



Make a World of Difference

By Debbie Waitkus, *Golf for Cause*

June 9-15, 2008. The US Open at Torrey Pines. We watched Tiger Woods reach deep within, fighting through physical pain to achieve victory. For 12 years Tiger has been an ambassador of the game, motivating so many to pick up a club, to play golf, to conduct themselves honorably, and even to fist pump and to wear red! Nike recognized his value from the very beginning, signing a \$40 million endorsement deal with Tiger that coincided with his professional debut. Today it is impossible to think of Tiger without associating him with Nike. Nike is so much a part of the Tiger “brand,” in fact, that other of his sponsors, Buick, for example, don’t object when he is sporting the Nike “swoosh” even as he does a pitch for their products. He is a perfect spokesman — scandal free and the best in his field.



At the 2008 US Open he revealed his humanness to us. We saw him struggle every day on the 1st hole, saw him grimace, saw him limp. Through it all, despite the pain and pressure, he continued to rise above his obstacles, tapping into his resources and remaining focused on his overall objective. And it still wasn’t decided at the end of 72 holes. He’d have to play one more day. At the end of the 18-hole playoff on Monday, Tiger was finally able to raise the Open trophy high in the air. What a role model he is for all of us!

What a difference one person can make.

Only a week earlier, 7500 miles away, I was in Israel with family and friends celebrating my son Ben becoming a Bar Mitzvah. The Friday evening before his ceremony, we walked to the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Friday evening, Shabbat, is a very festive time. As we neared the wall, we observed local custom and split up – men on one side and women on the other. On this Friday the spirited dancing, singing and praying was especially energetic and inspiring, and the turnout was larger than most Fridays — this was also the anniversary of the June 5–10 Six Day War in 1967.

An Israeli friend, Ebi (Ay-bee), who is typically the vociferous song leader, was unusually subdued. Concerned, I asked him to share what was on his mind. Ebi explained that during the Six-Day War he was one of the handful of soldiers from his platoon who had actually



recaptured the Old City, of which the Western Wall was part. He and I stood in silence, listening and watching as the different groups sang and danced and prayed. “This,” he said, pausing, “this is

overwhelming. To think that they can come here – that people can come visit here. And it wouldn’t have been. This is something.”

"It is time for us all to stand and cheer for the doer, the achiever - the one who recognizes the challenges and does something about it."

Vince Lombardi
1913-1970, American Football
Coach

What a difference one person can make.

Earlier in the week, as part of Ben's Bar Mitzvah project, we visited Rogozin High School in Migdal HaEmek (northern Israel). The area was hit by Ketusha rockets during the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006. The school is in a tough neighborhood. Prior to the trip Ben had worked diligently to collect new and used soccer equipment to present to the school. He had even designed a special logo for the new jerseys.

The school's Head Coach Rafi Busklia owns an impressive list of accomplishments as a soccer coach. Yet, today, his focus is the boys soccer team at Rogozin High School because, before the school had a soccer team, the majority of boys in



the area were not even enrolled in school. Rafi has given the boys a reason to come back to school, to learn, to be part of a community.

Ben presented them with four huge duffel bags stuffed with soccer gear — balls, cones, cups, cleats, socks, shin guards, jerseys, shorts, even whistles. Each of the coaches was presented a backpack (that's one on Ben's back in the picture at the Wall) and Ben gave each of the boys a jersey sporting the same logo. Inside the gymnasium, after the boys changed into their new blue jerseys with numbers on the back — that was big! — Rafi led them through a spirited series of well-orchestrated drills and a scrimmage. They listened attentively, respectfully, and executed each drill exactly per his instruction. As an expression of their

appreciation for Ben's efforts, Coach Rafi invited Ben to join the boys in their scrimmage.

What a difference one person can make.

What a difference each of us can make in the world. It's just a matter of being observant, seeing a need and doing something about it. And it doesn't have to be big. Sometimes the smallest gestures or acts of kindness have the greatest effect. You can make a difference. Perhaps you will make a difference on the golf course, leading by example. Or perhaps, like Ebi, like Rafi, like Ben, you will step forward and make a difference on an even greater stage.

Give it some thought. Every door has to be opened by *someone*, after all. As someone we all admire says every day of his life — says without even having to utter the words — just do it.

Take a swing and follow through. It's how you make a difference. It's how you **Turn Golf Into Gold®**.

Debbie Waitkus a business-golf consultant, trainer, and motivational speaker, is the owner and founder of Golf for Cause®, LLC. She speaks to groups and stages creative golf programs, especially for women, to help them blend business and golf at any skill level. Contact Debbie to explore how you can Turn Golf into Gold.® dwaitkus@golfforcause.com or 602/722-3605.