

This is the time of year when many of us love to get involved in outside activities. Our plans have moved from the cozy confines of our couch in front of a warm, crackling fireplace and new releases from the video streams, to the great outdoors, where mother nature is busting out all over. Company picnics, bar-b-qs, softball leagues and nights at the ballpark are all on our lists of things to do before July and August, when the heat and humidity drive us back inside.

When I was younger, I use to have a standing date every week at a local golf course with my Dad.

I hated it.

I was a young, stupid kid with a macho ego that didn't have a clue. When I stepped up to the first tee, I did so with an attitude of, "I'm gonna whip the old man good this time." Even if he was my dad, I was going to take no prisoners.

He of course, would step up to the first tee and announce, "Well me boy, today might be your day. The old man is feeling pretty old today."

As was the case week after week, the next 18 holes found my dad standing on the greens waiting for his son to come out, come out, wherever he was. The steam rising from my dwindling attitude was the only clue for my locations.

But one night stands out most in my memory.

We both went through our usual rituals on the first tee, found our way to the green and putted out, when we both realized that neither one of us had picked up a score card. Horrors of horrors to the male ego, we were resolved to playing the round of golf without keeping a tally.

For the next 17 holes, my dad and I did a lot of talking, laughing and enjoying the beauty that a golf course affords you. It was the most enjoyable round of golf I had ever played.

When it was over, we both realized that we had played golf the way it was meant to be played. It had become one of the best lessons about life that I could learn.

We all tend to be score card people. We get so wrapped up in keeping score in life instead of simply enjoying life. We get so focused on playing by the rules of the game instead of appreciating the many joys of simply being able to participate in the game.

When I carried a score card with me, I was too preoccupied with working my score that I usually ended up back at my car more frustrated and tired than when I arrived. I never afforded myself the opportunity to simply enjoy the game. But that day I went back to my car renewed, refreshed and feeling great. I had just spent the best day ever with my dad.

I had finally beat the game of golf.

I have a hunch that there are a lot of people who would enjoy life more if they could only learn to leave the score cards out of it. Golf wasn't meant for score cards, and neither was life.

As you plan your picnics, barbecues and ball games, don't fool yourself into thinking that you must follow your score card to the letter in order for the activity to turn out perfect. The activity will turn out perfect when you learn to simply enjoy the opportunity of participating in it.

It has been a long time since that round of golf with my dad. I have since moved to Nashville, and do not even own a set of clubs. On those rare occasions when I do play a round of golf, I assure you that I am one player who makes no attempt to grab a score card as I head for the first tee.

This has become consistent with how I play the game of life as well.

Just A Thought