

OFFICIAL EVENT EDITION

The Fight Night Supporters' Circle



The Wisdom of the Fight — The Fight of Life and the Life of the Fight

PRESENTED BY SPORTSMART4LIFE

A word from the organisers



The Fight Night Supporters' Circle

A word from the organisers

Dear Sample Reader,

This copy is yours. Your name is on the cover, and it is inside on the pages too, because it was made for you and for nobody else. No two copies of this book are the same.

We wanted to give you something that outlasts a fixture list. Kit wears out. Medals go in a drawer. But everyone in this sport has been beaten, and everyone came back, and that is worth writing down somewhere you will find it again.

What follows are the real voices of this sport — players, coaches and writers, most of them talking about the parts nobody puts on a highlight reel. There is a section on pressure, and what the people who handle it best actually do differently. One on trust, and why a group that trusts each other beats a group that is merely talented. One on losing, which is the section we would ask you to read twice, because everyone in this sport has lost and everyone worth knowing came back. There is a section on joy, which is the reason any of us started. One on mastery, and the unglamorous patience it asks for. One on rivalry, and the respect that runs underneath it. And one on belonging — on being part of something whether or not you are the one on the field.

You do not have to read it in order. Keep it in the kit bag. Open it the night before a hard one. Let it fall open at whichever page finds you, and if a line is worth keeping, keep it.

The game has taught you things already — about nerve, about other people, about getting up. These pages are simply the same lessons in other people's words, gathered in one place so they are there when you need them.

Thank you for everything you give to this. It is noticed, and it matters more than the results ever say.

— The Committee, The Fight Night Supporters' Circle

Foreword

The fight game is the most honest arena sport ever built. There is nowhere to hide in a ring, nothing to blame, and no way to fake readiness — which is why its people, from boxers to judoka to wrestlers, tend to speak with such unusual candour. Wherever the game is practised, from famous arenas to one-room gyms above shops, it teaches the same things: master your fear, honour your corner, get up again, protect your joy, drill until it is yours, respect your opponent, belong to something.

This collection gathers the voices of the fight game — the fighters, the trainers, the great watchers and writers who loved it best — arranged around seven themes that belong as much to life as to the ring. Each chapter opens with an image and an idea, then hands the floor to the voices themselves.

Read it the way you would watch a great bout: sometimes for the drama, sometimes for the craft, and sometimes for one moment of heart you will remember for years.

Ways to Walk with This Book

A collection like this is not meant to be read once and shelved. It is meant to be lived with — kept close, opened often, and put to work. Seven ways to begin:

- **The daily voice**
open anywhere each morning and take one voice with you into the day.
- **The reflection pause**
choose the theme your week is testing, read its essay slowly, and write one honest line of your own in response.
- **Match-day ritual**
before the big broadcast, read the theme the fixture will examine — rivalry before the derby, pressure before the final.
- **The team talk**
captains, coaches, teachers, parents: one voice a week is enough to open a changing room, a classroom or a dinner table.
- **The hard-week medicine**
when life tackles you, the defeat chapter is waiting. It was written for exactly that week.
- **The gift of a voice**
photograph the quote a friend needs today and send it with their name on the message.
- **The long read**
one theme per Sunday evening — a handful of weeks, properly kept.

However you use it, let it stay within reach of wherever you watch.

