

R U L E 1

DO WHAT IS RIGHT

Let me put it this way: There is never a right time to do the wrong thing. And there is never a wrong time to do the right thing. The first step of your plan is to do what is right.

How do you know what is right? The answer is one you have heard many times. It comes directly from the Bible. Jesus said, “Do to others whatever you would have them do to you.”

This makes a lot of sense. You wouldn’t want someone to take something from you without your permission. I once had a player who told me he had

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found his teammate's wallet before he lost it. "Son, that's called stealing," I had to remind him. So do the same. Don't take something from someone else that is

"Do to others whatever you would have them do to you." (Matthew 7:12)

not yours. Don't borrow someone else's original idea. Don't cut corners on an assignment your supervisor gives to you. Treat the other person as you want to be treated. It's simple.

And for starters, you can do what is right each day by being honest. Let your yes mean yes and your no mean no. You want others to be truthful with you. You do the same.

Doing What Is Right on a Daily Basis

My long-range goal in coaching football was to advance my career as coach at the highest levels of the

sport. To reach my goal, I had to do what was right in decisions big and small. Sometimes this was difficult. Sometimes doing what was right seemed to take me away from my long-range goal. But still, I kept to the plan.

The best I can relate this lesson is through something that happened to me when I was hired to be the head coach at the College of William and Mary in 1969. I was hired by an outstanding school president, Davis Y. Paschall. His direction to me was that he wanted to build a football program that could compete with and eventually join the Atlantic Coast Conference as the conference's eighth member. This could only happen if we had success on the football field.

In our second year, we went to what is now the Citrus Bowl in Orlando. We lost the game to Toledo, the twelfth-ranked team in the country. We continued to progress in the next season, even though we played such teams as West Virginia, North Carolina, and Wake Forest. We were doing a nice job and well underway to building a good, solid program. However,

in 1971, Davis Y. Paschall got sick and had to resign. The school hired a new president whose ambition was different. He wanted to deemphasize football and establish more of an Ivy League-type program. I knew I was going to have to leave William and Mary if I was going to achieve my goals and aspirations of being the head football coach of an excellent football program.

During the summer of 1971, just before the season, I received a letter from representatives of North Carolina State informing me that Earle Edwards, their head coach of many years, was retiring and would be replaced with an interim coach until they could hire a full-time coach. They asked me if I was interested in the job. I replied that I was very much interested but would not talk to them about the job until after our season was over. I had an obligation to our football players at William and Mary. They said that was fine.

We started our season and won our first four games. We beat Tulane on their home field in New Orleans. When I arrived home after that game, the North

Carolina State representatives called again and said they would like to interview me immediately. They said they wanted to resolve their head coaching position before the first Saturday in December, the day football recruits could sign their ACC letters of intent. I politely informed him that an interview in the coming days would not be possible because of the obligation I had to William and Mary. I told them again that if they wanted to talk to me at the end of the season, I would love to do so.

They said they were sorry and that they would move on without me. They told me I would no longer be a candidate for the North Carolina State job.



photo credit NC State Athletics

Our William and Mary team continued to have a pretty good season. Late in the year we went to play the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. They had a great defense, one of the best in the country. Our starting quarterback, Steve Regan, was injured, and we would have to go with our backup, John Gargano, who stood only five foot eight. We did have an excellent wide receiver, David Knight, and we came up with a great game plan for North Carolina.

We went down to Chapel Hill and played an outstanding game. As a matter of fact, we were never behind the entire game and never ahead by more than seven points. With about two minutes left in the game, we led 35–28. North Carolina had the ball at its own twenty-yard line. A third down and ten yards to go play would decide the game. Their left-handed quarterback was Paul Miller. He went back to pass, couldn't find anybody open, and started to scramble. We put pressure on Miller and just before he was hit, he threw the ball down the field. The ball landed on

the ground right in front of me at the fifty-yard line and bounced twice.

The official from our conference who could see the play perfectly called it an incomplete pass. But the back judge from the home Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) came running up and said the pass was completed. So, there was a mixed ruling. The final decision would be made by the referee. He was also from the ACC. He decided to side with the back judge who could not even see the play and ruled it North Carolina's ball on the fifty-yard line. I then got two fifteen-yard unsportsmanlike penalties without ever using one word of profanity. That is hard to do. Two unsportsmanlike penalties for one play. Consequently, North Carolina went from their own twenty-yard line to our twenty-yard line on an incomplete pass.

They scored a touchdown with less than a minute to go and went for the two-point conversion. We deflected the pass, but their receiver, Lewis Jolley, caught it and we lost 36–35. I was devastated, but we

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had played a great game on the road against a very good team.

We returned home, and I no sooner walked in the door and the phone was ringing. It was the athletic director from North Carolina State. You have to realize that the University of North Carolina was North Carolina State's biggest rival. The NC State athletic director and everybody else were aware of the great performance our team had put on that day. He asked me if I would just visit with him for thirty minutes so he could let me know what the job at his school entailed. Then, if I was interested, they would wait until the end of the season to talk to me again.

I agreed to meet with him for thirty minutes, and I became more convinced that NC State would be a good place to further my coaching career.

A few weeks later, right before our last game, the Quarterback Club of William and Mary supporters invited me to their meeting and presented me with a new car. There were rumors of me leaving, but the club members insisted the gift of a car wasn't meant

to keep me at William and Mary. They said it was a reward for the good things I had already done.

It wouldn't be right for me to keep the car when I knew I was probably going to agree to take the coaching job at NC State very soon. I told them I could not accept the car, but I appreciated their sentiments very much.

After our last game on Saturday, I knew we were headed to Raleigh, North Carolina, the very next day to reach a final decision about whether or not to accept the NC State job. My wife greeted me when I came home and said, "Honey, you won't believe what happened today at the game. At halftime someone called me out of the stands and gave me the keys to a new car!"

"We can't keep that car," I said immediately.

"Well, they gave it to *me*, and we won't make it to Raleigh in our old car."

I called the president of the Quarterback Club that night and tried to give the car back again. He refused,

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so off we drove to North Carolina State the next day in the car that William and Mary gave my wife.

We accepted the job at NC State, were there for four years, and went to four straight bowl games. We were very, very successful. Coaching at North Carolina State was a great experience and benefit to my career. Raleigh was a wonderful place to live.

The point is that when you do the right thing—even if it seems it may cause you to lose out on something you really want—in the long run you will never regret it. I still must admit, though, it was wrong for us to take that car when we knew we were leaving. But then again, it was my wife's decision.

Sacrifice and Self-Discipline

To do what is right on a daily basis does take sacrifice and self-discipline in order for this part of your plan to be successful.

It's also right to always be on time.