

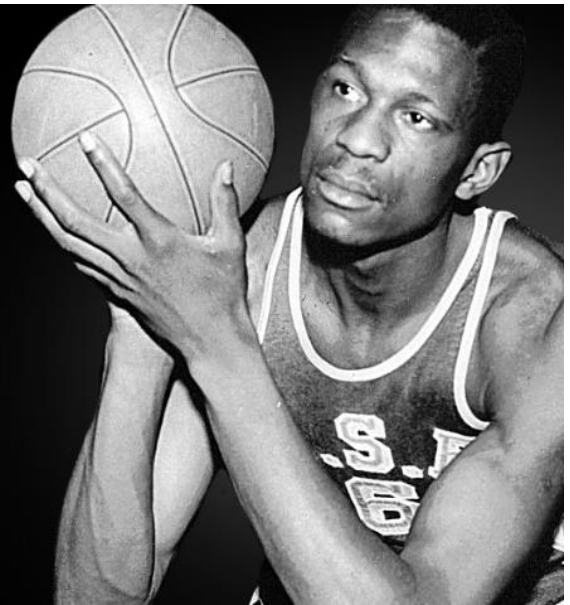
Russell Rules:

11 Lessons on Leadership from the Twentieth Century's Greatest Winner

By Bill Russell, David Falkner

The most important measure
of **how good a game**
I played was how much better
I'd made my teammates play.

– *Bill Russell*



Summary

1. Russell recounts the 11 rules he used to become the greatest winner in basketball history—eleven NBA championships in thirteen years. Some players can amass individual statistics but only he has had the strength and focus to keep his team a champion for over a decade. A great team is like a five-pointed star; each game, another player can be the reason for victory. That’s the way it was with the Boston Celtics of Russell’s era. He was surrounded by a talented group of teammates, but the team somehow belonged to him. In the end, Red Auerbach officially recognized his leadership by selecting him as the player-coach of the Celtics. In that role, without an assistant, he proceeded to win yet another two championships.

Key Takeaways

1. Lesson 1: Curiosity is a process.
 - a. RUSSELL RULES
 - i. Rule One: Ask questions. A silly question is worth any number of easy answers.
 - ii. Rule Two: Remember that curiosity is a process, and it is not a solution in itself. It’s ongoing and always leaves it to you to figure out what you need to do next.
 - iii. Rule Three: To really be committed, you must always pursue the questions until you get meaningful answers.
 - b. Tony said something powerful about commitment that day: **“I believe life is constantly testing us for our level of commitment, and life’s greatest rewards are reserved for those who demonstrate a never-ending commitment to act until they achieve. This level of resolve can move mountains, but it must be constant and consistent.”** As simplistic as this sounded, commitment in my mind is the common denominator separating those who live their dreams from those who live their lives regretting the opportunities they have squandered. So what’s the tiebreaker? **What differentiates those who see and pursue the power of commitment versus those who can’t? One word: curiosity.** Curiosity is as common as the air we breathe, but it is also the oxygen of accomplishment and success.
 - c. **Good questions are more important than easy answers.**
 - d. One of the most important characteristics one must possess for success in a world that is predicated on the survival of the fittest is an interest in life, good, bad, or peculiar.
 - e. Curiosity should always be challenging and always solidify a sense of commitment. The goal is to solve the problem, to win the game, to get past the place where you might have been stuck. The goal of winning slips away with the loss of curiosity. Though curiosity is a child’s possession, an adult can use it consciously as a tool, can develop it in the building of a winning strategy.

- f. **Curiosity should be a verb, not a noun. Curiosity is connected to doing, to solving, experimenting, trying, failing, and then accomplishing.** “How does this work?” “What do I do?” “What happens next?” “What do I do to make this turn out the way I want—or the way you want?” “How do I get from here to there?” “What can I do to help you (or myself)?” Those are all basic questions that stem from curiosity, but that are also basic to winning.
- g. **When commitment is coerced, thinking is not required—just obedience. Curiosity on the other hand is the arch-stone of that thinking process that leads to doing.**
- h. **I did something else, too. Sitting there on the bus, I’d close my eyes and try to see each move these players made the same way I had “memorized” Michelangelo and Leonardo. As I saw them move in my mind’s eye, I imagined myself as their shadow or mirror image. Every movement, every subtle gesture they made, I made in reverse, till I knew that I could guard them both.**
 - i. *Hologram in the head, “[coup d’oeil](#)”*
- i. But I had the feeling that all the while I was swimming upstream. My coach—who became a dear friend for life afterward—never once complimented me on my game and, I believe, never really saw all the positive things that I was doing on the court. He was brought up in the old school. When he saw me leave my feet on defense, he believed I had overcommitted myself; when he saw me move the ball like a guard, he thought I was taking unnecessary chances. I wasn’t.
- j. **Learning was driven by endless curiosity, paying attention to what players did, what their idiosyncrasies were, discovering their “signature styles.”**
- k. Red Auerbach, walking down the tunnel toward the court with me, **asked if I had any worries about my ability to score. “I wouldn’t say I had any worries, I think about it sometimes,” I said. He told me then he’d make a deal with me, that he’d never use statistics in negotiating one of my contracts, that the only thing he’d ever bring up was how I played. I welcomed what he said. It took a lot of the pressure off and it also freed me to play my game, which went beyond rebounding. I was comfortable running plays, setting up, passing the ball, working to get my teammates good shots, and so my task, I knew then, was to figure out how to make all that happen.**
- l. What I found with the Celtics was a set of other players who were brilliant and accomplished. I needed to know who the different players were, what their tendencies were, their habits, their preferences. I had to learn about their thinking, their temperaments. **For me to play my best game, I had to discover theirs.**
- m. One night, while I was leading a break up the floor, I noticed Bob Cousy over my shoulder, running behind me. I told myself something was wrong, the picture was out of whack, the signature style was missing. Bob Cousy, to this day, is the best I’ve ever seen in the NBA at running a fast break. What I was inadvertently doing was taking him out of his game, out of what he did best. My curiosity was getting the better of me. In my search to learn all I could about my teammates, I started to

learn how to play like them. **I needed to know their games inside out without actually doing what they were doing. That would actually have hurt our team.** Cousy never said anything to me about it, Red never said anything, reporters never criticized me. I realized how easy it had been to undermine my team's game by doing my own thing. What I did after that was to give Cousy the ball as soon as I got it and then fill the lane so he could go to work. That way I was helping him to play his game, which was exactly what our team needed.

