- 1. I felt that he was a guy who had an idea, I watched him and talked to him, and I could see what he was trying to do, that he had a plan, a philosophy.
- 2. Bringing the Cowboys from the bottom of the league to a Super Bowl victory in only four years was a tremendous job.
- 3. I didn't ever see a big change in philosophy. He knew what he wanted to do, and how he wanted to build things. He has a philosophy, he has put it in place and he has acquired the people to implement that philosophy. I think that's the only way the only way to be successful in professional football.
- 4. The people who constantly change plans, change people, change philosophies, are the ones who end up being the also-rans. The ones who can stick to what they believe in are the ones who emerge at the top.
- 5. The Friday night before the game, Jimmy and I went to dinner, had a couple of beers, and talked for hours. Most of the conversation involved his asking me questions about how we had prepared for the two Super Bowls we had won with the Giants. He was researching, planning.
- 6. After he won the Super Bowl, I'm sure he would have liked to have had at least two or three weeks off. He took three days. Then he went straight to the scouting-combine workouts in Indianapolis, to evaluate college players. He has to concentrate extra hard, to spot talent the other teams, picking high in the draft, might miss or pass over. He knows.
- 7. To any general, CEO, coach, or author, the element of surprise is a fundamental advantage.
- 8. I not only learned the toughness that is vital in football, I was granted freedom: I was never shackled by the ethnic hang-ups and prejudices which so many people my age and older have had to work to shed.
- 9. Of all the breaks I've had in my life, ethnic freedom is one the best and most basic.
- 10. Then in the late sixties and early seventies, as I worked and I mean I worked though the ranks of assistant coaching.
- 11. "I can't outline to you what it has taken forty-nine years of life to develop. There is no easy, one-two-three-four-five outline. I know you can find a stack of books at any bookstore on everybody's opinion of how to be successful. It's not that easy for me. It has to do with dealing with people, and how we structure our organization. There is not enough time to explain that, because there is not enough time in the day for me to explain what has transpired over the last forty-none years."
- 12. But there were many times when things weren't quite joyous.

- 13. Tin Man had a heart, Scarecrow had a brain, and Lion had courage. They just needed to be told. That's my job. Everybody needs to be and can be motivated, no matter how much money he or she makes. Different personalities require different catalysts. Lion had to be yelled at. Tin Man had to be touched. Scarecrow had to be challenged. After that, they were a helluva team.
- 14. Wizardry is a thorough understanding and application and projection of reality. Wizardry is seeing a person as the very best that he can be, treating him on that level, and waiting for him to rise to it.
- 15. He became the first of three men I have written off in my life, all for failing to be men of their word.
- 16. "Jimmy," he said, "you go to bed every night thinking about football and wake up every morning thinking about football, and that's all you think, all day long. That's exactly was I do in making money. "
- 17. "The two of us, with the energy we have, back to back, can accomplish great things."
- 18. Asked if I'd be interested in coming to Dallas as Landry's defensive coordinator, with the understanding that Landry would set in motions a plan for his retirements and my promotion to head coach. I wasn't interested. There would have been too many complications, including the matter of who would and wouldn't be retained from his old staff. I'd already been through one nightmare trying to keep together someone else's staff, and I wasn't about to do try it again.
- 19. Jerry sent his Lear jet to pick me up at Dallas's older, small airport, Love Field, after I'd tour the complex. His pilots flew me to Little Rock, where I spent a few hours with him talking about his plans.
- 20. There is a March deadline after which you're not allowed to talk to NFL assistant coaches about changing jobs from one franchise to another.
- 21. But Dave Wannstedt, my right-arm of a defensive coach and my best friend, had recently gone to work for the Dolphins. I also wanted to hire David Shula, who was also working as an assistant to his dad at the Dolphins.
- 22. Jerry wanted control. Jerry operates somewhat like another, even richer, Arkansan, the late Sam Walton of Walmart: no middle men. Cut straight to the top. Jerry went straight to Bum Bright.
- 23. The next eight days I spent shuttling rapidly, secretly, between Florida and Texas and Arkansas. That was mainly to keep speaking engagements, one in Miami on February 17 and one in St. Petersburg on February 22. I kept them for two reasons: first, it kept up the appearance of normalcy in public; second, and most important, my commitments.
- 24. I know why Jerry is such a great salesman. I don't think "if" is in his vocabulary. He always talks as if the deal is already done. He doesn't say, "Here's what we could do," he says, "Here's what we're going to do."

