



The Way of the Spartan Warrior

8 Life Lessons from
God's Gridiron

A PLAYBOOK

**From Game to
Greatness By**

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Prologue

“Football is a great deal like life in that it teaches that work, sacrifice, perseverance, competitive drive, selflessness and respect for authority is the price that each and every one of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile.”

- Vince Lombardi

Like they often say in the movie business, this story is “inspired by true characters and real events.” This is a fictional story designed to entertain and inspire. However, Jesus changed the world with stories and so I guess we stand in good company.

It was also a labor of love. The authors stepped onto this playing field of storytelling to give back to the sport that gave them so much. Most of all it was fun. This book is not just for high performance athletes and their coaches. It’s for anyone who wants to win in the game of life. Life is truly “God’s Gridiron” and “victory” (in its truest sense) is always within our reach.

Here is the premise. Everything learned on the football field today can be successfully translated into a greater life tomorrow.

This book intends to go above and beyond Coach Lombardi’s good advice. Our goal is to raise the bar, to “think beyond our thinking,” to a new level of playing and a new way of living.

Battle scars should not be just memories of the past; they should be symbols that point the way to a great life in the future.

If you are a player, this PLAYBOOK will motivate you to practice harder and become mentally and physically stronger today. Whether you are the CEO of a major business operation or a single mom trying to find money to pay her light bill, you will discover new paths to a better life today!

Football is more than a game. It is a vibrant stack of metaphors and lessons; all preparing you for an inspiring life, even after the game clock clicks to zeros.

In one respect, it is simple math. Applied lessons of God's Gridiron = a GREAT LIFE. Like all good lessons, they beg to demonstrate in our lives (or even passed on to our children and grandchildren). It will be the "gift that keeps on giving" and the coach that never leaves you.

It can be your compass that guides you through the thrill of new victories and the pain of losses...all part of a well lived life.



Football Gridiron = Life

We all have heard the stories of star athletes "falling from grace" after their playing days are over. We all know people who have tragically stepped out of the game of life and are needlessly sitting on the sidelines. This book is for them and more.

In this book there is a lot of talk about feeding. And so, we ask you a tough question that might change your life forever.

Daily, what are you feeding your mind? Are you feeding it junk food from the internet and social media or are you starving it with no food at all? When you wake up in the morning, you probably eat a healthy breakfast. However, what nourishing thoughts are you daily feeding your mind?

You wake up and dress for the day. And yet, what time or attention do you give to your "garments of your mind?"

What are your daily rituals? What are your daily meditations? What are you asking for your prayers?

We submit to you that we all have two stomachs. One is for food and the other is for thought. One is in your gut and the other is in your head.

Here's the kicker. The one in your head is more important because it is closer to God. You have (between your ears) the most powerful computer in the universe and most of us are not even opening this laptop and turning it on.

What a tragedy this is!

And here is the good news. Once you feed your mind, its nutrients bleed down into your heart and you become superhuman.

Like Jesus said, "you can do even greater miracles than I."

If you aren't excited about this idea, I urge you to close this book and go check your Facebook or twitter feeds. This book is not for you!

The story in this book is fiction, however, it is also what Joseph

Campbell called it "the hero's journey." We are all on a similar path. This book is a story about your life! It is an elaborate parable, designed to create the answers to these three questions.

1) What do I want?

2) What does that look like?

3) What am I feeding my body and mind...to get there?

Do this and you will be a rocket blasting off from earth. No one will have to motivate you to get in motion or work hard because your rocket fuel is your connection to God. You will be beyond discipline. Your hard work will become pleasure and your sacrifices will become a sacred journey and mission.

Here is one word of advice.

Do not do anything in life without first establishing an intention. Your intention is for your laser focus. Don't eat a meal without first saying grace... intending to gloriously feed your body, mind, and soul. Don't start a practice, workout, or meeting without intending it to be your best and most productive session ever. Don't fall asleep with first intending it to be your most restful sleep of your life. Don't even enter a room without first intending to connect with everyone there with humility, presence, and grace.

When you live life with intention, you bring the "gift of you...in everything you do!" Let your light shine and authentically play the music of "who you are" and it will bless the world and reflect to you tenfold.

As you will see by the end of this book, football is a shining example of how to establish the intention of becoming a Champion on or off the playing field.

And so, continually expecting more, raises the bar. Ask yourself “what is the next level in my life?” Adopt a mindset of a “work in progress” obsessed with growing in God’s garden. Be like a glorious oak tree whose only divine assignment is to GROW and reach for the heavens! How wonderful life is! And so...live it to the fullest.

Line up for kickoff and let the games begin.

Be Legendary,

--- John and Zo

Notes: What do you hope to get out of this book? What are your intentions?

List three:

Answer the following questions:

- 1) What do I want?**
- 2) What does that look like?**
- 3) What am I feeding my body and mind...to get there?**

Acknowledgements

“At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

Albert Schweitzer

God works in mysterious ways. When I emailed my good friend Zo and told him that I had finished the first draft of this book, I suddenly realized that it was Memorial Day Weekend.

How appropriate.

Accordingly, there are many people we would like to remember and thank. It was their bravery and relentless courage that inspired these pages.

This book is about inspirational life warriors.

We both would like to thank the soldiers and sailors who sacrificed life and limb to make our country safe and great.

We would like to thank our families (wives, siblings, and parents) who “fought the good fight” to give us a home and a good place to love, learn and grow.

We would also like to thank all our teammates and coaches who taught us so much about this playground called Life.

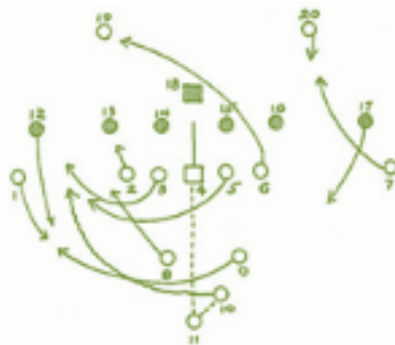
Lastly, we would like to thank that “Big Guy in the Sky” who made this dance with

Destiny possible.

Thank you, God, for your “light that shows the cracks in our armor.” (You will understand this more after you read this book.)

Go Green!

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CHAPTER ONE

The End

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever”.

- Mahatma Gandhi

Ex-MSU Defensive Tackle Max Bentley stands in front of two small gravestones in the middle of a tiny cemetery in a small farming community north of Detroit. He wears a suit and tie.

In his early 30's, he's a huge man who looks the part of a former football player. His eyes tell us that “off the football field” he is gentler than a giant. It's Springtime and the trees push tiny buds of life out the open arms of their spindly branches.

The green grass stretches across the landscape between headstones, like sections of turf in a football field end zone. The sun peaks over the horizon sending lasers of light through the morning air.

A cool breeze pushes across the area, just fast enough to make the trees bow and wave like fervent fans in a football stadium.

You can smell the richness of the plowed earth of new life growing in farms nearby. It whispers a silent prayer of God's eternal greatness... just waiting to be shared.

Max holds a copper urn of ashes in his right arm, like a tailback carrying a football. Strong, young, and handsome, he clashes with the lifeless symbols of death all around him. A tear slips from his right eye and rolls down his cheek.

Finally, he smiles as long-lost memories whisper in his ear. Let us join him and hear his story.

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CHAPTER TWO

The Awakening

"If you only knock long enough and loud enough at the gate, you are sure to wake up somebody."

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Max Bentley looked up to the sky as his eyes slowly opened. Where was he? Who was he? The blistering sun causes him to squint and blink. It is like waking from death; every cell of his body has closed from a short and temporary loss of consciousness.

Yet, his thoughts still raced like a horse exploding out of the gates of the Kentucky Derby. Max was barely conscious. Yet he still wanted answers. Where was he?

Was he just born, or had he been in a car crash, waiting to die? Was he a cage fighter that just hit the floor after a kick to the temple? Maybe he is a soldier heroically dying in

a war somewhere on foreign soil.

In fact, he was a wounded Spartan struggling to fight again.

Max clenched his fist and wiggled his feet. At least he could still move. Yet he still wanted answers. He finally blurted out a breathless sentence. "What happened?"

Max looked with squinting eyes to see someone kneeling over him, his head eclipsing the sun. He couldn't yet tell who it was.

Suddenly, a soothing voice dropped through the air like a warm blanket. "Easy son, you are going to be okay. We are going to take care of you. Just keep breathing big."

He finally took the advice and felt a little better. Fresh oxygen invades his brain and wakes him up from a deep dreamless sleep. Then another voice breaks his darkened state, "Can you sit up?"

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He clenched his lips and eyes again and answered in a slow, soft voice. "I think so?"

Gradually a huddle of more and more coaches and trainers shielded the sun from his eyes. He heard a protocol and diagnostic question, "What's your name, son?" His speech was still slow. "Maxwell Bentley."

Things are getting clearer now; like a jigsaw puzzle slowly assembling. The deep breaths give him new life as he wakes from a sleep that was only seconds long.

Confusion fades like someone turning down a dial on a radio.

"Football" he thought. "I was playing football!"

Each breath was a step-up on a stairway. He could now see the green and white uniforms as he grabbed his jersey from near the space of his heart.

He heard a voice again. This time it is a warning. "Take it slow. Make sure you're okay."

Consciousness has returned quickly now. "I guess I blacked out for a sec. Must have gotten blindsided."

The veteran female trainer put her hands on her knees and looked into Max's eyes. He is close to normal now. "Feeling better?" She flashed a still worried smile.

Max gave a slow "thumbs up."

A collective sigh filled the air as teammates gathered closer. Everyone felt a sense of relief, now knowing that this fallen DT was going to be okay.

Max heard a chorus of voices of players showing their relief. "That's it Max...Big Ben

just took you to Jesus for a second, that's all! Go Max! You are a tough guy!" Big Ben takes a knee next to Max, "I'm sorry bro! I didn't mean to..." Max cuts him off and then fist bumps his teammate.

"It's part of my job. Getting my ass kicked!"

Laughter explodes from the group, releasing a boatload of worry and tension.

It looks like one of their Spartan warriors is going to live to fight another day!

Max looked around and announced. "I want to get up. The group helps him slowly get to his feet, each grabbing part of his uniform and pulling upwards. Feeling better, he was now embarrassed about getting so much attention.

Everybody loved Max. He's one of those straight-laced guys who lights up the room wherever he goes. A born leader and hard worker.

He was also an aspiring MSU defensive tackle. A strong-bodied, tall, African American, who looked like he had all the tools and talent to be great.

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His deep, brown eyes glowed when he spoke. He was a young man with an old soul and every inch a warrior, now a Spartan.

He was also a special kind of player.

