



*“How can you support teammates to be their best; while being true to yourself? Be sure to define what being authentic and true to yourself is and what it means to you.”*

This book represents the finalist and honorable mention entries in the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual MIAA Student Sportsmanship Essay/Multimedia Contest as voted by the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee.

**Multimedia Category**

***First Place***

Kate Irwin  
Milford High School

***Second Place***

Madelyn Bottaso, Eva Charbonneau, Aaron Jacon  
Maynard High School

**Literary Category**

***First Place***

Mirabella Paolucci – Hopkinton High School

***Second Place***

Naicha Christophe – Taunton High School

**Multimedia Category Finalists**

Katherine Duseau – Walpole High School  
Chorr-Kin Chin – Franklin High School  
Max, Sofia, Kendra and Jack – Maynard High School  
Jay, Mia, Batania and Joel – Maynard High School  
Ty Goldstein, Brady Buckman and Drew Naisuler – Sharon High School

**Literary Category Finalists**

Kate Irwin – Milford High School  
Sonia Hellwig – Mashpee High School  
Jonna Kennedy – Watertown High School  
Maria Cray – Northbridge High School  
Madison Ferrara – Somerset-Berkley Regional High School  
Emily Goglia – Greater Lowell Technical High School  
Abbie Wager – Middleboro High School  
Jenna Learned – Granby Jr/Sr High School  
Iyano Fermino – Mashpee High School  
Cameron Davignon – Westfield High School  
Sasha Hussain – Foxboro High School  
Arienne Sauvignon Howard – Fontbonne Academy  
Ashley Onnembo – Clinton High School  
Kaleigh Simmons – Smith Academy  
Karlie Guimond – Smith Academy

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\*\*\*\*FIRST PLACE\*\*\*\*

The Authentic Athlete

*Mirabella Paolucci*  
Hopkinton High School

*“He’d say, you’ve got to stand for something or you’ll fall for anything. You’ve got to be your own man, not a puppet on a string. Never compromise what’s right...”* These words from Aaron Tippin’s 2009 *“You’ve Got to Stand for Something”* demonstrate the meaning of being true to yourself - standing firm and grounded in your beliefs, even if that means taking a harder path. This connects to authenticity, which is being confident in your own values and tapping into what makes you a genuine individual.

I recognize that as a volleyball player, on the court are not just athletes but individuals with their own experiences, opinions and attitudes. How I encourage and support my teammates, through victories or defeat is by showing empathy. Being empathetic instills acceptance and encourages others to keep a positive attitude. It breaks barriers within the team and allows everyone to come from a non-judgmental space. Relating to each other’s circumstances contributes greatly to the camaraderie of the team. An important part of being authentic is being able to truly listen and support one another.

I believe that the development of any athlete comes with peaks and valleys rather than a straight trajectory. It is important for every athlete to know that mistakes and failures are what help you improve and learn. In order to excel as an athlete, you have to be open and receptive to change and constructive feedback. The challenge lies within the concept of change. I encourage my teammates to see this as an opportunity, instead of an obstacle. Once you have adapted to that change, you will find that you’ve allowed yourself to become a better player and a more compassionate individual because accepting change requires humility.

Being true to yourself also means not being afraid to speak up when necessary. An authentic person can express their true thoughts and feelings, unapologetically. This means being genuine while still being respectful. If one of my teammates did not play well, I’m not going to say, “You did a good job today!” It’s not helping them develop as a player. It’s also not being true to yourself or them. I would say, “It’s okay that you didn’t do your best today. Shake it off. The next game is a new opportunity. We all make mistakes; it’s how we move beyond them that defines us.” This way your teammate knows that it’s okay he/she didn’t perform their best, you respect them and the important part is learning from it and working even harder the next time.

Being true to yourself is not something that is developed within a day or two. It’s over a series of life experiences, good and bad. Being genuine encourages all of us to be “authentic athletics.” As a freshman, I still have a lot of learning ahead of me, but knowing I have a solid foundation to build from is a very good place to start.

\*\*\*\*SECOND PLACE\*\*\*\*

The Authentic Athlete

*Naicha Christophe*

*Taunton High School*

In order to invest in our futures, we must invest in our children. Kids who are involved and connected to the world around them are at an advantage because they're being shaped into young leaders. The lessons that athletes learn on the court are cherished in their hearts, and they later apply it to their everyday lives. Their coaches teach them the aspects of the sport that goes beyond performance and skills. They teach them accountability, perseverance, teamwork, confidence, and instill a level of sportsmanship in their minds.

Balance is arguable one of the hardest things to learn and teach through a sport. As an athlete, the idea of a 'competitive edge' is ingrained into us, so much so that it almost becomes instinctive. We compete against other teams for a win and we even compete against our own teammates; whether that is for more playing time or to be brought up from JV to varsity. But to balance that competitive edge, we must remember that our job is not only to be a competitive player, but also to be a supportive team mate. This is where a person's authenticity comes into play.

To me, an authentic player is the perfect embodiment of an authentic person and leader. To be authentic is to be true to you and act genuinely. A player who is truly authentic will be trustworthy, and have an unfiltered personality that allows others to see how sincere they truly are. Authentic athletes are also leaders who capitalize on the approach of leadership that emphasizes on building a person's legitimacy through honesty. When players possess the quality of honesty, without having animosity or disdain, then they have proven themselves worthy enough for others to believe in them and their own capabilities.

Supporting teammates and staying true to who you are, are two big aspects of playing on any sports team. Many athletes have quickly learned how to lift up and encourage their teammates, without dismissing their own achievements. The true illustrations of what the authentic athlete is, are those who are able to leave their hearts out on the court or field with a sense of pride, and also able to bolster their teammate's success. This type of athlete not only celebrates their friends athletic achievements, they also helps them improve, and are humble enough to ask for help.

These traits that athletically inclined individuals have learned, or are still learning can be transferred to life outside of sports. The character building that we are exposed to through our sports teams help shape the type of person we are or want to be. It helps us to retain positivity and persistence with everything we do. Athletes are at an advantage, because after being exposed to what it's like to be on a sports team, they'll have a *game plan for life*.

\*\*\*\*FINALIST\*\*\*\*  
The Authentic Athlete  
*Kate Irwin*  
*Milford High School*

The support that you give and show your teammates goes a long way; it's extremely crucial and valuable. This support given is a huge factor in helping create a bond and chemistry on and off the playing field that in the end, plays an important role in producing wins. A part of giving support is actually being authentic with the encouragement you show towards your teammates and being true to yourself in the process. The dictionary definition of authentic is "of undisputed origin; genuine." The meaning I take away from that is that you have to show your teammates that you genuinely want them to succeed; let them know you have their back whether they succeed or fail.

Supporting your teammates includes actions that in the moment may seem small and not a big deal, but in the end make the biggest difference. When your teammates are exhausted at the end of a practice and say they can't do the last sprint because they are too tired, you push them to finish the sprint with the last ounce of energy they have left in their body; that's support! When your teammate makes a great play, scores, or just had an all-around great game or practice, let them know how well they did, congratulate them, and build up their self-esteem; that's support! When one of your teammates makes a mistake, don't get frustrated with them and tell them they screwed up, because chances are, they're already beating themselves up about what they did wrong. Instead, encourage them to get back out there and tell them to not worry about it and get it next time; that's support!

Along with all of that, trust plays an important role in showing your support. Let your teammates know that you trust them to get things done, especially in pressure situations that might not always go their way; you have to assure them that you have confidence in them to complete anything.

For any of this to be effective, you have to be genuine and true to yourself while doing it. You can't say one thing and then go off and do the opposite of what you said. For example, you can't tell your teammates to keep pushing and not give up, then the next day you give up after a few mistakes and a couple sprints. That will send a mixed message to your teammates and contradict what you said to them, making them think that it's okay to give up too.

