SELF-CONTROL

Definition

The quality that allows you to stop yourself from doing things you want to do, but that might not be in your best interest.

Story

Todd Marinovich was raised by his dad with the purpose of making Todd the perfect athlete. Todd's father, Marv, is a former pro football player and a strength and conditioning trainer. The young Marinovich was meticulously engineered and nurtured into a star quarterback by his father. As a high school quarterback in California, he passed for 9,182 yards, which stood as a record for more than two decades. In 1987, he was named the National High School Player of the Year, *Parade* magazine All-American, and the National High School Coaches Association's offensive player of the year. He attended the University of Southern California, where he was named the College Freshman of the Year, won a Rose Bowl, and was considered for the Heisman Trophy Award. Todd Marinovich entered the NFL draft in 1991, after his junior year, and was selected by the Oakland Raiders with the 24th pick in the first round.

In 1994, three years after his NFL start, Todd Marinovich quit professional football. What went wrong?

Growing up, Todd Marinovich was the poster child of self-control. His father wanted to answer the question, "How well could a kid develop if you provided him with the perfect environment?"

As a baby, Todd Marinovich was fed only fresh vegetables, fruits, and raw milk. For 9 months prior to Todd's birth, his mother used no salt, sugar, alcohol, or tobacco. Before he could walk, he learned to crawl on a balance beam. While in the crib, Todd's dad would stretch Todd's hamstrings. During his first 18 years, Todd never ate a Big Mac, Oreo, or any processed food. When he participated in birthday parties, he would bring his own cake and ice cream, prepared without refined sugar and white flour.

Marinovich's discipline and self-control was previewed on the cover of *California* magazine with the headline "ROBO QB; THE MAKING OF A PERFECT ATHLETE." A month later, *Sports Illustrated* published an article, titled "Bred to Be a Superstar," which declared Marinovich "America's first test-tube athlete."

In truth, Todd was living a double life. He began smoking marijuana during his senior year of high school. By the end of his freshman year at USC, he was addicted to cocaine, which led to his first arrest. During his brief NFL career, he would take amphetamines before games, and one time he cut his hand with a crack pipe during half-time. He later became addicted to heroin and was arrested a total of 9 times.

What went wrong with Marinovich was that he realized that he could and decided that he would. Self-control is knowing you can, but deciding you won't.

Quotes

"What lies in our power to do, it lies in our power not to do." ***Aristotle***

"One can be the master of what one does, but never of what one feels." ***Gustave Flaubert***

"The best fighter is never angry." ***Lao Tzu***

Interaction

1. How might Todd Marinovich's life been different today if he had exercised self-control?

2. How would your life be different today if you had exercised self-control in the past?

3. How will your life be different tomorrow if you exercise self-control today?

Main Idea

One of the greatest challenges in life is learning to control oneself. The next time you are upset at something or someone, think before you act. Never do something permanently foolish, because you are temporarily upset. You are always responsible for how you act, no matter how you feel. Self-control means doing what matters the most, not what feels the easiest.

Take Away

Self-control is knowing you can, but deciding you won't.