

**7-TIME COLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIP COACH**

"René Vidal is one of America's top coaches."

—**DICK GOULD, STANFORD UNIVERSITY**

# RENÉ VIDAL

# DOWN 40 LOVE

**PRIVATE LESSONS ON  
TURNING ADVERSITY INTO  
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**



STAY IN THE GAME.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, slanted upwards from left to right. The signature is composed of several thick, fluid strokes, including a large initial letter followed by a series of connected loops and a final upward-pointing stroke.

**ALSO BY RENÉ VIDAL**

*Execute to Win: How Leaders Get Results*

*Play Smart to Win in Business:  
Leadership Lessons from Center Court to Corner Office*

*Play Smart to Win: Better Tactics Lead to Better Results*

# **DOWN 40 LOVE**

**PRIVATE LESSONS ON TURNING ADVERSITY  
INTO COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

**RENÉ VIDAL**

*Down 40 Love* is dedicated to people who care deeply about turning setbacks into bouncebacks.

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# PREFACE: TURNING SETBACKS INTO BOUNCEBACKS

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“All my troubles and obstacles have strengthened me.”

—Walt Disney

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Setbacks are woven into the human experience.

The Sages of Legends Past shared an uncommon perspective on adversity: *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*

Before you let ancient wisdom scare you away, have no fear. I am not in the conversion business. I am, like you, actually in the business of capitalization. **With hustle and ridiculous luck, I have mastered the art of leveraging adversity and setbacks as seed money for wealth creation.** You cannot become truly successful without learning how to overcome obstacles and grow stronger.

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**Down 40 Love is a metaphor for embracing adversity and staying in the game.**

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The hardest setback for me was the death of my father when I was 13 years old. My entire life changed that day. When I heard the news, I was dumbfounded more than anything else. I had no clue what was going on, yet somewhere deep inside *I did know*. Life was

about to get very difficult. I lost the greatest leader and mentor in my life at such a young age. The whole game shifted.

I went from being a solid student and Ivy League prospect to attending three high schools in three different New York state counties. I dropped from being a top 100 nationally ranked junior tennis player to a has-been overnight—having access to the best coaches, resources, and training academies to searching for hitting partners or the local backboard. My life became a total mishit.

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**“The leader always displays a winning attitude.”**  
**—Colin Powell**

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As a teenager, my father Angelo Vidal lived in a Rye, New York orphanage along with my aunt and uncle. After attending trade school and foregoing college, my father built a successful Brooklyn-based commercial printing business. **Going from orphan to successful entrepreneur, Dad embodied the Down 40 Love philosophy.** An early riser, he set the standard for beating the sun. I took notice.

Shortly after Dad’s passing, I learned that an evil stepsister stole the company and all the assets that were coming my way. She deviously changed the family will and trust while Dad lay on his deathbed. On my father’s desk in his office were my baby shoes in bronze form. I never cared about not getting the money, the house, or the business. I only cared about those little bronze shoes.

When you have devastating emotional and existential experiences like this, everything else pales in comparison. **You become unstoppable by the mere fact that you are still breathing.** Adversity and crises occur to all of us. I have had SO MANY challenges and

disappointments in my career, business, and life. But I don't regret the setbacks. I turn setbacks into bouncebacks.

## Your Confidence Coach

I never did play division 1 tennis, but I used my counterpunching techniques and mental focus to forge a highly successful collegiate coaching career. I am a 7-time NCAA championship coach at Boise State, Colgate, Mississippi State, and McKendree. In 2022, I led the McKendree men's team to its first-ever GLVC Championship, best-ever 21-3 record, and best-ever Top 25 ITA ranking, earning GLVC Coach of the Year.

I am the author of five top selling books and creator of the *Down 40 Love* brand. My thought leadership has been published in sports and business media worldwide and I have been asked to share my books, my coaching philosophy, and my leadership strategies on STL-TV Live, Fox 2 News, business and personal development podcasts, the Sell It Like Serhant (SLS) exclusive membership community, and numerous industry trade association conferences.

When tennis-playing CEOs and business owners started asking me for advice on building morale and maximizing performance, I created speaking programs to solve their problems. As an entrepreneur and sales motivational speaker, I help companies and teams who want to improve in the areas of culture, persistence, leadership, confidence, performance, and the psychology of winning.

In 2022, I launched the Down 40 Love Podcast, where bold leaders across industries who are constantly turning adversity into competitive advantage. Our rock-star guests include yet are not limited to American Film Producer Hawk Koch, technology CEO

Lisa Nichols, real estate titan Michael Staenberg, and New York Times best-selling author Dr. Jim Loehr to name a few.

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**“The only time you lose if you quit.”**  
—Grant Cardone

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I want to be your confidence coach. I want to be your personal Sherpa because I lost my Ultimate Mentor way too early when I was coming up. For a time, I was angry and impulsive. I remember how desperately I wanted someone to lead and guide me, someone to show me the ropes, someone who would teach me about life, *someone to encourage me and believe in me—just like my dad.*

As a coach who works with elite athletes and super-successful business leaders all his life, I'll let you in on a not-so little secret: **Champions practice to win. Repetition is the mother skill.** Don't just read this book. Study *Down 40 Love*. Identify the habits you need to *learn* and *unlearn*. Focus.

Burn this mantra into your mentally tough brain:

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**“If you live it, you know it. If you don't live it, you don't know it.”**

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Setbacks impact every person on this planet. The book you hold in your hands is my playbook for building unshakeable confidence and persistence. *Down 40 Love: Private Lessons on Turning Adversity into Competitive Advantage* is just the beginning of our relationship on your path to dominance. *Are you ready? Let's go!*

René Vidal

# FOREWORD

The first time I met René Vidal, I recognized him for what he is, a great sales and businessperson in coach clothing. Think about it. What do coaches *really* do? They persuade, recruit, inspire, and empower people to achieve their personal and collective dreams.

How René develops leaders and changes culture as a 7-time NCAA championship tennis coach and one of the world's top leadership coaches is not that much different than what I do as founder and President of The Staenberg Group, the leading real estate and development company serving as catalysts for positive change in cities throughout the United States.

As a former high school singles and doubles tennis champion, I instantly got René's idea of *Down 40 Love* as a metaphor for embracing adversity and turning setbacks into bouncebacks. As an entrepreneur, I don't see obstacles, I see opportunity. René and I share the capacity to see things others don't see.

Like any great salesperson, René was very persuasive in asking me to write this foreword. Bragging about him, something I usually reserve only for myself, wasn't enough. René *coached* and *sold* me into giving you my personal beliefs around turning obstacles into opportunities and becoming a success. May they serve you well.

- 1. You're only as good as your mentors.** Asking for help is something you need to do. I remember as a teenager I was a pretty good bowler. My bowling average was about 200 and I thought I would become a professional. One Sunday, I bowled a great series. I think I'm a hot stuff even though I'm actually this little fat kid.

After my games, I go up to the counter and start eating a hamburger. A gentleman I don't know comes up to me and says, "*You're a really good bowler, but I want to give you some advice. You don't have to tell everybody that you're a good bowler. Let your actions speak for you.*"

Whereas you wouldn't classify this experience as a failure, it was a failure on my part to recognize the value in showing people that you can do something. I'll never forget that day—this man was one of my first mentors. I stayed in touch with him and would see him occasionally. At season's end, he came up to me and said, "Well, you learned the lesson."

2. **Model generosity for others.** Twenty-five years ago, I had the opportunity to have a mentor in Tommy Green. A great guy, Tommy was founder and majority shareholder of Royal Bancshares Inc. I used to give money anonymously and Tommy says, "*You're not bragging when you give money. Put your name on things—show people that you're involved because they want to emulate you.*"

Today, I'm very proud of what our family has given and what I give personally. We have the treasure, but it's also the time and the talent.

3. **Stick to your game plan.** What people see as obstacles I call opportunities, and I've been through five or six down cycles. I started in business in 1976. Three years later, the prime rate was 21.5%. Today, people freak out at 8.5%. There was a gentleman named Arvin Gottlieb who said to me, "*Don't panic. Stick to your game plan. Keep being honest with yourself and things will work out. Focus and work a little harder.*"

No matter the challenge, you must have the discipline and the structure to do the things you're supposed to do. If you're

a leader, you can't panic. Stability is key. The leader says, *"If we all go together, we'll be fine."* As an entrepreneur, I have been in situations where I had no money and I said to myself, *"I am not going to fail. We will figure this out."*

As a leader, you can't show weakness. If you show weakness, everybody will fold. You need your team. Your teammates must believe that you can lead them to the promised land.

4. **Know your strengths and weaknesses.** A lot of people don't recognize their abilities. As a youngster, I wasn't a very gifted athlete. In tennis, it's all about the first step—but you can't teach that—you have it or you don't. In basketball, it's the ability to move. No one is good at everything. Personally, I know what I am good at and what I am bad at.

I've never tried to be something I couldn't be. It's important to think about where you excel and bring your strengths to the team. Not everybody is a good real estate developer, leasing agent, or broker. Do what you're good at and work harder at what you're not good at. Everybody can't be the artist. Some people are better framers, some people are better creators—it's hard to be both.

Embrace self-awareness. Everybody needs to know themselves. I know what I like to do, what I don't like to do, and what I need to work at. Sometimes it's better to work on things we don't like to do.

5. **Focus on the fundamentals.** Success is a formula. There are certain things you have to do no matter what business you're in. Being part of a team makes you successful. A lot of people like to work by themselves, but they're not truly successful. You've got to have a leader. Look at Steve Jobs



and Elon Musk. They're brilliant, but they're only as good as their team.

A lot of people have an idea, but what counts is how you implement the idea. Success is about doing the basics. Understanding who your client is. Looking toward the future and connecting dots to the past. History does repeat itself. As much as we can learn from history, we also have to be present for today. Don't think about tomorrow. Work in today's environment and make every day count.

- 6. Have a consistent message.** There are a lot of good leaders in the world. Jamie Dimon (JP Morgan). Phil Jackson (NBA). Bill Belichick (NFL). They don't panic under pressure. They always have a consistent message. No highs, no lows. It's never only about the leader.

At The Staenberg Group, we have weekly sales meetings. We make sure people are accountable. Structure is vital. When people know what their expectation is, everything works much better.

- 7. You can't fly a plane without instruments.** I like to leave my office with a clean desk. I put things away, look at my calendar, and organize tomorrow. Every morning, I take the top five things I really don't want to do and write them down on a legal pad. Those are the first five things I do. Nothing else.

I have a phone policy where calls are returned in 24 hours. The same principle applies to texts and emails. I also pick up the phone and thank people, even if I haven't talked to them in two years. In fact, I keep a list of people who I haven't spoken to in a while.

You've got to stay in touch with people. It's a human business. These are the kinds of things that I think are important. Know where you're going. You can't fly a plane without instruments. Have a little roadmap, a strategy to get to your destination.

For me, long-term is three to nine months out. After that, I can't figure out where I'm going in life. I focus on what I want to accomplish this week and then I look back on Saturdays and Sundays and ask, "*How did I do? What could I have done better? What are the lessons learned? What should I have thought about?*"

After reflection, I write myself little notes because when I write it down, it imprints in my brain. That's how I learn.

- 8. Never celebrate success or failure differently.** The best leaders are even keel. It's okay to hit a single. People always ask me, "*Who's your favorite baseball player?*" I say, "*Pete Rose, not the betting Pete Rose.*" He was the greatest singles hitting player ever. Pete Rose always got on base.

Don't try to hit the home run. Just try to hit the single. Because if you hit a single, it might nick the player's leg and turn into a double.

- 9. Just because the door's closed doesn't mean you can't open it.** Everything's not perfect. To be successful, you've got to be able to get over obstacles. Just because the door's closed doesn't mean you can't open it. You must figure out how to get through that door and how to work through the obstacle.

We're lucky to live in America. We have a lot of advantages. I see people getting frustrated because their cell phone isn't

working. I remember never having a cell phone or a pay phone, which was the most annoying thing. So work around it. You can't put a pencil through the phone.

- 10. Be a ten to one better.** As I get older, I've seen these "opportunities" before and I know what's going to happen. My friends won't bet with me anymore. I always tell people I'm a ten to one better. You get ten, I'll take one. I know what's going to happen because of experience.

The 10,000 Hour Rule says it takes three to five years to become good at anything. I've invested hundreds of thousands of hours in business. I know what's going to happen. Do I know 100%? Not really. But I say to myself, "*If this happens, how am I going to respond?*"

- 11. You can't win every time.** It's no secret that I like to win. I also like to lose so I can say, "*What happened?*" *What did I do wrong? What could I have done differently?*" There's nothing wrong with losing as long as you gain the takeaway and you don't lose too much. You don't want to lose but if you do, ask, "*What did I learn?*"

When you do lose, be respectful. Give the other person credit for winning. Don't make an excuse. You can't win every time. Even the greatest athletes don't win every time. Tom Brady didn't win every Super Bowl. I'm sure he would have loved to. And when Brady won, you didn't see him over the top. And when Brady lost, you never saw him down below. The best leaders are even keel.

- 12. Success has many parents. Failure is an orphan.** Don't be the orphan. Go celebrate someone's success.