Winning is a product of many different ingredients that go into making it. Support happens to play a big role, and without that one component, teams would fall apart. Letting your teammates know that you really want to see them do their best and succeed creates an atmosphere that not only makes everyone want to be there, but also boosts the energy of the team and helps mold a positive outcome.

\*\*\*\*FINALIST\*\*\*\*  
The Authentic Athlete  
*Sonia Hellwig*  
*Mashpee High School*

What does it mean to be authentic or be true to yourself? For me, being authentic means being who we really are and not pretending who we think we ought to be. It also means being comfortable with who we are and not worrying about what others think of us. When we are true to ourselves, we are not afraid to share and express our thoughts, beliefs, ideas, and talents with others. By hiding, pretending, or shying away from sharing our skills or ideas, we short change ourselves, hold back our creative juices, and become a stick-in-the-mud. So, no matter what our goals are in life, like becoming a nurse or football player, the way we act toward others on the outside should be the same true person we are in the inside.

Being a teenager in high school is tough, especially when it comes to being true to yourself because we are all trying to fit in. We want to feel accepted by friends, to be cool, to be popular, or to be an all-star student athlete. So, instead of being true to ourselves, we begin to act and agree with other people's opinions just to belong and feel accepted. We start agreeing with their likes and dislikes, going along with their opinions and ideas, and choosing to stay friends only with that certain clique. Being authentic means we are not afraid to take a stand and stay true to our values. It is about being our unique selves while at the same time having positive and meaningful friendships with others. In doing so, we are better able to help others and make a difference in the world. For instance, sports are a powerful way to express ourselves with our teammates. It allows us to work hard, build trust, and create a safe place to share our talents, gifts, and ideas while helping our teammates and coaches to also do the same. As a sports participant, we have the power to show support and courage to our teammates and others to do the right thing, speak the truth, and inspire positive change. Being authentic, we can freely explore different sports and opportunities to express ourselves through what we play and do. We should feel free to express our real selves through a sport we enjoy whether it be chess, swimming, soccer, or football.

As for me, participating in school sports such as cross country, track, and tennis has allowed me to feel safe in becoming true to myself. It has given me courage, confidence, motivation, and most importantly, the ability to take risks. It has taught me persistence, responsibility, self-respect, and teamwork. Win or lose, being a student athlete has allowed me to let go and be the person I am to becoming what I might be and sharing it with others. Despite our flaws, we all have a purpose and it is up to us to express our true selves to help others in our life's journey.

\*\*\*\*FINALIST\*\*\*\*

17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Jonna Kennedy*

*Watertown High School*

Each time I am on a sports field, wearing my high school jersey, I have pride. I am committed to every practice physically and mentally and I am determined to give one hundred percent effort. I am committed to my personal performance and to my team. I strive to play with a positive attitude and to be the best athlete I can be and importantly I will remain humble. I strive to reach personal and team goals and take any constructive criticism and apply it to the best of my ability.

I try to encourage the underclassmen. As many of them can be nervous and may need a little encouragement and support. As a goalkeeper, I see the entire field. I do my best to direct the players in front of me, encourage them and give praise when needed. In the huddle, I try to speak the truth and encourage every player including myself to improve as a team and individually as well. Being both critical and positive is key.

The third game of my fall sport season, my team and I lost a game. Yes, most teams lose a game or two in a high school season but this loss was the first loss for the program in almost nine years. We did our best to hold our heads high. My team and I give credit to the team that beat us, they were the better team and they were most certainly more determined. Immediately, we focused on our next practice and focused on how we as a team need to improve. As a one of the captains, of the team, I knew it was time to really take a leadership role. I encouraged the team to look ahead, learn from our mistakes and try to positively encourage everyone to as a team continue our hard work as usual at our next practice. As a team, we all learned from this experience. We will continue to have pride and have a constant stream of hard work and dedication.

My name is Jonna Kennedy and I am authentic! I am true to myself and my team. I know I will carry on this authenticity throughout my life. Being part of team, setting individual and team goals, and being true to myself and my team(s) has made me a better person, one with optimism. My positive attitude and commitment has given me so many opportunities academically and on the sports field. Thank you to my coaches and teammates for instilling such qualities. I will continue to strive and be true.

\*\*\*\*FINALIST\*\*\*\*

17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Maria Cray*

*Northbridge High School*

As soccer legend Mia Hamm once said “Being a good teammate is when you try to sprint down a ball that everyone thinks is going out of bounds, but you go after it anyways and you get it.” When you push yourself to be the best player you can be, you are not only being true to yourself but you are inspiring your teammates to be their best. As a captain, I have learned that you can never push your teammates to their fullest potential if you never dare to go after your own. It takes a lot of heart to give it your all, hustle in games and in practices, while yelling words of encouragement to your teammates with your last exhausted breath. I would like to think that is what I do for my team.

Most of my sports career I have always been told I am “too intense” or “too in the zone”, so when I was voted as captain I was beyond excited and honored, but a little hesitant. The truth is, the best thing you can be for your teammate is yourself. I have learned to help my team by being the spark we need in the last minutes of the game or by channeling my energy into words of encouragement. I never had to abandon my identity as a player, but instead I have used it to be a leader and to help my teammates rather than myself.

I believe that being authentic means not being afraid of what other people may say of you and never changing who you are for someone else, including teammates or coaches. The combination of being true to who you are while being a great teammate is being the best version of yourself and bringing your assets to the table for the benefit of your team. When you stay after practice for a few extra reps, when you spend the offseason bettering your fitness, or when you come to every game with a positive outlook winning or losing, you are helping your teammates. This all sends the message that you are someone to follow and look up to, which is not only the identity of a strong student athlete, but a way to make teammates who look up to you better and in turn bettering your entire team. And it all started from pushing yourself. I have learned a lot through my many years of playing sports, and one of the most important things is: if you cannot be a great teammate, you can never be a great player.

\*\*\*\*FINALIST\*\*\*\*

17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Madison Ferrara*

*Somerset-Berkley Regional High School*

Are you an athlete? Are you part of a team? If you are, having sportsmanship, being authentic and true to yourself and supporting your teammates is a very important part of being an athlete. My name is Madison Ferrara and I am a freshman in the class of 2021 at Somerset Berkley Regional High School and I play on the Varsity field hockey team. I know from experience from being a goalkeeper on the team that good sportsmanship is a big part of an athlete's game. Being true to yourself and doing so authentically is very important too, as well as supporting your teammates to be their best and pushing yourself to be your best as well.

What does being authentic mean? The exact definition of the word authentic from a dictionary is "not false or copied". However, the word authentic, to me, means to represent one's true nature or beliefs. It means to be genuine, real and true. Being authentic in athletics plays a very important part in having good sportsmanship. The greatest athletes are authentic and without that, they simply wouldn't be great athletes.

Being true to yourself is also a key part in having good sportsmanship. Being true to yourself simply means to believe in yourself. You have to be honest with yourself. Being true to yourself exists at the core of who you are. It's a lifelong practice that requires a lot of commitment. In order to succeed, you have to be positive and have the right mindset. You have to know that you are capable of great things. It's up to you to be courageous in bringing forth your own truth and expressing it with authenticity to the world.

Supporting your teammates to be the best they can be in athletics is an asset to good sportsmanship. Ways to support your teammates while also being true to yourself are giving them constructive criticism, telling them what they did really well, but also what they can improve on without sounding overbearing. Cheer them on, encourage them, and be happy for their successes. For example, while playing goalkeeper, my teammates and I always push each other to be our best. When I make a good save, they cheer for me. But when a goal gets scored on me, they tell me to keep trying and not to get down on myself. There are many ways to support your teammates to be their best while also being true to yourself, it's a very important part of being an athlete and being part of a team.

