

# Prepare & Persist: Coach Marv Levy's Words To Live By

**W**hat can you, as a college student, possibly learn and apply to your future career from Pro Football Hall of Fame Coach Marv Levy? More than you know.

Coach Levy is 94 years strong and one of the greatest NFL coaches of our time. Throughout his lengthy career, he's coached for the Philadelphia Eagles, LA Rams, Washington Redskins, Kansas City Chiefs and even the short-lived Chicago Blitz before he went on to his most well-known stint at the Buffalo Bills.

Levy is known to use historical examples to inspire his teams. In fact, it's one simple credo credited to Benjamin Franklin that he's led and lived by his entire career:

*"If you fail to prepare, you're preparing to fail."*

## What was his idea of preparation?

Learning the basics and doing them well. "I always stressed with my players that it's not how fancy you are or what formation you run; if you do the fundamentals better than anyone - run, throw, tackle, catch, kick - then you'll win. It's that simple."

Levy also had high moral values he instilled in his players. "It's not only to do what's fundamentally necessary, but honor your opponent, honor the game, don't cheat. Resilience is key because you're not gonna win them all - you just won't succeed every single time - but it's how you bounce back that matters the most."



His leadership style was not what one would expect from an NFL coach. Before the first game he ever coached in New Mexico, the players gathered around and the only thing he said to them was, "Where else would you rather be, than right here, right now?" That line eventually became the title to his book.

His approach wasn't hard-hitting, demanding, table-pounding, or boisterous. "I didn't believe in pep talk," he said. "It's just noise." Instead, he believed in setting a good example and aligning himself "with people of high character - not big personality - but

good citizens who could bounce back from setbacks."

Perhaps one of the biggest setbacks and criticisms he received in his career, was winning the AFC championship and making it to the Superbowl four times, and losing every time. "There's no question - some games you're going to lose," he says. How did he manage the losses with his team?

"The first Superbowl we lost in the dying last seconds, we had a team meeting on the plane home and everyone was down," he remembers. "My mom loved poetry, and she had given me a poem when I entered the army in WWII, by Sir Andrew, a Scotch warrior. I put it up on the bulletin board for all to read...and it went like this:

*"Fight on, my men," Sir Andrew said  
"A little I'm hurt, but not yet slain.  
I'll just lie down and bleed a while,  
And then I'll rise and fight again."*

Indeed, preparing and persisting for Levy, is the name of the game. "Because everything won't always go your way."



By Cathy Demetropoulos