- 25. I was 100 percent certain I would take the job. But I was not 100 percent enthusiastic about it. But if I hadn't taken it, I would have always second-guesses myself.
- 26. Landry had taken the Cowboys to five Super Bowls and won two.
- 27. Tex went with Jerry to help break the news to Landry. Jerry would face Landry. Jerry would have it no other way. When he learned that Landry wasn't in Dallas, he flew to Austin, where Landry was relaxing at his resort home on a golf course. Tex and Jerry waited until Landry had finished his Saturday afternoon golf game. It was reported that Tex wept as they spoke.
- 28. Not just to reign, and not just to settle various business affairs with my attorney, my buddy, my best friend outside of football, Nick Christin.
- 29. Hurricane football complex
- 30. I left the room in tears with Rich Dalrymple, Miami's sports information director and my jogging buddy. We jogged across the practice field as we'd often done, only this time we were in coats and ties.
- 31. My family gets together about once a year, usually down at Crystal Beach, and we let our hair down really cut up. Otherwise, we don't even talk much on the phone. We say what we need to say, and that's about it. No chitchat, no small talk.
- 32. The Los Angeles Times estimated that there were no more than two hundred media people waiting for me in the new conference room.
- 33. Lyon continued, "You don't see many 58-7 finals in the NFL." (But as it turned out, you did see a 52-17 Super bowl, didn't you?)
- 34. Jerry had been a wheeler –dealer who believed in brainstorming, just tossing any idea that had possibilities right out in the open, and then if it didn't seem feasible, he just discarded it. But he was used to doing that in his office, in the oil and gas business, where if you decided to cancel some big drilling operation up in western Canada it didn't lead the six o'clock news or the morning sports section.
- 35. "Well, we may not be very fast, but we'; be in such great condition that if we run a 4.7 forty, we'll still be running a 4.7 in the fourth quarter." (To give you some gauge, a "burner" receiver is down in the 4.35 range in the forty. I can live with a defensive lineman who runs a 4.7 forty, but not with 4.7 as a team average.)
- 36. When I bring in a new guy, I bring in more the person than the coach-someone I'm certain will click with our chemistry right away.

- 37. I had no concern whatsoever about the Miami guys making the transition from college to professional football. I wanted to have the right kind of people that I could work with, who could learn and develop, and have the right kind of chemistry for a group that was going to be with each other night and day, year round.
- 38. I couldn't let that matter. This was an absolutely necessary part of the massive radical surgery needed to begin getting this thing turned.
- 39. That first year, besides the football, besides evaluating all those players, I had to help out in an enormous housecleaning of the business side of a franchise which turned out to be astonishingly fat, wasteful, outdated and is some areas abusive.
- 40. One typical day, I called in Steve Orsini, our ticket manager, and we went through the entire complimentary tickets list. Just plain old friends of individuals who might or might not still work at the complex were getting comp tickets. I started making phone calls, eliminating people getting comp tickets.
- 41. Then I went through the list of everyone who was getting a courtesy car. For instance, I phoned one woman who had been furnished with a courtesy car from the Cowboys for a long time. And she hadn't even worked for the Cowboys for more than two years. When I phone her, she kind of laughed and said, "Well, Coach, I knew this call would come someday."
- 42. Then I had a look at all the figures for out TV show.
- 43. Like I say: if you go out and work your ass off evaluating players firsthand, and you have a good enough eye for talent, more times than not you'll make your picks count.
- 44. BUT: each of those five players was attached to a"conditional" draft choice or choices.
- 45. Bringing them in was essentially a formality. I wanted the draft picks.
- 46. How we did it in Dallas is inseparable from life experiences. It has to do with where I'm coming from, what I've been through, what I've learned, and most of all, the very careful ways in which I treat people.
- 47. This is a style of defense I've carried with me ever since, right through Miami and now with the Cowboys. It's more than technical strategy. It's a frame of mind that starts with the defensive line.
- 48. But more than anything else, it establishes an attitude we are attacking, rather than sitting back and reacting.
- 49. Furthermore, my Halloween party tradition had met its end in Fayetteville. When Eddie Sutton pulled a gun on us, I decided it was time to call off the house-house raids.