Max was also what is called a "preferred walk-on." The name and label bear consequences. Being a "PWO" is indeed a challenge...especially for a DT. It's a grueling uphill battle and not for the faint of heart.

Walk-ons in football are deeply appreciated by any coach, but clearly not part of the chosen few who are scholarship players. Some call them "human tackling dummies." Perhaps POW (prisoners of war) is a better description.

Walk-ons are often hopelessly captured and chained to an almost impossible dream.

PWO also means "work harder than everyone else." Max needed to constantly impress the coaches, in hopes that one day he could enter the playing field on gameday.

The big prize in winning this battle was seductive and almost irresistible. When you win, you win big. You become "Rocky" in pads and a helmet.

Max, however, also had a back-story that fit into the mix. He had a fire in his belly because he was angry at the world and even God. And in football...anger (when properly focused) is almost always a good thing. When he really "got game" on the field, coaches called him Mad Max.

Here's why...

When he was 14 years old his dad had a catastrophic stroke that left him with slurred speech, cross eyed vision, and a permanent seat in a wheelchair.

Max's football success always made his dad smile. It was like feeding him ice cream that Max could taste.

And it became both his grand obsession and glorious passion.

Every block or QB sack on the field, or patch on his high school letter sweater was another spoonful of icy redemption.

Max had offers from smaller colleges throughout Michigan, however, his dream since he was a little boy was to play football at MSU.

Today was the last day of Spring practice. This "knockout" would surely prevent him from playing in what was called the "Spring Game." And it was only three days away.

The game was pretty much a glorified scrimmage in full dress, with free tickets for anyone who wanted to attend.

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However, the Spring Games were infinitely important to Max. He was now damaged goods. He lost the chance to show his best to the coaches and his teammates. "Concussion Protocol" would clearly keep him on the sidelines wearing street clothes and holding a clipboard.

As he got up and walked the whole team applauded and urged him on with a banter of encouraging words.

Max waved them off with an "I'm okay." Max looked at Big Ben. "I love you more than my jock strap, Bad Ass!"

More laughter exploded from his green and white comrades.

Head Coach Matt Davis walked up to Max. "I'm glad you're okay, son. The blocker pushed Big Ben into you, and it hammered your head into the turf. Ben feels terrible about this. He's not a cheap shot artist, as I think you well know."

"And he's also my best friend." The irony of that statement stayed in the air for a beat. Ben's "hit" almost killed him.

Max looked at his coach. "Comes with the territory coach. I'm fine." Max took a swig from a water bottle that one of the student managers handed him.

Coach D looked at him. "Go take a shower and relax for a while. Come in and see me this week and we can put together a game plan."

But now...go rest!"

Max slowly smiled and pointed up. "I know... I guess it's in God's hands now."

Coach D winked.

Max turned and started a long and lonely walk towards the stadium tunnel. He couldn't help but think, "Is this my last walk to the Spartan locker room?"

Near the sidelines, we see the ancient and iconic equipment manager, "Bee" Bigsbee.

He was watching the whole thing.

Bee slowly nodded to himself as Max walked off the field and into the stadium tunnel. He looks down at Max's helmet, now cradles it in his arms like he was holding Baby Jesus himself.

"He's the one."

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CHAPTER THREE

The Aftermath

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

The team doctor shined a small flashlight into his eyes from a device no bigger than a pencil. He punctuated his search with a series of "hmmms" that were clearly unsettling.

Max finally lost patience. "Am I going to survive Doc, or should I just book a room at the

funeral home?” The doctor kept searching through Max’s pupils like he was looking for bad apples in a bushel basket.

“Well let’s put it this way...you can attend the party, but you aren’t going to dance. This is the second concussion you’ve had since last Fall.”

Translation? No Spring Games.

Doc pulled back and looked at Max. “How do you feel about that son?”

Max looked down. “Let’s just say, I see the writing on the chalkboard.” Doc was confused. Max smiles. “I know...nobody uses chalkboards anymore. They’re older than dirt...just like you.”

Max loved to joke around during tough times. He felt that it loosened things up in tight spots.

Legend had it, in the defensive huddle during the last seconds of his high school championship game, he asked the team “who’s buying the burritos after we win this thing?”

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He then made a game winning sack of the QB and they carried him off the field. (Or at least they tried to...Max was over 300 lbs.)

Doc smiled and took a small scalpel from his leather bag. “How would you like emergency surgery right now?”

They traded a slow high five. “You got me, Doc!”

Later...

The state-of-the-art locker room was empty as Max sat on a bench near the shower. The room looked clean but used. Coach D was a stickler about “cleaning up after yourself” and respect for your environment.

Max still looked a little dazed. Inside his locker was a virtual self improvement shrine. Peak performance quotes and pics were everywhere. Max was clearly a high performance junky. Three pictures set the stage. Martin Luther King, Gandhi, and Mother Teresa.

Finally, Max went over to the far side of the room where Bee was picking up wet towels and putting them in a canvas cart.

The two squared off for a beat. “How are you feeling son?”

Max smiled. “Ever wonder why every old guy on this team wants to call me son?” Bee kept working as he talked. “Just a habit, I guess. Me...I’m almost 70 and I never had any kids. These boys are overgrown babies. Part of my job is to teach them some things they needed to know.”

Max slowly smiled and took it all in. One thing Max was good at was listening. He also loved to pray. Since he was in little league, coaches considered him to be the team Chaplin.

In fact, he almost became a Catholic priest. Max had been admitted to a seminary for his high school years, but he waved it off because they didn't have a football team.

Max now had tears in his eyes. He looked at Bee. "I came over here to thank you. I know what you do is not easy. Most of the time nobody tells you thanks for supplying the armor that makes these Spartans safe."

Bee kept sorting towels as he talked. "I really appreciate that. It was my calling, I guess. Nothing is better in life than finding and following your calling. After that everything kind of falls in place."

Max and Bee squared off like two gunfighters in the middle of the street.

"What's your plan Mad Max?"

The wounded DT smiled as he grabbed his backpack. "Somehow I knew you were going to ask that!"

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Bee asked everybody that. His favorite saying was, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there."

Even though Bee wasn't a coach, he had a way of getting the best out of players. It was like he had a recipe for a "secret sauce." However, it was always very subtle. Bee wasn't a preacher; he was more of a magician.

And as everyone knows, a magician never reveals his secrets.

Added to this, no one had ever seen him in a car. Bee just "showed up" and disappeared every day like Superman or some kind of ghost.

When his sage advice really hit home for a player, their response was always the same... "Gaaaaa Damn" Bee just stung me!"

Bee also loved his job. He was always the first to arrive in the morning and the last to go home at night.

Max looked down, like he was ashamed and embarrassed. "You might as well be the first to know, I'm quitting Bee! I want to be a lawyer after my football days are over. When I got my bell rung out there today, it knocked some sense into me. This team isn't for me."

Bee now folded towels as he listened.

"In the shower it hit me like icy water. I decided it was time to give up this crazy dream. I'm gonna transfer to some smaller college...one of them offered me a scholarship. It

just isn't happening with this team. My reads are bad, and my pass rush is even worse. Coaches want to help, but there is only so much time they can give me. Out there I'm fifth in line of the DTs.

A silence filled the room like fog. Bee kept working as he talked. "That's a good plan...but it might not be the best plan. One thing for sure...you're gonna be a great lawyer. You are already making a good case for quitting on your dream."

Max tried to chew and swallow Bee's words, but they got stuck somewhere. "What do you mean?" Max rolled the towel cart to the door to the locker room exit. Finally, he turned and shot Max with a laser stare. "You eat breakfast?"

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CHAPTER FOUR

The Crack

"God has given us two hands - one to receive with and the other to give with. We are not cisterns made for hoarding; we are channels made for sharing." - Billy Graham

There is a breakfast dive in the middle of East Lansing that serves the best omelets and coffee in the world. The menu isn't filled with sweet, frothy coffee concoctions or glazed, sugary donuts.

Their breakfast special is always the same. It is an omelet big enough to feed your family and they don't pass out doggie bags.

For football players, the volume of food is almost as important as taste. As Big Ben once said, (while looking at his tiny steak in a 5-star bistro), “that’s about enough food to make me angry.”

The place had another draw. It sells the best coffee in the world. It is a magical black liquid in white porcelain cups. It lights up your brain and supercharges your morning mood.

It’s cheap and ...the best.

No one could ever remember the name of this joint and so customers just called it “that breakfast place.” And so, after a dozen years of this, Sid, the owner finally folded and posted a neon sign out front that said just that.

When Max entered, he immediately spotted Bee waving in a booth in the farthest corner.

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Max shook his head. No matter how hard they tried, no one could ever arrive before Bee. Over the years, players thought he might sleep in the locker room, since he never told anyone where he lived.

Bee was a self-appointed mystery man.

Max walked over, shook hands, and then took off his fanny pack and slid into the seat. Two black coffees were already sitting in front of them.

Bee has spent a lifetime setting the table for his players/kids on the MSU football team. It was simply who he was.

The waitress came over and smiled. “You need cream with that?” Max looked at Bee. “You are kidding me?” Bee cracked a smile and winked.

It was a running joke that Bee had started. Cream in your coffee was akin to wearing diapers. Real men don’t need any window dressing for their java. You never want to water down a good caffeine buzz.

The waitress held her pen in hand and waited for an instruction she already knew.

Bee looked at her. “We’ll both have the breakfast special.” Max nodded.

Bee cut to the chase with a question. “Do you know why we are here?” Max takes a drink of his coffee and then smiles. “Sure, you want to convince me to ride the pine as a Spartan for the next three or four years.”

Now Bee reloaded with his own sip of coffee. “Quite to the contrary. I came here because a long time ago I made a promise to a good friend.” Max is now percolated with curiosity. He couldn’t help but ask. “Who’s the friend?”

Bee ignored the question. "God knows why he chose me to be the caretaker of his life's work." Max looked up. "Who is this guy you made promises to?"

Bee looked out the window. "I'd rather not say... yet."

Max looked at him. "Then tell me about you, mystery man."

Bee hesitated. He didn't like talking about himself. Finally, he fessed up. "I grew up in Detroit during the fifties and sixties. It was a turbulent time. Riots, racial segregation, crime. It became a kind of war zone. And I was the skinny kid that everyone liked to bully."

"The thing that saved me in all this was football. From the time I could walk, I was in love with this crazy game. The problem is that I had no size, strength, or talent. No matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't compete. I watched the movie "Rudy," except my career started and ended in high school instead of college."

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Max smiled. "What's the happy ending?"

"In the last game of the season, I was on the kickoff team in a game that meant nothing. The ball fumbled and bounced right in front of me and into my arms and I took it into the endzone for a touchdown."

