

The Value of Discipline

December 8, 2023



Bill Toomey ranks as one of America's great twentieth-century athletes.

He brought the gold medal for the decathlon back to the United States in the 1960s. I was a member of Bill Toomey's track team at the University of Colorado in the late fifties. We ran side-by-side (at least for the first fifty yards) in most workouts. To this day I have anguished memories of our workouts each Monday afternoon. The memories are onerous because the workouts were. When those Monday workouts were ended, I would stagger in exhaustion to the locker room. But not Bill Toomey. He would rest on the grass beside the track for twenty minutes, and then he would repeat the workout. For every ounce of drive I had in me, Bill Toomey had ten more. And that's why American sports fans knew Bill Toomey's name in the sixties and no one knew or cared about mine. The difference between the two of us began on Monday afternoons during workouts. He was unafraid of discipline and did the maximum; I was afraid of discipline and did the minimum.

Nothing of value is ever acquired (in the spiritual realm) without discipline.

– Gordon MacDonald, via KneEmail, Mike Benson, Editor

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway – 1 Corinthians 9:27