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Years ago when I served in the United States Air Force, a sergeant gave me framed picture of legendary football coach Vince Lombardi with a quote of a famous speech the coach made. I remember reading it over and over and coming to the realization that being “Number One” was only possible with an incredible mindset and exhaustive effort which, of course, are preceded with a vision, plan, and proper preparation.

For this column, I honestly feel Vince Lombardi’s speech is a better testament of wisdom on the matter than anything I can write. Therefore, take note of the things he said and think about how they apply to you. Could you have played on his team? Is there anything you’d like to be “number one” at? Do you want to be as successful as you possibly can in your profession or sport? If so, here’s Coach Lombardi’s speech on what it takes to be number one:

“Winning is not a sometime thing; it’s an all-the-time thing. You don’t win once in a while; you don’t do things

## What it takes to be Number One

right once in a while; you do them right all of the time. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing.

There is no room for second place. There is only one place in my game, and that’s first place. I have finished second twice in my time at Green Bay, and I don’t ever want to finish second again. There is a second place bowl game, but it is a game for losers played by losers. It is and always has been an American zeal to be first in anything we do, and to win, and to win, and to win.

Every time a football player goes to play his trade he’s got to play from the ground up--from the soles of his feet right up to his head. Every inch of him has to play. Some guys play with their heads. That’s okay. You’ve got to be smart to be number one in any business. But more importantly, you’ve got to play with your heart, with every fiber of your body. If you’re lucky enough to find a guy with a lot of head and a lot of heart, he’s never going to come off the field second.

Running a football team is no different than running any other kind of organization--an army, a political

party or a business. The principles are the same. The object is to win--to beat the other guy. Maybe that sounds hard or cruel. I don’t think it is.

It is a reality of life that men are competitive and the most competitive games draw the most competitive men. That’s why they are there--to compete. The object is to win fairly, squarely, by the rules--but to win.

And in truth, I’ve never known a man worth his salt who in the long run, deep down in his heart, didn’t appreciate the grind, the discipline. There is something in good men that really yearns for discipline and the harsh reality of head-to-head combat.

I don’t say these things because I believe in the ‘brute’ nature of men or that men must be brutalized to be combative. I believe in God, and I believe in human decency. But I firmly believe that any man’s finest hour--his greatest fulfillment to all he holds dear--is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle--victorious.”

- Coach Vincent T. Lombardi

~ The End ~