**13. Help others achieve their dreams.** I get up every morning thinking about opportunities. I'm not looking for more deals. I'm looking to finish the deals I have. How can I finish Chesterfield? How can I make an impact? How can I make St. Louis a better place? *How can I help someone achieve something that they didn't think was possible?*

Help someone. I've been helped my whole life. We all have time, talent, and treasure. *How do we use that to better the world?*

Michael Staenberg  
President of The Staenberg Group  
St. Louis, Missouri



# WHAT IS DOWN 40 LOVE?



## Sell or Be Sold

I was fired before day one.

One night I had my dream job wrapped up tight and undercover. Assistant men's tennis coach at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. WOW! Within three short years of starting my collegiate coaching career as a graduate assistant at Boise State, I would join the upper echelon of Division I sports in the Big Ten Power 5 Conference! Yes, I made it!! I AM AMAZING!!!.....Wait, what?

I literally woke up the next summer morning in the home of then Wisconsin head coach Pat Klingelhoets with a handshake deal and a cool new apartment lease in downtown Madison. I was unbeatable. But things changed quicker than a Serena serve on match point. After exchanging breakfast pleasantries, Coach tells me that one of his former players wants and will get the job.

Welcome to Down 40 Love.

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**Down 40 Love is that moment when you are knocked to the ground and have a decision to make: you can give up and let fate take its course, or you can fight back and control your own destiny. Sell or be sold baby, let's go.**

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In competitive tennis, most players quit when the score is Down 40 Love. Because they feel that winning is out of reach, it is. **Wasted potential is a universal phenomenon.** Paralyzed by fear, deathly afraid of rejection, and completely addicted to comfort, most people are losing the game of life. They either give up right before the miracle happens or they never even enter the arena.



On that lovely morning in Madison, Wisconsin, I chose to fight. It's what New Yorkers do. Upon hearing the bad news from Coach, my inner voice not-so quietly whispered UNACCEPTABLE. I immediately *re-sold* myself with all the passion and enthusiasm I could muster. I touted the successes I had achieved in record time and guaranteed to bring *my magic* to Badgers tennis.

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**Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed  
is more important than any other.**

**—Abraham Lincoln**

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My sales pitch was a success. I got the job. I negotiated my future in an instant and harnessed the power of advocating for what I want. And whereas I would not eventually move to Madison and assist Pat (I was offered a Head Coaching position at Colgate shortly thereafter), my confidence soared as the result of turning a setback into a bounceback, building muscle for future obstacles.

## **Expect Thunderbolts**

In his New York Times best-selling book, "*The Winner Within*," luminary NBA coach Pat Riley writes:

*"A Thunderbolt is something beyond your control, a phenomenon that one day strikes you, your team, your business, your city, even your nation. It rocks you; it blows you into a crater. You have no choice but to take the hit. But you do have a choice about what to do next. That much is in your power. In the coming years, expect the sky to blaze with Thunderbolts. They're part of the game of constant change."*

Strangely prophetic, Riley penned these words in 1993. In the last thirty-plus years, the United States of America has experienced its fair share of Thunderbolts: September 11, 2001, the Great Recession of 2008, and the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

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**“Sweet are the uses of adversity.”**

**—William Shakespeare**

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Motivational speaker Dr. Waitley said, *“Success in life comes not from holding a good hand, but in playing a poor hand well.”* Can you relate? I sure can. For me, by the time I reached seventeen years of age, my parents were divorced, my father passed away, and I attended three different New York high schools. It was like I was being struck by life-changing Thunderbolts left and right.

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**Down 40 Love is about mental preparation.**

**To be a champion, it’s essential that you expect adversity.  
You welcome and embrace adversity as the ultimate tool that  
chips away all the nonessentials and forces you to focus  
on the things that matter most.**

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Here are three simple ideas to help you begin turning setbacks into bouncebacks.

1. You are a lot more resilient than you realize.
2. You can take on adversity and come back, better than before.
3. You have a choice about what to do next.

What will you do?

## Don't Focus on the Wall

When iconic film star Will Smith was eleven years old, his father decided he needed a new wall on the front of his business. The wall was sizeable: twelve feet high by twenty feet long. Rather than outsource the work to a professional, “Daddio” thought it would be a worthy project for Will and his younger brother.

*“Every day for nearly a year, my brother and I would go to my father’s shop after school to work on that wall. We did everything ourselves,” says Will. “My brother and I worked weekends, holidays, vacations... My father never took a day off, so neither could we. There were so many times I remember looking at that hole, totally discouraged. But Daddio wouldn’t let us stop.”*

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**It’s impossible to lose if you don’t quit.**

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The wall that Will and his brother were tasked to build represents the Twin Towers of Problem and Possibility. The Problem is the challenge, adversity, or obstacle you are facing today—physically, emotionally, relationally, professionally, or economically. The Possibility is your next BIG GOAL—the mountain you want to climb that ensures you keep expanding your potential.

Either way, there’s no room for excuses.

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**Down 40 Love is about how you show up every day to transform problems into growth opportunities and turn unreasonable visions into reality.**

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Because as Will correctly surmised, *“This wall was a constant; it was permanence.”* Listen my friend: THE OBSTACLES ARE NEVER GOING AWAY...and neither are your dreams.

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**“The height of my goals will not hold in me in awe.”**  
**—Og Mandino**

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One day, Daddio overheard Will and his brother complaining about how “ridiculous” it was to build the wall. Daddio marched over to the boys, snatched a brick out of Will’s hand, held it up in front of them and said:

*“Stop thinking about the damn wall! There is no wall. There are only bricks. Your job is to lay this brick perfectly. Then move on to the next brick. Then move on to the next brick. Then lay that brick perfectly. Then the next one. Don’t be worrying about no wall. Your only concern is one brick.”*

**PRIVATE LESSON:** When you focus on the obstacle (insurmountable walls), the journey feels impossible. When you focus on the process (one brick), the destination takes care of itself.

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**Down 40 Love is revealed in your perspective: the quality of your vision, what you pay attention to, and how you choose to interpret things. What you focus on expands.**

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Are you only seeing the problem? Or are you excited about the opportunity you see in the problem?

## Be a Turnaround Artist

Adversity brings out great leaders. Tough times prove whether a leader is great. When faced with a challenging circumstance, do you respond with “*the right stuff*” or do you complain that this is “*the wrong time*.”

In corporate America, a turnaround artist is the leader who thrives in situations where organizations are in danger of collapsing. The turnaround artist reorganizes and gets the company back on track.

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**Down 40 Love is about spotting opportunity in a crisis, rising to the occasion, and flipping negatives into positives to create a corporate benefit.**

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Personal development author Orison Swett Marden wrote, “*There is no failure for the person who persists when everyone else gives up.*”

For the turnaround artist, giving up never enters the picture.

## Paddle Like Crazy

Ducks look amazing as they swim magnificently across tranquil water. Calm, cool, in control. Yet underwater, the ducks are *paddling like crazy* to get from one side of the pond to the other.

Unless you deep dive into the water yourself, you never see the effort it takes for ducks to reach their destination. And whereas ducks keep moving to stay alive, successful people *paddle like crazy* to thrive no matter what or who is watching.

**The dynamic balance between maintaining your poise while staying in motion is the essence of Down 40 Love. When you put in the work of persistence, your results flow naturally.**

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How well are you balancing grace and initiative? Are you moving toward your goal with intention or are you merely flapping in place?

Your ability to effectively navigate the changing waters makes the difference between a life of doubt and failure versus a life of confidence and success.

## **A Letter in the Mailbox**

I picked up a tennis racquet when I was five-years old.

Whereas we lived in Jamaica, Queens, my father Angelo Vidal owned and operated a commercial printing business in East New York, Brooklyn. I loved the early morning daily commute to *Angell Printers*. The Mill Harbour private school bus would pick me up in front of *The Shop* and drop me back off at the end of the day. Then I hit tennis balls against a wall until it was time to go home.

Life was good. By the age of seven, I was getting serious about tennis. My dad passed the tennis-teaching baton to a private coach. I began training with some of the best players in the region at the famous Port Washington Tennis Academy. I played my first tournament in Syosset, Long Island, and I started making friends on the Eastern Tennis Association (ETA) junior circuit.

*Who trains six days a week when you can go seven?*

On Sundays, I would play practice matches against my friend and nemesis Marco Cacopardo. I will never forget coming home one Sunday after training to a letter in the mailbox—a note from my mom saying that she had moved out. My eight-year-old brain didn't know what to think at the time. Of course, I was hurt and now tennis in some strange way would always be attached to loss.

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**Down 40 Love is that moment when you realize that so much of life is outside of your control. If you want to turn adversity into competitive advantage, all you can do is focus on the vital few things that you can control.**

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Walls are interesting in that they can work for you or against you, depending on how you see things. In tennis, being a wall means you never miss, you're consistent—nobody wants to play against a wall! In life, walls serve as obstacles and potential drivers for success. After a morning of competitive tennis, that letter in the mailbox served as a nasty return on the adversities of life.

My back was against the wall.

## **Play More Matches**

In tennis, who's going to improve the fastest? The player who competes in twenty tournaments a year, or the player who enters just one?

To immediately strengthen your relationships, accelerate your career, or expand your business, double your failure rate. Go on more dates. Take on more projects. Double your marketing outreach. **PLAY MORE MATCHES.**

The more often you fail and learn, the more rapidly you will succeed.

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**Down 40 Love is about consciously, consistently, and courageously putting yourself in situations that cause you to grow...*fast!***

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Get in the game. Pay your entry fee! Work your ass off. You will gain your lessons quicker, start to recognize the patterns of success, and grow in experience and wisdom. Game, set, match.

## **Don't Be a Dick**

By the age of twelve, I was the 13<sup>th</sup> best junior player in the Eastern Tennis Association and ranked 95<sup>th</sup> nationally in the boys under 12 division. In 1982, I spent the summer months training with Richard Lynch at the Douglaston Club in Queens. We were preparing for the national hard courts in San Diego, had become buddies, and would be traveling to and competing together at the event.

We arrived in California a few days before the tournament began. All 128 players, including Richard and myself, assembled for practice on the courts at Balboa Park to get used to the surface. During that time, I met a fellow player named Jean-Francois Mathieu, seeded 5<sup>th</sup> in singles. We hit it off and because of his talent, I chose to ditch Richard as a doubles partner to play with Mathieu.

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**“Greed is the lack of confidence in one’s own ability to create.”**  
—Ancient Saying

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When my dad heard of my shitty behavior, I was on the first plane back to New York after my singles matches were complete. I didn't get to play doubles with "Jean-Francois" and my friendship with Richard was forever changed. Competitive desire never trumps decency.

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**Down 40 Love is recognizing that many of the obstacles we face are self-created. We get in our own way. It's understanding that how you play the game is much more important than whether you win the game. Humanity is power.**

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There's always a price to pay for being a dick.

## Compete to Dominate

Since the moment I started coaching collegiate tennis, I've been fueled by competition. It started at the USTA Player Development Headquarters, where I began as a sport science intern.

Our Miami office was full of smart and successful people. From PHDs and former professional tennis players turned CEOs and National Coaches, I was surrounded by ambition, intelligence, and more than a few egos. Rodney Harmon, then a USTA National Coach, also a US Open and Wimbledon singles quarterfinalist, served as my initial inspiration and became a lifelong friend.

In his best-selling book *Big Money Energy*, real estate entrepreneur Ryan Serhant writes, "*You need a clear vision of success to compete against. Let people who have reached a high level of success provide that picture for you.*" At the USTA, it was coaches like Rodney, Lynne Rolley and Nick Saviano, and keynote speakers like Dr. Ron Woods that set the standard for great work.

**Down 40 Love is about embracing competition as the edge you need to become number one in your field—using the knowledge and success of others as guidance and motivation to blaze your own trail of greatness.**

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Competition is healthy. It can and will bring out your best. *“There is no game without competition; it provides something to push off against,”* says Serhant. Ultimately, if you want to transform a mess into a miracle, then look at it as a competitive opportunity. Use your difficult circumstance as a driver and show the world what is possible when you love competing at the highest level.

## **Your Personal Signature**

Your ability to overcome adversity works to the degree you honor your self-agreements. If you do whatever it takes to turn things around, they will. If you waiver in any way, they won't.

Coach K of Duke basketball fame shares a great story about his mother's chocolate chip cookies. Each cookie always had three chocolate chips. If not, it wasn't mom's cookie. Three chocolate chips in every cookie served as her personal signature within the Krzyzewski family.

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**“When I make a promise, it means something.”**  
**—John Dutton, Yellowstone**

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It's impossible to turn setbacks into bouncebacks without integrity and self-worth.

**Down 40 Love is about bringing your Whole Self and Unique Creativity to the priority at hand. You can never be more powerful than the power of your own word.**

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You can try to fool your own soul, but The Real You knows what time it is. So don't be a flake. **Flakes are people who don't do what they say they are going to do.** Remember, the jump from flake to failure is a short one. When you don't keep your promises, you lose trust and credibility. You create disruption in your life and in the lives of those who depend on you to get things done.

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**Flakes don't win championships.**

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The most important “rules of engagement” are the ones you set for yourself. Your *personal signature* is the power of your word, being true to yourself and others in all you do.

