Think Like a Champion: Building Success One Victory at a Time by Adam Schefter

One Of The Greatest Books For Teens

By becoming only the fifth coach in history to lead his team to consecutive Super Bowl victories, Mike Shanahan of the Denver Broncos has certainly shown that he is a winner. In Think Like a Champion, he explains (with help from Denver Post sportswriter Adam Schefter) just how he reached this rarefied level and exactly what it takes to join him there. Even though Shanahan snared his first NFL head-coaching job at the tender age of 36 and joined its most elite ranks within just 10 years, he did not reach the top without working hard and paying careful attention to the steps he took to get there. And while football fans may find his examples more illuminating and entertaining than those who don't follow the game, chapters based on 16 traits he attributes to his professional and personal triumphs—including preparing, sacrificing, believing, taking risks, and persevering—inspiringly recount his principles and practices in a way that anyone can understand and emulate. In the chapter on setting goals, for example, Shanahan reveals that he is an inveterate list-maker. Each night, he notes, all tasks for the following day are carefully scripted so he can constantly review them, ingrain them into his thinking, and then check them off when they are done. If you have a plan, and if you have your direction laid out, you can chart your progress to your dreams at each stop along the way, he writes. And, just as important, all along the way you can see how far you've come. --Howard Rothman

My Personal Review:
In review of the autobiography I read, Think Like a Champion: Building Success One Victory at a Time by Mike Shanahan, I learned a great deal about succeeding on the football field. But more importantly, I learned about succeeding in life.

The book begins with Shanahan in college at Eastern Illinois University. Shanahan played quarterback on the Eastern Illinois football team and was routinely tackled during games. However, after being fiercely tackled during one particular game, Shanahan was rushed to the emergency room. Within hours Shanahan had undergone surgery to remove a badly ruptured kidney, and was soon told he could never play football again.
Wanting to remain close to the game he loved, Shanahan decided to try his hand at coaching. His first coaching stop was in Oklahoma as a part-time assistant coach for the University of Oklahoma Sooners. That year the Sooners won the National College Football Championship, and Shanahan was soon offered coaching jobs at other universities. He was an assistant coach at his alma mater, Eastern Illinois University, and at the University of Florida before moving to the professional ranks. As a professional football coach, Shanahan coached teams like the San Francisco 49ers and the Denver Broncos. Under Shanahan's direction, both of these teams won Super Bowl Championships.

Throughout the book, Shanahan states that he has learned something from every step he has taken in his coaching career. He notes that coaching football was not what he had wanted to do with his life; he wanted to play the game. But he acknowledges that he would probably never have made the pros as a player and would never have had the opportunities he had experienced as a coach.

In the book, Shanahan identifies a few key things he says are critical for success on and off the football field: preparing, sacrificing, competing, and persevering. Without any one of these items, success would not be possible. Shanahan also says that life may take you a direction you weren't planning to go, but that it is important to do your best, no matter what life has to offer.

After reading this book, I have a new perspective on coaching, and a new outlook on life. Hearing that perspective shared by a future Hall of Fame candidate, like Mike Shanahan, makes it even more powerful. Think Like a Champion: Building Success One Victory at a Time was more than a book about coaching the game of football. It was about being in, and succeeding at the game of life.

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