

The Road To Justice Starts Here

I am a competitive junkie, RAISING A COMPETITIVE JUNKIE, AND I AM OK WITH THAT

By Attorney Michael T. Gibson

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As I approach my forty-fifth birthday this month, I am constantly being reminded that I am officially entering middle age. When I look in the mirror, the hair is always grayer, and there is less of it in some spots. And the six pack in my abs is more like a four pack with a spare tire at the end. But, as I get older, I also come to understand certain things about myself more and more. One thing that I have noticed over the past few years, more prominently than at any other point in my life, is that I am a serial, competitive junkie. I have an almost unquenchable thirst for competition. It drives me daily, in almost everything that I do. I want to be the best lawyer, the best husband, the best Dad, the best adult hockey player, coach, and just about the best at anything anyone can do. In fact, one of my wife's favorite sayings to me is that it must be exhausting being me.

Jen is not wrong. It is sometimes exhausting being me. And I wish I had a switch that I could turn off that drive and enjoy some downtime. But at this stage in my life, I am pretty confident that I have no ability to turn that switch off. In fact, as I get older, it gets worse. I am sure some psychologist could have a field day with me. However, I am not ashamed or embarrassed by this trait. In fact, I think it is the number one reason why I have gotten to where I have in life. And I own it, and do my best to channel it in positive directions.

I don't think I ever realized exactly how competitive I am until the last couple years, and watching my son also grow to be a competitive junkie. Coaching his hockey team, and being around his teammates, and their parents, Brady and I sometimes stand out. When we lose, it is devastating to us. We are just not wired to lose a game and go to team lunch, and joke around and act like nothing happened. So, it has become quite common that after a loss, the two Gibson men are off in a corner, by themselves, and away from the group. And if you were to go over to our table, likely we are engaged in a conversation of what went wrong, and how do we fix it for the next game.

I see it in the gym or in our practices together. Brady is the only other person I know that if I beat him in a drill, or I outlift him during a workout rep, he is coming back on the next rep and trying to one up me. Our on-ice practices together do not look anything like a father and son that love each other and are best friends. There are days where it looks like all-out war, and that these two are going to kill each other. Our skills coaches and our trainers have just come to accept that we are the two most competitive people they know, and that this is our process.

But what I have figured out about our dynamic is that I think we both need each other to make ourselves better. There are days on the ice where he only wants to go against me. This isn't because I am the best player or in any way close to how good he is. It is because he knows that I am going to go as hard as I can at him, every single rep. And for me, I know that I am not going to face a more furious attacker than him. We are just going to go at each other, each one going all out the entire practice. And

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impacto voto latino

Por Juan José Rodríguez, Abogado de Enlace

De acuerdo con estadísticas ofrecidas por la página oficial de la Oficina de Elecciones en el condado de Osceola en Florida central, el porcentaje de votantes fue solo un 17.26%, es decir, de cada 10 votantes registrados con derecho a votar, casi 8 no fueron a votar. En el momento de escribir este artículo no tengo estadísticas oficiales, pero me han comunicado que también el voto hispano estuvo bien por debajo de lo esperado.

Que triste... dejar que otras personas decidan quien va a gobernar, y tomar decisiones importantes que afectaran mi vida y la de mi familia. Mas triste aun es cuando los medios noticiones nos informan que el voto hispano puede influenciar en gran manera quienes lleguen al poder. EN las elecciones presidenciales del 2020, alrededor de 32 millones de latinos votaron. Esa cantidad puede lucir sorprendente, sin embargo, solo fue el 13.6 % de los votantes hispanos que estaban inscritos para ejercer el voto en el 2020. Se pueden imaginar que si con solo una tercera parte o el 30% de los votantes hispanos registrados para votar, hubiesen sido alrededor de 70 millones de votantes hispanos. Sin duda alguno, seriamos los que seleccionarían el presidente de los Estados Unidos.

Según estudios realizados al respecto, existen varias razones por las cuales los hispanos no votan, especialmente en la Florida Central. Muchas lo atribuyen a hispanos recién llegados, especialmente de Puerto Rico, que no se han adaptado aun, ni están familiarizados con el proceso electoral. Además, algunos boricuas que se mudan para esta área se pueden sentir desconectados del proceso político, especialmente si fueron participes activos en las elecciones en Puerto Rico. Y como si fuera poco, después que se acostumbraron en Puerto Rico a no tener trabajo en el día de votar, aquí en la Florida, es un día normal, y tenemos que trabajar a pesar de que sea un día de elecciones.

