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PLAYBOOK FOR LIFE

FOR LIFE, YOU NEED...C.P.R.

CHOOSE: you can choose how to respond positively.

PLAN: you need to put time into improving your athletic skills and your school work.

READINESS: you need to be ready in and out of the season.



IT'S YOUR CHOICE; IT'S UP TO YOU.

Two days after being drafted #2 in the 1986 draft by the then champion Boston Celtics, Len Bias died from heart failure due to the use of cocaine. The University of Maryland star flatlined before he ever reached the hospital. His death is a reminder that life is impacted by choices that can end a life too quickly.

Don't let your life flatline. You can bring it to life... with C.P.R.

(CHOOSE, PLAN, READY)



A long time ago, in a far off land, there was a small village that was visited every so often by a wise man. The townspeople would line up to ask his advice and hear his words of wisdom.

They were constantly trying, however, two men who were jealous of his popularity and the respect he received from all of the village people. They were constantly trying to discredit him.

One day, one of the jealous men said to the other, "I think I have finally come up with a way to embarrass him in front of the whole village."

"How?" asked the other man.

"Here is my plan. I am going to catch a butterfly and cup it in my hands. With all the villagers watching, I will ask him, 'If you are so wise, tell me if the butterfly in my hands is alive or dead.' If he says it's alive, I will squeeze it and end its life. If he says it's dead, I will not squeeze it and open my hands and let it fly away.

"Oh, that is a very good plan. It will surely work," said the other.

The following day, as the people were lining up to speak to the wise man, the two jealous men positioned themselves in the front of the line. The man stood before the wise man and said, "Sir, I have a butterfly cupped in my hands. If you are all-knowing, tell me, is the butterfly alive or dead?" The wise man paused for a moment and said softly, "The answer lies only in your hands."

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ELIJAH'S STORY

Not long ago, in the not far off city of Newark, a young man named Elijah Allen sat in a grade school classroom much like the one you sit in today. Raised by his grandmother, Ida Allen, he was confronted by all of the challenges of urban life. One day, while he sat looking around the classroom at his friends, he began to wonder: What will become of Jerome? Of Keith? Of Kalid? More importantly, he wondered, what will become of me?

In the future, Elijah thought, "I'll be part of some statistical group, but which one? The group of city kids who graduate from high school? College? The group whose members go on to get a job and raise a family? OR, will I be in the group that falls into a life on the street? Get arrested? The group whose members die a premature, usually violent death?"

That very day, Elijah **CHOSE** to be a member of that first statistical group. He worked harder than ever in school. He enrolled in St. Benedict's Prep, and did so well in school and on the basketball court, that he was offered numerous full-scholarships to top universities. Wanting to stay close to his roots, he chose Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, where he led the team to its best record in history, the league title, and the NCAA tournament. Against the highly rated UCONN Huskies, Elijah scored 43 points! His remarkable

performance was witnessed by a large audience on national television. All of his hard work was rewarded when he signed a professional contract to play basketball in France. This was the moment he had begun to **PLAN** for as a grade school kid in Newark.

We never know exactly where life will take us, but if we make good choices, we usually end up in good places. Elijah's positive decisions led him to France, one of the most beautiful countries in the world, to do something he loved, playing basketball. Though he thoroughly enjoyed his experience in France, he felt a bigger calling. He wanted to give back to the place, and the people, who had shaped his future. He was **READY** to show his appreciation. He returned to Newark to become a teacher and coach. Hard work and preparation continue to be a part of his nature and have helped him be successful once again. He has coached his high school team to a state title, and more importantly, sent a number of players on to college.

This may sound like a fairy tale to you, but it isn't. It's a real story; one that can be your story if you decide right now that you want it to be yours. If you need any encouragement, contact Elijah Allen, Head Boys Basketball Coach University H.S., Newark, NJ.

LISTEN TO CHARLES BARKLEY:

"There's a lot of talent wasted in the world because people don't realize that what's just as important as physical skills, and maybe more important, is managing your life, and staying away from the big mistakes that can ruin your career and your life, no matter how much talent you have."