## **Get Out of the Valley**

Michael Ovitz is an entrepreneur who left a safe job to launch Creative Artists Agency, growing it from five guys in a rundown office to the most powerful talent agency in the world.

In his classic autobiography, “*Who is Michael Ovitz?*”, the pioneering über-agent writes, “*I was raised in Encino, a nondescript part of greater Los Angeles. I loved Encino until I knew better, and then I hated it. We were on the wrong side of the hill from all the action.*”

**Down 40 Love is about positive discontent—the healthy desire for a bigger life and a penchant for never settling for less than achieving your highest potential: emotionally, physically, relationally, professionally, and financially.**

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You never have to stay in the Valley.

You can maximize your potential, empower greatness in others, and make your dreams real.

*Are you ready?...Let's go!*



**1<sup>ST</sup> SET:  
THE 21-DAY  
LEADERSHIP  
CHALLENGE**



# DAY 1

## PURPOSE

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*Team Message:*

*Knowing why I get up every morning to grind and create dominance is vital to my well-being. Thanks to my dad's intense work ethic, I have never been stuck believing that the world owes me anything. **The undefeated combination of passion, purpose, and persistence results in getting everything you want.** Purpose unlocks your future. You are the engineer of your own destiny.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“Here is the test to find whether your mission on Earth is finished: if you’re alive, it isn’t.”**

**—Richard Bach**

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When Andre Agassi was at his professional tennis best, you could see it in his eyes: *laser-focused, unshakeable, on a mission*. Conversely and occasionally, Agassi’s “lights” would fade; he looked lost, anxious, and disengaged. The latter is what occurs when we forget our reason for being.

Without a purpose in life, it’s easy to get sidetracked, lose focus, and “swing at the wrong ball.”

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**The universe rewards leaders who are purpose driven.**

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I coach top athletes because I love to compete. I get excited about mentoring the next generation of leaders. Building culture is FUN! I look forward to beginning each season with a clean slate and there's nothing I love more than proving people wrong. **My mission is to set records.** To achieve things that have never been done before, and help others realize their greatest potential.

**What's your unique role in the universe?**

**Why do you do what you do?**

**Is your purpose strong enough to keep you swinging when adversity strikes?**

As a family man, coach, and business leader, everything I do is an expression of my purpose. If an activity doesn't align with my purpose, I don't work on it. Period. **When you say yes to your purpose, it is easy to say no to everything else.** Purpose means you are doing what you love to do, doing what you're great at, and accomplishing what's most meaningful and important to you.

## **The Purpose-Driven Leader**

- Leaders identify, acknowledge, and honor their purpose.
- Leaders know what they are here to do.
- Leaders pursue their purpose with passion, enthusiasm, and grit.
- Leaders never underestimate the relationship between purpose and joy.

- Leaders help others clarify and fulfill their calling and purpose.

By grounding yourself in purpose, you wake up easier, feel lighter, have more energy, and attract the people, resources, and opportunities you need to make more impact in the world.

## **7 Ways to Live Your Purpose**

1. Look inside—find your drivers.
2. Think big.
3. Have many purposes in your life—lots of reasons for doing what you do.
4. Trust your gut—don't second-guess yourself.
5. Never doubt why you do what you do.
6. Organize all your activities around your purpose.
7. Redefine who you are as seasons change.

## Coaching Exercise

My purpose is...

Bounceback Mantra

"I'm on a mission."

# DAY 2

# VISION

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*Team Message:*

*Your instinct is to attack the day until you get what you want. Yet your mojo is lacking. Perhaps it was trained out of you by boring professors, or you grew up in a vanilla town. It's time to get your vision back. **To do things others don't, you must see things others can't.** The life of a recreational athlete looks radically different from that of a professional baller. What is your vision as a leader?*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.”**  
—Helen Keller

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Vision is the spark that fires up your personal growth, your leadership impact, and your ability to overcome adversity for years to come. **The best vistas are eye-catching, big, and inspiring.** Vision is personal. Self-leadership precedes resilient leadership. Knowing what you want when you get to the top of the mountain gives you strength to overcome all the obstacles along the trail.

A unique and compelling vision of the future...

- *creates movement and progress;*
- *drives emotional energy forward;*

- *helps push through discomfort;*
- *raises motivation and performance.*

**What's your personal vision? What are you passionate about? What values do you want to embody in your life and work? Where do you want to be in ten years?** In my leadership conversation with Olympic gold medal softball coach Mike Candrea, we see the value of playing the long game: *“My job as a leader is to prepare my athletes for life after softball,”* says Candrea.

## **Goals Don't Make You Special**

Vision is a clear and exciting picture of the future. But thinking bigger is just the first step. Champions create systems and practices that are aligned with their vision of excellence.

Goals don't make you special; they make you average. In the head coaching world, every collegiate team sets the same goals. Qualify for the post-season. Win conference. Go to NCAA Regionals. Win the national championship. Do it again next year. Establishing goals is important. The problem is that most leaders and companies don't pay enough attention to execution.

*What will it take to win?*

## **The Power of Follow-Up**

Follow-up is more valuable than mere goal setting and dream boarding. By practicing the following tips, you will turn your vision into reality.

- Paint and share your vision
- Game plan for “showtime” and pressure moments
- Strive for practice perfection
- Provide ongoing communication and support
- Debrief regularly—learn from wins and losses
- Make the slight adjustments that lead to big gains
- Double-down your effort to create extraordinary results

Relentless attention to detail is what separates the champions who are constantly “throwing touchdowns” from those who watch painfully from the sidelines. Go and create your big vision.

## Coaching Exercise

My vision is...

Bounceback Mantra

"I see things others don't."

# DAY 3

## CHARACTER

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*Team Message:*

*You may win with good people, but you dominate with heart. Character is about your ethical DNA—who you are on the inside. The Law of Correspondence always applies: as within, so without. Your outer world reflects your inner world. There’s power in seeing yourself as the creator of circumstance. Your ability to DEFEAT ADVERSITY resides at the core of who you are.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.”**

**—John Wooden**

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*What makes you tick?*

*Why do you behave the way you do?*

*How do you define adversity?*

**Character is the correlation between what you believe and how you act.** This is the lens through which I evaluate my players, clients, and all the relationships in my galaxy. If you’re a talker, not a doer—I’m not interested. If your audio is in sync with your video, we have something.



**You can't help someone who doesn't show up.**

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Every season, I take time to get to know my players. Because we develop and grow each day, I never take my returners for granted. They're not the same people they were last year, last month, or last match. I want to know your essence—*what really, really drives you TODAY*. The better I understand what juices you, the better prepared I am to help you stay true to yourself and dominate.

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**BS wastes time.**

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It's sad when someone with real promise doesn't have the desire and fails to deliver. Ultimately, character development is the relentless quest to grow bigger than your problems—all the challenges and obstacles on your path. The more we evolve as human beings, the more "talented" and adept we become at turning setbacks into bouncebacks. *Are you ready to show your heart?*

## **Coach Vidal's Top 7 Strategies for Building Character**

1. Define what you stand for.
2. Be true to yourself.
3. Play to your strengths.
4. Surround yourself with good people.
5. Don't tolerate behavior that doesn't fit your standards.

6. Replace bad apples before they ruin the rest of the barrel.
7. Lead by example.

## Coaching Exercise

**My top three personal values are...**

Bounceback Mantra

"I am honest, caring, and playful."

# DAY 4

# OWNERSHIP

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*Team Message:*

*You can't change a shitty result, but you can profit from one. The secret is ownership—taking 100% responsibility for your outcomes. **As a leader, I am responsible for everyone's growth.** It's a privilege that begins with my own evolution—everything I do and say affects the players I coach and develop. No excuses. No alibis. There is nothing so influential as your own personal power.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“I am never a victim.”**  
**—Tom Brady**

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In tennis, complainers and losers never want to look at their own “technique”—where fundamental change occurs. It's easier to blame the wind, the sun, your opponent, or a “bad line call.” Winners are owners. They take responsibility for results by doubling down on perfecting the basics, making vital tweaks, and finding ways to use challenges as motivation to rise above the competition.

**Becoming an owner is about agency, control, and betting on yourself.** To be a responsible leader, A TRUE BOSS, you must *think like an owner*. While most “athletes” blame the referee for their crappy backhand, top performers put in the reps until the ball goes where they want it to go. By holding yourself to a higher standard, you have all the power. Anything less is a waste of time.

**“Never complain and never explain.”**  
**—Benjamin Disraeli**

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Most people express performance dissatisfaction to the wrong source. Spouse. Friend. Colleague. Stranger. The mysterious *they*. “They” can’t change your situation. “They” can’t make you feel better. “They” can’t give you what you want. If you’re going to growl, then bark at someone who has the power to make things happen. Ten times out of ten it’s the person in the mirror.

## **How to Be a Boss**

1. See yourself as a Victor, not a victim.
2. Take responsibility for every “statistic” you create in life.
3. Pay attention to results. **“Results don’t lie.”**
4. Look inside for solutions, not outside for excuses.
5. Change your actions until you produce your desired result.
6. Don’t play the blame game.
7. Seek wise counsel and advice.
8. Reframe obstacles as opportunities.
9. Face problems proactively—owners don’t wait for things to happen.

## Coaching Exercise

**I take ownership for improving my...**

Bounceback Mantra

"I am responsible."



## DAY 5

# COMMITMENT

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*Team Message:*

*In tennis, you either develop the best grip for your physical composition and game style or you don't. You either have a winning attitude and perform well under pressure or you don't. In life, you're either an optimist or a pessimist, a doer or a talker. **There is no gray area or "NO MAN'S LAND" when it comes to commitment.** You're either all in or you're not. What's it going to be?*

*Coach Vidal*

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**"There can be no retreat."**

**—Nick Saban**

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Everybody wants to win, but few people are willing nor eager to do what it takes to win. In the collegiate coaching business, the number of athletes who want more scholarship money and ask for more playing opportunities in return for less work and less than stellar results are astronomical. **Wanting alone is useless.** Unbridled commitment to winning unlocks everything you desire.

**Commitment is the unrelenting obsession to be a champion.** It's dedicating yourself to the little things, whether it's the follow-through on your golf swing or your ability to reframe every setback into an opportunity for growth. *"It's not the will to win that matters—everyone has that,"* said coaching legend Bear Bryant. *"It's the will to prepare that matters."* Champions are ready to win.



## **What are the costs of greatness?**

### **How much are you willing to pay?**

When you're not practicing, someone else is. The word commit means to devote oneself unreservedly. Champions hold nothing back. You put all your chips in play. A true commitment is like a contract you sign with yourself. The more contracts you fulfill and honor for yourself, the more confidence and trust you gain in yourself. Self-belief reinforces serious commitment.

## **Coach Vidal's Commitment Starter Kit**

### **1. Determine the trade-off.**

American businessman H.L. Hunt said, "*Decide what you want, then decide what you are willing to exchange for it.*" What steps are required to achieve your goal?

### **2. Interview successful people.**

Make a list of ten thought leaders who have already done what you want to do. Connect. Their insights will provide a blueprint that you can learn from. *Success leaves clues.*

### **3. Engage in deliberate practice.**

*Repetition is the mother of skill.* Real leaders and top performers train and automatize specific behaviors consistently over time. This level of dedication makes you *different.*

### **4. Never take no for an answer.**

Champions do whatever it takes, no matter how long it takes. Invest your mind, body, and soul into your dreams. You deserve the best and nothing less. *Are you ready?...Let's go!*

## Coaching Exercise

Commitment is...

Bounceback Mantra

"I never waiver."



# DAY 6

# DISCOMFORT

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*Team Message:*

*Nobody wants to hit tennis balls at 6am. Shoot baskets past sundown. Make a sales pitch in an elevator. It's uncomfortable. You're not rewarded for your effort, only results. You don't get a prize for showing up. **Everything you want and need is on the other side of comfortable.** Convenience is doing what's easy. Conviction is doing whatever it takes. What's stopping you?*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.”**  
—Neale Donald Walsch

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Skill development, positive change, and real progress is always uncomfortable. If you “held your racquet” one way for twenty years and I “change your grip” for twenty seconds, you’ll feel the difference. **Leadership growth requires doing things differently.** “A new, expanded comfort zone means you have become a bigger person,” writes Harv Eker, author of *The Millionaire Mind*.

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**Nobody ever died of discomfort.**

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If an early morning practice knocks you out of the game, then you’re simply someone who can be easily defeated. **THERE’S NO GROWTH OR VICTORY IN COMFORT.** Being comfortable as

a lifestyle is grossly over-rated. Laziness never gives you what you want, only what you deserve. The more you practice getting out of your comfort zone, the more *comfortable* you become.

*What prevents people from getting out of their comfort zones?*

- *Fear and anxiety*
- *Self-doubt*
- *Worry and stress*
- *The Path of Least Resistance*
- *Negative self-talk*

American humorist Mark Twain said, *“I’ve had thousands of problems in my life, most of which never actually happened.”* Champions train their minds to focus on winning. The decision to fuel your growth and become unstoppable demands constantly working the outer edges of your potential. What is standing in the way of your next level success?