In athletics, and participating in a sport, good sportsmanship is a key part of the game. Without it, you will never succeed and achieve your goals as an athlete. Sportsmanship is not only pushing yourself to greatness but also supporting your teammates to be their best. Being authentic and true to yourself is very important in sportsmanship and succeeding in whatever sport you participate in.

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17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Emily Goglia*

*Greater Lowell Technical High School*

Often times people say that it's important to be true to yourself and to stay authentic, but what does that really mean? There is no one answer to this because everyone defines themselves differently. If you look up authentic in the dictionary it comes up with genuine. To me it means something a little different, it means you are honest about what you feel, and you allow people to see all of your qualities whether they be good or bad. This is an important aspect of supporting people, especially teammates.

Being true to yourself, is a way to support your teammate to be their best. If people on your team look at you and see you fixing mistakes you made, or hear you acknowledge your faults they can tell you aren't hiding anything, and see your authenticity. This helps your teammates see they don't have to hold back parts of them self. Today everyone is so worried about what everyone else thinks of them, it is rare to see someone truly be them self. When people are around others who are true to themselves they are going to feel like they don't have to hide anything. This helps them be their best because they don't hold back out of fear of what other kids on the team will think because they are already open with everyone on the team. Everyone is their best when they are them self so encouraging someone to be themselves helps them to be the best they can.

Leading by example is another way to help your teammates be their best, while staying authentic. Whether it be working extra hard in drills, or training in the off seasons other players notice these things. If you put one hundred percent of yourself into what you are doing people are going to reciprocate by doing the same thing to keep up. Forcing teammates to work harder by working harder yourself helps your teammate to become their best, along with helping you improve as well. This shows you are being yourself because you are working harder for no reason other than to improve your own skill.

When supporting a teammate, be sure to always be authentic. You should always be cautious because it is easy to be a hypocrite, and stray from your true self.

\*\*\*\*FINALIST\*\*\*\*

17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Abbie Wager*

*Middleboro High School*

To me, being authentic is dependent on a number of factors. For example, the context of a given situation could determine the authenticity of a person. The context of any situation impacts how authentic we ultimately are. This is absolutely true in sports where athletes tend to bring different skill levels to different sporting events. As far as “being true to yourself” I think that it also depends upon the person. I set goals and stand by them in order to achieve them. Sometimes these are based upon personal and team oriented goals. I understand that recognizing flaws empowers me to conquer them; I do my best to impart this reasoning to my teammates as well.

My Cross Country and Track coach, Ms. May-Beaton, has always expressed the idea that, “Hard work beats talent when talent fails to work.” These nine words have stuck with me since my first cross country practice freshman year. Because these words are powerful and motivating for me - I do my best to pass them along to younger runners who do not have enough self-confidence in their performance during practices and races. If they don’t have faith in themselves to improve then they won’t put their best foot forward. Invoking a new sense of hope alters their mindset to begin a new outlook on how they view themselves as a teammate, an athlete, and overall, as a high school student. Recognizing weaknesses and setting goals to overcome those weaknesses, strengthens an athlete’s ability to achieve new goals and improve the team.

By modeling positive athletic skills and personal objectives, I strive to move all of us forward so that we may collectively achieve our goals. At the beginning of the season, I decide on objectives that are slightly above my ability level in order to motivate myself to do better. As I create a list of what I hope to accomplish during the season, I make sure that my intentions benefit me and the team. By remaining dedicated to myself and my sport I have regularly achieved my goals and have seen my teammates achieve their goals as well.

\*\*\*\*FINALIST\*\*\*\*

The Authentic Athlete

*Jenna Learned*

*Granby Jr/Sr High School*

Being part of a team isn't just about playing a sport. It isn't just kicking a ball into a goal or finishing a 5K race. It's about helping your friend get that goal and finishing the race together. It's about cheering on your teammates from the sidelines and extending a hand when they fall down. But best of all, being part of team makes you feel like you're part of something bigger, no matter where you come from or what you like to do.

Recently, I have been bestowed the honor of becoming my cross-country team's captain. Being a captain of course, comes with many responsibilities, such as leadership qualities and being a good role model to all that are around you. But not only as captain, but as a good teammate it's my job to encourage them to do the best to their capabilities. But more importantly, to have fun! All of my life, I've enjoyed being with people that love the same things that I do. It's interesting how I've met so many different people through sports that I would have never met otherwise.

Outside of sports, there is a societal expectation for you to fit in, which is a difficult struggle for many people--including myself. I in fact do have a rather "interesting" hobby. I love to design and make costumes. Too many, it comes off as "weird" and I used to try and hide it from people...because I was afraid of being ridiculed for what I do. So, I pretended to be somebody I'm not. After a while, I started to talk about it with some close friends at cross-country and I realized, I should never be embarrassed for what I enjoy doing! And now, I'm proud to announce that I'm even making a brand new mascot costume for my school.

Pretending to be somebody you're not will never get you far in life. If I never came out of my shell and told people about my hobbies, I would never have the opportunities that I have today. Being an authentic person isn't just about staying true to yourself, it's about showing others how to be authentic people. It's about teaching others how to be the best people that they can be and to never be afraid of being who they really are. So next time your friend tells you about a painting that they did, or a book that they wrote, remember to give them a pat on the back for

being their true selves. Because you never know, they might grow up to be a role model for the next generations to come.

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17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Iyano Fermino*

*Mashpee High School*

Being true to myself? What exactly does that mean? Honestly I believe this question is asking if i am inconsiderate and if I'm selfish but realistically "being true to myself" means to have courage and having integrity. Being true to me means to me that you're not disrespectful and you will not let others define you.

I know i can support my teammates while still being true to myself because i can make them better by practicing with them and it is also helping me because i'm practicing so we are all getting better every day.

Being true to yourself to me is a big part of your life because what you do when no one's looking creates character and that's being true to yourself. If you do not have great character you're not true to yourself. I am not saying that you have to be perfect to be true to yourself but you need some character and courage to be true to yourself. I know a lot of people that are fake and are hypocrites who are not true with themselves and they need that courage to respect themselves and respect others because there character is not great.

I always support my teammates whether it's practice or in game scenario. For example if my teammate and i are practicing together we are working each other to get better whether if it's catching, tackling, or even lifting weights we encourage each other to get better. A team is like a family you all work together to get better. A team is not just about one person doing all the work that's why everyone practices their job to get better.

In conclusion to this question I will always be sure to support my teammates while being true to myself. Whether if i am practicing with my teammates or teaching them verbally how to do something they need help with. Also being true to yourself means a lot, as in having courage, believing yourself and have great character. Those items will determine if you are true to yourself or not.

\*\*\*\*FINALIST\*\*\*\*

17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

***Cameron Davignon***

*Westfield High School*

Personally, I cannot imagine trying to support teammates to be their best without being true to myself. In my mind, those things just go hand in hand as simply as can be. Without personal honesty, it's simply impossible to be genuinely motivational to others around me. All of my friends and teammates are intelligent individuals who would simply be able to see right through me if I were acting as anyone but myself. To me, being true to yourself involves understanding who you really are and not going against any of the key virtues or values you have developed throughout your life. In such a tightly knit town like Westfield, many of the values we have grown to develop are similar from student to student, and especially from athlete to athlete, who all know the grit and grind it takes to work as hard as you can in not only sports but all other aspects of your life additionally. In all of the sports teams I have been on throughout my life, especially those at Westfield High School, the brotherhood I have formed with my fellow teammates has given me a joy like no other. Teams like cross country and baseball have brought me closer to some of my teammates than I ever expected. When you get that close, it's difficult not to form a type of relationship where you simply know each other better than you even realize. Therefore, not being true to yourself would be extremely evident to fellow teammates, who would simply see right through it and understand that your support is not genuine. For teammates to understand that you want them to be the best they can be, they must be able to understand that you want the same for yourself, and you are working to reach that goal every day. It's difficult to accept motivation and support from someone who lacks such qualities about themselves, and for this reason it is imperative that you must always stay true to yourself to give your teammates the strong support they all deserve. Through the good and the bad, the happy and the ugly, it is always most important to just be who you're meant to be and never attempt to fake that. It simply makes life's hardships much easier to endure. In conclusion, I just always believe it's important that you must stay true to yourself, regardless of the situation, but especially when it comes to supporting your teammates, because they will be able to easily see right through your disingenuousness and not accept your support.