- n. How do you put curiosity to work in your life? What practical steps can you take to make sure you exploit this natural power to allow you to make commitments? **The most basic step is a willingness to deal with what is right in front of you.** If your competitor has a product that is top of the line, you have to find out what made that product so special before you commit yourself to surpassing him. That is what VHS technology did to Betamax. **What can I do? Say that to yourself, teach yourself to keep saying it in every situation that matters. The answers will come—and with them real commitment—even if, for a time, the self-questioning might seem to slow you down.**
 - o. **When I walked into the Celtics locker room for the first time, I saw a bunch of guys, each of whom I knew by sight. In fact, I had read everything I could about every guy on the Celtics and in the league. I knew what every opponent would look like before I played against them.**
2. Lesson 2 – Ego = MC^2
- a. RUSSELL RULES
 - i. Rule One: Establish your business environment. Help everyone understand the power in decision-making that benefits the team.
 - ii. Rule Two: Make sure the team is part of the process. Help your business team or family or basketball team understand not only what's going to happen but also the whys and the hows.
 - iii. Rule Three: Create unselfishness as the most important team attribute. Philip Caldwell, the former CEO at Ford who helped turn the company around, made many memorable statements. One that impressed me was “The important thing to recognize is that it takes a team. And the team ought to get credit for both the wins and the losses. Successes have many fathers, failures none.”
 - b. **What must be done to achieve success is often something where the doer is not the direct beneficiary. This is especially true for any kind of team player.** Trying to figure out how something is done automatically pushes one toward commitment. That commitment can be to making yourself the best parent you can be, the best teacher, the best golfer. Commitment to a collective entity like the Boston Celtics or Boeing inevitably means a commitment to a team. **But whatever the nature of the commitment, the deepest is the one that comes from within yourself and that is freely given.**
 - c. **I began by telling them that despite that so much had been written about me being the most unselfish player, I was the most egotistical player they would**

ever meet. All kinds of nervous smiles were coming back at me from people who were not sure what was coming next. These smiles disappeared when I said, “Do you know the difference between your ego and mine? My ego is not a personal ego, it’s a team ego. My ego demands—for myself—the success of my team. My personal achievement became my team achievement. The single greatest disappointment in my career was when I was hurt and we didn’t win a twelfth title.” These talented young players all looked at me with strange expressions on their faces. I could almost read their minds. Here was Bill Russell, the guy with eleven championship rings on his ten fingers, telling them that the only thing that mattered to him was how his team did. But that’s exactly what I was saying. Thirty-plus years later, the only regrets I have are about those two years when the Celtics didn’t win. My career was never about personal statistics. It was never about contracts or money. I never paid attention to MVP awards or how many endorsements I had lined up—only how many titles we won. My team went out night after night, played totally unselfishly and had fun.

- d. When I played, I was the most dominant player in the game. But I was so team-oriented that I never needed to prove it. All I wanted was for my attitude to rub off on my teammates, and it did.
- e. I realized at a young age that winning was the ultimate form of athletic expression. And **to win regularly, I would have to subordinate my individual goals so my team would be able to win. As a result, I became the kind of leader who understood that doing the most for my team would best guarantee success. To get there, I had to get past a lot of things that weren’t really vital to winning but that made me feel good—like taking shots.**
- f. **If you’re going to spend your career trying to prove yourself to other people, you are bound to fail sooner or later.**
- g. **There were never any pep talks, never any grandstanding** (well, there were victory cigars!). All that was required for Red’s ego to be filled was for the Celtics to win basketball games and championships.
- h. Nearly all of my new teammates were egotists in exactly the way Red was. Each of them knew how good he was, but **each of them seemed to understand perfectly that everyone had to play his part for us to win.**
 - i. *Know your role, star in your role*
- i. I didn’t know how I’d be received or if the way I saw myself would bother anyone else. I didn’t care. I wore facial hair, for instance—a sharp goatee and a thin mustache. Over time, I developed a calculated air of mystery so that my teammates would never be able to take me for granted (or later on to see that I happened to like them). I had a job to do, and what my ego told me then was that I had to take control of how anyone else was going to define me.
- j. To get the most out of being a member of a team it is absolutely essential to establish yourself as an integral part of the unit. That is your responsibility, not anyone else’s.

- k. When a ball reached me in the middle, it was as though my eyesight and my hands got better. I could see from sideline to sideline, knowing where each of my teammates was. My impulse was to get the ball to someone who was in a position to shoot. More and more, I prided myself on my passing. I never made fancy passes, but I always made good ones that allowed my teammates to catch the ball and usually to find themselves in a spot where they were open to shoot it.
 - l. I learned something essential in my ego battles with Wilt. **Ego is not a principle so much as a force of energy in the self. It is the vital current in your body, what you bring to everything you do, it is the power in you that can create positive (or negative) results in your life.** No matter what the job or station you find yourself in, ego is the force of energy you summon that will allow you to be fully present and engaged.
 - m. Red accused me of being stubborn and willful—which he knew I was anyway—and wanted to know why, why I wanted to shun such an honor from the fans. **Because I never played for the fans, I explained, I played for myself and for my team. I told Red I felt honored to have my number retired but that was something I could in good conscience only do with my teammates. Everything I had done I had done with them and with no one else.** So what Red then proposed was that the ceremony take place before the game that night—prior to the time when fans were admitted to the building—with only my teammates and him in attendance. That I gladly agreed to. Later, when word got out about what had happened, one of my many critics took pains to point out that what I had done was a colossal act of egotism. I had chosen to show to the world—and the Boston Celtics—the size of my own ego. He was exactly right. Except for the fact that my ego was always about my team.
3. Lesson 3 – Listening is Never Casual
- a. RUSSELL RULES
 - i. Rule One: **Make sure your ears are open enough not only to catch what is said, but to pick up the intention of the speaker.**
 - ii. Rule Two: Make sure you know your own intention as a listener. Are you hearing, or are you listening?
 - iii. Rule Three: This is the most important of the rules: Combine these very different intentions that you pick up from listening into something that can help you make useful decisions. Call it translation, call it interaction, but **what is most essential is having an ability to combine what is said with what is meant so that useful decision-making may follow.**
 - b. So, someone who listens obviously has many advantages that others do not have, among them: being able to discriminate between what someone says and what he or she really means; being able to absorb necessary information in making decisions; being able to act and interact in a positive and empowering way with others. In all my years as an active listener, I have noticed six bad habits that people fall into when they are hearing but not listening. Take a look at the following list and see how many you answer with a yes. Do you find yourself

trying to come up with a “better” story than the one the speaker is telling? Are you nodding yes when you are not really listening just to keep the conversation moving? Do you make eye contact with the speaker? Do you find that you forget what has been said immediately following the conversation? Are you asking trivial questions to seem as if you are listening? Are you always interrupting because you feel you have a “more important” thing to say?

