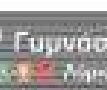


# THE OLYMPIC VALUES EDUCATION: A SPORTS-BASED PROGRAMME



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# INTRODUCTION TO OLYMPIC VALUES EDUCATION

Education and sport is a combination that requires synergy. Today, more than ever, a strong alliance between sports and educational institutions is essential to activate a positive contamination of universal and timeless values of sport, since the structuring of society requires a cultural and social pact that guarantees in all "formal" and "non-formal" contexts the learning of skills that could transform children's lives: Sport is life, Sport educates and forges character, defines our choices and the collective future, the first step towards success.

It can be said that sport represents the third educational agency after family and school. At a time when in many parts there is a particularly delicate phase experienced by traditional educational agencies, the sports movement cannot be to the advantage of a few because the aggregative moments that it manages to express often become a real lifeline for many young people.



The educational values of sport are fundamental and can make a decisive contribution to the education and training of young people.

How?

- Supporting the development processes of motor, cognitive, emotional and relational skills, conveying values such as respect for oneself, for others and for the environment, equal opportunities, solidarity;
- Helping to mature, that is, to admit one's limits, but highlighting one's potential;
- Building success on physical fatigue;
- Stimulating continuous confrontation with oneself and with others with a critical spirit.

In fact, studies show how the skills acquired in sports can be effectively transferred to other cultural contexts from early childhood.

Sport and play, in addition to spreading the values of solidarity, loyalty, respect for the person and rules, which are the founding principles of any healthy society, are extraordinary tools for building skills that can be transferred to other life contexts.

The organization of a competition, the definition of roles, the determination of times, game strategies, are true intellectual skills that can be transferred to any work context and represent skills that everyone should be able to put into practice when they have to take decisions or prepare an action program.

Sport activities are opportunities to privilege creativity and emotional investment, because the educational perspective is to support the processes that lead to autonomy, self-esteem growth, initiative capacity and self-awareness at various levels, physical and emotional.

# THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OLYMPIISM

Sport was without a doubt the most important symbol of ancient Greek culture and one of the most living legacies of the ancient world to the modern. The greatest sporting event of Greek antiquity was the **Olympic Games** (*Olympia*).

They were held every four years in the sanctuary of Olympia, in honor of the father of the gods Zeus.

Since 776 BC. the games were held continuously until 393 AD. Athletes from all the Greek cities would take part and compete for the victory (not for the record!). The Games would rise again, largely thanks to the efforts of Baron Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937) of France.

Dedicated to the promotion of physical education, the young baron became inspired by the idea of creating modern Olympic Games after visiting the ancient Olympic site. In November 1892, at a meeting of the *'Union des Sports Athlétiques'* in Paris, Coubertin proposed the idea of reviving the Olympics as an international athletic competition held every four years.

The Olympic Games were revived in the late 19th century and have become the world's preeminent sporting competition. The first modern Olympics took place in 1896 in Athens.

Coubertin believed sport could help bring communities together, stop war and promote healthy competition free from cheating and discrimination.

Ultimately, Coubertin wanted to show how sport can make the world a better place by encouraging friendship, togetherness and fair play.

Equality, Fair-play, Truce, Beauty, «Religio – athletae» were Baron de Coubertin's original ideals that the Olympic Games should be based on.

These principles were supposed to enhance human development and became the basis of the Olympic Philosophy, called Olympism.

The principles of Olympism is a valuable source of values and ideals that, through education, highlight the humanitarian and cultural value of sport. They aim at the contribution of building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport.

This of course, on condition that sport is practiced without discrimination of any kind and within the Olympic spirit, needless to say, that it requires mutual understanding with a spirit of **friendship, solidarity** and **fair play**.



## OLYMPISM AS A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. By blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles. According to scholars of the principles of Olympism, these have an impact at four levels: individual, social, cultural and universal.

Let's see them one by one:

### At individual level

On an individual level, Olympism creates the moral status that acts as a prerequisite for individual peace, respect and understanding of others. In other words, it promotes:

- harmonious development of body and mind
- respect for ourselves
- participation
- voluntary effort
- self-discipline
- self-esteem
- persistence
- effort
- pursuit of excellence
- wellness-health

### At social level

The philosophy of Olympism is based on the principles of cooperation, equality, friendship, fair play with the ultimate goal of creating a peaceful society with less violence and unfair competition. A society without prejudices, with equal opportunities for all people, a society which takes care of the preservation of human dignity. Thus it contributes to:

- cooperation, equality, friendship
- respect of all social classes and groups
- rejects social prejudices in order to understand and achieve social peace throughout the world (friendship, equality, respect for others, understanding, solidarity, brotherhood, fair-play, equality of opportunity, camaraderie, ethics).



## OLYMPISM AS A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

### At cultural level

The value of Olympism lies in the fact that through it people should know and accept the culture and traditions of other people, eliminate ignorance and prejudice and promote peace and mutual respect of people on a global scale. Embracing the ideals of Olympism means:

- respect for cultural values
- intercultural relations and exchanges between individuals, countries, continents
- equal participation of all, regardless of race, religion, gender, culture or socio-economic status.



### At universal level

The common ideals of Olympism unite all people not only in the field of sports but also in other fields such as the environment. Respect for nature and environmental harmony and peace must be intertwined with the vision of Olympism that promotes the model of offering to humanity.

Respect for fellow human beings also leads to international understanding:

- peaceful coexistence of people
- respect for the environment
- altruism
- democracy in sports



# THE CORE VALUES OF OLYMPIISM

Olympism refers to the philosophy of the Olympic games and its fundamental principles are presented in the Olympic Charter.

Olympism creates a way of life that unites sport with education and cooperation: non-discrimination is one of the principles on which it is based on.

Values are those beliefs that help us determine what is truly important and Olympism deeply acknowledges and honors worthwhile values.



The Olympic Spirit - genuine values generator - leads to knowledge, friendship, loyalty and awareness of the world's obstacles.

It also prepares children to promote and be part of an equitable society. It is meant as a guide for developing and practising democratic and collaborative competences and attitudes, skills that are needed to lead the youngsters to an active participation in the social life.

Olympism also helps to support the conservation of freedom's principles, human rights and the rule of law, concepts that create the fundamentals of democracy.



*I don't run away from a challenge when I am afraid. Instead, I run towards it because the only way to escape fear is to trample it beneath your feet*

NADIA COMANECI



## OLYMPIISM DEVELOPS:

- children's honest-oriented attitude, spontaneity, social skills and the propensity to taking initiative
- the response to challenges, the level of cooperation and focus
- practicing and taking responsibility
- the awareness and approach to diversity
- sharing different principles



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# THE CORE VALUES OF OLYMPISM

Sport shares values such as fairness, teamwork, equal opportunities, discipline, tenacity and respect. Sport offers the world the global foundation for learning and applying social and moral values .

