



## Olympic Lessons for Life

**Passion and Belief.** I hope you have been watching the Olympic Games. It is an opportunity every four years to be thrilled by great feats from ordinary people achieving extraordinary results. The great majority of them are not highly paid athletes nor is their sport their job. They do this in spite of a job. They make tremendous sacrifices because they are passionate about what they do. They believe in what they do and they love what they do. Now that the Winter Olympics 2010 have ended, what can we learn from these champions? What lessons do they provide that can help each of us regardless of our occupation, position, area of endeavor or dream?

**Setting a Goal.** It became very clear that these elite athletes had set themselves some pretty high goals going into the Olympic Games. That just makes good sense. If you want to achieve something great, you must know what you want and believe in getting it. But what really became evident as we listened to their personal stories were the years of planning and hard work that went into preparing for the games. All those dreams and goals won't matter if you do not have a great goal plan, a clearly defined path for getting there. I share with you now some excellent tips from a man who should know about achieving goals, Lou Holtz, former football coach and Hall of Famer. <sup>1</sup> Tips that can go a long way in helping you achieve your goals, be they personal, professional, or recreational.

- **Be goal-oriented**
- **Believe** that you can achieve what you set out to do
- **Set a plan**
- **Work** for it
- **Expect** good things to happen
- Always **aim high**

**Leadership and Coaching.** Did you watch the coaches? Actually, did you even see the coaches? Most likely not. They were in the shadows...in the



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background helping when needed. What we saw demonstrated at the Olympics was good coaching and good leadership. The coaches basically let the athletes run their own show, freeing them to perform the way they had trained and prepared. The coaches displayed effective leadership: suggesting, guiding, influencing, but never controlling. Good coaching, like good parenting is all about teaching, developing and providing support to the athletes or children, freeing them to harness their own unique potential. Good leaders develop and prepare their people and then get out of the way to allow them to succeed.

**Calm and Focused Under Pressure.** We saw the steely nerves of some of the finest athletes in the world. We watched them overcome major hurdles like an injured shin or the death of a mother or a fall that could have ended the dream but didn't. They remained calm and composed, focused on the target, until finished. Are they born this way? Do some just have it and others don't? No. It is what they worked to develop all their life, the mental and emotional strength to endure, persevere, and triumph against all odds. They never stopped believing in what they could do. These are skills that have been learned and honed just as surely as their physical skills. We need not be world-class athletes to possess these same mental skills. We need merely a dream and the desire and passion to follow it. With these, we can also be "Olympic Champions" in whatever we do.

Sincerely,

Dr. Louis Csoka COL (RET)  
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1. Lou Holtz, Do Right, 1988

## About Apex Performance

Apex Performance provides performance improvement services to military units, police forces, pro and college athletes and senior executives who need to build mental agility and mental toughness. APEX Performance offers training to deliver results on the core of leadership - self awareness, confidence, mental agility, and composure. Utilizing a combination of personalized development programs, follow-up coaching, and advanced sensory technology, APEX provides the tools and learning required to achieve sustainable peak performance.

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