

ATTITUDES TOWARD RUNNING

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[Assignment: Select a group of individuals and classify them in from two to four categories, making sure that the same basis of classification is employed throughout and that the classes be mutually exclusive. The principle of classification is to be stated in a clearcut, succinct topic sentence.]

(1) Having run with a cross country team for two years, I was able to observe other runners and realize that most fall into one of three categories based upon their attitude toward running: the devoted, the reward-conscious, and the noncompetitive. Devoted runners are those who gain pleasure from running and who strive to improve their own ability while also supporting the team. Runners who are overly concerned about winning medals and being recognized as the best on the team are called reward-conscious. Noncompetitive runners lack the spirit of winning and run for the sole purpose of keeping their bodies in shape.

(2) Devoted runners serve as the greatest support of a team. Runners of this type do not need to possess running ability. Even a runner with little talent can support the team. Attending the majority of practices, speaking well of the team, and cheering on other team members are just a few ways to help build up a team. Devoted runners contain many good qualities which other team members recognize and may even wish that they, too, possessed. In other words, his/her good qualities become an example for others on the team to follow. Devoted runners are not interested in showing off their great running ability, especially since they may not be the best runners on the team. Rather, they join a team because of the personal pleasure they receive from running and competing against others. Runners who are devoted are not overly concerned about themselves nor do they seek praise or glory from others. They set goals for themselves and work hard at practices in order to fulfill those goals. Most devoted runners usually run on their own outside of practices. Before joining a team, they make a commitment to try their best and improve the quality of the team.

(3) In contrast to the devoted runners, reward-conscious runners are those who are overly concerned about the number of medals or trophies they receive at each meet. They run in order to fulfill their personal goal of winning praise from others. Often, runners of this type feel that they will not be accepted by other team members unless they can prove how good they are by how many awards they receive. Reward-conscious runners are mainly concerned with what others think about them and their achievements. After a well-run race, they do not keep their pride to themselves but, on the other

hand, let everyone know how well they ran. Runners who solely seek reward are really longing for attention. So that they may receive this attention, they strive for winning and may become depressed if they do not reach their goals. Obviously, such attitudes are not an asset to the team. Reward-conscious runners are more concerned with supporting themselves rather than supporting others on the team. They are usually unsympathetic towards others' needs. Instead of trying to help others improve their running ability, they take their needs for granted. A good team needs to be able to work together in order to be effective. Runners who are reward-conscious have no significance in helping to unite the team.

(4) Of the three types of runners, noncompetitive ones differ because they often run for the wrong reason. Most run for the sole purpose of keeping their bodies in shape. Another reason for their joining a team may be that they want to get involved in some kind of function. Usually, their real talent does not lie in running. Therefore, they do not run for the mere enjoyment of the sport. For this reason, their style of running and practicing may be more casual. Unlike reward-conscious runners, runners who are noncompetitive do not have a winning or competitive edge. Rather, they realize their own limits and do not set major goals or push themselves in hope of a victory. They are satisfied by merely knowing that through running their bodies are being kept in shape. A reason for their desire to stay in shape may be that they plan to participate in an upcoming sport. For example, basketball players may join a cross country team in the fall so as to force themselves to stay in good shape for the upcoming basketball season. In this way, training for the basketball team will not be so strenuous and difficult. However, there may be other reasons for being noncompetitive. Maybe those players who appear to be noncompetitive have just lost their enthusiasm for the sport due to a variety of reasons. Whatever the case may be, noncompetitive runners are even more of a hindrance to the team than those who are reward-conscious. In a way, they can be thought of as just taking up a place on the team. Without any desire to be competitive they serve no purpose on the team. A good team needs to have committed and hard-working individuals. Noncompetitive runners are not there to win, but just to stay in shape or to provide some kind of activity for themselves.

(5) All three types of runners have different attitudes about running as a sport. These attitudes affect how well they perform and also how well they support their teams. Of the three kinds of attitudes, I realized that the attitude of a devoted runner is the best one to develop. Overall, he/she is the best example for both the reward-conscious and noncompetitive runners because his/her efforts work to support the team.