## **5 Ways to Be Unstoppable**

### **1. Practice being uncomfortable.**

Action is the foundational key to success. Winners do something. Losers do nothing. Challenge your greatest fears. Refuse to allow anything to get in your way.

**2. Do what's hard.**

There's NO APP for turning adversity into competitive advantage. Uber or Lyft can't fast-track your success. Leaders don't base their actions on what's easy or convenient.

**3. Train your mind.**

*"No thought ever lives in your head rent-free,"* says media entrepreneur Robert Allen. Observe your thought patterns. Reinforce the positive and replace the negative.

**4. Increase the goal.**

At McKendree, the day after we won our first-ever GLVC championship, I set our sights on winning a national championship. *The minute we get comfortable, we stop growing.*

**5. Be persistent.**

It takes true dedication over time to realize your potential. PERSISTENCE CHANGES EVERYTHING. Your destiny is winning. Go the distance. Keep on running.

## Coaching Exercise

**I am expanding my comfort zone by...**

Bounceback Mantra

"I am here to grow."

# DAY 7

## CHANGE

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*Team Message:*

*By the age of 17, I experienced my parents' divorce, I was crushed by my dad's death, I attended 3 different high schools, and I lived in 3 distinct New York counties—Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk. I learned how to make friends quickly and drop the bad ones just as fast. **My capacity to change is self-made.** Change is real. The world is a perpetual growth machine. How quick can you pivot?*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“Doing more of what doesn’t work won’t make it work any better.”**

**—Charles J. Givens**

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You can embrace change and grow, or you can deny change and die, but you can't do both. In tennis, if you play with a wooden racquet while your opponent is using the latest *Head Radical*, you're going home with a loss. Your technology is outdated...and so is your brain...jus sayin.

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**When it comes to embracing change, too many people are playing with a metaphorical wooden racquet.**

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“*We all have to evolve,*” says Tilman Fertitta, CEO of Landry’s and NBA owner of the Houston Rockets. The word *evolve* means to develop gradually. To get a little bit better each day. To learn from success and failure. To see change as an opportunity to “inch” our game to the next level.

Most people are terrified, spooked, and unnerved by change. When you are paralyzed by fear, addicted to old habits, resist and resent change, or overact to new developments, you will ultimately be run over by the competition—those who are open, nimble, and light on their feet.

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**Standing still is a loser’s game.**

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In the business marketplace, change is currency. **People don’t buy products; people buy the CHANGE they believe that product will bring them.** World-class organizations understand why people buy and then create the kinds of gadgets and services that meet those desires. In your life and career, you can proactively create the change you need to produce the outcomes you want.

## **The Change-Agent Manifesto**

1. Change is perpetual.
2. By being open to change, you get better at creating positive change.
3. Yellow alerts are the little signals you get that something’s not right.

4. Successful people create change; they don't wait for things to happen.
5. Leaders identify new areas for growth.
6. Expansion calls for new paradigms and transformative change.

## Coaching Exercise

Change is amazing because...

Bounceback Mantra

"I am open to change."

# DAY 8

## UNREASONABLE

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*Team Message:*

*Building a championship team is an undertaking that requires massive amounts of discipline, an unshakeable belief in yourself, and more than a few balls to bounce your way. Asking “Why not?” is my personal mantra. When down 40 love, I remind myself of all the things “seasoned pros” told me I couldn’t do that I went on to accomplish. Proving people wrong is immensely satisfying.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“We need more people to be unreasonable.”  
—Michael Bloomberg**

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What do you have the guts to create?

It’s a simple and powerful question. Creation is what you are here to do. Guts is how you do it. Radical change never occurs without moxie—a certain vigor, swag, and pep in your step.

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**Dream big.**

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Everything is paradox. The world is suspicious of big dreamers with unreasonable ideas and goals yet delivers the most exquisite rewards to the movers and shakers who turn vision into reality.

**Never lose sight of a bigger and better future.**

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Asking “Why not me?” is the entrepreneur’s ultimate tool and motto. Visionary leaders understand that when you venture out to create something out of nothing, you will be on a solitary path blocked by haters, obstacles, and doubt. In 2022, why would anyone believe that our little McKendree men’s team could defeat WASHU? After all, we were 0-11 against the Bears...until we weren’t.

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**Victory is sweet.**

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Champions push into new frontiers and believe that the impossible can be achieved. Where most people kick back after early success, champions possess endless ambition and always believe there is more work to do. As a coach, my mission is to build the confidence to do what naysayers dismiss as “crazy” and to keep achieving the heights and success nobody thinks we can reach.

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**How you do anything is how you do everything.**

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Playwright George Bernard Shaw said, “*Some people see things as they are and say, why? I dream of things that never were and say, why not?*” The down 40 love mindset won’t necessarily make you a good team player, and it certainly won’t make you popular, but it will set you apart as a dramatically effective leader, someone who has the guts to make big things happen.

## **How to Think Bigger**

1. Be open to new ideas.
2. Do your homework.
3. Ask lots of questions.
4. Pursue the impossible.
5. Enlist allies and collaborators.
6. Revise expectations upward.
7. Take risks.
8. Seek out the best in everything.
9. Go for it!

## Coaching Exercise

My big dream is...

Bounceback Mantra

"I set the course."

## DAY 9

# OPPORTUNITY

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*Team Message:*

*Opportunities exist to be capitalized upon and fully exploited. CONVERT, YOU WIN. HESITATE, YOU LOSE. To excel in tennis, you must go for your shots. **To dominate at life, you must play aggressively.** It's the only way to build true confidence and attract greater opportunities. To get out of any hole and create success, one must look up in faith, not down in frustration. Let's go!*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“Nothing is more expensive than a missed opportunity.”**  
**—H. Jackson Browne, Jr.**

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*What is your game plan for creating, evaluating, and seizing opportunities?*

*How do you become more than the person who just drops off the bagels?*

*Are you willing to climb higher so that you can reach more opportunities?*

**An opportunist capitalizes on the “break points of life.”** You see an opportunity and hit the ball to the open court. One of the best ways to become an opportunist is by creating opportunities for others. If you need to get out of a hole, then give someone the opportunity and a reason to pull you up. **PARTICIPATE IN YOUR OWN RESCUE.** Helpful beats helpless every day of the week.



**Opportunity is created by vision, an intense work ethic, and relentless dedication.** There are always gaps in the marketplace—room for new ideas and innovation. Leaders spot opportunities and potential growth. They are not afraid to take action and start. The best leaders trust that once they embark on a new journey, they will course correct and adjust their sails along the way.

### **What gets in the way of opportunity creation?**

- Being unprepared
- Not believing in yourself
- Feeling undeserving
- Analysis Paralysis or “thinking it through”
- Having to know everything in advance
- Focusing on what’s wrong
- Distraction or “busy being busy”
- Small thinking or “living in a bubble”
- Expecting to fail
- Playing it safe

**Scared money don’t make money.** Where losers see problems, winners see opportunity and expansion. Where losers see only risk, winners see big rewards. While losers focus on what’s wrong and why something won’t work, winners focus on what’s right and how to make it work. Losers expect to fail. Winners expect to succeed. Opportunists have the winner’s mindset.

## Coaching Exercise

**For me, seizing the day means...**

Bounceback Mantra

"I create my own luck."



# DAY 10

# CONFIDENCE

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*Team Message:*

*Do you believe you have what it takes to win? **The Latin root of confidence is confidere: to trust.** In 2022, our McKendree men's tennis team leveraged the power of trust to create history: 1<sup>st</sup>-ever GLVC Championship. Best-ever 21-3 record. Greatest-ever Top 25 national ranking. We believed in ourselves when nobody else did. Unshakeable confidence unleashes your ultimate potential.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“The first sale is to yourself.”**  
—Alan Weiss

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A lack of self-belief is the #1 reason why people fail to get what they want. They fall prey to **CONFIDENCE MONSTERS** such as fear, self-doubt, performance anxiety, insecurity, and negativity. Discouraged by **FALSE COMPARISONS** or made powerless by **THE BLAME GAME**, under-achievers don't understand that you can start from anywhere and create success.

*“You have to believe in yourself when no one else does. That's what makes you a winner,”* says 7-time Grand Slam singles champion Venus Williams. Confidence is believing that all things are possible—and trusting in a Force that is infinitely bigger than yourself yet resides at the core of who you really are. True confidence is your inherent sense of invincibility. You are unstoppable.

## **Confidence is your birthright.**

**Doesn't it feel *right* when you are true to yourself?**

When you pursue a goal without emotional limitations, you will produce transformative results. Keyword: *pursue*. Positive thinking alone does not win championships. **The source of real confidence is rooted in purposeful action.** To succeed, you must think proactively, take initiative, put in the work, and persevere. Principles only work when you work the principles.

## **8 Strategies for Building Confidence**

### **1. Paradigm**

How you see yourself and the world influences everything you do or don't do.

### **2. Picture**

Champions envision a bigger and brighter future.

### **3. Preparation**

Efficient systems and sweat equity drive extraordinary belief.

### **4. Positivity**

Optimism is a force multiplier informing more and more action.

### **5. Physicality**

When you look great, you feel great. Everything works better.

### **6. Promises**

Our confidence rises with every agreement we fulfill.

**7. Proactivity**

Ideas without initiative leads to insanity.

**8. Persistence**

Never giving up is the most powerful expression of faith.

## Coaching Exercise

**I can build my confidence by...**

Bounceback Mantra

"I bet on myself."

# DAY 11

## TEAM BUILDING

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*Team Message:*

*Our 2022 GLVC men's championship team represented the Bahamas, Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, Dubai, England, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, and the United States of America. **Teamwork is about people from all walks of life coming together and committing to a vision.** The best leaders morph top performers and key role players into relentless championship teams.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“Teamwork is the essence of life.”**  
—Pat Riley

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*Does your organization have a burning desire to be the best?*

*What's the secret behind great teams?*

*Are you willing to do the little things that lead to unique competitive advantage?*

**Culture is the key to dominance.** Early in my coaching career, Stanford University men's tennis coach Dick Gould taught me the power of creating a positive learning environment. From the pictures on the wall to the meticulousness of the facility, everything



at Stanford speaks excellence. American architect Charlie Eames said, “*The details are not the details. They make the design.*”

As a baseline, successful teams require everyone involved to be wholly committed to maximizing their potential. **Unmotivated players with skill are the death of culture.** You’ll be six feet under before the ball hits the ground. Attributes without the work ethic is a losing formula. The goal is to build a determined, persistent, unstoppable team. Here’s how your team can win in record time.

## Elements of a Great Culture

- Character – you have a fortified team identity.
- Ownership – you take responsibility and don’t point fingers at others.
- Intelligence – you play smart to win.
- Focus – you do what matters, unhindered by distractions or personal agendas.
- Immediacy – you train, compete, and adapt with positive urgency.
- Determination – you push yourself every minute, working the outer edge of your potential.
- Vision – you are committed to something larger than yourself.

## 12 Strategies for Team Dominance

1. Define the mission.
2. Evaluate character and sign the best talent.
3. Build a culture of communication and trust.
4. Give team members a say in the direction of the group.
5. Put the mission and group ahead of the individual.
6. Elicit maximum performance from every player.
7. Don't accept anything less than 100% effort.
8. Master the fundamentals.
9. Empower your team to achieve their personal goals.
10. Do not let mistakes go uncorrected—fix or remove weak links.
11. Outwork your opponents—*dominance is daily*.
12. Push even harder when you are ahead—*complacency is a disease*.

## Coaching Exercise

**Our team competitive advantage is...**

Bounceback Mantra

"Success is not a sole operation."

# DAY 12

## COMMUNICATION

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*Team Message:*

*You can't truly lead without being an excellent communicator. Authority isn't enough. **The greatest leaders in history earn and sustain credibility through communication.** Master communication extends beyond knowing what to say, when to say it, and whom to say it to. Any salesman can do that. **Communication mastery is about touching the hearts and minds of people.***

*Coach Vidal*

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**“You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't work.”**

**—Lee Iacocca**

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Communication is the ability to have effective conversations. Take Warren Buffet, chairman and CEO of investment juggernaut Berkshire Hathaway. Buffet's prudent analysis and intensive preparation encompasses spending considerable time with key people in an organization. While evaluating potential partnerships, Buffet asks himself three questions regarding core leaders:

Do I like them?

Do I trust them?

Do I respect them?

If the answer to any one of these questions is no, the deal is off. **“The first rule of business is not to lose. The second rule is not to forget the first rule,”** says Buffet. By investing the time to “get a feel” for others, to understand and meet people’s needs, you set the stage for productive conversations that lead to results. Leaders who excel have mastered the art of communication.

As a coach and business owner, my ability to communicate with both our student-athletes and my corporate clients is key to achieving our goals. At McKendree, one of my communication practices is to set the tone each week. Every Sunday, our teams receive an email from me that includes a brief motivational theme and a “play-by-play” description of how we will hit our sweet spot goals.

The relationship equity that you build with others through master communication is an intangible that cannot be measured by a win-loss record or the latest sale report. Are you ready to connect?

## **13 Ways to Move Hearts and Minds**

1. Pay attention to your overall presence.
2. Know your audience and what works best.
3. Make people feel important by showing appreciation.
4. Set the tone each week.
5. Establish clear expectations.
6. Get instructions across concisely and coherently.
7. Communicate personally on a daily and/or weekly basis.

