

# LOYALTY

## Definition

The unshakable faithfulness to a cause, ideal, product, commitment or obligation.

## Story

Loyalty is essential in the world of sports. It is an unswerving, unshakeable faithfulness at all times. There should be no denying our loyalty to our team. Athletes and coaches change schools, teams, and programs at the drop of a hat. It seems loyalty is a thing of the past. But for the success of a team, loyalty is imperative!

Former NFL safety, Pat Tillman, had options. He walked away from more than \$3 million to join the Army Rangers and fight for his country. When Tillman learned he could opt out of his military service, NFL teams were clamoring for his service.

“They all wanted Pat,” said Frank Bauer, Tillman’s agent. “And they all said the same thing: ‘Frank, this kid can get out of it. He’s already served in a war. Just file his discharge papers.’”

Pat said, “Frank, I know it’s flattering and all, but the bottom line is I made a commitment. I’m going to give it one more tour, then I’ll get ready and train (for the NFL).”

Four months later, Tillman died in a firefight in Afghanistan at the age of 27. Tillman made a decision that symbolized his life—a decision of loyalty to his country.

## Quotes

“Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved.”

*Martin Luther*

“Loyalty means nothing unless it has at its heart the absolute principle of self-sacrifice.” *Woodrow Wilson*

## Interaction

1. What are you 'loyal to' in life?
2. Who is the most loyal person you know? What makes them loyal?
3. What are some specific ways you can demonstrate loyalty to your teammates and coaches?

## Main Idea

Loyalty is essential to every relationship we have in life that matters. The loyal person acts for, stays with, and remains committed even when it is tough. We can be loyal to many things—a team, friends, family, church, school, community, country, or employer...just to name a few. And some loyalties can be more important to us than others. Yet in all cases, loyalty implies a specialness of the relationship.

What makes it special is our identification with the object of our loyalty—at some level, we think of it as belonging to us. There comes a point at which one must plant one's loyalty in the simple fact that it is **my** team, **my** friend, **my** alma mater, **my** nation.

The word "my" implies ownership. We "own" things because they bring value to our lives; otherwise, we would discard them. Ownership demands responsibility. When a relationship falls into the category of "my," that responsibility is our loyalty.

## Take Away

You have to give loyalty to get loyalty.