



## SPORT

By Wayne Visser

*~ Sport is a better peacemaker than politics or religion ~*

What is it about sport that makes it so compelling?

How did it become such a pervasive force in modern society, or was it always so?

Admittedly, not everyone is a sports fanatic, but its influence on our collective psyche cannot be ignored.

Sport has become a metaphor for life.

We talk about levelling the playing field, competing for our place, playing by the rules and being good sports.

As with sport, life is a game of risk and reward, of scores and penalties, of rules and referees, of winning and losing.

We can choose whether to play fair or dirty, whether to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat.

The drama of sport reflects the drama of our lives.

Hence, we live our lives vicariously through the lens of sport.

The action on the court or field acts out our own struggles and triumphs, our highs and lows, the jubilation and the disappointment, the swings of fortune because of, or sometimes in spite of, our best efforts.

Through sport, we learn that hard work is rewarded with results, but also that the best team doesn't always win.

We see that there is a place for individual brilliance (indeed, it is essential), but that high performing teams are stronger than any lone star.

Our heroes on the sports field become role models for our children; in fact, for all of us.

They teach us the importance of believing in ourselves and having big dreams, of focussed commitment and tenacious striving, of fair play and respect for others.

Sport is a channel for our competitive instincts, an outlet for our sense of pride and identity.

In a very real sense, sport is a civilized form of war - it allows rival factions to do battle.

But the only casualties are bruised egos and wounded pride.

International tournaments, although fought viciously, become instruments of friendship.

World Cups and the Olympic Games bring the world together on peaceful terms.

Sport makes it more difficult to harbour resentment and cultivate discrimination against others because they happen to be a different race, nationality, sex or persuasion.

It shows us that talent ignores artificial boundaries and needs to be recognised on its own merits.

And when we do allow natural ability to be nurtured and to flourish, we witness spectacular feats of human accomplishment.

It is impossible not to be inspired by the remarkable achievements of our sports women and men.

They push the borders of what is physically and mentally possible.

Through unbelievable dedication and training, they fine tune their bodies and hone their skills.





And the result is a breathtaking display of realised human potential, an exquisitely choreographed dance of agility.

We don't always have to be spectators on the sidelines either.  
The beauty of sport is that everyone can enjoy it, if they are willing to try.

Have you got memories of playing sport, of being on a winning team?  
Perhaps you even scored.  
Can you recall the exhilaration, the sense of being invincible for those few precious moments?

Did you ever have the experience of being "in the zone" – that heightened state of awareness, where you and the game are perfectly at one, where every move is in tune with the overall harmony of the dynamics in play?  
Psychologists call this being in a flow state, while many religious traditions recognise it as a form of meditation.

We all strive to achieve that ideal state of seemingly effortless performance in our lives, but sport gives us the clues to making it happen.  
We have to work hard, have positive mental attitude, listen to our intuition, respect the rules, immerse ourselves in the moment, and love what we do.

Are you game to give it a try today?  
Go on, be a sport!



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