- c. Red spoke to each of us differently. This was never an affectation. He had an uncanny ability to pick up intonations, inflections, and body language in every one of his players. When he listened, he had what I like to think of as a built-in, shockproof lie detector. We used to have a saying on the Celtics, “Don’t lie to me, boy!” That came from Red. He insisted that players tell him exactly what was on their mind. That meant spelling out in the clearest possible basketball terms what they could and couldn’t do on the court. He wanted straight answers so he could make good decisions. **And he knew how to solicit those answers, and he had the wiliest instinct for eliminating the difficult space between someone’s words and their intentions. The key to Red’s method was that when he asked a question or wanted to know if you could do something, he did it in such a way that you knew you had room to answer him without feeling threatened.** In itself that was an enormous boon to a player who might have felt he could not speak his mind for fear of job security. But that wasn’t the end of it. If you did say no to Red, he would want to know why. Again there was no threat in the question. It was clear to the player that what Red was after was accurate information. Then, and only if Red was able to hear something in that player’s answer, would he suggest that there might be a way to teach you or to do something a little differently.
- d. **Red was a great leader because of the trust and respect he had earned among his players. It had everything to do with listening.**
- e. When listening is most productive, it is always about communication. It is two-sided even when one person is left to make a decision. It takes into account the words, the viewpoints, of others and then respects them. To be a good listener it is imperative that you become free enough of your own agenda to really hear someone else.
- f. **We’re all bilingual. Most people, for example, are called on to use different languages for different audiences. We all have both public and private languages.** For example, when you are going to a business meeting, you have to adjust your language to allow your audiences to listen to you more effectively. You need to choose words that are more than idioms or clichés for your industry because many people tend to hear those all-too-familiar words and tune out. Choose words that cause people to think, “What does he mean by that?” **When I speak to audiences, I always try to use words that they might not expect, words they do not always hear, so I know they are listening to the point I am trying to make.** But you would not use this technique with your family. At home, developing an inviting language encourages honesty, dialogue, and sharing of

feelings that will prove to deliver a much more enriching relationship with your family.

- i. *Focus not only on what is being said, but what their intention is. The iceberg model of understanding that what has breached the surface is only a small portion*
 - g. **I learned a great deal from the Jesuits at the University of San Francisco. Not only did the priests teach us about the importance of making distinctions, they used to tell us over and over again that we had to learn how to distinguish true from false statements. Their method was simple. After defining the terms, you had to consider the source.**
 - h. **Listening is a leadership skill that has to be developed. It is about respecting others and yourself enough so that you can put yourself, your company, your family, in position to win.**
4. Lesson 4 – Toughness or Tenderness: Creating Your Leadership Style
 - a. RUSSELL RULES
 - i. Rule One: Successful teams of any kind are dictatorships. This is not a bad thing, but a necessary component of a winning team.
 - ii. Rule Two: Good dictators follow as well as lead. They will encourage, not discourage, the people who work for them.
 - iii. Rule Three: **Tenderness is an act of strength and can be a most powerful leadership trait when it is used to recognize and promote the abilities and talents of others.**
 - b. **I do not believe leaders are born leaders. Leadership is an acquired skill.** And, most important, leadership, like swimming, has to be learned through active participation and practice. It cannot be learned solely through observation. **Great leaders in my opinion possess three flexible skills: toughness, tenderness, and the ability to know when is the right time to use one or the other. This is one of the most valuable skills any leader can gain.**
 - c. The choice of how to lead is more than a skill. It is a reflection of both the leader himself and of the culture he or she has created for the company. I once told an audience of corporate salespeople how impressed I was with Tom May from Nstar in Boston. NStar is Massachusetts’s largest investor-owned electrical gas utility. **He could get anything out of his colleagues because he could relate to them. Every problem, every project, every change, was shaped into a metaphor, an analogy, or expressed as a picture. He’d never say, “I want this done!” It would always be “I wonder if we can do that.” or “I think it could look more like this.” And then he would begin exploring the problem, project, or plan with his employees.**
 - i. *Must be able to “see through the eyes of the crew”*
 - d. The first principle of developing a leadership style of any kind, as I see it, is toughness. Of all the characteristics of leaders this is the one that is most easily misunderstood and the one that is most necessary. Some very unlikely people—Mother Teresa, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr.—exemplify toughness. These

people were not tyrants or intimidators, as one would expect a person exhibiting toughness would be. But they had convictions and beliefs that they held on to with fierce determination. That is an outward sign of toughness. **Toughness is the ability to shut out all that is irrelevant in reaching a goal and to inspire others to follow you.**

- e. **A good leader is always a follower as much as he is a ruler. The team comes first.** That was why Red listened to his players and got out of the way when he felt they were right.
 - f. In the thirteen years I was a player, I think I had three or four fights, none that I ever sought, but all of them were ones where I felt I had no choice but to respond, where walking away would have created more problems for me than if I'd fought. **Fighting was not how I showed toughness. Doing what was necessary to stand up for myself was.**
 - g. What has to be understood about toughness is that it is necessary only because a team, a business, a family, cannot exist without core leadership. Decisions can be made in many ways, top-down or democratically, but ultimately there must be responsibility for decision-making.
 - h. Tenderness is always the result of intelligence. In other words, tenderness allowed these leaders to better see and respect the talents of those they were dealing with. Far from being soft-headed, these leaders were exhibiting farsightedness that led directly to the enormous successes they achieved in life. **A tyrant without tenderness, a tough guy who prides himself on his toughness, may accomplish things, but does so with a reluctant army behind him.**
 - i. *Volunteer vs. Draft*
 - i. **As I see it, leaders like Walter Brown and Red Auerbach were infinitely more effective because they had this unexpected side to them. But why tenderness should be effective rather than merely decorative is interesting.**
 - i. *Tin – Copper - Bronze*
5. Lesson 5 – Invisible Men
- a. RUSSELL RULES
 - i. Rule One: Invisibility confers power. It is the “sixth man” on your team, the unseen but very present player who can consciously be employed in a winning strategy—in a company, in all relationships.
 - ii. Rule Two: Use invisibility to shape how others see you. Create perceptions, don't just rely on them. The Boston Celtics, the Xerox Corporation, IBM, all have carried logos that have infiltrated the minds of competitors and of the public at large. You can be twice as big and three times as powerful even when you're on the sidelines, watching the action.
 - iii. Rule Three: Invisibility opens doors when they are locked, it always creates opportunity for those willing to see.
 - b. Invisibility is usually not a standard by which anyone measures success, but it is a great power if it is understood and used creatively. It is a subtle power. It resists formulas and definitions, but its rewards are extraordinary.

