

THE CABBAGETOWN BOXING CLUB NEWSLETTER



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MOTIVATION

The Role of Motivation in Sports - Motivating Young Athletes to Achieve Goals in Sports and Life

Johnny Kalbhenn

How do you motivate athletes, especially young athlete where sports lead to both physical, but also personal character development? The motivation for participating in sport and striving for improvement is likely to vary considerably from person to person.

I know what made me go after what I wanted – I had the desire to become a boxing champion, and the ambition to prove that I could achieve this goal. And so my desire and ambition became the driving force that lead mi to achieve my goal. But is it necessary to have “Desire” and “Drive” together? Can you achieve your goals with just Drive or just Desire? Does the “Want” to achieve have to be stronger than the “Need” to achieve?

In studying peak achievers in sports as well as in life we realize that “Desire” and “Drive” have to combine into “Motivation”, i.e. the will to exert persistent effort in attaining the desired goal. A highly motivated person would be more eager to give a better performance than a lowly motivated one with the same skills. Likewise, a person who has less skills but more motivation can train to be better than another who has more skill but is less motivated to put in 100% of effort.

If we set specific goals to be individual steps on a ladder to our final goal, each victory will be a step to the achievement of that goal – setting well thought through step-by-step goals is the key to achieving our final objectives.

In amateur boxing it is for all athletes the achievement of a personal victory to reach the provincial or national championships and to see the path open in some cases to the top – to compete at the Olympic Games. But in ensuring the path from beginner to the highest achievement in any sports, the base question for every coach remains of how to bring out the best in every athlete – how to give an athlete the motivation, the desire and drive or to reach his or her personal goal.

Each person is consciously or subconsciously aware of his or her personal needs for self-fulfillment, but how do coaches find the trigger to change the personal needs into the drive to achieve at the critical performance time for the athlete?

The basic step for both coach and athlete is to clearly define the athlete's goal – his or her real understanding and interest in achieving the desired objectives.

In guiding the athlete and creating the proper environment for the athlete to exert persistent effort and maintain motivation, the coach has to be adviser and role model.

As such the Coach helps the athlete to set proper and attainable goals and encourage him or her to achieve these goals will lead by example through his or her own behaviour in the gym as well as in life. A good coach will give the athlete repeat encouragement and build self-confidence, while being able to point out areas for improvement and be firm in requesting focus and persistent performance.

But regardless what the driving motivation of the athlete might be – fame, fortune, self-improvement – the bottom line is that you have to let the athletes know that it is up to them to fulfill their drive and desire.