EDUCATIONALLY

"Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration."

– Thomas Edison (Inventor, Scientist, Businessman 1847-1931).

CHOOSE to practice. Research with elite athletes has shown that "deliberate practice" is what separates the average player from those at the elite levels. Time spent practicing specific technical aspects of one's sport only enhances the talent that resides within an athlete. Practice doesn't make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect. The great point guard, Steven Nash, of the Phoenix Suns spends 40 minutes every day on catching a pass and moving the ball into his shooting position without ever taking a shot. That's deliberate practice! Nash understands the need to do things correctly, over and over. That's why he is one of the top point guards in NBA history. Are you willing to work daily on each facet of your game in order to perfect your technique? You can use this same principle with your academics...practicing the correct things the correct way will help you get material correct! (Ericsson, K.A. et. al. 1993. The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance. Psychological Review. Vol. 100. No. 3, 363-406) Just as you have set aside time to practice each aspect of your sport (dribbling, passing, shooting, etc.), you need to set aside quiet time each day to do your homework. This means no TV or music in the background. No matter what grades you have received in the past, teachers are looking to see progress. You need to prepare yourself for greater academic demands with each passing grade. Don't "dumb down" because you think your friends will ridicule you by calling you a "nerd", or "teacher's pet". Do you think Barack Obama ever "dumbed down" on his way to Harvard and the presidency?



PLAN to stay engaged and attentive in school. Teachers love when students show initiative and ask questions about the material being taught.

READY yourself to stay engaged in class by reading your class assignments ahead of time, responding positively to academic challenges, and resisting the urge to slack off in your effort, time, and attention spent on your academics. Do you know how many students wait until they are seniors in high school before they wake up and decide they'd better buckle down and do their schoolwork so they can go to college? Too many! Get serious now-today, not tomorrow.

IN VS. INTO

In school, as in sports and in life, there is only one question you need to ask yourself: “Am I into going all out or holding back?” There is no middle road to becoming successful. Ask yourself, “Am I IN school, or INTO school?” ‘In’ means I’m enrolled but not much more. ‘Into’ means I am interested in learning, and I understand that without good grades I have little chance of going to college, getting a decent job, or providing for a family.

Urban history is filled with stories of young people who were bright, talented, and athletically gifted who never made a name for themselves because they didn’t work hard in school. They chose gangs over teams, hanging out over studying, and looked at challenges as problems rather than as opportunities.

You have the same choices. You can join the list of urban legends who never made it, or you can be the next Elijah Allen! Like the wise man said to the jealous villagers, “The answer lies only in your hands.” Studies show that people who put in minimal effort in school get minimum grades and later on earn minimum wages. Don’t you want more?

Here are some things you can start doing today which will help you get INTO your schooling:

Sit in the front or center of the classroom.

Listen carefully so you know exactly what you’re expected to do.

Ask questions and ask for extra help.

Never be late or absent.

Take notes in every class, every day.

SOCIALLY

“Whatever you are, be a good one.”

–Abraham Lincoln (lived 1809-1865; 16th US President 1861-1865)

CHOOSE to be a good friend, a good citizen of your school and your neighborhood. You need to respect and hang around those who are honest, loyal, and trustworthy...if you are like that yourself, you will attract similar kinds of people.

Plaxico Burrell, former NY Giant wide receiver, chose to hang with those who continued to not be honest with him about his erratic behavior, and who encouraged him to think that he was “above the law” regarding gun possession. This contributed to his errant misuse of a firearm...and resulted in a 2-year prison sentence.

PLAN to focus on picking your friends wisely, to think ahead of time about the consequences of your actions, and to get help from responsible, caring adults.

READY yourself by remembering to respond (Don’t react!) to situations. You can respond by telling someone you’ll get back to them, or by taking a breath, inhaling and exhaling deeply, or giving yourself a “time out” to calm yourself down if you’re upset. You can even talk things over with one of your wisely-chosen friends or a responsible, caring adult.



