

Play the Game!

...of Your Life

Author's Introduction

Setting the Stage for "Play the Game!"

The idea for this book came together in a couple different places: some college classrooms and driving down the road in a pickup truck named Bob T, talking to an 8-year-old named Landon.

The Classroom

I never even thought about becoming a teacher, yet somehow I teach at LSU Shreveport and I love it. Sometimes it's stunning what surprises life throws at us.

Over the last few years I have been completely lucky, blessed and thrilled to have had the opportunity to get to know a number of wonderful college students. I've really been blown away by what they've taught me.

I've also been surprised by how much I care about them. Many times, as I look around the classroom, I realize the feeling I have deep in my heart is the exact same feeling I have when I look at my own children... and some of my students are older than I am!

It is an awesome feeling, much more valuable than money. Now I know why teachers teach!

I don't think they understand, but I always tell them that I always learn more from them than they do from me. The

old saying is true, if you really want to learn something, teach it.

I've found another truth; if you really want to see potential greatness awaken, watch a college student slowly come to the realization that they're capable of changing the world.

From teaching, I've learned a lot about leadership, business, and Entrepreneurship, the subjects I teach, but what I've really learned the most about is people and life.

Talking about life with the people (my students) in my classes has made me realize how much I've learned (and the value of it) throughout my own life. I gained something priceless through all the various experiences I've lived through, the mistakes I've made (tons of them), the way I grew up, the people I've known, and the jobs I've had.

My experience and hindsight added to the experience and hindsight of the students I've gotten to know sums up to a whole lot of extraordinarily valuable wisdom.

In the course of these discussions, I realized that there was no really good resource (book) containing the important things we talked about. There was no manual or textbook... and there needed to be.

Therein came the classroom beginnings of the idea for this book.

Bob T. & Landon

One day while riding along in Bob T (my truck), my son Landon (8 years old at the time) asked a simple question. “Dad, will we be around in the future?”

“Well, I sure hope so Landon,” I answered. “The future is a hard concept to explain, but tomorrow is the future, so is next week and next year.” “Well... will we be around when cars fly?” Of course, it dawned on me that the question came from the Jetsons, but it really stuck in my mind: Will we be around in the future?

I began trying to explain the whole concept of “the future” to an 8-year old who really just wanted to know when cars would fly because it looked like it would be cool.

It dawned on me that yep, we will be around for the future, it’s right now too. Yesterday today was the future!

Whatever is happening to us right now began in the past. If we’re full, it’s because we ate in the recent past. If we’re tired, it’s because we’ve done something to cause it. If we’re president, it’s because of some things we did beginning a long time ago.

The realization was clear that our future is whatever we make it. Our future is a result of everything we’ve done. Then, if that is true, our future can also be pretty much whatever we want it to be.

The old saying is completely true, we’re not put here to “find” ourselves... as too many people think... we’re here to “CREATE” ourselves!

Therein came the pickup truck part of this book.

The Sources for “Play the Game!”

I’ve lived long enough and done enough to be able to look back and see that everything I am now... EVERYTHING... is a result of everything I’ve done in the past... both good and bad (too much of the bad I’m afraid!).

I’ve been taught lots of lessons, many of them very hard lessons. I’ve made so many mistakes that I so wish I could go back and change. I have so many regrets that I wish I could forget. And the thing that probably weighs on my mind the most is all the time... the years!... that I’ve wasted.

But, like it or not, it’s what makes me me today... for better or worse; good or bad. I hope it’s made me a better man today. I know it gave me a lot of material for this book.

Many of the ideas and concepts in this book came from the hundreds of students I’ve gotten to know over the last few years; students from 17 to 57 and older. A piece of advice from any one or two may not have a lot of validity, but when the advice comes from a whole bunch of them, there has to be something to it.

Many of us were taught a lot of the lessons in this book by our parents, but some of us, especially as teens, hear what everyone says except our parents. Hopefully, coming from a different source may make these lessons a little more hearable for some readers.

There are really few (if any) original thoughts in this book. Most of this came from my memory, which is comprised of everything I’ve ever learned, read, or heard. Instead of trying to cite where it all came from (which would be

impossible anyway), I decided instead to insert a blanket statement here: Anything that looks like it came from somewhere else, it probably did. In fact, every word, every letter, and every number I know came from somewhere or someone else.

Many of the lessons in this book are common sense, common courtesy, or common knowledge... I'm just not so sure everyone is being taught a lot of these anymore.

We may take it for granted that everyone knows simple things like how wrong and unethical cheating on a test is. However, it seems that many students these days may not be getting told that. Too many people don't see the disgraceful far-reaching reality of being the kind of person who cheats.

