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"You can move a lot of water with a thimble."

»Martin Fischer



A Game, Not a Season

Few years in our history have been so gleefully left behind as the one we've just turned the page on.

2020 will be the "Lord Voldemort" of years for many.

The less it is mentioned, the better.

There were positive events interspersed throughout the year. Alas, they tended to be eclipsed by the turmoil we witnessed firsthand and the steady drip of doom dispensed by most news sources.

As I've been trying to encapsulate thoughts on the year that was, I keep flashing back to a post-game talk I had with a basketball team a few years back.

You never know when certain moments will stay with you. This was one of those moments.

I remember that particular game being a heartbreaker.

Our clearly overmatched team had played well enough to win. To add insult to injury, questionable calls late in the game really hurt us.

Afterward, the team was upset. A few boys were near tears.



Don't Fear Crickets

A friend I supported during his former job recently joined a megabank. He reached out to introduce me to his new peers, as well as give a genuinely nice endorsement.

I've been chuckling regularly about the joys of business development since then.

After the great initial call and a very encouraging follow-up call with senior managers, I believed we'd be working together soon.

Weeks passed. Follow-up emails were sent to the folks I spoke with.

(Insert cricket chirps here.)

Three months passed without an email being acknowledged. I sent samples (unsolicited) of some of the things we discussed.

Again, crickets.

I emailed my friend who made the introduction to see if my email address was blocked by their system. He responded and apologized for not hearing anything.

I began laughing and told him that one of the challenges of publicly offering advice to others is that you're a hypocrite if you ignore your own guidance.

Yet, I remember having a smile on my face and being downright motivated. They had played their best game of the year.

It was in that game that I knew we were going to be a handful for the rest of the league as the season continued.

In the moment, however, a group of young men were not especially receptive to moral victories.

I remember smiling and telling them that the fact that they played well enough to keep that game close enough for a heartbreaking loss was impressive.

On paper, we were seriously overmatched.

But thankfully competitions aren't fought on paper.

I told them that they had proven something to themselves that day. They were a solid team.

I also used a line I've used dozens of times through the years after a defeat. I told them, "Believe me, that team does not want to see us again."

Spoiler alert: We did see them again. We beat them in the playoffs later that season.

In some ways, I feel that the incredible challenges and hardships so many of us have faced in the previous year is like a game we played well enough to win.

Whether we won or not is a matter of opinion. Business environments were brutal for many.

Yet, we survived.

And in many ways, our teams are more focused and unified than ever.

Last year was a difficult (and poorly officiated) game that may not have turned out the way you would have liked.

But it was just one game. Your championship run is in front of you.

Game on.

I've spoken the words, "You are more likely to act your way into feeling than feel your way into acting," hundreds of times.

There are usually rational-sounding reasons why right now is not the perfect time to act. Act now, anyway.

Success is born of action. Done is better than perfect.

When you are in any sort of business development position (i.e., "sales"), you will experience rejection on a regular basis. Period.

In fact, if you're not experiencing regular doses of (hopefully polite) rejection, you may not be trying hard enough.

Still, it can often be one of the hardest pieces of advice to follow.

No one enjoys opening themselves up to rejection or being ignored.

But unless someone asks us to stop contacting them, we should keep regularly and respectfully checking in.

Several months into my seemingly Quixotic quest, I got a response. I had to do a double take to make sure it wasn't an automated out-of-office reply.

More calls ensued. We're engaged in talks again.

They may indeed become a customer...or maybe they won't.

But the process has again reminded me that business opportunities are often only earned through actions after your initial "pitch."

One of the best ways to display stability and dependability to a potential customer is to reliably check in with them.

Who will you check in with to start your new year?

**"There's a pretty big difference between wanting something
and deciding to have it."**

» Scott Adams

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