

Take 5



A five minute read that could change the way you do business

Up the Underdogs!

Is it the battle of the underdog to be the top banana?

Well, here we are again in the Footy finals' month, the race towards that Aussie institution, the last weekend in September. And if that much ball sport isn't enough, we've got the Rugby Union World Cup tossed in just for good measure and an excuse to spend a little more time in front of the small screen.

I've noticed in the last few years in particular, Football players and coaches, like politicians seem to vie for the underdog status like it's some powerful and unseen force that will propel the players to some previously unknown plane of personal performance.

Well, last weekend, I thought I'd try this out and wandered off to the local betting establishment to put a few dollars on a certain Rugby League team that was enjoying the underdog status like you wouldn't believe. Oh great joy, the generous girl behind the window even provided me with odds that would see me winning \$ 7 for every dollar I placed in her care (for what I was sure to be only a short space of time). I could almost feel those crisp notes being passed back over the counter and into my eagerly awaiting hands.

Always the man to be seeking out that learning experience, I spent a few minutes after the game in question and reflected on the fact that the underdog status didn't in fact help my team to get up, but rather, they got a hiding of the first order.

Maybe it's our cultural heritage, but we do seem to be a nation that takes joy from the idea of being the underdog, or the oppressed masses or the classless and egalitarian society. I offer Ned Kelly, the Eureka Stockade, Military Conscription from 1951 to 1972 and, if you live in Queensland, a "free" ambulance service financed by the upper classes who own or are paying off their home as a few exhibits for consideration.

Our own version of success is a unique and very personal thing.

On the flip side, sometimes I also see resentment of those who have dared to do well. There are plenty of real world examples where the underdogs who started from behind the line have made good. To me we should use these people as examples, as a way of motivating ourselves and others to make the most of what we have.



Colin Paroz

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WWW.COLINPAROZ.COM



But sometimes I see something different. I see the same people moved from the underdog made good category to the tall poppy department. Apparently it's not so good to be a tall poppy around here.

I recall phases from my past such as "too big for their boots" and "we need to bring 'em down a peg or two". What's all that about? I've got a bit of a theory.

Most of us start off about the same and then from about the time we leave school we start to diversify in our degree of achievement. Those who achieve less can become a little uncomfortable around those who achieve more, and as I've emphasized before, it's not just about financial or material success, it's about success as we ourselves define it. Remember our own version of success is a unique and very personal thing. Some people, at some point, find it easier to criticize, ridicule or denounce the successful rather than examine their own goals and achievements. Something that I have learnt is that trying to take other peoples' goals and successes as my own is a sure fire recipe for frustration and probable failure. I am the only person who can define my success and how to achieve.

Personally, I reckon the whole underdog thing is over rated. I'd rather be fifteen points up at half time than 15 points in the hole every day of the week.

What I do agree with is that we should celebrate stories of people who overcome the odds to achieve success in life whether it's in the sporting arena, business, the community or personal wealth creation. Ultimately, nobody achieves success without facing and beating obstacles, solving the myriad of problems that arise along the way while all the time keeping the end goal firmly in sight. Let's celebrate where we are and where we're going, not just where we've come from.

Now back to my more immediate and pressing problem. I've got to come up with a way to get that money flowing back over the Betting shop counter and in my direction. Anyone like to wager me a few dollars on Japan coming home in the World Cup, I'll even spot you a few points start.

Enjoy the ride!



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