



DavidAllen

The Play of the Day

When things get tight and tough, it's easy to get hung up in a negative loop in your self talk: "Oh no! Things are tight and tough!" And you bemoan your fate and pander to your disappointment. In fact, such times are always great opportunities to reassess what you're really doing and mature your thinking and focus. Tough times can be good times, as long as you know the game you are playing and the play you are making.

Easy to say. But changes in your circumstances, especially the ones that seem to be out of your control and grief-producing (a bear market, things other people do that create hardship for us, and other "accidents" of life), can catch you seriously off guard. Ever had the feeling that you just woke up on a soccer field, being run over by bigger, meaner, uglier and faster players than you, and you haven't the vaguest idea what you are doing there? You find yourself beaten, bloody, and muddy, and from the outset things are getting worse!

To get a grip, what's the first thing you must focus on? What the game is and where your goal is! When you wake up to the fact that you're playing soccer and you see your target, you quickly lose interest in how beaten, bloody, or muddy you are. You're now into the challenge!

But then, even if you know where you're headed, you'll still feel paralyzed and at the mercy of bigger forces than you, until you do what? Determine the next move! Left or right; pass or run. The next action.

You're now into the game! Even if it's a tough game, with the odds seemingly against you. (And the more that's true, the nobler your endeavor!) The two basic and most critical elements that need to be clear, to be fully and positively engaged in what you're doing are (1) the goal or outcome you're intending, and (2) the next physical move to head you in that direction.

You just lost your job. What do you want to have true now in your career, and how do you need to get started on that? You just had a major setback in your health. How do you want to be feeling about your situation, and what do you need to do to make that happen? When the world has shifted on you in whatever way, what would success NOW mean for you, and what activity will move you NOW in that direction?

It's not what's going on in your world that is good or bad. The world just is what it is. What makes the difference to you is how you're engaged with it. You can't ignore it without being victimized by it in your attitude. As any performance race driver will tell you, coasting is the most dangerous behavior. You have to stay involved with the pedals. You must play. You have to get in the game you're in.

"The business of life is to go forward." - Samuel Johnson

"One can stand still in a flowing stream, but not in the world of men." - Japanese Proverb

"To fight a bull when you are not scared is nothing. And to not fight a bull when you are scared is nothing. But to fight a bull when you are scared is something." - Unknown