- 50. We didn't go head-to-head with Oklahoma in recruiting very much, for the simple reason that we knew we were the underdogs. We would take players that Oklahoma wasn't offering scholarships to, and we knew weren't going to get the players. Oklahoma wanted.
- 51. (After I started making a little more money, I worked some deals with the airlines and alumni, and our trips have gone everywhere from St. Martin to Puerto Rico to the Bahamas to skiing in Colorado. From Stillwater to Miami to Dallas, I think those outings have been vitally important for the unity of the staff, and I think even more important for the wives. They're able to form a bond that they can hold on to when you go through very trying and demanding seasons, when their husbands are working late hours and are seldom at home with their families. On those outings, we can be an inner circle, enjoy one another, let our hair down, and not be on stage like we are with alumni or media or outsiders).
- 52. We were no Oklahoma or Nebraska, but we were now ready to win our class, the rest of the Big Eight, regularly for a while to come.
- 53. When you see a new head coach come into any program, clean house and bring in his own people, it isn't just because he wanted to give all his old buddies jobs. I repeat, and I cannot say it enough times, that coaching staffs must be bonded to function properly. They must know one another well, like one another (hell, even their wives and girlfriends have to like one another).
- 54. I realized it was mainly because I was not Schnellenberger. And that pounding, hurt thought it might, was a minor matter indeed compared to the pounding I took for not being Schnellenberger in the hallways and meeting rooms of the University of Miami football offices.
- 55. The staff took the entire month of June and part of July off, and when they came back. We had to face an early opening game without even knowing one another.
- 56. "Hey, it's a lot easier for one guy to change than for one hundred guys to change. You guys don't have to."
- 57. Florida State not only won, but embarrassed us, 38-3. (After that, I was bound and determined not to lose to Florida State, and never did again. We won four straight from them. In fact, after that embarrassing game, I would always spend extra time on Florida State during out spring and summer practices, to make sure we were able to get an edge on one of our major rivals.)
- 58. And that was then, because of lack of unity, lack of a bond, lack of trust, lack of respect on the coaching staff, we totally came unraveled. That was the day I said, "Just please, somehow, let me survive the rest of the year." Conversations with the assistant coaches after that game were nonexistent. I pretty well stayed in my office, except to jump into a meeting and watch some tape occasionally.

- 59. We had an obligation to play in the Fiesta Bowl, but I don't think anybody was excited about going there. Prior to leaving for Phoenix, a lot of coaches announced their resignations; In fact, we made the trip without a defensive coordinator and without an offensive line coach. And we went to Arizona with a lame-duck trainer, strength coach, quarterbacks coach and two graduate assistants, all of whom had given me their resignations. Some fiesta.
- 60. Never, ever again, in college or the NFL, was I going to have a staff that was not bonded.
- 61. From the first meeting of my new staff and for the next four years the remainder of my stay at Miami, we would lose four games. We would win forty-four.
- 62. I don't ever want my players to know what it feels like to let up.
- 63. And nobody is going to take the attack initiative from us.
- 64. I said, "Let me get this straight: You've got out publicly and said you're extending my contract, that you're doing my contract, how happy you were that I was going to stay at the University of Miami, and now you're telling me that you're not a man of your word, Is that correct?"
- 65. He said, "Well, we're just not going to do anything about this contract. We'll have to address this at a later date." I walked out of his office and slammed the door so hard it just about came off its hinges. Sam came running down the hall after me. I said, "Sam, go back in there and get him to settle on what years I've got left. I want out of here."
- 66. To paraphrase General Sherman, war is hell and the other side started it.
- 67. This wasn't just a national championship. We had taken on a world of bullshit, and Florida, and Florida State, and Arkansas, and Notre Dame, and Oklahoma, and Edward Thaddeus Foote II. And we had kicked their collective ass.
- 68. And now here was one of those holier-than-thou types who profess to understand what black people have been through. I didn't and don't, and I never will, because I have not been through it, and I admit it and go on and do the best I can. And I think black players have been a lot more comfortable with that than if I'd tried to bullshit them.
- 69. While I was there we added two academic counselors and a full academic support system. We had a mandatory study hall. We had disciplinary action. If players missed classes or had academic problems we would get them up at 6 o'clock in the morning and run them. I did that personally sometimes. We had mandatory curfews after study hall. We put in some monitoring processes and some controls that really forced the players to be students, and at least got them started off on the right track.
- 70. There's an old saying around the NFL that in order to win, you must first hate to lose.

