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Is Your Athletic House in Order?

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While people and societies change over time I am continually amazed by the fact that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Regardless of our time in history and our current conditions there is always reference which can be made to those who have come before and the wisdom they have provided. One of my favorite historical figures is the great President, Abraham Lincoln. Abe is known for his quiet confidence and willingness to continue moving forward even in the face of great adversity. His perseverance is without question a greatly sought after commodity, but his sage wisdom has stood the test of time. Abe was wise enough to know that the fighting of the Civil War and the issues of the time were causing great damage to the American ideal. His statement "a house divided cannot stand" has and will continue to be visionary far into our future.

What is most impressive about this statement is how it resonates throughout every culture, religion, family, and even to the individual. The statement is true in the business world, and yes, even in the world of athletics; both team and individually. After all, each athlete is responsible for their own house and is reflected in the choices that they make. I recently heard one of my professional golf clients say something similar to a student; "if your house isn't in order you cannot play good golf". This goes for any sport or any team for that matter. If there is stress, tension, in-fighting, doubt,

anxiety, in your life (your house) you cannot possibly play well. Thoughts which distract you from your purpose on the playing field limit your abilities to perform up to your capabilities.

So the question remains, is your house in order? This does not mean is your garbage hidden under the rug, it means have you taken out the garbage so that your house is clean and functions well. It may seem obvious to most that this concept applies in the world of sport, but just to make sure let's explore the thought a little further. When you are at practice or in the act of practicing are you distracted by other stuff you should have done or should be doing? Are you distracted by the thoughts and comments from teammates which are not healthy for the team? Are you constantly focused on your weaknesses and faults? Distraction is all around us making for a messy house if we don't engage, keeping it clean. Our best performances occur when our mind is free to focus on the present, not when we are thinking about outside stuff.

So where is your focus? What drives you? Why do you do what you do?

Those driven for success are able to block out the negative distractions around them. They have prepared their mind and body to perform through hard work and dedication to details. The great Jerry Rice, of the San Francisco 49ers, once said "today I will do what others won't so that tomorrow I can achieve what others can't. Jerry planned for success and was then ready to receive it when everyone else was dealing with the clutter of life and underachieving.

Successful people find other successful people to emulate and pattern their lives after. Your world, who you hang out with, how you treat

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people, how you think either moves you towards success or separates you from it. This concept has a profound effect on who you are and hope to be. Are you a giver or a taker? This inner battle takes place every day of your life and often determines who will win today or lose today. Regardless of the final score your success is more likely determined by who you are on the inside than out. How do you choose to respond to the outside world, the people you interact with, the society you live in, the sport you play? Much of your athletic life is made up of outside elements which you cannot control, but you can always control how you respond. Choose wisely.

Do you choose to do what others won't?

The Road Not Taken **Robert Frost**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.