- c. What Xerox accomplished through the power of invisibility was to swamp the field, to infiltrate the minds of customers and competitors alike, giving the company a huge advantage that went way beyond the actual resources and technology they had at their disposal.
- d. I learned from my dad then, for the first time, that he had attended every one of my high school JV and varsity games, even when I was the last man on the bench and didn't get a minute's worth of playing time. He told me he had sat up in the back behind our bench where I'd be sure not to see him. I asked him why he did that and he told me he wanted to be there to lend me support without doing anything to put extra pressure on me. He wanted to be aware of what I was doing and going through, but he did not feel the need to physically make himself known. There is a lesson here for every manager. **You need to know what is going on with your employees, but you do not always need to force yourself on them or even influence them. You have to trust them to operate on their own (that's why you hired them in the first place).** The funny thing about this talk with my father was that this story of his didn't really surprise me. I always knew he had been my biggest fan. My father's encouragement was like a constant current of energy in my body.
- e. As a player, I believed in intimidation. I didn't want to just win games, I wanted to rob the other team of any sense of belief they had in their ability. I didn't want players thinking they could come back against us when they were down.
- f. Even when I was most physically intimidating, I used the power of invisibility to help me. When I went to block a shot, for instance, I wanted to do it in such a way that I could surprise the other player.
- g. Ironically, the skill level of play in the NBA made it easier to use invisibility as a weapon. **One of the skills top athletes have that others don't have or even understand is their vision. Top athletes in any sport see differently from ordinary people. Talk to a great baseball player, someone like Willy Mays or Joe Morgan, and they will tell you strange things about the way they saw a baseball. Mays will talk about seeing a ball in slow motion when he made a great catch. Joe Morgan was once asked how he was able to handle a hundred-miles-per-hour Nolan Ryan fastball. Morgan said he never saw a hundred-miles-per-hour fastball; every fastball Ryan threw to him seemed to be coming in at seventy-five to eighty miles an hour. Joe said that he was able to "slow the ball down" so that he saw it differently. This extra dimension of vision made me fully realize that I could actually take advantage of a great athlete's power to see by making myself invisible as surely as that guy who unwound the bandages from his head in that old movie.** When I played against Oscar Robertson, for example, I thought for a while that he had 360-degree vision. He seemed to know where everyone on the court was at all times; he could thread a pass through the eye of a needle, through a football scrimmage of bodies. But he didn't really have 360-degree vision at all; he had this peculiar ability great athletes have to focus. **Where an ordinary player would see whatever was in**

front of him and whatever his peripheral vision took in, a player like Oscar would be able to eliminate everything between him and the player he wanted to pass to or the area where he had to get to shoot or set up a play. His vision then narrowed like a laser beam. Within that beam he could slow down or speed up the action as need demanded. But then everything outside that beam wasn't visible to him! I realized his great seeing power made him blind! And that allowed me to work invisibly against him. I could move into these blind zones and attack the ball or the player without being seen.

- i. *Special athletes see differently, they are able to slow things down and see things simultaneously from many angles*
 - h. **How can invisibility become a creative force, a technique for success, in your life? Begin with your personal relationships. If you genuinely love some people, if you have a powerful effect on their lives for good or ill, become aware that you will follow them around wherever they go.** So use that for the good, for positive rather than negative ends. In corporate life, the goal of establishing your company carries with it the opportunity to extend resources and power beyond the limits of a budget to the possibilities conferred by invisibility, the hidden effect of your brand. **Working for your success means making sure you are doing everything you can to work for your team's success. And then, also, the power of your own performance can be an invisible support for your coworkers, your teammates and colleagues.**
 - i. The Celtics, quite specifically, understood the power of invisibility. Playing for the team was always the plan. You had to be willing to give yourself up—to make yourself invisible—if you wanted success.
 - j. Because I knew Wilt as well as I did, I was always seeking to take advantage of his good nature. I did whatever I could to make sure I would never get him angry or fired up. My battle plan with him was always to keep him feeling as comfortable as possible with his own game. If he ever felt pressured or shown up, he would take notice and try that much harder. I was determined to make sure that never happened.
 - k. **Think of invisibility as a plant: whatever beauty or ugliness it produces above ground for all to see, the roots that give it life are deep beneath the ground, far out of view, invisible, alive, drawing sustenance from the heart of the earth.**
 - i. *Iceberg model*
6. Lesson 6 – Craftsmanship
 - a. RUSSELL RULES
 - i. Rule One: **Learning should be a daily experience and a lifetime mission.** Michelangelo said, “I have offended God and mankind because my work didn't reach the quality it should have.” I always believed if Michelangelo felt that way, then I would always strive for the best because anything else would not be enough.

- ii. Rule Two: Craftsmanship and quality are never accidents. In lesson three, on listening, I talked about the importance of careful language selection to get folks to listen more effectively. Well, **think about replacing the word quality with craftsmanship and reintroduce it as an integral part of your brand.**
- iii. Rule Three: Make craftsmanship contagious. Craftsmanship and teamwork go hand in hand; one cannot happen without the other. If others see the care and dedication that you put into your job and into winning, they will follow. Accomplishing that is a true mark of a winning leader.
- b. Craftsmanship is another word for quality. It is also about getting the best results from your work effort. When we are creating a team we have to apply the same quality as a fine Swiss watchmaker. Craftsmanship comes out of intelligent hard work.
- c. **Success is a result of consistent practice of winning skills and actions. There is nothing miraculous about the process. There is no luck involved. Amateurs hope, professionals work.**
 - i. *Consistent, incremental progress eternally repeated*
- d. My father once told me that anyone who worked for three dollars an hour owed it to himself to put in four dollars' worth of work so at the end of the day he could look any man in the eye and tell him where to go. My father believed that you could feel a sense of security for giving more than what someone was expecting from you. I took my lead from him.
- e. Craftsmanship is inevitably linked to success, but, even more, it is tied to leadership. The better you are at what you do, the more you set an example without words or memos for others to see and follow. Craftsmanship is infectious because it raises the standard. It is a funny notion, but many times if you refuse to accept anything but the very best, you often get it. In my opinion, craftsmanship needs to become an important part of your business culture. My father used to say, "If you don't do it excellently, don't do it at all."
- f. A good shot always comes from the toes and then flows up through the body to the fingertips. And I observed then that for good shooters to get off good shots, they had to be in position to use their feet, their toes. They had to essentially square up to the basket, and if they didn't, if they were forced to turn to the side, for example, they would be less effective. So I taught myself to always move against a shooter in such a way that he would not be able to square up. If I was correctly positioned, I would be able to spring out or to the side so quickly a shooter would wind up altering what he did, taking a more difficult shot even when I had little or no chance of blocking it.
- g. **I loved making passes in from out of bounds because I could see each of my teammates so distinctly in the rush of bodies moving this way and that. By then, because I had acquired enough technique, I could slow those bodies down in my mind's eye before I released the ball.**