RIGHT PLACE*RIGHT TIME*RIGHT THING

There's an old saying that "you can judge a person by the company he/she keeps." If that's indeed true, what does your group of friends say about you? Do they lift you up or pull you down?

A famous comedian once said, "The trouble with me is that I appeal to people who can do me absolutely no good!" That line drew big laughs, but it's not at all funny. Does it ring a bell with you? If so, it's time to seriously consider getting new friends.

Studies reveal that how well a student does in school can be predicted by examining the grades of his/her five closest friends. In nearly every case, his/her gpa (grade point average) is in the same range. Go ahead, do a study of your own; you'll see that it's true.

Are your friends on teams, in clubs, in band or in trouble? Do they spend time with teachers after school, visit the library, or hang on the streets? Do they workout, keep their body strong and healthy, or do they smoke and drink alcohol? What they do is probably what you choose to do, and remember, you alone make the choice.

It's true that life should be seen as a journey, and not a destination, but decisions you make along that journey sometimes determine that destination. Roughly 85% of people in prison are between the ages of 18-30. Obviously, these people made bad decisions or were in the wrong place at the wrong time. You are now at an age where you are going to have to decide who you are and where you want your journey to take you.

The first order of business is to set goals for yourself and surround yourself with positive people, ones who share your values and goals. Never allow yourself to be pressured into doing something you know is not right, something that will prevent you from attaining your goals.

You certainly know the difference between right and wrong. The question is: Do you have enough personal conviction to do what you know you should do, or are you paralyzed by WWOPT (what will other people think?). The easiest way to avoid being tempted or pressured into smoking, drinking, doing drugs, or committing crimes is to avoid people who do these things.

"Successful people in all walks of life, including sports, are the ones who know how to get to the right place, at the right time, and do the right thing.

-Coach Ollie Gelston, Montclair State

HOW TO WIN THE BATTLE WITHIN

An elderly Cherokee was speaking to his teenage grandson about life. "There is a fight between two wolves taking place inside of me," he said. "One wolf stands for fear, anger and resentment. The other wolf stands for joy, peace and love." He looked directly into his grandson's eyes and said, "The same fight is going on inside of you, too." The teenager thought for a while and asked, "Grandfather, which wolf will win?" The wise elder replied, "The wolf that you feed." YOU become what you think about most of the time.

THE STORY OF TWO N.J. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WILL HOPEFULLY INSPIRE YOU!"

-Bruce Baumgartner grew up in NJ and attended Manchester Regional High School. As a college wrestler, this young man won only one title for Indiana State University, an NCAA Championship, and that was in his senior year.

After college, he went on to win an amazing 13 World and Olympic medals, which is more than any other freestyle wrestler ever has. What's the point? There is one championship he never won. He was never a NJ high school state champion. In fact, he never earned better than a third place in high school. The point??? He didn't let his past determine his future, and neither should you!

-Imagine how successful you could become if you were unstoppable. Being unstoppable means that no matter what bad things happen to you, you will bounce back. You will persist. You won't ever give up. Have you ever told anyone that your future plans and that person laughed or said, "You'll never do that." "You'll never graduate from college." "You'll never be an actor." "You're not smart enough to go to law school." When you heard these words you might have felt humiliated, but deep inside you a little voice said, "Watch me!" The five words that will motivate you to become unstoppable are, "I'm going to show you." There was once a kid who was so unpopular in a Jersey high school that most of the other students never even knew who he was. He said, "I'm going to show you!" They all know him now! His name is Bruce Springsteen!

ATHLETICALLY

T.E.A.M.

Together everyone achieves more

CHOOSE to be a team player.

“There is no ‘I’ in team.”

NFL wide-receiver, Terrell Owens was cut in 2009 from the Dallas Cowboys. Not only did Owens have relationship issues with quarterback Tony Romo and tight end Jason Witten, the receiver consistently criticized his offensive coordinator Jason Garrett’s play calling and his offensive schemes, because they did not always involve him, to the point that sources said Garrett did not believe he and Owens could coexist. Owens landed a spot with the Cincinnati Bengals—where he continued his “self interested” play. The result in 2010? A lackluster season for the Bengals. The next year he was out of the NFL.

