

Driven From Within

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To watch an athlete play any game is like watching poetry in motion. The lines are so smooth and precise and each move is made with a certain determination and strategy. As they take the inside lane in track and field or run 80 yards on a punt return in football, it is amazing to see how they move. The angles are so clean and their ability to stop on a dime is like nothing you have ever seen in life.

There is a certain rhythm and timing to how the body responds in the game. Where does this come from? Is it innate or can it be taught? The fierceness of the moment is almost angelic or God like, they defy gravity when they leap up and spin to take the ball to the hoop. Can this kind of dexterity be explained, taught or even cloned? What makes the athlete different than the average person?

The neuromuscular scientist may look at the way the athlete controls their body and uses it at different intervals in the game. If you stop and ask the coach he or she might say it is the way they condition their bodies and learn what they can and can't do or it is the way the coach can move them through certain plays and drills. You might ask the player themselves and they might say it is just hard work and the determination to be the best.

“Leaders aren’t born they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work. And that’s the price we’ll have to pay to achieve that goal, or any goal.” Vincent Lombardi

Coach Lombardi sums it up well when it comes to being great and it is you must be willing to work hard. The internal hard drive of an athlete is wired for greatness but it has to be developed and nurtured over a period time. The return on the investment is what we see each time we watch our favorite games on TV or in the stadium. However each time they run across the field or jump through that hurdle or pin their opponent to the mat is years of hard work and the drive to win. Determination mixed with a desire to win is a good combination for success. All athletes want to dominate and control their sport at the highest level and to even consider becoming that kind of player you must be driven from within.

My grandfather would watch me hit balls on the baseball diamond as a young boy and I would be so frustrated if I did not knock it out of the park or hit a nice ground ball. As we rode home after practice, he would say to me, “Son, it will work, if you work it.” I hated to hear that because it just didn’t make any sense to my young ears. He would say this even about my school grades and again I thought why does he keep saying that to me? “It will work, if you work it.”

If you want to be the best in your game, then take the advice my grandfather gave me, it will work if you work it. Here is how you work it:

1. Practice. When everyone else is sleeping and goofing off, you should be working on plays, drills, conditioning and diet.
2. Partnership: Pair up with people who are bigger, stronger, faster and more experienced, they can only make you better over a period of time.
3. Patience: Be willing to give yourself permission to develop over a period of time. All athletes reach a period when they are playing at optimum peak performance and it takes time.

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