

The Score Takes Care of Itself by Bill Walsh

1. You start first with a structural format and basic philosophy and then find the people who can implement it.
2. Every profession has many elements unique unto itself.
3. When it comes to the fundamentals of effective leadership in the context of human nature and managing people, there are great parallels among the NFL, corporate America, or a grocery store with twelve employees.
4. Speak about leadership to their executive teams.
5. On team building and leadership.
6. See a connection between wearing a tie and winning a Super Bowl.
7. If you didn't "get with the program" as defined by Bill Walsh, you were gone.
8. Building a dynasty by dismantling a disaster.
9. Journey was arduous, but his dream was big: Bill Walsh wanted to be a successful head coach in the NFL more than anything else in the world.
10. And his standard was simple: perfection.
11. He had in his mind this ideal – an image of perfect football – coupled with the nuts-and-bolts details of how to accomplish it, which he then taught.
12. Teach people how to think and play at a different and much higher.
13. He accomplished this in three ways: 1) He had a tremendous knowledge of all aspects of the game and visionary approach to offense; 2) he brought in a great staff and coaches who knew how to coach, how to complement his own teaching of what he needed to know to rise to his standard of performance; and 3) he taught us to hate mistakes.
14. That if you aim for perfection and miss, you're still pretty good, but if you aim for mediocre and miss?
15. He taught us to want to be perfect and instilled in the team a hunger for improvement, a drive to get better and better.
16. Bill didn't jump on you for a mistake; he came right in with the correction: "Here's what was wrong; this is how to do it right."
17. He was great at making people great students.
18. He didn't beat up players mentally or physically in practice. In fact, his approach was unique because often we didn't even wear pads in practice – there was no contact, especially as the season went on.

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19. Bill raised everybody's standard, what he defined as acceptable.
20. He got us thinking we could achieve it by teaching us what perfection and how to reach it.
21. The place you dreamed of but didn't know you could reach.
22. I came to the San Francisco 49'ers with a specific goal – to implement what I call the Standard of Performance.
23. More to do with the mental than with the physical.
24. The need for character as a component of leadership.
25. Making the complex comprehensible, the comprehensible achievable.
26. To directing an organization's attention and best effort to achieving goals he defined.
27. People are the heart of your organization.
28. This perspective affected his leadership profoundly.
29. Dissected the issue into its relevant parts found a solution, and then taught the solution to the appropriate individuals.
30. He accumulated great knowledge because he was a Grade A student of leadership, paying close attention along the way to some of football's most outstanding.
31. Their good ideas, learned from their bad ones.
32. Identifying outstanding talent and teaching that player, assistant coach, or staff members how to be great.
33. I contacted Jeffrey Krames, one of the publishing world's foremost editors in the field.
34. I would never write anything that suggests the path to success is a continuum of positive, even euphoric experiences – that if you do all the right things everything will work out.
35. Even when you have an organization brimming with talent, victory is not always under your control.
36. Almost always, your road to victory goes through a place called "failure".
37. Intelligently and relentlessly seeking solutions that will increase your chance of prevailing in a competitive environment.
38. Assault on a person's spirit and basic self-esteem are incredible.
39. The fundamental task of leadership.

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40. Organizing and managing a group of individuals to achieve difficult goals in an extremely competitive world.
41. Pursuing your ambitions, especially those of any magnitude, can be grueling and hazardous, and produce agonizing failure along the way, but achieving those goals is among life's most gratifying and thrilling experiences. The ability to survive and overcome the former to attain the latter is a fundamental difference between winners and losers.
42. I observed that if individuals who prevail in a highly competitive environment have any one thing in common besides success – it is failure – and their ability to overcome it.
43. When I give a speech at a corporate event, I often ask those in attendance, "Do you know how to tell if you're doing the job?" As heads start whispering back and forth, I provide these clues: "If you're up at 3 a.m. every night talking into a tape recorder and writing notes on scraps of paper, have a knot in your stomach and a rash on your skin are losing sleep and losing touch with your wife and kids, have no appetite or sense of humor, and feel that everything might turn out wrong, then you're probably doing the job.
44. There is a significant price to pay to the best. That price is not something they laugh at.
45. I stood alone on the sideline in a cocoon of grief, emotionally grunted, wondering if I had the strength to even get back to the locker room.
46. While also creating a fear inside it might happen again.
47. Coaches aren't supposed to cry, but I'm not ashamed to admit that on the night flight back to San Francisco sat in my seat in the first row of the plane and broke down sobbing in darkness.
48. In my dark little space, contemplating whether I should offer my resignation. Most debilitating of all – devastating – was a gnawing fear that I didn't have what it takes to be an NFL head coach.
49. My component would directly affect the attitudes and performance of everyone who looked to me for answers and direction. I had to do what I was being paid to do: be a leader.
50. In the NFL events occur – hit you – at supersonic speeds with volcanic force during the regular season. There aren't months or weeks to recover, not even days. Usually only hours or minutes.
51. Summon strength enough to pull my focus, my thinking, out of the past and move it forward to our next big problem.
52. At the moment of deepest despair I had the strength to stand and confront the future instead of wallowing in the past.

