

Rodger on Retirement

A changed life in retirement

While attending a conference in Dallas, Texas, I sat listening to the keynote address presented by Emmitt Smith. He is considered by many to be one of the greatest running backs in NFL history. From All-American at the University of Florida to 15 seasons in the NFL, he managed to break Walter Peyton's record as the NFL's all time rushing leader. As I sat there, I thought to myself that this fellow knows a bit about determination, focus and success. So I took out a fresh pad of paper and began to take notes.

He spoke about adversity and having to figure out a way to overcome it. He said "*It's time to change. Do not let challenges paralyze you.*" He recommended we ask for assistance from others, and stop being stubborn thinking we can do everything by ourselves.

Towards the end of the session I asked him about balancing all the things you want to accomplish in life while having enough time for family. He replied slowly, forming his thoughts as he answered me. As best I can recollect, he said that it is important to surround yourself in life with people who can help you. You will spend too much time trying to accomplish things if you try to do it all by yourself. He said do not be afraid to ask for help. He was adamant that time always be made for family and children.

He told us that when he decided to quit football, he turned to others for guidance, advice and strategy. He recognized that as good as he was in A, that success did not necessarily translate to B.

Today he leads:

- Emmitt Smith Enterprises
- Pat & Emmitt Smith Charities
- EJ Smith Construction
- Emmitt Smith Brand Marketing
- E Smith Legacy Real Estate

I have counseled people over the years that have refused to change. These individuals have branded themselves one-dimensional and do not see that there are many avenues of success open to them. It is possible to reinvent yourself at nearly any age. A former school administrator can step out and have a fulfilling part-time career to stay active during their retirement. A retired nurse can reinvent themselves into dozens of healthcare-related fields to continue to earn money in retirement, while enjoying a different focus than the last three decades.

What it takes is imagination, and believe it or not, we all have it. Sit in a quiet place with a pad and pencil and list out 50 things you can do in retirement. It is not easy, but stick with it. The last ten will be like squeezing water from a rock.

Somehow I doubt that Emmitt Smith thought about his future charities, real estate or construction activities while wearing the uniform of a Dallas Cowboy.