

Be The Best You

By Lloyd Iaccarino, pBus Squad

I have always been fascinated with elite sport. I adored the time spent with my dad kicking the footy, having a hit of cricket or tennis and falling in love with anything sport.

I was beside myself every Olympics or Commonwealth games, studying the world's best athletes and dreaming of one day, "donning the green and gold" and representing my country. Is there any greater honour?

I lived my young life believing in two main theories:

- 1) Not everyone gets the chance to play for their country and if you get an opportunity: give it everything you got!
- 2) No matter what you do, aim to be the best.

As you grow up you begin to learn that more often than not, childhood dreams are simple in theory, but impossible in reality.

There was an old Italian fellow at my first bowling club (who in all reality was crazy) who took it upon himself to impart his wisdom on me.

At the time I was playing (and loving) four or five different sports and he was adamant that I should focus only on one. "Don't be a jack of all trades, but a master of one."

So, I hung up the boots and runners and donned the bowling shoes.

I trained two hours a day every day and was determined to improve my game.

Being eight years older and lucky enough to have bowled with many students of the game, I look back on 18-year-old me and wonder how great it would have been to know then, what I know now. I thought putting the time in, regardless of *how* I was training would lead to success. What I realize now, is that being successful is dependent on purpose, focus and intensity of training, rather than the number of hours put in.

As I got older, my philosophies changed. I was still as determined as ever to succeed, but how I was viewed by my peers and the way I played mattered just as much.

I was a kid and the importance of ‘fitting-in’ became more appealing than being myself. Unfortunately, the burden of trying to impress others becomes tiring and you lose the tenacity you once had. Ambition cannot be judged by those around you and as I tried my hardest to be what I thought ‘the better bowlers’ wanted me to be, I became lost.

As I so often do, I turned to my sporting heroes for guidance. What differentiated a champion from a legend? How can I make it to the top whilst staying true to the person I wanted to be?

Roger Federer has always been my ultimate idol. His resilience, determination and humility are traits I admire. Five years ago, he was down and out, challenged to retire and instead of giving up and ending what is one of the most decorated careers in tennis history, he believed he had more to offer, evolved his game and won several more grand slams on the back of hard work.

Most importantly, he did it with humility and remaining true to himself. Novak Djokovic is equally as talented as Roger Federer, however as he hunts down Federer’s records, crowds all around the world seem to support and relate to the Swiss far more than the Serb.

Novak appears to have stopped being true to himself. He appears to crave the adoration the community have for Federer and to believe if he acts the same as he does, on and off the court, the public will show him the same appreciation.

A shame as he is more than likely to pass Federer in accolades but will never be seen in the same light.

Unfortunately for Novak, he thinks he is doing the right thing, but too often it comes across the wrong way and looks ‘try-hard’. In my opinion, if he wants to earn the respect of the sporting world, he needs to stop trying to be the next Roger but be the best version of Novak.

What is the point of this example? I often see bowlers, particularly young bowlers behaving like other bowlers at the top of the sport. Craving their approval.

In some instances, this is great, but in other instances, not so much. To make it to the top you need confidence and unfortunately the line between arrogance and confidence is too often crossed.

The biggest challenge as you aim to make it to the top is to remain true to yourself and remain loyal to your values, regardless of other people’s opinions.
Be the best you.

I no longer dream of being the best, but rather understand that being the best I can be, is far more important than anything else. I still love sport and I still have idols, but their impact is far different than I ever thought it would be and define the bowler and person I want to be...

Russell Green Jr.'s determination, Russell Green Sr's resilience, Robbie Briglia's self-respect, Lachie Tighe's bravery and most importantly, Bear's humility.

It is these people's influence and others who have made me who I am and I owe it to them and myself to never forget the journey to greatness isn't determined by *what* you do to get to the top, but *how* you be the best you. That is what legends are made of.