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53. Do expect defeat.
54. It's mental quicksand.
55. Give yourself a little time to recuperate. A keyword here is "little."
56. Don't ask, "Why me?" (*no self condolence*)
57. Don't expect sympathy.
58. Don't keep accepting condolences.
59. Don't blame others. (*Should be #2*)
60. I would teach each person in the organization what to do and how to think.
61. He let everyone in the organization know that I was the boss and that he would not undercut my authority. Without his power and support my task would have been virtually impossible given the abysmal situation.
62. It began with this fundamental leadership assertion: regardless of your specific job, it is vital to our team that you do that job at the highest possible level in all its various aspects, both mental and physical (ie, good talent with bad attitude equals bad talent).
63. Personal accountability among the organization and its personnel.
64. The dictates of your personal beliefs should ultimately become characteristic of your team.
65. Exhibit a ferocious and intelligently applied to work ethic directed at continual improvement; demonstrate respect for each person in the organization and the work he or she does; be deeply committed to learning and teaching, which means increasing my own experience; be fair; demonstrate character; honor the direct connection between details and improvement, and relentlessly seek the latter; show self-control, especially where it counts most – under pressure; demonstrate and prize loyalty; use positive language and have a positive attitude; take pride in my effort as an entity separate from the result of that effort; be willing to go the extra distance for the organization; deal appropriately with victory and defeat, adulation and humiliation (don't get crazy with victory nor dysfunctional with loss); promote internal communication that is both open and substantive (especially under stress); seek poise in myself and those I lead; put the team's welfare and priorities ahead of my own; maintain an ongoing level of concentration and focus that is abnormally high; and make sacrifice and commitment the organizations trademark.

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66. For this to happen the person in charge—whether a head coach, CEO, manager, or assembly line foreman—must exhibit the principles code of conduct, and behavior he or she is asking others to emulate.
67. I was committed to identifying and hiring the best people I could find and teaching them what I deemed necessary to achieve the required levels of performance.
68. After careful analysis, they identified thirty specific and separate physical skills—actions—that every offensive lineman needed to master in order to do his job at the highest level, everything from tackling no evasion, footwork to arm movement.
69. Regardless of the size of an employee's check or the requirements of his or her job, I made it clear that he or she was 100 percent a member of our team, whether he or she was a superstar or secretary, black or white, manager or maintenance man.
70. We were immersed in building the inventory of skills, both attitudinal and physical, that would lead to improved execution.
71. Prize of victory than to the process of improving.
72. I began hiring personnel with four characteristics I value most highly; talent, character, function intelligence (beyond basic intelligence, the ability to think on your feet, quickly and spontaneously) and an eagerness to adopt my way of doing things, my philosophy.
73. The bull-headed know-it-all is a destructive force on your team.
74. Individuals who had the ability to work with others.
75. Understand his own role and how it fits into the organization's goal, but a knowledge or understanding of other people's roles.
76. I would take out a calendar and plan when I would talk about different subjects with individual players, with a squad, with the entire team, with position coaches, staff members, and others.
77. All employees not only raise their level of "play" but dramatically lift the level of their thinking—how they perceived their relationship to the team and its members; how they approached the vagaries of competition; and how willing they were to sacrifice for the goals I identified.
78. Everybody was connected, each of us an extension of the others, each of us with ownership in our organization.
79. Combat soldiers talk about whom they will die for. Who is it? It's those guys right next to them in the trench.

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80. Somebody they had never seen before they joined the army or marines has become someone they would die for. That's the ultimate connection and extension.
81. When you know that your peers demand and expect a lot out of you and you, in turn, turn out of them, that's when the sky's the limit.
82. The commitment to, and execution of, the specific actions and attitudes embodied in my Standard of Performance.
83. They were crucial to creating and cementing a 49er level of professionalism that I viewed as the foundation on which future success could be constructed.
84. And phones were answered in a professional manner: "San Francisco 49ers headquarters. How may I assist you?" All calls had to be returned within 24 hours.
85. People want to believe they're part of something special, an organization that's exceptional.
86. The culture precedes positive results.
87. Champions behave like champions before they're champions.
88. Before you can win the fight, you've got to be in the fight.
89. Achieving success takes patience, time, and fortitude.
90. Within our organization the Standard of Performance served as a compass that pointed to true north. It embraced the individual requirements and expectations – benchmarks – required of our personnel in all areas *regardless* of whether things were going well or badly. That's the toughest thing – constancy amid chaos or presumed perfection.
91. Consistent effort is a consistent challenge.
92. Initially, it meant I had to drastically change the environment, raise the level of talent, and teach everyone what they needed to know to get to where I wanted us to go.
93. The intense focus on those pertinent details cements the foundation that establishes excellence in performance.
94. Like water, many decent individuals will seek lower ground if left to their own inclinations. In most cases you are the one who inspires and demands they go upward rather than settle for the comfort of doing what comes easily. Push them beyond their comfort zone; expect them to give extra effort.

