

Im a whiner. I guess I finally have to admit it. I took a look back at the way I have lived my life, and I cant come to any other conclusion.

When I was a high school, I whined about not being able to take business classes when I was a junior (they were only available to seniors), so I took classes at the University of Pittsburgh instead.

When I got to Indiana University, I whined that the classes they wanted me to take weren't enough of a challenge, so I snuck into the MBA program and took graduate level statistics when I was a freshman. Then I took other MBA level classes as a freshman and sophomore, which gave me the confidence to compete at any level.

When I got a job selling software, I whined to the owner that he shouldn't make me sweep the floor of our store and I should be able to go out and close sales. That led to me getting fired, which in turn led to me starting MicroSolutions.

When I started MicroSolutions, I whined that there were no companies that could help hook personal computers together, so we became one of the first integrators for Novell Share Data Systems, which in turn became the core for our business that grew and grew until I sold it in 1990 and retired for a few years.

When I was hanging out with my buddy, Todd Wagner, we whined together about how we couldn't listen to Indiana Basketball or any hometown sports in Dallas, so we started AudioNet, which became Broadcast.com.

When I was at the opening night of the Mavs 99-00 season, I whined to my friends that there was no energy, no fun in the building, that I could do a better job. Which led to me buying the Mavs.

When I bought my first HDTV, I whined about the fact that there was no content, which led to me starting HDNet with Phil Garvin.

Now that I own the Mavs, I whine about a lot of things in the NBA, from marketing to officials, which has led to change. Changes in how games are sold and marketed, how games are presented, how some departments are organized and managed in the NBA. That's the nice thing about whining to an organization that wants to improve. They might not always show the love, but actions can speak louder than words.

When we started producing movies, I whined that it made no sense that movies couldn't be released in theaters, on HDNet and on DVD and HD DVD all on the same day. So we started releasing movies day and date.

Im sure there have been many other things I have whined about in the past, and many more that I will whine about in the future. What I don't understand is why so many people think whining has a negative connotation. I don't.

Whining is the first step towards change. It's the moment when you realize something is very wrong and that you have to take the initiative to do something about it. Sure, criticism usually comes along with the territory. Who cares ?

People in media like to call people whiners. With a negative connotation. Because of course, people in the media are non whiners. Which they amazingly enough, think is a good thing.

People who don't whine are punching bags. They just go about their days, their jobs, their lives, knowing there is nothing they can do to change a darn thing, so why say a word ? They see no reason to whine because they know they are incapable of affecting change.

Randy Galloway is a great example of a media non whiner, a punching bag. He works in two industries, newspaper and terrestrial radio that are getting the hell kicked out of them. All around him, people he knows and cares about are losing their jobs. He knows he is one format change, one consultant or one acquisition from losing his job. That's got to hurt.

He doesn't whine. He does nothing. He might go have a drink or 15, but then it's business as usual. Like many non whiners, he has so little distaste for watching people around him get hurt, he does nothing. He is a punching bag guy, in a punching bag life.

Call me a whiner any day.