Desgraciadamente, estos puntos y algunos más son los que inducen a que el voto latino, especialmente el puertorriqueño, no diga presentes en las urnas. Esto obliga a los candidatos a movilizarse con eventos y actividades que promuevan la participación en las primarias y elecciones.

Sin embargo, en este mismo estado, nos fijamos en las estadísticas del voto cubano en el sur de Florida, y la diferencia es significativa. Usualmente, en cualquier elección o primaria, más del 50% de los cubanos registrados con derecho para votar ejercer su voto. En el condado MIAMI-Dade, por ejemplo, Es significativo como alcaldes, comisionados y otros cargos municipales son cubanoamericanos. Esta representación también se puede observar a nivel estatal, y hasta a nivel nacional, donde hay muchos representantes en el Congreso y hasta el senador Marco Rubio, que son cubanoamericanos.

En resumen, el voto hispano puede ser la diferencia entre ganar o perder una elección, pero no lo estamos utilizando. Mientras tanto, estamos permitiendo que otros decidan por nosotros. Digamos presente, debemos darnos a respetar y por favor, Salgamos a votar. ■

"I am a Competitive Junkie, Raising a Competitive Junkie, and I am Ok with That" continued from page 1.

regardless of who wins the day that day, each of us will be better having engaged in the same.

Candidly, I am losing more and more of those battles. Brady is entering his athletic prime. I don't think I have had an athletic prime. But I am noticing signs of my age. Two years ago, I could do three or four days on the ice, and not feel tired. Hockey is really hard to play with no jump or juice in your legs. But this summer, when I hit the third day of the week, it was like hitting a brick wall, and those Thursday practices were really hard for me. In the gym, he can push heavier weight and be no worse for wear the following day. If I try keeping up, and pushing the weight, I am going to be on the couch not moving for a day. But even though I know I will pay a price physically, there is no back down, there is no tap out. I do whatever it takes to match or beat him. And he does the same.

Now, I realize that some of you are reading and probably wondering is this type of competitiveness good for a healthy father-son or parent-child relationship. The truth is I have no idea. But for our relationship, it is exactly what each of us needs. And it makes each of us better. It has helped me become one of the better defensive defensemen in my adult hockey leagues. And Brady is one of the best players in our Hockey program. And outside of the athletic arena, this competitiveness has pushed him to be a straight A student, while taking all AP courses, and it has pushed me to build one of the larger personal injury firms in Central Florida. You see, like I said earlier, I just do not think we possess an "on-off" switch. This competitive nature and mindset is just at the core of our being. It is who we are, and it forms the foundation of how we see life.

If I have done anything right as a parent, it has been to recognize this similar character trait in my son, and to steer him to use it and the drive and motivation that it gives you into putting in the work to be successful in life. In all honesty, I really believe that both Brady and I hate losing more than we love winning. It is that fear and dread of losing that pushes us to get up off the couch and go do something, each and every day, that gives us a better chance of winning.

As a coach, I am not shy about pushing winning and the importance of doing the work to win. I have had some parents call me out for my ultra-competitive mindset and nature. What I tell them is that life is competitive. Business is competitive. And someday, some employer is going to be relying on your son to win that day. I am not going to back down from teaching them a mindset of doing everything you can do and putting in the work to win. If we gave it everything we had, both in the game and in practice. I can accept a loss. Some of life's greatest lessons are taught by perceived losses. But you take the lessons learned in those losses, and you do the work to be better.

I truly believe that the competitive nature of personal injury law was one of the reasons I chose this profession. In my line of work, if you don't win, you don't get paid. If we try a case and lose, I am out usually around \$75,000 to \$100,000. Simply put, we won't be around very long if

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it's hockey season

AND WE HAVE A NEW DRIVER

By: Attorney Michael T. Gibson

Labor Day means one thing in the Gibson House – It is Travel Hockey Season! In some ways, it feels like the season never ended. This Spring was the first time Brady and I did Spring Travel hockey, competing in tournaments from late April through

late June. We basically got a couple weeks off and then started practice for the fall in July. This year, Brady has moved up an age level, and a skill level, and is now playing 16U AA. This is the highest level of amateur hockey in Florida without joining the only AAA organization in the state.