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95. Let all know that you expect them to possess the highest level of expertise in their area of responsibility.
96. Beyond standards and methodology, teach your beliefs, values, and philosophy.
97. An organization filled with individuals who are "independent contractors" unattached to one another is a team with little interior cohesion and strength.
98. Some leaders drive their team past being able to perform with poise and presence and into a state of anxiety where they're not thinking as clearly as they should.
99. It was comprehensive, meticulously detailed, and practical.
100. Bill was a great observer and student.
101. Wanted things clear and easily understood.
102. He had written a series of lectures for each department detailing what he expected in all ways – appearance, attitude, performance, and more. He had it written out in detail for scouts, assistant coaches, equipment men, groundskeepers, and trainers. Even secretaries got specific and lengthy instructions from Bill himself.
103. Meetings were held, and he would take an hour or two with every employee so they knew exactly what he expected of them, what he wanted them to do and how he wanted them to do it.
104. He simply did not allow casual execution of your job. There was intensity and urgency, a focus all the time, a tight ship.
105. Bill Walsh was not afraid of talent.
106. Spot potential in a person and then develop it.
107. An accident into an asset.
108. Success doesn't care which road you take.
109. The traditionalists – rigid and resistant in their thinking.
110. Desperation should not drive innovation.
111. What assets do we have right now that we're not taking advantage of?
112. While waiting to get what you want.
113. Make the most of what you've got.
114. Be obsessive in looking for the upside in the downside.
115. Reasons we couldn't make it work.

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116. Solutions that would make it succeed.
117. Post-it Notes guy who figured out how to sell the glue that didn't stick.
118. Unfortunately, too often we find comfort in what worked before – even when it stops working.
119. Few things offer greater return on less investment than praise.
120. Write your own script for success: flying by the seat of your pants (is no way to travel).
121. Contingency planning is critical for a fire department.
122. You must continually be anticipating and preparing to deal with that management expert Peter Drucker characterized as foul weather.
123. Making decision off the top of my head was a recipe for a bad decision – especially under pressure.
124. *Docs ATO List.*
125. *Go to plays for go to guys.*
126. *1st 5-10 go to sits ENDOG.*
127. Informed preplanning – looking perceptively into the future and getting ready for it.
128. At San Francisco our first twenty or twenty-five plays of the game would be scripted, along with a multitude of options, alternatives, and contingency plays depending on the situation and circumstance.
129. I was visualizing the game ahead.
130. I kept answering this question: What do I do if...?
131. It was almost impossible for me to make quick and correct decisions in the extreme emotional and mental upheaval that accompanied many situations during a game.
132. During practice I'd tell them, "This is the first play of the game on Sunday." Right away the expectation level would pop up. Now they connected practice with the game.
133. Of course, there's always something you can't anticipate, but you strive to greatly reduce the number of those unforeseeable.
134. Rarely did we go straight by the numbers, one through twenty-five. Usually it would be more like one through four; seven through ten; back to give and six; then perhaps a play from page three of my laminated sheets on the clipboard.

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135. This is true in the context of offensive strategy, a contract negotiation, a sales meeting, and a vast array of other business situations I can think of.
136. Thorough I came in creating a response to every foreseeable circumstance.
137. Planning for the future shouldn't be postponed until the future arrives.
138. When it counts before all hell breaks lose.
139. Comprehensive planning and preparation.
140. And at the upper levels of competition, talent becomes much more evenly distributed.
141. When you prepare for everything, you're ready for anything.
142. A wrong call made in a decisive manner is still the wrong call.
143. A solution was imperative but not evident.
144. I looked for clues that might indicate whether we were moving in the right direction at the right speed and, if not, what we needed to do to address the problems.
145. Also, I knew from experience that it is often difficult to assess these interior, or buried, signs of progress or dysfunction, strength or weakness, because coming transfixed by the big prize – winning a championship, getting a promotion, achieving a yearly quota, and all the rest. When that goal is attained, a common mistake is to assume things are fine. Conversely, when you or the organization fall short of the goal, the letdown can be so severe you're blinded to substantive information indicating that success may be closer than you would imagine.
146. What people were supposed to do individually and as part of a team and how to integrate those two components so that the whole was more than the sum of its parts.
147. He knew that organizations have leaders within, not just one leader, the CEO or head coach, but interior leaders who make possible or prevent what the guy in charge is trying to accomplish.
148. Influential people who've got your back – or are putting a knife in it.
149. He would ask me to get up and "teach" my offensive techniques to a defensive coach, who would play the part of a student – a player. Bill would critique us, teach us how to communicate better and better so that the players would be more fully informed. No other coach in the NFL was coaching his coaches like this. And it was serious business with him.