- h. **As a player and a coach, I didn't look at statistics the way sportswriters and fans did. I wasn't interested in who scored most, got the most rebounds or assists. I was after clues that would let me see patterns, what it was that enabled the Knicks to succeed against us.** The stats, this time, revealed something startling about the Knicks' defense. I noticed that in each of the regular-season games against them, I had taken no more than five or six shots. Now the guy guarding me and the backbone of the Knicks defense was Willis Reed. Because I hadn't been shooting much, Reed had been free to help out on defense. He had been able to leave me safe in the assumption that I wasn't likely to get the ball and shoot.
- i. For a player to experience the game on a level where he has to use all of himself, where he is, in effect, a problem solver as well as a body, constantly committing himself all out to the possibilities of the moment, creating chances and opportunities for himself and his team, is to experience the game at the highest level of creativity. Craftsmanship at this level is about artistry.
- j. Personally, I found a great thrill in using my craft as fully as I could. But it was always about winning. I loved those times when a situation looked absolutely hopeless and yet I could still do something to turn things around. I probably broke up thirty-five to forty three-on-one breaks in my career, for instance. The feeling of joy and accomplishment I felt after each one of those defensive gems was contagious. I wanted to do it again. I remember once that we were a single point down in a regular-season game against Philadelphia with twelve seconds left. Archie Clark of the Sixers had the ball in the frontcourt and was dribbling out the clock. **I was the only player near him. I knew I had no chance to take the ball from him. He had so much room he could have just stood still with the ball. So I stared at him—and he stared back at me, smiling. What followed happened so quickly it deadens out in the writing. My mind flashed on this player; I told myself, "Archie Clark is a scorer who is more inclined to take a layup than a jump shot. If he had a shot, he would be more comfortable taking a layup. . . so what I'm going to do is turn my back and start to walk off the floor like I've given up."** I did this—and he did exactly what I hoped he would do. **He drove to the basket for an easy layup. But there I was, waiting for him! I blocked the ball, called time-out. There were three seconds left. We took the ball out in frontcourt. Havlicek passed in to me down low; I dunked. We won in regulation.**
- k. **There's a saying about doing your job and letting go of the results. It's grounded in deep truth. I was always more interested in the doing, in the craft of playing, than I ever was in rings on my fingers. At the height of my game, what I found was the joy of my life.**
- i. *Process > Outcome*
- l. **Craftsmanship is a way in to what's best in yourself. The real mastery is always of yourself.**
- m. **It goes back to that old saying that it's not what you give but what you share.**

- n. One final thought. Because I have gotten so much joy from the things I have done in my life, **it has sometimes been hard to think that joy itself is a leadership quality. But it is. When a leader is obviously passionate and joyful in what he or she does, that is inevitably communicated. It sets a tone, a standard in which winning is not the only thing but the most natural thing in the world.**
7. Lesson 7 – Personal Integrity
- a. RUSSELL RULES
- i. Rule One: **Take responsibility for everything you do.** One great quality that leaders have is the ability to take responsibility—we all know that responsibility ultimately gravitates to the person who can shoulder it. We must all be strong enough. The more you stand behind what you do or what you decide, the more you will be able to feel that is a reflection of yourself. It is your integrity that is at stake when you genuinely take responsibility for what you do.
 - ii. Rule Two: Make clear choices and stand behind those choices. This rule involves utilizing three powerful words: ask, listen, decide.
 - iii. Rule Three: **Be fully present in whatever you are doing. Once you commit yourself to an activity, an appointment, a relationship, you have committed yourself to being there in an active and engaged way.** Integrity means consciously committing yourself to reality, to what is right under your nose. It means immersing yourself wholeheartedly in whatever you are doing. Committing yourself to reality means doing everything you can to eliminate comparisons, fantasizing, wishing, or all the other mental distractions that not only take you out of the moment but also rob you of your own power. That will no doubt mean that someone else’s “excellent” will, often, for you, only seem “very good.” But the difference, in the end, will be about winning—and you, most of all, will be conscious of that.
- b. **“Trust the teller and you’ll trust the tale.”** This quote, which I first heard from a close friend whose father used to always say it, is at the heart of this chapter on personal integrity. To me, that quote means that personal integrity is always, first and foremost, about trust and truth. To reach any level of understanding of ourselves we must examine who we are and at least understand and accept the many aspects of our individuality. I do not usually pay much attention to names of companies, but I know this guy Rob Smith, the CEO of a Bluemont, Virginia, marketing company called Focal Point. I loved that name because of the imagery it evoked. A focal point is where light converges through a prism or lens and results in a multitude of colors that exit on the other side.
- c. I believe that we are a blend of colors, and that this blend of colors comes from a single light. I call that light personal integrity.
- d. **Integrity is assuredly not an easy thing to define because it is so individual at its core, yet it is perhaps the single most essential quality needed by a leader. Integrity is about the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that go into how we**

make decisions, how we conduct ourselves in our day-to-day lives, who we are in the workplace and at home.

- e. The most essential and common behavior integrity demands of us is responsibility. In its essence, that means being able to own what it is you do. That implies that your actions and words will be filled with self-awareness. That you will take the pains to see consequences, possibilities, liabilities, opportunities, in whatever you do—and accepting them rather than feigning surprise or ignorance when what happens subsequently produces a result less desirable than what you wished for.
- f. Integrity always comes back to this point in reality where you are called to be fully present.
- g. Happiness or personal satisfaction, to me, it almost goes without saying, is an inevitable by-product of personal integrity.
- h. The important choices we make in our lives are never clear-cut. There are good reasons in many situations to go one way or another. Yet the ability to choose wisely or correctly is so fundamental to building success, to exhibiting true leadership, that it sometimes seems as if we are being asked to walk a high wire without a net below us.
- i. In my view, anyone who needs an agent or representative must thoroughly familiarize himself or herself with all that will be involved in making key decisions and ultimately take responsibility for every important decision. If it is left up to someone else to tell you what is best for you, you might as well listen to him or her because you will have no opinion yourself.
 - i. *Danger of outsourcing key decisions, processes – you eventually lose the skill yourself*
- j. **Integrity always comes from within and, unlike dogma, always proceeds across a no-man’s-land of doubt, fear, and contradiction where the only reliable guide is fidelity to oneself.**
- k. One of my favorite sayings is a remark attributed to Gandhi, a man who, to me, exemplified the full power of integrity. **“I do not concern myself with being consistent,” he was supposed to have said. “I only concern myself with being consistent with the truth as it reveals itself to me.”**
 - i. *Karl Popper on Truth – “corresponds to the facts as we currently understand them.”*
- l. The everyday world we live in is the testing place for our integrity—our jobs, our marriages, our families, what we do with ourselves just trying to do the best we can.
- m. Many people ponder career choices when they are young and believe that unless they find exactly the right job or career path for themselves they will be eternally miserable. This is a fundamental mistake. What is essential is the inner commitment we make—the commitment of our integrity—to whatever it is we decide to do.

