

Hello everyone. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. We’d love to have your comments and thoughts. So, click on the box below, let us know what you’re thinking about our blog deliveries and things that you might like to see.

This week I want to talk about Lou Holtz. Lou Holtz, three rules for life and three questions. My wife and I were surfing in this odd period of time in 2020, we’re looking for things to do and we’re surfing around, and we found a documentary about Lou Holtz and it really struck me. Not only is he a famous coach and broadcaster and public speaker, he was quite a writer too. And we were sort of inspired by this. And so, there’s three rules for life and three questions you need to ask. But really there was a question that was buried in the documentary a little bit that really struck us as being the most important piece, we’ll finish with that.

The first rule, just do the right thing. You know, it just sounds so easy. In our hearts, I think most of us know right from wrong. And the times when we feel like we’ve made big mistakes, if you go back and analyze those things, you probably knew that you were short-cutting, or you were moving in a direction not consistent with your values. Somehow you got away from that path of doing the right thing. And I think this is, again my wife and I think, that life is nothing more, if you think about it, than the sum total of all of the decisions that you make over a long period of time. We have to decide what to wear, what to eat, where to live, all those things, who to marry, all that stuff. And in each of those decisions, some very big and some not so big, but each of those decisions has an impact on where you go.

So just do the right thing. If we keep that first and foremost in our minds, I think that will serve to keep you on the straight and narrow. The second thing is do everything to the best of your ability in the allotted time. Now everybody’s mom and dad probably told them to do your best, do your best in school, do your best in sports, whatever it happened to be. The thing that I think Lou Holtz added that is really crystallizing for me and crystallizing in the construction business is within the time allotted. Because the reality of business is that time is tight. Schedules are compressed, whether it’s your daily schedule or whether it’s your job schedule. And you’ve got to do the best you can, but you’ve got to do it within the time allotted. I think that’s a little bit of Lou Holtz genius that he takes this concept that all of us know, but he puts this unique spin on it, in the time allotted.

And I think that’s so critical. And then the third rule is show your people that you care. And the way he says to do this is, how can I help you. About, oh, I don’t know, 15 years ago I was reading a biography of Johnny Unitas. Okay, I know I’m aging myself, but when I was a little boy, Johnny Unitas was the Tom Brady of the NFL. And he was just a great leader. And I was reading this book and Johnny Unitas would come to the huddle. Now, you don’t have long, you’ve got a matter of seconds in the huddle to pull your team together and craft your next tactic. And he would walk into the huddle and look at his running backs and receivers and he would say, "What do you need?" Man, I thought that, that was life shattering to me.

That this guy, you talk about allotted time, you don’t have much of it. And he would look at his people and he would say, what do you need. Basically, how can I help you? What leadership. That’s just amazing. That just blew me away. Okay. Lou Holtz, three questions. Can I trust you? Man, that’s a good one. He says we have to honor our commitments. And I remember when I was a young man before I got married, I was talking to my boss at that time and he said something that kind of went over my head then, but I think about it here 30 years later. And he said that that successful marriages are the ones that are bound by commitment. And I think too much in our society, we’re not committed. We’re not committed to our jobs. We’re not committed to our teams. We’re not committed to our customers.

And that all comes down to that commitment means if you're truly a hundred percent committed to your wife, your employees, your customers, that means they can trust you. The lack of commitment equates in my mind to a lack of trust. The second thing, are you committed to excellence? Well, lots of people can say they're committed to excellence, but to me and here at FBI, we want to have certain standards for behavior. We want to have goals. We want to have mileposts. We want to have ways that we can measure ourselves in our individual jobs and also as a team. Because it's easy to say you're committed to excellence, but then how are you going to measure that commitment to excellence? And if you're not checking all the boxes along the way, maybe excellence isn't uppermost in your mind.

And the third thing is, the third question is, do you care about me? And we have a presidential election coming up here. And I think if you look back over at least the last handful of elections, the person who won the presidential race scored stronger on the question, cares about me, as a voter, cares about me. And that's how important it is. People base their choice of president not so much on policies or any of those things, but the perception that this person cares about the plight of the little guys like me.

Okay. The bonus question. This is the one that Lisa and I thought was the most important. And here it is, just simply here it is. Who would miss you if you didn't show up and why? I mean, that brings it all together doesn't it? Who would miss you if you didn't show up and why? I'd like to have your comments and thoughts about Lou Holtz and his three rules for life and his three questions. And we're looking forward to hearing from you.

This is Wayne Rivers. Thank you.