64. To stay on top you have to develop an attitude that excellence is always defined as wanting to do better. When you understand what it takes to sustain greatness and championship form, then complacency is something that isn't part of your life. You don't allow it.
65. We hadn't ever had a defensive philosophy, just a set of tactics. There's a difference.
66. Our defensive concept was three words: Contain, Protect, Contest.

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67. Contain means we will make it our top priority to stop that first strike.
68. When that first-option player catches the ball, he sees nothing but a wall. He has to give up the ball in favor of their second option.
69. The first threat is contained.
70. Protect means we have to shift back in a very coordinated way. This is tremendously vulnerable moment for the defense. This is where teamwork has to be at a peak.
71. This is alertness time.
72. Contest means that we keep the pressure on.
73. Of all plays run in this league, the shot is taken on the first pass seventy-five percent of the time.
74. Been ready to go since the middle of August. I was driving the people around me crazy. I wanted to do more, prepare more, change things.
75. Ultimately, every offensive player has to master a certain shot. It becomes his stock-in grade.
76. Russell said that the talent he looks for his hustle, and hustle really is talent.
77. Hustle isn't a God-given talent, like quick feet. It's something that a person develops through sheer will. It's a state of mind.
78. But his greatness is in his heart.
79. "Your first six minutes of the game have to be played like they're the last six minutes you're going to play in your career."
80. Is to be an inspirational player.
81. Full of competitive desire, as anybody who climbs the ladder must be.
82. We make about five new videos every year, setting the season's highlight moments to music about joy and victory and love. I want the team to remember always the feelings that go with winning. I want them to remember the striving it took to get themselves in a position to be winners.
83. I have to do a lot of talking in camp. I hate to hold up practices. For the first half hour every day, before the players were stretched and ready, we walked through our new situation, step by step.
84. "We're going to emphasize flying," I told them. "We have always run. This year we're going to fly. "

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85. I stuck a cassette into the car's player. I constantly review motivational literature, looking for pearls. The team needs them and I need them. This time I selected Wayne Dyer reading from his book "Choosing Your Own Greatness". While my mind worked on fine-tuning an approach to the challenges laid out against our best-in-history/over-the-hill team, Dyer said, "Attitude is an inner concept. It is the most important thing you can develop in your life."
86. College glory fades fast in the NBA.
87. You don't want all milk drinkers on your team!
88. A shooter, and shooters are going to be erratic. That's the nature of the beast. The outside jumper is allow percentage shot. The off-guard has to beat those percentages.
89. His weaknesses have been more emotional and attitudinal than anything else.
90. But a coach can't let the media pick the team.
91. The Lakers had become a team waiting for something to happen to them.
92. They weren't living in the present moment.
93. The Rockets were totally in the present moment.
94. Come back in to steel yourself for the next challenge. Life happens the same way. You never know what it's going to throw at you. You just know that your life is being lived at every moment. You just know you've got to be as ready as possible.
95. Dyer says that the highest form of sanity is to live totally in the present moment. Be consumed by it, not by what happened yesterday or what you hope will happen tomorrow.
96. Start thinking about what you do have.
97. With single-minded purpose.
98. "We're playing from a waiting posture, like somebody is about to arrive and help us.
99. Those writers are saying that you guys don't have the guts or the character right now. You're a bunch of wimps. The Lakers can't deal with a little bit of adversity.
100. This is the breakthrough.
101. Let's get it done. Let's get started.
102. Nobody expected any great revolution. It was what I like to call "the innocent climb."

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103. Effort makes up for a lot of deficiencies.
104. Robert Keidel is a Wharton professor and business consultant. He wrote a book about a year ago called *Game Plans*, where he compared sports strategies to business strategies. (*Get this book.*)
105. He said basketball was the most relevant model of all sports for future business effectiveness because it works on flow, process, and chemistry.
106. Basketball is ruled by constant tension between style and efficiency.
107. You disrupt your game plan enough to make dumb mistakes. Then you get mad at yourself. You make more mistakes. You get madder and dumber.
108. It takes more than fast wheels to be a running team. It takes tough defense. You rattle the other team into taking the wrong shots, you grab the rebound and take off.
109. But we also divide the season up by pointing for certain games – the big ones.
110. That's when you get knocked off unexpectedly. So you go out and acquire veterans such as Wes Matthews for your bench – insurance policies. Players who have been around for a long time. You hope that investment will pay when the team finds itself needing a strong, steady force in relief.
111. We had rebuilt most of our bench to get a positive atmosphere, a sureness of good clutch support when we needed it.
112. The key to success isn't in great talent. The key to success is to learn how to do something right. Then do it every time. Do it the same way every time. We were frivolous about our method in this game and it pissed me off.
113. We wanted the offensive execution to find the shot.
114. They are a team of pursuit.
115. We wanted to catch them in mid-pursuit and find the short jump shot. We definitely did not want to find ourselves taking long range jump shots on a regular basis.
116. Come prepared to take away your strengths.
117. Has to be denied the ball in his favorite spot.
118. They'll always be superior in the context of their own game plan.
119. Every time we lose a game, no matter what the reason, no matter who we lose to, catch yourselves quickly. Get back on track with our best performance, our toughest performance. Don't let it slide.

