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## Competition vs Cooperation

Friday, October 07, 2016

Thank you once again for your comments and good wishes on Joe's continued recovery. He's doing remarkably well although I will still be holding my breath until CT scans show all residual blood and swelling completely gone. They say that will take a long time. I'm just grateful that we do have time. At age 71 subdural hematomas of that size could have killed him. Being "in good shape" to begin with was key to recovery.

I posted my status that we are almost back to normal. That's almost. He hasn't been given permission to drive yet and although he's been walking nearly 2 miles at a time, I don't let him go alone. Also we got him one of those medical alert buttons and we are living at our house in town. It's down the block from the hospital and more convenient for doctor's appointments. Our lake house is 25 miles away. We drive out there every few days to pick up the mail and check on things.

As for the title of this blog, I learned something about myself as I had to find something to occupy my mind beside worry.

TV was out. Joe is supposed to avoid stress. Hah! In this election year? Not possible, so we haven't even turned it on.

This house belonged to my parents and after they died, we just kept it. In a closet I found a scrabble game from my childhood.

Playing against myself brought back memories. Even as a child I always had a large vocabulary and was very good with words so "winning" was easy. I suggested to my playmates that we not keep score, but try to make the biggest words we could and use all the letters by the end of the game.

That became our pattern. Winning was redefined - use all the letters, cover the board and make words others could build off of.

When we finished a game that we were proud of, we would often take a picture of it. I did that too for old times sake.

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Eventually this got rather lonely (DH never did like Scrabble) so I turned to an online version.

I decided to only play against the computer - a disembodied brain that while programmed to win, really didn't care one way or the other.

I learned that Scrabble competitions are the antithesis of my goal. Here you go for points. Any 2 letter word properly placed is better than a carefully crafted 6 letter word on which one can build. Oh well, I would adapt.

I discovered that I could beat the computer at its own game. I too could make nonsense sounding words while playing "keep away." That is, never make a word that would allow my opponent to use those red triple word scores. And I win, just about every single time. Often by a lot. I really am very good with words.

However, our boards look strange to me. Often the words are scrunched into one part of the board while we make words like jo, ka, ki, xi, xu and za.

I decided to adapt. If I could no longer play the game on my terms, at least I would make it a learning experience. I created a spreadsheet of those weird words the computer posted and even those that I inadvertently came up with. Zinco? Ganister? Evulsis? Now it's a different experience. I even check the official dictionary later for the meaning.

I don't mean to imply that there's anything wrong with healthy competition. Done properly, it helps us to improve. When running in a race, I've been known to find an extra gear when I see the finish line, especially if I see some women who looks like she's in my age group. You would think there's an Olympic medal at stake. LOL

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## Member Comments About This Blog Post



**MARYJEANSL**

I am with you in preferring cooperation to competition. I mostly gave up bridge because of the way it's played. If you and your partner have a great hand, you aren't allowed to bid it and play it because the opposing team will outbid you deliberately, since the points they will lose by doing so are significantly fewer than the points your team could win. I just couldn't stand playing that way. I also like playing Scrabble just to see if we can use up all the tiles to make words. My oldest son, though, likes to play competitively, and he just loves it if he can beat me.

1688 days ago



**CD17233848**

I'm so glad Joe's made a good recovery from his surgery for the subdural hematoma, and that you've both come through such a trying medical ordeal so well. Scrabble! I haven't played it for years, as my husband's not much of a fan. But, how surprising that there's an online version of Scrabble, too :) My late aunt used to be quite "inventive" when it came to Scrabble words; we still remember some of her more creative would-be words. And, you \*look\* like an Olympic medalist!



1690 days ago



**HAYBURNER1969**

Ha ha ha, I love it when I put together letters that look like they could be a strange word - and it turns out it IS a word! I really need to start writing those words down because I never remember them.

1700 days ago



**DS9KIE**

WAY TO GO 🤗

1705 days ago



**MARYALICE411**

I have a fitbit and am on the chat thread of people over 60. One of the things we have talked about is when competition becomes more important than health. People that wear fit bits tend to become step crazy anything for steps. But that about exercises that don't have steps, what about things you enjoy that don't have steps. Sometimes there is something more important than winning, sometimes you need to say you won if.