8. Instill confidence and trust.
9. Ask for ideas.
10. Listen to others.
11. Be fair and honest.
12. Prioritize the development of good relationships.
13. Help your team members develop strong communication skills.

## Coaching Exercise

**My audience wants and needs...**

Bounceback Mantra

"Candor gets results."

# DAY 13

## DRIVE

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*Team Message:*

*There's a difference between a pep talk and a consistent dose of inspiration. Pep talks are occasional. **Motivation is daily.** A second does not go by when I am not shaping the emotional climate of our players, teams, clients, and businesses. **To win at the highest level, you must be self-motivated.** I'm not here to judge motives. What I do is recognize what really drives you and feed it fuel.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“Wanting something is not enough. You must hunger for it.”**  
—Les Brown

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The thrill and intensity of competition is what motivates me the most about the coaching profession. **Motivation can be defined as the burning desire to be the best.** It's the spark that ignites action toward your big vision and it's the fire that attracts the hottest talent to join and “blow up” your cause. Motivation is directly related to success in every facet of your life and work.

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**What juices you?**

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It is vital to identify and take advantage of all the opportunities you have to keep your own spirits high and inspire the people around



you who look to you for leadership. Personally, my morning routine is the fuel I need to attack each day with ferocity. As a coach working with elite-level athletes, the key is understanding what makes everyone “go” and knowing when to flip the switch.

Every day, I motivate my winning tennis players and corporate speaking clients to:

- Practice and play hard
- Maximize their time
- Keep believing in themselves
- Embrace rejection
- Bounce back from defeat
- Leverage success into bigger wins
- Raise their standards
- Play the long game
- Hold each other accountable
- Compete with character
- Enjoy the process...and more

## How to Boost Morale and Energy

*“Motivation gives you a reason and a passion to do the things you love to do and to push you through the things you hate to do,”* says Nick Saban, 7-time national championship football coach at Alabama.

**Here are my proven techniques for creating a sustainable, high-octane culture:**

1. Get to know your people.
2. Ask, “What drives you?”
3. Craft a weekly motivational message and LIVE IT DAILY.
4. Recognize and praise positive performance.
5. Be creative—do something unique; make it a habit.
6. Incorporate the element of surprise.
7. Employ competition.
8. Offer incentives. Break up monotony.
9. Motivate intrinsically—help others become the best that they can be.

## Coaching Exercise

What drives me is...

Bounceback Mantra

"We are the best."

# DAY 14

# RISK

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*Team Message:*

*Humans are not designed to be anxious or exist in fearful states. In fact, much of your fear is bullshit. Our gravest worries and deepest insecurities rarely come to pass. Mark Twain said, “I’ve had thousands of problems in my life, most of which never actually happened.” **If you’re going to be afraid, then be afraid of wasting your own prized potential.** This is my greatest nightmare.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“Progress always involves risk.”**  
**—Frederick Wilcox**

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You can either tiptoe through life and pray you don’t fall down, or you can walk with your head held high and keep reaching for the stars. Most people let fear stand in the way of realizing their true capacity. Others will *do anything* to avoid the discomfort of fear. Ironically, they become paralyzed by fear and *do nothing*. The good life: *happiness and success* require taking a risk.

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**The courage to act never goes unrewarded.**

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How do you find out if you can do something? *You fucking do it.* Every time you smash a fear, you reignite your inborn fearless muscles. It's like lifting weights at the gym. You overcome the resistance through repetitions you perform over and over again. Most perceived threats are "over-weighted." Leaders never let fear keep them from doing what must be done. It's your time now.

The pain of wasted potential is stronger than the discomfort of pushing through the feeling of fear. No one is saying it's a slam dunk to bounce your fears away, but it's possible...and essential. **Our greatest fears are the gateway to our greatest destinations.** NFL coach Jimmy Johnson said, "*Do you want to be safe and good, or do you want to take a chance and be great?*" Time to choose.

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**Champions do what others are unwilling to do.**

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Champions take action despite fear, stress, or anxiety. Champions see fear as a greenlight, not a stoplight. **Champions never base their actions and habits on what's easy or convenient.** It's not easy to engage in two-a-day workouts or venture into new territory to test the limits of your capabilities. But this is what it takes to become truly fearless and smash anxiety in the face.

## **The Fearless Leader Blueprint**

1. Acknowledge what's stopping you.
2. Refuse to let fear dictate your life.
3. Be determined to work through your fears.

4. Scale down the risk.
5. Replace negative mental images with positive desired outcomes.
6. Act as if.
7. Take a chance—to “hit the ball,” you must “swing the racquet.”
8. Identify your first step.
9. Trust in a larger plan—step out in faith.
10. Keep moving toward your goal.

## Coaching Exercise

My biggest fear is...

Bounceback Mantra

"I do what others are unwilling to do."

# DAY 15

# ACTION

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*Team Message:*

*Followers wait for direction. Leaders chart the course. Who do you want to be? The most successful people in the world are action oriented. **Nothing works unless you do.** You can read my tennis book and be entertained, or you can hire a teaching pro and get trained. The time to start doing is now. “Someday” is not a real day. Great ideas are useless unless fully actualized.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“Action is the foundational key to all success.”**  
—Pablo Picasso

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Only through consistent, dedicated action can you bring a vision to life. There is no other way.

**How hungry are you to achieve greatness?**

**Are you making things happen every day?**

Early in my collegiate coaching career, I decided to turn setbacks into serious opportunities. Inspired by motivational author Og Mandino’s insight, *“Failure will never overtake me if my determination is strong enough,”* I vowed to do my best and forget the rest. A loss is never allowed to infect my DNA or the fabric of our team.

Winners absorb defeat, but they don’t accept it.



## How to Fail Forward *Fast!*

1. Get started.
2. Gain progress and build.
3. Make mistakes and learn.
4. Keep adjusting to advance.

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**Action planning is a top predictor of engaged employees.  
(Gallup)**

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## Stay Quick on Your Feet

Action, not blind confidence, is the first step to success. Leaders build the plane on the way up. In 1993, my mentor Dr. Paul Roetert suggested I contact Boise State tennis director Greg Patton to inquire about assisting the Broncos. Three months later, I flew from Miami to god's country to work with the legendary motivator who had formerly turned UC-Irvine into a national powerhouse.

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**What you lack in confidence and experience can be made up for  
in proactivity and action.**

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I trusted Paul. I made the call. I applied to graduate school. I bought the plane ticket. **Action does not require talent.** I made things happen. There was no grand plan. I had no intention of coaching high-level collegiate tennis as a career. My vision was to become a

sport psychologist. Yet, the combination of a dynamic culture, great people, and competition proved to be a powerful cocktail.

## Coaching Exercise

**My next step toward my goal is...**

Bounceback Mantra

"I am a doer. I take action."

## DAY 16

# ENDURANCE

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*Team Message:*

*Winners never allow complacency or adversity to dampen their hunger to win. **Down 40 Lovers are 100% committed to creating success.** Sometimes the enemy resides outside in the wilderness. Often, your greatest adversary lives inside your own head. The strength of your competitive spirit determines the size of your success. Endurance transforms hardship into hustle and results.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“Endurance is not just the ability to bear a hard thing,  
but to turn it into glory.”  
—William Barclay**

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The moment you get comfortable, you’ve already lost.

My job as a coach is centered upon outworking our opponents and overcoming the challenges that can arise from unforeseen events. In the summer of 2022, our McKendree team had just recorded unprecedented success. Then, for a variety of reasons, some of our best players transferred. Though we were able to recruit new talented freshmen in their place, we lacked critical experience.

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**Are you willing to keep grinding even though the outcome  
is uncertain?**

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In the blink of a drop shot, our team's expectations were revised from a national championship contender to a highly respectable Top 50 program. Circumstances vary every day. As you venture to achieve bigger goals, you never really know what will be required of you in mind, body, and soul. "Without struggle, there is no progress," wrote abolitionist Frederick Douglas.

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**Outlast: to endure or last longer than.**

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THERE IS NOTHING MORE POWERFUL THAN THE COMPETITIVE SPIRIT. Your willingness to "play five sets" and your determination to "walk off the court" a champion is the difference between success and failure. Resolve today to outlast the competition with stamina in your heart and fire in your belly. Do you have the energy to *go the distance* and realize your goal?

## **How Leaders Outwork the Competition**

- Leaders have an "all day" mentality.
- Leaders put in the work long after everyone else goes home.
- Leaders embrace uncertainty.
- Leaders get things done no matter what.
- Leaders are willing to "play one more ball" than their opponents.
- Leaders stay in the game.

## Coaching Exercise

**I outlast everyone else because...**

Bounceback Mantra

"We run the extra mile."



# DAY 17

# MASTERY

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*Team Message:*

*A **student** is someone who investigates, examines, and learns thoroughly. A **master** owns the information learned and disseminates it in a way that makes a difference in people's lives. To achieve excellence, you must wear both hats. Just as the voice at the center of any great symphony must be strong enough to realize its lyrical ambition, it's your time to grab the mic of excellence.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“The will to win is important, but the will to prepare is vital.”**  
**—Joe Paterno**

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As a leader, you must relentlessly invest in amazing people, build positive morale, provide the resources to grow, and exercise tough love. The goal is to embody individual and team excellence. **You have an unceasing desire to be the best.** It's a hunger that never goes away. There is no other way to the top than hard, intelligent work, and going the distance without exception.

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**Mastery is the path to success.**

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In his New York Times best-selling book, *The Winner Within*, NBA hall-of-famer Pat Riley defines excellence as:



- Consistent high performance
- Never having learned enough
- The gradual result of always wanting to do better

*“Mastery is built on excellence,” says Riley. “Any true quest for excellence reaches for the best in body, mind, and spirit.”*

## Make the Hustle Plays

At The College of William & Mary, our tennis program had a philosophy of “running down every ball.” Even if your opponent’s shot was out on your side of the court, you still made *the hustle play*. By covering more ground, you build your own endurance, make the singles court appear smaller, and send a message to your opponent about your willingness to stay out there all day long.

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### Complacency is a disease.

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The Dark Villain of Excellence is Complacency. It’s no secret that success can lull people into a trance state. Autopilot only works when you are dominating the competition, not when you are so unconscious or self-satisfied that you stop doing the work. **To be Batman in a Business Suit requires sustained effort no matter the score.** Whether you’re in front or behind, the game never ends.

## 3 Steps to Excellence

**Step One: Define reality.**

*Where do I stand right now?*

*Where am I falling short of my potential?*

*Where should I focus my fullest concentration?*

**Step Two: Compete against yourself.**

*Am I doing better or worse than at the same point yesterday?*

**Step Three: Focus on moderate, sustainable improvement.**

*Did I get a little bit better today?*

## Coaching Exercise

**I can better model personal excellence by...**

Bounceback Mantra

"Be the student and the master."

## DAY 18

# WINNING HABITS

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*Team Message:*

*It's impossible to win without discipline. **Dominance is daily.** You have to trust your production—what you create every day. How we do anything is how we do everything. Do you disagree? You are only as strong as your weakest link. There's a direct correlation between habits, belief, and results. Do your habits produce greatness over time? That's how you make winning automatic.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“Trust is built with consistency.”**  
—Lincoln Chafee

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What is a winning habit?

**A winning habit is simply positive behavior that happens when it's supposed to.** Take former world No. 1 tennis player Chrissie Evert. Because of her ability to consistently thrive under pressure, sports-casters nicknamed Chrissie “The Ice Maiden.” Chrissie developed the habits of mind and physical poise required to win 18 grand slam singles titles and dominate women's tennis.

What is a losing habit?

**A losing habit is self-defeating behavior that limits your growth and derails your success.** Since 90% of our behavior is habitual, it's

critical we put effective systems in place to maximize potential. A losing habit can also be defined as a well-intentioned behavior that becomes laborious. “*Any habit can become unhealthy when the effort is forced,*” says photographer Chase Jarvis.

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### What habits no longer serve you?

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Habits determine outcomes. Behind every winner reside a series of positive, healthy, self-empowering habits. You can say the same about losers—poor habits cause poor results.

#### *Reasons why people fail at developing winning habits:*

- *Lack of awareness*
- *Lack of motivation*
- *Lack of practice*
- *Lack of consistency*
- *Lack of staying power*

British petroleum industrialist J. Paul Getty said, “*The individual who wants to reach the top in business must appreciate the might and force of habit.*” But you don’t have to be a corporate titan to build championship habits. All you need is consistency and self-compassion. The “might of habit” will strengthen your returns by way of renewed energy and improved performance.

## Coach Vidal's Success Rituals

1. Wake up at 5am. *"Rise and grind."*
2. Work out 6-7am. *"Look great, feel great."*
3. Read daily. *"Grow: The speed of the leader is the speed of the team."*
4. Be a doer. *"Productivity is my real meditation."*
5. Be true to my values. *"Honest, caring, and playful."*
6. Be on a mission. *"Go big."*
7. Be relentless. *"Stay in the game."*

## Coaching Exercise

**I am improving my morning routine by...**

Bounceback Mantra

"Dominance is daily."

