

a leadership fable

The **7**
Commitments
of a Great Team



JON GORDON

Bestselling Author of *The Energy Bus*

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WILEY

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Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is Available:

ISBN 9781119757382 (cloth)

ISBN 9781119757399 (ePub)

ISBN 9781119757405 (ePDF)

Cover Design: Paul McCarthy

Cover Image: © Getty Images/Flavio Coelho

*I dedicate this book to my coach Richie Moran
and teammates.*

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Introduction

When people ask me how long it took to write this book I say “over fifty years” because I feel that I’ve been preparing to write it my entire life. I’ve been on a team since I was six years old and wore the number ½ on my football jersey. I have been on countless sports teams growing up in youth sports, in high school, and eventually in college. So many of my greatest memories are from my time being on a team. I love being part of a team, and I love helping teams become more united, positive, connected and committed. In fact, one of my greatest gifts and passions is to help leaders build stronger, more successful teams.

I know there are many talents and gifts I don’t possess, but when it comes to leadership and teams I see the patterns, challenges, issues, and solutions so clearly. Like a doctor, I’m able to see the symptoms and patterns of disease and prescribe the antidote. I’ve helped iconic companies who were merging together to become more connected in order for the merger to be successful. I’ve worked with countless corporate leadership teams, educational teams, healthcare teams, and college and pro sports teams. In fact, over the last 20 years I’ve probably

worked with more business, sports, education, and health-care teams combined than anyone on the planet.

This special book is a culmination of all the experiences, time, and insights I've gained working with teams. Much of this book was inspired by true stories, including my own. Coach Richie was inspired by my college coach, Richie Moran, who passed away a few years ago. He really did tell me, "Teammates are forever" before he passed away, and he really did change my life forever. In fact, after he told me "Teammates are forever," I couldn't get that idea out of my head and knew I would write a book about it one day.

So, while this is a fictional story, I believe it resonates deeply with readers because it is based on many actual events and stories that have inspired and touched me over the years. Like so many writers, I am inspired by the people I've met and impacted by the experiences I've had on my journey. This book is an expression of the best I've learned, experienced, taught, and felt.

I'm so thankful to all the leaders, teammates, and coaches I've had the opportunity to work with and learn from over the years. They have made my life so much more meaningful and rewarding and made this book possible. Without them there is no me, and there's no 7 Commitments of a great team. I'm forever grateful, and I hope this book impacts you and your team!

If you are impacted by this book, please email me at 7@jongordon.com and let me know.

Chapter 1

Teammates Are Forever

Tim sat beside Coach Richie's bed and held his hand. It was the same hand that he shook when he was offered a scholarship to play ball for him 30 years earlier. Coach Richie's grip was different then—strong, powerful, affirming. "Welcome to the team, kid," he said with a big smile so bright that Tim knew this was the place and the coach that felt right. Tim told his mom that he was going to turn down all the other offers from other schools. This was where he wanted to go. He wanted to play for Coach Richie. Besides marrying his wife, this was the best decision of his life.

Tim cried as his old coach fell back to sleep. His sick, frail body was failing. His weak grip let Tim know Coach Richie was losing his grip on life. Tim grabbed the moist towel in the bowl on the nightstand of Coach's bedroom and wiped his dry mouth. He scanned his thin, pale face and wondered what you say to the man who gave you so much and changed the course of your life.

Coach Richie opened his eyes and said in a hoarse voice, "Thank you, Tim. I needed that. I feel like it's two minutes left in the game and I'm in desperate need of a water break." He attempted to smile but his eyes lit up more than his mouth opened. "I'm not doing too well. I don't think I'm going to win this one," he said.

"It's okay, Coach. You're fighting and that's what matters most. You're a fighter and a winner. You've always been a winner. That's what you always told me, and I get to tell you that now. Coach, you can't lose, because you've already won," Tim told him.

Coach nodded as best as he could. "I'm just tired. But I'm doing my best."

"I know you are," said Tim. "You always did your best, and you taught me how to do my best. I love you, Coach. You changed my life. I want you to know that. I love you so much."

Coach Richie's eyes lit up for a moment. "Remember, kid, teammates are forever. Teammates are forever," he said before closing his eyes again.

"So are coaches who change your life," said Tim as Coach fell back to sleep.

Tim leaned forward in his chair and sat in silence with his head between his knees for a while before he got up, walked out of the bedroom to the living room, and hugged Coach's wife, Patty.

"How long does he have left?" he asked.

"A month, tops," she answered, with tears in her eyes.

"I'll keep checking on him, and on you," said Tim.

"We appreciate it," replied Patty. "He always loved you so much, and it means the world to him and to me that you came to visit."

"It's the least I could do. He changed my life, and I'm forever in his debt. Please let me know if you need anything. I'm going to miss him so much."

"I know, me too," said Patty as she walked Tim to the door and gave him another hug goodbye.

Disconnected, Discouraged, Disappointing Results

