

How to Achieve Olympic Levels of Success

I love watching the **Olympics** because it's one of the few places where you can spend a few weeks watching the best in the world. It's really a celebration of sacrifice, training and performance that's hard to beat.

But how do they achieve these extraordinarily high levels of **success**? Certainly it's a complex answer, but when I was writing my new book *One Big Thing: Discovering What You Were Born to Do*, three areas stood out as absolutely essential to Olympic level success on the field or in business:

1) Learn to Focus. Great performers have the remarkable ability to **focus** on the one big thing they're facing. Today we live in the most distracted and disrupted culture in history. In an age of email, instant messaging and mobile technology, it's more difficult than ever to focus on the task at hand. But research study after study reveals that "multitasking" simply doesn't work. The only thing it does is help us do multiple things badly. If you want to excel, and reach new levels of productivity and excellence, then learn to focus.

2) Leave the past behind. I spoke at a CEO conference in Los Angeles a few years ago and after the talk, the audience wrote their questions on index cards and passed them to me. Flipping through the cards, I was stunned at how many of the questions were alike: "How can I get over a past failure, and move my career and business forward?" It doesn't matter if it was a defeat in the last race, or a financial, marriage, career or personal failure. Dwelling on the past only distracts us from the future. Let it go.

3) Don't settle. As I look around, every area of life today is filled with mediocrity. Athletics, business, politics,

school—even church and religious organizations. We settle for a lot of reasons—the need to be liked, laziness, insecurity and sometimes oddly enough, pride and arrogance. But whatever the reason, I honestly believe it's tearing apart the fabric of our society. Our politicians in Washington have exchanged vision for whatever the polling tells them, CEOs have exchanged integrity for a quick profit, educators are more focused on their careers than their students. Chances are the level of excellence in your own work is something you'll regret later. Man up (or woman up). Make a stand. Push the boundaries, take a risk and be willing to create a few enemies. As Winston Churchill said, "You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life."

Which of these three do you struggle with the most?