

# Olympic Values

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There you are; standing on top of that board. Looking down, absorbing the power, the emotions, the support and most of all the excitement the crowd throws in your direction. All you have done to get in that position, right there, right in the moment. With nothing but sheer hard work behind you and goals with unfulfilled achievements ahead of you. Here, as you take your last breath, gathering your thoughts of Gold Olympic medals, and the country's pride, pulling together your fears, you take these last few seconds to reminisce. Reminisce at what got you there, standing on that Olympic diving board, about to put all your unbreakable efforts, solid work and regretful tears into one dive. Here, right in this glimpse of time you seem alone, yet, in fact you couldn't have dreamed for more support. The whole country looks up with awe, your inspirational journey whether short or long, you have won the respect of a nation and every athlete. Nothing can bring this unison and harmony except the one event that humans of this world call, The Olympics.

One might say that a gold medal is everything, yet, I believe that while a gold medal can be everything, it could also mean nothing. It is the journey you take, the steps you travel upon, the ways in which you carry yourself, and essentially the lessons you learn on your voyage to conquer the Olympics that means something far greater than achieving a gold medal. It is just as important to carry yourself with pride and dignity, as it is to carry out a medal. The Olympic values are thoroughly expressed in three short, yet, powerful words; Friendship, Excellence and Respect.

I believe that true athletes, competing in the Olympics, always have an unspoken agreement and a deeper, mutual understanding with each other. The friendship that is shown between them is inspiring. No matter what country, what language, what religion, what appearance, the Olympic value of friendship encourages everyone to use sport as a tool to generate understanding and true companionship. From a spectator's perspective, it is easy to look at their behavior and not understand it. As it's hard to comprehend, that the athletes who spend their life training mentally and physically for events in the Olympics, could be so friendly and show such good nature towards one another. When the very person they are divulging to, could knock them off the podium. This is why the Olympic value of friendship truly leaves me in awe as I see the way the athletes execute the games with such passion and hunger, yet still have the right values to show decency and good nature towards each other.

The athletes at the Olympics showing remarkable qualities of friendship are great role models for children involved with sport at a young age. I can remember my first 'proper' cross-country event in year six. My friend and I were off to a good start, and after braving most of the race, I fell over towards the end. At this point, my friend who I had been running with could have left me there and won the race. Yet, an Olympic value shone through in that peak of desperation, and she stopped, helping me up, brushing off my knee, and we finished the race together. I still remember this day, as it illustrated the way friendship can tower through the temptation of winning. Allowing a good runner to stand up, separating themselves from other runners, growing and maturing into not only a good runner, but a well rounded athlete and person, like all Olympians are.

Excellence in trying and putting in 110 percent. That is my interpretation of the next Olympic value. My view is that half of the hard part about sport, is giving it a go, trying something new, and giving it your all. Not only do you risk embarrassment, you risk the shame of trying but not succeeding. However, it is just as important that you give it your best, as in reality there are many opportunities for 'failure', and sometimes you just need that taste of disappointment to realize the importance of attempting new and unfamiliar things.

Albert Schweitzer once said "*Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing*". I think that by achieving great success, and excelling in a certain area, is one of the best ways you can show an example, and get others to follow. Children look up to athletes, which is why I believe showing the importance of effort and leading by example is part of the value of excellence, which has proved to be imperative for children's development in sport and life in general.

Whether, male or female, both genders have the right to have equal opportunities at experiencing excellence in different varieties of sport. Women must be given the same encouragement and recognition as men. It is also important that all levels of competence are celebrated, as people cannot strive for excellence when there is a not an appropriate starting position.

In my opinion the most important Olympic value, that must always be carried on throughout every phase of your life, is respect. An athlete must not only respect others, they must respect themselves; the rules, regulations, the environment and also the culture in which they have committed. Respect is awfully important as it necessitates honesty, which is so important in every area of sport and life generally. The ability to collaborate in your ideas and views with friends, acquaintances, family and even strangers with integrity deserves respect. This is an inspiring quality that I believe most athletes and Olympians aspire to and indeed obtain.

The ability to have regard for others, and not place judgment is an Olympic quality of high-importance, and I believe, can be achieved by all and should be achieved by all. The attention sport brings to the importance of respect is evident, as when players treat you with respect, you are more inclined to do the same. It is a domino effect, and is so simple yet, so easily forgotten. Respect carried onto the court, field, track, pool, gym, etc. is just as important as acquiring respect away from the sporting grounds.

All these values are so important. Not only should they permeate the Olympic Games, but we should aspire to achieve them through all aspects of life. I believe when striving for a goal, as long as you demonstrate and understand the importance of Olympic values - respect, friendship and excellence - you stand the best chance of achieving your goal. To fall just short of a goal, yet to know the execution of your journey involved respect, friendship and excellence, will carry you through sadness, exasperation, celebration and hardest of all grief. I believe the importance of these values; need to be shown throughout your whole life. In a classroom, in a playground, in a job interview, in a basketball match, in any element of life these three Olympic values would be immensely valuable and would create a more educated, and harmonious environment.

The world may be a cut throat place, however, from my perspective the only way to true success and true fulfillment, is generated from the three simple values, respect, friendship and excellence. It is through sport that I have made some of my deepest friendships, learnt respect for myself and others and valued excellence in the struggle and journey, not just the result.