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How to Be True To Yourself: The Most Important Characteristic

*Sasha Hussain*

*Foxboro High School*

*Authentic, of undisputed origin; genuine.* This sophisticated characteristic is so crucial for creating an admirable persona, which can be appreciated by everyone. It is essential to be genuine to the people around you, and especially, yourself. Like many other traits, this one is not something you are born with, you have to develop and learn this characteristic. When working and interacting with your environment around you, it is always important to be true to yourself. You'll never learn from your mistakes if you do not confront yourself and learn to accept defeat. To understand these things, you need to be honest. It is difficult to accept failure, especially when it's coming from you, but you will not be able to comprehend and grow as a person if you cannot acknowledge what you have done and what you need to work on. When on a team, you need to be true to yourself and true to your teammates; this gives you double the pressure. When I'm on my sport teams like lacrosse, volleyball, cross country, or swim, supporting your teammates is what unites you all and gives you an advantage of winning because of how strong and close everyone is with each other. However, it is very difficult to stay honest and true when supporting your teammates because it is one thing to confront yourself, but it is another difficult task to confront someone else for the fear of "hurting their feelings," a phrase that often gets thrown around when we are children. The art of encouragement is a well discusses topic throughout the world; it isn't as easy as it seems! There is an enormous difference between encouragement and praise, but often seems to be a gray area in between. Encouragement should not be the same for every person; it should be specific and directed at the progress. When I support someone on my team, I make sure it is specific and helps them to reach their personal goal for success. Support is what all human beings need and crave, and when being on a sports team, it is essential to support one another. When a teammate is working on one move or tactic, it is often that they want someone to acknowledge their improvement. Recognizing their hard work can have a huge impact on them and give them more motivation to work harder. If you think about it, if everyone is being true to themselves and their teammates, they will have the same impact on everyone and everyone will grow their skills and overall, the team will be better. Having good sportsmanship is the road to achievement, not only for yourself but for your whole team. Being true to your teammates and yourself will lead everyone to their goals. So when encouraging someone, I make sure to recognize their hard work and stay true to myself and my beliefs. This makes me a stronger person, and makes my teammates and I stronger as a team. Being true is crucial for being part of a team and crucial for yourself.

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17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Arienne Sauvignon Howard*

*Fontbonne Academy*

Being true to oneself requires you to understand who you are by really taking a look at your strengths and limitations. You need to be able to accept the good and the bad, so that you understand where these strengths and limitations lie. It's also important to understand that no one is 100% perfect. Therefore, if you fall short in one area, you should pick yourself up and understand that you will need to put in more effort to improve or build upon the other aspects of your life where you feel you have the greatest impact for self-improvement.

As an authentic athlete, I've come to understand that there are certain things required of me from my coaches and my teammates. Specifically, being a team player; a strong contributor; and being able to accept criticism as much as I am able to accept accolades which are key factors in being a complete athlete and team player. This upcoming basketball season, I have been named captain of my high school's varsity basketball team. This will be an important time for me in my own development as a student, player and leader which I feel will improve me as a person overall. As captain, I plan to be a proactive leader and in order to achieve this goal, I feel it is important to work on building a strong relationship with my teammates. Without including everyone, a team cannot function.

I feel that my greatest asset is in my ability to bring people together to work hard toward a common goal with the belief that there is no "I" in team. I feel that my coaches and teammates will see and appreciate my commitment to the team and my desire to help us reach our goals for the season. Moreover, I want them to collaborate with me on my agenda and be able to approach me with ideas and any issues they may have. With knowledge of the game, knowledge of my strengths and the recognition of all team players' skills, I will be able to provide assistance and insight to my fellow teammates who want to further their skills. Players need to feel that they have someone they can relate to and voice their concerns to. I know that I have the listening skills necessary to take everything into consideration that may affect the chemistry of the team.

As for my personal growth, I have recognized that I need to step up, play well, recognize my strengths and weaknesses, lead my team and encourage those around me to grow. As I said before there is no "I" in team and if I want to be able to pass the torch, I need to be able to mentor players and let them lead as well. This is the only way to maintain my authentic characteristics. Being upfront and honest with myself and my commitment for self-improvement as well as being a true teammate by achieving mutual goals and building together.

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The Authentic Athlete  
*Ashley Onnembo*  
*Clinton High School*

“It doesn’t matter how your opponent acts, that’s something you cannot control. It’s up to you to respond with maturity for every second the clock ticks.” These words from my father circulate through my brain before every sporting event. Sports have always been integrated in my family. I always listened to the tales of my older sister’s endeavors, practically hanging onto her words. Eyes sparkling, she would ramble about a header into a mesh soccer net or a line drive into centerfield. I was transported to a place where I could hear the thwack of a bat or see a black and white checkered ball soaring through the night sky. I have watched her lead teams into hard fought battles, resulting in tough losses or sweet victories. In each period or inning, she kept a composure that was admirable to all. Although it may have seemed trivial to her, she inspired me to not only love the game, but be yourself while doing so. Without knowing or meaning to, she ignited a desire in me. Taking a leap, I joined my local field hockey team. I knew going into a varsity level sport would be difficult, but I yearned to know the joy that came with playing. I was told to never lose sight of who I was, because once I did I would lose love for the game. Whenever I can, I lay it all on the field. My cheerful personality follows me to every practice, my loyalty growing at each game. Even while watching on the sidelines, I yell at the top of my lungs. Doing this reminds my team to give 110%, even if their energy is lackluster. Off the field, we established “encouragement buddies” that take our minds off tension and nerves. We’re redirected to remember what we love about our teammates. I don’t let any resentments or jealousy get in the way of supporting others-- when this happens, the whole field is permeated with negative energy. We constantly recover for one another, lifting up others when they’re down. For me, this side to a team is crucial. I am not perfect, but I do the most I can to not stray from the person I have been. Every day I am evolving and learning something new. I believe I am caring, supportive, and kind. By having these qualities, I am always attentive to my teammates needs. I go to the ends of the earth to make them laugh, give them kind words of encouragement, and most importantly push them in positive directions that they couldn’t reach on their own. Staying true to yourself and authentic means sticking to your principals despite what others may say or think, being humble through the best and worst, and doing what you think is right. Once you start to abandon your own policies, you abandon the person you have worked so hard to blossom into. If you cannot be authentic to your teammates, you cannot be authentic to your sport.

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The Authentic Athlete  
*Kaleigh Simmons*  
*Smith Academy*

The dictionary defines the word *authentic* as “of undisputed origin; genuine.” I think of the word *authentic* as being original and one of a kind. To be true to yourself means that you do not let others make decisions for you, and that you are sincere, open-minded, thoughtful, and kind. I think of the word *authentic* and the saying *true to yourself* in a very similar regard. These two words and sayings can be applied to any sport and relate to how I can support my teammate, or my whole team, to be their best, while staying true to myself. Supporting your teammates while staying true to yourself can be difficult at times, but with the correct motivation and effort you can hope that your teammates will do well, without beating yourself up.

In relation to sports, I think of being authentic as being true and meaningful in what you say. When your teammates are on the field, you should want them to succeed in what they are doing. You should be speaking authentic words of wisdom and advice in order to encourage them to be their best. In my experience, when I see one of my friends enter the competition ring on their horse, I truly want them to do their best. I want to see my friends succeed and be able to share their joy once they finish their test or course, and I want to see the huge smile on their face. In the end, supporting your teammate always pays off, and you will never regret it.