# DAY 19

## GROWTH

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*Team Message:*

*One of the most powerful developmental strategies is the utilization of mentors—leaders and game-changers who help guide you to build a bigger and better life. To attract the best mentors requires that you develop a reputation for being a GO-GETTER—someone who makes things happen. You can never be too smart to ask for wise, unbiased counsel. Who you gonna call?*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“If you’re not growing, you’re dying.”**  
—Lou Holtz

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*Where are you going?*

*Who can help you achieve your goals? How can you leverage your assets and fortify your liabilities?*

*What can you learn today so that you are a better leader tomorrow?*

Larry Tisch was an American businessman, investor, billionaire... and avid tennis player. Back in my teaching pro days, I noticed Larry’s habit of reading the Financial Times every Saturday morning before his doubles game. Larry possessed a high LQ (Learning Quotient). Larry was creating *edge*. Your success in life is determined by the quality of and quantity of your curiosity.



**Learn a little, earn small. Learn a lot, EARN BIG.**

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That's the power of lifelong learning.

## **The Curiosity Habit**

Champions (and billionaires) practice the following mindsets and disciplines to create growth:

- Never assuming you know it all
- Seeking out trusted advisors
- Hunting for relevant content
- Asking for what you want
- Building on your strengths
- Fortifying or “hiding” your liabilities
- Developing mutually beneficial relationships
- Discussing new ideas and perspectives

## **Become the Avatar**

An avatar is the embodiment or personification of a principle, attitude, or view of life. **Learning is pointless if it doesn't lead to doing.** Leaders put knowledge to work, and they do it daily, relentlessly,

joyfully, without question. As the Avatar, you embody unmistakable personal integrity, influence, and success. Never hesitate to share what you know and own. We can all learn.

## **10 Ways to Grow in Your Life and Work**

1. Don't be a know-it-all.
2. Be open to doing things differently,
3. Focus on making slight, yet significant improvements.
4. Have a clear vision and track your progress.
5. Hire a coach, mentor, or trusted advisor.
6. Read biographies of successful people.
7. Take courses or watch documentaries.
8. Reinvent yourself annually.
9. Observe the best in action.
10. Exemplify mastery and ingenuity—write your own playbook.

## Coaching Exercise

I want to learn how to...

Bounceback Mantra

"I grow every day.

## DAY 20

# HONESTY

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*Team Message:*

*To be fair is to be free from bias or injustice. For me, I have one agenda: WINNING. Fortunately, you can excel and be a mensch simultaneously. **The number one characteristic people are looking for in a leader is honesty.** My players want me to tell them the truth. They don't want to be told they're going to play, and then three days later be taken out of the lineup. Honesty wins matches.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“When my team beats your team,  
I want it to be fair and square.”  
—Don Shula**

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Integrity is an intangible that can't be measured by a win-loss record or a profit and loss statement. Though I'm confident the universe rewards honesty. In tennis, when you play by the rules, fight for every point, and call the lines ethically, the “net chords” magically appear to bounce your way.

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**The universe loves honesty.**

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Today more than ever, people need and want honest leaders. In a world where everyone is “shouting from the mountaintop,” people

want to hear, feel, and be moved by the sounds of authenticity. The *Down 40 Love* mindset is nothing if not grounded in honesty. You are candid with yourself and others about who you are, what you are doing, and where you want to go.

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**Honesty is being straight with people, starting with yourself.**

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**“There’s no pillow as soft as a clean conscience.”**  
**(John Wooden)**

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I do my best every day to ensure that what you see in René Vidal is what you get. My image of who I am as a person is my greatest currency. **My character is literally money in the bank.** Doing something unethical or dishonest would erode my self-esteem and peace of mind. To avoid the “bad bounces” of life, I refuse to settle for anything less than honesty from myself and others.

## **Brutal Honesty Pays Dividends**

- \$ You sleep well at night.
- \$ People feel your calm confidence.
- \$ You lead with integrity.
- \$ People trust you.
- \$ You build credibility.

- \$ People believe you can solve their problem.
- \$ You attract the best talent, opportunities, and resources.
- \$ People want to work with you.
- \$ You don't have to remember what you said.
- \$ People are honest with you.

## Coaching Exercise

**The most ethical person I know is...**

Bounceback Mantra

"Honesty wins."

# DAY 21

## PERSISTENCE

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*Team Message:*

*Winners keep the ball in play. Losers eventually miss. Why the unforced errors? **Fatigue:** lack the stamina to make a real effort. **Distraction:** lack the focus to consistently execute. **Impatience:** lack the discipline to make smart decisions. **WINNERS STAY ALIVE TO SEE ANOTHER DAY.** It takes radical courage and ridiculous hustle to stay in the game long enough to win the game.*

*Coach Vidal*

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**“It pays to keep punching.”**  
—Tilman Fertitta

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The famous basketball icon John Wooden worked patiently for nearly two decades before being offered a head coaching position. Once Coach Wooden took the helm at UCLA, he led the men’s basketball program to ten national championships in twelve years. According to the Wizard of Westwood, *“Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.”*

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**Persistence is staying in the game.**

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Persistence separates the competitor with growth potential from the one that teeters out. Like Coach Wooden, winners “keep shooting”



long after the crowd has gone home. **Persistence is the ability to keep competing, no matter how challenging the conditions or what shots your opponents might be throwing at you.**

*Is your level of hunger stronger than the amount of difficulty?*

### **How Leaders Keep Punching in Tough Times**

- Don't throw a pity party
- Pull themselves up by their bootstraps
- Embody strength and purpose
- Keep others upbeat, vested, and focused
- Refuse to wave the white flag
- Use adversity to inspire by example

**Persistence is staying in the game, and it is my ultimate calling card.** I believe persistence is deeply embedded in my DNA. The world has done its best to train my persistence out of me—to make me a quitter. *It will never happen.*

Here's the ancient teaching with forever relevance: **We are born for adversity.** Nothing can stop you unless you let it. The essence of Down 40 Love is persistence. Never give up, no matter what.

## Your Persistence Playbook

### 1. Ignore the naysayers.

A naysayer is anyone who encourages you to quit. Naysayers are simply spewing their own limited beliefs. Everything they say has nothing to do with you. It's all BS. Don't listen.

### 2. Play to your strengths.

What you do well will always take you further than what you don't do well. Efficiency is a lifestyle. Effectiveness wins matches. Hide your liabilities and shine light on your assets.

### 3. Focus on your wins.

Champions have selective amnesia. They forget the bad and remember the good. Mining your wins boosts confidence in the moment and provides clues as to how you can solve today's puzzle.

## Coaching Exercise

**My greatest strength under pressure is...**

Bounceback Mantra

"I stay in the game."

**2<sup>ND</sup> SET:  
DOWN 40 LOVE  
PODCAST  
CONVERSATIONS**





## **The Soulful Art of Persuasion with CEO and Marketing Expert Jason Harris**





*Jason Harris is president and CEO of Mekanism Inc., a San Francisco-based creative agency whose corporate clients include Alaska Airlines, Charles Schwab, Jose Cuervo, Peleton, and the NBA. He is also the Wall Street best-selling author of “The Soulful Art of Persuasion: 11 Habits That Will Make Anyone a Master Influencer.” To learn more, visit [www.mekanism.com](http://www.mekanism.com). Jason shared the following lessons and more on René Vidal’s Down 40 Love Podcast.*

## **#1: Treat People the Same**

My parents did an awesome job at modeling character. One of the foundational beliefs I’ve carried on with my kids is that everyone on the planet is equal. Everyone is on the same earth. You treat the janitor and the CEO the same. My parents always treated people with the exact same respect no matter who they were. It’s one key building block for the type of people I want in my life.

## **#2: Keep a Journal**

Since college, I always wanted to be an entrepreneur and go into advertising. I worked at a design shop along with well-known agencies. I always kept a journal in my twenties and I’d write down things I learned from managers or people that I worked with and leaders that ran the agency—what the culture was like, things I hated, things I loved. I knew at some point I would start my own business.

## **#3: Define and Market Your Brand**

As a kid, I was obsessed with the rock band Kiss. I joined the Kiss Army and their characters and mythology. I was into good versus evil



and superheroes. Kiss marketed their band in a unique way. They made all kinds of merchandise, created the world's first influencer network, and would write you letters. Subconsciously, at an early age, I was drawn into marketing and storytelling.

At Mekanism, we're known as a strategic and creative brand building agency. We're in the business of building great brands. We work with Peloton, Alaska Airlines, Charles Schwab, Jose Cuervo. We help clients figure out what their brand purpose is, what their brand is going to stand for, create their brand DNA strategy, and produce ads on social media or television or streaming.

#### **#4: Build a Strong Culture**

We launched Mekanism with values that haven't changed. In their onboarding packet, each team member receives a Book of Values. We talk about our values at company meetings and that really creates the culture. As a leader, it's important to write your values down, state those values over and over again, and grade people against the values. Mekanism really started with a value system.

#### **#5: Have a Life Code**

My book, *The Soulful Art of Persuasion*, is based on my personal values. I have the symbols tattooed on my arm that are in the book. The four principles: Original, Generous, Empathetic, Soulful, guide my business and personal life. I wanted to share these values with other people not because they need to follow them exactly, but I think everyone needs a life code.

## #6: Live Your Values

At Mekanism, our core values are:

- **Optimistic**

We always try to find a path forward. Even in hard times, we hire optimistic people.

- **Fearless**

We want people to come up with big, bold ideas, not timid ideas.

- **Realistic**

You can't just present big ideas cause they're fun or you want to win an award, or you think it's a neat idea. Ideas have to be connected because we're in the business of building brands and driving companies forward.

- **Weird**

Being weird or original is bringing your full self to the office versus a work or business persona. We want everyone to bring their idiosyncrasies, awareness, and presence to work.

- **Collaborative**

Working closely with the people within the company, being a collaborative individual, and collaborating with clients. We think collaboration breeds the best work.

- **Inclusive.**

Making everyone feel comfortable and safe. We want the work we put out in the world and for our brands to feel inclusive.

- **Independent Spirit**

We want everyone to have an entrepreneurial mind and treat Mechanism and our client's business as if they're starting the business

themselves. For example, if we're working with Weber Grills, we want our team to think about that brand as an owner. The decisions we make should be through that lens.



## **How to Create a Magical Life with American Film Producer Hawk Koch**





*Hawk Koch is an American film producer, the former president of both the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Producers Guild of America, and a former road manager for the musical groups The Supremes and The Dave Clark Five, and the author of “Magic Time: My Life in Hollywood.” To learn more, visit [www.magictime.pictures](http://www.magictime.pictures). Hawk shared the following lessons and more on René Vidal’s Down 40 Love Podcast.*

## **The Power of Identity**

My father’s name was Howard Koch. No matter where I went from the time I was a little kid, when I was introduced as Howard Koch, Jr., people didn’t talk to me, they talked about my father. *“You must be so proud. Your dad is a wonderful man. Please say hello for me.”*

This didn’t continue when I was like four. This continued when I was like four, fourteen, twenty-four, thirty-four, and forty-four. It didn’t happen monthly. It didn’t happen weekly. It happened daily. I’m not exaggerating. Even today (summer 2022), my father has been gone twenty-one years, and people still talk about him.

The difference for me finally was at forty-nine years old, I was looking to do something spiritual for my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. A good Catholic friend of mine said, *“I know you never had your own Bar Mitzvah and I’ve been to your children’s Bar and Bat Mitzvahs.”* Can you even get a Bar Mitzvah at age 50? I liked the idea.

I met with an amazing Rabbi. At the end of our conversation, he asks: *“Who are you?”* I said, *“I’m a movie producer.”* The Rabbi says, *“No, no, no. Who are you?”* I replied, *“I’m a father and a son.”* Then he looks at me, not angry, but delving deep and asks again, *“Who are you?”* I don’t know where it came from, but I said: *“I’m a Jewish man.”*

The Rabbi says, *“That’s a start. What’s your Hebrew name?”* I said, *“My parents were nonreligious. My name is Howard Koch, Jr., I was never given a Hebrew name.”* Then he says, *“For your Bar Mitzvah (which you can receive at any age), you’ll be given your own name.”* When he said that, I broke down.

I realized that after forty-nine years I wanted my own name. Then the Rabbi said the words that changed my life: *“You could have your own name.”* Going further, he asks, *“Did you ever have a nickname?”* My initials are HWK and a few friends called me Hawk, but it never really stuck.

The Rabbi says: *“Hawks are Birds of Praise. Hawks can see from horizon to horizon, and they can also see a squirrel a half a mile away. Wouldn’t it be great if you could see the panoramic of your life and the details always at the same time?”*

I went away and really thought about it. At 50 years-old, with three kids and a life of friendships and relationships, I decided to change my name from Howard Koch Jr. to Hawk Koch. To have my own name, people began to look at me differently. All of a sudden, they were talking to me as opposed to talking about my father.

## How to Lead

Leaders have knowledge of what they’re trying to lead. You must be decisive. A leader says, *“This is the way we’re going.”* Leadership begins with preparation—knowledge of your subject. At the British Open, Rory McElroy was on-site three hours before his tee time—in the gym, working out, getting ready.

