



Becoming Your Best

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Olympic athletes truly represent the pinnacle of achievement. They are not just very good at their sport. They are the best. They are not just the best in their town or state. The ones that win are the best in the world. Since the Olympic Games began in 776 BC in Olympia Greece, athletes have been competing for their chance to earn the honor and prestige that comes with being the very best.

For those of us who don't compete in the Olympic Games, our ambitions are clearly different. Yet we still have goals and aspirations to achieve – whether at home, in our relationships, at work, or in our community. We aspire to be the best parents we can be, the best sales representatives we can be, the best leaders, or the best friends we can be. The attainment of these aspirations doesn't garner us a gold medal, but the achievement is no less important to us.

We are all competitors in some way. We all have a niche in which we aspire to be great if not the best. Becoming the best for some involves competing in the marketplace for a customer or for a job. For others it involves competing with our self in developing skills or stopping a bad habit. Regardless, we compete. We strive. In many cases, the stakes couldn't be higher. Coming in second place in the Olympics might be heart breaking, but no more so than coming in second place when competing for a must-have job when you are out of work or when you're vying to close a sale in order to keep your job.

In our own way, we all compete. We each have the opportunity to be the best at something. To be your best, apply these four success enabling principles:

- 1. Pursue What is Truly Important** – Olympians focus. They have a clear goal and everything they do is directed toward their goal. Slow down and figure out what it is that you truly aspire to achieve. It may be achieving your key performance metrics at work. Or you may be pursuing a personal goal or considering a new career. Consider your passions, interests, talents, experiences, and knowledge. Identify the areas most worthy of your focus and set goals for them. Create a clear picture of your desired end-state. Don't merely react to what comes your way. Set your own goals. Take charge of your destiny. Be intentional about how you invest your precious time and energy.
- 2. Look in the Mirror** – For you to achieve your goal, you have some development to do. If you didn't, you would have already achieved your goal. It might be that you need to be a slightly better listener or improve your time management skills. You might need to be more disciplined or learn how to delegate more. You might need to overcome a tendency to procrastinate or to control your anger. Think about what is holding you back. Seek feedback from others. Open yourself up to constructive criticism. Ask those who know you well, "How do you think I might develop in order to reach my goals?" Even the best athletes in the world follow the advice of their coaches and make adjustments to their stance, step, stride, swing, take-off, jump, landing, or turn from time to time.
- 3. Confront Your Fear** – Fear holds people back from becoming their best. Think about where fear has its grip on you. Are you afraid of failure? Looking foolish? Putting yourself at risk or being vulnerable? We all have fears, phobias, and anxiety in some form or another. We all retreat into our comfort zone. Fears however keep you from being your best. Attack your fears by building your courage. Relegate your fears by taking incremental steps outside of your comfort zone. Replace your anxiety with logic. Put your perceived risks in their proper perspective by considering the bigger picture. Realize that looking foolish and even failing is merely someone else's perception. Recognize that it is through adversity that you do your best learning. Don't shy away from a little adversity. It can be a great friend.



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- 4. Invest in Yourself** – Carve out time for yourself. Make regular investments in your development. Like your bank account, regular deposits in your self-development will increase your net worth. The more value you are capable of offering, the more you are worth. Build your capacity to perform at the highest level and it will pay dividends for the rest of your life. Pursue being your best and your value will soar – whether at work, home, or in the community. Anything you do to improve yourself in one area, improves yourself in the other areas. Read non-fiction books. Improve your fitness. Attend seminars in the areas of your interest. Obtain a mentor or hire a coach. Find ways to practice your desired skills and behavior until you reach unconscious competence. Your improvements will soon become a normal part of you.

Take action now. While our Olympians are giving their best in the Winter Games, get excited about becoming the best you can be. Make a commitment to invest in yourself. Apply the principles of success and put yourself on the journey of becoming the best you can be.

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