



*From Left: Cathy Freeman (Women's 400m) and Naoko Takahashi (Women's Marathon) - Winners*

Press Release October 2000

## NZ Olympic Medals Tally. What Are The Lessons?

***We have heard much talk about why New Zealand athletes had such a poor medals tally at the 2000 Olympics. Some say it was due to under funding, resulting in limited training capability. Others say we should reduce funding and have the athletes prove they are worthy of it first. Many lay blame on political correctness affecting our entire culture, and the attitude of athletes. In contrast, there are those who think we are all winners, as long as we get to compete, and do our best. But what is the opinion of those who are accustomed to succeeding?***

### **Winning Is Good For The Economy**

Though difficult to quantify, it is widely felt that winning at international sporting events is good for the economy. It helps advertise our country, indirectly attracting investment and tourism. Significant is it's effect on local consumers. The "feel good" factor resulting from sporting wins may influence consumer confidence and effect spending patterns, stimulating the economy.

### **"It's Not Fair"**

Yes, a cyclist lost a bronze medal by a fraction of a second: Yes, a horse was judged, "lame": Yes, our yachting hopes were dashed over a protest: Yes, suspected illegal use of drugs gave others an unfair advantage. "It's not fair" is the cry of many. Does that still account for our poor overall result? The reality is, other people have to endure unfairness too. Consistent winners are well aware of this. They fail the most! Why? Because they are out there trying

and failing repeatedly until they get it right. Although they fail too, they are never happy to stop there. They are mentally tough, driving themselves on until success is finally achieved. Complaining of unfairness is common, but it is a major cause for failure to try hard enough, or at all. Consistent achievers win because they get over unfairness. They know they cannot do a lot about it, so they decide to win in spite of it.

### **Attitudes Displayed Mirror Results**

When we hear comments from athletes like, "I'm happy just to get selected for the team, so now I'm going to cruise and enjoy myself", or, "I knew I had the Bronze (in sight), so I was happy with that", is it any wonder we fail to aspire to our full potential? Contrast that with Tiger Woods who was unhappy with his performance, even when he won, saying he had to practice more. The results speak for themselves. Professional motivators know that you will live up to your own expectations or that of other's. If these are low, we will achieve accordingly. Winning is the result of passionate goal setting, and relentless determination to reach those goals, in spite of difficulties, failure along the way, or unfairness.

### **Dangerous Thinking**

"It's not winning or losing, it's how you play the game" say some. In other words, there are no losers, only winners. The doctrine is intended to encourage positive self-image regardless of how one compares with others. It is also intended to encourage good sportsmanship. While the sentiments are "nice" in a perfect world, this way of thinking is fundamentally flawed. Broadly speaking, many who promote these views have not achieved a lot in their own lives, and are responsible for preparing our children for the real world. The result is an entire "namby-pamby" generation of mediocre, where only a few shine. Excellence is not encouraged. Achievers know this. They see their opportunities from it - succeeding in areas seen as too hard by most.

Regardless of what we may want the world to be, the cold hard reality is there are only two types of people: Winners, and losers. If we are to compete in sports or business, local or overseas, we have to understand that second place is still failure. Just ask those who compete for a contract or a customer - second place still means you do not get the order - just like tenth place. That does not mean winners have to be ruthless, and generally, are not "nice" people. In fact many winners practise ethical codes of conduct that are exemplary. But they are acutely aware of life's harsh realities, and compete in the real world. The real world is unforgiving, so they play to win.

### **Is It Too Late For Our Athletes?**

In a word, no. Some have already referred to the results as a "wake up call". This level of failure can be the start of greatness, provided we take things more seriously at all levels, and train to win. The successful Australian model appears to be made up of three parts: 1) Serious funding: 2) Treating it like a

serious and precise business with proper planning: 3) Developing of the “killer instinct” - a quality we badly need to see more of - thinking like winners.

Are the principles for sports achievement transferable to business? Yes. We are every bit effected by proper use of resources, careful planning and above all, serious attitude. Such principles apply to life in general. Ideal? Perhaps not. Do they work in the real world? Absolutely! How long have achievers known these basic truths? 6000 years - well before the Olympics.

*For comprehensive training on this subject, ask about, “How To Succeed At Anything”, and “Unlocking Your Brain Power” - high intensity programmes provided by Advantage. These programmes are the result of studying the thinking and habits of successful people.*