- n. **In my life, I have found that integrity is its own reward. What you give you get back over and over again.**
 - o. **What is absolutely essential to understand is that integrity involves a willingness to be honest with oneself in any kind of self-assessment.** Integrity is always an inner process where outcomes are not preordained. A person who lives by a standard of integrity will encounter setbacks in one way or another and will often have to accept the reality of small successes rather than overarching triumphs. **The Celtics were just as much a model of small successes and compromises as they were of memorable victories and championships.**
 - p. **You are the only one who can define what is and isn't right for you. It is essential that you recognize this because what you are after is the location of that place within yourself, yourself alone, that you will have to call on to choose right from wrong, wise from unwise, caring from uncaring or indifferent.**
8. Lesson 8 – Rebounding, or How to Change the Flow of the Game
- a. RUSSELL RULES
 - i. Rule One: Rebounding is an affirmative act. It begins the offense. The simple fact that you are in the game, able to rebound, is the first step to taking control.
 - ii. Rule Two: You cannot rebound well if you have a victim mentality. If you are not the person who is called upon to shoot the game-winning shot at the end of the game, then put yourself in a position to get the rebound in case the shot is missed.
 - iii. Rule Three: **Build resilience both as a winner and in defeat. Understand why you are winning and never take it for granted. Recognize that it is harder to rebound from a win than to rebound from a defeat.**
 - b. Failures and setbacks occur all the time. Each one of us deals with adversity differently. The swing of our lives from good times to bad and back again is as inevitable as variations in the weather. But in the ways we deal with these **variations we define ourselves.**
 - c. **I looked at a basketball court and divided it into quadrants. Left and right below the foul circle, left and right above it. Creating this geometrical design in my mind had only one purpose: to help me better position myself for a rebound. Over time, because I was so used to doing this, it felt almost like instinct. I knew definitely that I needed to go to 1, 2, 3, or 4, depending on what kind of play was developing, who was shooting, and so forth. I didn't have to rely on extraordinary inner resources, flashes of inspiration, to tell me to get my body where it had to go. My objective was clear. I wanted to make sure of the rebound.**
 - d. **To have resilience means not to get distracted by the peaks and valleys in a game.** This is true in business, at home, and in life. A rebound is like a crossroads. You get it, now what are you going to do with it? It's the start of a

new process, one in which you have control. So the missed rebound is only a momentary event that will ultimately lead to the next shot and the rebound you don't miss.

- e. Rebounding puts you in a position to take control. But an important point here is that rebounding is not about returning from defeat. In my opinion, rebounding from victory is harder than rebounding from defeat.
- f. **I have been flattered when people say I always helped my teammates play taller. What I tried to do was to make the adjustments to ensure they all could play their games better.**
- g. **The ultimate danger of being victorious is losing sight of how you got there.** I have often said, "It is harder to stay a champion than it was to get there in the first place." The greatest deterrent to not repeating is always internal.
 - i. *Success also tends to breed rigidity, close-mindedness. Avoid "Kasparov's Bronze Coat"*
- h. Another factor is ambition. To win year after year, all players have to be ambitious. Everyone wants to improve from year to year, but in trying to improve, players change their game, which can disrupt the balance of the team.
- i. **To me, knowing how to act is everything.** You cannot just throw yourself at a problem and expect to succeed. You cannot win the NBA championship on the first day of the season. It has to be won at every practice, every meeting, each and every game on the schedule. During the season, you learn to master all the important skills needed to get you to the championship game.
 - i. *To understand is to know what to do*
- j. **Adversity is said to bring out the best in people. I don't believe that for a moment. It brings out only what they have to do. It begins with self-acceptance and then proceeds, through resilience, to taking the necessary positive actions.**
- k. Each day, over many months, he had a required set of tasks to perform. In the beginning, those tasks would have seemed easy to a child—though they were as difficult for Elgin as scaling mountain peaks. He could not speed up the process. He could go to the next stage of his rehabilitation only after he had completed the prior one. There was no skipping stages, no time for wishing things were different or for feeling that the effort was somehow transforming and inspiring. It wasn't. It was perspiration, perspiration, and more perspiration. And the end result was that this very talented professional ballplayer was once again able to work. But each small action he took, each painful but positive step in the rehabilitation, was consciously undertaken. Each of those resilient actions brought Elgin Baylor closer to returning to the team with all of its important implications.
- l. **Those who choose to dwell on the nature of their misfortune only prolong it, give it more life, allow it to define whatever afterlife it will have.**
- m. **The actions taken are all that matters.** Some of those actions will be helpful, others will not, but it is always important to act rather than react. The determination to see through the process of team-building is everything. What is

essential in every company, organization, or team is a knowledge of your business. Skill, not luck, is what is demanded. For it to be effective, action must have this multisided character to it that includes dogged persistence, a willingness to absorb information and to apply that information to oneself. Then there must be skill. The sports cliché that you need to give 110 percent is just so much hot air. Intelligence, resourcefulness, patience, and skill matter far more. **By all means work hard, but don't confuse perspiration with accomplishment. There may be sweat in success, but success doesn't have sweat glands.**

9. Lesson 9 – Imagination, or Seeing the Unseeable
 - a. RUSSELL RULES
 - i. Rule One: Look for the positive in your imagination. If you go into a dark room, find the light switch.
 - ii. Rule Two: **An idea can be a feat of association. Good ideas are more often the stringing together of experiences, observations, and thoughts in a way that no one has done before. Good ideas make great conclusions. It creates order out of chaos**
 - iii. Rule Three: Practice visualization. Try to run through scenarios or situations before you experience them so that when you do experience them, it is familiar to you. Actualize your imagination.
 - b. It has been said that imagination is more important than knowledge. Curiosity, as I have suggested, is the mother of imagination. But imagination is the father of innovation. Imagination lets you see what is possible beyond the boundaries of the basketball court, the boardroom, or the showroom floor. The only limitation is your imagination.
 - c. **I imagined things that no one else thought were really worth much on the basketball court because the concepts were so different from the accepted view of the sport. But I knew they were important, because they worked.**
 - i. *LKY's Razor – Do what works*
 - d. **Beginning in my freshman year, I developed the concept of horizontal and vertical games. I made a distinction between the two that others had not done. The horizontal game meant how I played side to side. The vertical game was how I played up and down. I knew that if I could integrate the two games, our team could win. I would always be in a position to determine where the ball was and where it was going.**
 - e. **In the end, imagination and creative thinking are simply the realization that there is no particular virtue in doing things the way they have always been done.**
 - f. **My innovations came from first asking “Why?” and then thinking “Why not?”**
 - g. Imagination grows with use. Great imagination and innovation become more powerful as we get older. As I've always seen it, the challenge for most people is building a bridge between the shore of imagination and the shore of innovation. I remember when I was growing up adults would always say, don't cross that

bridge until you come to it. But the world of innovation was created by those who in fact bravely crossed the bridge in their imaginations far ahead of the crowd.