- 71. Even to this day, writes talks about how I take losses so hard. They don't know how long I can survive in this game because losing wears on me too much.
- 72. Throughout the regular season, the Cowboys' roster was a revolving door, and every day was tryout camp.
- 73. This was like going to the dentist every day of the week, eighteen hours a day.
- 74. If you don't get sick to your stomach every time you lose a ball game, then you're really losing a part of yourself. You're losing your pride, and it's time to get out of this game.
- 75. I made it a big deal. From that point on, not a single player with the Dallas Cowboys Football Club, Irving Texas, felt a comfort zone. I mean, anybody crazy enough to trade Herschel Walker and chew out Everson Walls was likely to do anything.
- 76. Her whole life had revolved around my coaching career, and now her whole life was changing. That was the part; I felt, and feel, the worst about.
- 77. "Discipline is a lot more than saying, 'Don't throw your hands up in the air when you score a touchdown."
- 78. Quarterback schools and minicamps, and we started building some unity of this team, which I feel is an even bigger benefit than the strength and conditioning itself. Hard work together builds a bond that is vital to the team concept.
- 79. Most NFL franchises still rely largely on scouting departments. Ours is one of the smallest in the league. Jerry wants it that way and I want it that way, because I want to pick the players I am going to coach. If that sounds entirely logical to the point of, "so what?" to the layman, you'd be surprised at how most of the league works. Coaches don't always get full say-so as to the players selected. You'd be surprised how many coaches in the past have been given players and told, "Here, coach them." In fact, the Cowboys hit the skids in the last years of the Landry regime, many observers claimed it wasn't so much of a matter of Landry's coaching as of his staff being given poor talent by Gil Brandt's scouting staff/
- 80. Doing homework isn't nearly enough for me in preparing for the draft. At Dallas, we do our road work. We as a staff go personally to the Florida States and the Michigans and the Notre Dames and the Southern Cals and the Ohio States and on and on and on, looking at players personally. And we evaluate a helluva lot more than vertical leap and forty-yard dash times. If I'm talking with a group of prospective draftees and one kid's sitting there flipping ice at his teammate or kidding around, he'll be hard pressed to stay on my list for more than about give more minutes. I have formal training in the psychology of learning, but none of that does any good on an unwilling or uncaring pupil.
- 81. We've probably been successful at making the most of our picks for the very reason we were criticized when we came into the league: We were a college staff. Colleges don't have scouting departments. Coaches work and travel their

asses off scouting and recruiting. We were not only used to work, but we had excellent first-hand knowledge of players coming up in the draft, because we'd either played against them or recruited them ourselves, or at least tried to recruit them.

- 82. In 1990 I'd gone back to doing things I'd always done meeting with the players on a regular basis and talking to them about being a team. In 1991, as our turnaround became obvious to the football-watching nation, I would be able, truly and completely, to treat players the way I believe in, and the way I know best. You can have the greatest eye in the world for physical talents, and fill a roster with the finest players in America, and be the smartest Xs and Os coach in America, and you can still watch a team fall flat on its face. Why? Because human beings haven't been made to feel the best that they can possibly feel about themselves. Seeing people as the best they can be, and getting them to see it too, is my job. And I am pretty good at it.
- 83. I never tell a running back, "Don't fumble." I never tell a place kicker, "Don't miss." I say to the running back, "Protect the ball." I say to the place kicker, "Make this." You'd be surprised how few coaches understand the simple psychology I'm using here. But in my opinion, it is vital psychology.
- 84. The human mind, upon receiving a message, "Don't fumble" will record the word "fumble" and, consciously or not, worry over it. The "Don't" doesn't help. If anything it hurts, because it's a negative. And so the running back told, "Don't fumble," is more likely to fumble than if the coach had said nothing at all. So I never try to plant a negative.
- 85. In recent years, specialists called sports psychologists have been collecting some nice fees from professional athletes. For these fees, all they are doing is teaching them to turn their thinking around to think, "Protect the ball" or "make this," or in the case of baseball pitchers, "throw strikes." We have even seen psychologists sitting behind home plate so their clients could see them from the mound. Why? Well, because they're doing part of the job which, in my opinion, any coach or manager should be doing, which is to make the player feel as good about himself as he can possibly feel, all the time. You'd think every coach, manager, any CEO in America would understand this by now. Certainly, any CEO who might have hired James W. Johnson as an industrial psychologist would have had it made abundantly clear to him. There's just too much scientific evidence to support positive management.
- 86. But all three times, our players got a message that was strong and positive about high expectations.
- 87. There is a saying: "Treat a person as he is, and he will remain as he is. Treat a person as if here were what he could be and should be, and he will become what he could be and should be."
- 88. The ones he didn't expect to be good got only a token amount of individual time.