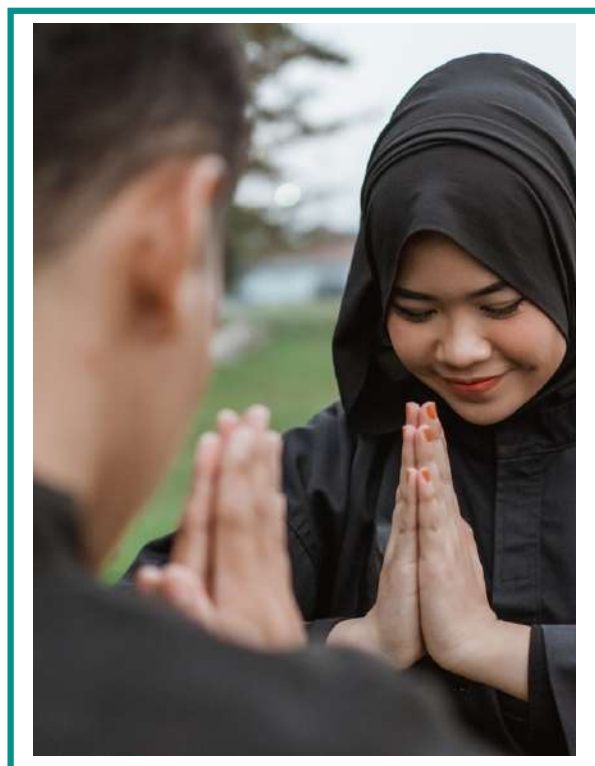
The three core values of Olympism are **Respect, Friendship and Excellence**. They form the framework for the Olympic Movement to promote sport, culture and education with a perspective to create a progressing world.

## Respect

The term includes respect for yourself , for other people, for rules and regulations, for sport and for the environment. We show respect for high achievement oriented people. Successful experiences lead to respect and acknowledgement of expertise. Thus the attitude of esteem and honor toward an individual or a group comes to life concerning positive qualities. Showing regard for other's abilities and skills and eliciting admiration creates the perfect environment for inspiration and collaboration. Building a climate of respect should be seen as a necessity for proper interaction.



*Do you know that ... ?  
When young people who live  
in a multicultural world  
learn to accept and respect  
diversity and practise  
peaceful behaviour, they  
promote peace and  
international understanding.*



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# THE CORE VALUES OF OLYMPISM

## *Friendship*

Friendship is the element at the heart of the Olympic Movement. It encourages us to see sport as an instrument for mutual understanding between individuals and of people all over the world. Friendship requires intention and initiative in order to create a reliable and strong connection. Good skills generate the development of friendship. Competence and capability facilitate the friendship between two parties. Friendship enriches our life experiences because it brings out growth and pure joy.



### **Do you know that ... ?**

*Sport teaches the value of positive competition dictated by respect for the opponent, the recognition of the skills of others and the acceptance of one's responsibilities and one's mistakes or limitations. In fact, let's not forget that conflict is an essential element in sport: dealing with opponents and teammates, managing tensions, confronting and discussing together are all opportunities to get involved and to develop important soft skills useful in everyday life.*





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# THE CORE VALUES OF OLYMPISM

## Excellence

It means doing the best we can, on the field as well as in our professional life. The important thing is not winning, but taking part, making progress and enjoying the active combination of involving body, will and mind for a goal. The ability to perform at the highest possible level is the dream for athletes and professionals in education. It can be acquired when someone is investing time for practice and can remain focused on the learning perspective throughout the process. Champions are able to perform at their best while they reach the supreme potential. Excellence is gained at the level of being able to focus entirely on the task and performing it at an outstanding magnitude. The positive reinforcement helps maintaining that spectacular level of achievement.

Pursuit of excellence. A focus on excellence can help young people make positive, healthy choices, and strive to become the best that they can be in whatever field they perform.



### **Do you know that ... ?**

*Individual or team sports allow children to face new and highly changing situations that, over time, help them develop the ability to question themselves and consider new solutions and different points of view. Learning to analyze a situation and find solutions is a skill that, in all everyday contexts, can be of great help.*





## TEACHING THE EDUCATIONAL THEMES OF OLYMPISM

Sport can play an important role in education. It can be a valuable tool for promoting personal and community values such as team spirit, discipline, perseverance and fair play.

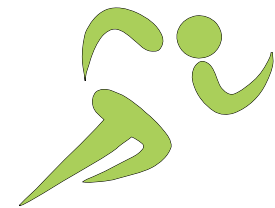
Sports practice can also be a valid help for young people to deepen their knowledge, skills and to increase their personal motivation: *mens sana in corpore sano*.

But to have a real and concrete value, the work of coaches, trainers and teachers plays an essential role. It is therefore important to adopt an integrated and interdisciplinary approach that brings together activities from a variety of different disciplines.

## EDUCATING THROUGH SPORT

Sport contains in a small way all the elements necessary for the formation and development of the personal and social identity of individuals and the use of Olympic themes can be a precious source of stimuli to talk about them:

- psychophysical well-being, pursuit of performance, competition;
- the importance of socialization and sharing common goals;
- respect for the fundamental rules, the spirit of sacrifice and the acceptance of defeat.



Practicing sports, at any level, implies the need to set goals and work hard, making choices to achieve them.



## USING THE OLYMPIC EDUCATIONAL THEMES

The Olympic themes, with their potential made up of history, mathematics, science, physical education, geography, languages and social studies, are therefore ideally suited for this type of integrated approach.

They can also be used in an educational key for example to talk about social issues or historical events which are particularly significant, in order to develop social competence in young people and trigger a lasting social transformation and a civic awareness.



“The future of our civilisation does not rest on political or economic foundations. It wholly depends on the direction given to education.

PIERRE DE COUBERTIN

Educating through the use of Olympic Themes requires, then, the presence of other fundamental elements that use sport and physical exercise with the aim of generating a form of lifelong learning: tolerance, solidarity, trust between peoples and nations. This type of approach can be seen as a plan for reflection and, at the same time, as a field of action.

Playing sports, being part of a team but also interacting with others and reflecting on specific issues, allows young people to develop numerous skills. These are essential skills that will be important throughout their life.

Too often we focus on results rather than process. Instead, it is interesting to remember that important life skills are developed and adopted gradually rather than simply taught and learned.

Therefore, one of the ideal environments for achieving this goal could be during the practice of sports, at school or at sports organizations.

Sport is certainly not the solution to every problem, but an accurate and careful policy of promoting sport and its values among young people can certainly produce positive effects in their path of growth, development and training.

**These Five educational themes are related to the core Olympic values: they can be easily integrated into the objectives commonly pursued in youth sport and school curricula.**

## THE CULTURE OF SPORT

Sport as a very multidimensional field is related to almost all spheres of life, from history to medicine and from economics to feeling the boundaries of the human body.

At the same time, sport is both a very personal and a social activity. As a social activity, sport facilitates human development, skills and growth in both individual and group contexts.

Through a culture of sport, we can understand and share social values and attitudes, which in turn is a powerful resource for teaching citizens to participate and contribute effectively in their community.

Be it sports yourself or supporting sports as a field with the same values - fair play, teamwork, contribution and the effort to improve.

In the case of an individual, physical education begins from the moment when movement, caring for body and mind becomes purposeful and conscious activities.

It is based on the desire to get better, which is more individual or collective in different cultures. The effort to get better does not change, but in a more collective cultural context, a broader support structure to notice and support is helpful in earlier human development.

From the childhood we start with games. Children are developed through playful activities by parents, teachers and coaches. In the later career of an athlete, several other specialists will be added, depending on the sport and level of development.

However, it is possible to reach the top from a more individual and collective cultural space.

Purposeful action requires agreements - fair play, equal treatment and a way of thinking that everyone can win, because a loss in performance also leads to progress. Meaningful action also presupposes the formulation of the ideal and the pursuit of it, and the moment of comparison on which the cultural level becomes the basis.

It can be said that the most important is an ideally designed goal, which can be very different in terms of sports, such as recreation as an amateur, achieving and maintaining a good state of health, or professional goals in achievement sports.



