



What's Holding You Back?

November 14, 2018

My son Kenneth and daughter Tayelor both had a birthday this week. They are both teenagers which means their mother, my wife of fifteen years is getting old. I remember my mother saying a prayer in the hospital after our youngest Kenneth was born. She prayed that I stay away from my wife and give her a break because we had two children in one year. Her prayer obviously worked, we haven't had any more children. Two children in one year, that was crazy. What was even more insane was the twelve hours of labor my wife endured to deliver our most troubled, I mean our most energetic child.

Although I held my wife's hand for every hour she was in labor, and although I tried to say the right things I will never know what it is like to give birth to a child. I can spend years in the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Center of Women's Reproductive Health at the prestigious medical institute of higher learning known as the University of Alabama Birmingham or UAB. I could read several articles on the women's reproductive system, but I will never know what it is like to live as a female or to give birth to a child.

In the same way, no matter how empathic we are in our country we will never know what it is like to live as an African American male in the south. The challenges facing our young men in our schools are insurmountable for so many different reasons. What is the problem, more importantly what is the solution? In the wake of the perceived racial issues in our country any coach will tell you that race has no place in the sports profession.

We all want to win so bad our focus is not politics, finances or race. Our focus is results. Our actions are result driven. We don't care if you're catholic or protestant, black or white, gay or straight. Republican or Democrat. We just want you to do your job so we can win. I wish society understood this point.

Can you imagine a society where our focus was winning as a human race? When it comes to politics many of us are loyal to our party or our race. There is no room for gray. The same is obvious when rooting for our favorite team. Roll Tide or War Eagle. No gray. When it comes to football this way of thinking is not only safe, it's fun. However, when it comes to politics, religion, education, socioeconomic status and influence race seems to show up in the equation. Sometimes I wish we were all hot pink.

The second point I want to make is how important it is to be patience and embrace pain. It takes nine months and a period of pain and uncomfortable living to produce every person you saw today.

Any change in our city, school system, sports program, relationship, church or finances will take time and pain. We all want the end result, but rarely do we want to embrace the time table or experience the heartache and pain.

One thing that trumps (not the president) our judgmental ways is tragedy. Thanks to Hurricane Michael I have witnessed people in my hometown of Panama City Florida come together from all walks of life to help one another. It is truly beautiful.

What's holding you back from loving people who are different than you?