

Hindsight Offers 20-20 Vision

By Irv Sternberg

The phrase “next time” suggests both regret and determination. Regret that you failed to achieve something but also a determination that you will succeed “next time.”

Sports fans suffer this cycle repeatedly. As a devoted follower of the old Brooklyn Dodgers in my childhood, I commiserated with other fans of the Bums as they fell short of our aspirations, and we’d proclaim: *Wait ’til next year*. Cubbie fans experienced this disappointed for decades before their beloved team finally won the championship last year. Here in Denver, we didn’t have to wait so long, attaining entry into the World Series in our fourteenth year but losing out in four straight games, a sorry anti-climax. However, we’re off to great start this year. Can 2017 be our year?

For Denver Bronco fandom, the city’s most fervent congregation, expectations are even higher. We demand not only an annual appearance in the Super Bowl, but also a victory. Anything less is a wasted season, as was last year. But with a new head coach, bigger and stronger linemen, and a tougher attitude, the team is expected to perform much better, meaning actually becoming the Super Bowl champs.

The phrase “next time” sometimes recalls a confrontation we experienced that went badly. We second-guess ourselves over what we should have done, or said. We replay the episode in our minds and reconstruct it to create a more satisfying outcome. The next time that happens, I’ll say this or do that, we promise ourselves.

The principal characters on the national scene reflect this phenomenon. Hillary Clinton no doubt wishes she had done things differently during the most recent election campaign. At her age, she’s not likely to get a “next time.” And does the person who defeated her ever wish he’d never sent all those tweets or orchestrated a private meeting that has created some much trouble for him? Probably not!

But most of us are less arrogant. We accept the fact that we are not perfect – that we make mistakes and wish we could correct them. We’ll do better *next time*, we tell ourselves.