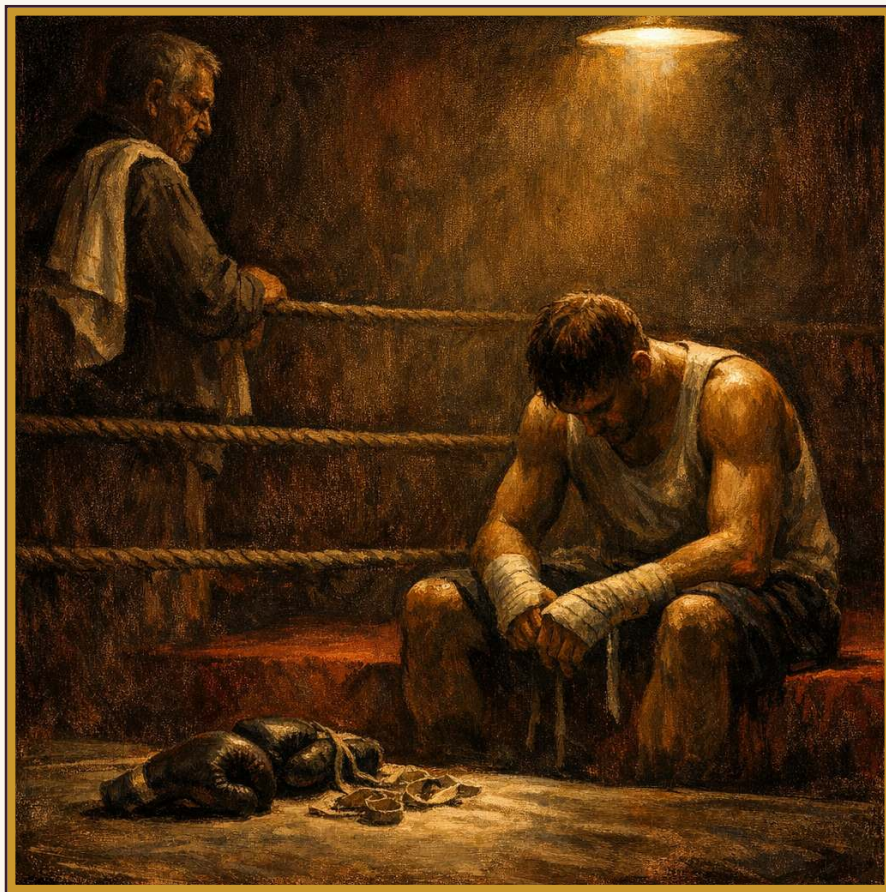
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THEME 1 OF 7

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Losing with nowhere to hide — and the long discipline of getting up.



The knockdown is the fight's question. Getting up is the only answer it respects.

Defeat & Bouncing Back — in the game, in life

Defeat in the fight game has no hiding place. There is no team to absorb the result, no teammate's error to share it with, no bench to disappear onto. One name is announced, and it is not yours, and you stand in the middle of the ring under the lights while it happens. Fighters lose in the most public and most personal way sport allows — and that is exactly why the fight game has become the world's great university of getting up. Listen to old fighters talk and you notice they speak of their defeats with a strange tenderness, because the losses were the honest teachers. A loss tells a fighter precisely what the winning streak concealed: the guard that drops when tired, the habit a good opponent will always find, the corner that was cut in training and collected in the ring. The comeback follows a discipline as old as the sport. Grieve honestly — nobody in a real gym pretends a loss doesn't hurt. Watch the tape with cold eyes. Separate the lesson from the shame, keep the first and bin the second. Then return to the gym, quietly, and begin again at the bag like a beginner. The fighters who become legends are almost never unbeaten; they are the ones whose response to a beating became their signature. Life will hand you your own nights when the decision goes the other way — the application declined, the venture that failed in public, the year of work undone in an afternoon. Take the loss the fighter's way: alone if you must, honestly always, and briefly. Then wrap your hands and go back to work. In this game, and in yours, getting up is not a moment. It is a practice.

“Looking back, I'm almost happy I lost that fight. Just imagine if I would have come back to Germany with a victory. I had nothing to do with the Nazis, but they would have given me a medal.”

— Max Schmeling

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“The best man won tonight and it's a massive event for boxing. Two gentleman fought each other. Anthony was better today. It's really sad I didn't make it tonight.”

— Wladimir Klitschko

“I mentally and physically beat him. I put an old-fashioned project beating on him.”

— Pernell Whitaker

“I got the 50th win when I got up off the floor November 23, 2010, and got out of my house. That was my 50th win.”

— Christy Martin

“It doesn't end like this. No excuses. I lost today; he is a great boxer.”

— Canelo Álvarez

“My life, almost from its very start, has been filled with tragedy and romance, failure and success, poverty and wealth, misery and happiness.”

— Jack Johnson

“I saw him fading, and when he came back to the corner my mind was already made up. I was just asking him out of respect, but my mind was made up. I wasn't going to let him go out there.”

— Buddy McGirt

“Let's move on... we are born warriors, we are real.”

— Michael Watson

“Every man's got to figure to get beat sometime.”

— Joe Louis

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I realized I would never be free unless I revealed the whole truth, no matter how much it hurt."

— Sugar Ray Leonard

"It's a very sad position to be in, but I will deal with it like I've dealt with things in the past."

— Daniel Cormier

"This was supposed to be my year. This was supposed to be my breakthrough performance."

— Jordan Burroughs

"Because of my mother... God bless her heart."