Max claps his hands hard and smiles. "Damn Bee you just stung me!"

"I knew then that football would be my life's work. I knew that I would do whatever I could to create that feeling, even if it wasn't me carrying the ball. It was enough for me to be a cog in the machine that created those moments."

Bee continued, "When I came to MSU I volunteered as a student manager. After four years of this I got a job as an assistant in the equipment room. The rest is history."

Silence and smiles. Bee looks up. "I like to eat breakfast with special friends. Want to know why?"

"It reminds me of the story about heaven and hell my mentor told me. Both places had a huge banquet hall with the tastiest food and drink God ever created. Except each guest had these huge spoons and forks attached permanently to their arms and hands. And in hell everyone was cursing and swearing, because they couldn't get the food to their mouths. They could look, but never eat. And they constantly fought and blamed each other."

Max smiled. "And heaven?"

Bee smiled back. "They had the exact same food and the exact same problem. However, the room was always filled with joy and laughter. Everyone got their fill. And

you know why?"

"Why?"

"The folks in heaven did one thing different. They didn't feed themselves. They fed each other."

Max slowly clapped. "That's dope!" Bee had him where he wanted him. He knew the time was right for something special.

"I want to give you something. However, you must promise me that after your visit coach Davis... you meet with me one more time.

Max was confused. "How did you know that coach D and I were meeting?"

Bee smiled, "Let's just say, I know things."

He pulls out Max's helmet from under the table. "Recognizes this?"

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Max looked at the helmet, clearly shaken to the core. "How did you?" Bee smiled. "Hey, I'm the equipment manager. Look at it close."

Max sees that it is cracked in the front next to his face mask. "It's broken."

Bee takes a sip from his coffee. "It's like all of us. As humans we are all damaged goods. We're all in a cocoon trying to break through to the next level. We all must embrace this process. It's that struggle that makes us great. Did you know that a butterfly will die if you help cut it loose from the cocoon? When the butterfly engages in the struggle, it pushes life giving fluids into the wings so they can grow and expand. If we shortcut the process, the butterfly will die. His wings never grow. The crack is also a sign. You're the one."

Bee slides the helmet across the table to Max. "Keep this as a reminder. To take your life to the next level, you must break through your old thinking. And it all starts in your head. It's like my mentor told me. "A wound is just a crack in your armor where the light can shine through."

There is a long and uncomfortable silence.

Bee continued. "Let's get to ground level before we try to fly. I have seen players come and go for almost fifty years and do you know what the mindset of the great ones is?"

Max sat back... like he was about to hear a church sermon that he had already heard a thousand times before. He knew all the answers to that question. Make goals, think positive, stay strong... yadda, yadda, yadda.

Out of respect, he took out a small notebook from his back pocket. "Tell me... I'm all

ears.”

Bee smiled as he continued. “We all have two lions inside of us fighting each other. One is good, the other is evil. One light, the other is darkness. One is hope, the other is fear. Do you know which one always wins?”

Max slowly shook his head “no.”

“The one you feed.”

Suddenly the waitress arrived with two plates piled with the biggest omelets you have ever seen. She set them down in front of Bee and Max. “Anything else?”

Bee looked at her. “Plenty...just not today.” He winked at her. “We are good so far.”

Max was still in shock. Bee looked down at his folded hands in front of him. “Lesson one is finished. Let’s pray...and then feed.”

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CHAPTER FIVE

The Collision

“The first and greatest victory is to conquer yourself; to be conquered by yourself is of all things most shameful and vile.” - Plato

Max drove on mental cruise control on his way back to his apartment. His thoughts were a million miles away. No doubt about it...Bee’s words had stung him as much as Big Ben’s hit on the field.

Luckily, he had put \$5 of gas in his 20-year-old Chevy yesterday or he might have ended up in the gravel on the side of the road, his car sputtering empty and stalled.

Of course, Max liked the feeling of “running on empty.” It was a little game he would often play while driving on campus. It reminded him of a clock ticking down in the fourth quarter of a game. He liked the feeling of “getting the most out of whatever is left.”

For some reason, Bee’s words “hit home” somehow. Chill bumps still filled his arms and back. “Was it the caffeine?” he thought.

Max never took drugs or drank. He thought to himself, “this must be how it feels!” He read somewhere that the brain can produce drugs more powerful than anything you could buy in a drug store or on the Detroit ghetto-streets. And all of them are free!

No doubt about it. Bee had given Max some big pills to swallow. He reached over and felt the crack in his helmet with his fingers. He wondered how much light could really come through that tiny broken space.

Bee had done something powerful in that little dive and breakfast place. He had wiped the slate clean. He had turned Max into a blank canvas. And all he could think about were those two lions knocking heads.

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Max had been a high performance junky all his life. His favorite book was “The Magic of Thinking Big” He had seen the movie “Rocky” at least a dozen times. His first hero as a child was Warren Sapp. The book “The Power of Positive Thinking” was his second Bible.

Max had always been searching for an “edge” that would give him the “keys to the kingdom.”

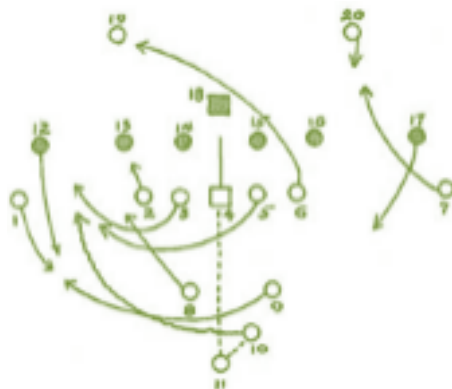
But now the game has changed. He suddenly realized that he was just beginning. He knew nothing. This emptiness now fought with the full stomach from a big breakfast. For a short moment, Max thought he might puke. And so, he started to breathe deeply.

Suddenly, a MSU student on a bike pulled out in front of him. “Noooo!” He slammed on his breaks, just missing him by inches.

Now stopped and stationary, Max waved off the bike rider like he was a DB who just missed any easy Pic 6ix. “It’s okay...”

He started breathing hard again like he would on the field after a painful tackle. Max was learning fast. He was making progress.

But he still knew... there was still plenty of heavy lifting to do.



CHAPTER SIX

The Meeting

"It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light." - Aristotle

Max looked both ways as he crossed the street next to the football building. It was raining, but he loved it...even without an umbrella. He never understood why students

hated Michigan weather. Max loved the seasons. He once had a friend who lived in California. He said “Your life flatlines because every day the weather is the same.

Perfect.”

Where do you go from perfect? “It’s like kissing your sister or drinking stale beer. It’s...lifeless.” Max had a lot of faults, but he liked to battle them.

Max liked the challenges of change and disruption.

He took a deep breath and got focused. Today was the day he had scheduled to talk to Coach Davis.

Inside the building, it was clear that Max arrived at his favorite place: the Duffy Daugherty Football Building.

It was like a piece of heaven. State-of-the-art glass walls and tall ceilings, it was a cross between a museum and a massive trophy room.

It dripped the stuff that legends are made of. There were giant photos of former Spartan players in their moments of celebrating greatness. Trophies sat in glass casings that said, “look...feel...but don’t touch.” It was a spectacular collage of great moments of victory and triumph.

After he walked up the steps to Coach D’s office on the second floor he was greeted by the receptionist. Somehow, she knew. “I’ll tell him you’re here.” Max smiled and nodded. “Great.”

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Inside his office, Coach D rose from his desk chair and shook hands. He was a living legend. He turned the Spartan program around almost immediately and returned it to the greatness and success of Duffy Daugherty in the 60’s.

When his tenure was over, there would surely be a statute of him in front of the building Max was standing in.

Coach D smiled big. “Good to see you Max. Have a seat.” Max smiled and sat in a comfortable leather chair in front of him. “How you feel?”

Max looked down, “Doc told me I would have to miss the Spring Game. To be honest with you, that hurt, Coach. It hurt worse than banging my head on the turf.”

The coach listened hard. Max looked sideways as if he was reading a cue card on the wall. “I guess God took away my last chance.”

Max looked down at his feet and felt a surge of shame that he did not like. It was the pose of a loser.

Finally, Coach D spoke. “I know.”

Max spoke from the heart. "I want to be a lawyer coach. Maybe that is where I am supposed to compete. Maybe that's my real playing field."

Finally, Max broke the silence. "What do I do Coach?"

It was indeed a special moment...especially for a football player. It was as if the game was tied with only seconds left to play and Max and his teammates were huddled on the sidelines, waiting for the play from his coach that was going to push his team into the endzone.

Coach D finally broke the silence and leaned back in his chair. "You know, I have been doing this coaching stuff most of my life. And you know what I have realized is?"

Max looked up. "What?"

"Most of the time...I have no answers."

This was not what Max expected. Most coaches, especially the great ones, always have answers. They spend hundreds of hours looking at videos of the opposing teams and playing with the x's and o's to find answers and responses to big questions. It seemed like this man who he clearly worshipped was throwing in the towel on him.

Coach D finally spoke. "You know the selfish response for me would be to give you false hope and keep you around on the scouting team for three more years. And I'm not going to do that. You are something special Max. That's all I know. I really wish that I could tell you what to do. But that's up to you and God. And I know you'll make the right decision. A good coach sets the table. But the player is the one who has to eat."

Max is reminded of Bee's stories about heaven and the fighting lions.

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He looked up again. "How do I do that coach?"

Coach D leaned forward with his fingers laced together. "I go through this every year myself. When is enough... enough? When should I retire? And you know what? Everyone has an opinion. The press has an opinion, the Spartan nation has an opinion, my team has an opinion. But ultimately, it's my call. All we can do is focus on getting answers instead of more questions."

"But it's so confusing."

Coach pulls a keychain from his desk drawer. It has a small flashlight hooked to it. He flicks it on and gives it to Max.

"I agree. Life is like a dark room. But God gives you a flashlight so that you can find your way. And whatever you shine that light on will become your future. All we can do today is know that you will make the right decision. Go shine your light on answers and nothing else. I can't tell you what to do. All I can do is know that you will do the right thing."

Max tried to give the small flashlight back to his coach. He waved it off. “My gift to you. I got a bunch of them for the guys.”

Max clicks it off. “Thanks.”

Coach D leaned forward again. “Here is where my flashlight is pointed... someday, whether it’s in a courtroom, stadium or an auditorium, I’m going to be in the front row giving you a standing ovation. Can you see that for me Max?”

Max was silent for a long time. His mind raced a mile a minute. A thousand responses flew through his head like a flock of sparrows crossing a morning sky.