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150. That's not to say he didn't have his rough patches, because he was very insecure and took some knocks that shook his belief in himself.
151. Accuracy, accuracy, precision in execution of everything at all levels.
152. Game-level focus was the price of admission.
153. Others follow you based on the quality of your actions rather than the magnitude of your declarations.
154. We have seen a move away from the dictatorial type of leadership.
155. You may get results for a week or a few months, but the cumulative effects of bullying people, creating an environment of ongoing fear, panic, and intimidation, are a situation where employees become increasingly tuned out and immune to all of your noise. And, of course, the talented ones look for a job with a better outfit.
156. Leaders are paid to make a decision.
157. Failure rarely garners the amount of attention victory does.
158. Checklist worth keeping in mind when it comes to persevering, to do "your way" at all costs: 1. A leader must never quit. 2. A leader must know when to quit. 3. Proving that you are right or proving that someone is wrong are bad reasons for persisting. 4. Good logic, sound principles, and a strong belief are the purest and most productive reasons for pushing forward when things get rough.
159. When you fall prey to the naysayers who eagerly provide you with all the reasons why you won't succeed, why you can't win, and why you shouldn't quit, you have lost the winner's edge.
160. Be yourself.
161. You must be the best version of yourself that you can be; stay within the framework of our own personality and be authentic.
162. Be committed to excellence.
163. My commitment to this "product" – excellence – preceded my commitment to winning football games. At all times, in all way, your focus must be on doing things at the highest possible level.
164. Be positive. I spent far more time teaching what to do than what not to do.
165. More time building up than tearing down.
166. Be prepared. Good luck is a product of good planning.
167. What happens when what's supposed to happen doesn't happen?

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168. No leader can control the outcome of the contest or competition, but you can control how you prepare for it.
169. Be detail oriented. Organizational excellence evolves from the perfection of details relevant to performance and production.
170. Be organized.
171. Great organization is the trademark of a great organization.
172. Be accountable. Excuse making is contagious.
173. Be near sighted and far sighted.
174. All decisions should be made with an eye toward how they affect the organization's performance – not how they affect you or your feelings.
175. Be fair.
176. Be firm. I would not budge one inch on my core values, standards, and principles.
177. Be flexible.
178. Believe in yourself. To a large degree, a leader must "sell" himself to the team. This is impossible unless you exhibit self-confidence.
179. Be a leader.
180. You must know when you're going and how you intend to get there, keeping in mind that it may be necessary to modify your tactics as circumstances dictate.
181. You must care about people and help those people care about one another and the team's goals.
182. A few days before the game, he sent a staff member out of the Coliseum for an entire afternoon to chart the movement of the sun during the hours when the game would be played. George wanted to know exactly where it would be so he could calculate the "sun advantage" if the Redskins won the coin toss.
183. Immersed in the meaningless at the expense of the meaningful. (*If you're not doing your job you're losing your job!*).
184. The trademark of a well-led organization in sports or business is that it's virtually self-sustaining and self-directed – almost autonomous. To put it in a more personal way, if your staff doesn't seem fully mobilized and energized until you enter the room, if they require your presence to carry on at the level of effort and excellence you have tried to install, your leadership has not percolated down.
185. I didn't want an organization psyche of leadership dependency, of being semi-dysfunctional without me around making every decision.

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186. Commit, explode recover (if you're wrong)!
187. I instructed our maintenance crew to put up a white five foot square grease board with "I WILL NOT BE OUTHIT ANY TIME THIS SEASON!" printed in bold letters across the top. I got out my Magic Marker and signed it – "Bill Walsh". Then everybody on the team signed it. It was a frame of mind, an attitude that I sought to instill.
188. Leaders who regularly employ this tactic of demonizing opponents destroy its effectiveness because it's soon recognized as a ploy to stir up emotions.
189. Applied correctly, this hard edge will not only solve the immediate difficulty, but also prevent future problems by sending out this important message: Cross my line and you can expect severe consequences. This will have ongoing benefits for your organization.
190. From time to time, leaders must show this hard edge.
191. This true inspiration, expertise, and ability to execute that employees take with them into their work is often the result of their inner voice talking, not some out voice shouting, and not some leader giving a pep talk. (*How do we teach this inner voice*).
192. We can win if we work smart enough and hard enough.
193. We can win if we put the good of the group ahead of our own personal interests.
194. We can win if we improve. And there is always room for improvement.
195. I know what is required for us to win. I will show you what it is.
196. Led with one fundamental and powerful leadership technique: his own example.
197. Joe Montana's leadership was grounded in these key characteristics.
198. He never played favorites or believed that a person's reputation, status, or credentials entitled him to special treatment.
199. His leadership example of doing your job, treating others with respect, expecting people to do their jobs, and holding them accountable is a formula for success that will work in any good organization.
200. Order to manage people effectively, you must act responsibly and professionally in your capacity as a leader.
201. Treat people like people. Every player on our team wore a number; no player on our team was "just a number." Treat each member of your organization as a unique person.