- 89. I do it with scientific knowledge that if you treat people that way, long enough and sincerely enough, then more times than not, that's what you'll get from the person. Even if you don't attain the final goal, at least the treatment will have such a positive influence that he'll come closer to attaining the goal than he would have otherwise.
- 90. You should sit with me some afternoon on the bench in the breezeway leading to our locker room at the complex, during out April minicamp, when we bring the rookies in. You should see them light up over something as simple from me, as "Hey, (first name), I saw you doing some really good things out her today. We think you can play here. We like you."
- 91. Sincerity is the most important part of positive treatments. The only thing worse than a coach or CEO who doesn't care about his people is one who pretends to care. People can post a phony every time.
- 92. The critical factor in proving sincerity is consistency.
- 93. You create an environment where everybody feels good about themselves, everybody is upbeat and positive, everybody feels like a winner. It's not only for them; it becomes second nature to you and it becomes part of your personality.
- 94. As head coach, or CEO, it's my job to put everybody who is in the organization in an environment that allows them to be the best that they can be. The best way to go about that is, 1) give them the responsibility for their various roles so that they know that if they don't do it, the job won't get done, and the feeling that when they accomplish something they will share in the accolades, and 2) have enough personal involvement with each of them in a positive way that they know I'm interested in them individually, and that I am extremely supportive and loyal, and 3) in my own way give them enough guidance to make, in essence, a decision that I want them to make.
- 95. I mean, who cares who makes the decision, as long as it works? Keep everybody feeling as positive about themselves as consistently, as possible.
- 96. They all saw themselves at the very best they could be.
- 97. It's been proven in the psychology of learning that the most effective way to teach is through a combination of positive reinforcement and punishment.
- 98. I think at times the punishment can have a short-term negative effect but give you long term positive reaction in that it really reinforces the learning that you want to instill.
- 99. The one time that I come down hard and embarrass him really stands out and that reinforces the leaning in an optimum way.

- 100. In order to get the optimal response, you have to be strong enough mentally that you can govern how positive, and how sincere, and how negative you are. You can't be controlled by outside situations. For example, through the 1989 season, I never chewed out a player because I was in a bad frame of mind over my divorce or the reaction I was getting from the public.
- 101. For instance, to cuss at Michael Irvin publicly might draw such a negative reaction that it counteracts what I'm trying to accomplish.
- 102. There seems to be a school of thought nowadays that some individuals may reach a status or an income level, whether in business or sports, where they no longer needs pats on the back. The notion that all these highly paid athletes nowadays don't need stroking, can't be motivated, and won't perform as team players that's all bull. Everybody needs positive reinforcement.
- 103. Usually the meeting on Monday involves as evaluation of the previous game, and one thing I always try to do is have a scouting report on Monday of the upcoming opponent. That way we eliminate feelings from the previous Sunday, whether we've won or lost. Our players have Tuesdays off, and I don't want them celebrating for two days after a win or moping around for two days after a loss. So we plant seeds in their minds so that even on their day off they're thinking about the next opponent. By the time they actually begin to practice, they know precisely what we need to work on, and why.
- 104. But Xs and Os are not as important to me as chemistry among the staff.
- 105. "In studying Washington, we find that every team that has played them this year has gone with a normal game plan and came up short. My feeling is that if you're going to hit a big old gorilla, you don't tap him and run; you hit him with all your might. We're going to take a lot of chances. We're going to go for it on fourth down; we're going for onside kicks; we're going for Hail Marys. We have an opportunity to beat a team that is undefeated."
- 106. And in my life, the hay was in the barn. I would turn forty-nine that summer, and I wouldn't have traded it for any other age. It's great to be forty-nine and have the storms and uphill roads behind you, and to realize that your life has cone to just exactly what you want; living alone in a big house with no other living creatures except for the six big aquarium tanks full of tropical fish; my girlfriend and buddy, Rhonda, a few blocks away, always there when I needed cheerful companionship; my sons in Dallas, successful, independent, but likely to drop by and help me eat, oh say a hundred-dollar take-out order of barbeque ribs from Tony Roma's; my big screen TV and my monster sound system and my satellite dish and my stacks of laser-disk movies; my two Corvettes and a Nissan 300ZX that Rhonda and I drive; happy hours and rollicking vacations with my crew; coaching the most popular team in the most popular sport in America; and knowing it was about to become one of the most successful teams of its time.
- 107. When I wake-up at 4AM and it isn't nearly time to go to work, I can sit for hours watching the fish interact.
- 108. Hike things a certain way in my house, which is to say, neat.

