

"For those who have learned that golf is more than just a game, *The Mulligan* will be welcome reading that will provide helpful insights not just for their golf game, but for their lives as well."

—Ben Crenshaw, two-time Masters Champion and
2002 inductee to the World Golf Hall of Fame

"Wally Armstrong and Ken Blanchard not only understand golf but life and the value of relationships. They have put together a story that should warm your heart, help your golf game, and just may touch your life."

—Jack Nicklaus, golf legend and 1974 inductee
to the World Golf Hall of Fame

"I really enjoyed reading *The Mulligan* and I know my dad, Harvey, would have loved this simple little book because there are so many things in it that embody the wisdom, grace, and the importance of friendships my dad always treasured."

—Tinsley Penick, PGA golf professional

"A compelling story about the importance of a mulligan. It may only happen on the first tee in golf, but in the game of life it is there for the asking, provided you are prepared to ask and know the One who has the answer."

—C. William Pollard, Chairman of The ServiceMaster
Company and author of *The Soul of the Firm*

"If you want to improve your golf game and your life, reading *The Mulligan* is a must. It's a spiritual journey down the fairway."

—John C. Maxwell, author, speaker, and founder
of INJOY Stewardship and EQUIP

"Every now and then we need a wake-up call to remind us of the things in life that really matter. Thankfully, Wally Armstrong and Ken Blanchard in their book, *The Mulligan*, reassure us that second chances to correct our wrongs are just one swing away!"

—Paul J. Meyer, New York Times best-selling author and f
ounder of Success Motivation International, Inc.

"In *The Mulligan*, Wally Armstrong and Ken Blanchard strike a common chord among sportsmen and those seeking a better understanding of the broader arena that is life itself. The lessons of second chances, forgiveness, and love are eternal as espoused by the great 'Old Pro' himself: Jesus Christ."

—Pete McDaniel, best-selling author
and senior writer for *Golf Digest*

"As we walk the fairways of life, this great game teaches us early on that if we continue in our dedication to perfection, good things may happen. The same holds true in our own lives; dedication, hard work, and trial and error will be rewarded. *The Mulligan* sets the stage for that perfect score. Great job, Wally and Ken!"

—Jerry Rich, owner of Rich Harvest Farms,
site of the 2009 Solheim Cup

"If golf is a metaphor for life, then a mulligan is a perfect metaphor for God's love. Ken Blanchard's new book is a terrific reminder that whenever we ask, God gives us second chances throughout our lives and straight into eternity."

—Bill Jones III, chairman and CEO of Sea Island Company

"Everyone needs the ultimate mulligan. This book will tell you how to get it. Your life will never be the same. Thanks, Ken and Wally."

—Larry Moody, President of Search Ministries
and pastor to PGA tour players

THE
MULLIGAN

A Parable of Second Chances

THE
MULLIGAN

KEN BLANCHARD

— AND —

WALLY ARMSTRONG



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The Mulligan

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This book is dedicated to Harvey Penick, Davis Love Jr.,
and all the Old Pros who teach us about golf and life.

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mulligan (*n*) — In friendly play, permission granted a golfer by the other players to retake a flubbed shot, especially the first shot of the game. Golf's generous forgiveness, The Mulligan originated in the United States at the Winged Foot Golf Club and was created by David B. Mulligan. This second-chance shot is not allowed by the official rules of golf.

CHAPTER I



THE EXECUTIVE

"LATE AS USUAL," Paul McAllister grumbled to himself as he sped toward the Biltmore Forest Country Club in Asheville, North Carolina. He'd flown in yesterday from Atlanta, and being late for his tee-off time for the Pro-Am was the last thing he wanted to be. Playing in this tournament was something he had wanted to do for a long time. He was especially excited about it after last night's Pro-Am Pairing Party, when his foursome had drawn Davis Love III. Year after year, Love was one of the greatest players on the PGA golf tour. His late father, Davis Love Jr., had been revered as one of the best teachers of the game anywhere.

What an opportunity, thought McAllister. *Maybe Love can help me with my golf game.*

Paul's attitude toward golf was the same attitude he had toward everything: he wanted to be the best. At forty-five, Paul saw life as one achievement game after another.

He had gone to an Ivy League school, working hard to make sure he ranked near the top of his class. He became president or captain of everything he joined. Everything for him was about getting ahead. Get into a good graduate school. Land a job with the best possible company. Stay one step in front of the next guy. Paul McAllister was driven — and he was very successful.

The only failure Paul ever had was his marriage. Right after he earned his MBA he married Rebecca, his college sweetheart. She was one of the most popular girls on campus.

Everybody wanted her, but he beat out the competition. He secretly enjoyed the fact that if he had fumbled his lines at the wedding ceremony, at least three of the guys in his wedding party would have stepped forward to take his place. Once the ceremony was over, Paul figured the marriage job was done. Now he could get back to work.

After five years of trying to find some way of being part of Paul's life, including having a son, Rebecca filed for divorce. She tried everything—even suggesting marriage counseling—but Paul never had time. It wasn't important to him. He was too busy being an entrepreneur and building his business. After working for a great company for two years he had decided to go out on his own. He worked harder than ever. But there were consequences. Just as Paul had predicted, the marriage job was done. His wife and child were out of his life. And though there was some initial pain and regret, Paul took it as a career-enhancing opportunity.

Free to focus on the business he started three years before, Paul grew it into a multimillion dollar operation. When Paul looked at his life, he thought real success had to do with the amount of wealth he accumulated, the amount of recognition he got for his efforts, and the power and status he achieved. But after fifteen years of experiencing the momentary highs from making one hot deal after another, Paul felt something was missing. It was not enough.