Suddenly, his least expected answer blurted out before he could stop it. “Got it.” Coach D stood up and extended his hand for a shake. “I don’t really know how this applies, but I want to share with you something Duffy Daugherty told me when I had a tough decision to make about two special opportunities. He smiled at me and said, ‘Choose both.’”



CHAPTER SEVEN

The Church

“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he

who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.” - Nelson Mandela

The meeting with Coach Davis left Max with plenty to think about. To be honest, Max was somewhat disappointed. He had been looking for answers, and all he got was more questions.

As he walked down the stairs of the football building, he couldn't help but study the giant photos and trophies that filled the room with fresh eyes, "Did all of these heroes go through this? Is all this the price of greatness?"

Suddenly, something strange gripped him

"Is all this simply symptoms of a broken helmet and a broken brain? Should I go see a doc for some meds to heal my head?"

One thing's for sure, if Bee left him with an empty canvas and clean slate, things would fill up fast.

He also had another unexpected symptom. His sessions with Bee and Coach D have been exhausting. He was feeling a little punch drunk.

He needed time to think and time to recalibrate.

It was like those times on his laptop when everything was overloaded, the screen was frozen and all you can do to fix it is shut everything down.

No doubt about it. Max needed time to reboot.

He was also feeling something new and unexpected. Fear.

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Max was at the crossroads of something big and beautiful, and he was afraid he would "blow it" and make the wrong decision. He read somewhere that fear was really an illusion. False Evidence Appearing Real.

"However, maybe fear is good." He whispered to himself now. "What if fear is just the juice to get you ready for the battle? It puts you on high alert and gets you ready to fight like a mother bear protecting her cubs.

Max exited the football building and walked over to his car. The rain had stopped, and the cool Spring air was easy to breathe. It felt good to be outside.

Before getting into his car, Max felt an urge to go inside the stadium. The sun was breaking through the storm clouds and it was turning into a beautiful sunny day.

Inside the stadium, he walked to the middle of the field near the fifty-yard line and did a 360. He did this regularly during his year at Michigan State.

The empty space felt good. It was a giant, cement, and open-air cathedral.

He loved it more than a church because there was no roof. There was no barrier between God and His creations. The clouds were the only ceiling and the open air reminded him that, “the sky’s the limit.”

Max liked empty churches. Back in his days in high school at Roseville Sacred Heart, he would always visit church and pray before a game, when no one else was around.

After a while, it became a ritual and unbreakable habit. It seemed that “the more he prayed, the better he played.”

It was easy to pray in this massive Spartan church.

As he looked at the stadium tunnel, he remembered last year’s Spring Game. He was a freshman DT and his mom and dad surprised him and showed up with his two younger sisters to see him in uniform.

He remembered how proud he was to see his mom push dad through the tunnel in his wheelchair, his sisters by their side.

Max remembered his words when his dad waved him over and he looked his dad in the eye, “the real Spartan has just arrived.” He then gripped his dad’s fists with both hands and kissed his forehead.

His dad smiled big.

However, as brave as his dad was, Max got most of his strength and inspiration from his mother, Beatrice.

She was always the one pushing the wheelchair. She was the one who took the family life challenges and one by one, wrestled them to the ground.

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Beatrice was a true warrior; fully engaged in the battles of life. For almost 7 years she devoted her life to caring for the man she loved and creating an environment still filled with laughter and joy for their four grown kids and two younger sisters.

His dad wasn’t really a sports fan. Before his stroke, he loved to fish. And some of Max’s fondest memories were fishing with his dad on Sunday mornings on lake St. Clair. After 5:30 mass they would hitch up his trailer and boat to go to his dad’s real church. “The middle of the lake.”

Dad used to say, “Church isn’t a place, it’s a state of mind.”

During his illness he would often scream and cry out of frustration and anxiety.

He would shout with broken words, “middle of the lake, middle of the lake” as if he wanted his mind to go there to escape the chains and prison of his sickness and

disability.

Max had quit asking God why such a good man had to suffer so much. It was one of his biggest life revelations.

Some questions are never answered, and you just move on and move forward.

During the Spring Game last year, Max got a chance to play a series of downs in the last quarter. He caught the opposing QB and wrested him to the ground for a “big time sack.” As Max ran off the field, he locked eyes with his old man and traded a “thumbs up.”

Stroke or no stroke, no one could take away that moment between father and son.

Max thought about what Coach D said about the flashlight.

Maybe his problem was living too much in the past and not enough in the future. Maybe he was pointing his light downwards instead of upwards. Maybe he wasn't pointing the flashlight anywhere at all.

It seemed that everything in the past was bolted into the cement, like the seats in the stadium. It seemed like painful memories were as toxic as hate.

He remembered a quote he read from Nelson Mandela, who spent 18 years of his life in prison for a crime he did not commit.

It was short, sweet, and simple. “Forget the past.”

One thing for sure, Max could not change what had already happened in his life. He could only change the future.

Max laid back on the turf in the middle of the field. The grass was still wet from the morning rain.

However, he didn't care.

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If anything, it made him feel more connected to the energies of earth. It was the kind of glue that bonded him to something bigger.

His arms and legs spread like a kid creating a “snow angel.”

For a beat he felt connected to everyone and everything. He could see life unfolding for him like yard markers on this gridiron.

“Football is not a game. Maybe, the white paint of the field is a path not a place,” he whispered to himself.

The spring sun warmed his body. In the middle of this field of play, he felt like the center of God's universe.

And all he had to do was shine. Just be who he was. A thought hit him as his eyes slowly closed. “The sun doesn’t think or remember... it just radiates life to anything and everything it touches. It just is!”

He took a short breath as he looked upwards. “Is this just concussion talking again?”

Maybe all Max needed to know was in the game played on this very field. “Maybe the answer was right here.”

He shut his eyes and felt this magical state. This time he didn’t care where it came from. He wanted more.

In the tunnel, Bee had been watching the whole thing.

It was like a mother who opened the stove to check and see whether an apple pie was ready for consumption.

His sly smile gave the answer... “Yes.”

Later in the parking lot...

When Max approached his car, he noticed a Post-it notes on the driver’s side window.

Bee was famous for his posted notes. He used them for everything. He would place them on each new piece of new equipment he gave to his Spartan players.

It read: “Meet me tomorrow in front of the library at the Red Cedar at 6pm...to start what needs to be finished... Bee.”

Max looked back at the stadium.

It looked like a giant pyramid in the middle of nowhere and everywhere. **He wondered what hidden treasures were inside.**



CHAPTER EIGHT

The Gift

We are all gifted, but we must discover the gift, uncover the gift, nurture, and develop the gift and use it for the Glory of God and for the liberation struggle of our people.

-Louis Farrakhan

Max looked at his watch as he walked across the MSU campus. It was ten minutes to six as he approached his destination.

The beauty of the campus was breathtaking. The leaves on the trees had unraveled into huge green butterflies, slowly fluttering in the cool spring air.

The damp grass made it all look like a glistening, emerald golf course.

Max loved walking to his classes because it helped him think. He never could understand why students got bus passes when the University had created such a beautiful campus. As he crossed through the grass behind the administrative building, he could see the bubbling magic of the Red Cedar river.

The river had become a kind of iconic symbol for the University. It was mentioned in the first line of the MSU fight song; “On the banks of the Red Cedar, there’s a school that’s known to all.”

The river was the main artery to the heart and soul of the University and a symbol of its greatness.

It was indeed a special place. Max was anxious to see what Bee was going to give him. He felt it would be something big!

He looked down and did not see what he expected. “Huh?” He thought. “No Bee?” Had he finally “beat Bee to the punch?”

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Max looked at his watch again and then did a slow 360 to see if he had somehow missed the Mystery Man in the shadows of the massive trees.

Suddenly, he spotted him. Bee waved Max over to him from the top of the hill, near the water.

Bee was sitting on the grass and looking down near the tumbling river current.

The river had visitors constantly throughout the day. Both students and faculty would come here to picnic or even just relax and meditate after a quick lunch.

As he got closer, he announced his arrival. “Mr. Bee, how are you B, my good friend?” Bee turned and smiled. “Mr. Mad Max...you have finally arrived!”

Max sat down on the grass next to his new friend. Bee had a blanket covering something next to him.

“I trust you had a good meeting with Coach Davis?” Max nodded in agreement. “Let’s just say, he gave me lots to think about... and questions to ask.”

“Ahhh questions. They can be quite disruptive to the human brain can’t they.”

Max smiles. “And I thought getting knocked on my noggin’ was bad.” Max holds up his keychain flashlight. He turns it on and off and then smiles, “It helps me focus.”

Bee nodded. “Good...good.

“Listen, I’m dying inside. What do you have for me, Pops?”

Max peers over Bee’s shoulder to get a look at the blanket.

Bee stood up, still hiding the goods under the cloth. “Ever hear of Duffy Daugherty?”

Max smiled. “Hear? He is an MSU Legend. Hell, they named the damn football building after him.”

Bee pulled off the blanket like he was a magician. It revealed a briefcase. “He was my mentor and he liked how I handled his kids. And then we started to meet right here every week. It must have been ten years.”

“Before he died, he gave me something to share with the team. He wanted it to be divvied out into bits in pieces... until someone special came along.”

Max had seen this bruised and battered leather case before. Bee carried it almost everywhere, but no one had ever seen him open it.

There was a lot of locker room speculation. One theory was that it was full of money and old Bee did not trust banks. Another was that Bee had a loaded gun in it in case someone wanted to rob him in the parking lot. One time, (legend has it) one of the players stole it and held it hostage... until Bee told him what was inside. Bee refused.

One thing for sure, it was always locked and only Bee had the key.

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After a long pause, Max finally asked. “Are you going to show me what’s inside?” Bee quickly answered. “Of course! That is why we are here.”

Max was now bubbling with curiosity. “Why me?”

Bee answered. “Why not you?”

Max had lost his patience. “Listen Bee, no one has more respect for you than me. You are a legend in the locker room. I am honored to meet with you, and I would be happy to

talk to you all day but...”

Finally, Bee reveals a small key from his pocket. “No one has seen this for over 40 years. Duffy gave it to me just before he died. He called it his secret path to greatness.

Bee removed a small stack of worn and tattered papers that were held together with a huge paper clip. He looked down and read the title.

“He called it...plain and simple... *WAY OF THE SPARTAN WARRIOR*” “He also considered it to be his playbook.”

Max looked down at it. “It’s all about football? Damn, the game has changed since the 60’s and 70’s.”

Bee smiled. “That’s what I told him when he first showed it to me. But despite the title, it doesn’t have much to do with football. It has everything to do with life.”

“It is the ‘way’ or path to personal greatness!”