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120. The truth is that a reserve has to accumulate a lot of minutes of glory before his role expands. There has to be an attitude of backing up that glory with intense showings in practice.
121. I think it's significant to train your players to get out of the blocks early. Try to build a four-or-five game lead. Then, if you have some January and February Dog Days or some injuries, you can absorb it a little better.
122. Proof of how important a person's attitudes are in shaping his career.
123. Everybody likes to use the Lakers as a gauge for their own breakthroughs.
124. Passionate performances.
125. "They beat us in the fourth quarter," Bird told the writers, "and I don't like to get beat in the fourth quarter."
126. Still, I'm careful not to saddle the team with unrealistic expectations about winning all the time.
127. If we're crushed every time we lose, we'll never feel any joy when we win. There are teams like that, where there's no joy in winning. Just an attitude of "So what? This is what you're paid for!"
128. You sustain success and you motivate yourself by trying to develop another reason above and beyond the natural motivation of just wanting to be successful. There are 276 players in the NBA. They want to do one thing. They all want to win a world's championship.
129. The ones who can really separate themselves from the pack are those who understand what it takes to sustain excellence. To get away from a "to have" mentality. "To have" is something we get early in our life. To have a little bit of prestige. To have position. To have the house and the car and all those things that we feel we need.
130. When you experience them, you realize the only thing left is to be the very best. You prioritize "to be" ahead of "to have".
131. Once you believe that you want to be the best, you realize that all those other things you worried about for years.
132. And follow you wherever you go.
133. The only thing they care about, ultimately, is separating themselves from the pack.
134. But they value their sense of excellence more.
135. And when you can put those two things together, what you need and what you want – there's your motivation. Be so good at it that they can't even think about replacing you.

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136. They were the best driving, penetrating, what we call catch-and-go, drive-and-kick team in the league.
137. We got back and got down.
138. This was a survival game.
139. Each player got to come up with Laker Christmas Tree and select any gift package he wanted. Then they unwrapped the gift and showed it around the room.
140. Don't let him touch you. Make him turn his head to look.
141. Here's where you see the tension in basketball between style and efficiency. There's a lot of expression in slam dunk, but there's a risk. Coaches like the primal attack mentality behind dunk shots.
142. Our philosophy is that you reach a championship with hard work, good organization and a minimum of distractions.
143. Please, Pat, don't add any more offense. They're just getting this one down. Bill knows I love to tinker with things, adding new looks, new counterplays.
144. To win the season, you want to get a bunch of good runs. You want to get out of their blocks well. You're going to have periods of letdown. Even though you're pushing for optimum levels, you're going to get caught.
145. We're getting measured right now. I don't know if you recognized this, but they're checking you to see how bad you want this game.
146. Any time you're living a lie in a team situation, it's going to break the team down – just as it breaks individuals down.
147. Teas are built on dedication and sacrifice. When you've got people dedicated to their drugs and willing to sacrifice their families and their careers for their drugs, the only thing that can happen is a breakdown of the fiber of the team – or the family.
148. Like most teams, we usually send our center downcourt during free throws. The idea is that he shouldn't have to run any more than necessary. But Randy had a great point: This was the end of the game. If Earvin missed, a rebound could determine the winner.
149. When I get involved in a game, I get so damned competitive that compassion and sensitivity can fade out of the picture.
150. Break down the barriers between family and career as much as you can.