- 109. I might order a dozen complete dinners to go, I'll take them home and put them in the freezer and microwave them as I want them.
- 110. As for my den, put a laser-disk action movie on the big screen, and turned up the sound system so the walls were reverberating, sank into a chair, put his hands behind his head.
- 111. You spend your entire life, your entire personality, to make people feel good.

 Make people feel happy. And there are just times when you say, "Geez, I don't want to make 'em feel happy anymore. Just leave me alone. I want to go to the beach."
- 112. I guess they worry sometimes about my intensity and hours I put in.
- 113. And then the day will come when I won't do them anymore.
- 114. When a season starts, 50 percent of the teams in the NFL have the ingredients to win the Super Bowl.
- 115. Now, what are the variables when so many teams have the ingredients? The way they're blended, of course.
- 116. Chemistry is detailed, minute, indeed molecular.
- 117. Into the realm of the psychology of the self-fulfilling prophecy.
- 118. There's a helluva lot of difference in knowing the technical part and knowing the organization. Running an organization is more a matter of knowing people than the mechanics of how the game is played or how the product is manufactured. If you can't get the best out of people in your organization, it doesn't really make any difference what you know.
- 119. One would be hard work. The other would be dealing with people. In most NFL franchises, they work hard. The difference in the group at the top is dealing with people.
- 120. You can't neglect the media because they can create such a negative environment as to make it difficult for your players to play to the best of their ability.
- 121. A lot of things I tell the media are simply repeats of what I just got through telling players a few hours earlier, and I keep the reinforcement cycle going.
- 122. Demanding loyalty from your people, without first showing your loyalty to them, is disastrously phony.

- 123. Everybody in this league knows we're going to win. That's the way it is. When their NFL Preview issue came out, they called us the Team of the Nineties and ran various articles explaining why, from the youth of our team to my focused personality. They left out one major element I told them about. I told them, "One of the big reasons we're going to win is that my crew and I are all going down to the Bahamas for a few days together." Bonding. At two o'clock in the morning in the middle of November, when they've been home with the kids alone for days, the wives don't think of me as some asshole boss who's wringing every ounce of life out of their husbands. I'm just Jimmy, the guy who was cutting up with them at the bar, or around the casino in Nassau, and who during the season is not asking a single minute of his crew that he doesn't put in himself.
- 124. This was a time for me to differentiate, as the generals say, between the tactical and the strategic, or, in layman's language, the matter of losing battles but winning wars.
- 125. The subject, for four hours, was how Bill Parcells had gotten ready for the Super Bowls the Giants had won. By getting ready, I mean all the logistics during the two week stretch following the NFC Championship game.
- 126. And then there are times when you have to be a bit of an asshole.
- 127. Our guys took that loss hard. I mean, they were sick, but I wanted them to be sicker. I wasn't angry at them. But I wanted to intensify the pain and frustration. I wanted everybody to experience the pain and sorrow to the maximum because that could become a driving force.
- 128. I would hate to be one of those individuals who goes through life and never experiences that pain or that ecstasy.
- 129. If you have the mental ingredients to be a championship team, you're not concerned about the opponent, you're concerned about yourselves.
- 130. Because I couldn't depend on him.
- 131. That made an impact. Ninety percent of the time I'm saying. "Protect the ball; protect the ball." Then all of a sudden a player drops it on the ground twice, and he's cut. That one time made more of an impact than all the times I'd said "Protect the ball." It would be Curvin Richards no good, but for forty-six other individuals it was the guarantee that they had optimum retention of learning.
- 132. For the Dallas Cowboys, there was a profound new meaning when I told them what all coaches tell all teams as they go into the playoffs: "You get no second chances."
- 133. We prepared extremely well for San Francisco. We felt like we had a plan. As bad as footing promised to be, most football fans figured we would run the ball. But the 48ers had an excellent run defense. In our Wednesday morning meeting, I told the team, "We're going to come out throwing the ball all over the field. And don't get frustrated because we're not handing it to the guy who has carried us to this point (meaning Emmit Smith). We're gonna be wide open, and

