

COMPETITIVE PERSEVERENCE The *athlete* and great teams are not deterred by bumps in the road. Since she is committed to continuous improvement, she can **recover quickly from a mistake and refuse to remain discouraged**. Positive, competitive, persevering athletes are “mentally tough”, a quality that allows an individual to remain confident, enthusiastic and positive. *Athletes*, who are mentally tough, **simply cannot have their spirits broken**. They can lose to an opponent ten times and look forward to the next rematch. They **welcome challenges and look forward to the toughest competitions as tests of themselves**.

A **non-athlete** is **easily discouraged and allows yesterday's failures and disappointments to interfere with today**. Non-athletes are unable to recover quickly from mistakes.

Perseverance and positive attitude are a choice.

DISCIPLINE This is nothing more than **focused attention and effort**. To be successful individually or collectively, sacrifices involving discipline (“focused attention and effort”) are required. Great *athletes* not only accept discipline, they embrace it for the benefit of the team. They have the **strength of character** to overcome temptations and pressures and **will do what's right for their team** at the moment of truth. Discipline is exhibited by **attentiveness, enthusiasm, sportsmanship, respecting authority and personal responsibility**. Because they display “athletic integrity”, disciplined athletes are **better teammates**. They are **reliable and trustworthy, are always there for their teammates**. For a team, discipline can be *the* characteristic that sets them apart and gives them an edge.

The **non-athlete** chooses **self-indulgence** (“I'll do what I want!”) over self-control and only thinks of discipline in terms of punishment.

Accepting discipline (“focused attention and effort”) is a positive form of teamwork. It is also a choice.

TEAM FIRST Teamwork is a **rare gift that allows ordinary people to attain extraordinary results**. The process of becoming a good teammate is a decision based on attitude, specifically the choice of **interdependence over independence**. The *athlete* **intentionally puts the needs of the team ahead of herself. She will NEVER LET HER TEAMMATES DOWN**. She understands that everyone on a team can have different roles that together can make the team stronger. On a great team all roles have equal value, and great teams are made up of athletes who have given up the quest for individual glory, who willingly and wholeheartedly commit themselves to the team effort. Sports provide many individually satisfying memories, but for the true athlete, **nothing can compare with the memories built from being part of something bigger than yourself**.

The **non-athlete** is a **selective participant, looking to satisfy her own needs first by being selfish with her effort, attention or behavior**.

Putting the team first and not letting your teammates down in any situation is a choice.