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KEN BLANCHARD
& DON SHULA

**EVERYONE'S
A COACH**

*Five Business Secrets for
High-Performance Coaching*



HarperCollins Publishers
New York, New York

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GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49530

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Everyone's a Coach

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Co-published by Zondervan and HarperBusiness, divisions of HarperCollins Publishers.

Requests for information should be addressed to:

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Shula, Don, 1930-

Everyone's a coach : you can inspire anyone to be a winner / Don Shula and Ken Blanchard.

p. m.

ISBN 0-310-20815-7 (softcover)

1. Football—Coaching—Philosophy. 2. Achievement motivation. 3. Motivation (Psychology) 4. Leadership. I. Blanchard, Kenneth H. II. Title.

[GV954.B546 1995]

796.332'07'7—dc20

95-33423

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Edited by Lyn Cryderman

Interior design by Sue Koppenol

Printed in the United States of America

14 15 16 17 QG 35 34 33 32

■ *To Mary Anne Shula and Margie Blanchard
for their constant love, support, encouragement,
and helpful wisdom throughout the writing of this book.*

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Charlie Morgan, for seeing the potential power of our partnership and persisting until we sat down together and began this project. He then supported us at every turn. Charlie is the inspiration behind this book.

Jim Ballard, for his writing support, creativity, and commitment to this project. After the first draft, Jim became Ken's writing partner. Eighteen-hour days writing, creating, and praying together were not unusual. Jim is not only a fabulous writer, but he is a warm and caring human being. This project soared in quality because of his contribution, and the ongoing guidance of the Big Four.

ONE-MINUTE PRAISINGS TO:

Margret McBride, our literary agent, who was excited about this project right from the beginning, and transferred that enthusiasm to our Harper Business/Zondervan publishing partners. Margret was always there with a smile, a good idea, and the willingness to follow up and make things happen.

Lyn Cryderman from Zondervan and *Adrian Zackheim* from Harper Business, our editors, for believing in us and this project, and for their insightful feedback that helped lift the book to continually higher levels.

Eleanor Terndrup, who has typed and nurtured Ken's books for over fifteen years. She was always there when Ken and Jim needed her—assisted by *David Witt*, one of the great utility resources of all time, who was ready to take a hand-off and run with the ball.

Scott DeGarmo, editor in chief of *Success* magazine, and *Lisa Berkowitz*, director of publicity for Harper Business, for believing in this book and creating some wonderful publicity events.

Dana Kyle, *Harry Paul*, and *Pete Psychogios*, Ken's strategic team, for planning, strategizing, and implementing the launch of this book.

Peggy Stanton, *Lou Sahadi*, and the sports staff of the *Miami Herald*, fine writers who have previously written about Don Shula and his philosophy toward football and life, for providing valuable information for this book.

And finally, to *Paul Hersey*, *Spencer Johnson*, *Robert Lorber* and *Norman Vincent Peale*, former co-authors with Ken, and *Gerald Nelson*, the originator of the One Minute Scolding, for influencing Ken's thinking and many of the concepts he presents in this book. ■

INTRODUCTION



SHULA

Football has been my way of life ever since I can remember. I love it. I love to compete. I love working with the team. When my classmates went off to careers in business, I stayed with football, first as a player, then as a coach. Over the past forty years I have played with and coached literally thousands of players, many of them now retired and enjoying a far more restful life than I. Over these years, football has brought home the crushing lows of defeat, but at other times, the ecstatic highs of achievement. Looking back, I wouldn't trade it for anything.

The game of football hasn't really changed much over the years. Today we have more sophisticated offensive and defensive schemes, special teams, strength training, and better training facilities. But the objective is essentially the same: put a cohesive unit on the field that's able to drive the ball down the field and put points on the scoreboard and stop the other team from scoring. Simple, isn't it? For more than thirty years, my life has been structured to lead teams to do that. I'm just a guy who rolls up his sleeves every day and works hard to get the best out of his team. Every week is a carbon copy of the prior week. Only the faces and jerseys change—and the game plan to face the new opponent.

Most of you reading this book are not football coaches and never will be. But whether you're a teacher or a committee chairman, a sales manager or a choir leader, a Little League coach or a military officer, you can improve your ability to get the best performance from

people. The principles I've used successfully in coaching the Baltimore Colts and the Miami Dolphins for over three decades can help you do that.