## THE CULTURE OF SPORT

Influence and ascendancy plays an important role in sport. The impact of sport varies from culture to culture in terms of proportions, but sport is affected and sport has influence. Sport grows people! In childhood there are role models and especially playfulness, as well as the living environment and community traditions. The main thing is one's own effort to do something better than before, the willpower not to give up and the will to get better, compared to yourself, playmates' friends and competitors.

Common sense (perception and cognition) and enthusiasm in team areas, but in addition everyone's own inner will to be good, the courage to try, to contribute, achieve, and win.

In a cultural context, we can talk about the concepts of common strive versus competing. You can also win so that everyone else wins. You can win by giving or losing and same time the victory is a creation that seems to belong to the people.

The success and awareness depends on the popularity of the area, and how important the community and the public consider their heroes and results to be. It is up to the community to highlight role models and idols, but also social control, expectations and good practices as unwritten rules.

This is how the cognitive level develops - sport as a cultural phenomenon. For example, the Olympic Movement, whose modern parts are joy, will, effort, purity, inclusion and tolerance.

The structures created for all kinds of sports characterize the sports culture and build on the sports support, marketing and other economies.

Sports culture is characterized by a greater results orientation than other cultural fields, which is symbolized by the podium, medals, leaderboards and victory. Depending on the sport, playfulness and strategies for success are more or less the hallmarks.

Going back to the beginning, the prerequisite for success is will and perseverance. It can be argued that these shared values are indicators of inner culture and mindset, and by developing physical abilities we achieve success and careers. Sports culture changes over time, growing with society and its changing behaviors, ideas, practices and traditions. In this way, it is through sport that it is possible to shape change in society in order to increase equality and reduce discrimination, be it ethnicity, minorities or special needs.

Sport helps to create a better society. It is possible to rise to the top of the world from any part of the world. It is an indicator of culture. We need role models, legends of self-transcendence and great victories. At the same time, it is not just the Olympic winner who needs to be an example, but each of us who sets high goals, dreams and shares our inspiration can be one. Be INSPIREd!



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## THE FIVE OLYMPIC EDUCATIONAL THEMES

Sport should play a fundamental role in everyone's life, especially in that of young people, since it represents a real school of life, a moment of growth, through aggregative and formative activities. Let's not forget, in fact, that many of the teachings given by sport are also valid outside the playing field and that, consequently, young people, through sport, learn in a natural way how to deal with many situations that also arise in other contexts.

Sport has a significant impact on the development and growth of children, not only from a physical and psychological point of view but also from a social and cultural point of view.

Sport as a school of life as:

- it helps developing self-confidence, leading youth to respect themselves and others both on and off the field of play;
- it teaches the importance of effort and sacrifice, of waiting and managing difficult situations to face;
- it is a powerful learning tool for education, providing a universal language for delivering key messages on the issues of healthy lifestyles, social inclusion, gender balance, and rebuilding of local communities.

The Five Educational Themes are inspired by this potential of Sport and are closely linked to the Fundamental Principles of Olympism: they decline, even more thoroughly, the Three Core Olympic Values of Respect, Friendship and Excellence.



# EXPERIENCING THE JOY OF EFFORT THROUGH SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

“*Sport teaches that talent is not enough for victory, it takes hard work and daily sacrifice. In sport as in life*”

PIETRO MENNEA

Sport teaches life lessons in a unique and memorable way, providing the opportunity to develop psychophysical and interpersonal skills that will be useful on and off the field. Imagine an athlete, standing there on the track, training his running technique until it gets dark and he can't see anything. Here, this is what sport shows us.

Discipline is a requirement for success in any field but sport, in particular, instills this value in athletes from the very beginning of their careers.

Practice can lead to perfection, but it can still be difficult for athletes of all levels to get out of bed early in the morning to go for a run; or go to the gym or to the field day after day to achieve peak performance while being tired or distracted by other worries.

Practicing a sport, therefore, requires perseverance and commitment. And that is why it can teach young people the value of sacrifice and renunciation necessary to achieve their goals.

However, Sport has also a valuable advantage: it is one of the few areas in our life where we receive immediate feedback for our actions. If we take a shot in a certain way and make a mistake, we can immediately change our approach or technique to improve.

Thanks to this instant feedback loop, sport proves to be the perfect training ground for developing attention to detail, the importance of discipline to improve ourselves and learn not to give up easily in the face of difficulties.



## EMIL ZÁTOPEK

“

**AFTER ALL THOSE DARK DAYS OF THE WAR, THE BOMBING, THE KILLING, THE STARVATION, THE REVIVAL OF THE OLYMPICS WAS AS IF THE SUN HAD COME OUT ... I WENT INTO THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE AND SUDDENLY THERE WERE NO MORE FRONTIERS, NO MORE BARRIERS. JUST THE PEOPLE MEETING TOGETHER. IT WAS WONDERFULLY WARM. MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAD JUST LOST FIVE YEARS OF LIFE WERE BACK AGAIN.**

”

Emil was born in Koprivnice, Czechoslovakia on 19 September 1922. Poor family, he was the sixth of eight children, his father was a shoemaker. At the age of 16, he began working at Bata, the shoe factory that supplied the Austro-Hungarian army during the First World War.

Emil has no racing experience yet but he is forced by his employer to participate in a race. He comes second. Emil runs, but he doesn't like it. He does it only to please the bosses: he runs reluctantly, wins, but finds it stupid and ridiculous all the same.

Anyway, there is something that attracts him about this effort, a sort of ancestral call that leads him to start running in secret, gradually covering longer and longer distances from home to the factory. He runs early in the morning and comes up with an exercise program of his own (apnea, endurance competitions) and finds that this not only amuses him, but also gives him enormous pleasure. If he could, now, he would just run.

At the age of 20 he was drafted into the army but the German occupation did not allow him to start his competitive career. He will have to wait until the end of the war to express his innate talents, setting national track records on 2,000, 3,000 and 5,000 meters up to fifth place at the European Championships in Oslo in 1946. From here on his career is all a crescendo of successes. and world records on 10,000 meters.

Czechoslovakia no longer exists.  
In 1993, fortunately without any war,  
two distinct countries were born:  
the Czech Republic and Slovakia.





## EMIL ZÁTOPEK

According to experts, however, he runs in a distressing and impressive way, in the worst sense of the term. Disjointed and heavy stride, face contracted into grimaces of spasm and pain.

The truth is that he is not interested in style, nor in technique: he is interested in substance, fatigue, the fruit of the victory that comes from a struggle against himself, against the limits of his own body.

There is no competition that sees him second, no one who can resist his pace. Nothing to do with the others, Zátopek's race is indisputable: it is he who leaves everyone behind, laps his opponents, continues a weak run after having already crossed the finish line, always smiling enthusiastically not so much for the victory, as for the ride itself.

He becomes **The Human Locomotive**.

It is estimated that with all the kilometers run for races and training, Emil Zátopek went three times around the Earth!



“

***I was not talented enough to run and smile at the same time.***

”

After the peak of his sporting career, both Emil and his wife became prominent figures of the Czechoslovakian dissidence and the Prague Spring (1968).

But Zátopek pays dearly for his independence of thought: expelled from the ranks of the army, he is forced to leave the capital and is confined to the mountains of his homeland. He survives by working as a gas station attendant and then as a miner. The regime, however, did not affect the genuine beauty of this meek and joyful man. Zátopek fed his passion with dedication and sacrifice by breaking down every obstacle. Starting from misery, he faced the most unsustainable training sessions, the most absurd diets, the most daring trips to participate in competitions.

