

Success is simple ...

Keep Turning Up!



Do you remember when you were a kid and your parents made you take up a musical instrument, learn to sing or do something that you really, at the time, didn't want to do? My mum and dad made me learn guitar, but all I was interested in was playing football. I went to a few lessons, took little notice and then stopped turning up. Guess how good my skill on the guitar is today? You got it ... non-existent! But there are people, maybe even you, who kept turning up for lessons anyway and now play beautifully and get incredible joy and success from their musical ability. Their success lay in a decision to keep turning up ...

In the last game of the Victorian AFL/VFL season in 1983, at the age of 18 and after several years of turning up, I was selected to play my very first senior game of football for the St Kilda Football Club. Boy was I excited! I remember the game as clearly as if it were yesterday. It was beautiful spring day August 27, 1983 and we were playing Collingwood at Victoria Park. For those of you who follow AFL and have been around a while you will understand the significance of this – it was a tough place to play a first game of senior grade football. In fact an article written in **The Age** newspaper after the game said, *"Bottom teams like St Kilda are unable to give the youngsters the protection and gentle nurturing they deserve. More often than not they are flipped head-first from the deep end"*

I didn't really understand the significance of that until I was running around the boundary line, in the first half of the game, keeping myself warm. I just expected to be welcomed with respect and adoration by all fans. What I wasn't prepared for was the barraged of abuse I received from the opposing teams supporters. It just wasn't friendly or nice and it took me aback. Nevertheless I got through the game, my very first one - I was excited about my future and all the success I would have the following year leading on from this game.



You don't always get what you want or deserve

I put in a great pre-season of training and got myself strong and fit and ready to dominate in the senior team in 1984 and waited with anticipation as the senior team was read out on the Thursday night before the first game. To my

absolute shock and horror my name was not mentioned. I didn't understand! I had done everything I could do, had a great pre-season and I was ready, but I didn't make the team. I was devastated, but luckily too young and dumb to let it get to me. So I just kept turning up! I played in the reserve team for the first week and was in the top 2 best players and so I was confident that I would be selected in round two. The same thing happened – my name was not mentioned on the Thursday night! I didn't get it, but I just kept turning up. I played all that year in the reserves and I **did not get** one single game in the senior team and out of the 18 reserve grade games that I played in 1984, I was in the top 5 best players on the ground in 14 of them. In fact, it was not until Saturday May 18, 1985 that I played my next senior game with St Kilda – almost two years later!

What happens when you just keep turning up?



During the 1984 season, there were many times when I thought, *'it doesn't matter what I do or how well I will play I will never get a game. The coach obviously doesn't like me!'* In frustration, many times, I was ready to spit-the-dummy and throw-in-the-towel, but for some reason, I don't know why, I just kept turning up and doing the best that I could. I had unknowingly stumbled across one of the simplest and most powerful principles of success there is – just keep turning up!

It is only when I turned up that I could be in that environment to become better. Every time I turned up could I see and visualise what it was that I was fighting for. Each time I turned up I could feel that I was gradually changing, learning, growing and becoming the person I needed to be to play senior football. Only when I turned up was I in the game with a chance. Let me repeat that; only when I turned up was there any chance, no matter how good or how slim, that I could ever get what I wanted.

Don't stress and don't complicate it – just keep turning up!

What is it that you are well and truly over right now? What is it that you seemed to have tried and tried to achieve – but all to no avail? What is it that seems so hard and looks just too far away that you are on the verge of giving up? You don't understand just how close you are. It is that next effort, that next sentence, that next step, that next phone call and that next attempt that could change everything for you. But you can only ever feel the thrill of success and sweet rewards that accompany it if you just keep turning up.



It is really only one decision that you need to make – and that is, *'I will just keep turning up'*. Imagine if every time I had a training session I debated with myself about whether I would go today or not – life would be miserable and lacking in any success or fulfilment. So all I am encouraging you to do this week is to look at the one thing that you are negotiating with yourself about and make one simple decision and then stick to it until the job is done. That decision ... **just keep turning up**. Have a great week

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