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202. Seek positive relationships through encouragement, support, and critical evaluation.
203. Afford everyone equal dignity, respect, and treatment.
204. Blend honesty and "diplomacy."
205. Allow for a wide range of moods, from serious to very relaxed, in the workplace depending on the circumstances.
206. Make each person in your employ very aware that his or her well-being has a high priority with the organization.
207. Don't let differences or animosity linger.
208. Letter of Instruction Number 1.
209. Patton offered six key dictates.
210. Remember that praise is more valuable than blame.
211. Use every means before and after combat to tell troops what they are going to do and what they have done.
212. Discipline is based on pride in the profession (my italics) of arms, on meticulous attention to details, and on mutual respect and confidence. Discipline must be a habit so ingrained that it is stronger than the excitement of battle or the fear of death.
213. Officers must assert themselves by example and by voice.
214. General officers must be seen in the front line during action.
215. There is a tendency for the chain of command to overload junior officers by excessive requirements in the way of training and reports.
216. If you're growing a garden, you need to pull out the weeds, but flowers will die if all you do is pick the weeds. They need sunshine and water. People are the same. They need criticism, but they also require positive and substantive language and information and true support to really blossom.
217. When your feedback is interpreted as a personal attack rather than a critique with positive intentions, you are going backward.
218. Constructive criticism is a powerful instrument essential for improving performance. Positive support can be equally productive.
219. Paul Brown was thorough enough that when the Bengals personnel left the meeting room they knew precisely what they were supposed to do in the coming weeks and that their head coach expected them to enthusiastically adhere to every procedure, policy, and timetable he had specified.

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220. Vince Lombardi.
221. He started each seasons' training camp by assembling the team and announcing, as he held it over his head, "Gentlemen, this is a football."
222. Employees can thrive in an environment where they know exactly what is expected of them – even when those expectations are very high.
223. Don't mistake activity for achievement.
224. Quality collaboration is only possible in the presence of quality communication.
225. When you're not listening, ask good questions.
226. I wanted each of us to be as interested in finding out what others thought as in telling others what we thought.
227. It turns unhealthy when self-confidence becomes arrogance.
228. And self-assurance becomes reckless abandon
229. You should be willing to go to someone's office or desk and help him or her do his or her job.
230. Among many other things, at least once a week each coach spent his lunch hour in the locker room with the team.
231. Dave Packard and Bill Hewlett, founders of Hewlett-Packard.
232. They called it "management by walking around."
233. Be more concerned with finding the right way than in having it your way.
234. A sales manager who resists input from his or her sales team automatically limits its potential; a manager who holds forth at the conference might as well be sitting there alone.
235. Listen and learn.
236. Listen and lead.
237. Leadership is as easy as one, two, three.
238. Only if the one, two, and three are as follows.
239. Listen
240. Learn.
241. Lead.
242. Contrived outburst.
243. Used sparingly, it is an effective leadership tool.

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244. Leadership requires poise under pressure.
245. It takes to be a good teacher: passion, expertise, communication, and persistence.
246. I was consumed by the process of developing the abilities of others.
247. Expertise in the inventory of knowledge and experience you possess on a particular subject.
248. You're not necessarily born with it; you develop it, research it, thrive on learning as much about your subject as you possibly can.
249. People know when you don't have the answers.
250. The more you know, the higher you go.
251. To advance in any profession.
252. It is imperative to understand all aspects of that profession, not just one particular area.
253. They must expand their base of knowledge and develop their inventory of skills and proficiencies in all phases of the job.
254. Your team will sense it, that you are not as knowledgeable in what you do as you should be.
255. Relentless effort to add to his or her own knowledge.
256. In business, this means actively seeking the counsel of those you respect in your profession, as well as studying printed material and publications that you determine will provide pertinent input.
257. Successful teaching requires reception, retention, and comprehension of your message.
258. Enthusiasm for the subject matter is what powers in the communication connection to those you teach.
259. Persistence is essential because knowledge is rarely imparted on the first attempt.
260. Nuts-and-bolts practices to facilitate what you do as a leader.
261. Remember Sun-tzu: "With more sophistication comes more control."
262. Many executives have told me they experience the same pleasure in developing and advancing the skills of their own employees. Companies led by good teachers, those with passion, expertise, communication skills, and persistence, do very well.
263. If you don't love it, don't do it.

