

Experience Not Required

By Karel Murray

Today, I noticed a newspaper article entitled "Experience Not Required". It caught my interest due to the fact that it was associated with sports. I don't know about you, but the thought of participating in a sporting event without knowledge of the rules and skills required seems a bit like personal suicide to me.

I have worked my way up through a business career and have learned that experience is vital in a person's perspective and overall success. I believe it is through hands-on tasks and real life experiences that impact an individual's ability most permanently. Considering that it may not be required in sports just boggles my mind.

I have to admit, I am not a sports fan. I prefer a good book or movie. So, I thought I would take a moment and explore how lack of experience could impact a person's perspective in understanding the game. Let's consider the implications...

Football

For me, protective gear (helmets, shoulder pads, and mouth guards) would not immediately come to mind as necessary, especially if I could run like the artful dodger. As I understand it, the object of the game for the offensive team is to throw an oblong leather ball down a 100 yard stretch of grass or Astroturf, have someone else catch it and place the ball between the goal posts. The defensive side is responsible for stopping the play. What is so hard about that?

It isn't until I see the sheer brute size of the opposing team members that I realize that the possibility of dismemberment exists. Why isn't that in the rule book? Sure, there are referees to limit the brutality that could stem from over aggressive players, but let's get real... a person on the opposing line might feel my face reminds them of someone they hate. I immediately become the target of revenge. Things like grabbing my face mask in order to snarl at me with clenched teeth, chopping my knees from under me (clipping), sneak attacks from behind and other unsavory physical punishments would become a part of my reality within a very short period of time. And with my luck, the referee or coach would never see it.

Why do they change the direction in which they play at half time? If you were not paying close attention or got distracted by a crazy fan, I think it would be easy to

run in the wrong direction. In fact, the opposing team would probably help you reach your goal to the end zone.

As for celebration, if I made a touchdown, I would want the world to know about it... at the very least, my mother. A stylish dance and pumping arms seem to me like a reasonable expression of a person's happiness. Why restrict that in football games? It seems to take the joy out of making the touchdown in the first place!

Baseball

If a person had never seen the game played, I think there are several things that would be confusing. For example, why do baseball players chew tobacco and then spit it out on the field? Is it to build up a type of oil slick so that opposing team member running around the bases slips and falls?

Why do many baseball teams wear white uniforms? I know a mother didn't design them. Its terribly hard to get grass stains out of white material... didn't anyone teach the uniform designers that? Sure, they look crisp and stylish for the national anthem, but the moment they slide into base, trip over their own feet trying to catch a foul ball, or slam into the bleachers, the stains would be etched into the uniform permanently.

Black or dark blue uniforms seem reasonable to me – they hides stains better. Sure, the ballplayers might sweat a bit more because dark material drinks in the sunlight, but seems to me some of those baseball players could stand to lose a few pounds. A perfect solution; sweat while you play and hide stains at the same time. Simple.

Why aren't all of the fans who sit in the first tier of seats given helmets? With the opportunity of foul balls rocketing into the stands and permanently causing brain damage, you'd think people would be more prepared. Sure, use the excuse of the hot sun. Well, don't come crying to me when you come home with a black eye caused by the fist of an over exuberant fan's enthusiastic rush to catch a foul ball.

Soccer

I have several questions...why can't the players handle the ball with their hands? The objective is the same as football – one team tries to get the ball down the field to the goal and the other side attempts to stop them. Since soccer originated outside of the United States, are other cultures better with their feet?

Also, the players don't wear the protective gear like the football players in the United States. Are they more polite in soccer or do they have better referees?

Don't the soccer players get headaches? Hitting that ball with their head for the duration of a game must hurt after a while. Do bald soccer players hit the ball as well as a person with hair? Or does an unruly hair day mess up the ability to accurately target a ball to a team member?

Golf

A person takes a stick with a knob at the end, swings it to hit a small white ball with the end goal of getting that ball into a hole located several hundred yards away. There are no directional signs on the fairways that say, "hit this way". Only the curve of the finely mowed lawn give you any hint as to which direction to play. The challenge for a golfer is avoiding trees, ditches, other players, geese, and sand pits. It seems to me that without the right amount of experience, someone could end up maiming another person by "driving the ball" into another golf cart buzzing up an opposing fairway.

Like soccer, why can't people use their feet or head to move the ball down the fairway? Granted, the ball is smaller and a bit harder, but it seems we would have more control over our body than we do over the stick which seems to have a mind of its own. Especially if the ball ends up embedded in the dirt near a tree stump.

A set number of strokes are set as the ideal objective for each hole and it's called a "par". What is that.. an abbreviation for "particularly good?" Why is one stroke under par called a "birdie"? Is it because the ball had to fly like a bird in order to have the player perform better than par? This is stuff that needs to be explained. Obviously, two under par, called an "eagle" means you are the king of birds.

Golf is considered a very gentlemanly sport. If you played with someone who gloats over their exceptional ability and each perfect stroke, I'd think having a club in your hand wouldn't be recommended. Only restraint and social disapproval keeps the golfers from beating each other up on the course. There aren't even referees unless a person is in a tournament! Maybe that is why so many players have caddies with them...they are there to remove the clubs a safe distance from the players when tempers flare.

Basketball.

I think this sport is a combination of soccer, football and golf... except different. For example, the swiftness and lack of protective clothing reminds me of soccer. The aggression and need to pass the ball from one player to another is a football element. The hole (even though it is up in the air and on a pole) feels like an adaptation of golf. There just aren't any sand pits to avoid. We leave that for volleyball.

I have one question regarding this sport. If the players are getting taller, why aren't the baskets placed farther up the pole? For heaven's sake, the players can easily jump up and hang from the baskets as it is. Make it a challenge for these tall individuals. Also, the accuracy of the majority of basketball players is astounding. Why not make the basket rims smaller like they do in a carnival. The game is about challenge and accuracy.

Personally, I like water polo which incorporates the best of all sports into one. In water polo, the field of play is a swimming pool. Goals are placed at each end of the pool, and a rubber ball is bounced back and forth between the participants on their respective teams. This sport requires minimal clothing, keeps a person cool during hot days, allows you to spit out water when it gets into your mouth, gives the upper body and lower body a workout and slows down an aggressive opponent (since they need to push through gallons of water) that you could escape out of the pool if needed and run away.

It is the only sport where I feel experience is not required except of course, there is the small hazard of drowning.

You can't have everything.

Karel Murray, a national motivational humorist and business trainer is the author of Straight Talk: Getting Off the Curb (a book co-authored with KC Lundberg), Think Forward!® (a monthly e-newsletter with over 4,200+ subscribers), The Profitability Blueprint Series: Career Building Concepts for the Real Estate Licensee and numerous articles in local, regional, and national publications. You can contact her at karel@karel.com or call 866-817-2986 or access her web site at <http://www.karel.com>