

Paying the price

As I sit to write this we are literally only days away from the XXth Winter Olympic Games in Torino, Italy. At a recent speaking engagement someone asked me if I would be competing and I pointed out that I had retired from the sport due to a knee injury I had sustained.

As I later contemplated my answer I realize that that was only part of the truth. In Nagano, I hobbled around on a knee swollen one and half times its size and thought nothing of it. Having competed in three Olympic Games, I knew only too well the enormous price exacted in order to compete at that level and this time, I was simply unwilling to pay it. I was not willing to pay the price of being on the bobsled circuit for months at a time and missing my children growing up. I was not willing to pay the price of not pursuing my new love—a career as a motivational speaker and author. I was not willing to spend the time to hone my skills as a bobsled driver choosing instead to invest that time learning and developing my skills as an entrepreneur. I was willing to pay the price but not to get back to the Olympics.

I am reminded of the story of the hostess at a cocktail party. She approached the world famous concert pianist who had just given a wonderful recital and declared that she would give anything to play like him. He looked at her thoughtfully trying to find the kindest way to coach his response.

"No you wouldn't." He finally said.

An embarrassed smile creased her face as she exclaimed "Yes, I really would!"

"No Madame" He asserted.

"You would love to play the way I play now, but I promise you, you would not be willing to practice 8 hrs a day for the next 20 yrs to learn to play the way I do."

The silence in the room was deafening. Everyone present knew the pianist was right and that the hostess was only deluding herself.

There is no free lunch. Everything has a price and whether you are competing at the Winter or Summer Olympic Games or like all of us, in the Olympics of life you must pay it. You can have anything you want as long as you are willing to pay the price. The cost is exacted in different ways. Sometimes it is in dollars and cents. Perhaps you need to use your life savings and at the same time borrow from

everyone you know to pursue a business opportunity. Maybe the cost is in time—the hours, weeks and months you need to invest to get that college degree. Probably it could be the sacrifices you need to make. What must you give up to have what you want? The cost could also be in the form of personal growth. Not just in terms of developing your skills and talents but also growing in terms of developing your self esteem and confidence, your ability to influence as well as elevating your level of thinking.

You don't get an exciting career, a thriving business and live the life of your dreams without paying the price. The price must be paid in full. It cannot be bartered. Neither can you put on credit or layaway. Your willingness to pay the price gives you the power to make your dreams come true. A refusal or hesitation to do so, ensures that you don't get to march in the opening ceremonies of life. Instead you are left outside the stadium listening to everyone else enjoying the fruits of their labor and living their dreams.

Chuck Swindoll had this to say about paying the price:

"A piano sits in a room, gathering dust. It is full of the music of the masters, but in order for such strains to flow from it, fingers must strike the keys...trained fingers, representing endless hours of disciplined dedication. You do not have to practice. The piano neither requires it nor demands it. If, however, you want to draw a beautiful music from the piano, that discipline is required..

You do not have to pay the price to grow and expand intellectually. The mind neither requires it nor demands it. If, however, you want to experience the joy of discovery and the pleasure of plowing new and fertile soil, effort is required.

Light won't automatically shine upon you nor will truth silently seep into your head by means of rocking-chair osmosis. It's up to you. It's your move."

If you are unwilling to pay the price, then you'll discover as others have, that it is far more costly not to have paid it in the first place. Your willingness to pay it will allow you to discover, as I have that achieving your goals will be different and more difficult than you imagined.

You will discover strengths and abilities that you didn't know you had. You will be amazed by how much your horizons have broadened and by how far you can take yourself. In short if you are willing to pay the price it will be better and more beautiful than you could ever have imagined.

Keep On Pushing.

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