



When Curtis Martin was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame in 2012, he shared something with the crowd. Even though he was now a Hall of Fame running back, he wasn't a fan of the game, matter of fact he didn't even like football or running. At first glance, readers might think he wasted valuable years of his life doing something he didn't like, but in reality it was the opposite. He spent his NFL career playing for a purpose. Playing football helped him achieve his "Why", which was to help others. And there is a great lesson in his story for all of us.

In the book *Die Empty*, author Todd Henry, writes, "In [Martin's] rookie season with the Patriots, [he] began committing a minimum of 12 percent of paycheck to his newly formed Job Foundation, which he formed to help single mothers and disadvantaged youth." He kept with football because it gave him a platform to help his mother and other people who

struggled to help themselves. During his acceptance speech, Hall said the following:

Most of these guys have lived for the game of football and eat, breath, sleep football. I was someone who was somewhat forced to play football. I can remember draft day like it was yesterday. My family and I were sitting around and were watching the draft. The phone rings and it's Bill Parcells. I answer the phone and say "Hello," and Parcells says, "Curtis, we want to know if you're interested in being a New England Patriot?" I said, "Yes, yes, sir." And we hang up the phone. As soon as we hang up the phone I turn around to everyone and I said, "Oh my gosh, I do not want to play football."

No, you're laughing, but this is the truth. I turned around and said, "I don't want to play football. I don't even know that I like football enough to try to make a career out of it." My pastor at the time was a guy by the name of Leroy Joseph, and I'm so glad he was there to talk some sense into me. He says, "Curtis, look at it this way, man." He said, "Maybe football is just something that God is giving you to do all those wonderful things that you say you want to do for other people." I tell you, it was like a light bulb came on in my head.

That became my connection with football. I don't know if he wouldn't have said that to me if football would have gotten out of me what it got out of me. I definitely wouldn't be standing here. And ever since he said that, I knew the only way I was going to be successful at this game called football is if I played for a purpose that was bigger than the game itself because I knew that the love for the game just wasn't in my heart.

His story illustrates the importance of connecting our lives to a higher purpose and understanding our "Why". By knowing that he wanted to help people, Martin took a career path that gave him a stage to potentially help far more people than he might have otherwise. It allowed him to play at a level greater than that of other players. When we follow Martin's example, and make that connection between action and purpose, our

performance will always be better than if those two are disconnected. It will also give us fulfillment, something that many of us spend our entire lives chasing. Martin's connection not only let him help others, it led him to the NFL Hall of Fame.

Have you connected what you do to a higher purpose?

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