As a leader, if you have prepped, if you know exactly what you want to do, why you want to do it along with consideration for others

and integrity, then you must have the courage to sway others. A lot of people live in fear. When you demonstrate courage, people will have trust in you.

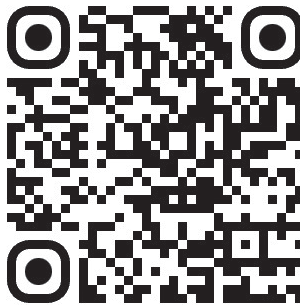
Listening is a key leadership quality. As a leader, you must listen and give everybody a chance to be heard and say what they feel. A great leader is malleable enough to get things done.







## **The Power of Full Engagement with Performance Psychologist Dr. Jim Loehr**





*Dr. Jim Loehr is a world-renowned performance psychologist, retired chairman and co-founder of the human Performance Institute (acquired by Johnson & Johnson), and the co-author of New York Times bestseller “The Power of Full Engagement.” To learn more, visit [www.jim-loehr.com](http://www.jim-loehr.com). Dr. Loehr shared the following lessons and more on René Vidal’s Down 40 Love Podcast.*

## **#1: Lead with Character**

There are two types of character.

- 1. Performance Character:** acquired competencies that support high individual and team achievement. Skills like focus, discipline, positivity, grit, resilience, decisiveness, ambition, and competitiveness. These assets help you drive extraordinary achievement in whatever it is you’re chasing.
- 2. Moral Character:** acquired competencies that support the ethical treatment of others. Values and skills like integrity, honesty, kindness, compassion, gratefulness, generosity, love, empathy, and patience with others. These assets help you become a more virtuous person.

To have a fully functioning human being with sustained success, you need a boatload of both performance character and moral character.

## **#2: Play for a Bigger Cause**

You were granted the gift of life. You won the lottery of life. What is this all about for you? The deeper you get into that space, the more you realize that your life is not really about you. True success

is about giving your life to a cause much bigger than yourself. The highest priority is how you treat people in your quest to contribute.

If you're obsessed with getting to the top and being number one, but don't pay attention to the rules of the road—your treatment of other people—we've learned that you won't stay at the top very long. The reason you won't stay at the top is people don't want you to be there. People are always keeping score.

### **#3: Create a Caring Culture**

Companies that connect to others in terms of endearment outperform the competition because their employees are fully engaged. As a team member, I have to feel valued as a person. I have to feel like I'm in a culture that really understands the sacrifices that we make and has concern for my wellbeing as a human being; physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

The best coaches (Billy Donovan, Pete Carroll) are Sherpas helping people get to the top and making sure they are all tended. They care about their players. Players can sense the connection, causing them to dig deeper, to look inside and come up with the stuff that actually makes a difference in terms of getting to the top of the mountain.

### **#4: Manage Your Energy**

Time has no power. It's the energy you invest that matters most. Whatever time you have aligned with the mission, energy is the substrate that makes everything happen. Time is simply an opportunity. Energy has quality, quantity, focus, and intensity. All energy in the universe possesses these dimensions. You manage yourself around time, but you don't manage time.

We are reservoirs of potential energy. The more energy we have, the bigger life we can create. People don't want your time—they want your energy. Everyone wants our energy. Because energy is life, whatever you give your energy to, you give life to. It is the ultimate recognition. If you want to have a big life, you're going to have to be a big spender.

## **#5: Go Against the Grain**

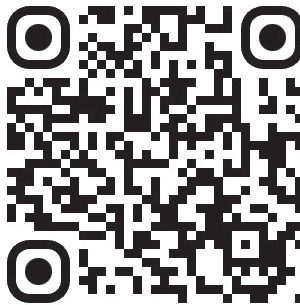
Professionally, I went about the world of sports and academics in a very different way. Follow your own path and be curious. To be successful, you have to be kind of courageous to go against the grain, not be antagonistic, but to look at things from different perspectives. Most inventions come from turning things upside down, inside out, and not accepting.

It's important for us to walk our talk. The more you can be what you teach, the more of a power you are in making people believe this works. Don't wait to be happy or joyful. Be joyful every day for another opportunity to be a curious learner. You never stop learning. For me, the most exciting part of my life is that I'm always trying to push the envelope and learn something new.





## **How to Be a Titan in Your Industry with Real Estate Mogul Michael Staenberg**







*Michael Staenberg is president of The Staenberg Group, a real estate and development firm acquiring, designing, leasing, as well as managing entertainment and retail centers as catalysts for positive change in cities throughout the United States. To learn more, visit [www.tsgproperties.com](http://www.tsgproperties.com). Michael shared the following lessons and more on René Vidal's Down 40 Love Podcast.*

## **#1: Build Structure and Values**

I always thought of myself as kind of shy and awkward growing up, but I was an inquisitive kid. I used to drive people crazy. My grandfather would say, “*You’re asking too many questions!*”

I had a great childhood. My dad was a big disciplinarian. He taught us that you need to have structure and you need to do something. Everybody had chores and I hated them.

We went to services all the time—synagogue on Friday nights and Saturday morning services. I was taught to be very respectful. You would always call someone Sir, Ma’am, and by their last name.

## **#2: Practice to Get Good**

I started playing tennis when I was 13 and I was horrendous. It was embarrassing so what I did was practice relentlessly. We had a wall in our backyard, and I would hit tennis balls for hours. I was determined not to be that dorky fat little kid who could not hit a tennis ball.

In high school, I became the doubles champion. At the Omaha state championships, I placed third in singles. I thought I was really pretty good but I wasn’t that good.

I played a little tennis at Arizona State. I could have been better if I would've taken it more seriously, but when you have no money, you need to work and get through college. It wasn't like social hour.

Whatever you do, if you want to get good, you must practice.

### **#3: Don't Worry About the Money**

I have been blessed to have people take an interest in me in a very positive way. Early on, my dad was a tremendous role model. Smart, smart, smart—everybody loved this guy.

There was nobody that didn't love and respect my father. But he was strict; he taught us discipline. My dad always said, "*If you tell someone something, do it.*" Your word is your bond. He said that a thousand, if not a million times.

My dad emphasized that if you do a good job, you'll get paid. Don't worry about the money. The money will come.

### **#4: Be a Persistent Person**

Early in my real estate career, I am trying to find a site for McDonald's in Excel Springs, Missouri. There's a Walmart that has this huge parking lot. I find out that Walmart owns the building and the land.

I decide I'm going to go see Sam Walton. I call headquarters and they said, "*Mr. Walton's not taking appointments for a while.*" I drive down there. It just so happens that he will be there all day. I sit by the bathroom because everybody's got to go eventually.

When I see him, I introduced myself and said, “*Mr. Walton, I tried to set up a meeting with you. I would like five minutes of your time.*” He looks at me and says, I’ll be right out and says, “*Okay. You get five minutes. You’re a persistent person.*”

Ultimately, I signed the McDonalds deal and did approximately 200 Walmart transactions. Later on, Sam Walton sent me a letter saying, “*You are going to be one of the most successful businessmen because you don’t quit.*”

## **#5: Empower People to Move Forward**

I define leadership as empowering people to move forward in the same direction as you. Leaders need to tell people what success looks like. Most people will tell you that we’re successful because we make money. I don’t believe that.

Leadership involves social factors like being good to your community, working together as a team, and being flexible and candid—telling people how I feel. I always tell people that a man that can’t change his mind has no mind.

What I’m most proud is the fact that I have people that have been with me 25 to 35 years and are still my good friends. Leadership is learning from other people and imparting that learning to someone else.



**3<sup>RD</sup> SET:  
CHECKLISTS  
TO MAXIMIZE  
PERFORMANCE**



## How to Overcome Self-Doubt

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**“Nothing can be done without confidence.”**

**—Helen Keller**

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- Stop comparing yourself to others.
- Use self-doubt as a map for your future.
- Identify and eliminate emotional triggers.
- Set a goal.
- Create a plan.
- Take action.
- Don't be overly self-critical.
- Acknowledge your power to choose. *You always have a choice.*
- Embrace your imperfections.
- Celebrate your victories, big or small.

*My next step is...*



## How to Create Your Own Luck

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**“Luck is the residue of design.”**

**—Branch Rickey**

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- Start. *“Action always beats inaction.”*
- Combine an intense work ethic with relentless dedication.
- Aim higher—visualize something bigger and better.
- Get out of your comfort zone.
- Seize opportunities.
- Trust that you’ll figure out “the how.”
- Showcase your strengths.
- Build a support system that allows for expansion.
- Attach your passion and skill to a marketplace need.
- Expose yourself to new ideas.
- Take educated risks.
- Keep moving toward your target.
- Expect to win.

*My next step is...*

## How to Build a Championship Team

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**“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.”  
—Michael Jordan**

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- Find people who can work together to achieve great things.
- Surround yourself with exceptional talent.
- Lead with passion and enthusiasm.
- Optimize communication—up, down, and sideways.
- Train and develop your team members.
- Have good market intelligence.
- Develop fallback plans for the worst possible outcomes.
- Play to people’s strengths.
- Weed out incompetents.
- Commit to dominate—always talk in terms of winning.

*My next step is...*

## How to Overcome Obstacles

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**“Sweet are the uses of adversity.”  
—William Shakespeare**

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- See adversity as opportunity.
- Never use the word *failure*.
- Get the facts.
- Stay calm—maintain your mental clarity.
- Take 100% responsibility for turning things around.
- Be solution oriented.
- Dare to go forward.
- Exude confidence in your abilities. “*We’ve been here before.*”
- Double your failure rate. (Thomas J. Watson)
- Gain your lessons quicker.
- Keep things simple.
- Cut your losses—walk away from unsavable situations.
- Never compromise your integrity.
- Get up every time you fall.
- Find serenity amidst uncertainty.
- Persist when everyone else gives up.

*My next step is...*

## How to Coach Greatness

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**“It is during our darkest moments that we must focus  
to see the light.”  
—Aristotle Onassis**

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- Make your standards clear.
- Focus on performance: how people can be their best.
- Insist on practice perfection: *“There are no minor mistakes.”*
- Notice and correct errors on the spot.
- Don’t let little things go.
- Throw away the clock—do the work until you get it right.
- Give people The Gift of Predictability. *#Feedback*
- Behave the same way in similar circumstances.
- Praise good performance.
- Redirect or reprimand subpar performance.
- Refuse to let your mood determine how you respond to a person.
- Never do anything on “game day” that you haven’t perfected in practice.

*My next step is...*

## How to Smash Your Goals

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**“Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.”**  
**—Jim Rohn**

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- Commit to be the best at what you do.
- Don't overthink the goal-setting process.
- Define a clear target.
- Develop a plan around your vision of perfection.
- Focus on what needs to be done to achieve your goals.
- Pay attention to detail.
- Be a master at Follow-Up.
- Debrief “game film” to accelerate growth.
- Observe and monitor, day-in and day-out.
- Add and subtract things from the plan.
- Keep doing what's working.
- Don't “miss practice.”
- Be a doer, not a talker.

*My next step is...*

## How to Be Efficient

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“If everything is a priority, nothing is a priority.”  
—Alan Weiss

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- Start your day the night before.
- Wake up early and exercise.
- Know exactly what your day entails.
- Work in time blocks.
- Deal with complications promptly.
- Say no to minor things.
- Don't wait for things to happen.
- Create your own opportunities.
- Put in the work and keep grinding.
- Train your team to succeed.
- Delegate wisely. (See *How to Delegate*)
- Cut your losses quickly.
- Go to bed happily exhausted.

*My next step is...*

## How to Spark Creativity

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**“Art is never finished, only abandoned.”  
—Leonardi da Vinci**

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- Write things down.
- Mine your natural curiosity—ask, listen, integrate.
- Practice extreme patience.
- Engage in many disciplines and “connect the dots.”
- Take time off—travel, explore, have fun, and rest.
- Spend considerable time in nature.
- Grow wise by reflection.

*My next step is...*

## How to Develop a Positive Mindset

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**“Success is getting what you want.  
Happiness is wanting what you get.”**  
—Dale Carnegie

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- Love what you do.
- Make every day your best.
- Have hobbies—do fun things.
- Appreciate how lucky you are.
- Live in the moment. *“What’s done is done.”*
- Focus on what you can control.
- Cut off toxic people.
- Build your Inner Game—emotional and spiritual muscles.
- Look at things from various angles.
- Bring more love to the world—be optimistic.
- Let benevolence be its own reward.
- Don’t punish someone for being human.
- Visualize everything you want in life.
- Work intensely toward your goals.
- Have a Beginner’s Mind. *“How can I improve?”*
- Surround yourself with good people.
- Help someone.
- Keep growing professionally and personally.
- Choose abundance over greed.

*My next step is...*



## How to Delegate

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**“If you can’t delegate, it’s not them, it’s you.”  
—Eli Broad**

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- Understand your strengths and limitations.
- Identify your vital tasks.
- Leverage assets and fortify liabilities.
- Focus on your Most Valuable Priorities (MVPs).
- Delegate everything else outside your core responsibilities.
- Make sure your team members share your priorities.
- Define your expectations clearly.
- Pick the right person to execute.
- Express confidence and give latitude to grow.
- Monitor and guide by providing the right feedback.
- Allow for different approaches—what matters is goal achievement.
- Praise good performance and redirect “missing the mark.”
- Utilize technology to accelerate communication and expansion.