Even though people who grew up with Paul—like the classmates he saw at his twenty-fifth year high school reunion—viewed him as being very successful, that did not comfort him. No matter what he achieved, it never was enough. The job was never done. Instead of slowing down to find out why, Paul was always looking for the next mountain to climb. And for Paul, that next mountain was golf.

Golf became the second singular passion in Paul's life. Golf was the one connection he had shared with his functioning alcoholic father. Paul's happiest memories were of walking the public course near their home on late summer afternoons with his dad, who took off work early to teach him the game. When Paul was twelve, his dad was killed in a car accident—ending that shining period. From that day forward Paul felt abandoned and alone. His life was an unending mission to fill the void.

CHAPTER 2



A TRAUMA

PAUL CAME RACING into the clubhouse parking lot and frowned as he stopped the car—no one was waiting to take his bag. When a youngster finally showed up, Paul was short with him. Giving the kid his bag, Paul hurried off to the registration desk without giving him a tip. After registering, he realized that he had only thirty minutes until his tee-off time. *Not much time to warm up*, Paul thought. He headed quickly to the driving range to beat as many balls as possible before he had to go to the first tee.

Waiting for him at the tee were three other amateurs, whom Paul had met at the Pairing Party the night before. But after finding out what they did for a living and whom they didn't know, he wrote them off as not being important enough to get to know. As a result, he shook their hands in a cursory way. His main concern was the whereabouts of their pro member, Davis Love III.

Just as the starter asked if the 11:30 group was ready to go, Love walked through the crowd and onto the tee. He had a warm smile on his face as he introduced himself to each of his amateur playing partners.

As Paul shook Davis's hand he was wondering how he could make Love realize that *he* was the most important member of the group. Paul had taken a number of lessons during the last three weeks in preparation for this tournament. Maybe his golf game would pave the way to a relationship with Love.

Attempting to be gracious, Paul encouraged his three playing partners to hit first after Love sent a towering drive from the back tee down the middle of the fairway well over three hundred yards away. As Paul watched his playing partners hit their drives, a small grin appeared on his face. He realized these guys were real hackers—twenty handicappers at best. And here he was, a twelve handicapper who would soon be a single-digit player.

When it came Paul's turn to hit, he walked confidently to the tee box, teed up his ball, and stepped back to look up the fairway toward the hole. His caddy broke in, "The best spot to hit your drive on this hole is the right center of the fairway. It opens up the hole from there, especially given where they've set the pin today." The caddy's advice broke Paul's concentration. *I hope he is not going to talk in my ear all day*, thought Paul. *I know how to play this game.*

With that he stepped up to the ball, swung too hard, and hit a wild hook. Not only did it not end up on the right side of the fairway, but it landed in heavy rough on the left. He glanced quickly around the gallery to see if there was anybody taking any pictures that he could blame. He'd seen top pros do this many times on TV. But when he looked in Davis's direction, the pro wasn't paying attention. He didn't seem to care where Paul's shot had gone.

Paul's hook off the first tee was a sign of things to come. He went from bad to worse. While his higher-handicap playing partners were short off the tee, they were straight and kept on bogeying holes. Paul, on the other hand, hit his tee shots long but they were wild. He ended up contributing double bogeys. He picked up on more holes than he finished. Paul did everything he could to fix his swing, but nothing seemed to work. As they reached the ninth hole, Paul really was losing it: he wasn't developing a relationship with Love and he wasn't having fun.

Paul's negative self-talk began to take over, as usual.

You idiot, he thought. *This is embarrassing! How can you play like this? Those lessons certainly didn't help.*

When it came his turn to tee off, Paul quieted his mind for the first time during the round and lo and behold, he hit a perfect drive that brought a smile to his face. *Now I am going to get it together*, he thought. He followed his drive with a beautiful four iron that bounced on the center

of the green and stopped four feet from the cup. Even the crowd gathered around the green waiting to see Davis Love applauded Paul as he approached.

After Davis and his playing partners had putted out, it was Paul's turn. Paul's heart was racing. Since this was the number-two-handicap hole on the card, he got a stroke. If he could make this birdie putt, it would mean an eagle for his team. Davis Love knew that and helped Paul read the putt. But when he stroked the ball it came up three inches short of the cup—the dreaded “never up, never in.”

Paul clenched his teeth and felt his face grow hot with anger. Tapping the ball into the cup for par, he completely lost it. He took his putter and without even thinking, snapped it over his knee. Everybody around him—including the caddies—slowly walked away in silence, leaving him alone on the green.

Paul didn't know whether to cry or yell. It suddenly struck him that now he would have to putt the rest of the round with a two iron or a wood. What he had hoped would be a wonderful day had turned into a nightmare.

When Paul finally headed for the tenth tee, Davis Love was waiting for him.

“Paul,” he said in a caring voice, “we haven't talked much during the first nine holes, but I've been watching you. And to be honest, you aren't good enough to get that mad. What you just did on the ninth green may have as much to say about where you are with your life as your

game. Think about it.” With that, Love headed to the tee to hit his shot.

Love’s comments froze Paul in his tracks. He was deeply embarrassed — probably for the first time in his life (at least that he would admit). He wondered if he should just quit and walk to his car. But Love’s remarks had hooked him. They made him want to stay.

Walking down from the tenth tee, Paul waited for Love to catch up. Love hit his drive from the back tee, almost seventy-five yards farther than where the amateurs hit. As Love walked up, Paul was almost too choked up to speak.

“What you said to me,” Paul finally managed, “hit me like a ton of bricks. I apologize. I’ve been a real jerk.”