

Honor on the One-Yard Line: Why How Wins

Saints vs. Falcons. A rivalry that doesn't need stakes to be heated. On this particular day, though, the stakes were low. Playoff hopes? Practically non-existent. Yet, with seconds left on the clock, the Saints were dominating, up by 24 points.

The ball rested on the one-yard line. The customary move—the *honorable* move—was clear: line up in the “victory formation,” take a knee, and let the clock run out. No rubbing it in. Just ending the game with dignity.

But Jameis Winston had a different idea.

His teammate, a running back who hadn't scored all season, was just one yard away from breaking that streak. Winston saw an opportunity to make it happen. In the huddle, he proposed the change. No objections. The silence was taken as agreement.

The ball was snapped. Instead of kneeling, Winston handed it off, and the running back scored. A win for his teammate? Sure. But for the team, the play left a sour aftertaste.

The Falcons were blindsided, their coaches fuming. The Saints' own sideline was outraged by the brazen insubordination. The touchdown didn't matter in the grand scheme of the game—or even the season—but *how* it happened did.

And that's the lesson.

How > What: A Leadership Philosophy

In life and leadership, it's easy to get caught up in outcomes—the *what*. Did we meet the goal? Deliver the result? Check the box?

But results alone don't define success. It's the *how*—the process, the character, the integrity behind the result—that reveals true leadership.

Winston's decision wasn't about the score. It wasn't even about winning. It was about *how* he led in a moment when honor should've trumped ambition. His *what*—helping a teammate score—was commendable. But the *how*—going rogue, disregarding team values, and blindsiding the opponent—was a failure of leadership.

Leadership Lessons from the Play That Didn't Matter

1. The Process Is the Point

How you achieve your goals will always matter more than the goals themselves. Shortcuts or selfish decisions erode trust, no matter how noble your intentions.

2. Honor Matters, Even When the Stakes Don't

True leadership isn't situational. It's consistent. Whether it's a high-stakes moment or a meaningless one-yard line, honor should guide your choices.

3. Silence Isn't Always Agreement

In leadership, letting something slide is the same as endorsing it. Speak up in the huddle. Hold yourself and others accountable to shared values.

Reflection Question

Think about a time when the stakes were low, but your actions still impacted others. Did your *how* align with your values?

Call to Action

Whether the moment seems critical or insignificant, lead with honor. Focus on the *how*—your integrity, your respect for others, your process. Because at the end of the day, people won't just remember the results. They'll remember *how* you got there.

Every moment is a leadership moment. What will yours say about you?

Ready to lead with integrity and impact?

If this article resonated with you and you're ready to take your leadership to the next level, I'd love to connect. Visit prestonpoore.com to explore workshops, coaching opportunities, and resources designed to help you lead with purpose, poise, and presence.

Let's transform your *how* together.

– Preston