

WORKPLACE WISDOM NEWSLETTER

LESSONS FROM A WINNER

On Saturday, August 4, 2007, Michael Irvin of the Dallas Cowboys was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Michael Irvin played for the Cowboys at the beginning of this decade and for ten years was known as "The Playmaker". Then personal troubles set in for Michael, as his life careened out of control in a wild and decadent ride -- for him and for his loved ones. As the media tracked his court appearances, his illicit escapades, his gold-and-diamonds, and his fascination with drugs, I was one of many, many fans that was heart-sick. He was our superstar and a real hero to our kids. What has he done? What will happen to him?

Michael paid his dues.

**But....he was not chosen to enter The Hall of Fame in 2006.
His two best friends of that famous football three-some were chosen.
He was not.**

**The general feeling of the fans was that Michael had ruined his chances.
His personal life - and individual blow-ups - had kept him from the "the win".**

His downward spiral, off the field, had killed his glorious career.

**Then the call came in 2007!
"Michael, you've been voted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame!"**

**Some people doubted he should have received the honor.
Other fans looked past his off-the-field mistakes.
There were mixed emotions about Michael deserving the honor.**

But there was no wavering by his coach, his owner, and his teammates!

THEY PRAISED HIS CHARACTER!

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

I thought of many lessons as I listened to the speech that Michael gave on Saturday afternoon. And what a speech it was! It was unscripted. As a speaker, I know a little bit about speech-making. The only time you can speak without notes (unscripted) is when you are delivering a message straight from your heart. You're in a "zone". The platform is yours. Time stands still. You don't notice yourself, your surroundings, or the time. You speak to your audience freely about something that is coming straight from your beliefs.

Michael thanked many individuals. Then he apologized to his family, friends, teammates, and fans for his misdeeds.

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AND THEN FOR ME....THE MAGIC HAPPENED.

Toward the end of his speech, Michael said:

"Look up. Get up. And never give up!"

And here is what he meant:

1. **Look up.** Ask God to inspire you and give you the strength you'll need to start over.
2. **Get up.** Physically, psychologically, emotionally start putting one foot in front of the other.
Create a pattern of steps. As the steps increase, start moving faster and faster.
Your goal is to hit your old stride and to find your strength again.
3. **Never give up.** Your self-talk needs to be saying "Move on now! Fly! You can do it! Don't quit!"

Sue, most of us mess up at some point.

Look closely at Michael's advice to make a comeback.

This Dallas Cowboy "playmaker" gave straight-from-the-heart advice to his audience last Saturday.

- Seek a second, third, or more attempts to get on the right track.
- Pay the price it takes to set things right with people near you.
- Humble yourself when you ask for their forgiveness (that's a word we don't hear in the workplace too often!).
- Begin to fix a damaged relationship, a messed up project, a painful problem or an unkept promise.
- Pick up your speed, and feel the exhilaration of a restored relationship or the relief of a problem resolved.
- Vow to never quit. Believe that your very best day will be "TOMORROW", so don't quit!

The opposite behavior when we make a mess of things would be to:

- Become depressed and remain motionless.
- Blame someone or something for your problem.
- Be belligerent to anyone that tries to help.
- Carry a grudge for many years.
- Stagnate. Do nothing.
- Quit. Drop out.

**WE NEVER KNOW WHAT INFLUENCE WE HAVE!
Others are watching to see how we rebuild.
If we rebuild well, we can inspire many, many people.**

"Look up. Get up. And never give up!"

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