The old saying is true, something may be common sense or common knowledge, but that doesn't mean it's common practice.

Many of the concepts in this book came from my personal experiences and observations. I have made (or been an eye witness to) most of the mistakes and things to not do mentioned in this book.

I know what not to do, what does not work, and how to screw things up. Anyone who hasn't done it the wrong way does not have a clue how to tell others what not to do—much less what to do. I have and I can.

People who know me as a Redneck from Springhill Louisiana might ask what in the world Wayne Hogue is doing writing a book like this. Actually, a lot of them will

be surprised I even know this many words (I learned a few more since I left Springhill).

I wear the Redneck moniker proudly; it really does define me well and I like the definition. There's no pretense or arrogance in it and I contend that it's one of the things that qualifies me to write this book.

My Redneck attitude and ways are what gave me whatever it takes to do so much so wrong, set my sights so low, make so many mistakes, and screw up so much. It's made me a world class expert!

I now have the advantage of a little age, education, clarity, and 20/20 hindsight to help put these lessons on paper in order to make use of them.

Of course that Redneck background also strongly influences my writing and speaking. English teachers (and snooty people) may be aghast at my writing (they would probably cry if they heard me speak!).

My use of Redneck and country slang is completely intentional though. It gets attention, helps me stand apart from the crowd, and it adds humor. Mostly though, I enjoy it and I have fun with it.

It's actually amazing how simple it is to be remarkable. It's even more amazing that so few people try to be.

History of “Play the Game!”

I first used the phrase “Play the Game!” in trying to help my students be successful in college classes.

It seems so obvious to me (having sat in a lot of classrooms as a student) that every professor and every class has a game with a specific set of rules.

As a student, I figured out real quick that the faster I learned those rules and the better I played by them, the easier class was and the more successful I was in terms of grades and how much I learned.

Students should start learning the rules before the first day of class by listening to what others say about teachers and classes. Then, on the first day of class the teacher hands out some of the most important rules in the form of a syllabus.

If you pay close attention, almost every teacher will gradually lay out all their rules for you. Then, it’s your responsibility, and to your benefit, to play by them.

I tell my students up front that I value work ethic most, because that’s the key to a degree and it’s where many students are lacking.

So, to play my game successfully, first of all you have to work hard. Then, as we progress into the semester I gradually make all of my other rules obvious.

Every teacher is exactly the same. They all have a set of rules, whether they are aware of them or not.

The “Play the Game” concept comes in handy especially when students question things that don’t appear to have any real world value (calculus, statistics, reading, riting, etc.).

Some things in life are difficult (or impossible) to explain or define, especially things that are a small part of a much bigger picture. That makes it hard to justify why we have to do some of the things we have to do, like taking classes that appear to have no value in the real world.

“Playing the Game” gives us a great shorthand way to explain things or justify them by reminding ourselves that it’s all part of the game of getting a college degree. It’s one of the rules of college that everyone has to play by.

Over time it was a simple matter to migrate the “Play the Game” concept to the other things the students were dealing with in their lives. It wasn’t difficult to realize that the concept works in everything we do in life.

Everything can be thought of, or dealt with, like it’s a game. We can explain life itself like a game. How successful we are is a result of how well we play the game.

This book is an attempt to explain how to “Play the Game” of your life.

Purpose of “Play the Game!”

My goal for “Play the Game!” is to help others not make as many mistakes as I have or waste as much of their life getting nowhere as I did. I hope I can prevent others from doing some of the idiotic things I’ve done and I hope I can prevent others from having the regrets I have.

Maybe most importantly, I hope I can get everyone who reads this book to WANT TO. Want to is the most basic ingredient in everything ever accomplished. Drive, passion, desire and all the other words thrown around by motivational writers and speakers mean absolutely nothing without want to!

Since we are always creating our lives, I hope that the message offered in Play the Game! will convince some to want to create better lives and communities. I want people to actively participate in the creation of their own lives.

I want the same thing for everyone who reads this book that I want for each and every one of the students in my classes. I want you to go out into the real world and be successful so you can make the world a better place.

Anyone who takes the time to read this book has what it takes to do all of that. If you care enough to give the concepts in this book some thought, you have the kind of mind that can do whatever you want.

If there is a specific target audience for this book, it would have to be high school and college students, simply because they are the in the stage of their life that can have the biggest impact (and repercussions) on their life... both good and bad; positive and negative.

The paths students are choosing and choices they are making right now are extraordinarily critical to how their life is going to look in the future. Though I believe anyone can benefit from this book, students are the ones who can gain the most.

The unfair paradox of the information in this book is that the older the reader, the more you will see the value, but the less ability you'll have to take advantage of it.

Now... **Play the Game!**

*Wayne
Hogue*

To the point!

