



Discipline Part IV

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Some time ago I was on a flight to Salt Lake City, Utah. While thumbing through the in-flight magazine I saw an ad for the Special Olympics. In the middle of the page was the picture of an athlete going over the bar in the high jump. Above the photo the caption read “There were a few basic steps I had to take to learn the high jump.....like believing I could. IT’S ALL ABOUT ATTITUDE.” When I read it I smiled to myself because I knew how true the statement was. Attitude is beyond question an integral part of discipline. Every single moment of every day we chose the attitude we have.

Develop a “can-do” attitude

Successful individuals have a can-do attitude. They do whatever it takes to win, providing it is moral, legal and ethical. One of the things I enjoy most about the Olympics is to hear all the human interest stories of the athletes from all over the world. The tremendous obstacles that many of them had to overcome in their personal lives are admirable by any standard, but to overcome those obstacles and make it to the Olympic Games is in many cases nothing short of miraculous. Along the way they adopted an attitude of “how I can” instead of “why I can’t” and they were able to handsomely reap the rewards of that attitude. As the ad said “It’s all about attitude.” The current that determines our dreams and shapes our lives flow from the attitude we nurture everyday.

Never mind the facts

As we go through life, we are going to encounter all kinds of obstacles - dozens of reasons why the goals we seek cannot be achieved or should not be pursued. Many of these will present themselves as concrete facts.

Let me share some facts with you.... [Jamaica](#), being only 18 degrees north of the equator, is always hot. That means the only place we ever see ice is in the tall glasses of lemonade we drink to keep ourselves cool. In 1988, during the week of the four man event when all the major teams were fine tuning their skills and completing final selection of the two teams that would race on the weekend, we were still trying to figure out who would ride in the second third and fourth spot on our sled. We already knew who the driver was. These facts would suggest that there was a greater opportunity for Jamaica to have a white

Christmas than for its bobsled team to have any success at the Winter Olympics. However, by the end of the week, we had the seventh fastest start time. In 1994 our team finished in 14th place - ahead of the US in 15th - and was ranked 8th overall. In the Salt Lake Winter Olympic Games we set a new start record in the two man event. The facts may in fact be daunting, but as that great Jamaican philosopher [Bob Marley](#) said "it's a small axe that takes down a big tree." When you focus on the solutions with a positive mental attitude you end up with an opportunity to create a new set of facts that are far more powerful and dynamic.

Programming yourself

It is very easy for us to believe that our attitudes are affected by what others say or do. The reality is that it is what we say to ourselves that has the greatest impact on how we approach the challenges in our lives. Back in 1988 when everybody was calling us a media stunt we were calling ourselves the "Ragamuffins." When asked what it meant we were always happy to reply that it denoted a "can-do attitude" because we knew that we were also reaffirming that attitude to ourselves.

Consider the following words from [Chuck Swindoll](#), speaker and Chancellor of the Dallas Theological Seminary - "Attitude to me is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. The remarkable thing is that we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one thing we have and that is our attitude.....life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it, and so it is, we are in charge of our attitude."

Keep on Pushing!

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