- once we do that, we'll loosen up their run defense and start handing it to Emmit in the second half.
- 134. Military commanders' first priority, with any battle imminent, is to check the terrain and find the good ground. We studied the map and walked the field. On the old turf, there was going to be some slippage.
- 135. I normally sleep really, really well the night before a game. The night before the San Francisco game, I didn't. I got up about four o'clock in the morning, and got out the map of the turf, and went through our game plan. I wanted to see if there was some edge we might get, some adjustment we might make for various parts of the field.
- 136. I made a bunch of notes and called a staff meeting for seven o'clock that morning, six hours before kick-off. We went through our entire game plan, offensively, defensively, and in the kicking game, every phase, making adjustments according to where we were on the field. That made a two or three times as complex as a normal game plan.
- 137. And it happened because we'd adjusted our game plan according to the footing in the various areas.
- 138. We had two prepare for that one remaining game. I had spent, oh, the better part of the past decade preparing to prepare for it. We didn't have our strategy meeting until Thursday, January 21, ten days before the game. I wanted to give us, the staff, three days to study Buffalo. I also didn't want to drag this thing out too far from our standard practice routines. And, because negative seeds were going to be showered on this team from now through January 31 from the outside, I had to try to immunize the players from the hoopla before it hit.
- 139. When we met, I told the team, "You've got to understand this: The game can be as big in your mind as you want it to be. If you take Buffalo's team and we have studied them thoroughly and our team, and we all go right out here on this practice field, we'll kick their ass."
- 140. "With no anxiety, no distractions, nobody watching, we win. That's the approach you've got to have for the game. You focus in your mind that you're playing Buffalo on the practice field at Valley Ranch."
- 141. "Now if we take a two-by-four and lay it on its broad side across this room, nearly everybody in this room can walk this two-by-four, right across the room and never flinch." I kind of laughed and pointed to a couple of assistant coaches and said, "Well, some don't have the athletic ability." Everybody laughed. I said, "But everybody else in this room does." I paused for a moment. "Now you can take this same two-by-four, and you put it ten stories up. It would be difficult time for anybody to walk between two buildings ten stories up. Because the focus of your mind now is not about walking the two-by-four. Ten stories up, you're thinking, "I don't want to fall." Your entire concentration is "I don't want to fall, I don't want to fall." So what do you do? You stumble and you grab hold of the two-by-four, and you hang on.

