



Compete...

Did you grow up a competitor? Did you like to compete? Whether it was for your parents' attention, the biggest piece of cake, or to be homecoming queen or the starting quarterback, my guess is we would all answer YES in some way.

For me, competition was fun. I loved to compete. Grades, girls, gridiron...you name it, I was a competitor.

Is competitiveness the result of nature, nurture, or both? Since I am experiencing change in my competitive nature I would have to answer BOTH. So, I believe we can "nurture" toward or away from competitiveness. Maybe better stated, I can learn and practice "good competition" and "avoid" "bad competition."

Clients often hear me talk about building

a second-nature muscle.

Certain muscles we are born with...those would be of the first-nature order. Most of us (absent a congenital condition) have a heart muscle that does its work without our work. Yes, we can give health to our heart muscle through healthy eating and cardiovascular exercise, but the heart muscle works, in many ways, "on its own." What I mean by second-nature muscle is best illustrated by my journey of generosity. I would not say I am a generous person "by nature." When I played basketball, I wanted the ball in my hands. Even though I was part of a team, I was a selfish, self-centered player. On the other hand, my wife Lyn is by nature a generous person. So, now being married 32 years, generosity has "grown a muscle" in me, mostly due to Lyn's positive "nurturing" and modeling.

Back to competition. For me to un-learn bad competition

I've had to build a second-nature muscle of co-operation.

And sometimes that second-nature muscle now proves stronger than my natural muscle to compete. When I talk about "bad competition," I am speaking of the

I-win-you-lose

scenarios. EITHER I get a client OR a "competitor" gets a client. EITHER I get my way OR you get your way. EITHER I win OR I lose...Western culture has squeezed us into an EITHER/OR, US/THEM,

WIN/LOSE way of thinking. And it's tough to break out of it. BUT, it's possible. And that possibility breeds HOPE.

A fresh way of looking at this might be to tap into something Angela Duckworth writes about in a book I'd highly recommend, **Grit**. Ms. Duckworth dove deeper into the meaning of the word **COMPETE**. She found out it's derivation is Latin. On page 265 of her book, she writes:

Quite literally, it means strive together. It doesn't have anything in its origins

about another person losing.

I love that! I think she captures what I mean by "good competition" – learning to strive together. What might that look like? One way would be by simply enjoying the beauty of the outdoors and the company I'm with when I mountain bike instead of striving to beat my friend to the top of a climb or get a "personal best" on a particular ride. What would it look like for you to strive together? At home, at work, in your community?

Just for today, try to COMPETE – to STRIVE TOGETHER!

You'll be glad you did!