

IN SEARCH OF GREATNESS TEAM DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE FILM

From award-winning filmmaker Gabe Polsky (“*Red Army*”, “*Genius*”), IN SEARCH OF GREATNESS is a groundbreaking feature documentary revealing the true nature and nurture of the greatest athletes of all time, including Wayne Gretzky, Pelé, Jerry Rice, Muhammad Ali, Venus & Serena Williams, Michael Jordan and others. Through a series of intimate conversations and captivating footage, Polsky leads viewers on an entertaining, thrilling, and inspiring personal journey.

KEY THEMES

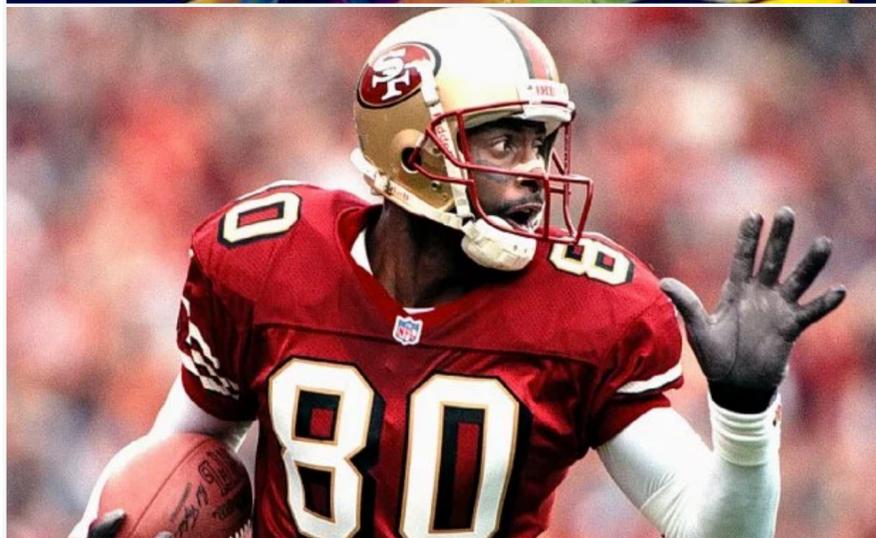
Many of the film’s themes can stimulate discussion and engagement with young athletes:

- Importance of embracing one’s originality.
- Understanding that failure can be positive.
- Greatness is born from creativity.
- Positive coaching, mentoring, parenting.
- An expanded understanding & appreciation of sport.



In Search of Greatness is partnered with Positive Coaching Alliance, a national nonprofit organization with a mission of transforming the culture of youth and high school sports so that all kids have a positive, character-building experience.

Organize a Virtual Screening of In Search of Greatness for your team by contacting Madison at polskyproductions@gmail.com



DISCUSSION BEFORE VIEWING THE FILM

Prior to taking your students to view the film, pose the following questions. Ask your athletes to research answers, and spend some time discussing them.

- Try to define the concept of “greatness.” What does it mean to you?
- Who inspires you? What about them inspires you? What would you most like to know about them?
- What do you think is the purpose of sports? What do you expect to get from participating/watching in them?
- Think of some of your coaches or educators. What do you think makes a good coach/educator and not? Think about when you perform your best, what kind of teaching and coaching is most conducive to bringing that out?
- What role do you think creativity plays in athletics? Do you consider sport an art form? Why or why not?

DISCUSSION AFTER VIEWING THE FILM

- How has your perspective on “greatness” changed since watching the film?
- What ideas in the film did you most relate to and why?
- How would you change the sports programs you participate in?
- What did you learn that most surprised you?
- How do you think the film applies beyond sports? What other subjects could you think about as forms of art?

RESOURCES

- www.insearchofgreatness.com
- <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>
- <https://devzone.positivecoach.org/>

ACTIVITIES

Suggested activities to extend the lessons:

- Expand on any of the below discussions with a research project and/or writing prompt to further explore the theme.
- Break the team into groups and have them create a short 30-60 second video (PSA) to promote their understanding of “greatness” to share with their teammates (this could also be done with posters and photos).

See the next page for Lesson Plan ideas!



TEAM DISCUSSION IDEAS

SPORTS & SCIENCE

- Think about different definitions of “greatness.” Break down the different elements of “greatness.”
- What do you think influences athletes more-- their biology or their environment? What about you?
- What specific qualities do the greatest athletes have that have enabled them to excel? Choose specific moments from the film and discuss them.
- Why have many great athletes succeeded despite the odds being stacked against them?

A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF SPORT

- What do you typically think of when you hear the word “sport”? Has the film made you think differently about the word?
- How does the film offer a different perspective on the function and purpose of sport?
- What are some of the traditional ways we measure success within sport? Can you think of some other, different ways? Are there examples from the film that stick out to you?
- What makes someone “great”? What unique qualities do some of the athletes portrayed in the film have?

ORIGINALITY & CREATIVITY

- How does encouraging originality and creativity in any field apply to society/culture as a whole?
- Why should we encourage original thought and action? What examples of originality from the film stuck out most to you and why?
- Do you feel your school and teachers encourage you to think differently?

POSITIVE COACHING & PLAY

- What do you think are the most important aspects of playing a sport?
- In the film, Wayne Gretzky says that kids wouldn’t know what to do if you brought them to a frozen pond and gave them pucks and sticks. What does he mean? Do you agree with this statement?
- What are the best ways to be motivated? What must come from within the athlete? How can role models support the efforts of coaches?
- Many great athletes had to overcome perceived shortcomings (size, speed) to turn obstacles into motivators. How might coaches teach young athletes to use their disadvantages as advantages?
- What can we learn from failure? List some examples from the film that illustrate how failure is essential to greatness? Can you think of an example from your own life where you’ve learned from failure?