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151. Some family members get selfish and they need to be brought back to a team-first attitude. Some members get hurt and alienated and they need to be reminded how important they are.
152. You have to be aware, because the wives and families can become the team's allies or they can become the greatest Peripheral Opponents in the world. When jealousies build up, when unhealthy dynamics are at work, the families can rob power and distract players from their goals. Wives might envy the dedication that has to go into being a winner. They could grow to hate the sport for absorbing their man's bands, especially if their husbands are so foolish that they won't share the glory. Wives might envy the position that another player has on the team, versus the glory they believe their husband should be receiving. All of a sudden, you've got someone in the inner circle who is cheering for failure. Success is the most fertile soil for resentment.
153. To be concentrated mayhem.
154. I always tell my players not to stop and think. Because if they do, they'll never start again. Basketball requires a high intelligence level, but the thinking has to be automatic. They say football is a game of inches. Basketball is a game of microseconds. Timing advantages are crucial.
155. Rebounding is the epitome of effort areas. The team that fights for position and aggressively pursues the ball off the boards is eventually going to be the team that wins.
156. They just don't understand the length of the season. And they don't understand the nature of the NBA from season to season. You've got to do it night in and night out. And if you're that good, you don't feel much need to brag and posture. Talk doesn't hold confidence together. Consistent performance does.
157. You can never overlook the mental aspect of basketball. Any good athlete is ready to play a game, soon as they can get their legs into a pair of shorts and sneakers laced on their feet. But are they prepared? That's a different matter. Ask a bum on the street if he's ready to take a million-dollar-a-year executive position. He'll usually say "yes!" but would be prepared? (*Mental ability*).
158. I hate the pain of losing, but I really can't stand the misery of giving one away.
159. It's chemistry that makes basketball teams great.
160. Michael Jordan is such a talented, creative, explosive player that people don't see how much of his game is based on pure effort. He is always in a crouch, ready to spring.
161. He moves slowly and intently, then he uncoils powerfully toward the basket.
162. It's a necessity in this sport to be able to focus, to have tunnel vision.
163. "We're on the brink of greatness or disaster."

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164. "It's up to them."
165. There's a peripheral opponent talking. All players have to watch out about listening to this kind of talk.
166. I was pushing to take our concentration off the fatigue and the injuries. Everyone else has those factors, too. If we handle ours better, we can maintain an advantage.
167. Stress time, for Earvin, is simply opportunity time.
168. There was a sense of subconscious disrespect: "We've won six in a row. What do you want from us? You're overcoaching us. This is the last place in the world we want to be."
169. The last resort is getting angry. I had to do something, though, to rebel against what was happening. Peripheral opponents were intruding on the team's mentality. Dissension loomed on the roster. A Dog Days attitude threatened to cost us our position as league leaders and the homecourt advantage in the playoffs.
170. The last step in our responsibilities to each of the games on our schedule is filling out the Final Look. This is a one-page summary of key material such as matchups, reminders about our game plan, and ideas for the next time we'll face the same opponent.
171. Here's what Bill Berka wrote in the Final Look after the Utah game: "Not getting back...Very different attitude...Nightmare...ATITUDE...WHY?...Hate success? Hate winning?"
172. The team used their underdog status to develop some toughness.
173. We strengthened our attitude.
174. I know what subconscious sabotage can do.
175. I would sit there, some nights, watching him play and thinking, "Make a mistake... turn the ball over... make a stupid foul." My attitude was even more immature than his. An attitude of subconscious sabotage is like an accident waiting to happen.
176. In the words of a gospel song, they got what they wanted but they lost what they had.
177. That every man is his own greatest enemy. Every team can also be its own worst enemy
178. Got-it-made attitude. WE were playing bad and still winning.
179. That meant subconsciously that there was no penalty for playing bad.