Max started to connect the dots. “Has coach Davis seen all this?”

Bee paged through it. “Duffy asked me to keep it a secret. Coaches have come and gone over the years. The purity of the system had to be protected. Duffy wanted to keep the source and content secret. I have kept that promise.”

Bee set his empty briefcase down.

“Over the years, I have used the materials in bits and pieces; never revealing where it came from. I was able to divvy out Duffy’s words of wisdom in small digestible meals. One spoonful of wisdom at a time. It made this team great again. Almost all those players in the pictures in the football building’s first floor were influenced by these pages.”

Bee flipped through the worn and yellowed pages.

Max stared at Bee. A look of despair now filled his eyes: “But I’m a washed up, battered up Walk On!”

“Preferred Walk On.” Bee banter back.

He returned the papers back into the tattered briefcase. “Duffy was a big believer in hunches. He also told me the broken helmet would be a sign. But here is the kicker. You

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can’t tell anyone about these written materials or reveal its contents...until body mind and spirit...you fully represent its contents. Ever hear of Gandhi?”

Max responded quickly. “I have his picture in my locker.”

Bee looked Max in the eye. “Gandhi taught us to ‘Be the change, we wish to see in the world.’”

“Duffy told me that there would come a time when I would find a player who could

understand this challenge and rise to the occasion to teach it's principles by action rather than words. Are you willing to take on this role?"

Max was clearly speechless. "What do I have to do?"

Bee stood up now. "You must believe in the system; you must behave in accordance with its words. You must become this system with your whole being. Heart, mind, and soul. And when someone wants to know what the book is all about, they need only look at YOU! Not some tattered pages written by a long-gone coach, some 50 years ago!"

Bee handed the stack of papers to Max. "I have now fulfilled my promise and performed my duty. It is done."

Bee started to walk away. Max stops him. "What if I say no? Because that's my answer. NO, NO, NO!"

Bee smiled. "I am glad you got that out of your system. Because once you read the content of this PLAYBOOK, you won't be able to say no! Ever again."

Max looked at the title page.

THE WAY OF THE SPARTAN WARRIOR

8 Life Lessons from God's



Gridiron

A PLAYBOOK for Game to Greatness

By

Duffy Daugherty

Max read for a beat and sifted through the tattered pages. Finally, he looked up.

“Huh?”

Bee is nowhere to be found. “Why does he always disappear like that?” Max is now angry. What the hell is going on? Had Bee been hitting the sauce? Why should he follow the lead of some washed out, equipment room guy? The “no’s” were assembling like a brick wall.

His thoughts turned in a new direction.

He had almost \$900 in his savings account. Maybe he should buy a phone call with one of the best performance coaches in the world and get a “modern-day” map to greatness.

This was Max’s life... not some “game!” He had big decisions to make and the only tools he had gathered were a keychain flashlight and fifty-year-old pile of papers.

Max stuffed it all into his backpack and headed home.

Never in his life had he been this disappointed.



CHAPTER NINE

The Wings

“There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly.” - R. Buckminster Fuller

Max sat on his bed in his apartment with his computer on his lap and a pillow behind his back. He was alone because his roommate had left for the summer.

He smiled to himself. “I love silence. Maybe I should leave all of this and be a Buddhist Monk somewhere far away.”

He also loved YouTube because it had such great content. After a click to the screen you could have Tony Robbins or Wayne Dyer on your screen giving some of the best talks in the world.

You also could research anything and everything. Music, Sports or even “how to fix a leaky faucet.”

A new thought hit him. He could probably assemble the best “playbook” in the world just using the internet.

He suddenly got an idea. He typed “leaving the cocoon” in the search box. In a flash, a video showed a butterfly battling through his cocoon.

The process was amazing to watch. It was like a video of a high-speed blooming of a flower. It seemed so natural and painless. He couldn't help but think, “Why can't I be that?” It's so...easy and elegant?

It was a delicate dance with nature, instead of a vicious and violent dog fight.”

its potential. A tree effortlessly draws life from its roots and pushes skyward to all it is supposed to be.

Even a dog knows what to do in its place on earth. It doesn't overthink things. A puppy doesn't have a program of goals and a list of things to do. It grows by reacting to things in the moment. And everything is a glorious game of fun.

Max loved dogs and he missed not being around them. Football and college had no room for such preoccupations.

Growing up Max had a dog named Blacky. He was his best friend. As a kid, Max would crawl into his doghouse and pet and talk to her for hours. She was his first coach and therapist.

Every spring, it seemed that Blacky would have an encounter with some male dog and produce a gorgeous litter of pups.

For Max, this was heaven on earth. He suddenly had a tribe of little bandits that he could name and talk to as he pressed them against his cheek.

Now returning from his daydream, Max looked down at the foot of his bed. Bee's battered briefcase sat near his feet, locked and secure but still within reach. He rubbed his hip area to confirm the key was still in his pocket.

Max picked up his cracked helmet and took off the lampshade from the lighted lamp, on the table next to his bed.

He replaced it with his helmet and to his surprise the light did indeed shine through.

Then, Max turned off the overhead light.

In the darkened room, only lit by the small crack in the helmet, he took out the flashlight Coach D gave him and started to point it at the dark ceiling.

It was as if he were scouring the ceiling, looking for the truth.

He took a deep breath. "Where are all the answers?"

Suddenly, Max got an idea. Maybe he should call home to talk to his mother. Sometimes moms have good answers.

He grabbed his phone and pounded out her phone number. He took another deep breath as he heard it ringing.

Finally, he heard her voice. "I have been thinking about you. Are you in trouble?"

Max smiled and thought to himself. "How do mothers always know?" He quickly responded. "I'm good. I just have some big decisions to make." His mom responded. "I know?"

For a long beat, silence filled the air. Finally, Beatrice spoke. "You want to quit, don't you?" Max nodded like she was in front of her.

"To tell you the truth, I never understood football and never will. As a mother you just want your kids to be safe. And I worry about you, Max." Her voice started to crack. "I know that's wrong and I should respect your dreams. But I still worry."

Max's eyes glistened with tears as his mom kept talking.

"I used to go through the same thing with your dad. He worked so hard every day breathing that carbon monoxide in the car dealership and smoking cigarettes. He would wake up in the morning at 5 a.m. to get to work at 7 and then stay till the doors closed at 9. Even on Saturday he would work at least 8 hours. I regularly told him he needed to slow down... he was a ticking time bomb, ready to explode. He already had a heart murmur for God's sake."

"After 30 years of this nagging, he finally looked at me, in a moment I will never forget. He said: 'I guess it was just a dream I have... of my kids having something bigger and better.'"

Max lifted his t-shirt collar and soaked up a flow of tears.

His mother continued. "I guess I finally understood. And every day, when I look at him in a wheelchair, I think. As a mother, I have lots of mistakes, but as a wife...at least I didn't stand in the way of his dream. And you know what Max? He achieved his dream. And deep down inside, I know he knows that too. All six of his kids have had great lives and created great careers, families and grandchildren...each live "bigger and better" in their own way."

Max couldn't help but ask, "Was its worth it

Ma?' There was a long silence.

Finally, Bea answered. "Of course."

'And after he passes and I am on my own, at least I know that the stroke didn't win. You and all my kids are living proof. It took away his health, but it didn't take away his dream." Max clicked off his flashlight and closed his eyes.

He felt the buzz again. It was the same feeling he had in the middle of the stadium a few days back. Only this time it moved from his head to his heart. Four words were his only thought. And so, he spoke them into his phone...

"I love you ma." Maxy... when me and your dad pass and are laid to rest in that little cemetery in Brown City...and you are this big NFL football star...you are still going to visit us, aren't you?

"Promise?" Mom's love promises.

"Promise!" Max smiled big. He could see it.



CHAPTER TEN

The Passing

“The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.” -Mark Twain

Max walked across campus. He found himself walking more and more these days and keeping his car at his apartment. Maybe it was the beautiful, spring weather. Maybe it was his efforts to save on gas and car repairs. One thing is for sure, it gave Max time to think.

He was going to work out at the football building.

Matt was fanatical about his weight training. He felt bad about missing his workouts for the last couple days.

For the last week he had been disconnected with the things that were a regular part of his life. He needed time alone and didn't even go to the Spring Game. He read all about it on the internet.

As he entered the locker room, he was confronted by Big Ben.

“Where the hell have you been, Bro? I have been missing my workout partner.”

Max walked to his locker. “Been taking care of some personal things outside of football. I haven't been feeling right these days.”

Ben walked over to Max. “You ok?”

Max shook his head yes. “Going to be just fine.”

“All of us were there except you. Why didn’t you go to the funeral?”

“What?”

“The lady at the funeral home said that Bee asked to be cremated and that you were supposed to keep his ashes.”

Max sat down to absorb the moment. He was completely confused. “I don’t understand.”

Ben continued. “After the Spring game, Bee went home to take a nap and just never woke up.”

Max is stunned. “But I just...” He didn’t know how to explain the unexplainable.” His meeting on the Red Cedar was after Bee’s death.

Obviously, this was no time to try to explain this to his big friend, because he wouldn’t...or couldn’t understand.

Ben was giving him funny looks already.

He looked at Max and stared at his temples. “Did you break something up there when you hit the turf? Rumor has it that you cracked your damn helmet.”

Max looked up and finally spoke. “I think I have to puke.”

He ran to the toilet and released his morning protein shake into the white porcelain bowl. He felt like a tackling dummy that had just been broken in half by a 300-pound lineman.

He sorted through his thoughts.

Had Max been talking to a ghost on the Red Cedar? He was reminded of that young kid who was in the movie *The Sixth Sense* “I see dead people.”

“I got to go.” He quickly exited.

Max ran as fast as he could in the direction of his apartment. There were no thoughts about school or spring weather. He saw nothing but the road or sidewalk he was on.

He was still exhausted and sick, but he didn’t care.

His apartment was now the goal line. He had the ball, and he ran as if a team of tacklers was on his tail.

He shut off all thoughts about football. It was now all about the briefcase at his apartment.

Still his thoughts raced even faster than his running. What is happening?

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Perhaps he had dreamed all of this. Or maybe it was a practical joke orchestrated by his teammates. Things like this have happened before.

Elaborate locker room jokes were erected to mess with a guy's mind for the sake of a good laugh.

For a beat, he thought about taking a cab to the ER in Lansing to get an MRI of his brain.

Then he thought, "Just let me check out my apartment. If the Playbook is there maybe I am not brain damaged or crazy."

Finally, Max could see his apartment building.

He arrived, entered, and sprinted up the stairs.

Max entered his room and saw the briefcase on the bed and the key. With his hands shaking he unlocked the case and saw it as clear as daylight.