- h. But imagination has this unexpected aspect of actualization built into it. What we see in our dreams or fantasies can often be made real when we then commit resources, labor, ingenuity, effort, to back it up. That is precisely the task of enlightened leadership.
 - i. **With the old masters, my goal was to do what they did. When I began “imagining” the moves of those two basketball players I so greatly admired on that early pre-college tour I took to Canada, my goal was never to reproduce what they did—but to counter their moves.**
 - j. With McKelvey, who had remained a lifelong friend, it was a little different. McKelvey was an outstanding rebounder who understood positioning and timing. I was enormously helped by visualizing his moves, but again **I was constrained because what I was really doing was imitating, not creating.**
 - k. What changed things for me, what made this imaginative process creative, was when I began to see in my mind’s eye the moves I would need to defend against these players. **Each move I then came up with was an invention of mine, something that had not existed before.**
 - l. What I saw was how much more there was to the game than that. I would lie awake at night and play with numbers. How much time was there in an NBA game? Forty-eight minutes. How many shots were taken in a game? Maybe a hundred and sixty, eighty or so on each side. I calculated the number of seconds each shot took—a second, a second and a half—and then I multiplied by a hundred. Two hundred forty seconds at most—or four minutes. Then add a single extra second for a foul shot missed and then the ball put in play; add another minute at the most. So, five minutes out of forty-eight are actually taken up in the vertical game. What happens during the rest of the game? That was the challenge to my imagination.
 - m. **You could never defend Kareem by reacting to what he did. If he started his move, it would be too late to do much about it.**
 - n. **Do not confuse imagination with inspiration. The Celtics won infinitely more games because of the power of imagination than because of inspirational talks and speeches.**
10. Lesson 10 – Discipline, Delegation, and Decision-Making
- a. RUSSELL RULES
 - i. Rule One: **All decisions need to have a clear and attainable goal.** Without that, no one will take your decision seriously or follow your directive with any passion.
 - ii. Rule Two: Delegation can only become comfortable when the person you are delegating to has your full respect and confidence. You get this respect and confidence from the decisions that you make.
 - iii. Rule Three: **Think, then stick out your neck. Do not be afraid of making the wrong decision.**

- b. **Decision-making is centered around gathering information, assessing it, and deciding what is pertinent for your specific situation, and what is the right decision for that moment. It may not work out, but knowing that you made the most informed, thoughtful, and intelligent decision based on the information you could gather at the time is all that you can hope for. Leadership is deciding when and where to implement the decision. What all sound decision-making has in common is discipline.**
- c. Red was always relying on us to get the job done because he trusted not only our talent but our intelligence. **In delegating, he empowered us.** He made us co-coaches, even though ultimate responsibility always rested with him.
- d. Becoming an outside-in thinker requires a deep understanding of the needs of the “buyer.” I don’t know a more effective way to get that obvious and hidden understanding than to listen. Which type of manager are you? Which type of team player are you? **Which type of decision maker are you? Inside-out and exclusive or outside-in and inclusive?** My opinion the outside-in decision maker is the ultimate team player because he or she also possesses one additional and vital aspect of behavior—discipline. Discipline is in part the ability to eliminate all the competing, vying personal needs and inclinations that will get in the way of making decisions that will benefit the team.
- e. Discipline is not really so much about self-abnegation as it is about having control of and a plan for your personal life to the point where you can do whatever you must to follow through. Individuals as much as people in collective settings are faced with this problem.
- f. **Some decisions require most of all the ability to let go, particularly where unanticipated bad results have occurred. For individuals, teams, companies, mistaken choices are always part of the picture. How we handle these decisions is almost more important than the decisions themselves, because we need to learn from our mistakes, let go, and go on.**
- g. Letting go is most difficult when we are most personally attached. The decision one makes to retire comes to mind. An individual can make no more important decision, yet what is most essential in making that decision is the ability to let go. It is hard to leave a company, a team, a way of life. So much has been invested, so much history, so much experience. What is important is the ability to let go so that you can move on to the next phase of your life.
- h. I had decided to retire before the season had begun but chose not to announce it for three reasons. First, I didn’t want to go through the year with everyone saying good-bye. That would place too much attention on me. Secondly, Sam had announced that the ’68–69 season was his last, and I didn’t want to take anything away from the recognition he really deserved. Third, it would have changed the dynamics of my relationship with the team, and I was unwilling to take the chance. Retiring was my final victory. Not staying a minute too long, or a season too long, let me leave on my own terms. Knowing when to retire is difficult for any athlete or businessperson. You have to give up so much and start another life.

But making that decision and sticking to it is one of the most rewarding decisions you will ever make in your life. I encourage folks to look at this moment as starting a new season in a different game.

- i. **I had to define my own standard of success even though I had to answer to the team's standard of what it needed.**

11. Lesson 11 – Everyone Can Win

a. RUSSELL RULES

- i. Rule One: **Look for the opportunity to win in every situation. Know precisely what the lines and boundaries of your field are and learn the standards of success, no matter how insignificant they may seem. Keep at this until you really understand the difference between putting in hours and really doing a job.**
- ii. Rule Two: **No matter how often you have heard this before, you and you alone have to come to grips with any definition of success; it has to be yours, not someone else's.** Doing your best at what seems like a lousy job is not a means of survival but of seeing the possibilities of winning. The most common stumbling block to success is when people, for one reason or another, tell themselves their best efforts will neither be needed nor recognized. Those who can give four dollars' worth of work for every three dollars of pay will be doing far more than earning points with their boss, they will be creating their own conditions for success. Such success need only be a standard of pride in oneself. It will be enough, and more than likely, it will ultimately be recognized by others.
- iii. Rule Three: **Take the first step to winning today. Make sure that you start from where you happen to find yourself. Don't wait for that better job, that greater opportunity, the raise or promotion you have coming, the dream you still have in the back of your mind. Now is the time.** There will never be a better time, there is only this moment, this very moment wherever you happen to be, where the opportunity to see yourself as powerful and accomplished is right there, with you—always has been and always will be. Use it. Begin winning now.

