

“Echoes of the Heart”

Reflections on Life and Community Living

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Okay, we got it wrong—the Dolphins and other stuff. Take a deep breath, friends, and acknowledge with me that one of the fascinating elements in our human experience is that—at times—we’re wrong.

Think how boring our lives would be if all we ever did was *call it right*. Make the *right* investment, choose the *right* life-time mate, opt for the *right* career, and select the *right* players in fantasy football.

About the Dolphins. We gotta cut them some slack. To begin with, they over-achieved hugely last season. Also, it’s only head coach Nick Saban’s second year. These things take time and luck, and then more time and luck.

Take a fresh look, people. There’s a *new* quarterback coming off *serious* knee surgery. The *Ricky factor* is playing out his year’s suspension to the north (between you and me: this guy’s good). To say nothing of all the other usual elements: new players (some of whom are rookies and unproven), new coaches, and new systems.

And we still haven’t mentioned that hovering over it all is the sobering reality: it’s a mystery. All of which is to say that *making it all work out* so we are play-off bound every year is never a lock. The Dolphins will be fine. They need time and patience, two things that are seldom afforded National Football League teams and coaches.

(Note: this article was written before the Dolphins’ 31-13 drubbing of the previously unbeaten Chicago Bears, at Chicago, on November 5th. I.e., already, good things are happenings)

Seeing what we want to see vs. what’s really there. Sometimes our fervent desire to have a winning team to cheer for distorts our vision. We get the cart ahead of the horse.

We begin to view the present in light of our hoped-for results at the end. Because we *want* to have a winning team, we attribute talent and potential to players when it is not really there. We’ve simply created it in our own mind.

Curiously, this is also a considerable part of our current quagmire in Iraq. Our leaders *want* to see the present unfolding of events in light of their hoped-for outcome. But when the outcome is not sufficiently rooted in reality and is due, perhaps, to a misreading of history and circumstances, the end result is that we are off track in our expectations.

We can’t simply *read* talent into athletes or *deny* current realities on the battlefield simply because they don’t fit the expectation of our desired outcome.

The bottom line in any competitive situation is *scoreboard*. In sports, when we're losing—like it or not—that tells us something about the quality of our team. In much the same way, in war, when the number of insurgent attacks increases or sustains over weeks and months, that may signal a need to reevaluate our goals and agenda.

Regrouping and recommitting. In the mean time, Dolphin fans, let's step back from it all, regroup, and reprioritize. If we think about our lives, we have to do this all the time. It's called *life*. We fail every day, to some extent. I've yet to live the perfect day ... largely, because it doesn't exist.

It takes a big person (wise, too) to admit: *hey, I got it wrong*; and then to *move on* in an effort to reevaluate and recommit.

Sometimes our expectations in life are too lofty. For whatever reasons, we haven't seen our gifts, our personality, our disposition (or whatever else) in light of the sobering realities that swirl around us. Not everyone can be a medical doctor, a top CEO, a prize winning novelist, or a Superbowl champion.

It's not that we have to *settle for less*. It's more a matter of being the person our *real life* situation allows us to be. Forcing things seldom works—like trying to fit a jigsaw puzzle piece into the wrong spot.

Sometimes, the best we can do—after we've worked hard and gone the second mile—is to *let life come to us*. Over time, it will come. It may not be our dream life, but perhaps our dream life was somehow off base and lacking in realism to begin with.

There is nothing shameful about regrouping or starting over in anything. Sometimes, that's all there is. With investments, sports teams, careers—even relationships—there are times when a fresh start is *exactly* what the situation calls for.