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264. The most important attribute of any organization is the way it treats its people, its commitment to the individuals on the team.
265. The highest-paid, most talented people that you can out and hire will not perform to their potential unless they feel as if they are part of something special – a family that treats them right.
266. An organization is only as good as the people who work there and that the leader determines who works there.
267. They knew and believed in me as much as I knew and believed in them.
268. My checklist of personal qualities – assets – in potential staff members.
269. A fundamental knowledge of the area he or she has been hired to manage.
270. A relatively high – but not manic – level of energy and enthusiasm and a personality that is upbeat, motivated, and animated.
271. The ability to discern talent in its potential employees.
272. An ability to communicate.
273. Unconditional loyalty to both you and other staff members. If your staff members are chipping away at one another, the organization is weakened from within – like a tree full of termites. There is, in my view, no offense more serious than disloyalty.
274. My checklist for keeping good staff members on the same page.
275. You must establish clear parameters for your staff regarding the overall method by which you expect things to be done.
276. Any philosophical differences that crop up must be identified and addressed by you in private meetings with the individuals.
277. You must recognize that staff members may work in different ways, using approaches that are at variance with yours.
278. To ensure unanimity throughout that staff, make unannounced visits to various department meetings.
279. Don't cede inordinate power or control to a staff member simply because you are relieved to have an experienced and proven performer come on board.
280. Sometimes a staff member may intentionally teach a philosophy that is at odds with your code of conduct, in the belief that it conforms to your philosophy.
281. Be alert for those staff members who seek to use their position to teach and express their personal beliefs.

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282. Remember Mike Ditka's comment on leadership after his Bears won a Super Bowl championship.
283. Go to the other guys office.
284. As with losing, there is fallout from success, and many of the symptoms are the same.
285. Becoming consumed with themselves.
286. Warren Buffet, says one of his biggest challenges is to help his top people – all wealthy beyond belief – stay interested enough to jump out of bed in the morning and work with all the enthusiasm they did when they were poor and just getting started.
287. Success disease – overconfidence is a major symptom.
288. Over-and-underconfidence are an ongoing challenge in leadership.
289. First comes heightened confidence, followed quickly by overconfidence, arrogance, and a sense that.
290. Mastery requires endless remastery.
291. It is a process, not a destination.
292. Having triumphed, winners come to believe that the process of mastery is concluded and that they are its proud new owners.
293. Makes people begin to forego to different degrees of the effort, focus, discipline, teaching, teamwork, learning, and attention to detail that brought "mastery" and its progeny, success. The hunger is diminished, even removed in some people.
294. Complacency may be too strong a word to describe it, maybe not. Perhaps "contentment".
295. It can create a lack of respect for the competition, a feeling of superiority.
296. That you can win at will, turn it on when it counts. The time is to turn it on (and leave it on) is before it counts. In fact, my belief is that it counts all the time.
297. When you couple contentment with underestimating the competition, you – all by yourself – have set yourself up for defeat.
298. Then formally return to business as usual by letting everyone know the party is over.
299. Channel that powerful force and enthusiasm into the work ahead to solidify and build on the gains made by your team in achieving their recent success. Make sure the power of your victory propels you forward in a controlled manner.

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300. Be apprehensive about applause.
301. Develops a plan for yore staff that gets them back into the mode of operation that produced success in the first place.
302. Hold meetings to explain that steps must be taken to sustain momentum; refocus personnel by covering in detail why success was achieved.
303. Address specific situations that need shoring up; focus on the mistakes that were made and things that were not up to snuff in the success.
304. Be demanding. Do not relax. Hold everyone to even higher expectations.
305. Don't fall prey to overconfidence so that you feel you can or should make change for the sake of change. Change is inevitable, but change is not a casual consideration.
306. Never fall prey to the belief that getting to the top makes everything easy. In fact, what it makes easier is the job of motivating those who want your spot at the top.
307. You are now the target.
308. Recognize that mastery is a process, not a destination.
309. It's one of the reasons only six teams in the history of the NFL have won the Super Bowl and then repeated by winning it again the next year.
310. Others may have started cashing out on the season because of our 5-5 won-lost record. Either way, cocky or cashing out.
311. The road to a goal even more elusive than success; namely, consistent success.
312. Some individuals have "situational character" – their attitude (and subsequent performance) are linked to results.
313. A leader must be able to identify these types of situations and not shy away from removing malcontents from the organization.
314. Some define character as simply aspiring to high ideals and standards.
315. You must also have the strength of commitment and sacrifice to adhere to those standards and ideals in both good times and bad.
316. Commitment and sacrifice.
317. Personal characteristics.
318. Ronnie drove others to sacrifice at his level by setting extreme personal standards of physical intensity and concentration for himself in practice

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(especially in practice, where it can be tempting to coast) and games that have exceeded even my own expectations.