- 142. "And so your focus playing Buffalo will be, we're on the practice field, we're the best team, and we are going to win. Now if you go out there (to Pasadena) and your focus is, this is going to be the most watched television program of all time. A billion people or so are going to watch this game. It's the most televised sporting event in the world. It's the most important game of the year. If your focus is on that, you're going to be uptight and you're going to make mistakes.
- 143. "And we're gonna work our ass off in practice. We've got everything programmed to work out just like a game week during the regular season. Nothing's going to change. Everything is going to be down to the minute of our regular practice schedule. Because if we do it like that, we're the best team. If we take Buffalo out here on this practice field, we're gonna win."
- 144. "Here's how we're going to practice: We're going to have two scout teams to simulate their no-huddle offense; which will really give them some problems, because we'll be prepared for that tempo. In practice, we're going to run plays every 15 seconds to give you that tempo. It's actually about 18 or 19 seconds between plays that Buffalo runs.
- 145. "And because they call so many plays at the line of scrimmage, we're really going to concentrate on disguising our coverage to give 'em some problems."
- 146. What made me such an expert on getting ready for a Super Bowl, when they only way I'd ever been to Super Bowls was a guest in a skybox? Well, years ago, while I was coaching at the University of Miami, I used to visit Don Shula at the Dolphins, and I would ask him all about how he got ready for a Super Bowl. At the time, I was trying to take some of his logistics and combine them with things I already knew to prepare for national championship college games. Then, once while I was at Miami and once after I got to the Cowboys, I talked to Joe Gibbs of the Redskins about the same subject. Then I had that long conversation with Bill Parcells.
- 147. I researched the coaches the teams that had won the Super Bowl.
- 148. One of the things stressed by all the successful coaches I talked to was to have the bulk of your game plan done before you ever got to the site of the Super Bowl. So we did that in Valley Ranch.
- 149. "The biggest thing you need to do is have a meeting right away with players about their tickets, their merchandise endorsements that sometimes hound you during the Super Bowl, and their family arrangements for going to the game. That will be the biggest headache of all: worrying about their families and friends getting hotel rooms, getting (side) event tickets, getting game tickets. You need to make sure not only that they take care of that early, but also that you assign people in the organization that the players can go to get it done."
- 150. "For the night of January 30, book us into a different hotel. Somewhere in the Pasadena area. Find one, book it, and don't tell anybody else. Not even me, I don't want to know."

- 151. "If this thing comes about, I want you to work with me and help me to help Dave to be the very best head coach he can be."
- 152. When I left Oklahoma State, I spent considerable time calling the board of regents and visiting with them, to make sure Pat Jones would get the head coaching job there.
- 153. And as I told, Larry, I'm not the same guy I was in 1970 at Oklahoma. There's no doubt in my mind that I'm a lot more focused and committed, and a lot simpler. Nowadays I live a very simple life, with very few people. But that's the way I want it.
- 154. (And until weeks later I would learn that the Beverly Garland was the same hotel to which Joe Gibbs had moved the Redskins the night before their Super Bowl XVII victory in Pasadena in 1983, and to which Bill Parcells had moved the Giants the night before their Super Bowl XXI win in Pasadena in 1987).
- 155. "The feeling you have at this very moment is one of the best things you will ever have in life, especially the feeling you have for one another.
- 156. We had the limo stop at a little hole-in-the-wall pizza place we found along the way, so that we could all go to the bathroom and replenish our Heineken. I signed a couple autographs in the pizza parlor, and the people just couldn't believe I was the guy who'd just win the Super Bowl.
- 157. In February a lot of coaches and personnel people at the scouting combine's mass workout in Indianapolis seemed astonished to see me sitting in the stands with a clipboard, watching college players and making notes, nine hours a day. People would come up and say, "Geez, didn't you take any time off after the Super Bowl?" I said, "Oh, yeah, I went to the Bahamas for three days." "All of three days?" they would say.
- 158. Why has it become a hackneyed saying in sports that "the only thing harder than getting to the top is staying there?" The answer, in two words, is human nature. We all want satisfaction in life, and when we get it, we tend to relish it. It takes time to bask. And that means complacency. No sooner have you gotten the edge on the rest of the National Football League, or any other business arena, than you lose it, unless you can keep yourself just as mindful of, and focused on, exactly what the hell got you there in the first place.
- 159. Year in, year out, personnel directors have said, "We're going to take the best player available when we pick."
- 160. But since we've been in Dallas, we've augmented that philosophy, to make it more efficient. We try to trade so that our pick comes up when the player we want is the player available.
- 161. And so, we continue to wheel, deal, evaluate, try to treat people right, and work our asses off.

- 162. (And he wouldn't have doubled my salary after we won the Super Bowl, redoing a contract that still has six years left on it).
- 163. Bill Parcells has told me he doesn't know how long anyone could go at our pace. So far, I'm fine. Do this job and put in the hours because I enjoy it, and when it gets to the point that I don't enjoy it, that's when I'll stop, and head on out to the beach for good.