**4 powerful pieces of career advice from legendary coach John Wooden**

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John Wooden, the legendary UCLA men's basketball coach, is famous for his winning ways on the court. He led his team to 10 championships in 12 years, at one point winning seven in a row. This streak marked a period of sustained excellence that has yet to be matched in any level of college or professional sports.

Perhaps the only thing more famous than Wooden's record as a coach was the advice and maxims he gave to his players and assistants. ESPN collected some his most [well-known and poignant quotes](http://sports.espn.go.com/ncb/news/story?id=5249709), and in reading them, you'll notice just how easily they can be removed from the world of sports and put into practice in all areas of your life. Here are some of Wooden's most memorable quotes and some thoughts on how to make them a part of your own career philosophy.

**1. "Don't mistake activity with achievement."**

There is a big difference between being busy and being productive. If you look at the daily routines of people who complain about constantly being busy, you'll see that they most likely spend a lot of time putting out other people's fires, checking emails and spending far too much time in meetings.

The problem with these and other time-drainers is that they often give the feeling of having done something with actually completing any real work, which as Wooden said, is a mistake. Carve out time in your day that you allow yourself to be free from distraction and focus on the things that really matter. Doing the important things well is what sets the best apart from the rest.

**2. "Failure is not fatal, but failure to change might be."**

It's a well-known truth that we often learn more from our failures than in our successes. Throughout your career, it's highly likely that you'll fail multiple times, as most people do. It's inevitable, but you can't go your whole professional life being scared to fail. Someone who has never failed has likely never tried anything big.

As Wooden said, the only way it will be fatal to your career is if you never learn from your mistakes. Look closely at your failures and be honest as to why they happened. From there, you'll know how to avoid those shortcomings in the future.

John Wooden may have been a basketball coach, but through building his transcendent legacy through his coaching, he left behind a wealth of advice that people in all walks of life can apply to their pursuits.

**3. "If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?"**

In today's fast-paced workplace, employees are often called upon to do more and do it faster. When you have deadlines pressing down on you, it can be easy to sacrifice quality for speed.

*"Don't let professional success come at the cost of your happiness."*

Wooden correctly points out the flaw in the mindset of managers and companies who want to rush projects along: Very often, the final product will require a reworking due to mistakes that could have been avoided if the employees and teams could slow down. Everyone from management to staff should understand that taking the time to create high quality work will save time in the end since it won't have to be done again.

**4. "Don't let making a living prevent you from making a life."**

This may be the most important "Woodenism" of them all. It's important to work hard and find success in your career. Work is a central part of most of our lives, and we should make the most of it. But at the same time, you should always remember that it isn't, nor should it be, your whole life.

Don't forget to recharge. Spend quality time with your family and friends, pursue your hobbies or tackle some passion projects. Burnout is a very real thing and can severely impair your overall performance in all areas of your life. Don't let professional success come at the cost of your happiness.