He arrived dead tired at the starting blocks and won. Always smiling, always serene. And even after that, when his performance begins to dull, he never loses his good humor. He is aware that it cannot last forever; he knows that others will come - they are already coming - after him.

And he is happy. Life, sport go like this.

“

***It's at the borders of pain and suffering that the men are separated from the boys.***

”

# LEARNING TO PLAY FAIR

## WHAT IS FAIR PLAY?

Fair play is a complex concept that comprises and embodies a number of fundamental values that are not only integral to sport but relevant in everyday life. Fair competition, respect, friendship, team spirit, equality, sport without doping, respect for written and unwritten rules such as integrity, solidarity, tolerance, care, excellence and joy, are the building blocks of fair play that can be experienced and learnt both on and off the field.

Fairplay is, by definition, fair acceptance of the rules in a game, and by extension, honest conduct in any situation. The concept refers to the observance of opponents, the rules, the decisions of the referees, the spectators and the general spirit of the game. Also, fair play involves accepting with dignity both defeat and victory.

In sport the term is connected also with Sportsmanship which is an aspiration or ethos that a sport, or activity will be enjoyed for its own sake. This is with proper consideration for fairness, ethics, respect, and a sense of fellowship with one's competitors. A "sore loser" refers to one who does not take defeat well, whereas a "good sport" means being a "good winner" as well as being a "good loser" (someone who shows courtesy towards another in a sports game).

In the education work with students we, the educators and teachers, have to promote fair play in sport as a tool for self-esteem, self-development and fair relations with the others.

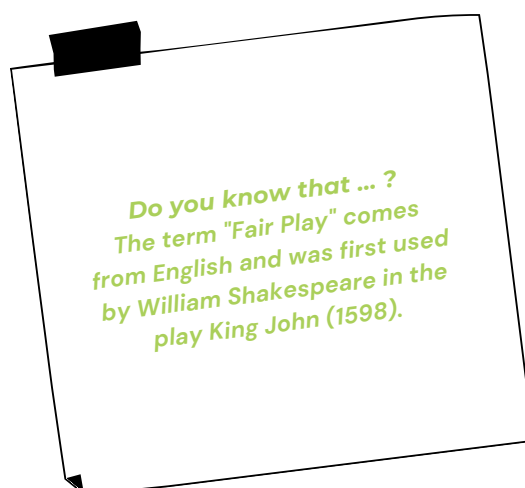
## HOW DO THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF FAIR PLAY CONTRIBUTE TO THE BETTERMENT OF THE WORLD?

Fair play is not a theory. Fair play is an attitude that manifests itself in behaviour. Whenever we act in the spirit of fair play we contribute to building a peaceful and better world.

Without fairness and trustworthiness the established order of our society is at risk. If we do not play by the rules, we ruin the spirit of the game and it is impossible to play with destroyers of the game.

Fair play, which is an essential and central part of successful involvement, promotion and development in both sport and life, can teach people tolerance and respect for others. It allows them to integrate into society and create a sense of teamwork. Fair play in sport is capable of giving hope, pride and identity, and it is able to unite where nationalities, politics, religions and cultures often divide.

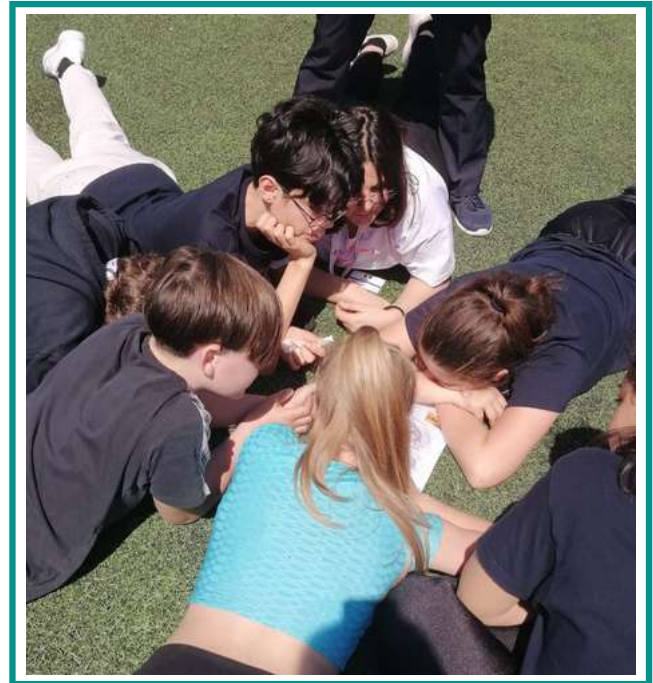
Cooperation in the spirit of fair play delivers even greater results than pure gamesmanship in all walks of life. It plays a key role, the role of a catalyst in today's society as a means of improving quality of life and human well-being.



# LEARNING TO PLAY FAIR

## FAIR PLAY AND COMPETITION

Competition can be good for students. When students compete against each other, the game becomes a challenge and motivates them to do their best. This can improve skills, encourage discipline and make children feel good about their achievements. Competition also increases the desire to win. And that's when children can sometimes find it hard to play fair. Because they want to win, they might challenge rules and other players. Some might get into arguments with their teammates and even start cheating.



“

**We cannot understand fair play unless we link it to moral values such as the spirit of justice, fairness, and human dignity. This "broad" vision makes fair play accessible to all and underpins all its specific applications.**

**Thus, respect, loyalty, tolerance and the healthy body are the marks of fair play in sport. Reciprocity plays an essential role in competition: one cannot do without one's opponent, and sport demands a respectful attitude towards the other; respect must go to the loser as well as to the winner. In order for there to be justice, equality of opportunity is as necessary in sport for leisure as in competitive sports, and in the latter, it must exist at all stages of training. Fair play calls for the greatest understanding of the social environment of competitors and of different cultures.**

**International Fair Play Committee, Declaration 2011**


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# LEARNING TO PLAY FAIR


## HELPING YOUR STUDENTS WITH FAIR PLAY: TIPS


You can use the following tips to help students of any age learn about fair play and enjoying the game.


 Give your students the chance to play lots of different games: the more experience and practice the better. Try board and ball games, competitive games of skill like chess, competitive games of chance, and cooperative games like charades. Even make-believe games can help children practise taking turns.


 Find a range of playmates: it's good for your students to play with school mates who are older or younger. For example, your child can look after younger children and maybe show them the rules. Older children can also be good role models for younger children.

 Go over the rules of the game: before the game starts, make sure everyone knows the rules. You might also need to gently remind students of the rules as you play.

 Introduce some social rules: these could be rules about taking turns and congratulating other people when they win.

 Encourage children to have a say in the rules: if you're playing a game with flexible or made-up rules, ask students what the rules should be. For example, 'If the ball goes out of bounds, what do you think should happen?' Students who feel they've had a say in the rules are more likely to follow them.

 Give feedback: praise your students for sharing, taking turns and other examples of playing fair. Point out what your students did well. For example, 'I thought it was great the way you shook hands with the other team at the end of the game'.

 Students learn about fair play by watching what you say and do. Following the rules, accepting referee decisions and being a good sport yourself all set a great example for your children. You can be a good role model on the sidelines too by saying things like, 'Better luck next time', 'Good try' or 'Well played'.

## "WHAT WOULD MY MOTHER THINK OF THAT?"

In an athletics race, voter Abel Mutai representing Kenya was only a few meters from the finish line, but was confused due to sports signs and stopped running, believing that he had finished the race and crossed the finish line.

The Spanish athlete, Ivan Fernandez was right behind him and realizing what was happening, he started shouting at Kenyan for the latter to continue running towards the finish.

