



# 3 Simple Truths from an Olympic Journey

It's been said that the sport of triathlon FOUND Gwen Jorgensen. As a child, she dreamt of going to the Olympics for SWIMMING. Unfortunately, her fierce determination was not enough...and in her 3rd year of college she started to question her dreams. It was during this time that a running coach found her and convinced her to run with the cross country team. Her running efforts quickly produced MANY more accolades in the running world than in swimming. A few years later Gwen would stand before the world and accept the Gold Medal, representing the US in TRIATHLON at the Rio Olympics. Let's fill in some of the gaps in Gwen's journey, and focus on three truths we can learn from her sports experience.



## **1) Get Comfortable With the Uncomfortable**

When the USA triathlon committee approached Gwen about considering triathlon, she had NEVER EVEN been on a bike! She had much to learn. Gwen approached this weakness like everything else and worked tirelessly to get better. She had to try things on the bike that put her way out of her comfort zone. Her coach's mantra was, "You have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable." For your athlete that might be: Committing to early morning workouts; Adopting a new mindset in competition; Changing a swing or a serve. It's important to encourage your athlete to step out of their comfort zone.

## **2), Focus on the Investment, not the Sacrifice**

When USA triathlon convinced Gwen to give it a try, she was already immersed in life after college. She had given up any dreams of going to the Olympics. She had a job she loved, and a life that was predictable. If she was to accept the invite for the Olympics she would have to make a lot of changes in her current life. Gwen had to view these changes as investments toward her ultimate goal of being an Olympian—even though the temptation might be to see them as sacrifices. Top athletes give up a lot, but they view it as an investment, not a loss. It might be: Missing out on social events; Less free time; or Limitations on exploring other activities. It helps for them to see it as an investment in the future, not a sacrifice.

## **3) The Process Transforms You, Not the Results**

Gwen's journey from swimmer to triathlete was quite a transformation. But the transformation was not complete. In the midst of all that training, she started to consider what it would be like to give up the swim and bike and pursue the marathon. Today she's training for the Tokyo Olympic marathon where she'll pursue a gold medal as a runner. She's learned to be comfortable with the uncomfortable, again. Although top athletes invest themselves to reach specific results, it's the PROCESS that changes them. This is encouraging news for young athletes who are devoting so much time to reach their goals. The process is where the real reward is found. And you might not always know where that will lead.



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## Discussion Guide for Parent and Athlete

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Which of the 3 simple truths will be most helpful to your athlete right now?

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Discuss with your child how he or she has been transformed already by the sport experience.