

Photo provided by Brenda Warner



EYE ON THE

Former NFL quarterback Kurt Warner shares his strategy for building successful relationships.

By Kurt Warner



PRIZE

recently took a couple of my boys to the Santa Monica Pier. We shared the joy of spending some time together, laughing a lot on the crazy rinky-dink rides I remember so well from county fairs when I was growing up, and creating memories that will last a lifetime.

The best part for all of us was the time we spent playing those old carnival games that cost a lot of money and leave you with either a monumental feeling of disappointment or another raggedy stuffed animal. I especially enjoyed watching my kids engage in so many different ones ... and we played just about every game that was there.

I enjoyed this part of the trip so much because each game had a different strategy. You couldn't just blindly go up to any of them and expect to win without trying to figure out the best means of defeating it and why it was set up the way it was. So this became not only a physical exercise, but a mental problem-solving task as well.

Some of the games simply required enough brawn in order for the player to win. Others required great accuracy and correctly picking out the easiest target to hit. Another one came down to finesse, having the ability to gently toss a softball so it didn't bounce out of the bucket. Each game was designed in a specific way so the fair owners could take home more money than they gave away in prizes. The best way to accomplish this was by making a fair-goer approach each game differently if he or she wanted to win.

This philosophy benefits the owners because most people don't want to think when they go to the county fair. They want to drop \$5 on the counter and then go up and throw the ball really hard and win that BIG stuffed animal for their lady or kids and feel really good about themselves. (We also love carrying around the huge prize, putting it on display so everyone else can see it. It's a nice ego-builder!) The problem for us big, strong guys is that we don't normally win these games due to our muscle. So after we lose, we just keep dropping more money until we eventually win, or we quit and take a big hit to our pride. And we all know which one is likely to come first.

It's funny: If you watch people play these games, they never want to stay at the same game for very long. Even though they are good at one, and could stay there and win all night long, they inevitably move on to the next game after just a couple tries. Why? Because the prizes are different and the challenge is greater!

We love to prove that we can win *all* the different games. We want to show how versatile we are, because that's more impressive than just sitting around and



Photo by Bruce Yeung



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WARNER LAUNCHES APP

Retired NFL quarterback and two-time MVP Kurt

Warner and his friends from the Good Sports Gang have launched a series of sports-themed apps for the iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch. The first one, Kurt Warner's Football 101 teaches kids and novices alike all about football fundamentals. This interactive guidebook features cool videos and on-screen animations that illustrate different aspects of the game.

Choose from two levels, "Rookie" or "Pro," and then earn points for each correct answer, which are displayed on your own personal scoreboard. And that's not all — you can keep racking up points by continuing to answer new questions, plus the ones you missed earlier at the end of the first full round. Best of all, you can test your knowledge in the exciting "Lightning Round" timed quizzes at the end of each quarter. If you get all the answers right, you win a Silver Trophy and can move on to the "Bonus Round"!

The app is available in the App Store on iTunes.

doing the same thing over and over again. The problem is, most of us are one-trick ponies. We are really good at one thing, but struggle when we have to change our approach. We feel as if we have perfected a certain way of doing things and we want to bring the same approach to everything we do. But it doesn't take long to realize that it's hard to win many of these games this way.

OK, I know what you are thinking: *What does this have to do with my life?* Well, what I realized while playing these games with my boys is that the people and the world around us are set up in a very similar manner. No two people are exactly alike and no two people can be approached in a relationship in exactly the same way. Strategy must be used within every relationship to make it a successful one and to make sure each one produces the BIGGEST prize.

I need look no further than my own household to see this principal on display. I love sports — specifically, football. This is great when it comes to relating to my two middle boys. They love sports like I do, and it speaks to them and draws us closer when I go outside and play with them. But if I try to get my girls to hang with me by offering to play a game of football with them, chances are I will probably be throwing the ball to myself in the backyard.

In order to cultivate an effective relationship with my girls, I have to figure out what speaks to them and choose to join them in it. This means

I often spend my days putting together fashion shows, watching interpretive dance (I use the word "interpretive" loosely), and playing with dolls. That's not necessarily the way I would like to spend my time, but if I want to connect with my girls, it's how it's gotta be.

Then there is my 22-year-old special needs son, who simply loves to pick up trash and listen to music. A day of enjoyment for Zack is just the two of us (he hates it when "all the little ones" have to come) taking a ride around the neighborhood looking for trash. Last week, on the way to a movie, we saw two broken tree limbs lying on the road, and we pulled over so Zack could jump out and throw them in the back of the truck. He never stopped smiling the rest of the night. Mission accomplished. Connection made!

And my wife? She loves a good ol' foot massage, an evening lying in bed together watching all *her* favorite shows, a corny love note that reminds her of all the reasons I love her, or even a simple gesture of letting her go to sleep early while I put the kids to bed. These are all things I have spent time figuring out over the years so that we stay connected. I have come to realize there is no way to truly impact another person without being connected to him or her. And the greatest knowledge I have gained over the years is that the best way to connect with people is by meeting them right where they are and not trying to get them to come to you!