While you are supporting and encouraging your teammates to be their best, you should be doing your best to stay true to yourself at the same time. Staying true to yourself while supporting your teammates is very important in your personal performance in the sport. You do not want all of your attention to go to your teammates while you are completely ignoring yourself. Instead, you should work to find the steady balance between supporting your teammates, and supporting yourself and staying true to your values. Supporting your teammates will most definitely, in the end, support you as well. When your teammate and you feel confident in what you are doing, you can both work together to accomplish your common goal.

Overall, being able to support your teammates to be their best while staying true to yourself can be difficult at times, but once you succeed at it, you will feel very proud. The words *authentic* and *true to yourself* can and will assist you in supporting your teammates while still focusing on your overall performance in your sport. Being authentic in your actions and words towards your teammates can help them be their best in whatever sport they are playing. Being true to yourself can ensure that you will do your best in the sport you are playing as well.

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Authenticity in Sports

*Karlie Guimond*

*Smith Academy*

When playing sports, it's important to support your teammates so they can be the best person and player possible. But how do you do that and be true to yourself? Authenticity as an athlete is something that is hard to maintain, especially when you're constantly around people you are trying to compare yourself to and fit in with. The definition of the word authentic is "of undisputed origin; genuine." So how do you be genuine and original in the context of sports? The key is to stay true to your values as a person but still be willing to compete and succeed.

Being true to yourself means not changing yourself to be like others. On a sports team, people may change themselves to be someone they're not. Whether it's saying things you normally would never say, or doing things you would never do, people do it all the time. It's important to remember that you have values you live by, and boundaries you set for yourself. If your team is doing something you're not comfortable with, it is your job to make a decision that's best for YOU. Being yourself is an important aspect of being an athlete.

It's vital to support your teammates on and off the field. If you see one of your teammates doing something that's not smart it's important to help them and tell them to do the right thing. But at the same time, support them and still be true to who you are. Don't say something that's not like you. Give them good advice and help them remember what kind of person they are constantly striving to be. Also, sometimes it's ok to change yourself to help your team succeed. For example, sometimes teams struggle getting along on and off the field. It is important to leave your problems in at home before a practice or game. If they means changing how you feel about someone or something for the time being, so be it. Helping and supporting your teammates through tough situations is important especially when trying to be an authentic leader on your team.

Being authentic is really important to me. One quote I live by and try to remember every day is "be yourself, because everyone else is already taken" (Oscar Wilde). I live by this quote because I am proud of who I am and try not to change myself to be more similar to others. I have played varsity sports since the seventh grade, so I know what it's like to not fit in with people who are 5 years older than you. It is really hard to not change myself to fit in with them. I just had to continue being myself and not try to be something I'm not. There's only one me, so why not embrace that.

In conclusion, being authentic and true to yourself makes a great teammate and athlete. Embracing who you are is crucial to having a happy and healthy life.

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MIAA Sportsmanship  
*Tess Hachey*  
*Mashpee High School*

The connection between supporting others, both on and off the field, is a true reflection of a person's values. Whether it's screaming on the side-lines or hosting a team dinner, teammates make the effort to empower and support each other, to always ensure they're ready to compete to their best ability. While maintaining my personal values of happiness and respect, I always make sure to encourage my peers in the most positive way. I believe that bringing people up, and understanding them is key to developing the best relationships, and furthermore the strongest team.

Ever since I was young I've never been too competitive in sports, rather more into enjoying myself and having fun with teammates. As I value being an overall good person, I put my efforts into contributing to my team, both physically and socially. Not only should I sprint that last leg of the relay, or try to stick my beam routine, but I should offer my friendship and support just as well. While staying true to my concerned character, I try and help out my teammates with whatever is going on, so they can focus on the moment and we can all come together to win. Because when a team is prepared all around, they begin to see the championship trophies.

Winning, the ultimate goal of sporting events, can come in numerous ways. Not only what the scoreboard or crowd says, but how you feel after knowing you gave it your all. To feel proud of myself I can't live with the regrets; thinking, "bummer I could've caught up to her." I must hold myself to these standards because I can't preach it to my teammates if I can't at least try to do it myself. It isn't measured on if I place highly, rather if I feel good about my performance, as if I truly didn't let the team down. In order to maintain my own pride and happiness I must put my all in and encourage my friends to do just the same. Because it's at moments when everyone is into the game, screaming, applauding, and truly supporting each other that creates these special wins. The wins that are not only for yourself, but more importantly for your team and its shared passion. It's the inner values of positivity and kindness towards one another that result in the record breaking seasons. Everything from the cohesion on the hand-off to the high-fives after the goal come together to show the beauty of the players within.

The balance between upholding your own values, and promoting others to do the same can be a challenge, but the reward of not only success, but life long memories are worth the struggles. Always going beyond the field to make teammates feel welcome, and always pushing yourself that extra step truly make a team. A team that wins in competition, friendship, and spirit.

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The Authentic Athlete  
*Kelley Skantz*  
*Mashpee High School*

The best way to support your team mates, whether it be on or off the court or field, is by being the best version of you you can be. And the best way to do this is by staying true to yourself. To be authentic or true to yourself means to take your deepest values and thrive off it. What you believe in and the way you feel about things defines who you are, so whatever an opponent says or does should not affect the way you do your job or change the way you feel about it. When an athlete stays strong to their morals they feel better about themselves therefore perform better, and the better that athlete performs, the better it helps out the team supporting them, and inspiring them to also be the best versions of themselves they can be.

For years my field hockey coach has always told me, “The better you are, the better your teammates become.” What this means is that you can spread positive energy, positive thinking, and a positive attitude as easy as you can spread a common cold. If I am putting my full effort into every drill, every play, and every practice it will rub off on my teammates and hopefully inspire them to work harder. Whenever I play against a player that is better than me, it inspires me to strive and practice until I become better than them. This is the mindset of all dedicated athletes. Therefore the harder I try, the harder it will make my teammates try so that they can become more skilled than me. It has a snowball effect where we all end up motivating each other, which in my eyes is the best way to support one another. However the ball can also roll the other way. There have been many times where we have played teams that are simply not at our skill level yet or not trying as hard as we are. Their lack of effort can spread to our team and cause us to perform weaker and lose our skills just because that is how the other team is operating. In a perfect league every player, goalie, and coach would always perform to the best of their abilities therefore supporting their teammates, but in reality that is not how it is. Instead of leading by telling a teammate what they are doing wrong, I believe that we should lead by example.

Staying true to yourself is what defines you as an athlete. There is no excuse to not always give one hundred percent effort even for the simplest activity. With these two aspects in mind, becoming the strongest version of yourself is inevitable. And as I mentioned before, the better you are, the better your team becomes, and together you become unstoppable.

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MIAA Sportsmanship Essay  
*Ainsley Kiefer*  
*Mashpee High School*

If you ask me, being on a sports team is one of the hardest things to accomplish in life. I've been a part of many and have found that always being a leader and being forced to show the best part of yourself can be exhausting, both on and off the field. Yet, thousands and thousands show the compassion and motivation they have for that sport every single day no matter how difficult it is. Your teammates are constantly relying on you to either be there for a pass or win a one on one, but despite the situation they are always trusting you to be on top of it. Alongside, it's still equally as important to be true to myself, while always contributing everything to the team.

Being on a team that is close knit and shows love unconditionally makes a team anyone would wish to be on. Knowing you'll be told "good job" or "next time" even if you messed up, is an amazing quality to have. Being an athlete myself, I've experienced criticism from teammates and I know it's a very hard thing to just let go like nothing happened. I've learned that's it's all a part of being fired up when you're playing, and it's important to understand their perspective. You'll get yelled at and be told what you did wrong by teammates or your coach, but all they are doing is helping, even if it doesn't feel like it at the moment. Still, you always have to remember to keep pushing through even if it's hard, and composing yourself and who you are at the same time.

