

Chapter 2: Losing to Win

Remembering

1. Recall a relaxing vacation you took during a hectic time in your life.
2. Remember a time when you suffered a crushing defeat.

Understanding

1. After reading the chapter and understanding the material, reword the title of the chapter in your own words.
2. What do you think Waitzkin means when he says, “It might sound absurd, but I believe that year, from eight to nine, was the defining period of my life” on page 23?

Applying

1. Using what you know about Josh’s feelings at the end of the chapter (his “defining period,” becoming National Champion, and seeing his opponent Jeff’s reaction to losing), predict what will happen next in the story.
2. Relate Josh’s defeat to an experience in your own life. What are the similarities and differences between how Josh and you recovered from these setbacks?

Analyzing

1. Examine the importance of Josh’s fishing trip(s) in his recovery process. From what you have read, do you believe Josh could have bounced back without this period of relaxation and recess from chess?
2. Josh describes, in great detail, the relationship he has with his mother and father. Compare and contrast these relationships with specific reference to Josh’s chess aspirations.

Evaluating

1. Josh has a varying array of feelings towards his premier opponent, Jeff Sawyer: fear, respect, aggression, etc. In your opinion, which of these feelings is most prominent in the chapter?
2. Josh describes the different elements of his rehabilitation from his major defeat in this chapter: the fishing trip, casual chess, and intense chess practice. Which of these elements do you believe was most important in Josh's recuperation?

Creating

1. Josh has just lost the chess match described at the beginning of the chapter. Given what you know about how Josh operates and incorporating your own opinions, construct a rehabilitation schedule to help Josh fully recover mentally and emotionally as well as get him back into chess as quickly as possibly.
2. Suppose you had just suffered a major setback in an area that you enjoy achieving in (a debilitating injury in sports, a bad grade in academics, etc.). Take what you know about yourself and information that you have gained from the chapter and construct a plan you could use to get back on track. Describe each of the elements in your plan thoroughly and it's importance to your overall recovery.