1705 days ago



**WELLBEING67**

So glad to know your DH is recovering well. May his recovery continue to 100%. My DH and I play scrabble every Saturday evening. We are very evenly matched so the win usually comes down to who draws the better tiles to work with. Nothing more frustrating than 6 or 7 vowels at once! Sometimes we score close to 300 points per game. Winner does the dinner dishes (yes, you



read that right - balm for the loser, humility for the winner.) 🤗

1705 days ago



**FUNLOVEN**

I'm not much of a Scrabble player, but that sounds so interesting - keeping track of the strange words the computer comes up with and checking the meaning later! I'm actually don't like competition because it places extra pressure on me that I don't like and eventually causes me to quit. I do, however, like the side-by-side support that I get when walking with a friend, for example, because she can spur me on when my step pace starts to lag into a stroll!



Enjoy the game!  
1705 days ago



**CD3409143**

AWESOME

1706 days ago



**PEGGYO**

have fun!!

1706 days ago



**DOVESEYES**

Loved this blog thanks :) thinking of you both.  
1706 days ago

**ONEKIDSMOM**

I like the long words, use all the letters, cover the board goal better, myself. What fun is all that tiny words defensive strategy...? I suppose if all you care about is winning... but learning? Used as a bonding tool with kids / the next generation? Give me good solid real words any day!



Glad for both the progress your DH is showing, and your wisdom in handling the living

arrangements for best results/safety.



1706 days ago

Comment edited on: 10/7/2016 8:14:27 PM

**CD4114015**

SO happy dh continues to improve! Prayers still going out for you both!  
1706 days ago

**HOLLYM48**

I am happy to hear that your hubby continues to heal and get better with each passing day. Working in MRI, I agree, these are hard things to overcome but the healthier we are as we go through those journeys really make a huge difference! Here is to continued healing and healthy competition!  
1706 days ago

**SYLPHINPROGRESS**

With Scrabble, a tight board is a joy to behold. Once upon a time I played for keeps even when the game was casual. There can be relaxation in competition, the satisfaction of taking on a job and seeing it through. A truly casual game also has its charms. I'd never get far now, as it's probably been 30+ years since my last game.  
1706 days ago

**LIVEDAILY**

I miss playing Scrabble. My DH doesn't enjoy playing board or card games. When I used to visit my Mom, we would play 2 games every night. I miss that.  
1706 days ago

**GINIEMIE**

Oh I so love scrabble and numbles. Erik isn't into board games and besides with his Aphasia it would be torture. Never thought to play against myself though. I had nine siblings and five children there always used to be someone to play with. I try to teach my granddaughters but I have to be more simple in my word choices. Thanks for the idea. I like long words too, not boxing up the game so others can't make many points.



Keeping you both in my prayers.



1706 days ago

**JEANKNEE**

Joe's continued progress is good to hear. And, obviously, you enjoy Scrabble!



It's always been interesting to me to hear from other runners about their awareness of other runners while they're running. I'm oblivious. I guess I'm in my own world focused on my own experience. Guess I don't have that kind of a competitive spirit. I also don't watch my GPS watch while I run. I simply turn it on to track the event when I start and turn it off at the end. I'm not an endurance runner though, either. I've only run three 5k's.  
1706 days ago

**DR1939**

After my husband had several small strokes we bought a Kindle and started him playing Words with Friends. We encouraged all who knew him to play with him. It likely was the best therapy he had. He still plays daily with a number of friends. Some he beats, some he splits, and some he always loses, but he doesn't mind. Lately he has beaten me several times. It is the only therapy that he has maintained over the 5 years since the strokes.  
1706 days ago

**PHEBESS**

Good idea on the medicalert button thing.



I've never tried Scrabble on the computer - that's funny that you make up words! (And yes, I early

on learned to avoid giving someone else the chance to get a triple word score. Strategy is just as important.)

Epoxy! What a great Scrabble word!

And continued get well wishes!!!!  
1706 days ago



**PHOENIX1949**



1706 days ago



**HELEN\_BRU**

My dh quit playing scrabble with me when I made such a big fuss about winning!  
1706 days ago



**SMILINGEYES2**

Love playing board games or cards. I tend to enjoy the social experience more versus winning or losing so liked your idea of redefining winning.

Hope your dh continues his great recovery.  
1706 days ago



**TERI-RIFIC**

I'm glad to hear things continue to go well. I quit playing Words with friends for the reasons you mention. I think it is much more interesting to make an unusual word than a high scoring one. I wanted to make the rule that you can't use a word you don't know the meaning of. My husband was the worst offender.  
1707 days ago



**NELLJONES**

I got my husband a Medic Alert necklace. It has a phone number and a code, and EMTs know to look for it and call if he needs help and I'm not around. They will tell the EMTs all of his medications, his diagnoses, and doctor phone numbers. I got one for my sister, too (she's epileptic), and she got one for her daughter after her seizure last year. It isn't a button, but has all pertinent info.  
1707 days ago



**DOROTHY58X**

Great post!  
1707 days ago



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