



The Power of...

Self Direction

Why it Matters

Have you ever wondered why some athletes never quite seem to fulfill their potential? The answer is often a lack of *self direction*.

Self direction is the ability to lead ourselves toward a goal. Those who have it are able to get the most out of their talent. Those who lack it never quite fulfill their promise.

Five Winning Habits

Learn these winning habits of self direction and you will become a valuable teammate and a better performer in athletics, in school, and in life beyond sports.

1. **Self Motivation.** Self-directed athletes bring their own motivation to the team. They don't wait for a coach or someone else to pump them up. They motivate themselves by thinking about what they want to accomplish before every workout, practice, and competition.
2. **Self Initiative.** Self-directed athletes take the initiative to improve without being told. Even some highly motivated athletes have trouble taking initiative on their own. They are so used to being told what to do, they seem to forget that they have the power to work out, seek coaching, read, watch videos, etc. on their own. Give yourself an edge by showing self initiative.
3. **Self Discipline.** Self directed athletes have the discipline to stay focused. They set goals and stick with them. They set priorities and manage time to get things done. Self discipline is a powerful sign of personal strength and maturity. Even if you occasionally fall short, the experience of practicing self discipline will help you tremendously.
4. **Self Control.** Self directed athletes have the ability to keep their cool under pressure. They have emotions like anyone else, but they are able to keep themselves in check. Self control helps them stay focused on execution during competition – especially under pressure. Self control also helps them avoid trouble outside of sports.
5. **Self-Directed Learning.** Self directed athletes bring a learning mentality every day. They seek and accept coaching. They take what they learned yesterday, and apply it to what they are doing today. This learning mentality also helps them in the classroom, in the community, and in the workplace. Always be learning.

Think About It...

1. Think of someone you know outside of sports who has a strong sense of self direction. What makes this person different?
2. Think of a time in your life when you showed strong self direction. This could be in sports or another setting. How did self direction help you accomplish your goal?
3. Imagine yourself as a coach recruiting two athletes of equal ability. One is highly self-directed, but the other is not. Which athlete would you want to coach?

Take Action

- ✓ Look through the five winning habits of self direction and commit to doing one thing to strengthen your self-direction starting right now.