

What We Can Learn From the Olympians

Dr. Ron Kaiser January 24, 2014 No Comments

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Hi, this is Dr. Ron Kaiser with your audio from The Mental Health Gym for August 2012. I've had a couple of people tell me that I was technically incorrect when I've been calling these audios, podcasts. Technically a podcast should be on a special podcast platform rather than part of a particular website like The Mental Health Gym. So I'll try to remember but I don't guarantee you that I will at any rate, let's get started. This is being recorded during the Olympic Games and so I thought it was a kind of timely to have an Olympic theme, so the audio is called "what can we learn from the Olympians". In other words, what can we learn from the participants in the Olympic Games. The Olympics always get a tremendous TV audience; lots of us are really appreciative of the skill of the various athletes, the elite athletes in the various sports, at the Olympics. A lot of us are also quite intrigued by some of the back stories that take place as we learn about the history of many athletes who overcame disappointments, physical injuries, and other types of adversities, in order to achieve their special status as elite athletes.

Furthermore, even at the games themselves, we've seen athletes experience significant disappointments that for many of us may seem to be particularly embarrassing. Imagine Michael Phelps, the greatest swimmer, probably in history, actually came in second place in his first race and did not medal at all at one of his races. We experienced seeing Jordyn Wieber, the young gymnast from the United States who was expected to probably win the all-around gold medal, who didn't actually make it into the finals. And yet both of them came back. Both of them came back to win gold medals in other events. Their initial disappointments did not determine the outcome of the Olympics for them.

Essentially they and a number of others looked at what happened to them, went through some temporary shock and disappointment and then they successfully decided that this isn't going to control how they're going to function in the rest of the Olympics games and obviously it's not going to control the way that they function in the rest of their lives. That's very much the same kind of thing that athletes who overcame serious injuries or not having been selected for previous games or other types of disappointments, have also done and many of them achieved very great success in these games as well as the experience of just being a participant on the international stage.

So what can we learn from the Olympians. It almost seems too obvious to run a special audio about it but let's look at just the whole concept of trying and falling short and being disappointed and then deciding that hey, I'm gonna move forward. And this is really one of the concepts that we really try to emphasize at the mental health gym. The reality is that all of us meet adversity, all of us meet disappointments, all of us try and fall short at various times, but if we except the concept of the fact that we're moving forward, that we're in a process of moving forward and that we can learn about ourselves from every success or non-success along the way then we can really implement personal growth and personal achievement. So the things like being embarrassed or not being selected for a particular job or not getting into the relationship that we would've want or not having quite the height or weight or appearance that we might want, that all of these things don't have to be the single defining factor. Some of us are experiencing headaches, other kinds of pains that can either become a central part out personality or they become one part of our total being.

I admit that for the most part when we watch the Olympics, I really admire the participants and don't try to do too much heavy thinking about the back-stories and I recommend that you do the same. The

Olympics are fun, they allow us to kind of gain a sense of national pride, in some cases we can see tremendous stories that may bring tears to our eyes or other positive or negative emotion. It's something that we can be wrapped up in for a couple of weeks. So again the important thing is to watch and have fun but I do think that it's also important to not forget that there are some lessons to be learned from the Olympians; the importance of trying, the importance of overcoming adversity, the importance of not being too concerned about embarrassment or falling short and the importance of keeping a forward goal achieving orientation. If we've got particular goals then everything should be evaluated based on how is that helping me achieve those goals, how is that helping me to get there? Olympians focus on their goals. We can do the same thing.

Hopefully as we move forward, we'll have fewer and fewer reasons to not pursue those goals and well have fewer and fewer things that may impact upon our ability to do so. Let's take a lesson from the Olympians. This is Dr. Ron Kaiser and this has been your audio for August 2012 from The Mental Health Gym. I hope it may reinforce some ideas that you may already have about moving forward and pursuing goals and certainly as always I'd like to hear from you if you have some thoughts or other ideas regarding this audio or possible future ones or anything about the website in general. There is obviously a place to contact us through the website and I'll be speaking with you again in September.