319. In his own personal example, he became a de facto coach, one whose specialty was teaching others what it meant to give it everything you've got. When evaluating our people, this was a key characteristic that I valued highly. I understood the impact it has on others in the organization. (KG)
320. When you bring a "Ronnie Lott" into your organization, you are actually bringing several "Ronnie Lotts" aboard, because they create others in their own image.
321. I wanted players who had character, not players who were characters.
322. Cumulative character is the backbone of your winning team.
323. Every single one of you guys will have at least one chance to win a game for us. I ask you to prepare for that opportunity with the attitude that it's a certainty, not a possibility.
324. In business it may be a customer-service representative or another less prominent "player" who fails to address a problem due to lack of readiness or a feeling that his or her particular job doesn't really mean that much in the big picture.
325. Members of this group can become a serious distraction and liability, because as their attitude worsens, their commitment wavers and their carping increases. When the bottom 20 percent is dissatisfied – doesn't feel they're a real part of your team, that is, appreciated – their comments, perspective, and reactions – their "bitching" – is seen, heard, absorbed by those who are positive and productive.
326. Working hard to ensure that they were integrated and assimilated into everything we did so they didn't feel left out or part of a second tier on the team.
327. During meetings I would often give a one hundred dollar bill a reward to a role player who had made a big contribution in the previous game. It was another chance for them to be recognized by me in front of the whole squad, for me to give them ownership in the organizations results.
328. Helping them understand that they make a difference.
329. I care a lot more about how we lose than if we lose.
330. I believe in you.

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331. It's amazing and one of the things I love most about leadership – teaching a person how to reach higher and higher, to achieve great things with his or her talent.
332. Nobody will ever come back to you later and say "thank you" for expecting too little of them.
333. The art of leadership requires knowing when it makes sense to take people over the top, to push them to their highest level of effort, and when to take your foot off the accelerator a little.
334. The best leaders are those who understand the levels of energy and focus available within their team.
335. We got beat because we were beat.
336. By instinct we – leaders – want to run hard all the time; by intellect we know this is not possible.
337. What's difficult to do is recognize when extra effort, extreme exertion, working "as hard as possible" starts to produce diminishing returns.
338. You're trying to keep your superiors from doing anything rash because they want results now, while simultaneously working with those under your supervision so they don't give up or mutiny.
339. This included providing him with a budget manual (thick), an operations manual (thick), a personnel manual (thick), an overall set of job descriptions that included the specific job of each player and my evaluation of that individual (thick), and a detailed listing of my performance goals and expectations (even thicker).
340. I wanted the owner to understand that I was applying maximum effort and paying attention to every single solitary detail of the family's massive financial investment. I believe the voluminous detailing of my efforts and plans bought me precious time.
341. Positive results – winning- count most. But until those results come through your door, a heavy dose of documentation relating to what you've done and what you're doing, planning to do, and hoping to do may buy you just enough extra time to actually do it.
342. Open and honest communication with your superiors, both written and verbal, is a valuable tool in keeping them from coming to the wrong conclusions.
343. Concentrate on what will produce results rather than on the results, the process rather than the prize.
344. Don't isolate yourself. Keep in mind that as troubles mount, your relationships with personnel become even more critical.

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345. Don't let the magnitude of the challenge take you away from the incremental steps necessary to effect change.
346. Exude an upbeat and determined attitude.
347. Deal with your immediate superiors on a one-to-one ongoing basis. Expect betrayal if results are not immediate. (You extend the time before betrayal occurs by keeping your superiors in the loop.)
348. I made it my job to study others, to learn along the way.
349. The great leaders start learning young and continue until their last breath.
350. That he had a singular focus: on being first class, on being the best, on being the greatest. But lots of guys have that – the desire to be the best. Here's the difference: Bill knew exactly how to do it, the specifics, not just for his quarterback but for a receptionist answering the phones, not just for a backup left tackle but for groundskeepers.
351. Bill Walsh had the ability to change the way people thought – not just how we performed a task, but how we thought and felt about who we were.
352. The connection between preparation and performance; between intelligently applied hard work and results; between mediocrity and mastery of your job.
353. Has the skill coupled with the will to do it.
354. They understood the absolute and direct connection between intelligently directed hard work and achieving your potential. We all do; you do; I do. Everybody who's a serious player.
355. The difference is how much you're willing to give to get there.
356. The starting point for everything – before strategy, tactics, theories, managing, organizing, philosophy, methodology, talent, or experience – is the work ethic.
357. You – the one in charge – are the reference point for what that means.
358. A leader's great work ethic must be seen to be perceived, must be perceived if it is to be the organization's norm.
359. What caused what, and how can it be improved? Was my recurrent question, an obsession.
360. Achieving success in a competitive environment requires solving a very complicated puzzle. This is true in all big-time competition. The winners know how to get more pieces of the puzzle in place than the losers.