But Mutai did not know Spanish and did not understand.

Then the Spaniard pushed him from behind, literally to victory. A reporter asked Ivan after the race, "Why did you do that?"

Ivan replied: "My dream is that one day we can have a different life in the community." The journalist insisted "But why did you let Kenyan win?" Ivan replied, "I didn't let him win, he would win."

The journalist insisted again: "But you could have won!".

Ivan looked at him and replied, "But what would be the merit of my victory? What would be the honor of that medal?"

### What would my mother think of that?

Values are passed down from generation to generation.

What values do our children learn?

Let's not teach our children the wrong ways and means to win.



# PRACTISING RESPECT FOR ONESELF AND OTHERS

Practicing respect for oneself and the others is maybe the most important key point in sport in generally and in education for youngsters especially.

Showing yourself respect does not make you narcissistic or conceited. In fact, it does quite the opposite. When we respect ourselves, we are more worthy of receiving love and, in turn, giving love to others.

All of us live in a world which is filled with conflict. Worldviews and opinions like and dislikes, they all vary as the number of people on this planet.

The vast majority of us like to believe we're open-minded toward individuals who see the world uniquely in contrast to how we do. We know it's essential to show respect to people around us, and we truly attempt. Yet, we appear to be lenient towards people who see things our way. That is a human instinct, right? To push back when we hear somebody express (what we accept to be) an absurd supposition?

*Respect is a concept that refers to the ability to value and honor another person*

*Even if we do not approve what some people say or do, they still deserve respect*

*Respect may not come naturally – it is something you learn, often from the adults in your life*

Respect

JUST A LITTLE BIT






## WHAT IS RESPECT?

Respect is the feeling you show when you accept that customs or cultures may be different from your own, and when you behave in a way that does not cause offence.

You accept the other person and not try to change them.

It is learning to tolerate, not discriminate, and avoid actions that may offend others.

Some examples of consideration in everyday life are:

-  greeting or speaking to others in a kind and respectful way
-  giving up your seat in public places
-  treating others as you would like them to treat you

**for the family: being able to understand, respect and coexist with each other**

**for culture: appreciating cultural differences**

## THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF RESPECT

**self-respect: valuing and appreciating yourself**

**for others: accepting and considering another person**

**for social norms: respecting norms that govern society**

**for nature: appreciating the environment**

**for values: ability to honor our own principles**

**for laws and norms: ability to comply with legal norms**

## WHY SHOULD WE PRACTISE RESPECT?

Respect is a very powerful ingredient in how people – even total strangers – treat each other.

Acts of respect could change the world and make the world a harmonious place.

There would be no hatred, no violence, and no wars.

Indeed, we would live in a world of peace.

If we don't respect others, they will not respect us, and if we don't respect ourselves we will not be respected by others.

Receiving respect from others helps us to feel safe and to express ourselves.

Respect in your relationships builds feelings of trust, safety, and wellbeing.

Self-respect is your view of how you're living your life. Without being respectful and civil, we will never be able to discuss or reflect upon anything of importance.

We will never be able to understand the reasoning of any other perspective.

Respect opens us up to processing new ideas with consideration.

Everyone deserves to have their opinion heard. Respect is a simple common courtesy.

We need to respect each other because we are all humans because none of us is above another.



## HOW CAN WE PRACTISE RESPECT?

How to encourage youth groups to discuss various aspects of respect?

In the following page there are **some examples** of topics for discussion. It is a long list, but this topic is wide-ranging and requires in-depth discussions.





## HOW CAN WE PRACTISE RESPECT?

What is the impact of having respect for yourself?

How does your education affect respect?

How important is it that we understand what somebody else thinks and feels?

How do life experiences and life skills affect the respect you receive?

Does taking care of your body affect the respect you may receive?

What is the effect of attending to your needs and listening to yourself such as a need for rest or fun?

How does learning to be an effective communicator impact the respect you get?

What are the results of showing people what respect looks like by being respectful to others?

What is the impact of you having goals and working to achieve them?

What is the effect of association with negative or toxic people have on your respect?

Why is it important to understand the point of view of other people?

Why staying calm, not shouting or using negative labels can be effective.

How can adults help to teach respect?

Why is it important to be polite with each other to show respect?

Why becoming angry or hurting others is not a way to solve problems?

How do we show respect to others?

Why is practicing humility, being empathetic, and respecting other people important?

## THE POWER OF LISTENING TO OTHER PEOPLE



1

Being empathetic, understanding each other, and putting ourselves in other people's shoes

2

Using assertive communication, that is, defending our rights while respecting the rights of others, in an educated and non-aggressive manner

3

Keep in mind that our approaches, ideas, and opinions may differ from other people

4

No one has the absolute truth

5

Apologizing to each other when we make mistakes

6

Keeping other people's secrets

7

Complying with and respecting laws and regulations

8

Taking care of the common spaces and the environment

9

Interest in others, their everyday lives, and how they feel

10

Respecting the privacy and intimacy of others, their spaces and belongings

11

Including rather than excluding others

12

Helping others when it is in our power to do so

# DOING YOUR BEST BY PURSUING EXCELLENCE

## What is excellence?

Excellence is performing at your highest level. Whether it is raising your self-esteem, doing well at your job, having satisfying relationships, or improving your physical body, engaging in excellence means you carefully think through your goal and make logical plans, you take the time to do your best, and you work hard at achieving what you desire.

Pursuing excellence begins with a decision you make, an ideal you envision. Once that vision is in place, you do whatever is necessary to make it a reality.

Following are ten different strategies to use that will help you attain excellence in your life.

### **Commit to do what is required to excel.**

After you make a plan to reach your goal, your commitment to do everything that's required to reach it is essential. This commitment involves having a high level of education and self-discipline.



### **Strive for self-improvement.**

Striving for self-improvement and the desire to continue to grow and develop are often natural for people with healthy self-esteem.

#### **TIP!**

**Being committed is persevering through all the ups and downs that happen, persisting in the face of any obstacles that appear before you, and continuously striving to do your best.**



### **Use your knowledge of yourself**

Personal excellence requires that you evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. Your strengths are those things that are easy for you to do and what you do best. They are your natural talents and skills. You may not even notice them because they are so instinctive to you. Your strengths may or may not be what you like to do. They can be, but that's not always the case.

# DOING YOUR BEST BY PURSUING EXCELLENCE



## TIP!

Your enthusiasm about your goal engenders creativity, and this creativity then generates even more enthusiasm. As you inspire yourself and others to take the steps that are needed to reach your goals, your passion increases even more.



## Stick with your goal until it's completed

To truly reach excellence, it is crucial to persist with any project until it is completed. Giving up halfway through will diminish your self-esteem quickly. If you are unsure which direction to go, it is okay to find out through try and error. Just keep in mind, persistence is key!

## TIP!

Just as important as identifying your personal strengths is recognizing your personal weaknesses. Realize that everybody has weaknesses. Weaknesses are qualities that create negative situations in your life..



## Have enthusiastic feelings that lead to creativity

In order to achieve excellence, you need to have a keen interest in accomplishing what you desire. Without these deep feelings of enthusiasm, you won't have much motivation and you'll stop partway through without completing what you started.

## REMEMBER!

Life is all about growing and improving yourself. When you do this every day, getting better and better, you build intensity to develop your skills and talents in whatever you are focused on.



