

When Ave Maria Press published *A Teen's Game Plan for Life* in 2002, I had no idea it would be as well received as it has been. The reason I can say this is because a day hardly passes that I don't receive a letter or comment about the positive effect this book has had on them as teenagers or as parents, grandparents, and coaches who work with teens.

Today, or thirty years from now, I couldn't add *one thing* to the lessons taught in this book that lead to a successful life. The ones taught on these pages have withstood the test of time. However, I would like teens to think about two more stories to help in forging a successful game plan for life.

Many times I have heard teenagers tell me they wish that their parents weren't such strong disciplinarians and would give them more freedom. In response, I would like them to consider the story of two young men who each received a puppy.

Both men loved their new puppies. However, the first owner just wanted his puppy to love him back so he allowed the puppy to do anything it wanted.

The first thing that the other young man did was to fit his puppy with a choke collar. Every time the puppy moved too far to the right or to the left, the choke collar pinched its neck. Many people told the man how mean and nasty he was to put a choke collar on the dog.

When the puppies were a year old, the second owner took off the choke collar and was able to walk through the neighborhood with his dog at his side. The dog enjoyed the neighbors, and everyone enjoyed the dog. The dog was free to sniff along the curbs and greet the children. The dog knew what it could and couldn't do. It had learned that freedom meant that there were parameters that would control actions. The dog loved the owner because he had helped the dog earn its freedom.

Meanwhile, the first owner who loved his dog but allowed it to do anything it wanted could never let his dog walk freely around the neighborhood or enjoy the neighbors and other dogs because it didn't know what conduct was acceptable or not. It hadn't learned

the parameters of acceptable behavior when it was young.

So, I say to you, would you rather follow your parents' teachers', and coaches' rules of discipline so that you can enjoy a lifetime of responsible freedom? Or would you rather be allowed to do everything you want now and never fully learn how to be successful in the rest of your life? All successful people understand that rules and discipline help them achieve their success.

I know a very successful man by the name of Mitch Modell who owns approximately 150 sporting goods stores in the northeast called "Modell's." Mitch is a loving husband, devoted father, and one of the nicest men you will ever meet. I asked him one time about why he was so successful and he summed it up by saying "I want to make a difference."

Mitch went on to ask this question: "If I didn't go to work, who would miss me and why? If Modell's went out of business, why would it be missed?"

Mitch realized that because his stores' fair prices, quality merchandise, friendliness,

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and service were better than any of his competitors, people would miss them if they ever went away.

As long as you live the kind of life that people would miss you if you one day didn't show up, you are adding value to other people and ensuring success for your own life.

If you live by the three rules of this book:

1. Do right,
2. Do your best,
3. Show people you care,

then you will have success and you can be assured that you will be missed.

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