It's the PLAYBOOK Bee that was given yesterday.

He grabbed his laptop and turned it on. He clicked on Google and typed in Bee's name. A page popped up into the obituaries and he checked the date. He takes a deep breath.

He finally knew the truth. His last meeting with Bee wasn't real.

Max looked down at the PLAYBOOK and sat on the side of his bed. "But that is real!"

He turns to find something special on the night-stand next to his bed. To his shock and surprise, his broken helmet has been replaced by a brand-new Spartan headgear. It sparkled with energy from the afternoon sun that now flooded the room.

Bee made his final equipment change and delivery. A posted note said this, "I will always be with you. Love Bee."

Then Max did something he never remembered doing on the field or in the locker room. He started to cry.

But it wasn't what he called "sissy tears" ... those watery eyes after a big game and a big loss. Those were the emotions of losers who wanted a pat on the back that said, "you did your best."

These tears were filled with both anger and triumph. Like a baby who had just been born. They were like the war cry of a kid who was only 8 pounds and screaming at life...

delivering and demonstrating without words... the Spartan line in the sand that said, "Come and take it!"

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And then the same thing happened to him as it did in the stadium when he laid down in the middle of the field and looked up at the sun.

He felt big...big. Bigger than he ever felt before. For the first time in his life he finally "fed the right lion."

He grabbed the tattered pages and started to read the words in the PLAYBOOK like a man with his hair on fire.

He let go of any desire to understand what had happened to Bee. That didn't matter now.

The only thing that mattered were the pages in front of him. No doubt about it. Bee's plan worked. Max was finally ready to commit to the plan... heart mind and soul.

Max finally understood everything. It all unfolded in his head like dominos falling across the floor in a long winding chain.

Bee needed to give him the PLAYBOOK after he passed. It was his final magic trick, to make sure that Max was a true believer.

And it worked.

He could hear Coach Duffy talking in his head as he read his words. It was like "books on tape." All **Max had to do was listen.**

One thing is for sure.

This PLAYBOOK was real!



CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Goodbye

Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever. - **Mahatma Gandhi**

8 years later...

It is the same scene that we saw in Chapter One, when this story first started.

Ex-MSU DT, Max Bentley stood alone in front of a small marker in the middle of a tiny cemetery in the farming community of Brown City, Michigan. He wore a suit and tie.

It's springtime and the trees pushed tiny buds of life out the open arms of its spindly branches. The green grass stretched across the areas between headstones like thick spots of turf on a football field.

The sun peeked over the horizon sending lasers of light through the morning air.

A cool breeze pushed across the area fast enough to make the trees bow and wave like fans in a football stadium. You could smell the richness of the plowed ground of the farms nearby.

It whispered a silent prayer of God's eternal greatness.

Max held a copper urn of ashes in his right arm, like a tailback carrying a football.

We saw the markers close enough to read the names.

One said Aldon Bentley and the other Beatrice Bentley.

Max looked at the urn under his right arm. It was engraved with the name... Bradley "Bee" Beesly. He opened it and poured one half of the contents onto each grave of his two parents.

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Tears flowed from his eyes... as he slowly mouthed the words "thank you." As

Max walked over to his car, he could see a tree branch waving "good-bye."

Then he noticed that what he just saw was impossible.

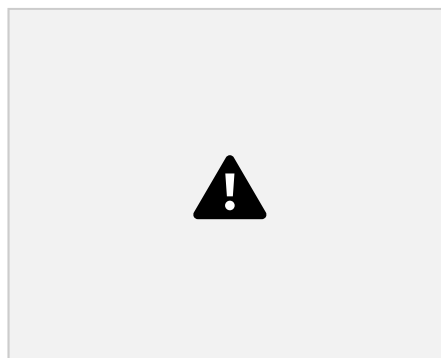
The wind was moving in the opposite direction.

He looked up to the heavens and made the Catholic sign of the cross. He thought about his cracked helmet and head injury before the Spring Game.

He thought about his meetings with Coach Davis. He thought about his encounters with Bee at "That Breakfast Place" and on the "Banks of the Red Cedar."

It all made him smile. One thing is for sure.

Max was living proof ...nothing is impossible



Epilogue

One day later...

We hear a voice. "Our next speaker needs no introduction; however, I will give one anyway."

It's an MSU graduation ceremony. The place is packed with graduates, family members, students, and football fans.

The graduates are all in caps and gowns.

Everyone on stage is in full dress. Doctoral Gown, Velvet Tam, Metallic Tassel and Hood.

The speaker continues his introduction. "Our Speaker has indeed made our University proud. He personifies, "mind body and soul" what it means to be a football player. As a Spartan, he was the only football player to be elected captain three years in a row. After graduating, he was drafted into the NFL and became an All-Pro defensive tackle for 5 consecutive years. Three years before his retirement, he signed the highest paid contract of a lineman in the history of the NFL. Tonight, he has been awarded an Honorary Doctoral Degree in Social Science. And today he announced his new plans to go to Notre Dame Law School in the Fall. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a big round of applause to a living legend, Mr. Maxwell Bentley!"

The crowd gives Max a standing ovation as he smiles big. He looks in the corner and sees Coach Davis standing and clapping as loud as he can.

He gives Max a "thumbs up."

Max smiles big as he holds up his "now famous" flashlight keychain.

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He waits until the crowd settles as he opens the briefcase.

He looks at the crowd with deep love in his eyes. "I thought long and hard about what I wanted to say to you all today. First, I want to thank God and this great University that gave me so much. I want to thank my dear parents Al and Beatrice and all my brothers Al and sisters Nancy, Beatrice, Diane, and Beth...my beautiful wife Carrie and those here in this celebration of the Spartan family. I want to thank Coach Davis, my teammates, and the football program for putting up with me. But most of all I want to talk about a Coach named Duffy Daugherty and an equipment Manager, Bee Beasley... and especially I want to talk about this pack of messy papers called "the PLAYBOOK."

The crowd started clapping again. It quickly turns into another standing ovation.

He points to Big Ben, who is also in the front row, and mouths the words, "You started

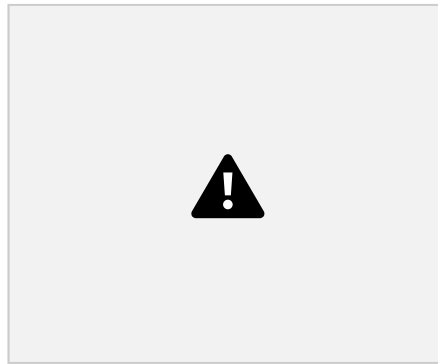
all this!”

Ben returns a 30-yard fist bump. Max does the same.

He looks at Coach D again.

He is still standing and joyfully clapping.

The legendary coach slowly shakes his head “yes” and mouths the words “choose both!”



THE WAY OF THE

SPARTAN WARRIOR

A PLAYBOOK

From Game to Greatness

by

Duffy Daugherty

“The difference between good and great is a little extra effort.”

Dear Spartan Player,

These materials will give you the tools to be the best that you can be!

If you are a player of Sports, THIS PLAYBOOK will motivate you to practice harder today, become mentally and physically stronger today. You discover what needs to be done to find your personal greatness.

If you are a player of life, you will discover a new and exciting future.

Whether you are the CEO of a major business operation or a single mom trying to find money to pay her light bill, you will discover a path to your personal greatness and life vision!

Here is the bottom line. Football is more than a game. It is a giant gift of metaphors and lessons; all preparing the more inspired participants for a great life even after the game clock clicks to zeros.

This is what this stack of papers is all about.

In one respect it is simple math. Applied lessons taught by God’s Gridiron = a GREAT LIFE. This is MY gift to you.

Like all good lessons, they beg to be demonstrated in our lives (or even passed on to our children and grandchildren).

44

When you faithfully become a student and follower of the principles outlined in this book, you will be changed for life. It will be the “gift that keeps on giving” and the coach that never leaves you because this guidance is still inside and available to you.

It will be your compass to guide you through the thrill of new victories and the painful failures part of a well lived life. It will be the game plan of a winner and a tried and true teammate who will never let you down when the game of life is on the line.

I have positioned these 8 lessons in a format that will be easy to refer to and remember and provide you with a toolbox in your mind that is always within your reach. It is called the “acrostic poem format.” Each play is organized by letters in the word FOOTBALL.

It makes change and achievement as simple as following the white markers of a gridiron.

Although the football field is 100 yards long, its real arena (after kickoff) is the middle 80 yards, where most of the real action begins. Hence, the importance of the number 8.^[1]

This book is for football players, ex-football players and “non-football players” who want to become great in both the game that we all love so much and also greatness in a “life.”

[1] The number **8** is very significant, such that it is used 73 times in the **Bible**. It is the symbol of Resurrection and Regeneration. In **Bible** numerology, **8** means a new beginning; it denotes “a new order or creation, and man's true 'born again' event when he is resurrected from the dead into eternal life.”

Most of all these lessons will teach you the magic and miracles performed by the principles of HABIT.

You must form good habits and become their slave.

And how will you accomplish this difficult feat? Through these lessons it will be done, for each play and exercise contains a principle which will drive a bad habit from your life and replace it with one which will bring you closer to your goals and closer to success.

FOOTBALL Acronym:

Play 1: **F Ferocity**

Play 2: **O Opportunity**

Play 3: **O Order**

Play 4: **T Talent**

Play 5: **B Beauty**

Play 6: **A Audacity**

Play 7: **L Leadership**

Play 8: **L Love**

Use this PLAYBOOK over the summer before the Fall training camp.

45

Read the words out loud each morning and before you go to sleep at night, one lesson a week, for 8 weeks.

Remember the magic of “How do I...?” These three words have incredible power. When you go to bed at night write “How do I .” (i.e. Become a better athlete, get better grades or be a better family member, etc.)

And in the morning, write out 8 sentences that are answers to your questions.

Do this and the sky's the limit. Let this marinate in your sleep like a juicy steak. In the morning, let your mind loose and write out whatever 8 answers you get...and then go do them with massive action!

Stay with the playbook and program. it has never let me down.

Do not get overwhelmed by these words and exercises! Football is a game of inches. If you get one idea or one new habit, it may translate into victory on the field during a tight game.

As Aristotle once said, "Good character occurs when you turn virtue into habits." Develop a thirst for good habits. Soon they will become an "effortless ritual" that you crave as much as your next meal.

Develop a mindset and preoccupation with self-improvement. Constantly, ask yourself, "what is my next level of excellence?" Continually raise the bar. Make small improvements to your Divine Obsession and constant goal. Give more than expected and deliver more than what is asked for. If you are asked to do 100 push-ups deliver 110. If you are asked to run one lap, run two. This is the mindset of the great ones. "Extra" creates "Excellence."