— James 'Buster' Douglas

"I found out tonight it isn't there no more. I'm a happy man tonight. I have got the answers I needed."

— Ricky Hatton

"It's easy to do anything in victory. It's in defeat that a man reveals himself."

— Floyd Patterson

"You're the greatest."

— Barney Ross

"I was down in the medical room and sitting in the corner, and I was like, 'What am I anymore if I'm not this?'"

— Ronda Rousey

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“There are no easy champions in the UFC ring, and in the Octagon it all comes down to merit.”

— Zhang Weili

“I hear people always say that when you surrender and admit these things, it's a sense of freedom too.”

— Sugar Ray Leonard

“I never wanted to lose, never thought I would, but the thing that matters is how you lose.”

— Muhammad Ali

“My legacy isn't hurt by this. I really think I've gone down in the history books as one of the greatest. I showed dominance at this stage.”

— Adeline Gray

“It is what it is.”

— Max Holloway

“I have reached my physical limit and lost my vitality. Last November I knew that I had reached my limit, so I was ready to retire.”

— Chiyonofuji Mitsugu

“How I got back up, I really don't know. I was sound asleep on the floor. All of a sudden, I opened my eyes and I jumped up.”

— Tyson Fury

“Boxing is about being hit rather more than it is about hitting, just as it is about feeling pain, if not devastating psychological paralysis, more than it is about winning.”

— Joyce Carol Oates

THE FIGHT NIGHT SUPPORTERS' CIRCLE

More from Defeat & Bouncing Back



The walk back.

"It's a funny thing about people. People will hate a guy all his life for what he is, but the minute he dies for it they make him out a hero and they go around saying that maybe he wasn't such a bad guy after all because he sure was willing to go the distance for whatever he believed or whatever he was."

— W.C. Heinz

A few more from Defeat & Bouncing Back



And then you come again.

“Without cancer, I would have never had some of these opportunities, and I wouldn’t be the man I am today.”

— Daniel Jacobs

“I’ve had a long run. It’s been great. I just fought my last fight for a heavyweight championship.”

— Daniel Cormier

“It would be a waste if I don’t make a good lesson out of this loss.”

— Kaori Icho

This copy belongs to: Sample Reader

The Fight Night Supporters' Circle · Defeat & Bouncing Back

THEME 2 OF 7

Pressure & Nerve

The walk to the ring, the last minute before the first bell — what fear asks, and how the brave answer.



Everyone in the arena is watching the fighter; the fighter is watching the fear — and walking anyway.

Pressure & Nerve — in the game, in life

There is no lonelier walk in sport than the walk to the ring. Team athletes run out in a tunnel of teammates; the fighter walks through the crowd with a towel over the shoulders and a corner trailing behind, and everybody watching knows that in a few minutes the ropes will close and no one can climb in to help. The fight game is honest about fear in a way almost nothing else is. Every fighter feels it — the veterans say so openly — and the sport's first great teaching is that fear is not the enemy of courage but its raw material. The changing room before a bout is a study in ritual: the hands wrapped slowly, layer by layer, the same warm-up in the same order, the same few words from the same trusted voice. None of it removes the fear. All of it gives the fear somewhere to go. Watch a fighter in the final seconds before the first bell and you are not watching calm; you are watching a routine so deeply rehearsed that it can carry a frightened human being across the canvas anyway. That is nerve, and it is the whole art. Your life will schedule its own fight nights — the interview, the diagnosis, the conversation you have rehearsed in the car until the words wore smooth. Meet them the fighter's way. Build the ritual before you need it. Let the fear come, and put it to work as attention, as sharpness, as respect for the moment. Then walk — unhurried, breathing, one step after another — toward the thing you are afraid of. Courage was never the absence of fear. It is the walk that continues while the fear walks with you.

“You can map out a fight plan or a life plan, but when the action starts, it may not go the way you planned, and you're down to your reflexes—that means your preparation. That's where your roadwork shows. If you cheated on that in the dark of the morning, well, you're going to get found out now, under the bright lights.”

— Joe Frazier

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“A boxer, like a writer, must stand alone.”

— A.J. Liebling

“Acting without fear is called recklessness. Acting with fear is called courage.”

— Ronda Rousey

“At best a gold, at least a gold.”

— Ryoko Tani

“Every time I step into the ring, I fight for all women, for equality and for Puerto Rico.”

— Amanda Serrano

“Knowing that God has a plan for me has always helped me live a stress-free and worry-free life.”

