

Are Your Athletes Whiners or Winners?

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"Think you can or think you can't - either way, you'll be right." - Henry Ford

There is something special about being around winners. They just have a way about them that makes you want to watch, listen, and learn. They tend to look at the "bright side" of things, remain positive in the face of obstacles, and keep an optimistic outlook for the future.

On the other hand, we all know what it is like to be around those that whine, complain, and focus on what is wrong with their current situations.

In his book, *The Top 10 Distinctions Between Winners and Whiners*, Keith Cameron Smith (2011) compares the beliefs, behaviors, habits, words, and actions of those that win . . . to those that whine. The reader is quietly challenged to whine less, and in doing so, win more. This book is about taking responsibility for your behaviors, changing perspective when needed, and having a clear purpose for what you think, say, and do.

Here are five of the author's 10 distinctions. Take a look, contemplate, and honestly assess if you are really focused on winning or a bit too consumed with whining.

First:

Winners take responsibility - Winners tend to look at people and situations as "good." They don't worry about those things, people, or situations that they cannot control. In short, winners believe that a positive outcome will result as they trust their teammates to work together and remain united. Winners choose to be winners and know that they must (in part) depend on others for their success. While winning is a team effort, winners take responsibility for their results by controlling those thoughts and actions that lead to the desired outcome.



Whiners play the victim - Whiners allow their fears, worries, doubts, and suspicions to guide their actions. Whiners typically believe they have no choice . . . and "whatever happens, happens." In the end, whiners make choices based on fear and believe that situations are a result of someone else's actions. This belief leads to blaming others for the current circumstance and giving up all responsibility as it relates to creating positive outcomes.

Second:

Winners find a way - Winners believe they can finish the job. Their belief shows itself in confidence, persistence, and perseverance. If winners don't get the results they are seeking . . . they try again, try something new, or change the plan in order to reach the goal. Winners just keep going until the task is completed as expected. They promise themselves that they will never give up . . . and they don't.

Whiners find an excuse - On the other hand, because they don't believe they can be successful, whiners find excuses as to why they cannot complete the task. They lack resolve, confidence, and a clear reason to continue. Because they often lack purpose and vision, whiners find it easier to quit. They simply cannot envision the task being completed because they do not believe they can do it in the first place.

Third:

Winners brighten a room by entering - Winners are full of energy, passion, and enthusiasm and they make a point to talk about the good things that have happened and what others are doing well. They encourage and esteem their teammates and refuse to speak poorly of others. Winners would rather focus on the positive and the good. They stay focused on their own and others' strengths.



Whiners brighten a room by leaving - Whiners tend to be draining as they suck the energy from those around them. They often gossip about others and complain about how bad life is. Their discouraging words, negative tone, and overall self-pity are de-motivating to teammates. Instead of focusing on strengths, whiners would rather focus on their weaknesses and what they don't have. When whiners leave a room, the room becomes a better and brighter place.

Fourth:

Winners build friendships - Winners understand the importance of "true" friends. They find ways to respect those they are working with, despite having different opinions and perspectives. There is a sense of humility about winners as they continually try to improve by asking others for the help they need to reach their goals. In sum, winners are other-minded and want the best for the team. They are about team unity and overall team performance. They lack arrogance and self-centeredness. Winners simply understand the value of friends, teammates, and help from others.

Whiners destroy friendships - Whiners generally don't understand the need to work through differences and often demand that their way is the right way. They typically do not respect others' viewpoints and they lack humility, good communication skills, and the wisdom to know when to stop talking. Whiners just don't value meaningful relationships or practice what it takes to build such relationships. They want things on their terms and are unwilling to see things any other way. Their arrogance and lack of trust often destroy friendships . . . even before the friendships get started.

Fifth:

Winners think big - Winners know that thinking big leads to excitement and enthusiasm for what could be. They know if they expand their thinking and ask bigger questions that they will grow and have a chance to win more. Winners are not afraid to work more, think more, change their old ways of believing, or be pushed outside their comfort zones. They simply want to get better, make better, and do better. As a result, winners are full of energy, passion, and enthusiasm. In short, they are happy and fun to be around.



Whiners think small - Whiners seem to always be in survival mode. They stick to their old ways of thinking and believing and are reluctant to think bigger. They are gripped by fear and anxiety and, in the end, ignore their goals and dreams. Whiners simply choose to stay the same and then blame the results on someone or something else. They lack the faith to change and the belief that they really can change. As stated, whiners remain stressed, fearful, and unhappy . . . and are not much fun to be with.

Alright, how are you doing? How are you with taking responsibility, finding a way to finish the job, staying optimistic and positive, building genuine friendships, and thinking big?

You cannot control much of what happens to you . . . but you can control your perspective surrounding what happens to you. Winners choose to win and whiners choose to whine.

To be honest, most of us still whine too much! What if we start whining less so that we can begin winning more? Hey winners, let's be more about winning and less about whining!