



February 15, 2008

Watco Team:

With all the press about the Patriots and the perfect season, I saw the attached article about Bart Starr and Vince Lombardi in Parade magazine. As a kid, I loved football and especially the Green Bay Packers. It was a time when football was a much different game than it is today. The money wasn't even enough to support a family. Men played the game because they loved it. The athletes were not always the fastest, biggest, strongest or specialists like they are today. They were just tough, gritty people that reached deep inside themselves to discover whole new levels of performance by challenging themselves to go beyond limits they didn't even know they could conquer.

Vince Lombardi was my favorite coach of all time. He was a short, Catholic Italian with intensity to excel that came from his perfectionist mom. I read many of the Packer books including "Mean On Sunday", "Run to Daylight" and "When Pride Still Mattered". All recount in vivid detail the famous Lombardi intensity and demanding nature. The following epitomizes Lombardi. He is just hired as the coach for the Packers and it is his first address to the team. ... "Gentlemen, we are going to relentlessly chase perfection, knowing full well we will not catch it, because nothing is perfect. I am not remotely interested in just being good." Another of my favorite Lombardi quotes is "The difference between men is in energy, in the strong will, in the settled purpose and in invincible determination."

Some people wilt under this type of pressure. Others thrived, like Ray Nitschke, Jerry Kramer and Bart Starr, a 17th round draft pick who was inducted in the football Hall of Fame. Starr attributes all of his success to Lombardi. Following Lombardi's first greeting to the team, Starr is so energized by Lombardi that he tells his wife that they are going to start winning at a time when the Packers won only one game in their last twelve. As you will read in the article, Starr emphasizes over and over that he can do better.

What it took was someone who he respected who pushed him beyond his own self imposed limits. How do we as leaders motivate our people to do better? If we accept average or good, our people and our performance will be no better. The fundamental question is one only each of us can answer....do we want to be average, good or pursue excellence? It is up to us.

Thanks for being part of the Watco Team.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Starr', written in a cursive style.