

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

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One of Dad's favorite sayings was, "It takes less time to do something right then it does to do something wrong." Most of the lessons that Dad shared with us were born on the baseball field and hold true at all levels of the game. Many, if not all of them, also carry over into everyday life. Take this one for example.

On the field, it's very simple to see that during batting practice, if team fundamentals are being taught – bunt defenses, pick off play, cutoffs and relays, etc – and the players are not executing them correctly, they must be done over and over again until they are perfected. A particular pick off play might not be used until a crucial situation in a late-season game, but the ability to run the play correctly in that situation could mean the difference between a championship and a disappointing finish to the season.

Team fundamentals clearly are not as exciting as hitting, running, catching fly balls or fielding groundballs. Those are the fun parts of the game. Therefore, when team fundamentals are being practiced, players – especially younger players – often have lapses in focus and concentration. Inevitably the plays have to be practiced over and over again until the coach is confident that the team can execute them in a game situation.

At that point, a good portion of practice time will have been used up, which means that there will be considerably less time for the fun stuff. Had the players simple focused and made a point to do things right the first time there would have been more time for them to hit, run, throw and catch.

This same scenario plays itself out daily in homes across the country. Kids come home from school all wound up and ready to play with their friends. Moms and dads would like to give their children a chance to burn up some of that excess energy, but homework comes first. So the kids, anxious to be with their friends, rush through their homework and the results are unacceptable. The parents make the children do the work correctly before allowing them to go outside. Meanwhile, the kids have to spend extra time correcting their sub-par work. Had they simply done it right the first time they would have been outside playing much sooner.

Dad's words also carry over into the corporate world. How many people do we know who procrastinate and put off important projects until the last minute? Inevitably, other tasks pop up and these people end up cramming two weeks worth of work into one night just to get something on the boss's desk in time to meet the deadline. Of course, most times the work is not going to be complete, and the boss is going to require that it be redone. Instead of the golf outing that was planned for the weekend or the trip to the beach with the family, the procrastinators end up slaving away in front of their computers, redoing a project when there was ample opportunity to get the work done properly the first time. Had these folks simple put in a little extra time to do the projects right to begin with they would have been able to spend their weekend relaxing instead of typing.

I'm sure every one of you (and me too!) has been guilty of rushing through something just to get it done. It's a tough lesson to learn, but there are tow important things to take away from this particular lesson:

- 1) We should take pride in any task we perform. Sometimes we can rush through a task and get it done on time and in a satisfactory manner. But if we take pride in everything we do, operating in this way will not be very rewarding.
- 2) A little extra sweat and attention to detail now will pay off in the long run – either through a raise or a promotion or simply some extra rest and relaxation time.