

# Lessons from our Athletes

The Jamaican team performed very well in Berlin. There are many lessons to be learnt from their achievements. These lessons are especially relevant for young people.

1. Believe in yourself. The entire team exuded a high level of self-confidence. Many people commented on Usain Bolt's high level of confidence. He believed in himself, but he was not arrogant.

"Man without self-confidence is twice defeated in the race of life." - Marcus Garvey.

2. Hard work and discipline. All the athletes trained and worked hard. Success did not come overnight. Brigitte Foster-Hylton worked very hard for her medal. Melaine Walker commented on the pain and sore she went through to gain her medal. Usain Bolt ran so many races that he was tired in the relay finals. Hard work and discipline are the keys to success.

"Heights of great men reached and kept were never attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, kept toiling onward through the night."

3. Good manners. The world has come to admire and adore all our athletes for their good manners and sportsmanship. Our athletes have distinguished themselves as ladies and gentlemen. They are proud but never arrogant. They can be firm but never rude.

As the good old Jamaican expression goes, 'Manners carry you through the world and back without a penny.'

4. Balance your life. Have fun. It is important that we remember that even as we work hard, we should take time to have fun. Usain Bolt has taught this to the world. Everyone commented on his sense of fun. I could not help but smile when Bolt placed his hands over his heart and did the fake tears while the crowd sang him happy birthday. Most athletes did their partying but after the games. There is a time and place for everything. Get the work done first then party and celebrate.

5. Avoid drugs. Drugs and alcohol can affect your health in the long term. This is one of the many reasons performance-enhancing drugs are banned from competitive sports. Still, far too many of our young people use alcohol and cannabis, which affect their general performance in life and studies. The top Jamaican athletes have shown the world that they can achieve without using drugs. Let us learn from them.

6. Ensure that you have a basic education. Regardless of what you do in life, a basic education is critical to your success. Almost all our athletes have secured a good foundation in education. Far too many of our young people are dropping out of school and ending up in music studios with the hope and expectation of making it big in the music world.

"Labour for learning before you grow old, for learning is better than silver and gold. Silver and gold will vanish away, but a good education will never decay."

7. The present, not your past, defines you. Many of our athletes are from humble backgrounds. Despite the challenges, they have broken through barriers. You can all succeed despite your past.

8. Don't bad-mouth your country. There are far too many Jamaicans who love to bad-mouth the country. Many of us have made this a national pastime. All our athletes have shown an abiding love and respect for this country. Let us emulate them and never speak ill of Jamaica. The great patriot always respects and speaks well of his country.