Being authentic is all about being yourself and being genuine. On and off the field, you should always believe in yourself, as well as others. If your team knows you will be there for them mentally and physically then you'll feel a part of the team in your heart. The teams I have been on in the past have always been there for me, either picked me up when I did something wrong or said "good job" when I did something right. Personally, it makes me feel like they will always have my back even if we aren't on the field, and nothing will beat that feeling. I know I will always be there to support my teammates no matter what or where we are in return.

If you were to ask me what being true to yourself means I would say it means, always be yourself. Never change for anyone else unless it's best for you and what you want. Also, being honest with your teammates is one of the most important things when you're a part of a team. If you don't tell them something they did wrong and instead said "good job", then they won't learn what is right. Being nice will always help but hiding the problem won't.

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Sportsmanship: The Authentic Athlete

*Parker Shea*

*Mashpee High School*

Being on any kind team is one of the most rewarding experiences a person can have. Teams create learning opportunities, memories, and trust between peers. Teammates help each other grow, inspire confidence in one another, but most of all, form everlasting friendships between each other. Achieving victory is a difficult thing when there is not a positive bond from one player to the next. With better relations comes higher performance, allowing for teammates to communicate, understand each other, and overall, work together better. Games, titles, and more are won through the teamwork demonstrated by the players.

Being authentic and true to one's self is a big part of athletics. Being authentic is being genuine, honest, and showing true feelings. Trust is built off of the foundation of authenticity. Where there is no authenticity, there will not be very much trust between two people. Being true to one's self is to follow values and ideals while also creating real connections between themselves and others. These values are extremely important when trying to become a better person and create better relationships with others, which is why they are also exceptionally useful in athletics and teamwork.

Teammates can be acutely influential in a player's confidence and ability to perform in sports. These people are able to help players correct their mistakes, give them advice to play better, or even just something as simple as cheering them up. Constructive criticism is a great way to support teammates to be their best. It gives the opportunity to help improve a player's performance, but while also being honest, which builds on the trust between the person giving the advice and the person who receives it. It is a much more positive way to help someone than to be ingenuine or rude about something you want them to improve on, and will benefit the team's chemistry together as well.

In conclusion, sports are not only just a form of entertainment. They help make crucial life experiences and allow for people to join together and collaborate in something they all enjoy taking part in. Athletics build a foundation for relationships and skills to grow and prosper. They develop character, authenticity, and create lasting memories to look back on and reminisce on. Sports are opportunities to win games, leagues, and championships, but some of the most important moments in athletics are the experiences that you have while doing it.

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17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

***Kyle Puchol***

*Mashpee High School*

Can you help teammates while still being authentic and true to yourself as an athlete? By definition, to be authentic to yourself requires being genuine to your own beliefs. To be authentic to your teammates requires you to be genuine to different beliefs. Being true to yourself is being responsible enough to hold yourself accountable for your actions. Truth in an athlete means communicating truthfully to teammates, coaches, and family. It's a combination of both definitions that leaves you feeling authentic and true to yourself, your team and your teammates.

To be truly authentic means coming from a real place of who you are, a completely honest you. Traits that make you respectable, trustable and a valuable leader. Being authentic is being yourself, not what you think you should be or what others want. Being both, as an athlete should not hide who you are as a person. A team wants the same goals, winning. Goals both authentic and true to most. How you react towards a teammate may sway personal goals. Not everyone will have the same beliefs.

How do you get authenticity? Who has it? Coaches and teammates may be telling you what you want to hear. True or authentic? Is it real, or something said as in the moment to benefit players? You either believe words you hear from others, or don't. We tend to believe those who we think are authentic and true. Teammates and coaches say words to encourage and motivate a team in the moment. Being an athlete on a team you want the best out of everyone. This is done by helping give ideas to help a teammate, supporting when a teammate is in a slump, or having a bad day. Everyone wants to be their personal best, but being authentic and true on a team means believing in everyone. Those who have it have a passion, they listen, they observe, they react. To me authenticity and being true is a personal belief that you hope others see in you.

Having a point of view that benefits a team is important to being authentic and true. Being open and able to see different points of view and engage in them is critical. Helping a teammate that needs encouragement is important to whole team without thinking of yourself. Speaking out to encourage a teammate that needs encouragement helps team. You have to put yourself out there yourself to be trustworthy to anyone. Your words may or not be authentic and true to your personal goals, but words coming from your own self the best you can in the moment benefit the team. Those words make you trustworthy and genuine to you and everyone that listens and believes like you. Authenticity is easier to see in others than it is to see in yourself. Being a leader, a coach, a family member that is trusted and authentic is a skill. Those who have, are ones that encourage and share your beliefs.

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Authenticity and Sportsmanship  
*Nicole Glidden*  
*West Springfield High School*

Sportsmanship: a term coined for its exemplary notions of fairness and equality no matter what the outcome. However, can one truly be capable of giving one last grand hurrah after a crippling defeat while still remaining true to themselves? A person's actions might not always reveal the authenticity of their true feelings; in fact, in today's society, it can often be quite difficult to discern what is genuine and what is simply, fake. Being authentic means being deeply rooted within your own personal beliefs, values, and morals. Specifically, in the realm of sports, being authentic to your values means putting yourself and your pride to the side while focusing on what truly matters: the team. When your own teammate is out on the field, it is not important what you think of yourself at that moment, it only matters that your teammate is trying their hardest to prove that they deserve field time. In another time, circumstances might have been switched, and it might have been your teammate who looked at you with longingness, but still cheered you on.

This year I had a trying experience in regards to sportsmanship: I tried out for my school's volleyball team. I was twice as excited as anyone else in that gym to make the varsity team; however, no matter how hard I pushed myself, I didn't make the team. My serve-receive passes were simply not as good as other aspiring players. I was disappointed in myself because I kept thinking if I had just done one thing differently, the outcome could have been different, and it would have been me standing out there with the team. Have I let my feelings alter my perspective about our volleyball team? Not at all. Instead, I attend games when I have time and watch our team win consecutive games. Quite frankly, they are extremely successful right now and it's amazing to experience. Being able to support your teammates does not just mean slapping them on the back and saying "good job" when they sub out of the game; it means striving every single day, whether it be at practice or at a game, to make sure they know they are doing one heck of a job with whatever skill they are practicing, making sure they know they are just as much a member of the team as anyone, and making sure they know that Nicole Glidden West Springfield High School

Everything they do matters, whether it be a simple pass or scoring the winning goal of a big championship game. Being a supportive member of a team does not mean you are only held accountable for making someone feel good about themselves only after they have done something well, but it means giving constant encouragement-a simple thumbs up or a smile- that can boost their confidence if only by a slight margin. Overall, being authentic to yourself means abiding by your morals by placing your pride to the side and positively representing "West Side".

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17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Diana Mix*

*Greater Lowell Technical High School*

Being true to oneself is to be completely honest with yourself. It is to stand for what you truly desire and value. It is to keep a set morals you believe corresponds with what you've been taught or have learned. In order to be true to myself, I believe it includes finding a team or just one, well-bonded friendship. This friendship is one that helps carry you from the good and bad. It is authentic meaning its real.

Authentic is a way to describe the Greater Lowell Technical High School girls' varsity soccer team. We have come together since day one with teamwork and friendship. When I hear teamwork, I automatically think of my team. Since the beginning of the year, we have bonded to know all our strengths and weaknesses even on the bad days. We are always cheering each other on even on the days we have to run the dreaded cross country trail.

This is an example of how it's possible to stay true to myself. When I am helping my teammates, I believe that is what brings true happiness to myself because no matter the day, we always come together and bring out the goodness as players and people in general. This goodness is authentic. These small actions of kindness show how true some people can be. Some actions may include grabbing an extra penny for a teammate or even just a small recognition that shows that they know you're putting in effort. My teammates bring out the greater good of me. I believe I am able to express my true self to this team. Without them I believe it would be hard to have someone to go to everyday after school. Even on my bad days, I always have someone to talk to and help encourage me throughout the hard times.

