

The Game Is Going to End

Mortality is not a reason to withdraw from life. It is the clearest invitation to stop saving your full participation for later.

There is a strange bargain many of us make with life. We will participate fully once we feel safe enough.

We will say the honest thing after the relationship feels secure. We will begin the meaningful work after the finances are settled. We will rest after the next accomplishment, love after the risk of rejection has passed, and enjoy ourselves when there is no longer anything serious to manage.

The bargain sounds responsible. It is also impossible.

There is no point at which life removes all uncertainty and hands us permission to open our heart. Security keeps moving because the mind keeps updating its requirements. One problem resolves, and another condition appears. We become very skilled at preparing to live.

Mortality interrupts that arrangement.

Not as a threat. Not as something morbid. It simply tells the truth we have been trying not to hear: the game is going to end. The calendar is not unlimited. The people we love will change. We will change. Whatever part of our life we keep saving for later is being spent right now.

The mind hears this and may rush toward drama. *Then I should quit everything. I should make a reckless move. I should force a grand adventure.* But urgency is not the same as aliveness. Panic is still fear directing the show.

“So let's play fully and with our full heart, love fully and participate fully.”

TIM O. DAVIS, FRIDAY GROUP CALL

Full participation is quieter than that.

It means not withholding your presence from the life you already have. It means listening when someone is speaking instead of preparing your defense. It means doing today's work with your whole attention, then putting it down when the work is done. It means saying "I love you" without using those words to purchase a particular response.

We put tremendous pressure on ourselves to prove that we lived well. Achievement becomes evidence. Status becomes evidence. Being needed becomes evidence. Yet at the end of the game, the scorecard looks different. The question is less

often *How much did I control?* and more often *Was I here for it?*

To live with an open heart is not to become careless. The heart and the calendar can work together. You can make the plan, protect the people who depend on you, and attend to the practical details. The difference is that planning serves life instead of postponing it.

Fear says, hold back until you know how this will turn out. Love says, bring the best of yourself to the moment you have.

This is especially important for people with influence. A leader's unspoken fear of loss can shape a whole organization. It produces defensive decisions, small truths, and a culture that protects the position rather than serves the purpose. Remembering that the game ends can return leadership to its proper scale. The title is temporary. The effect you have on people is happening now.

You do not need a crisis to receive this teaching. Notice the ordinary endings already around you. Do not confuse temporary with unimportant. Passing is what makes your attention sacred.

So play fully. Not frantically. Fully.

Bring your heart to the conversation. Take the walk. Make the apology without demanding that it be accepted. Create the thing that matters even if it is not guaranteed to succeed. Let beauty interrupt your efficiency.

And when fear asks whether opening will protect you from pain, tell it the truth. No. An open heart will feel more, not less. But pain moves. A closed heart does not stop the ending; it only prevents us from being present before it comes.

We are not here to win permanence. We are here to participate, to love, to learn, and to bring light while the field is still open.

THE PRACTICE

Choose one place where you have been waiting to feel completely safe. Take one wholehearted, non-dramatic step today: tell the truth, give your attention, make the call, begin the work, or say the love that is already there.