- b. Finding a way to win in life and business has little to do with your station in life. There are opportunities everywhere, and you must take advantage of them. I have memories of many who did just that.
- c. What I most want to emphasize is that what is called for here is not self-improvement, but applying what you already have. You don't need to be better than you are.
- d. **Take what you have and put it to use. Russell's Rule for the Rest of the Road is to understand that success is never a destination and always a journey.**

12. Celtic Pride

- a. Celtic Pride a culture. It is not only a way you see yourself, it is a way you want others to see you. As I said in the introduction, Celtic Pride was the guts of how

our organization, our coaches, and our team made decisions. It was created, nurtured, and developed for one goal . . . winning.

- b. **I must say a word about an obvious tension that exists between reading and doing. To state a rule, to elaborate a lesson, is one thing, but at the end some heavy lifting must be done, and those who want to bring Celtic Pride into their lives, their businesses, must make sure to do it. No one can ease the way for you.**
 - c. **Mentoring is not hard work. Mentoring is about creating an awakening. It is breathing life into abilities, capabilities, and potential that are living under the surface but need to see the sunlight.** Mentoring is as old as the human race and is about redefining teamwork in a new context. It's a collaboration. Mentoring is the gift of a relationship.
 - d. Nearly all my teammates understood Celtic Pride in terms of what needed to be done to make us winners. John Havlicek, who was our other great sixth man, told a reporter one time that starting wasn't as important as finishing. How to win meant doing exactly what was called for. John was completely devoid of pretension.
 - e. What makes my teammates, coach, and I so close is that the experience of being a successful team has never left us. Who we are today has nothing to do with reliving our glory years but everything to do with the mutual understanding we continue to share about how winning takes place. **Celtic Pride isn't a diploma, it's how to manage your life. The principles that guided us then are just as relevant today.**
13. Other
- a. **A great winner is, above all, self-aware.** He understands the impact that he has on other players. I was always aware of what went on around me—but I mainly kept my own counsel because what I did was never for anyone else's approval. All I was ever interested in was to do what I did as best I could. Period. The payoff was in using my skills, the most comprehensive skills in the game at that time, to the fullest and winning more championships than anyone else in team sports.
 - b. I don't believe there was better basketball player and human being than the man I called Norman (his middle name). There was no one I competed with harder and had more respect for than him. Just before Wilt died in October 1999, he and I were having one of our marathon telephone calls. Wilt was a Renaissance man in the truest sense of the word. His interests, his knowledge, his experience, and his talents far transcended basketball. Get him started on the stock market or rare Chinese tableware or the mating habits of gnus and you'd never hear the end of it. **He went on in detail about how seeing from one angle would open up other angles that people might not be ready for**
 - c. **We won all those championships in part because we knew how to let other teams' stars do their thing and at the same time take that style of play and convert it to our advantage.** My battles with Wilt; our series against the great

Bob Pettit; the games we played against “The Big O,” Oscar Robertson, one of the greatest players ever; and, of course, our rivalry with the Lakers, led by Jerry West and Elgin Baylor, before and after Wilt got there—all had to do with our knowing how to win games against the very best. We knew how to play our best and how to win against other teams.

- d. Basketball is more than a game, it’s a metaphor. For me the basketball court was a place where I could bring my thoughts and my understanding of psychology, physiology, mathematics, and, most important, human values. So what is this book about? It’s about the skill sets, mostly mental and emotional, necessary for winning. Winning is an acquired habit
- e. **To make this even more specific: on our team, all of us—from the coach to the last guy on the bench—understood that the key shots at the end of the game were almost always going to be made by one player, Sam Jones. Every team needs a “go to” person, and Sam was ours. To win we knew we had to create the opportunity for him to take those shots . . . nothing good happens by accident. It had to do with knowing our team—and ourselves—so well that we nearly always had the right guys in the right place at the right time. It took every one of us doing what he had to do to make sure that happened. No matter where you are in life, you cannot win consistently unless you are in a position to win.**
- f. The rules, even more than telling me what I couldn’t do, told me what I could do. The more I understood them, the more I was able to use the rules to my advantage.
- g. We were dedicated professionals who did our jobs very, very well. From the owner, Walter Brown, to Red Auerbach, our coach, down to the guy who swept the locker room, there was first and last an unspoken understanding that all of us were there for one purpose: winning. The organization did whatever it was going to take. They weren’t going to be constrained in their imagination by the social mores of the time, inhibited by precedent, or restricted from out-of-the-box thinking. It was about creating a team dedicated to one purpose: winning.
- h. “Celtic Pride” is a real concept, a culture, and a practice rather than an idea. We lived it and breathed it. But we were each responsible for it. It began with a collective determination never to embarrass ourselves.
- i. In the thirteen years I played and coached for the Celtics, I never heard the words dynasty or legend spoken by anyone within the organization. The reality is, any team that thinks of itself as a dynasty will never become one. Red used to tell us that what we did last season was important only in terms of what it made our opponents think of us. There were no “winning streaks” on the Celtics. Every game was a new game. We tried to win games one quarter at a time.
- j. Because teams are made up of individuals, each with his or her own temperament, outlook, sets of values, and beliefs, there will always be a certain inevitable tension within the unit. **But successful teams are always able to handle that tension, to incorporate it, use it to advantage. That was a hallmark of my**

teams. There could never have been anything like Celtic Pride without the respect each of us had for each other—and for the differences between us.

- k. **We also enjoyed each other.** It's true that some successful organizations can exist without members liking each other, but the comfort level on the Celtics made it easier for us to accept each other's strengths and liabilities so that playing together was more like an adventure than a chore. To me, the most important part of winning is joy. **You can win without joy, but winning that's joyless is like eating in a four-star restaurant when you're not hungry. Joy is a current of energy in your body, like chlorophyll or sunlight, that fills you up and makes you naturally want to do your best. I learned about joy (and about doing my best) early in my life.** I would go to my grandfather's house and I would start running and jumping along the way. Later on, when I began to play basketball, I knew that running and jumping—the heart of the game—came from a child's joy. One of the things that the Celtics were able to do was play like children without being childish.
 - i. *Working to win vs. Playing to win*
- l. All winning streaks begin with a single victory. All successful people, teams, companies, experience their success by an ability to grow, to move from level one to the next, never taking shortcuts, never thinking about more than what's required to make things work right where they are.
- m. I am frequently asked if I am a basketball player, and I always say no. One time years ago John Havlicek and I were standing in an airport when he asked me why I did that. I told him what I had been telling myself all along: **basketball is what I do, it's not who I am.**

What I got out of it

1. One of the best books on teamwork and leadership I've come across - **“Do you know the difference between your ego and mine? My ego is not a personal ego, it's a team ego. My ego demands—for myself—the success of my team. My personal achievement became my team achievement.**

