

The Five stages of Death and Dying

Denial:

I got my NAB Cup footy record so I've got my list of all the opposition players, as well as my TV recording as well as my comfortable armchair. So my feet are up after a day in my studio listening to North Melbourne get their first win for the season. I have been painting away my anticipation.

Unfortunately, a little bit of hope has returned over the week, not the grand-final kind of grand hope, but a hope of at least a better showing. I mean, we've had a week with no serious injuries, no scandals, the ex-school girl hasn't appeared (though we are faced with a Ricki Nixon section on the "Sunday Night" program on Seven with a whack of a distressed Fevola).

We have several new players, Cripps and Johnson. We also have young guns Steven and Smith as well as the usual suspects. There's been some rain and now we're ready.

Anger:

C'mon! Quick start for a behind, matched by one for Adelaide. Messy, hard, equal 15 minutes, no goals. Tippett gets Crows first. We don't look at home with ourselves. Thank goodness the Crows haven't kicked straight. Gilbert gives away a free that Crows McKernon gets perfectly. Yes, out on the full and 50 metres to us. We need all the help we can get. Fischer, splays it. Goddard a free but poor kick and turn over. I'm ready to switch off as Tippett marks from 20 metres and of course, scores. Am contemplating turning off the TV and not putting myself through this, Almanac or not. Shneider breaks but we're going to play this game one point at a time. Five minutes left, no goal to Saints in 1st quarter. Finally, Crows make a mistake and Gilbert has a shot at goal. A point. Two minutes of chaos, and Saints crawl it back to a mark to Reiwoldt. Another point. And of course, Tippett, goals.

Bargaining:

Second quarter, Reiwoldt tag has something happen to his arm. More fumbling, mistakes, Crows, Crows, Crows. Douglas gets another goal. Walker goals after Blake gives away a free. Finally, they miss. Seventeen minutes gone. One second of good Saints play and Crows mark in from our goal. More mistakes and Crows get another, Wright. A bit of effort and St.Kilda get a free via Stephens. Yeah. Nineteen minutes into the second quarter and we get our first goal. There is more energy and

more effort but nothing until Tippett gets a mark that we can only remember in our forward line. No cookies.

Depression:

I actually turn it off and we starting watching Independence Day". When it first came out my son bought the video and it took me years to be brave enough to watch it but I'm not good at suspense, my "nerves" can't take it. Likewise with "Jurassic Park" and the "Mummy 1 & 2". Once I watched it with my kids, I got into the sheer madness, comedy and adventure. So I am relieved that I can distract myself and watch something that is deliberately ridiculous rather than watching this once mighty almost winners Saints team die a slow painful death.

(Checked the scores in the interval, Crows 41, Saints21. Zamir says not bad, but he is ever the optimist.)

In the movie, the goodies win again.

(Scores now Crows 51, Saints 40. Rina rings and says to watch. We've missed some improvement but it's over by the time we brace ourselves again. Walker kicks an impossible goal. Nick Reiwooldt concussed. Del Santo goals. McWalter misses. At the end of the third, Crows 58 Saints 48.

Acceptance:

Rina and I are on the phone all last quarter.

Gilbert splays. McWalter, off line. Point by point by point. Thank goodness Adelaide have the foot off the petrol. Stevens, out on the full. Cripps for a second? Please? Goal. Yesss. That was almost good. A bounce 15 metres from Crows goal, an illegal tackle and free to Adelaide. Then a 50 metre free. Chris Knights goals another. The coffin is shut. The window is closed, the gig is up, the war is over, the deed is done, the cockies fallen off the perch as Dangerfield gets another goal. The violins are playing. The Milne does a Milne. Every time hope comes a'knocking, it stirs the yearning again. Still plenty of time to wish which is very dangerous. Douglas kicks another. The dog is dead, it's done and dusted, the last post has played.

We need four goals. (Yeah, right, says Rina down the line). Point to McEvoy. Clint Jones, out on the full. Oh vey? Woe is me, us and them. Schneider, another point.

The fat lady is screaming out her anthem and it ain't "When the Saints come marching in."
Schneider kicks one. Now they are just playing with my emotions. Goodbye Saints of the last few years, the almost boys. Hello Tippett, very very happy Crows. We have to eat Crow for dinner. Free against Baker. Douglas goals. Put us out of our misery. Schneider misses.

Texts of condolences come in. This is Saints Footy circa 2011.