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180. It's still a ticket to belonging.
181. I also like to listen, I learn a lot about the mental state of the team.
182. After the Seattle game I called Earvin into my office. I always try to keep the lines open between myself and the leaders and top producers on the team. They're my greatest allies.
183. Sometimes being too frank can give fuel to the opposition or demoralize the troops. Sometimes you can create unnecessarily big issues out of small items.
184. Aggressive posture every minute he was on the floor.
185. He's what coaches call a floater. So much of his game comes easily that he didn't need to maintain a high level of concentration against the people he faced in high school and college.
186. The team bonds get renewed on the road.
187. "It's okay to lose some. Losing is just as much a part of NBA life as winning. But don't get on a slide. We win a few in a row and our attitude gets funny. We get mental slippage. What's wrong with winning more than ten in a row? Why not thirty?"
188. We force Akeem to pass over to the weak side. Now there's ten seconds left on the shot clock and the ball is out of the hands of their first option. Somebody else has to attempt the shot.
189. That's the last thing I want to do. My philosophy is to apply the fines and hope that peer pressure will do the rest. I don't think it's smart to create a big melodrama with suspension and threats. The team doesn't have time for that kind of distraction.
190. We had the Blue Team come down and play 24 seconds of offense without shooting the ball. When the 24-second-clock horn went off, they were free to take a shot. This way we kept the defense concentrated for 24 seconds and more on each possession. It was a drill we'd used before, especially in getting ready to play great passing teams.
191. Lot of questions asked by the media about resting the players.
192. But if you take away too many game minutes from your starters, you risk their losing some of their edge. After spending eighty-two games getting into top shape, they can't afford to lose their conditioning. We also wanted to deflect the idea that we were going to coast to the playoffs.
193. We wanted to rest them in the last two games.
194. But it had to be the coaching staff's decision to rest, not the team's, not the media's.

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195. What do you get when you squeeze an orange?
196. Then I tell them the answer: orange juice.
197. Put anything or anyone under pressure, and you'll bring out what's inside.
198. Last year, Houston squeezed us. Complacency came out, followed by humiliation, followed by shame. It was time to see what this year's pressure would bring.
199. It's not a normal life. But if you want the ring, you have to sacrifice.
200. We told them: Don't feel pressure. Feel excitement, feel anticipation of something that's going to happen.
201. You have prepared diligently over the past three and a half days. That's what confidence is all about, preparation.
202. Between Game One and Game Two I told the Lakers, "They're discounting your greatness. They're discounting what you did all year long. You worked hard to be where you are. They're turning it into a joke with this 'we can't win' attitude. I'd want to kick somebody's ass who had an attitude like that!"
203. Be as great as you can be, no matter who you play and what the score is. Let's be above the verbal garbage. Let's have a peak performance.
204. So when four or five of the players requested humidifiers, we went out and bought them.
205. It seems like a small thing, but professional athletes do need quality rest. They have to be confident that their bodies will respond to every demand.
206. They got cocky and they got caught – maybe like we did last year against Houston. That's what you face. We must never let our guard down. There's no place for arrogant statements, puffed up pride.
207. There are no guarantees but your attitude and your hard work.
208. Filled with confidence of your collective power as a unit.
209. We need three things: judgment, execution, patience.
210. Do you think they're gonna fold? This is going to be their easiest game to play. Everybody's expecting it to be over with, so it's the most dangerous game. They're not going to show any weakness.
211. Don't give them room to produce any miracles today, fellas. No daylight. All business.
212. Keep the edge. Continue to stay together in single-mindedness.

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213. All through the flight I wrote on everything I could get my hands on: napkins, travel guide packages, airline magazine covers, stat sheets. The effusiveness had gone over the line. We had become diffuse, spread thin, caught up in the image of being unbeatable.
214. Busted right through our wall of arrogance.
215. Something has entered this series that shouldn't be part of the picture. It's just going to hurt us as we go further.
216. That's the importance of decorum. You're professionals. You prove what you're worth with your action, not with your mouth.
217. The key was going to be our mental durability.
218. No ass-dragging today. I want everything sharp, efficient. I want to hear the sneakers squeaking on the floor.
219. Bobby Knight uses this same tactic at Indiana: Make practice five times harder than the game will be.
220. WE called it the "pit bull" practice.
221. We have to make the rhythm of the outlet pass second nature.
222. Finally they asked Earvin if his award was the ultimate accomplishment. He shook his head and said, "Diamond rings, that's what I play for. That's all I'm about – winning."
223. You only become a great team in the league by the number of tests that you can pass.
224. This is not ice skating or diving. The idea here is to win, even if it is not pretty.
225. As you start moving up the levels of competition for the biggest prize, every team still standing is there for a reason. Regardless of where they were rated. Regardless of their win-loss record over the regular season. It isn't luck.
226. What is hustle? Hustle = hard work? No! Hustle is a talent.
227. We've got to break the mindset of their defense. They want to pressure you into fatigue mistakes. We've got to work against it. There has to be a joy in knowing that we are good, that we are the best team. Let's lift each other up by outworking them on their effort plays.
228. Let's show them the work ethic today.
229. Our Monday morning practice was about two things: airspace and attitude.
230. We have to control not only the space on the floor. We have to control the airspace. We have to get airborne.