One of my morals that I strictly believe is that you must treat others how you'd like to be treated. This team examples this well. Together, we all treat with respect and have fun at the same time. That is what a team is truly about. Greater Lowell Technical High School girls' soccer shows a strong pride in working hard and playing hard. No matter the circumstances, we all come together and play together while pushing each other to strive to our strongest abilities. This make us authentic. This is what keeps me staying true to myself and morals. This is what brings me happiness.

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Momma Bear  
**Melissa Foley**  
*Middleboro High School*

Support is a word, but can come as a phrase,  
 “You’ve got it,” “I’m here,” there are so many ways.  
 From a teammate support can flow,  
 Breathe it in, and you both will grow.  
 When you give your all on the field, yet still seem to lack,  
 Support from your team hugs you, and you hug back.

Now, to give support one must search inside.  
 Deep within yourself, see your pride.  
 Find the parts of yourself that are near and dear to the person you have become.  
 Who are you?

I look and see kindness, dedication, and selflessness.  
 I see a momma bear ready for action,  
 Prepped to ensure that everything goes according to plan.  
 Ready to protect her young, her team, a part of herself.

Then, take those feelings and act.  
 Act on your instinct.  
 When you see a teammate struggling, your friend... React!

To stand up when they are down,  
 To pick them up when they fall,  
 To lift them up when they are about to give up,  
 That is the whole point of this matter.

Support that player, that friend, that sister.  
 That sister of yours that you will fight for.  
 For her, you would run the whole field just to have her back.  
 For her, you would do anything.

They are the people who need your support the most.  
 They look to you when they fall for a hand back up to their feet.  
 With your support, bring them up higher.  
 Help them to realize their full potential.

Support your family, and together, fight for your goals:  
 Your dreams.  
 “How can I help?” can lead to a victory.  
 There is no mystery.

Look inside, to see your pride, and realize  
 That you can support the bonds you have made with your teammates.  
 You have created a true team:  
 A family.

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Supportive and Authentic Teammates in Athletics

*Ashley Keleher*

*Mashpee High School*

Being on a team of any type can alter a person's way of viewing things. While playing sports, memories and bonds are created that can last a lifetime. Team chemistry is essential to achieve an excellent season. But another important aspect of any game is having authentic teammates who will always have each other's backs. Being a supportive teammate in a game is everything, but being a supportive leader is even more. A supportive leader will always stay positive, be open-minded, yet will be able to push a person mentally at the same time. The most favored type of leaders are ones who lead by example. They are always the ones who are giving it everything that they have while being helpful role models who will always put their team before them, no matter what.

Being a player who leads by example is the perfect example of how one can support teammates but yet they can still have the opportunity to be who they really are. They are always pushing their team and being competitive. Some leaders, typically the "lead by example" type, do not like direct their team by yelling or raising their voice. So instead they direct with their actions, how they play, and by setting good examples. Setting good examples for other players is all part of being a helpful teammate, while being able to be who they want to be. Whether one realizes it or not, someone is always watching, whether it be a coach during a practice, a parent on the sideline, or even a college scouter. They are always watching to see the examples that leaders or captains are making on and off the field.

To be authentic is to be real, honest, and expressing true feelings. Authenticity is a huge part of all sports. As a supportive teammate, it is important to always give players constructive criticism, which is very important in sports and is a great way to gain trust in one another. Constructive criticism is an authentic way to help improve a player's game while still being honest with them. This method is much better than yelling at each other and saying negative things. Every team should have an authentic teammate or two because in the end, they will improve the playing environment of that team.

In conclusion, playing sports can benefit people in so many ways. They can create learning experiences and memories that can last a lifetime. Everybody wants to be a part of a successful team and two ways that's possible is by having authentic & supportive teammates and everybody being true to themselves.

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17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Haley Welch*

*Mashpee High School*

If I support my teammates, will I lose my sense of self? Supporting teammates is important while being a part of a team. Taking responsibility on your team to help and support your teammates is a key to having a successful and lively team. If you communicate and support each other you and your team will be successful. Supporting and benefiting your team will help you become a better you.

Being authentic is being true to yourself or to an identified person representing their nature or beliefs. While being a part of a team is remarkably important, being a leader for your team members and their differences is extraordinary. As a teammate, knowing that your teammates support you and your beliefs on who you are and what you believe in will help you and your team improve and exceed. When you are being true to yourself, you are honest with: yourself, your desires, and how you feel towards yourself and others. When you express how you feel to your teammates it makes the team more fitting. Letting your teammates know your opinion will also benefit your team for the better.

In my opinion, being authentic and true to yourself is extremely important to help you and your team succeed. When you express your passion within what you are doing, it creates an extreme amount of value to you and your teammates. Being a leader and having an upper hand is a privilege, and you should use it to support your team and not your personal benefits. Always use direct communication; as it will benefit everyone around you. Be true, be better, and support everyone around you whether it's your teammate or not, because it'll not just make a difference for your team, but for society and the world around you.

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17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Tiffany Hassey*

*Mashpee High School*

When you are on a sports team or any team, it is very beneficial for not only you but the other teammates to be supportive. When you are supportive of your teammates it not only builds trust but it also builds friendship ,which can later become something more than just a small friendship, it can span out and become a lifelong friendship. Showing good sportsmanship to not only your teammates it is such a wonderful thing to do ,it shows the other team that you aren't all about bringing them down and winning but that you are mainly there and playing the game because you enjoy the sport , the friends you make , and the joy of having fun with it all.

You can make sure you show good sportsmanship while being true to yourself by helping and showing that you care while making sure that you still continue to put how you feel and such first. It may be important to help make others feel important and make them feel as though no matter what happens or how the game goes they won't be resented because of making a mistake but it is also incredibly important to make sure that while you do this you also stay true to yourself. You can't put who you are aside to make others happy. If they are not happy with who you are then they don't matter.

A quote I have always stood by is "Those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind." This quote fits perfectly with just about everything. If someone doesn't like how you are and how you act then they don't matter. The only people who matter are those who appreciate you for you. If you act a certain way whilst playing a sport and others don't like it then don't change or do anything. If they can't accept you for you they don't matter at all. The only time i believe that you should change based on people's opinions is when you are nearing the time of getting kicked off your sports team.

I've learned over the years, whilst doing sports and remembering that quote, that you must stay true to yourself. I stay true to myself by just being who I am regardless of what people have to say about me. If an individual doesn't like who i am then that is fine with me , as long as i am happy with myself and the way I treat and care for others then I don't care. And thus far I have done pretty good for myself by following that.

\*\*\*\*FINALIST\*\*\*\*  
The Authentic Athlete  
*Julia Tardugno*  
*Methuen High School*

Everyone has different reasons for playing a sport. Maybe you've grown to love it more than anything and have been playing longer than you can even remember. And sometimes it's a way to fit in and be a part of something bigger than yourself. But for whatever reason you might have, we have all come together to work hard, play hard, and become better people through the help of others. Our teammates not only push us to be our best and help guide us through the game we love, but also through the lives we are all living.

The people you surround yourself with are the people that can help you become a leader. Being a leader means that others believe in you and your morals to lead the way into a successful career of an athlete. In order to be a leader, you must be willing to do whatever you can for your team, in order to succeed in both the game and the life of an athlete. Our attitudes can define us as people and teammates too. The attitudes we portray towards each other can allow our teammates to feel supported by you and others.

