

Game Day

“You don’t love me. You don’t care. You’re not taking this seriously,” my wife said to me with tears streaming down her face as we left Lamaze class. We were expecting the birth of our first child. I was only 27. My brain wasn’t fully developed yet so I turned to my wife and said, “Its ok. I’m good on Game Day. I’ve always been good on Game Day.”

“Game Day. Game Day. Are you kidding me? This is not some sports event. This is the birth of our child. We need to practice.” She was right. Practice makes a difference.

I’ve learned that whether we are talking about birthing a child or success in business, sports, tennis, music or any area of expertise, practice and preparation means everything.

However, in the era of instant gratification and entertainment television, it’s easy to lose sight of what true success requires. After all what most of us see is a successful person performing their craft. We see the concert, the movie, the computer program, the presentation, the play, the miracle surgery, the Olympic event. We see the end result. We see “Game Day.” But we don’t see the countless hours of sweat and toil and dedication and practice that are the mark of greatness.

Tiger Woods practiced thousands of puts before hitting the one to win the US Open. Rafael Nadal hit thousands of backhands before winning Wimbledon. Josh Groban sang for thousands of hours before reaching stardom. iPod designers spent thousands of hours to create a revolutionary product. The Symphony practiced thousands of hours to create music that brought the audience to tears. The sales team spent numerous hours preparing for the important meeting that landed their biggest client.

Even in my own work, it’s amazing how many hours of writing, research, preparation and travel that go into (1) one hour speech and a lifetime of learning that goes into one book.

I believe that 10 percent of our life is made up of significant Game Day moments and 90 percent is made up of the time we are preparing, practicing and waiting for those moments. How we practice and prepare with 90 percent of our time determines how we perform on Game Day and how we do on Game Day determines the level of our success.

Just as the Olympian must train for years for one defining race we must wake up each day and practice, prepare and train to be the best we can be so that on Game Day we’ll be ready. Let us not settle for mediocrity but strive each day for excellence. It requires hard work, preparation and hours of effort but it’s worth it.

And if you are wondering how I did when my wife went into labor, she'll tell you I helped her breathe, timed the contractions and even stayed silent when she yelled at me to be quiet. I rose to the occasion but of course she was the superstar. After all it was Game Day. ☺

Jon Gordon is a speaker, consultant and author of several books including the recently released The No Complaining Rule: Positive Ways to deal with Negativity at Work and the international best seller The Energy Bus: 10 Rules to Fuel your Life, Work and Team with Positive Energy which has captured the hearts of readers world-wide. Jon's proven solutions are being put to use by people and organizations worldwide and his tips have been featured on CNN, the NBC Today Show, The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Forbes, and more. Learn more and sign up for Jon's free weekly Positive Tip newsletter at www.JonGordon.com

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