

The Blueprint Interview

The mighty Quinn

Part of the editorial policy of Blueprint for Successful Living is to interview successful people, like footballer Niall Quinn, and endeavour to discover how they became a success. This interview, conducted prior to World Cup '94 by Tony Quinn, uses an approach known as Behavioural Modelling. This consists of studying the subject to discover the areas of the person's behaviour that have made them a success with a view to enabling others to replicate these patterns.

Q TONY QUINN: The purpose of the newspaper is to help people to get the most out of themselves and their lives. With this in mind we have begun to interview successful people so that our readers can be inspired and learn from them. You of course are a success in the area of football. Yet it is not so much the football that interests us but you as a person and what you did to enable you to succeed. This interview will go into nearly every home in Ireland (over six hundred thousand) and the idea is that it is a communication between you and the reader. The only editing that will be done is just to enable the article to fit the available space.

I would like to begin by attempting to find out what is it like being Niall Quinn from the inside.

A NIALL QUINN: I am now twenty seven and I have lived here in England for eleven years [Manchester at the time of the interview.] Only the last four have been very successful. I have played for Arsenal for the first seven years and the last four for Manchester City. I am very much my own person. I have my football and I have my social life. My main interests are my family and then our house and I have an interest in horses - not just racehorses but all types of horses. Most of my earnings go into my pension and my mortgage and then there is my golf. I have no other great business interests and I am not a great philosopher. You won't find me driving big flash cars. I have an estate car so that the dog fits in, the baby fits in, everything fits in. It is very simplified and it has been like that since I first came to England. Over here I have a local pub that I go to and I don't go to night clubs except in Dublin. That is basically my life.

What is it that causes you to achieve, that drives you on? The main factor is people questioning whether I can do something or not. This is what drives me on. I must prove to them that I can and I am not happy until I do. I really admire people who are branded as being out of it because they are too old or

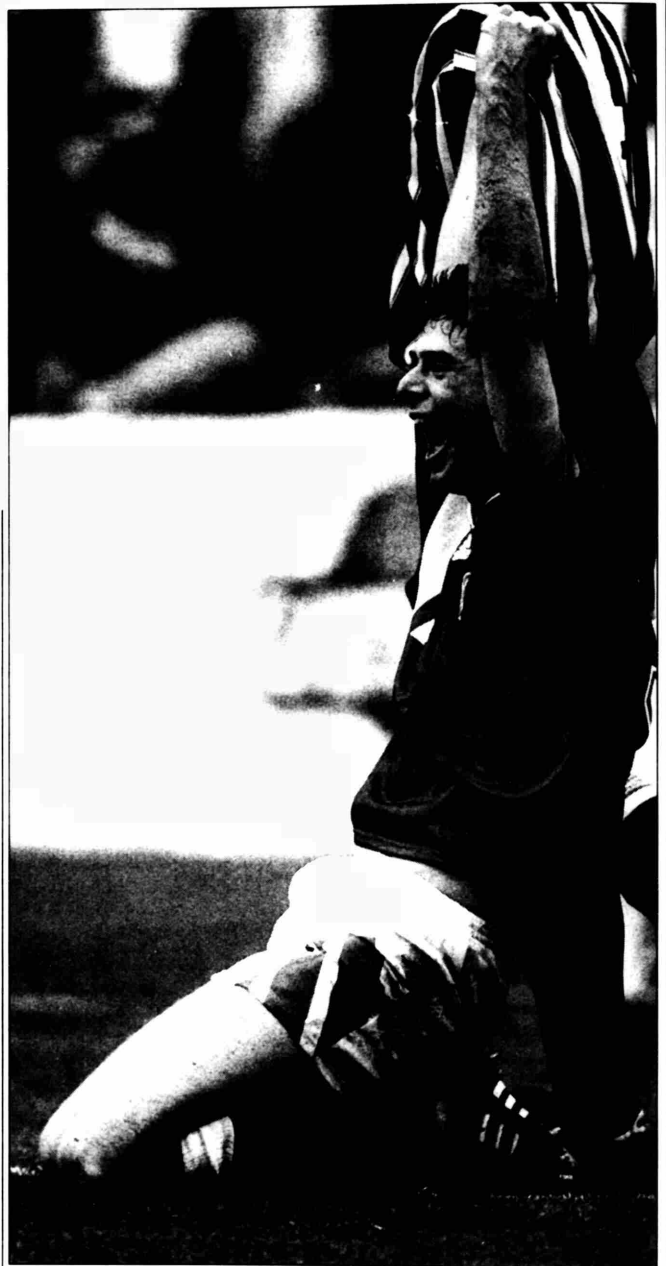
are not having the ability anymore and then suddenly they come back better than ever. It is okay getting there and it is hard staying there, but when you have been knocked off then the sportsman or the real successful person can get back up there. When I was first with Arsenal at eighteen for two years I played in every game. I thought this was great and then suddenly I was dropped. Then I was three or four years on the reserve. From there I moved to Manchester City who were bottom of the Premier League. Everyone said it was a terrible move and that I was going to be playing in the second division next year. Yet I got myself back up there and in fact further up than I had been at eighteen, nineteen or twenty. I played for Ireland in the World Cup. That kind of thing impresses me more, people who can do that. For instance now I have this horrific knee injury, and I have heard whispers where people say I will be lucky to be half the same player again. It would give me great pleasure to get back to show people that I am better than ever.

