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What The Olympics Can Teach You About Achieving Your Dreams ?

Like world-class athletes know, a person with desire but no dedication will never achieve much.

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August 14, 2016

Every four years the world is given [the gift of the Olympics](#). For a few weeks, nations lay down their arms and come together to let their world-class athletes compete on a level playing field to find the best in the many events. It boggles the mind what these young men and women can accomplish with their bodies—great feats of skill and determination bring them to the pinnacle of athletic achievement. *Incredible*.

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As I think about what it takes to become a world-class athlete capable of competing at the Olympic level, I realize there are some foundational lessons for all of us to learn as it relates to becoming world class in whatever we set our mind to.

The secret of how these athletes became world class is found in the combination of two fundamental ideas: desire and dedication.⁴

A 22-year-old man doesn't simply wake up one day and find himself on the Olympic basketball team. No, it started years before. In fact, it probably started when he was only 6 or 7 years old. Maybe his father took him to a basketball game and that little boy said, "Someday daddy, I am going to be a basketball player." That was the first sign of desire. Desire is key. World-class people start with desire. They have to at some point want it.

But we all know [people who dream of big things but never accomplish those dreams](#), don't we? Why is that? After all, they have desire. They *want it*. But the engine that drives the dream is dedication. Desire tells you what you want while dedication gets it for you.

Someone might see a young gymnast and say, "Wow, that looks easy." What they don't see or perhaps overlook is the years of practice, the years of getting up at 4:30 every morning and going to the gym before school. It is the dedication of the young athlete, the many times of failing in practice, the many times of falling off the equipment and faithfully getting back on that turns a wisher into a world-class doer.

A person with desire but no dedication will never achieve much. You must have the powerful combination of both.

So let's take a closer look at each of these and gain some insight into what desire and dedication are all about.

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1. Desire

There are three parts to desire:

- Dreaming
- The Vision
- Focus

Have you let yourself dream lately? Just sit down and begin to [imagine all of the incredible possibilities your life could become](#)? Spend some time just dreaming.

Next is the vision. Once you dream, you begin to cut back on all of the possibilities and narrow it to what possibility it is that you really want. You begin to create a vision for your life.² You begin to see it as you want it.

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Lastly under desire is focus. Once you have the vision, you have to really focus in on that dream. This is where you get really specific about what your life is going to look like.

2. Dedication

There are also three parts:

- The Plan
- Beginning
- Perseverance

Without a plan you will drift to and fro. You will certainly not carry out your dream if you do not have a plan. So write it down. [Set your goals](#). Know what you want and how you are going to get there.

Second is the beginning. This might sound simple and yet it is simply profound. Many people have a dream and they even have a plan, but they never begin. So simple: *Just start*. The first step on the long journey is still just one step. If you have a dream and a plan, take a step in the right direction.

Lastly is to persevere. Every road to every dream has a section that is hard to travel. Every great dream will encounter difficulty. The question isn't whether you will encounter trouble, but [how you will respond to trouble](#). Will you quit when the going gets tough or will you persevere? I have found that every successful person I know has encountered problems along the way that tempted them to quit. Yet they persevered and achieved their dream.

Let's take a look at the progression—think about where you are in the progression of becoming a world-class dream pursuer:

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1. Dream.
2. Create a vision.
3. Focus the vision.
4. Develop a plan.
5. Begin to pursue the dream.
6. Persevere.¹²

Friends, I hope for you the fulfillment of every dream that you have. That is what life is about, isn't it? But to do so, I know that you will have to combine your desire with dedication. And when you combine those two, you will be well on your way to leading a world-class life.