

**From:** Jeevacation <jeevacation@gmail.com>  
**To:** roger schank <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: answer to your question? (something I wrote a while back)  
**Date:** Wed, 15 Apr 2009 19:20:10 +0000

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You have to reduce the dosage

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 15, 2009, at 2:05 PM, roger schank <[REDACTED]> wrote:

## **Brooklyn, New Haven and Me**

### **Roger C. Schank**

When Bart Giamatti announced that he was leaving Yale, where I was a professor, to become president of the National League, I dropped a note to my soon to be ex-boss asking him to do me a small favor: "Make the Dodgers move back to Brooklyn." He responded that they probably didn't want to move back to Brooklyn, which seemed obvious enough, but he seemed to miss the point.

I suppose I wrote to him because I had been looking at videos for a video-based educational software project I was working on and found myself watching a videodisc showing Johnny Podres shut out the Yankees in the last game of the 1955 World Series. This was the beginning of a joyful madness that engulfed Brooklyn, where I lived, and lasted until the rumors of the Dodger's impending move began to circulate in my sixth grade class in 1957.

I was eleven years old when the Dodgers abandoned me, and I took it hard. I agreed with those who placed Walter O'Malley beside Hitler on the list of great evil doers of our time. Of course, with an adult perspective, this may seem a bit silly, but it still has the ring of truth to me.

In 1962, I became a Met fan. I cut classes in my last days at Stuyvesant High School, hoping to see the Mets actually win a game. Within a few weeks, I was hooked again, but this time it was I who abandoned Brooklyn, going off to college, never to return. I kept up my devotion to the Mets, but in 1969 I was at Stanford, in California, far far away. I could barely teach my class the day the Mets won the series because I was so exultant, but it was a joy not shared, or even understood, by my students.

In 1973, during the Mets next shot at the championship, I was living in Switzerland. You can't even hear the Armed Forces Radio Network in Switzerland.

My employment at Yale got me closer to my team. I went to a few games every year, and watched most of the games on television when cable finally made it to New Haven. It was my son who made me a nut for the Mets, the way I once had been for the Dodgers. He developed the classic boy's love of baseball, but, while I had had great Brooklyn teams to root for, he had only the pathetic Mets of the late seventies and early eighties. Everyone he knew more prudently rooted for the Yankees, but there would be no Yankee fans in my house.

Suddenly the Mets started to improve. He could wear his colors to school without being derided. We went to Shea Stadium on any sunny Sunday that the Mets were in town. And finally, it was 1986. My son was eleven,

the age I had been when the Dodgers left, and he was begging me to take him to the World Series. There was no way I could get a ticket except from scalpers at the stadium. The papers reported astronomical prices. It seemed prudent to watch the game on television. My eleven year old boy said he understood, but the eleven year old boy in me did not.

Who knew when such an event might recur? It had taken thirty-one years to get both me and my team in the World Series in the same place at the same time. This time I even had a son to share it with. Finally, I could stand it no more. I decided to pay the price. We got two box seats in right field. The boy who sold them to me asked \$500. I got them for \$450. What a deal! What if the game was boring? The Red Sox had already won three games. Suppose we paid all this money just to watch them celebrate at Shea?

The game didn't go so well. In the seventh inning, the stands started to clear out. The Mets were out of it. When they tied it up and the game went into extra innings, a Red Sox fan appeared in the seats behind me. He screamed so loud for his team that I thought he might not make it out of the stands alive, but the Met fans were too depressed, watching the Mets blow it in the top of the tenth. My son began to cry. Like an apparition, the Red Sox fan said that the Mets were a great team and would come back. Then he disappeared. The Mets were at bat and my son refused to watch. I quoted Yogi Berra: "It ain't over 'til its over." My son didn't believe me. I didn't believe me.

Then, there was Kevin Mitchell, and Gary Carter, and Ray Knight and people were hugging strangers. We collectively believed that anything is possible. As Bart Giamatti knew quite well, baseball is a metaphor for life.

"It ain't over 'til its over" has come up a few times in life of my son since then. All through his childhood, when he was about to give up on something my quote of this quote, and the memory of that game, spurred him on to try harder.

And now I have a grandson. He lives in Brooklyn of all places. He will be wearing his Met uniform at the new Shea soon.

roger schank