Life is a process not an event, a journey not a destination. And so, experience your movement and not just the goal. It will be like pushing a car down a steep hill. At first you can barely move it, but soon you can barely keep up with it. Celebrate this momentum! Make it your passion!

It will be like fuel for your engine... A map to greatness and a path to everything you want to be.

These pages have been my "Football Bible" for over 50 years.

But most of all, make it fun. Life is short for all of us. Remember that football, first and foremost, is a GAME. Don't waste a second and remember how precious life is.

Do this and you will become the stuff that true Legends are made of.

Always know...win lose or draw...I am with you on this glorious journey. Begin your journey with a joyous resolve.

Note that the words "Listen", and "Silence" have the same letters in them. And so, daily "Silence your mind and Listen to your heart."

It will be the gift that keeps on giving." You will hear the whispers of God.

And you will be unstoppable

Remember these words of inspiration:

“Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your
actions become your habits, your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.” -Gandhi

Let the game begin...today!

Your loving Coach and Mentor,

Duffy F = Ferocity

Dictionary Definition:

fe·roc·i·ty
/fəˈræsədē/ *Noun*

1. extreme or intense. relentless, stormy, strong.

Life Definition:

I know God's love is conscious, volitional, and tender. But it is ferocious. It is unstoppable.

- Elizabeth Lesser

Bible Definition:

Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people buying and selling animals for sacrifices. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves, and he stopped everyone from using the Temple as a marketplace.

- Matthew 21:12-17

The training:

(read the following aloud both morning and night for eight days)

Today I will demonstrate ferocity in my life.

I will adopt this mindset with my heart, mind, and soul.

For it embodies the Spartan war cry, “**molon labe**” “Come and take it.”

Today, I will not just live life, I will engage it with fierceness, integrity, and love.

I will stand guard in the doorway of my own mind. And I will diligently inspect all the thoughts, feelings and words that seek entry.

And nothing or no one will enter who does not serve me and my life vision.

For I am the mother and father of my hopes, dreams, and visions... and I will protect them like a Lioness protects her cubs.

Today I demonstrated ferocity in my life.

My life is my castle.

I will decide who and what enters my castle. For the world does not own my castle. I do.

It is my life's work and my grand obsession.

For it is this castle which will be my legacy. And one day, I will give this most valuable possession away...for free.

It will be my gift to the world.

However, first I must finish my castle, for it is always “a work in progress.” And building it will be my life's work.

It is my divine passion and holy demonstration.

I am building it one brick at a time. I will stand on the strongest of foundations...my connection and faith in God.

The bricks and mortar will only be from the best of sources, and all chosen only by me and my Creator.

Today I demonstrated ferocity in my life.

I will recognize the demons of doubt and “naysayers of doom” who hate what I am building, because they fear building one of their own.

I will protect this “gift to world” with the sword and shield of my persistent vision.

One day my castle, after all my building, will no longer intimidate. It will inspire.

It will “show the way” rather than “close its doors.” And I reveal the only real occupant of my fortress and home... God’s love.

It will change me. It will change my comrades; I will change the world.

Notes: How do I incorporate these principals into my daily life?

List three:

O = Opportunity

Dictionary Definition:

op·por·tu·ni·ty

/,äpər't(y)oṽnədē/ *noun*

1. a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something.

Life Definition:

"A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds."

- Francis Bacon

Bible Definition:

"And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name."

- Acts 22:16

(read the following aloud both morning and night for eight

days) Today I am looking for an opportunity in my life.

49

I will no longer be a spectator. I am a player on the field.

Spectators buy tickets to watch. I buy tickets to enter the arena and compete.

Avoiding the arena is for the weak and the worried. For they are always the first to abandon and retreat during times of trial and tribulation.

For I know that I am a creator and not a reactor. Both words have the same letters. Yet, each are worlds apart. A creator "makes plays!" A reactor "sits on his heels" and lets players make them.

However, when I do watch...it is only to learn.

And I will learn from the great ones who have already made their demonstration. I will learn their mindset and beliefs and copy their techniques and tactics.

Most of all I will study my life and look for opportunities for greatness.

For improvement is my grand obsession.

I am comforted by the truth that I need only to get better 1% each day. And these "ones will become wins" in every aspect of my life.

For when I climb the highest mountains, it is only one step at a time.

I know that it doesn't matter where I am... as much as it matters what direction I am going. And I choose the direction of greatness.

Today I am looking for an opportunity in my life.

Here are my commitments as I start and finish each day.

If I am not in the game, I will look for opportunities to get in. And when I get in, I will find opportunities to become great.

After I become great, I will look for opportunities to teach and share my path to greatness with others.

However, I know that mere words are cheap and the currency of losers. For I know, in my heart of hearts that words are not the end, they are the beginning.

My path is not fixed on the memories of the past, it fixes my divine obsession with the

future.

50

And (after much planning) I will start and finish each day with massive action. I will always do more than expected and give more than I receive.

Action is the true key to the kingdom and the price of admission. And I know

that if I don't consistently climb, I can't move higher than I already am.

If I can't run, I will walk. If I can't walk, I will crawl. And if I can't crawl, I will still move in the direction of greatness.

Most importantly, I will teach the world through my demonstrations. This investment will always return "heaped up, pressed down and overflowing."

My actions are my footprint for others to follow. Today I am looking for an opportunity in my life.

And I will win!

Notes: How do I incorporate these principals into my daily life?

List three:

O = Order and Chaos

Dictionary Definition:

or·der

/ˈɔrdər/ **NOUN**

1. the arrangement or disposition of people or things in relation to each other

according to a particular sequence, pattern, or method.

Life Definition:

The battlefield is a scene of constant chaos. The winner will be the one who controls that chaos, both his own and the enemies.

- Napoleon Bonaparte

Bible Definition:

God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

- Genesis 1:5

(read the following aloud both morning and night):

Today I will embrace both “order and chaos” in life.

For they are but different sides of the same coin. Both are needed.

We live in a world of opposites. The sun rises and then it sets. The rain starts and then it stops. Life begins with birth and ends in death. Today, I embrace both.

In my heart of hearts, I know that there is nothing to fear, except illusions of my mind.

Fear is not real. It is easily disassembled as “False Evidence Appearing Real.”

And today I refuse to be fear’s, “Lap Dog.” I will be fear’s trainer. And I will train this creature to serve my need for greatness and the task of inspiring others.

“Order” is a safe harbor and respite from the stormy seas of the ocean.

52

It is easier to stay in the calm waters of life. However, I know that it is the storm that shows a captain’s real skill and courage.

And so, as I step into today, I will embrace both. Order and chaos.

When calm is here in my life, I will relax and rest. However, when the storms of chaos summon me, I will heed the call and embrace the challenge.

When I win, I celebrate with humility. When I lose, I will learn with passion.

Today I will embrace the “order and chaos” in my life.

For any man can be comfortable in the stale and windless path of life. Leave that to timid people who fear disruption and conflict.

I choose to embrace the pain and darkness of life, not run from it.

I chose a life that tests my limits and shows my potential. And if my ship sinks, I will know that I fought the storm to my death.

Today I will embrace the “order and chaos” in life.

I will know that I was the captain of my destiny and steward of my soul.

If necessary, I will go down with my ship and know for certain, I didn't just live life... I embraced it. I entered the arena of greatness. I went face to face with my limits and confronted my demons. I did my best.

I left it all on the field.

As much as possible, today I will be on good terms with all people. And when I am able, I will turn enemies and obstacles into comrades and teammates with my focus and intention.

Today I will embrace the “order and chaos” in life.

And I will win!

Notes: How do I incorporate these principals into my daily life?

List three:

53

T = Talent

Dictionary Definition:

tal·ent

/ˈtælənt/ noun

1. natural aptitude or skill.

Life Definition:

“The person born with a talent they are meant to use will find their greatest happiness in using it.”

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Bible Definition:

“Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light unto all that are in the house. Let your light shine so before men,

that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

*-King James Bible, 1611, Matthew, 5:15 and
5:16.*

(read the following aloud both morning and night)

Today I will awaken and appreciate my talents.

For I know that I have gifts that beg to be discovered and powers that “cry out” to hear.

They are like wrapped gifts, waiting to be opened and admired. Today is my day of “opening.”

For my talent is God's gift to me. What I do with this talent is my expression of thanks and appreciation to God.

54

Once discovered, I will use my gifts like logs on a bonfire. And they will ignite with power and strength. As their flames stretch into the darkened sky, I will celebrate their power and embrace their potential.

I know that gifts are only of value if you use them. And so today, I vow to use my talents and gifts to the fullest.

I will regularly look inside myself and take inventory. Talents are often hidden by doubt and fear.

I will regularly ask myself. “What is easy for me that is hard for others?” And when I awaken these sleeping giants and I will give them all the time and attention they need.

For on this path, I will also discover greatness.

And this is the stuff that miracles and legends are made of.

I know I cannot be “all things to all people.”

And so, I will focus on my special gifts and point them like a bow and arrow at my chosen targets.

I will also help others do the same. For the path of a great leader is to enable others to find their own God-given talents. And as I encourage others, I encourage myself. When I teach others, God teaches me.

Today I will awaken my talents.

I know that the formation of a winning team is like the discovery of how cogs in a machine fit together. This machine (or team) then becomes greater and more powerful than the sum of its parts.

And when these parts are correctly assembled, there are no limits. Each piece will perform beyond its abilities and expectations.

It is God's greatest gift. It is the mathematics of miracles.

Rockets can fly to the moon and back. Submarines can dive to the bottom of the deepest oceans on earth.

As Jesus demonstrated, even "the dead can rise from their sleep."

However, none of this can happen until I empower the pieces that make up the whole. **Today I will awaken my talents.**

I will see this power in others, even if they do not see it in themselves.

55

And eventually, they will join me on this path to Grace and Greatness.

Today, I will create a culture of discovery, praise and acknowledgement that will inspire all to be their best.

With all my thoughts, words, and actions, I will encourage talents to come forward, like a baby learning to walk.

What will unfold is a life that has no limits.

And I shall awaken from my sleep.

Notes: How do I incorporate these principals into my daily life?

List three:

B = Beauty**Dictionary Definition:**

beau·ty

/'byoōdē/ *noun*

1. a combination of qualities, such as shape, color, or form, that pleases the aesthetic senses, especially the sight.

Life Definition:

When I admire the wonders of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in the worship of the creator.

- Mahatma Gandhi

Bible Definition:

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

Bible 1 Peter 3:3-4

(read aloud both morning and night)

Today I will enjoy the beauty of life.

