

# Regrets

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We have all had regrets in our life. There are two easily identifiable regrets. They are both based on action, either doing something or not doing something. In both cases, there is a feeling of disappointment and wishing another choice was made.

I am going to share one of my biggest regrets, why I made the choice I made, what I learned from it, and why it is important for me (not just as a coach) to share and teach people about regret.

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I have done my fair of stupid things growing up. Bonfires, bottle rockets, m-80s, baseball bats, mailboxes, sparklers, duct tape, and acreage to roam. I've talked to my fair share of law enforcement officers growing up.

In fact, fun story, one night we event had the trifecta show up; the county sheriff, fire department, and an ambulance crew. A New Year's Eve bonfire that apparently a few people thought was a massive house fire. No one was in any danger, but we did have 3 county sheriffs, 3 different volunteer fire departments, and an ambulance show up to check it out.

There are a few things that I look back at and wonder what I was thinking. Some of them regrets, some of them just some good old mischievous country fun. Off the record, and in person only, I will share a story about a rival high school's flag.

## INTIMIDATED

There are plenty of decisions that I regret making, but one of my biggest regrets is a decision I chose not to make. I had the "luxury" of going to a small school where my mom was a teacher. I was in junior high at the time, 8th grade, and the high school, junior high, and elementary schools were all in the same area and all on the same street. Across the street was the football field, track, and high school field house.

School was let out around 3:30p every day and my mom stayed until about 4:30-5:00p to wrap up her daily activities. For some reason, I started going across the street to watch the high school kids participate in their off-season activities. These are the same guys I was watching play football every Friday night. I looked up to them as I wanted to be like them one day.

Then, out of the blue, my coach asked if I wanted to join them. I declined. I don't know how much I weighed then, but I would only be 130 pounds when I graduated high school. I didn't see an opportunity to train and get better. I was scared and intimidated that I would be the smallest, weakest, and slowest of the group. I didn't think about how the following summer I was going to be their teammate. Or how much faster I was than

many of those people already. All I could think about was how much bigger everyone else was and how much more weight they could lift. When in the end, I focused on the wrong thing. I was focusing on something that was not in my control.

I was too young to know that it didn't really matter what anyone else was doing. All that mattered was that I had an opportunity to train and make myself better. And I turned it down. Twice.

### EGO AND PERFORMANCE

Recently I wrote about proper goal setting ([here](#)) and discussed the difference between objective and task oriented goals. The same concepts apply here. Instead of focusing on things I could control (task/performance) I was so consumed how my performance and skills stacked up with those around me (objective/ego) and how they would perceive any lack of talent. What I should have known is that I would have been on a team and by training and getting myself better, I would be helping the team get better.

I never really trained in the weight room that much while in high school. I did the circuit training that was required, but never really any strength or body building. The stuff that would have turned me into a much better athlete. Why? Again, I was intimidated and worried about how others would perceive any lack of strength. I was getting playing time. By the time I was a Junior I was starting on the varsity team. I was the fastest person on the team and I was playing, really all I cared about.

I was able to play football in college. I was fighting an uphill battle my entire career as I was the smallest person on the field. Here is what I was working with. Our equipment manager had to special order a helmet for me. Over the next 10 or so years after I graduated, that helmet was used 1 one other player... a kicker. I did as much as I could to gain weight, but it was just a little too late. I did gain 30 pounds, but my max weight was 165 pounds. That is where the regret started creeping in. Where would I have been if I had started 5 years ago? Especially when I loved the strength training. I was never intimidated playing a sport like football, but I was intimidated by being in the weight room many years before.

### LESSON LEARNED

It was a tough pill to swallow when my football career ended. Literally, as my football career ended due to a broken jaw a few weeks into my senior season. I put in a lot of work to develop as a football player. My name was on the depth chart. I was getting opportunities in practice. But the reality is football is a collision sport and I was a few years behind in training. And I was the one to blame for being behind.

It is something that has stuck with me for a long time. Not that I had any real aspirations of becoming some elite football player but allowing the perceptions of what others might think affect a decision I made, and then looking back at different opportunities I missed because of that decision.

## REGRETS TURN INTO EXPERIENCE

Regrets are nothing but learning experiences. You can't gain experience without doing something. And actually doing something requires a level of risk, not matter what it is you are doing. A regret from inaction is just as valuable as a regret from action. Many times you can learn a lesson immediately from a regret you acted on; however, the regret from inaction can take some time for the lesson to be learned. And learning lessons is how you gain experience.

There have been many things in my life that I had some apprehension about. In my real job, I moved from an account management role to more of a technical role in 2010. I was nervous as I didn't have any software experience at all. I was nervous that some of the more senior people wouldn't tolerate me because of my lack of knowledge. But I jumped in and learned as much as I could. I asked for help when I needed help. And I learned a lot. It was challenging, and I like challenges.

In my coaching world, I followed the same path. I found competent coaches early on. I received a program and really tried to understand why I was doing a certain exercise. I learned about different techniques and programs. I have learned the ins and outs of strategy at events. I believe myself to be an excellent resource for my athletes and I still try to learn.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

I hear people say "no regrets" all the time. That is not possible. You should strive to have no regrets, but eventually you will have regrets. When you do regret something, you must learn something from it and move on. If you dwell on the past, you can't move forward. And that is the biggest regret you will ever have.