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231. Our covenant was to play harder. To be the quiet assassins. Not to give them any emotional fuel.
232. You know what he did, don't you? He took his foot off the gas.
233. We had been through almost eight months of playing and traveling together. All of a sudden we were at home in our comfort zones, waiting to play the ultimate series. We were separated. Even though we'd be sharp physically, letting go of our emotional bond might subtract something from the team.
234. But when we get to this point, there isn't anything that can't and shouldn't be done. Anything. Any request, any plan of action that's going to help get the job done. Or alleviate the pressure on the team. The only thing I care about is giving the players every single thing they need to give them the chance to win.
235. There was no way we could let the team hang around home for eight days and let everybody pat them on the back and soften them up.
236. We wanted to get the players away from the mentality, to be off somewhere where we could hold on to our focus and our commitment and not have to constantly say no.
237. The whole idea behind our Santa Barbara mini-camp was to maintain conditioning.
238. We like to play the fastest game possible, within the limits of maintaining control.
239. We will have nobody to blame but ourselves if we get out of shape this week.
240. We call "contingency motivational drills". That means the drills are controlled and policed by the players.
241. We will set a two-minute time, in which they have to make thirty layups.
242. Only three passes allowed.
243. The ball cannot hit the floor.
244. How can we top last year?
245. I reminded the team about the phrase. I said, "there was truth in that, because there really is no way to top what we did in 1985. It was a forever experience . We don't have to top it.
246. It doesn't mean they have to do it. But the great ones want to do it again.
247. Boston has staved off injuries. Courage has brought them here. Real men, versus you. The superficial, sensitive Lakers. Pampered buddies of the movie stars. Natural athletes, who can win because of gifts, not because of years of honing their craft, not because of guts.

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248. That's what people think. You are less than real. Why are we not called a tactical team, an intelligent team, a team of great strategy?
249. The truth is, there has rarely been a team more dedicated, more passionate, more caring, more together and more real than the Lakers.
250. They don't know. They really don't know who the hell we are.
251. Our environment is here on the court. This is where we get the job done. This is our strength. We understand the power of belief. That's the key to our motivation. We all believe in our greatness.
252. We cannot tolerate mediocrity in our play. We cannot tolerate mediocrity in our attitude, in our focus, in our game.
253. You can say, 'We just lost. We got beat. They beat our ass.' But don't rationalize it. Because that is mediocrity. We cannot go in that attitude at all.
254. The locker room is our haven, our place of refuge. I hate to have commotion in there.
255. Our practice was light, mostly concerned with timing. Then we reviewed video and went home.
256. The major part of my job isn't to tell the players what to do. The most important thing I do is to create a great setting for them to work in.
257. Creating an environment that's organized, free of distractions, ready.
258. Today isn't about playing better. Today is about playing the same way we played all season long.
259. Don't think about scoring layups.
260. I want you to take it out of the net and across half court in four seconds. Every time. You advance it, you advance it. And before you know it, you'll crack the game. You'll get a layup. You'll get a jump shot. You'll get a dunk.
261. Winning sometimes erodes a team's effort.
262. On breaks, the wing men have to always run out on the edges of the court. It's a discipline thing.
263. When the wing men stay spread out, the first man down can lure the defender and then kick the ball out to whoever is open.
264. A great team that gets killed in two straight games will usually come back strong in rebounding. It's the first place to invest your effort and rage when you've been frustrated by defeat.

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265. When two teams get to the Finals, it isn't because of their offense or their defense or the cleverness of their coaches. It's because of their effort. Boston knew they had to win. All their effort muscles came into play.
266. Were contesting every shot and pursuing every defensive play.
267. But I want you to think about what happened. We've created a little white lie. We lied to ourselves.
268. We weren't ready because we didn't back up our commitment.
269. It's not the wives' fault we lost. It's our own. But the point is, we broke a covenant.
270. We worked, but we did not work intelligently. We were not efficient. We didn't have a total commitment in the game.
271. They whipped us all over the court. We gave them their confidence back.
272. You've got seven days left. Seven days from today. Are we going to look back like we did in '84 and say, 'I regret I didn't bust my ass to get fifteen boards? I regret that when I was six for eighteen I didn't get thirteen rebounds or make up for it in some other department.
273. Right now, a good performance isn't enough. A great performance isn't enough. What we need from each and every individual at this stage is a superior performance.
274. It's an arbitrary analysis of me not doing well in isolated parts of these games.
275. But I want you to supply me with statistical data to corroborate what you've said.
276. That meeting stimulated our whole program of keeping charts – which later gave us the foundation to build our Career Best Season program. Managers usually get their best ideas from the people they're supposedly in charge of. People think about coaches and managers as running everyone else, making them do what you want them to do. But listening is just as important as giving orders.
277. I couldn't be arbitrary with him or Earvin, or any of the other great producers.
278. I've got to give them more.
279. To show them exactly irrefutably what their production numbers are – just as salespeople always see where they stand, relative to the averages of their district, relative to the other producers in the office.
280. A great performance occurs when all the factors we believe in as a great team happen effortlessly and naturally. You never have to work at a great performance.