Over the years, I've focused my efforts on helping players and coaches. I hadn't thought much about passing along to others what I've learned in my years of NFL coaching (except maybe to my coaching staff who are trying to help us win a Super Bowl). But when Ken and I met and discussed doing a project together that would help executives, coaches, teachers, or parents—anyone who is in a position to bring out the best in people—it made sense to me. Football and business are different, of course; but these days, I think the challenge for business people is not that different from what I face. The competition is fierce. The strategizing is similar; finding and using that edge that makes the difference requires constant attention. Then there are people; they come to you with skills and talents; your job is to instruct, discipline, and inspire them to do things better than they thought they could do them on their own.

In the end, whether it's sports or business, winning and losing doesn't depend on trick plays or using new systems each week. The information your competition has is not that different from yours. So what are you going to use to win? It comes down to a matter of motivating people to work hard and prepare to play as a team. That's what really counts. In a word, it's coaching.

What makes a great coach? That's a question I've been asked many times over the years. This book contains my answer. Of course, no book can give you the thing that drives all real success—passion and enthusiasm for what you do. How do you get this burning in the gut, this desire to win that won't quit? I don't know. But with it the advice in this book can give you some valuable tools to be the best.

—Miami, Spring 1995

 **BLANCHARD**

My life is not centered around football but around leadership. For the last thirty years, I've studied people and what contributes to effective behavior in organizations. I've acted as a coach for executives and managers who lead organizations. When I coauthored *The One Minute Manager*, I was amazed at the response that business leaders made to the simple, straightforward approach of the legendary character in the story. At that point, I began a search for simple truths to help leaders and managers be their best. That's why I was so fascinated when I met Don Shula in the spring of 1992 at the Dolphins training camp. Don impressed me as one of the most focused human beings I'd ever encountered. As I walked into his office, he greeted me by saying, "Nice to meet you. Unfortunately, I only have about ten minutes." Right away I knew I had met another One Minute Manager.

As it turned out, our meeting lasted about an hour, but since it was five days before the start of the college draft, Shula's mind was clearly on his team and on the kind of players they needed to be competitive in the next season. But the meeting had piqued my interest in Shula and the Miami Dolphins. I wondered:

- What makes this man tick?
- What drives him to coach year after year, when other coaches burn out and quit?
- What are the secrets of his personal game plan that have made him so successful over three decades in an ever-changing National Football League?
- How can these principles be communicated to others so they can help their teams and organizations succeed?

The last question intrigued me the most. Leaders come and go on the American landscape. There aren't many examples of people who have sustained success in their organizations over a long period of time in this kind of pressure-cooker environment, where evaluation is going on week by week. Somehow Don Shula has been able to do it. With my list of questions in mind, I began a learning quest—talking to Shula, visiting the Dolphins in their training camp, interviewing players and coaches and officials who knew and had worked with Don. As I began to gather my notes and to develop applications of Shula's coaching principles to the workplace, I came to the conclusion that all organizations are moving closer to what Shula and top football coaches face in their jobs.

Between 1945 and 1980 there was no competition in American business, domestically or in the foreign market. Back then even if some individual or department was falling down on the job, the organization—whether it was a school, the military, or the government—was still in business. If you were loyal to the organization, you were guaranteed job security.

Starting in 1980, the whole game began to change, and in the 1990s business is closer to football than ever before—especially in terms of how often your performance gets evaluated. I recently heard a manager tell an audience that he'd worked for his company for twenty-two years. He said, "I actually should tell you I've worked for my company for eighty-eight quarters. The way things are going, pretty soon I'll be telling you I've worked for them for twenty-two times fifty-two. Organizations today are under the gun almost every single week." Today there are no guarantees. If your organization doesn't take care of your customers and perform well, there's somebody out there who will. The pressure is on

for people to perform at their best, so there has never been a greater need for effective coaching. Everybody's a coach in some aspect of life, and that means you. Regardless of whether you have an official title, there are people out there who need your help.

The message of this book is for anyone with the task of helping others perform better. No matter how good you are at coaching others, you can improve your ability. In writing this book, Don and I have used a tag-team format. First, he will share his secrets of successful coaching. Then I will seek to apply these same principles to your world. So grab your whistle and clipboard, and let's get in the game.

—San Diego, Spring 1995