

The fourth quarter mentality

by Keith Washington, contributing writer

“During my years playing sports in high school and college, there was always something special and revealing about the fourth quarter. Whenever a game is close going into the fourth quarter, I love hearing the sports announcers say, “*We have reached that point of the game where your playmakers and game-changers show up!*” It is also during this phase of the game where everyone is physically exhausted, and the athletes must now rely more heavily on their mental preparation than the physical. This is the fourth quarter! This is where the final outcome of the competition will be determined, and this is where your will and determination to WIN are tested and revealed. Regardless of the challenges, the adversities, and the setbacks experienced during the first three quarters, as a competitor, you always want to find a way to finish strong in the fourth quarter!

This is the mindset I employ when it comes to my career; and I would like to share five key reasons why you, too, should possess **The Fourth Quarter Mentality!**

1. Always remember that you are the CEO of your business, which is your career; and the best businesses in the world make the commitment and investment to find ways to separate themselves from their competition. Each day, no matter what you do, you are either advancing beyond or falling behind your competition. You are either enhancing your value proposition beyond that of your competitors or your competitors are making their skills more valuable and more attractive than yours. You are never standing still in this competitive space. **The Fourth Quarter Mentality** reminds one of this reality.
2. **The Fourth Quarter Mentality** helps you understand that while your career is a journey, it is still a competition within the journey! With the reality of globalization, the work-from-anywhere movement, and the rapid advancement of technology, we are in constant competition with the real possibility of being replaced by someone or something. While we are in an environment where jobs are plentiful today, never forget that we live in a cyclical business environment. Geopolitical shifts and economic cycles, and the introduction of technical advancements, whether they be international or domestic, can change our business ecosystem instantly. Such events can immediately and directly impact the demand for our skills and affect one's employability. For these reasons, we must always be thinking of ways to evolve our value proposition by enhancing our existing skills or identifying new skills.
3. **The Fourth Quarter Mentality** forces you to be intentional. Similar to any sport, the way you end the year can be a boost to (or a drag on) the way you start the next one. This is an opportunity to revisit your careerspecific “WHY” in an effort to reaffirm your motivation or discover another more purposeful direction.
4. **The Fourth Quarter Mentality** keeps in the forefront of your mind that whatever you have accomplished in your life, whatever level of success you have achieved in your career was not achieved solely by your personal efforts. This mentality reminds you that someone helped you get there. You owe it to those who paved the way for your success by enabling you to be where you are today. As you continue to pursue even greater goals in your life, you owe it to those individuals who will help you achieve future successes to finish the year with determination. No one is an island, and no one succeeds alone. **The Fourth Quarter Mentality** reminds us to acknowledge that while we may be “the first” in our family or “the first” in our community to have achieved a particular level of success, it is NOT necessarily because we were the

first who was “qualified” or even capable of doing so. There were MANY before us who were equally or even more qualified. We were simply fortunate to have been “the first” in our family or community to have been qualified AND afforded the opportunity!

5. **The Fourth Quarter Mentality** challenges you to be mindful that whatever you choose to do from this point forward, someone upon whom you have great influence will be a front row observer of, and witness to, your journey. You owe it to them to positively display your **Fourth Quarter Mentality** as you finish strong.

In light of the aforementioned points, the question becomes, what are you doing each day to create separation between you and your competition? Or is your competition doing more to create distance between themselves and you?

One of my favorite scriptures is Proverbs 23:7, and it reads, “*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...*” This verse conveys to me that we have the ability to change the course of our lives by simply changing the way we think. We all are living products of our thoughts. How empowering is it to know that we all have been given the ability to control our own thoughts which, in turn, can influence the trajectory of our own lives! We simply have to exercise our ability to manage the way we think.

There is no better time than right now to fully embrace and employ **The Fourth Quarter Mentality!** Right now, during the fourth quarter of 2023, make the commitment to assume your ability to change your destiny by changing your thinking. Right now, let us all practice and intentionally manifest **The Fourth Quarter Mentality!** **TE**



Keith Washington is the Founder and CEO of Next Level Coaching, LLC dba Next Level Professional Development, LLC which is a business, career, and leadership coaching firm. Leveraging over 30 years of diverse corporate experiences, he provides career coaching, leadership development, and business consulting services to businesses, non-profits, sports teams, and colleges. Throughout his multi-industry career, and most recently as a supply chain executive, he has coached countless professionals and corporations - domestically and internationally. If you would like more information about this article or business assistance, please contact Keith Washington at nlcareercoach@gmail.com or visit www.nlcareercoach.com. PHOTO BY RED ANGLE PHOTOGRAPHY