I know that I cannot fully understand anyone or anything until I can understand its beauty and magic. For it exists in all things and it is my job to find it.

And so, today I will step back and enjoy the beauty in everything around me.

Today, I will find beauty in both the big things and the small things. I will see

beauty in the morning sun as well as the grass it feeds with its infinite light.

57

I will see beauty in rain that drips on my windows and the rivers that water the wilderness.

I will see the beauty in my pain and my pleasure. Each has special lessons for me to learn and then to teach.

I will see beauty in both victory and defeat. Both have much to teach. Both are part of God's plan.

Today I will enjoy the beauty in life

And when I see beauty in the ordinary it lights up my ceiling like a spotlight in a dark room.

For I know that beauty is "in the eye of the beholder." And I will behold God's grace

and miracles in all people and all things. For that is where my focus is.

I will see beauty when I fly and when I fall. I will see beauty in the storm and in the sunshine. I will see beauty in my love and in my hate. For I know that hatred can be a broom that sweeps all my bad habits out the door that can be locked.

And I will lock this door and throw away the key.

Today, I will also see everything like it was the last time. Because someday the last click of the clock will occur.

And after either victory or defeat, I will know this:

I learned how to be strong.

I learned how to love.

I learned how to win

Notes: How do I incorporate these principals into my daily life?

List three:

A = Audacity

Dictionary Definition:

au·dac·i·ty

/ôˈdasədē/ *noun*

1. a willingness to take bold risks.

Life Definition:

“Success is the child of audacity.”

- Benjamin Disraeli

Bible Definition

As Jesus said, "Everything is possible for one who believes."

- Mark 9:23

(read aloud both morning and night)

Today I will live with Divine Audacity.

I will wear it like a sacred robe, eat it like a blessed meal and feel it like the beats of my heart.

For I only find God when I go inside and connect with this divine energy.

I now realize my oneness with God and my teammates.

And if I have wounds, I will tend to them and know that they are only cracks in my armor where new light can shine through.

59

For God has appointed me as the caretaker and teacher of these great ideas and I will heed his calling.

And when I tap into this power, I can never lose.

As I walk through the crooked paths of darkness, I will know that I am not alone.

For God is ever present, ever available, and ever filling my soul with strength. I

will live today with Divine Audacity.

If I am asked to pick one out of two, I will choose BOTH.

When I look for miracles, they will find me.

I will quit asking “why me” and I will begin asking “why not me?”

And the answers will flow through the river of my mind and through depths my heart. For audacity is not my chance, it is my choice.

I will follow Divine Audacity because it is the path my God. It is a path to my greatness and my good. I shall conquer darkness and find the light.

I will follow that star to a baby named Jesus. And I will kneel in the presence of the energies and miracles of life. And it will change my world and change the world.

All because I heard the message in my heart and heeded the call.

Notes: How do I incorporate these principals into my daily life?

List three:

60

L = Leadership

Dictionary Definition:

lead·er·ship

/ˈlɛdər,SHɪp/ noun

1. the action of leading a group of people or an organization.

Life Definition:

First, they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you

win. - Mahatma Gandhi

Bible Definition:

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. - James 1:12

(read aloud both morning and night)

Today I embrace leadership. For true leaders are not born they are made.

I choose to lead. It is my calling.

It whispers to me in my darkest moments. It calls me during times of trial and terror. I will gladly hear its voice and embrace its responsibilities.

Leadership is not a burden or even a duty. It is a choice. And though many are called, few choose to answer.

Today is my day to move forward.

I will proudly wear this opportunity like an armor of anointed power. Now, fully dressed. I will step up in front of the masses and deliver words of inspiration.

I will teach what I have learned. I will show rather than tell. I will inspire rather than control.

As Gandhi says, "I will be the change I wish to see in the world.

Most of all, through both my words and my actions, I will teach others how to be leaders.

For my mission is not personal glory, it is to find the personal glory in my teammates.

Most of all I will do the following:

I will speak the truth.

I will act the truth.

I will make a difference.

Notes: How do I incorporate these principals into my daily life?

List three:

L = Love

Dictionary Definition:

love

/ləv/ noun

1. an intense feeling of deep affection.

Life Definition:

“Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

Bible Definition:

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is

love.” — 1 Corinthians 13:13

(read aloud both morning and night

Today my day will be filled with the energy of infinite love.

Love is the most powerful force in the Universe. It is the eternal source of everything that is good.

Accordingly, I will see love in everything and everyone I meet.

It will be my “walk of gratitude” that I perform during my journey each day. No source says it better than the Bible.

“Love is always patient and kind. It is never jealous. Love is never boastful or conceited. It is never rude or selfish. It does not take offense and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people’s sins but delights in the truth. It is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.”

Today my day will be filled with the energy of infinite love.

And so today, this passage quoted will be my teacher, my leader and loyal companion.

For I know that there are two powerful lions inside, me fighting for control. One represents light, the other darkness.

One represents love, the other represents hate.

One represents forgiveness, the other represents grievances.

I know that the one who will win today is the one that I choose to feed.

And so, today I chose light. I will bring this radiant energy to anyone and everyone I meet.

No matter how mean, bitter, or obnoxious they are... they are still a child of God.

Accordingly, I will silently bless them with my thoughts and hold up an invisible mirror of God's love and grace.

And they will see themselves in a new and different way. They are also God's favorite children.

I will bring light into every room I enter, with a sincere smile and a desire to help.

I will bring light to every sinner because I know that I am far from perfect. I will love enemies and they will become friends.

I will love my challenges and they will make me strong.

I will love losses for the wisdom they share.

Today my day will be filled with the energy of infinite love.

And I seize this day... knowing that God is always with me.

For the game is on and the clock is still ticking.

And I am now ready.

Notes: How do I incorporate these principals into my daily life?

List three:

Life lessons football teaches:

Discipline

How to compete

How to set goals

Motivation

Teamwork

Embracing different backgrounds

Accountability

Handling Adversity

Teamwork

The importance of working hard in time management

Pride in the team and yourself

Humility

Taking care of their mind and body.

Effectively communicating

Living with high expectations

Handling both success and failure

A final note from Duffy: (as envisioned by our authors)

Dear Readers,

During my long and challenging career at MSU, I was known as an “average” coach but “one hell of a storyteller.” (I think it was really my plan to distract the press and avoid their annoying questions.)

In any case, I will leave you with one of my favorite yarns.

“There is an old story that explains the difference between heaven and hell. Both places had a huge banquet hall with the tastiest food and drink God ever created.

Except each guest had these huge spoons and forks attached permanently to their arms and hands. And in hell everyone was cursing and swearing, because they couldn’t get the food to their mouths.

They could look, but never eat. And they constantly fought and blamed each other.”

“And heaven?”

“They had the exact same food and the exact same problem. However, the room was always filled with joy and laughter. Everyone got their fill. And you know why?”

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“Why?”

“The folks in heaven did one thing different. They didn’t feed themselves. They fed each other.”

Here is what I want to leave you with in this final page. I have been blessed to coach lots of the Hall of Famers and win lots of games.

It is perhaps the most important thing I learned through many trials and tribulations.

Life is short. Don’t fight... feed each other! Feed each other with the content of these pages. Feed each other with a kind word or a pat on the back. Remember that the difference between good and great is a little extra effort. You all deserve to live a National Championship Life... No matter who you are or what you do for a living. And remember. Be disruptive. Think “out of the box.” When you can’t decide between two... take both! See you on the Spartan Stadium sidelines. I haven’t missed a game yet. Go green!

Love,

Coach Duffy

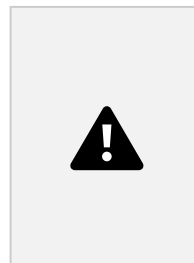


Coach Duffy Daugherty

During Daugherty's time in East Lansing, he recruited and coached 32 All-Americans, some of the best players in Michigan State's history, including Herb Adderley, Brad Van Pelt, Bubba Smith, George Webster, and Joe DeLamielleure. He recruited black players upon arrival in East Lansing in 1947. He was one of the first college football coaches to field a racially integrated team. His 1966 team featured 4 of the first 8 players in the 1967 NFL draft, all of them black.

After leaving Michigan State, Daugherty has served as a TV color analyst for several years. He died at the age of 72 on September 25, 1987 at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara, California after being hospitalized a month earlier with heart and kidney problems.

To honor his accomplishments at Michigan State, the university named the football team's practice facility, the Duffy Daugherty Football Building. The Duffy Daugherty Memorial Award is presented annually to a person for lifetime achievement and outstanding contribution to amateur football. Duffy was elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in 1984 and the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame in 1975. (Although this book is “self-help fiction”, the authors felt Duffy’s presence during the writing of this book.)

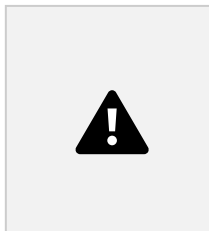


Coach Lorenzo Guess MBA

Associate head strength and conditioning coach Lorenzo Guess, a former Michigan State safety, is in his seventh year on staff at MSU. Guess is a certified strength and conditioning coach (SCCC) by the Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association (CSCCA) and is a certified strength and conditioning specialist with the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA). He is also certified by USA Weightlifting as a level one sports performance-coach.

In addition, Guess serves as the director of player enrichment, which includes coordinating and supervising the “Keeping it Real” player development program.

While at Michigan State, Guess was a four-year letter winner in football (1998-2001) and earned two letters with the basketball team. As a safety, Guess helped Michigan State defeat Florida in the 2000 Citrus Bowl and Fresno State in the 2001 Silicon Valley Bowl. He was part of two Big Ten titles and an NCAA Final Four appearance (1999) with the Spartan basketball team.



Life Coach and Attorney John J. Schalter

After high school, John went to Michigan State University as an Evans Scholar. He played Big Ten Football for the legendary coach Duffy Daugherty and was a University Rhodes Scholar Candidate.

Upon graduation, he taught English and Reading and coached high school sports at St. Clemens High School. He then went on to Notre Dame Law School and pursued a Personal Injury Practice in Michigan for over 35 years, serving the needs of clients experiencing catastrophic injury and loss. During this time, he also developed a career as a Hollywood screenwriter, having written over 30 screenplays, half of which have

been either sold or optioned and two were development deals for Walt Disney Studios.

He has also worked as an artist, musician, playwright, poet, and entrepreneur. He now serves full time as an Attorney-Life Coach and sits as board president for the St. Clair Butterfly Foundation, an organization that offers deprived, young adult programs for the arts (music, painting, writing and yoga) in "at-risk" communities in the Metro Detroit area.