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281. When those team factors happen effortless and naturally, it's because you're prepared. You're programmed.
282. Before the team started shooting I said, "We've got to have a superior performance in Game Four. We're right where we thought we would be. Bucking for a win on the opponent's home floor. It's either going to be three to one and we're playing for a championship, or two to two and a three game miniseries. If it's two to two, they've got the edge. That's what we're looking for. We're playing today for the edge. The psychological edge. To be one game from a championship. That's what today is all about. Let's take it a step forward. Let's do whatever it takes to win. Boston is the most dangerous playing from a crippled underdog position. Red Auerberach loves this. He's just thriving on it. Don't fall prey to this. Even after they beat us, they're still taking about all the guys who might not play in the next game. I can just see Auerbach smirking behind the scenes. You can bet that they're all going to be there for Game Four. Yes, they do have a mystique, perpetuated by the press. But so do we. We've got a mystique called Show Time. We know what really lies behind it. And the Celtics know that we know. Because we've beaten them with it in the past. We are not just another team. We stand toe to toe with them. They've won three championships in the eighties, and so have we. In the last twenty-two games with the Celtics, we're ahead thirteen to nine. That's the difference in the eighties. Bird is at his best using a pick to get off his shots from the perimeter and the baseline. His timing coming off the screens is extremely important. He needs to catch and shoot off the screen – all in one motion. All he needs is a pocket and a short count. We call it shooter's pocket. We had to take away the timing. We could not let their passers just find him. We had to adapt to the rhythms.
283. We had to force the point guard back another five feet, so the pass would have to travel more distance. The extra distance would give our defender more time to fight through the pick and recover defensive position.
284. We'll double him when the ball is in flight, coming to him. You have to be in his face exactly when he catches the ball.
285. We have one shot at this thing. From looking at your faces and seeing your body language, we're on the way to getting beat by twenty-five points. Unless we do something to change the tempo of the game defensively.
286. Throwing heavy defensive pressure at a great team is the most physically demanding job in basketball.
287. My message was only five minutes long. I said we had to put ourselves right back where the season began, with attitude. How we had worked, dedicated ourselves, pushed for Career Best efforts. Now we had just one thing left: to win one game. I said, "For the next forty-eight hours, just focus on this game. Don't allow anything else to come into your life. And focus on the attitude that you're going to bring to practice tomorrow – a work oriented attitude. We're going to go hard. We're preparing to hit.

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288. I didn't prepare you right for Game Five. I didn't push you in practice after you won Game Four because I thought you were tired. It was my fault we didn't give Game Five a championship effort. And we got caught.
289. I came home, ate dinner with my family, and played with James a while. Then I went back out to the office until three-thirty in the morning. I watched more videotape and wrote up my pregame talk. I started thinking about what I'd say if we won, what I'd say if we lost – but I didn't figure to lose. I worked out my thoughts on guaranteeing a repeat title. I wanted to be totally prepared.
290. Slept since Wednesday, I still couldn't sleep. I went back to my office and read. Then I took over a sauna and steam, listened to the oldies over and over.
291. We're going in with the disposition of dominating the court. We're going to control them with our defense. Intensity and emotion with poise and control. We won't try to win it in the first six minutes.
292. We were hyper, playing past the level of control.
293. I don't know about you, but I need a game to coach. I hope you need a game to play, a competitive one.
294. Next year is not about winning another championship or having one more ring or developing bigger reputations. It's about leaving footprints.
295. After four championships in eight years, we have arrived at a point in this team's history where there is just one thing left for us to accomplish. That is to become a team for all ages and eras, the greatest basketball team ever. We do not merely want to be considered the best of the best. It is time to truly separate ourselves from the pack and become the only ones who do what we do. Unique. That is the essence of Show Time.
296. The future is now fellas.