“A leader leads by example, whether s/he intends to or not.”

Cal Ripken, Jr. always admired and followed his baseball manager dad’s strong work ethic. During his career with the Baltimore Orioles, Ripken never missed a day of work and became baseball’s “Iron Man” by breaking the all-time record for most consecutive games played at 2,632 straight games, spanning 17 seasons, from 1982 to 1998.

PLAN to contribute positively to your sport by improving yourself as a person, and then as an athlete.

In 2007, when Boston Celtics’ coach Doc Rivers told Rajon Rondo that his teammates hated playing with him, Rondo realized that his poor attitude was hurting the team. He improved his attitude and earned his teammates’ trust. The result? The Celtics’ point guard went on to lead his team to a 2009 NBA Championship title.

READY yourself by preparing for competition.

Legendary Coach John Wooden believed that the team most likely to win the NCAA final game was the team that played closest to how it practiced.



FINANCIALLY

CHOOSE to earn money honestly. It has often been said that there are no small jobs, only small-minded people for jobs. For Kurt Warner, “small” may have described his life, but it was never in his vocabulary. His early athletic career did not capture the attention of either Division I college recruiters or NFL coaches. After being newly married with a wife and kids to feed, and having just been cut from the Green Bay Packers roster, Kurt chose to keep his NFL dreams alive by taking an evening job stocking supermarket shelves for \$5.50 an hour while he continued his football training during the day and made time for his wife and family. No task or job was “too beneath” him. When the opportunity to play Arena Football came about, he played his best. That landed him a spot as 3rd string quarterback for the St. Louis Rams. When their starting QB went down, Kurt, who did not mind that he was paid the lowest amount in football, \$250,000/year, stepped in and played his best. The result? He led the St. Louis Rams to win Super Bowl XXXIV, and was named MVP of the game. His starting salary was increased the next year to \$11.5 million.

PLAN not to be in debt, which occurs when your **D**aily **E**xpenses **B**ypass your **T**otal income. You are not in control. Someone else, the lender, controls you and what you have...and they can take it away at any time. Instead, take advantage of scholarship funds available to you. According to the NCAA, there’s roughly \$1 billion a year available in athletic scholarships. **Better still, there’s \$22 billion available in academic scholarships.** Do the math! You have a 22 times greater chance of getting money for college based on your work in the classroom than on the court or field. These grants don’t only go to the students at the very top of their class. They’re given to students with good grades, who are good citizens, based on financial need. That could include YOU!

READY yourself to keep control by following the” 4-S” Principle: **S**ave **S**ufficiently; **S**pend **S**paringly “...*whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow.*” – an old saying from a rich King Solomon (1011- 931 BC).

If you bought a pair of 2011 LeBron Air Max Soldier V(cost: \$110) and charged it on a credit card that has an interest rate of 18.9% and you paid the minimum payment of \$10/month, it would take you 12 months to pay it off, but the total amount you would have paid is \$119. That’s a \$9.00 overpayment to someone else! If instead, you saved up \$10/month for 11 months and bought LeBron Air Max Soldier V, you could then buy it with cash and not overpay, and owe nothing!!



NO REGRETS

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer about his plans to leave the business for a more leisurely life. He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. He could get by.

The contractor was sorry to see the worker go, and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart just wasn't in it. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished his work, the employer came to inspect the house. He handed the front door key to the carpenter. "This is your house, he said. "It's my gift to you." The carpenter was shocked! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done things so differently.

And so it is with us.

We build our lives, one day at a time, often putting in less than our best into the building. Then, with a shock, we realize we have to live in the house we have built.

You cannot go back. You are the carpenter. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. "Life is a do it yourself project," someone once said. Your attitude and the choices you make today, build the "house" you will live in tomorrow.

BUILD WISELY!

