

No. 16 offers 16 principles for success

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Introduction:

Today, you will be reading an article about a book entitled *The Winning Spirit* by football legend Joe Montana. The following excerpt tells you a little about Montana:

Joe Montana was one of the coolest of NFL quarterbacks. He led the San Francisco 49ers to four Super Bowl titles in his 16-year career, earning the nicknames "Joe Cool" and "Comeback Kid" for nail-biting, come-from-behind victories. Montana, who wore No. 16 on his 49ers jersey, knows about performance excellence and pressure to win.

In *The Winning Spirit*, with business coach Tom Mitchell, he outlines 16 principles from his playbook that have worked for him on the field and in the business world (he's been a motivational speaker since his retirement a decade ago).

Before reading: Below are some unfinished quotes from *The Winning Spirit*. All of the statements deal with success or competition. Think of an appropriate ending for each quote, and write it in the space provided. Remember, there are no "right" answers. This activity is simply a way of getting you to think about strategies for success before reading about them.

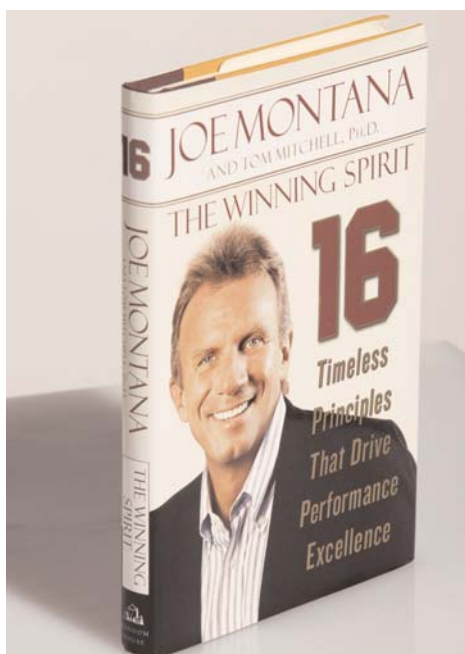
After reading: After completing the article, fill in the blanks on the right-hand side with Montana's actual words. Finally, compare your ideas to Montana's. Which one of the 10 statements below motivates you the most? Explain your answer to peers.

Your statements	Montana's statements
"Like it or not, we live in a world that _____ _____."	"Like it or not, we live in a world that _____ _____."
"You can't learn how to get better if you _____ _____."	"You can't learn how to get better if you _____ _____."
"It's nearly impossible to be involved in competition without _____ _____."	"It's nearly impossible to be involved in competition without _____ _____."
"To achieve peak performance, you must: _____ _____."	"To achieve peak performance, you must: _____ _____."
"Winners, I am convinced, imagine _____ _____."	"Winners, I am convinced, imagine _____ _____."

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The Winning Spirit: 16 Timeless Principles That Drive Performance Excellence

By Joe Montana and Tom Mitchell
Random House,
167 pages, \$23.95



By Kerry Hannon
Special for USA TODAY

Sports lessons that translate into business and life success continue to be mined for self-improvement books. Nonetheless, it's nice to hear it all again from football great Joe Montana, with some new stories to illustrate the oft-repeated advice.

"Competitive sports are one of the

best preparations for life, reflecting, as they do, the highly competitive nature of the world around us," writes Montana in *The Winning Spirit*. "Like it or not, we live in a world that keeps score."

It's a book that's likely to be most appreciated by people who love sports and can relate to its lessons.

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In *The Winning Spirit*, with business coach Tom Mitchell, he outlines 16 principles from his playbook that have worked for him on the field and in the business world (he's been a motivational speaker since his retirement a decade ago). Mitchell, once a performance coach for NBA star Chris Mullin, pulls from his background as a former basketball coach.

Montana's boyhood memories of practice with his dad in Monongahela, Pa., are touching and illuminating.

"My relationship with my dad was all about sports," he writes. To perfect his passing, his dad would have Joe throw the football through a tire swing as he swung it back and forth. But it wasn't just football. They'd play pick-up basketball games. Or he'd have Joe pitch a baseball to him for hours on end.

Wisdom that Montana gleaned from his 49ers head coach, Bill Walsh, also runs through the book. Montana's reverence for Walsh is palpable. "He pushed me and pushed us ... to seek perfection. If you miss perfection, you end up with greatness, and he could handle that, but nothing less," Montana writes.

In each chapter, there's a recommended exercise, such as: To learn from defeat, write down the biggest setback or lowest point you have experienced in your career, sports, school or life in general. Then ask yourself, what lessons you learned? What mistakes were made? Why did they happen? How could they have been prevented? What changes did you make?

In Montana's case, he had to file into the team's game film room come Monday and "watch it all over again — repeatedly and in slow motion." "You can't learn how to get better if

you don't understand what you did wrong," he coaches.

Among his rules: "Perform in the Moment." The theory is that living in the present allows us to relax under pressure. "Sports are excellent training for being in the moment," Montana writes. "Football, basketball, soccer, equestrian events — it's nearly impossible to be involved in competition without being fully present."

During a game, he would remind himself: "Right here. Right now."

To achieve peak performance, you must: "Know What You Want." The exercise is to make a list of every-

thing you wish in life — both work and personal wishes. Choose the thing that is most important to you now. Write down that desire on several 3-by-5 cards and put each card in a place where you'll see it each day. "It will give you extra motivation and help you stay focused."

Other practices include:

- ▶ When preparing for anything, try to eliminate the words "I have to" and replace them with "I want to."

- ▶ Monitor your stress levels and take a temporary time-out if need be. Move your body or give your mind a different focus, such as reading, listening to music or exercising.

- ▶ Choose a quality of a person in your life who best demonstrates leading by example. Make it a quality you don't possess. Focus on and practice it for 30 days without telling anyone. The goal is to get at least one person to comment on your success.

- ▶ Imagine yourself in the future, having accomplished your goal. See yourself living your dream, and sense everything in the picture — sights, scents, sounds, textures and emotions.

"Winners, I am convinced, imagine their dreams first," Montana writes. "They want it with all their heart and expect it to come true. There is, I believe, no other way to live."

Extension questions and activity for "16 principles for success"

DISCUSSION

According to football great Joe Montana, why are competitive sports a good preparation for life? What articles in today's paper support his belief that "we live in a world that keeps score"? Who were Montana's mentors? How did they help him? Do you know anyone who "leads by example"? What are the benefits and drawbacks of seeking perfection? What is the difference between saying "I have to" and "I want to"? Which of the principles mentioned in the article could you apply to your life?

ACTIVITY

In *The Winning Spirit*, Montana states: "Repetition is king in the world of preparation. Whether in sports, running the same drills over and over, or in business, practicing a sales pitch or refining a presentation, we gain through repetition a sense of mastery and self-confidence that can be taken into the real game."

Identify the goal that is most important to you. Next, write a brief motivational speech for yourself that describes how you will achieve that goal. When you are alone, say the speech aloud. Next, in a journal entry, describe how reading it made you feel (inspired, ridiculous, etc.). Then, read the speech five more times. Concentrate on saying it confidently. Again, note how you feel. Finally, practice your words of motivation another five times. Did repeating your game plan give you a "sense of mastery and self-confidence"? Do you think the exercise will help you remember your goal?