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Susan Weinschenk, Ph.D.

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New ways of thinking about people  
by Steven Reiss, Ph.D.

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## How to Motivate Athletes

A mental game for athletic excellence

Published on April 4, 2013 by Steven Reiss, Ph.D. in Who We Are

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You saw the movie many times. The home team is losing the football game. The star player is stinking it up. At halftime, the home team goes into the locker room, heads down in shame, and fans booing while hurling eggs. Coach gives an inspirational talk; players come out of the locker room brimming with renewed purpose; and with the star player looking like Superman, it is Touchdown City, with the winning points coming on a miraculous 98-yard pass with a second left in the game. And then the head cheerleader and star player embrace and the audience just knows they will marry and live happily ever after.



**Steven Reiss** is Emeritus Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at The Ohio State University.  
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Well, I'm no Hollywood movie maker. I am a professor who has some new ideas about motivation and sports. I can tell you that inspirational talks are just one small part of what sports motivation is all about. They often do not work as well in real life as they do in the movies. Real-life coaches tend to give pep talks that motivate themselves more than they motivate their athletes.

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Motivation is the assertion of values. It affects most everything you do as an athlete, such as how you play during the game; how you perform under stress; how you prepare for the game; and how you relate to teammates and coaches.

Motivation is the key to correcting bad athletic tendencies, such as choking under stress; playing great one day but lousy another; or committing too many penalties.

Motivation affects how you relate to your coach, including what he or she may really think about you.

When you are tired during competition, your values are the key for finding that extra motivation to finish the job.

Athletes looking to improve their mental game please note: I constructed a simple standardized questionnaire called the Reiss Motivation Profile. ® Peter Boltersdorf applied my work to sports in 2005. Since then Peter's clients have won an Olympic gold medal in weightlifting; a world championship in handball; and professional championships in soccer. On this side of the pond, Michael J Formica has had success working with U.S. figure skaters. In total we have assessed what motivates thousands of athletes here and in Europe.

To learn what motivates you as an athlete, take a look at our website, [www.iaimtowin.com](http://www.iaimtowin.com) If you have a Sirius/XM satellite radio, listen to our ads on Mike and Mike in the morning starting next Monday or Tuesday.

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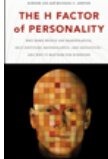
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