*My next step is...*

**4<sup>TH</sup> SET:  
THE CHAMPION'S  
DICTIONARY**

**Success (and Failure) Terms Every Leader  
Needs to Know**

**Abundance Mindset:** believing there is enough for everyone. (*See Scarcity Mindset*)

**Accelerated Learning:** techniques that allow you to learn faster and remember more of what you learn.

**Action Orientation:** doing one thing daily that moves you toward your goal.

**All In:** putting everything you've got into your goal. (*See Commitment*)

**Analysis Paralysis:** when over-thinking leads to under-doing; standing still.

**Anticipation:** seeing something in advance. (*See Foresight, Predict*)

**Apathetic:** you don't care enough. (*See Passive*)

**Attitude:** how you show up in the world; positive or negative; helpful or helpful.

**Audacity:** initiating action with no guarantees; playing BIG. (*See Courage*)

**Authenticity:** being true to yourself.

**Batching:** combining similar tasks and tackling them all at once.

**Beast Mode:** guarding your time and attention relentlessly. (*See Concentration, Focus, Law of Focus*)

**Benchmarks:** measures to evaluate your effectiveness and performance.

**Calling:** your mission in life; doing something that feels right.

**Chameleon:** being whoever you need to be in the moment; looking the part.

**Character:** who you are. (*See Values*)

**Clarity:** knowing what you want. (*See Niagara Syndrome, Vision*)

**Closer:** someone who consistently gets the sale (win). (*See Sales, Selling*)

**Coachability:** a person's openness to learning and doing things differently.

**Collaboration:** the ability to work well with others; 1 + 1 = one million.

**Commitment:** to devote oneself unreservedly. (*See All In*)

**Communication:** the ability to connect with others. (*See Follow-Up*)

**Compassion:** accepting and loving people for who they are.

**Competitiveness:** the insatiable hunger and determination to win.

**Complacency:** satisfaction with where you are.

**Concentration:** the ability to laser focus on achieving your goal. (*See Beast Mode, Focus, Law of Focus*)

**Confidence:** believing you can achieve anything you want.

**Consistency:** keeping to a regular schedule; doing something daily.  
(*See System*)

**Contrarian:** someone who does things nobody else is doing.

**Conviction:** a firmly held belief.

**Courage:** the ability to take risks; doing the thing you fear. (*See Audacity*)

**Creativity:** the capacity to make your ideas manifest in the world.

**Creativity Boosters:** habits that feed and nurture your creative capacity.

**Creativity Zappers:** habits that drain us or put our goals further out of reach.

**Credibility:** what people can hang their hat on; your reputation.  
(*See Personal Brand*)

**Curiosity:** the desire to learn more.

**Deconstruct:** to break down what works into its component elements.

**Deliberate Practice:** precise training designed to improve your skill.

**Differentiation:** how you set yourself apart from others.

**Discipline:** the ability to show up day after day and do the right things. (*See Attitude*)

**Dominance:** to be the best. (*See Winning*)

**Down 40 Love:** a metaphor for embracing adversity and staying in the game. (*See Resilience*)

**Dreamer:** someone who believes there are no limits.

**Educate:** to draw out; to develop from within.

**Efficiency:** getting things done quickly and skillfully; working smarter; a lifestyle. (*See Time*)

**Empathy:** showing that you care.

**Energy Vampires:** people who suck the life out of you. (*See Motivation Revenge, Naysayers*)

**Entrepreneur:** someone who solves problems at a profit.

**Excellence:** consistently achieving high standards.

**False Data:** inaccurate information accepted as truth.

**Focus:** the ability to zero in on what matters. (*See Beast Mode, Concentration*)

**Follow-Up:** keeping the flow of communication going. (*See Communication*)

**Foresight:** looking ahead and anticipating trends before your competitors. (*See Anticipation, Predict*)

**Friction:** anything that gets in the way of you and your goal.

**Goals:** targets you aim to hit or achieve. (*See Systems*)

**Go-Getter:** someone with a burning desire to excel; a mover and shaker.

**Habits:** automatic behaviors built through repetition and reward.

**Humility:** the ability to recognize the value of others without feeling threatened.

**Huna Philosophy:** the practice of blessing that which you want.

**Imposter Syndrome:** feeling like a newcomer, an outsider, a fake.

**Insanity:** doing the same things over and over again and expecting a different result.

**Integrity:** doing the right thing; telling the truth; your behavior matches your goals.

**Jackpot:** a reward that's much greater than anticipated.

**Labels:** ideas you have about yourself or that others have put on you.

**Law of Focus:** what you track will increase. (*See Beast Mode, Concentration, Focus*)

**Mental Preparation:** the ability to do what needs to be done when the moment calls.

**Midas Touch:** everything you touch turns to gold.

**Mindset:** the quality of your thoughts; empowering or disempowering.

**Mission:** what you do no matter what. (*See Purpose*)

**Mistakes:** your primary form of learning.

**Motivation Revenge:** a relentless drive to do your best and prove all your haters and doubters wrong. *(See Energy Vampires, Naysayers)*

**Naysayers:** people who say it can't be done. *(See Energy Vampires, Motivation Revenge)*

**Niagara Syndrome:** a metaphor for people jumping on the river of life without ever really deciding where they want to end up. *(See Clarity, Vision)*

**Niche:** a space that's unique to you.

**Obscurity:** not being known; an entrepreneur's biggest problem.

**Overlearning:** to make high performance automatic through constant, detailed practice.

**Ownership:** taking 100% responsibility for your results.

**Pain Threshold:** experiencing pain at such an intense level that you know you must change now.

**Paradigm:** the lens through which you see the world.

**Parkinson's Law:** expenses will rise in direct proportion to income. *(See Simplification)*

**Passion:** loving what you do.

**Passive:** approaching something as an option or a maybe.



**People Person:** someone who treats everyone with respect, no matter who they are or how much money they have. (*See People Pleasers*)

**People Pleasers:** individuals who go to extremes to gain approval; unhealthy attention-seeking. (*See People Person*)

**Persistence:** unwavering in your desire; never giving up.

**Personal Brand:** who you are and what you do; your reputation in the marketplace. (*See Credibility*)

**Philanthropic:** giving back to those less fortunate.

**Poise:** the ability to maintain composure under duress.

**Power:** the ability to act.

**Power Base:** people who already know you, trust you, and want to help you.

**Predict:** to state what happens next. (*See Anticipation, Foresight*)

**Prioritization:** saying yes to what matters; doing first things first.

**Problems:** the roadblocks to personal and professional progress.

**Psychological Baggage:** negative thoughts and emotions that weigh you down.

**Purpose:** why you do what you do. (*See Mission*)

**Reality Principle:** seeing the world as it really is, not as you wish it would be.

**Repetition:** the mother of skill; perfect practice makes perfect.

**Resilience:** the ability to turn setbacks into bouncebacks. (*See Down 40 Love*)

**Sales:** the business of persuasion, influence, and helping others. (*See Closer, Selling*)

**Scarcity Mindset:** an idea that there is never enough. (*See Abundance Mindset*)

**Segmentation:** determining the market who will benefit from your expertise.

**Self-awareness:** understanding your strengths and weaknesses.

**Self-talk:** how you communicate to yourself.

**Selling:** the process of helping others improve their lives. (*See Closer, Sales*)

**Shadow:** the counterfeit portion of ourselves that we stuff in the unconscious, so we don't have to deal with it.

**Signature Style:** the “special sauce” only you can bring to a project or creation.

**Simplicity:** the ultimate art of sophistication; true humility.

**Simplification:** decreasing your cost of living so that you can increase your savings and the amount of funds available for investing. (*See Parkinson's Law*)

**Skill Gaps:** areas preventing you from maximizing your potential.

**Specialization:** channeling your talents into a vital area to create value.

**Strategic Thinker:** someone who sees the big picture, considers the consequences, and plays the long game.

**Stress Reducer:** a method to temporarily decrease fear and anxiety.

**System:** the scheduled actions you take on a repeatable basis to achieve your goals. (*See Consistency*)

**The 10X Rule:** taking massive action equal to at least ten times what you think it will take to attain that one thing.

**Time:** our most valuable resource. (*See Efficiency*)

**Time Audit:** an exercise to see where your minutes are going.

**Trade-off:** doing one thing at the expense of another.

**Trailblazer:** someone who pushes new ideas and solutions without worrying about other people's opinions.

**Transactional Leader:** a person who gets things done through others. (*See Transformational Leader*)

**Transformational Leader:** a visionary who motivates, inspires, and empowers people to perform at levels far beyond anything they've ever done before. (*See Transactional Leader*)

**Turning Point:** the moment you tell yourself that something must change.

**Unlearning:** erasing what you know that simply isn't true.

**Unreasonable:** never settling for less; disregarding logic.

**Values:** the principles you define as most important; your North Star. (*See Character*)

**Vision:** the ability to see into the future. (*See Clarity, Niagara Syndrome*)

**Warrior:** one who conquers oneself.

**Winning:** achieving your goals; maximizing your potential; helping others succeed. (*See Dominance*)



**5<sup>TH</sup> SET:  
STAY IN THE GAME**



**RENÉ VIDAL  
PERSISTENCE  
MANIFESTO**



- Leaders create leaders, not followers.
- Anything you want to do you can do.
- Success leaves clues.
- The harder you work, the luckier you get.
- Complacency is a disease.
- Winners think “both/and.” Losers think “either/or.”
- Someday is not a real day.
- Life doesn’t happen to you. You happen to life.
- The quality of your thinking determines the quality of your results.
- If you don’t strive for perfection, you can never reach excellence.
- The first sale is to yourself.
- Everything is impossible until someone makes it possible.
- People want to feel good.
- No school can make a great person.
- Dominance is daily.
- What you focus on expands.

- The speed of the leader is the speed of the team.
- If you live it, you know it. If you don't live it, you don't know it.
- Success is 80% mindset and 20% mechanics.
- Leverage is the key to wealth creation.
- Self-confidence is not an option.
- People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.
- Teamwork is the essence of life.
- Absence does not make the heart grow fonder; it makes people forget.
- You can take it easy once you make it.
- The universe rewards action.
- Where your attention goes, energy flows.
- People believe what they see, not what they hear.
- Rejection is a speed bump on the road to success.
- Excellence is the gradual result of always getting better.
- Repetition is the mother of skill.
- Logic makes people think; emotions make them act.

- Time is your greatest asset.
- What you track improves.
- The best communicators are straight shooters.
- Speed + Simplicity = Power.
- Champions don't compete; they dominate.
- Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.
- Integrity is just a ticket to the game.
- F.E.A.R is nothing but False Evidence Appearing Real.
- A leader's number one tool is communication.
- Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.
- Passion drives all real success.
- Character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.
- Focus, focus, focus.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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A man on a mission, René Vidal is a 7-time NCAA championship coach, an entrepreneur, a bestselling author, and one of the nation's premier leadership strategists.

In 2022, Vidal led the McKendree men's team to its first-ever Great Lakes Valley Conference (GLVC) Championship, a best-ever 21-3 record, and a program best Top 25 (No. 22) final ranking by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA). The Bearcats advanced to the NCAA Regionals Round of 32 for the first time as Vidal earned GLVC Coach of the Year honors.

Under Vidal's leadership, the McKendree team made three consecutive appearances (2021, 2022, 2023) in the GLVC Championships, while the women's team qualified for the conference championship for the first time in 10 years in 2023. Currently, Vidal serves as head of men's tennis at national powerhouse Northern Illinois University (NIU).

Coach Vidal is the author five books, including *Play Smart to Win: Better Tactics Lead to Better Results* (2013), *The Power of Focus* (2014), *Play Smart to Win in Business: Leadership Lessons from Center Court to Corner Office* (2015), *Execute to Win: How Leaders Get Results* (2018), and *Down 40 Love: Private Lessons on Turning Adversity into Competitive Advantage* (2024).

Vidal serves as founder and CEO at Down 40 Love, a leadership training company that provides business teams the coaching tools they need to achieve massive results. Visionary leaders across industries tap Vidal for corporate consulting and team performance coaching.

In 2022, Vidal launched the Down 40 Love Podcast, where he interviews bold global leaders who turn adversity into competitive advantage. Guests include American film producer Hawk Koch, Johnson & Johnson Human Performance Institute co-founder Dr. Jim Loehr, and real estate tycoon Michael Staenberg.

For speaking inquiries, email [rene@renevidal.com](mailto:rene@renevidal.com). To learn more, visit [www.down40love.com](http://www.down40love.com).

# STAY IN THE GAME!

"As a former high school singles and doubles tennis champion, I instantly got René's idea of *Down 40 Love* as a metaphor for embracing adversity and turning setbacks into bouncebacks. As an entrepreneur, I don't see obstacles, I see opportunity. René and I share the capacity to see things others don't see."

**MICHAEL STAENBERG, PRESIDENT AT THE STAENBERG GROUP**



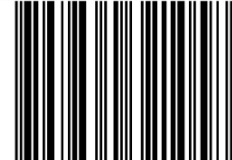
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