

# **Are You THE Best or PETE Best?**

by Mark Matteson

Are you old enough to remember the Beatles? John, Paul, George, and Ringo? I do. From the time they took the Big Apple by storm at Shea Stadium in 1964, they soared to the top of the charts and stayed there for the next seven years. They came to Seattle to play in 1966, and my older brother and sister both went to the show. I was only nine, but I wanted to go, too. My mother very wisely said no. I was so disappointed.

The Beatles were simply the best. Between 1964 and 1985, they sold almost 75,000,000 records. That is amazing, given the band broke up in 1971. What is even more astonishing is they sold another 57,000,000 records from 1991 to 2008! All told, according to EMI and *Guinness World Records*, they sold over 1,100,000,000 records, cassettes, CDs, and bootlegs. That's over a BILLION units.

My mother is English. She was born just outside of London in the early 1930s. Her cousin was Cyril Davis. They played together as kids. He went on to become a famous blues harmonica player and bandleader in London. Some say he was the best harmonica player in England at that time in rock and roll history. In the late 1950s, if you got a chance to play with Cyril, it might just launch your career. Eric Clapton sat in with him at age 15. There was also a young, skinny art student named Mick Jagger who sang a few times with Cyril's band.

The late fifties and early sixties was an exciting time in popular music. There was an underground movement, and a big part of that movement was a woman named Mona Best of Liverpool, England. She and her son, Pete, were entrepreneurs. In the cellar of their Liverpool home, Mona started The Casbah Coffee Club. Soon she had over 1,000 members. The Quarrymen was one of the bands to play there. From time to time, Pete played with them. From 1960 to 1962, he became their official drummer. The band began to gain some traction. Pete did much of the booking for the band and was very popular with the fans. Then the group secured a manager, Brian Epstein, a rising star himself. Epstein felt the group needed a more seasoned and professional session drummer for the first recordings. John Lennon, founder of the Quarrymen, asked Epstein to fire Best. It was ironic and sad. Like loyal employees of a start-up company who don't survive the transition after the company breaks through and goes public, Pete Best didn't survive the transition. He simply was not the best man for the job. So they hired Ringo Starr. The Beatles were on their way to the top.

Are you the *best* in your field or are you Pete Best?

Art Linkletter and John Wooden recently passed away. Both men were the best at what they did in their time. They were pioneers in their respective fields, as well as teachers and lifelong students of them. They did what they loved, touched millions of lives, and lived a long time. The world is a little worse for their departure.

What do Pelé, Madonna, Arnold, Sting, Bono, Lance, Oprah, Meryl, Yo-Yo, Pistol Pete, Walt, and Bill have in common? Besides being so wealthy, famous, or talented, that we need only mention their first name and you know who they are and what they do. They are, or were, world-class, the best at what they do.

How do we become the best? What are the common denominators for success?

I have read hundreds of biographies and made thousands of pages of notes in my journals over the last 28 years. All that research has led me to one simple conclusion: *Success leaves clues*. Here are twelve of those clues, submitted for your approval:

- **Successful people love what they do.** They are passionate very early in life. What they do is a calling and their careers begin at a very young age. *If you do what you love, you'll never work another day in your life.*
- **The best make a decision to succeed.** Their reasons to succeed—emotional reasons, irrational reasons, subjective reasons, multiple reasons—are powerful. *To thine own self be true.*
- **They pay the price in advance.** The price is simply ten years of hard work or 10,000 hours of practice. The Beatles logged that time in relative obscurity in Hamburg, Germany in the early sixties. *The price of leadership is loneliness.*
- **The best are serious students of their craft.** They read books and magazines; they are sponges for any information that will help them reach their goals. *The books you don't read won't help.*

- **Successful people set goals.** Most of the time it is a Single, Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal. Lennon's goal was to be the number one band in the world. The late, great John Wooden told me in 1993 that his favorite book was *Magnificent Obsession* by Lloyd C. Douglas, which in turn became the inspiration for my first book, *Freedom from Fear*. *The greatest reason for setting goals is for who you must become in order to reach them.*
- **The best outwork everyone else.** They put in unbelievably long hours early in their careers for very little money. Their commitment to being the best shows in the long hours logged. *It's what you do when no one is looking that matters.*
- **They are not afraid to make hard decisions** Fire Pete Best and hire Ringo Starr. Keep looking for and find other committed people who are on the same path. It's the Law of Attraction. *If we are related, we shall meet.*
- **The best never really consider retiring.** When they do shift gears, it is usually for a great cause or to teach. Coach Wooden lectured for 35 years after he retired from coaching basketball. He considered himself a teacher. *Pluck a thistle and plant a rose where you think it might grow.*
- **Successful people get better every year through persistence.** They are naturally curious. It took Coach Wooden sixteen years to win his first championship. While he was learning, he built his legendary Pyramid of Success, a philosophy of life he crafted and perfected as he taught basketball. *It's what you learn after you know everything that counts.*



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## **Book of the Month**

*The Education of a Coach* by David Halberstam

I re-read a terrific book on leadership during a recent getaway in Lake Chelan. It doesn't matter if you are not a football fan. Bill Belichick deserves to be on the first-name list, although Bill Gates and Bill Russell make that kinda tough! He fits perfectly into the Twelve Clues profile mentioned above.

Bill began studying game film with his father at age nine! He has a defensive philosophy that is simply profound and profoundly simple: *Find out what the other team does well, what they always want to do in big games, and make them do something else.* What the three-time Super Bowl champs' coach is saying, instead of exploiting their weaknesses, take away their strengths.

If you are a leader, this book will provide you with clues on how to be the best. Three different experts from coaching and the media said the same thing about Coach Belichick, "He might not be the most popular guy with the media, but with salary caps and free agency, two major barriers to building and sustaining greatness that did not exist in bygone eras, his success in this market make him perhaps the BEST coach in professional football."

I guess they are saying he is THE best, not PETE Best!