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# DOING YOUR BEST BY PURSUING EXCELLENCE

What is the secret of an excellent performance in the competition that matters, in that of life?

a total psycho-physical control, which allows you to experience a complete knowledge of your means and the possibility of using them; a state in which there are no doubts and fears but a feeling of joy and fluidity



a profound awareness in which attention is completely focused on the task that awaits us, to the point of almost perceiving a space-time distortion; unity with oneself, which is the experience of total involvement in the present, the feeling of doing the right thing



**THIS TYPE OF EXPERIENCE IS ONE OF THE SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WINNING ATHLETE AND THE LOSING ONE.**

## NADIA COMANECI: THE PERFECTION

At the Montreal Olympics in 1976, Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci, aged just 14, won the hearts of all the spectators of the Games.

Her angelic image moving on exercise equipment, was not only fascinating but also showed that gymnastics was not just about strength, power and speed ... it was also lightness, balance and harmony.

Nadia Comaneci was born in Onesti (Moldova) on December 12, 1961. At the age of 6 she began to practice gymnastics and at her first National Youth Championship she finished third. According to her coach, the bib number 13 brought bad luck to Nadia. The same thing did not happen the following year, when she won all the national competitions in which she took part, becoming the number one gymnast in her country.

In 1975, at the age of thirteen, Nadia defeated the Soviet athletes in the individual test of the European Championships making her arrive in Montreal as the favorite, even if no one expected her score or her five medals.



“

*Hard work has made it easy.  
That is my secret.  
That is why I win.*

*Nadia Comaneci*

”

On the beam the Comaneci collected an incredible score, with a totally unknown somersault on an equipment just a palm wide.

At only 39 kg in weight and 1.56 m in height, she crowned herself as the youngest medalist in all of the history of the Olympics: she won her first medal on the eve of the age of 15.

Her body is also fascinating for her perfection: seeing certain jumps or evolutions, pausing to observe the multiple abilities of an athlete, the harmony and beauty of her gesture, we can only be amazed. And then we ask ourselves: << But how does she do it? >>.



In Montreal it was not only the medals that made her inimitable: it was Nadia's talent that bewitched the world, a talent that was reflected in the famous "perfect 10".

That magical moment was also accompanied by a curious aspect: the Olympic scoreboards were not equipped to show a 10, because they were set with a whole digit and two decimals; the score that was displayed was therefore a "1.00" which for a moment confused everyone a bit!

---

# NADIA COMANECI: THE PERFECTION

**What if Nadia Comaneci's Perfect 10 happened today?**

**How would social media react to when Nadia Comaneci scored a Perfect 10?**



**Discover it at this link!**

<https://olympics.com/en/video/what-if-nadia-comaneci-s-perfect-10-happened-today>

## LIVING A HARMONIOUS AND BALANCED LIFE: BODY, WILL AND MIND

To get optimum results an athlete must train for the event in the most efficient and productive manner possible because the margin of error in a sporting event is miniscule. You could win or lose in an Olympic event by 1/100th of a second. When in training, the athlete must have discipline and maintain a routine that includes the proper balance of sleep, good nutrition, and exercise. He/she must also employ psychology to make sure that the necessary mindset or attitude is in place. Attitude and mindset are so important that they could make the difference between winning and losing.

Former Olympic gold medal-winning decathlon runner Bruce Jenner once said:

**“  
You have to train your mind  
like you train your body.  
”**

He's echoing an athletic maxim that says

**SPORTS ARE 90 PERCENT  
MENTAL AND 10 PERCENT  
PHYSICAL.**

## RUNNING TO FOCUS THE MIND

Running has seen a surge of popularity in the last 10 years, especially in adults. With less reliance on teams and other people, running is a very individual sport. Athletic running or cross country running races can involve long periods in relative solitude, and even more during training.

Running is a great way to develop great self-control, mental stamina and of course physical fitness. Alongside requiring physical fitness and stamina, a large part of being able to run long distances is having mental discipline and control to 'run your own race' and apply effort at the right time and not be drawn into what the competition is doing. This has huge applicability in the modern world. With large elements of our life beyond our control, 'running your own race' is an important skill to pick up.

**Motivation is finite but our capacity for motivation can be bolstered. If from a young age we are taught the benefits of being out of our "comfort zone" and hone the ability to work towards a greater reward, evidence shows that people are less likely to suffer from depression and experience greater life satisfaction.**



# LIVING A HARMONIOUS AND BALANCED LIFE: BODY, WILL AND MIND

In professional sports, some athletes have become successful purely because they are gifted physical specimens. They have phenomenal strength, speed and the game they play just comes natural to them. But this talent can only take them so far. The ones who truly excel, those who become world-class in sports, as in life, are those who simply outwork everyone else. They are the ones who have such a purpose and drive that they push the limits of what we believe is possible.

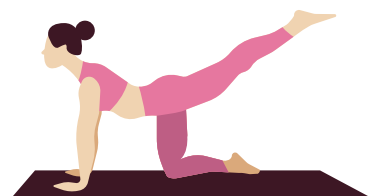
*“The mental aspect has to kick in, especially when you’re talking about the best of the best. As Olympic athletes, everyone is talented. Everyone trains hard. Everyone does the work. What separates the gold medalists from the silver medalists is simply the mental game.”*

*Shannon Miller*

**Those are the ordinary individuals who rise to greatness through sheer power of will.**

Behind an athletes' physical feats is an arguably even more impressive mental prowess cultivated through years of training the mind to tune out distractions, reduce stress and anxiety and build the focus and stamina they need to achieve optimal performance. In fact, great athletes succeed because they know how to stay at the top of their game mentally.

**Young people develop and practise physical, behavioural and intellectual skills by challenging themselves and each other in physical activities, movement, games and sport. Practicing a sport, especially at certain levels, requires perseverance and commitment. That’s why it can teach children about the value of sacrifice and abdication necessary to achieve their goals.**



## THE IMPORTANCE OF... BALANCE

In order to function at our best, we need to balance taking care of ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually. Focusing too much on any one facet catches up with us and leads to health problems in the neglected area. We need a sharp body, a strong mind and a powerful will - and to find our balance within.

Athletes talk a lot about “mental toughness”, the quality that allows a player to stay focused and dig deep even when they might be physically exhausted. It’s about doing whatever it takes to succeed, no matter how spent you might feel. And there’s nothing that develops mental toughness quite like sports. It’s the energy that allows a marathon runner to sprint that last half mile. It’s the inner voice that tells the athlete to find a way, not an excuse. It’s the ability to experience failures and setbacks without becoming discouraged.

### MENTAL TOUGHNESS

**The only way to develop mental toughness is to step into situations where you lack control and push yourself to control the chaos and succeed. In daily life, it’s possible to go days and weeks at a time without having to dig deep to overcome adversity. That isn’t possible for the committed athlete, who throws him or herself into those kinds of situations every day, by choice.**



## WOMEN IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

The history of women's participation in the modern Olympics, now in its 32nd edition with Tokyo 2020, testifies to the changes of the last century regarding the presence of women in society. The world of sport in fact proves to be a kind of microcosm that reflects problems and developments of the entire social body.

In Ancient Greece, sporting activity was generally reserved for males, of aristocratic rank and physically perfect. As a result, the Olympic Games provided for limited participation for free Greek male citizens. The athletes went to Olympia and during the celebration of the games they proclaimed an ekecheiria (Εκεχειρία), a general truce to promote participation. Women could not attend the races nor participate, but we know that during the Olympics of 396 b.C. Cinisca of Sparta won the chariot race with 4 horses. This is because, although women were prohibited from participating in Olympic competitions, chariot racing was an exception, as the organizer and financier of the participating team could also be female. In the following years, Cinisca was taken as an example by other women who wanted to try their hand at this competition and some of them matched their victories.