How fit are you at this moment?

I am not trying to get back to where I was. I think I have passed that, fitness wise. I want to be twenty percent better. I made it my mission to get back for the World Cup. As I have said, things like that turn me on and make me work hard. Now I am fit and the surgeon passed me fit at the end of April for the World Cup, although my club refused to let me go and didn't accept the advice my surgeon gave to them. But I know in my heart and soul that I was fit to play in this World Cup and that is all that matters to me. Okay I am going to miss it, I can accept all that. I can accept the reason that I am not going is political rather than football. Their investment in me is such that they do not want to put that at risk.

Have you any personality traits that you feel particularly contribute to your success?

Sincerity. I have found after so many years that sincerity counts an awful lot. I always try to be sincere. People say that us Irish are a nation of knockers. For example



recently I was asked to speak at a charity dinner and found that there were a lot of policemen there. Most people would try and make jokes about policemen, but I am not a comedian so I just gave a sincere talk about how I see football and I got a standing ovation. That would not have happened if I tried to be funny. It will be the same when I work for RTE this summer as a commentator on the World Cup. The John Giles or whoever, would be objective. I will have to be sincere as opposed to being objective. Because I have signed up with RTE I can't suddenly become a critic. What I hope to share with the Irish people is a sincerity of how things are in the Irish camp because I know that the whole of Ireland will be supporting Ireland. What I can do without actually spying is that I can get sincere feelings across without being sensationalised all over TV. This is the type of

thing that I want to do. In a sincere way I want to get the people closer to the team and maybe the team closer to the people - this is a little link. If they stuck me on and said "Do an Eamon Dunphy" I would be a disaster. Sincerity is what got me through up to now and I will hang on to that. It was the same when I bought a racehorse last year for the first time. I hadn't a clue about racing but I met a man who I felt was sincere like myself. The house that we now have is a testimony to that decision. The horse went on to be really good and we sold him to America for a lot of money and we were able to buy this place. The horse was called "Cois na Tine" and we have called the house after him - "by the fireside", that is what it means.

What else do you think has contributed to your success? Balance. I wanted to be somebody that could keep achieving without losing my

friends, comfort, happiness, to try and make a happy medium between it all. This is the way that I feel things are going now. If you are a young person and have the ability to play football, by all means play. I have found that when I have wanted things to happen and have worked too hard for them, and lost friends and went against the things that I have been saying to try and achieve them, they never happened. But when I got into my steady flow - like the way I am now - then suddenly things happened. For instance I had given up all hope of leaving Arsenal and went back leading a normal life, socialising with my friends, my golf, training hard hoping for a chance but not punishing myself into demanding a chance and then suddenly it all happened for me. What you mustn't do is to get carried away with it. For instance I see guys who come over from Ireland to play football here in England. They