

Reflections on 9/11 – 10 Year Anniversary

Dear ZogSports extended family,

My thoughts are with those of you who lost friends and family on 9/11. I can't imagine how hard this must be for you. I want to thank those of you who have reached out to me this week. I've been touched by the stories that people have shared about the impact ZogSports has had on their lives and encourage you to continue sharing those stories with us

As I personally reflect on the 10 year anniversary of 9/11, I am emotional and torn. On the one hand, I still think about how close I was to dying that day and how many people and their families were not as lucky as me. On the other, I think about how my post-9/11 epiphany to help bring people together and build community led me to create ZogSports. That in turn helped me and hopefully many others heal and brought a sense of normalcy and fun back to the lives of thousands of people.

After 9/11, I vowed that my life would never be the same and it hasn't. If you don't know it, here is the story of how I got there.

Story of My Close Call and Pina Colada Epiphany

Many of you have heard me tell this story. I got a new job as the VP of Operations for Marsh & McLennan's internet group in July 2001. My office was on the 96th Floor of World Trade Center Tower 1 (North Tower). So on September 11, I got off the subway and came outside at 8:45am in time to hear a loud explosion, look up and see a gaping hole in the side of the building where my office had been. None of the 297 people from Marsh who were already at work survived. I don't know how long I stood there, but after the 2nd plane hit, mass hysteria broke out and I ran. I met up with my girlfriend (now wife) at her office and we walked home desperately trying to make sense of what had happened.

There are dozens of things I did that sunny Tuesday morning that I usually didn't do – many of which were because we changed our vacation in Yosemite National Park to the week after Labor Day (not before) because there no accommodations available. I hit the snooze button twice, dropped off my laundry, picked up my held mail (and stopped to toss the junk mail), took the local (C) train instead of the Express (A) and numerous other small decisions that added up to me showing up 5 minutes late.

Three months later, I'm sitting on the beach with a pina colada in my hand lamenting about how terrible my life was: I closed down the internet company I was helping run, laid off 30 people who reported to me, was unemployed and then almost got hit by a plane. My glass was half empty. I decided to view it as half full. I thought about all the good things that had happened that year. I met my wife playing co-ed softball. I played in numerous other leagues and while I loved the sports and camaraderie part, thought that they were poorly organized and had disrespectful customer service. I could do better. Finally, I saw people like us being selfless and inspired to give back. That was the moment. I decided to combine sports, social and charity and create ZogSports. Our goal that day is the same as it is now – to bring people together through sports and incorporate charity into things that people want to do anyway like play team sports, meet new people and hang out with their friends.

All of this inspires what we do every day and how we do it.

I hope that as you reflect on the tragedy and loss of 9/11, you are comforted to know that we were there too and will continue to be here for you.

Thank you for being part our community.

Best regards,

Robert

Robert Herzog, Founder and CEO, ZogSports
robert@zogsports.com | www.zogsports.com