Sticking to your morals will show the confidence you have in yourself, therefore your thoughts and words will be heard and this will give your teammates the support they deserve. Being yourself is a very important aspect of who you are as a person. The morals that have shaped you are the reason that you are who you are today. When you believe in yourself and your abilities, you can become a better leader to your teammates and support them to be their best. As you continue to support your teammates to be their best, they will learn to trust themselves and others. Your attitude and morals you shared with the team will influence how the team plays as a whole. It is the most important part of the game. A team shares one same passion, which is the sport you and your teammates have become dedicated to. If you can support the people on your team to be their best, you can also continue to be yourself for the benefit of the team.

I truly believe that being yourself is the most important part of who you are as a person. To be authentic means to be original and just yourself. When you are yourself, people will respect you more. You create the reputation for yourself. Be the person people can trust and see as a leader. This is how you can support your teammates to be their best while still being true to yourself.

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17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

***Rachel Woodward***

*Mashpee High School*

You can support your teammates the same way you can support yourself, simply by being true to yourself. What being true to yourself means to me is to be honest, optimistic, and energetic in everything you do. Teaching the people around you to do the same is bringing out the light in you and shining it down on others.

Everybody has strengths and weaknesses. You should always be aware of yours, and sensitive to others'. Self-awareness is huge when it comes to support. Self-awareness includes knowing your point of view, yet understanding others, hearing yourself talk, but really listening to others, and being considerate towards everyone. Follow those who have strength in what is your weakness, and be strong for those who need help.

Show the younger kids how to play, act, and have the attitude of a varsity player. It is monkey see monkey do in sports. Don't be mean if someone messes up, you have made those mistakes, its high school sports not the NBA. Relax, stay calm, and try your hardest to be what you wish you had to look up to when you needed guidance. Sports drive competitiveness, quick thinking, and how to be a student athlete. Show the people around you how to achieve all of that with still having control of yourself. It is a lot to handle at a young age.

When pushing my teammates to do their best, I will tell them what I would tell myself. To envision the best version of you, reach your potential, and to defy people's presumptions. Let the haters be the motivators!!

Use people's doubts as motivation. Set goals off their negativity. "An entire sea of water can't sink a ship unless it gets inside the ship. Similarly, the negativity of the world can't put you down unless you allow it to get inside you." -Goi Nasu. Words that should be on your mind before every game, challenge, obstacle, and test. Never let your setbacks or failures hold you low. Make your life out like an arrow, the further it's pulled back, the further forward you will go. Things like these help me get through tough times so I hope they'll help those who need support.

Authenticism boils down to being kind and helpful, with your own twist. Just be a good person, make your own path, know yourself on and off the field, in the classroom, on the street, and in your community.

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Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Sophia Costa*

*Mashpee High School*

Being a student athlete brings along a lot of responsibility. It gives you the opportunity to respect others while doing what you love. What makes an athlete different from a kid who plays sports is all the small factors that go alongside with sportsmanship. Being an athlete, it is very important to understand that while you are wearing your school's jersey, you are representing that school as well. Knowing this, it is very important to show signs of sportsmanship to not only represent your school but to represent yourself in a positive manner as well.

Sportsmanship means being fair and treating other athletes with respect. This is very important because students thrive off of other students. If you are having a bad day and take it out on your teammates, then you are all going to have a bad game. Athletes need to be kind to not only their teammates but to their opposing teams as well. Sportsmanship means congratulating the opposing team even when you lose the game. It means telling your teammate that they can run those last three sprints rather than bringing them down for not being able to get a goal. This is so crucial for on and off the field. Sportsmanship helps your team work together and work toward success. If you cannot get along together, how does one expect to come together come game time and win? Sportsmanship is often mistaken as just shaking an athlete's hand after a game or helping up your teammate. Seldom do people realize sportsmanship can be as subtle as taking a knee while another is hurt or clapping for the other team. Harry Sheehy once said "It is your response to winning and losing that makes you a winner or a loser". This is a great example of sportsmanship.

Some words that portray sportsmanship include humble, fairness, honesty, honorable, and virtue. Student athletes need to feed off each other's positivity to make people play solely for the love of the game rather than any other intention. It is also important to teach the upcoming generation that sportsmanship is a quality that every student athlete should have as well as go by. Having this quality will not only help an athlete make himself or herself seem more respectful and mature, but it will also help them advance mentally while playing the sport they love. Going alongside this though, it will actually also help the people around them play better and have a better mindset during their athletic career.

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17<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

*Skylar Samanica*

*Bishop Stang High School*

To be an athlete means to be skilled in a particular sport or physical activity. By being an athlete, you are able to do your job on the playing field and fulfill your duties firmly. To be an authentic athlete means to play effectively and strongly not only for the good of yourself but for your teammates, coaches, and officials, as well. Every play you make and every word you speak in the presence of your team should be beneficial to yourself and themselves. By being an authentic athlete, you must be eager to give your 110% effort and willingness to lift your teammates up to be the best they can be. When you offer a positive attitude, it can spread through others like wildfire.

Being on a team is more than just having your name on a roster and on the back of a jersey. It is being a part of a family. As American ice hockey player and coach Herb Brooks once said, "When you pull on that jersey, you represent yourself and your teammates, and the name on the front is much more important than the one on the back." Every time you step out onto the ice, court, or field, you are playing in honor of the name on the front of your jersey. Each team member may be different, but that name is the one thing that makes you the same. You are all offering your gifts and talents for a similar reason: for the love of the game. Since you are all working towards the same goals, you must put your hearts and minds together as one unit to achieve these great feats. Each time you offer helpful advice or words of encouragement to one another, you are striving to push the entire team towards that specific goal. The action that you may think is small could be the one to move the team towards a greater change and even a chain reaction of improvement. Sometimes, your encouragement may go beyond the game. It could help someone in their everyday life and even support them in whatever they are going through. That is what being true to yourself and your teammates is: helping each person on and off the playing field no matter what the cost.

My sport, ice hockey, means everything to me. My teammates and the sport itself were there for me in a time when I thought no one else was. They may not know it, but my teammates helped push me to be the best person I could be not only on that ice but in my life. They helped me to realize how strong I really was at the time. When you are a part of a team, you must be willing to give back what that sport has given to you. Ice hockey gave me strength, courage, and eagerness to achieve. Go out today and inspire others. That is your duty as a team player.

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The Authentic Athlete  
*Quinn Roche*  
*Belchertown High School*

I have been involved in sports for as long as I can remember, and through sports I have learned a lot about myself as a competitor and teammate, especially this past year. This year's basketball season was definitely more difficult than many in the past. Looking back on it now, I've realized just how much I learned. This basketball season was my first year on varsity. I didn't expect to be a starter, but hoped to play as much as possible. Unfortunately for me, the other girl who played my position was a 6'2" senior who had a great season. This limited my time to several minutes each game. But I kept working as hard as I possibly could. I went to practice with a great attitude, and I did whatever I could do to make my teammates better and make the season as successful as possible. I wanted to see my teammates improve while I did the same. I cheered as loudly as I could for them while I was on the bench, and I accepted the role that I had been given. We were successful and went to the playoffs. I loved going to practice, being with my teammates, and being part of a winning team. Even though it wasn't necessarily the season I had hoped for myself, it was everything I wanted for the team. It was extremely rewarding to know that my hard work paid off. We had a successful season, and on top of that, my coaches recognized how hard I worked and how supportive I had been by awarding me the "Teammate Award" at the end of the season. Being authentic and true to yourself can be hard when you're on a team, because being on a team requires you to work with your teammates and compromise for what's best for the team as a whole. Being on a team doesn't mean that you cannot still be true to yourself though. Being authentic and true to yourself means supporting your teammates while still participating in a sport that you love and that brings you joy. I was able to have so much fun at every basketball practice, game, and team event, despite my lack of play time, because throughout the season I remained true to myself and my values. I took my role of being a supportive teammate, and made it into something that was fun and rewarding. Being authentic and true to myself brought me even closer to my teammates, and gave me some really amazing friends along the way.



### Acknowledgements

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