— Kyle Snyder

“We're not here to take part, we're here to take over.”

— Conor McGregor

“Before a fight, when I'm in the dressing room, I look in that mirror, and I can determine who's gonna win the fight.”

— Sugar Ray Leonard

“My biggest weakness is my sensitivity. I am too sensitive a person.”

— Mike Tyson

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Do you wanna be a f---ing fighter?”

— Dana White

“Christ is in me, I am enough.”

— Helen Maroulis

“In extreme situations, the entire universe becomes our foe; at such critical times, unity of mind and technique is essential.”

— Morihei Ueshiba

“When you go to the trenches, that's when you find out who you really are. In this small little ring there's nowhere to hide.”

— Wladimir Klitschko

“It doesn't matter what odds are on paper or what's happened before. It matters what happens that moment.”

— Holly Holm

“I would not be able to step into the ring without God in my life.”

— Katie Taylor

“I define fear as standing across the ring from Joe Louis and knowing he wants to go home early.”

— Max Baer

“It is just an unfair playing field. The pay discrepancy, it's mind-boggling to me. There's not a boxer — male or female — who have accomplished what I've accomplished.”

— Claressa Shields

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I don't care what's probable. Through blood, sweat and tears, I am unstoppable."

— Anthony Robles

"I'm not looking to escape the pressure. I'm embracing it."

— Ronda Rousey

"You walk out of that locker room and it's almost like you're about to head to a funeral. Everybody is worried and nervous and then the music hits the speakers and all that fear turns into butterflies and your skin starts to crawl."

— Daniel Cormier

"I won my gold medal with a broken freakin' neck."

— Kurt Angle

"I'm afraid of a lot of things. You should be afraid. If you didn't get afraid, you wouldn't be aware when danger's close by. You just have to learn how to deal with your fear."

— Teddy Atlas

"Once I could accept death and walk comfortably toward it, what was there to be afraid of?"

— Rickson Gracie

"No one will break me."

