

THE LONG RED LINE

DEVOTED TO ALL CARDINAL FOOTBALL PLAYERS; PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

Finding your hero

Without a doubt, there is something within each one of you that is heroic.

First of all, you are all meant to become something extraordinary. Emphasis being on the "meant"; getting there is totally up to you. Embarking on that journey, facing down the challenges you meet along the way, and overcoming disappointment and defeat is in itself heroic. In fact, there is something to be said for simply taking that very first step.

For far too long, too many of you choose to just get by, barely "scratching the surface" of your potential. Is it the fear of failure? Or, could it be a fear of commitment; simply being afraid that once you take that step, there can be no going back. Saying "good-bye" to your comfort zone, the safe and the known takes resolve. This too requires some heroism on your part.

Once you make that choice and take that initial step, every moment you spend engaged in the process of "becoming" extraordinary, you will also be conveying a lasting image to all others along the way. Your combined efforts, the trials and tribulations you endure, will be broadcast in some fashion for all to witness.

Nary a word or deed is missed. Somewhere, somehow, someone will know of your undertakings. They will live through this experience and your endeavors, with you. While this might seem like a huge responsibility, it is really an opportunity. Yet, for whatever reason, we remain blind – or oblivious – to that we were always intended to become. To be accountable to such a wide audience in that fashion is within you. Embracing that fact, come what may, is heroic.

"Unconsciously we all have a standard by which we measure other men, and if we examine closely we find that this standard is a very simple one, and is this: we admire them, we envy them, for great qualities we ourselves lack. Hero worship consists in just that. Our heroes are men who do things which we recognize, with regret, and sometimes with a secret shame, that we cannot do. We find not much in ourselves to admire, we are always privately wanting to

be like somebody else. If everybody was satisfied with himself, there would be no heroes."— Mark Twain

It stands to reason, that if you can "see" something that is remarkable about another, isn't it then possible to divine what is remarkable about you? It is simply a matter of perspective. For at that very moment, just as you find that missing trait of yours in a "hero", another person within the periphery of your life is seeing the very same thing you somehow missed, in you. They see what you cannot see in yourself; the hero in you.

"Heroes rarely look the way we draw them in our minds: attractive, imposing figures with rippling muscles and strong chins. More times than not they are humble beings, small and flawed. It is only their spirits that are beautiful and strong." — Richard Paul Evans

The Hollywood, bigger than life type of hero is a stereotype that can be tough to compete against – even if only between your ears. Whether you believe it or not, one of those heroes, the one with the rippling muscles and strong chins, lives within you. If you allow what you see on the screen to become your sense of that ideal, you might miss something that is already there. Do not ignore the one that is within you. Hollywood is only make-believe; you are the real deal.

"There is a determined though unseen bravery that defends itself foot by foot in the darkness against the fatal invasions of necessity and dishonesty. Noble and mysterious triumphs that no eye sees, and no fame rewards, and no flourish of triumph salutes. Life, misfortunes, isolation, abandonment, poverty, are battlefields that have their heroes; obscure heroes, sometimes greater than the illustrious heroes."— Victor Hugo

Heroic acts take place every minute, of every hour of every day. True, the battles one enjoins on a daily basis largely go unnoticed and unrewarded. Whether they are won or lost, they may rarely have any bearing on those around you. Yet in the grand scheme of things, when you struggle to turn the tide in your favor following defeat, when personal resources unimagined awaken to rescue you, your

character is triumphantly revealed to others.

Though your combat is waged on a personal level, obscured, perhaps, by a feigned smile or half-hearted laugh, your heroic efforts are understood. Others do share your plight. They see themselves in your fight. They are both strengthened and comforted by it.

"We do not have to become heroes overnight. Just a step at a time, meeting each thing that comes up, seeing it as not as dreadful as it appears, discovering that we have the strength to stare it down."— Eleanor Roosevelt

Little by little, waging your daily campaign to have a positive attitude, to make the best choices and to do the right things, you reveal within you an uncommon valor that matters; you do make a difference. If your immediate endeavors go unnoticed, so be it. It will serve to further reinforce your will for the adversity that surely lay ahead. Should your struggles bear witness, that vision offers irrefutable proof that they can make it as well.

"Heroes were ordinary people who knew that even if their own lives were impossibly knotted, they could untangle someone else's. And maybe that one-act could lead someone to rescue you right back."— Jodi Picoult

Weaving your way through your own life will undoubtedly lead you to encounter all sorts of knots. Some will be of your own doing. Others will not. Disentangling yourself from either can become quite an undertaking. It will take time. More often than not, it will be a solitary effort.

When the opportunity presents itself, share these bits of hard-earned wisdom and expertise. Regardless of the severity of your circumstance, you might find someone in an even more dire strait; real or imagined. Steel yourself for the challenge, and set your knot aside.

Be their hero, and in the process, find your own.