

COMMITMENT

Definition

- A pledge or promise; obligation.
- To surrender or give up for the sake of something else.

Story

At the Olympic Games, Mexico, 1968, the marathon was the final event on the program. The Olympic stadium was packed, and there was excitement as the first athlete, an Ethiopian runner, entered the stadium. The crowd erupted as he crossed the finish line.

Way back in the field was another runner, John Stephen Akwhari of Tanzania. He had been eclipsed by the other runners. After 30 kilometers, his head was throbbing, his muscles were aching, and he fell to the ground. He had serious leg injuries and officials wanted him to retire, but he refused. An hour after the winner had finished, Akwhari entered the stadium. With his knee bandaged, Akwhari picked himself up and hobbled the remaining 12 kilometers to the finish line. All but a few thousand of the crowd had gone home. Akwhari moved around the track at a painstakingly slow pace, until finally he collapsed over the finish line.

It was one of the most heroic efforts of Olympic history. Afterward, asked by a reporter why he had not dropped out, Akwhari says, "My country did not send me to start the race. They sent me to finish."

What a great picture of commitment...finishing at all cost! When we are fully committed to something, we must exhibit sacrifice and selflessness.

When the Cheyenne Indians were going into battle, they had a warrior who rode out in front known as the "Dog Soldier." What set this soldier apart from the rest was that he would lead his tribe into battle and when the fighting reached its hottest, when no one knew who would win, the Dog Soldier would dismount his horse and drive his stake into the ground. He was attached to the stake by a rope. Everyone knew that the Dog Soldier could be counted on to take a stand and fight to the finish. He was a leader because he was a servant.

Quotes

“The more you sweat in practice, the less you bleed in battle.”
US Navy Seals

“My God-given talent is my ability to stick with something longer than anyone else.” *Herschel Walker*

“Once you learn to quit, it becomes a habit.” *Vince Lombardi*

Interaction

1. What does it mean for you to be fully committed to your team?
2. What sacrifices have you made lately for your team?
3. What necessary disciplines do you need to develop in order to strengthen your commitment level to your coaches and teammates?

Main Idea

What is the true nature of commitment? Here are two characteristics of a serious commitment:

FULL INVESTMENT

A serious commitment means you fully invest yourself in the cause-- physically, mentally, and emotionally. You connect completely with your cause and passionately pursue it by putting your whole heart, mind, and soul into it.

WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE

Commitment means you knowingly and willingly give up things you might want in the short-term to potentially gain something of greater value in the long-term. In a team setting, commitment also means sometimes sacrificing your individual goals for the good of the team.

Take Away

Commitment: You are either in or you are out. There is no such thing as life in between.