

Why Champions Win

by **Steven D Huff**

Hold up your thumb and forefinger about 2 1/2 inches across. That is what one-hundredth of a second translates into in a 100-meter race run by Olympians. In the women's 100, at the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games a runner from Jamaica finished 6 one-hundredths of a second (six thumb-and-fingers) behind the winner. For that she came in only fifth place. Another Jamaican was 1 one-hundredth back and took the silver. The gold was won by an American who crossed the line only 2 1/2 inches ahead, and all this after 100 meters of electrifying speed.

Winning and success aren't easy in any area of competition. Business, like athletics, becomes more demanding and difficult every year. It has been said, "The bar of performance seems only to move in one direction." Winning takes more than trying hard, it requires trying hard at the right things. Joe Griffith said it this way: "You have removed most of the roadblocks to success when you have learned the difference between movement and direction."

Regardless of the field, champions win because they do these "right things" well:

- Champions perform with Consistency - Don't expect to win with occasional bursts of great performance. Real champions make the top ranks by performing well day in and day out. In fact, you don't always have to be the best - just perform reasonably well most of the time and you'll surpass those who only have momentary bouts of greatness.
- Champions practice Self Discipline - Someone once said, "The key to success is setting aside eight hours a day for work and eight hours for sleep and making sure they're not the same hours." Champions run ahead of the pack because they have learned to practice the self discipline required to get the job done. Don't look for short cuts and don't sit back waiting for success to be handed to you. Buckle down and do the hard work of learning, practicing and improving.
- Champions embody the "Never Give Up" Attitude - Ross Perot once observed, "Most people give up just when they are about to achieve success. They quit on the one yard line. They give up at the last minute of the game one foot from winning a touchdown." Phil Knight, founder of Nike, said, "Success goes to those who have the desire -- win or lose -- to say: again!" Remember, while crowds are usually on hand to watch a champion cross the finish line and win, few people are around during the tough times when the "would-be" champion keeps slugging it out. It is still true: "Winners never quit; and quitters never win."
- Champions focus on their Priorities - A thoroughbred doesn't worry about what people or the bettors think of him or his performance. He just keeps his eyes fixed on the track and gets the job done. Likewise, champions of every kind have learned not to be distracted by the concerns or demands of others. Most people run out of ammunition before they find an aim in their life. Real winners keep their priorities lined up in their sights and keep firing away.