The ancient Olympic Games were held until 393 AD. and only in 1896, about 1500 years later, in Athens the first modern Olympics were celebrated: anyway, even then women were absent, as Baron Pierre De Coubertin, the father of the modern Olympics, judged their participation "impractical, devoid of interest, incorrect and unsightly" and prevented the holding of women's competitions.

However, there was an unofficial marathon runner, a Greek woman of humble origins known as Melpomene (the real name was Stamati Revithi). As she was not allowed to run in the men's race, she decided to run alone the next day even if her act was never remembered in the official medals.

The marginality of women in the modern sports movement was, after all, the necessary consequence of social conventions implicit in an organization of society which intended to relegate women to a generally subordinate role, limited to the sphere of domestic work and procreation.

## WOMEN IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

However, despite the prejudices women were able to participate in the second Olympics, celebrated in Paris in 1900. Although unofficially, a representative of just 22 women out of a total of 997 athletes (2.2%) competed in five disciplines: tennis, croquet, sailing, horse riding and golf. In 1908 in London, 36 women out of a total of 2008 athletes participated, always unofficially, in archery, skating, sailing, tennis and motor boat competitions.

It was only after the I World War, in Antwerp, that in 1920 did women participate officially for the first time at the Olympics and their number has, since then, slowly grown: female athletes were just over 13% in 1964, 23% at the Los Angeles Games in 1984, 45% in Rio in 2016.

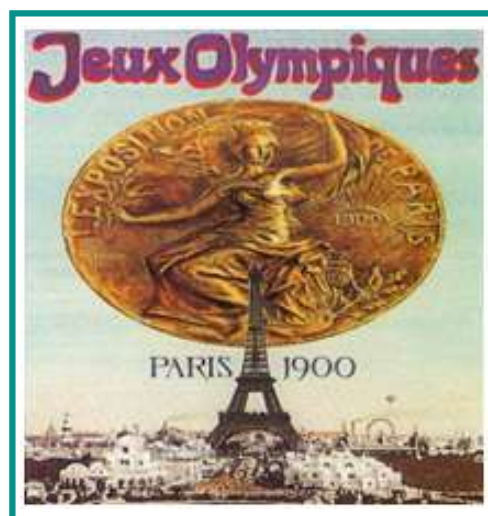
The 2012 London Games were the first in which women competed in almost all sports thanks to the introduction of women's boxing and, for the first time, Brunei, Qatar and Saudi Arabia had athletes in their delegations. The real breakthrough? Who knows ... it could come just with the Tokyo Games ...



In short, it has not been easy for women to find a way into a totally masculine world and their affirmation has gone hand in hand with the role achieved with the passage of time in society. Despite this increasing participation and presence of women, some continue to complain of discrimination, both because the number of male athletes is higher than that of women, and because in some disciplines there are more competitions for men than for women and, as a result, the number of women's medals is also lower.

There are other voices calling for the complete abolition of "gender discrimination" in competitions, hoping that males and females compete in the same races, eliminating any distinction of sex between competitors.

It is clear that physiology is at the basis of the movements that characterize sports performance, but it must be born in mind that equality and non-discrimination must be objectives that form an integral part of the educational and social functions of sport and that the battle to remove cultural barriers that prevent the real involvement of women is not yet won.



## BETTY ROBINSON, THE WOMAN WHO LIVED TWICE

Amsterdam, 1928. As for athletics, it is the women's first official appearance at the Olympics. With the Dutch edition, in fact, the number of women participating rises to 290. To win the first Olympic gold in the 100 meters is the sixteen-year-old American Elizabeth "Betty" Robinson, who in the race leaves behind the most listed Canadian and Italian athletes, the latter known as "the girls of Mussolini".

Born on 23 August 1911, Babe (as her classmates called her) is a sweet-natured teenager who likes to play the guitar, act in school shows and run in social competitions organized by her school or the local church. She knows she is fast, and she is intensely competitive, but she never imagined that she would one day be able to participate in the Olympics... and win!

The journey from New York to Amsterdam lasts nine days and Robinson remembers that she "loved every minute of it". There are 18 female track and field athletes in a US Olympic team of 280 athletes.

She returns home with a medal around her neck and is hailed as a real hero, but during a racing tour she is victim of a terrible plane crash. Given for dead and ready for inhumation it will be the undertaker who will realize that in reality it is only a coma. She'll wake up about two months later. It's a miracle for everyone that she's still alive. But the real miracle has yet to come true.

Betty will get back on her feet and with a prosthetic right leg, while recovering she slowly discovers she can actually run again, "not as fast as she used to be, but fast enough to join the Olympic team", she says

“

*It's indescribable how lucky I felt to be there and getting another medal. It would be useless for me to give up without at least an attempt to run.*

*Betty Robinson*

”

She then decides to try to join the Olympic team that would have participated in the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936 and starts training. Due to the injuries caused by the accident, however, she is no longer able to get into the starting position squatting. (she can't bend her knee completely), so competing in the 100 meters is impossible. However, as a 4x100 fractionist, she wouldn't have had to squat if she hadn't gone first. The 1936 Olympics are rightly remembered for Jesse Owens's four gold medals, but Betty Robinson also leaves her mark. The race is relay 4x100. And for Babe it's still Olympic gold.

In 1996, while living in Denver, the then 84-year-old was chosen to carry the Olympic torch a few blocks on the way to Atlanta for the Games. Although she was very frail, she refuses to allow anyone to help her carry the heavy torch or even hold her arm as she makes her way through the streets, filled with the Olympic spirit for Babe one last time.

She dies at 87. Her niece will say, "I think she enjoyed adventure and knew she was doing something different from her peers ... I think she was very grateful and later tried to use her place in history to make an impact for women and girls athletes. She loved running and wanted others to be able to do what they loved, just like her".

## THE PARALYMPICS : SPIRIT IN MOTION

Sports for athletes with disabilities have been around for a hundred years in which the first clubs for deaf people appeared in 1888 in Berlin.

However, it was only after World War II that they began to get more recognition.

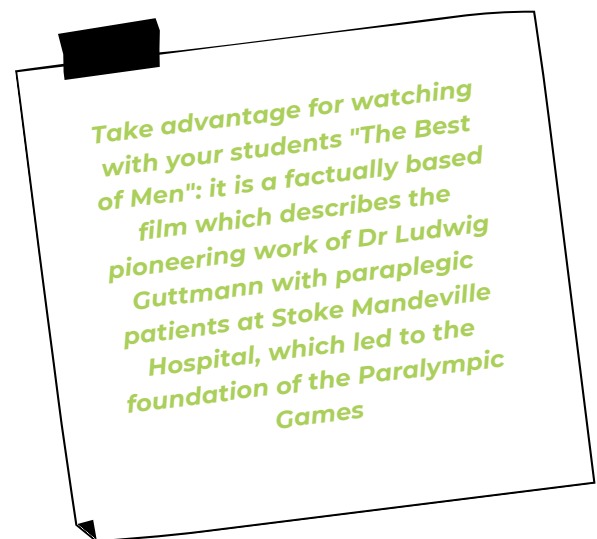
At the time, the objective of these games was to help rehabilitate war veterans.

In 1944, Dr. Ludwig Guttmann opened a treatment center of spinal injuries at Stoke Hospital Mandeville in Great Britain at the request of the British government and, over time, rehabilitation sports evolved into recreational sports and then into competitive sports.

