

## **Boris Becker's Steps to Success Part 2 - If**

You may have heard about this year's (2008) epic Wimbledon final? Or, like me, you may have been glued to the television not wanting the spectacle to end. What struck me was how both players appeared to be totally in control of their emotions for the entire match despite; at times being only a point away from winning or losing, the disruption caused by rain delays and the noise of the crowd.

During one of the rain delays Sue Barker interviewed Boris Becker and asked him about the part emotion played in success. Boris argued that, to be successful, you have to be aware of your emotions but not allow them to override your game plan. Latest research in how the brain works has demonstrated that, when the frontal lobe, the area of the brain dealing with emotions, is damaged people find it impossible to make decisions. In short, emotions are key to our ability to make decisions. Yet all too often we allow our emotions to take over and override logic. We lose our game plan.

As the rain cleared up the interview with Boris Becker drew to a close and attention turned to the two players returning to the tennis court. The commentator remarked on some of the photographs and trophies the players would pass on their way to the court including Rudyard Kipling's poem 'If', written for his son. As a string of former players recited the familiar words it seemed to encapsulate everything Boris had said about success.

"If" by Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

Food for thought?

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