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361. I also know that the degree of drive an individual has to solve the puzzle perfectly, no matter how complex or difficult, is directly related to attaining higher and higher levels of success. It's that desire that wakes you up in the middle of the night reaching for a pen and paper next to your bed – an insatiable hunger to capture inspiration and answers that all highly driven people share.
362. If a person can be extremely intense, extraordinarily focused, and completely composed all at the same time, I guess that's the state I was in by the time I was through not singing.
363. Getting your mind right has application beyond a football game. Those events when you're putting it all on the line – a big sales presentation, an important conference with your team (or your boss), and many other occasions – all require that your thinking be at its best.
364. We expected veterans to do everything possible to bring along the rookies.
365. I wanted new players, new staff members, new scouts, and everyone else who joined us to sense immediately they had joined an organization with a unique environment.
366. In a sense, I made teachers out of my students. The players became coaches. This built-in crew of teachers exists in your own organization.
367. My philosophy of team members teaching new arrivals the organization's system, not just X's and O's but the attitudes and actions of performance, is essential to a self-sustaining winning organization. It is accomplished through mentoring within your organization. And for mentoring to exist, members of your team must truly believe that their first loyalty is to furthering the good of the group: What is good for us is good for me.
368. Do you teach that being on your team includes sharing their knowledge?
369. Character-based leaders tend to seek and attract character-based employees in sports, in business or anywhere else.
370. They knew their career aspirations would be addressed and respected.
371. People matter most – more than equipment, investors, inventions, momentum, or X's and O's. People are at the heart of achieving organization greatness. Too often aggressive leaders forget the human part of the equation – the most important part.
372. Afford each person the same respect, support, and fair treatment you would expect if your roles were reversed. Deal with people individually not as objects who are part of a herd – that's the critical factor.

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391. Calculated risks are part of what you do, but the idea that something completely crazy will work just because it's completely crazy is completely crazy.
392. I was absolutely sure that if I did the job it would not get screwed up. Well, that can only take you so far. Pretty soon you're on overload while very talented people in the organization are being underutilized.
393. You may suspect you need to be delegating more, but you can't bring yourself to do it; you can't summon in yourself a trust in others whose talent you respected enough to hire them.
394. Losing, however you define it, even the thought of losing, can become so psychologically crippling that winning offers little solace and no cause for celebration because you've imposed an internal accounting system on yourself that awards zero points for winning and minus points for losing. You can never get ahead on points. That's exactly what happened to me.
395. Victory meant little more than delaying the pain of loss.
396. Either way, you are putting yourself on a slippery slope when you start believing that the outcome of your effort represents or embodies who you really are as a person – what you're value as a person is. I speak from personal experience.
397. For me, the San Francisco 49ers increasingly became who "Bill Walsh" was on the inside. Any mistake or loss became me. Any setback – big or small – reflected back on me, and I personalized it.
398. This is a dangerous way to run your professional life because it seeps into and contaminates your private live.
399. Ultimately because failure had been personalized to such a degree. I was tormented by the very thought of errors of execution, mistakes, or loss. Winning, winning, winning – perfection –was the only solution.
400. The pursuit of the prize had become an exercise in avoiding pain.
401. A profession I loved and had worked for all my life had gone from being joyful to unenjoyable and unendurable.
402. Football coaches, just like executives who push themselves to the bring and beyond, often have no support system and become isolated from family, friends, and normal interactions.
403. The best way to kill time is to work it to death.
404. I worked time to death until it killed me.

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405. You must derive satisfaction and gratification from winning without letting it define your self-worth, just as you cannot allow defeat to define you as a person.
406. Some thoughts on avoiding the trap.
407. How to deal with the escalating expectations that become preposterous, personalization of results and "zero points for winning."
408. Do not isolate yourself.
409. Develop a small, trusted network of people whose opinions you respect and are willing to honestly evaluate.
410. Keep your lines of communication open with mentors and professionals in your business whom you trust.
411. They can help you restore perspective and help clarify and prioritize situations and responsibilities.
412. Delegate abundantly.
413. Allow them to use their talent in ways that serve the team and lighten your load. If you've hired and taught them well, they will do their job.
414. Avoid the destructive temptation to define yourself as a person by the won-lost record, the "score," however you define it. Don't equate your team's "won-lost" record with your self worth.
415. Shake it off.
416. Also, it was unpleasant to know that doing a good job in the NFL wasn't much different from doing a bad job. Both will get you fired; the latter just gets you fired sooner. You know you're there as a coach temporarily, only while you're very successful, only when you do a fantastic job. Then you learn that even a fantastic job is inadequate. The norm becomes the impossible, and when you don't achieve the impossible, your head's on the chopping block.
417. From my first day at 49ers headquarters, I had begun imbuing individuals with a sense that a higher standard was being taught and learned, executed and expected in all of our actions and attitudes.
418. Today's effort becomes tomorrow's result. The quality of those efforts becomes the quality of your work. One day is connected to the following day and the following month to the succeeding years.
419. What got him to the top professionally was his downfall personally; in spite of his incomparable achievements, he had trouble ever feeling unfulfilled on a continuous basis.

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420. Improvement was his obsession – always looking for ways to improve his coaching, his team, his organization.