Sir Ludwig Guttmann, a Jewish refugee and neurosurgeon is considered to be the founder of the Paralympic Movement. In fact, there are several authors who refer to him as the "Coubertin of the Paralympics". Guttmann acknowledged indisputable physiological, psychological and social values in sports and used it, not only as a privileged means of rehabilitation, but also as a vehicle for inclusion in social and productive life.

Sporting excellence wasn't his goal at first, but rather the functional and social rehabilitation of his patients.. Thus, in a structured and organised way, he started introducing sports for people with disabilities through a rehabilitation programme for severely injured patients in the spinal cord during the second world war.

He started by developing less dynamic sports, such as: billiards, darts, archery, among others, introducing more competitive and physically demanding sports at a later stage, such as wheelchair tennis and basketball.



Due to the success of his programme, the first National Games of Stoke Mandeville appeared in 1948, in which 16 athletes participated in the archery modality.

This competition was held on the day of the opening ceremony of the London Olympic Games, aiming to publicly demonstrate the potential and capacity of these athletes. With this powerful message, these games started to take place year after year and new modalities were introduced as well as an increasing number of athletes.

It was in 1952 that these games became accessible to athletes from other European countries, namely the Netherlands with the participation of ex-military personnel. Thus, the International Stoke Mandeville Games were founded.

---

## THE PARALYMPICS : SPIRIT IN MOTION

However, it was only in 1960 that the Games once started by Guttman left England, having been internationalised in Rome and designated as the first Paralympic Games with the participation of 400 athletes from twenty-three countries. Since then, the Paralympic Games have been held every four years.

Later, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) was created in 1989 in Germany; an organisation that has been playing a leading role in the international context, for it managed to achieve the Olympic and Paralympic Games to be played simultaneously in 1992 in the city of Barcelona.

Over the years, sports for people with disabilities have been geared towards different purposes, from rehabilitation and therapeutic goals, to the competitive and high-performance aspect that attains maximum expression in the Paralympic Games today.

Choosing an athlete with an inspiring story is not an easy task. All of them demonstrate their strength, resilience capacity, their will to overcome barriers and obstacles, in short, to be an integral part of society.



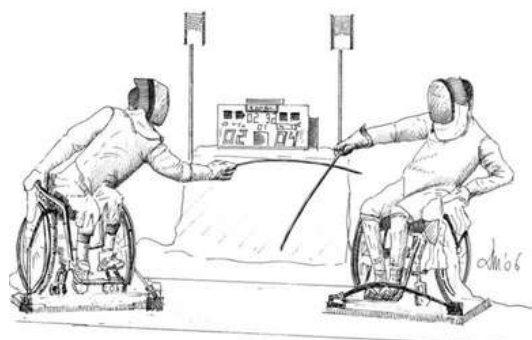
## BEBE VIO: A REBORN FENIX

Beatrice Vio, also known as Bebe, was born on March 4, 1997 in Mogliano Veneto, Italy. This young fencer is an inspiring force for all those who know her.

After having meningitis as a child, she later had to amputate both legs below the knees and her forearms, due to tissue necrosis.

Fencing, one of her passions, which she practised since the age of five, required the movement of her wrist and three fingers. However, she wasn't willing to give up. After three months of rehabilitation and using a special carbon prostheses, specially designed for her, Bebe returns to fencing. For her, this sport is like a competition against herself. She sets goals and objectives and, although she likes to win, she has to move forward, she has to set bigger goals, face the difficulties, overcome them.

Two years after surgery, she participated in the first wheelchair fencing competition. In 2013, she won her first World Cup in Montreal, after defeating Gyöngyi Dani, the Paralympic silver medallist. This participation earned herself the election of Paralympic athlete of the month by the International Paralympic Committee. Thenceforth she didn't stop and repeated success followed. She became one of the most famous athletes in Italy and became a world Paralympic champion at the age of 19.



Bebe also promotes vaccination, as she believes it can help prevent various diseases. As a baby, her doctor thought it was too early for her to be vaccinated against meningitis and two years later, she contracted the disease that led to limb amputation.

For those who have been victimised by serious illnesses that have supposedly ruined their lives, preventing them from achieving their dreams, Bebe can be a source of inspiration for having survived a disease in which 95% of patients die in the first hours of treatment, in which being alive must be a cause of joy and never of anger or sadness.

“

**IT'S NOT POSSIBLE? I'M SORRY  
BUT I DON'T KNOW THE  
MEANING OF THESE WORDS!**

*Bebe Vio*

”



---

## BEBE VIO: A REBORN FENIX

Bebe inspires anyone who thinks they don't have what it takes to make their dreams come true. And in doing so, she shows people that achieving their dreams is not a matter of talent, nor of having the necessary tools, but the desire that they have to achieve them.

This example should be considered an inspiration for all who face some kind of difficulty. The Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset made a quote that synthesises his way of understanding and interpreting the world and that fits in this context. He stated "I am I plus my circumstances and if I don't save it, I don't save myself". That is, we are not isolated, independent and self-sufficient beings. We are the sum of ourselves, our characteristics, the environment, the circumstances in which we are immersed, our singularities, plus our conditions, which can be favourable or adverse. What this philosopher means is that life is difficult, often a drama, but not necessarily a tragedy. We can assume a realistic and mature attitude towards life or we can escape from reality, by alternative paths, through the possible escape routes, which often contribute to the self-destruction of the person and to the emptying of the meaning of his/her life. However, no matter how many escape routes may be found, they do not undo our circumstances, nor our singularities. It is therefore fundamental to learn to live with this state of affairs, without necessarily accepting them passively. Bebe did not accept them, did not conform with them and looked for a way to overcome them. This is a question of survival, of maintaining possible emotional stability and mental health.

What Bebe shows us is that human beings have a natural capacity to reinvent themselves and to fulfill themselves. This means that the existence of certain adverse conditions cannot be seen as an obstacle to action. The constraints of action must be understood as the limits that internal or external factors impose on human action, but also as the possibilities that these factors give to our action. That is, the human being may be born unable to perform certain actions, or, as in this case, may be the victim of a disease or accident that limits his/her action, but he/she is also born endowed with intelligence and creativity that allows him/her to overcome these obstacles or difficulties, reinventing him/herself, just like Bebe did.

Attitude is the key factor in this whole process of building the human being. The psychological features linked to the personality or way of being of the individuals, the way in which each person interprets the situations and responds to them, influence the life path of each one and can limit or broaden the field of possibilities of action. The way in which each one reacts to failures and success, knowing how to be resilient, having willpower and motivation, having self-confidence, knowing how to find different paths that lead to the fulfillment of our dreams and the achievements that configure an existential project with meaning, is fundamental for the human being to live fully and the Paralympic games are one of the maximum exponents of this reality.

For some people, life is a problem. For others, like Bebe, life is about solving problems, experiencing conflicts and overcoming them.

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Introduction to olympic values education	1
The fundamental principles of olympism	2
<i>Olympism as a philosophy of life</i>	3
The core values of olympism	5
Teaching the educational themes of olympism	9
Using the olympic educational themes	10
The culture of sport	11
The five olympic educational themes	13
Experiencing the joy of effort through sport and physical activity	14
<i>Emil Zàtopek</i>	15
Learning to play fair	17
Practising respect for oneself and others	21
Doing your best by pursuing excellence	26
<i>Nadia Comaneci: the perfection</i>	29
Living a harmonious and balanced life: body, will and mind	31
Women in the olympic games	34
<i>Betty Robinson, the woman who lived twice</i>	36
The paralympics: spirit in motion	37
<i>Bebe Vio: a reborn fenix</i>	39

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