



(This is the ninth in a series of stories for The Buffalo News by the oldest daughter of Bills great Jim Kelly).

Once my father's reoccurrence of cancer became public, it sparked an unprecedented outpouring of love and concern for our family.

The compassion and support that came to us knew no borders, as people reached out to us from around the world. Sometimes it was because they were Bills fans. In some cases they didn't care for the Bills at all but wanted to support No. 12. We heard from NFL fans who simply wanted to express their heartfelt concern about an NFL legend, while some had endured similar situations or had suffered the loss of a loved one to cancer.

I can't begin to tell you how these sincere messages and expressions of prayer and love from people near and far have overwhelmed, humbled and blessed our family.

But then there are the haters . . .

Unfortunately, I've found myself in stunned disbelief at the sheer evil of words used to inflict pain upon a family that has endured some of the worst trials life can throw at it.

My parents have tried to protect me from the hatred that seems to be part of the package when a family member is a public figure. Certainly, I didn't grow up in a bubble and have experienced what it's like to live in a world that is lost, hurting and desperate for hope. I'm not immune to the fact that evil exists. And even though I've not lived that long, I already have learned that life generally does not go as we hope or plan. Death and pain, struggle and sorrow are experienced by all regardless of our connections, bank accounts, degrees, health or spheres of influence.

However, I never have experienced hate like I have since my dad's health has taken its recent turn. I was warned that it was probably coming, but I guess I was still holding on to the hope that people would be more gracious during such a difficult time.

So why do I share all this?

I guess because the hurt I have experienced in the midst of this has taught me some valuable lessons that apply to both being a Bills fan and winning at the game of life.

Haters Gonna Hate. It's what they do. Whether it's a fumble in the backfield, blowing a crucial field goal or losing a big game, they're looking for something to fix their negativity on.

But here's the thing: We're not responsible for their hatred and can't let their problem become ours – move on.

Or you can do what we do, pray for them, forgive and then move on.

Forgiveness Changes Everything. Nobody's perfect. We all make mistakes and we all need mercy and grace. No one wants to win the game as much as the team on the field, so let's not hold it against them if someone's game is off. You never know what's going on in a player's personal life.

And this could be true for the haters too – we don't know what they're going through. When you don't forgive, you carry that hate with you.

Love Always Wins. Like forgiveness, love is a way of life, and unconditional love is a commitment to the highest good of the object of your affection, independent of anything you may get out of it. That being said, whether haters hate or lovers love, whether the QB has an awesome game or is way off (my dad had both) – when you're committed to loving independent of what anyone else does, the scoreboard in the game of life always ends up in your favor.

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