We had our first tournament over Labor Day weekend. Brady had a great weekend, and ended the tournament tied as the team's leading scorer. But the team had a rough weekend, losing all four of our games. We were close and competitive in three of the four games. The other loss was to one of the top returning teams in the state. We followed this up with our first regular season weekend the following week, where we went 1-1. So, we have some work to do. It's early in the season, and Brady and I are both working hard in practice to help the team improve.

One note, during the Labor Day tournament, I got to make my debut as a Head Coach. Our current Head Coach is also coaching our 14U AA team, and there was a conflict with one of their games and ours. So, on the way out to the game, I got the call that I would be the Head Coach that night. I had always wondered what it would be like to run the full bench. Before the game, I made a few strategy tweaks. In the first period, those tweaks worked very well, and we built a lead. Ultimately, a few penalties and a few mistakes hurt us, and we ended up losing the game. But it was a great experience for me, and it gives me confidence that I am well on my way to being a Head Coach someday.

In other news, we have a kid driver. Brady turned 15 and passed his test to receive his learner's permit. He took a driver's education course online this summer. Jen and I just cannot believe we have a kid old enough to drive. He will be practicing a lot in the parking lot at the office on weekends. We haven't let him loose on the road yet, but I have a feeling that is coming soon. All the more reason I hope everyone drives carefully and takes care of each other.

And lastly, Jen and I have a new tradition that we started two years ago. We take one weekend and make it a staycation at the Four Seasons. We got this year's staycation in just before school started in August, and just before dance and travel hockey take over our lives. We get so busy with the kids' schedule that we don't really get a lot of date nights for just us. It is nice to have a weekend where we get waited on, and where there is no schedule of events to run to. We really enjoyed the restaurants they have at the hotel, and the spa. I included some pics from this event as well.

We hope you and your family are enjoying the start of Fall. ■

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we do not win consistently. That is a lot of risk, especially when I have thirty families depending on me for paychecks. But I can tolerate all that risk and thrive in it because the competitor in me will drive me to drive our team to find a way to be the best we can be in that case, and to win for our clients. Again, the mindset pushes the work ethic. I have always had this fear of being outworked by an opponent. I cannot control the facts of a case, or the law and how a judge or jury will apply the law to the facts. But the one thing I absolutely can control is my effort and the effort of my team. That effort has to be all out, all the time.

I realize that not everyone has this high level of competitiveness, and that I stand out sometimes for it. Most of my hockey buddies think that I am crazy with the amount of practice and work that I put in. I am forty-five, and I still practice weekly with kids who are elite level 16-, 17- and 18-year-olds. The stories of me punishing myself in the gym the day after a loss are well-known. And yes, there are times where my competitive nature gets the best of me on the ice, and I get in some what we will call disagreements with opponents. In some ways, it is very similar to when I was a litigator and doing battle in a courtroom or a deposition every day. I have come to accept that some will never see or understand someone who is wired this way. But for me, this trait which some may perceive to be a character flaw, is probably the number one attribute that got me to where I am today. So for me, it is a blessing and not a curse.

Lastly, over the years I have realized that addictive personalities and traits run in my bloodline. It has led some of my family to battle terrible addictions, and some, like my mother, never beat those addictions. I have accepted that I too am an addict. But instead of allowing those addictions to be to things that will harm my body or mind, I have tried to make them things that will have a positive impact on those around me. I channel that addictive personality into winning, both in the firm, and on the ice. It is like having a superpower, and it is what drives me to get up every single day and work at being the best lawyer, husband, father, and hockey player and coach I can be. I literally go from the time I get up, to the time I lay down. Jen is right, it is exhausting. But it is what works for me.

And I will keep competing as long as I possibly can. ■

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black bean 'n' pumpkin chili

Yield: 10 servings (2½ quarts); prep time: 20 min.; cook time: 4 hr.

This slow-cooker chili uses ingredients you don't usually find in chili — for instance, pumpkin, which makes this dish so special. Cook up a big batch and freeze some for later; it tastes even better reheated.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium sweet yellow pepper, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (15 ounces) solid-pumpkin
- 1 can (14½ ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 2½ cups cubed cooked turkey
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley flakes
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1½ teaspoons ground cumin
- 1½ teaspoons dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Cubed avocado and thinly sliced green onions, optional



Directions

1. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and pepper; cook and stir until tender. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer.
2. Transfer to a 5-qt. slow cooker; stir in the next 10 ingredients. Cook, covered, on low, 4–5 hours. If desired, top with avocado and green onions.

Recipe courtesy of www.tasteofhome.com. ■

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