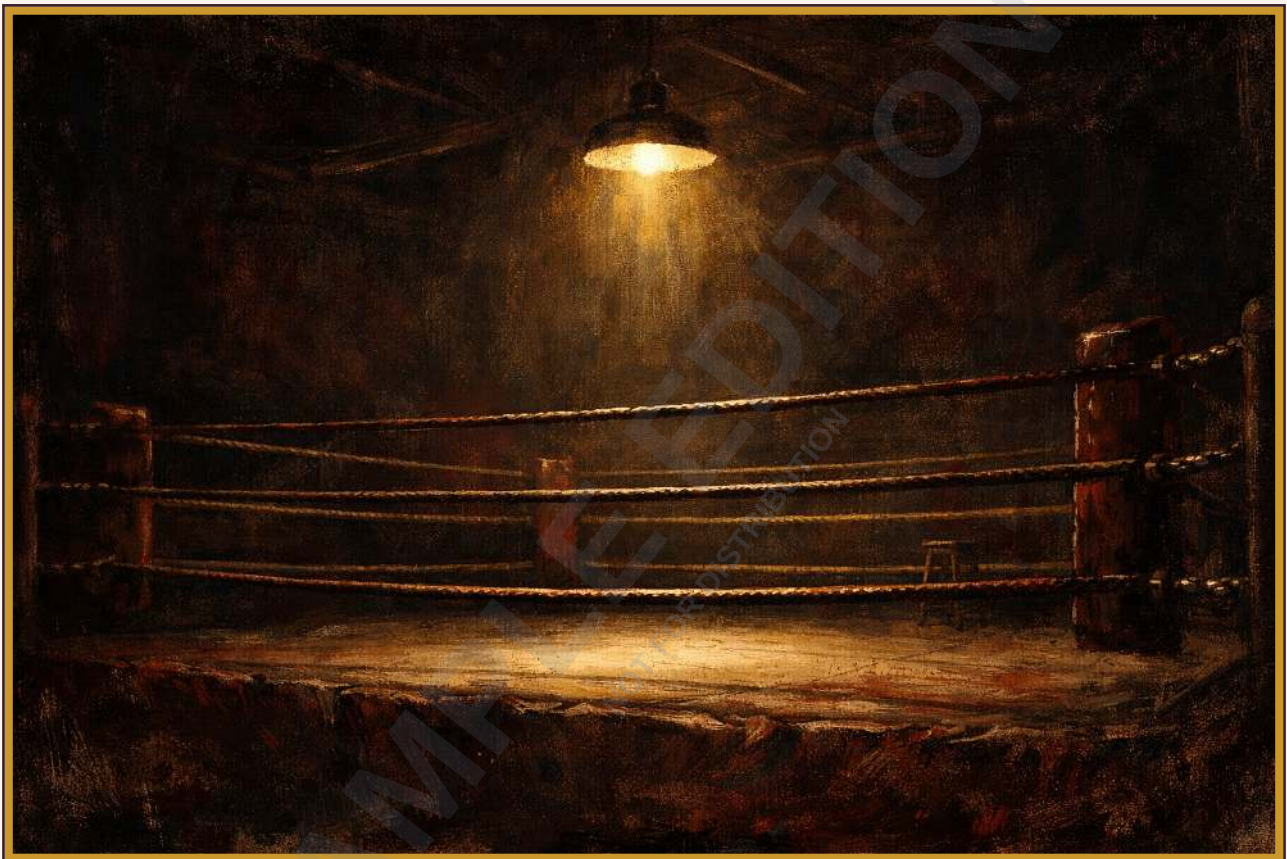
— Kayla Harrison

"That fear and those thoughts of losing, they all come into play, maybe not all the time, but they do come into play."

— Sugar Ray Leonard

THE FIGHT NIGHT SUPPORTERS' CIRCLE

More from Pressure & Nerve



The moment before it starts.

“When I fight, all of the eyes in Mexico are upon me. It's a big responsibility. Sometimes it seems I am defending the nation.”

— **Julio César Chávez**

A few more from Pressure & Nerve



Nerve is not the absence of fear.

“I used to have my hair up in my headgear and I used to be known as 'Kay Taylor.' So, when I took the headgear off at the end of the fight and everyone realised I was a girl, there was uproar.”

— Katie Taylor

“Jiu-jitsu students choose to step into an environment where the natural constraints are turmoil, confusion, fear, and aggression.”

— Rickson Gracie

“I fear a lot of things. I just don't let fear control me. I use it to motivate me.”

— Ronda Rousey

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The Fight Night Supporters' Circle · Pressure & Nerve

THEME 3 OF 7

Teamwork & Trust

The corner, the gym, the sparring partners nobody names — the hidden team behind every 'lone' fighter.



The loneliest sport in the world is a team sport in disguise — nobody ever climbed through the ropes alone.

Teamwork & Trust — in the game, in life

From the cheap seats a fight looks like the loneliest contest on earth: two people, one ring, no substitutions. Look closer and you will find one of sport's densest webs of teamwork hiding in plain sight. Between every round the fighter comes home to the corner — sixty seconds in which a stool appears, water arrives, a swelling is calmed, and one trusted voice cuts through the noise with the only two instructions that matter. A good corner is years of trust compressed into a minute. And behind the corner stands the gym: the coach who saw something before anyone else did, and the sparring partners who absorbed months of hard rounds so that someone else's fight could be won — partners whose names never appear on the poster. Wrestling rooms and judo clubs run on the same quiet economy: you cannot learn a throw without a partner willing to be thrown, hundreds of times, evening after evening. Every champion is a debt that can never fully be repaid. That is the fight game's correction to the myth of the self-made anything. Even here, in the most solitary sport we have, nobody rises alone; the solo performance is simply the visible tip of a buried team. Your life is the same shape. However alone your ring feels — the exam hall, the small business, the hospital corridor — you have a corner, and you are somebody else's. Choose your corner people with the seriousness fighters do, because in the hardest minute you will hear only one voice, and it had better be a true one. And take your turn holding the pads. The unseen work you do for someone else's fight is teamwork at its purest — the kind that never gets the photograph and always deserves it.

“There's a special bond between a fighter and his trainer. Often, they're the closest two people in camp. Many of them never had a father at home when they were growing up. So when the relationship between a fighter and his trainer is right, oftentimes the trainer becomes a father figure and the fighter's best friend.”

— Emanuel Steward

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Because the person who is your instructor, your trainer, your teacher, he's closer to you than your father.”

— Archie Moore

“Hard work! Dedication!”

— Floyd Mayweather Jr.

“One punch, as you know, can change a whole guy's life, and I wasn't going to let that happen. I'd rather have them be mad at me for a day or two than to be mad at me for the rest of their life.”

— Buddy McGirt

“When UFC called me about Justin, I talk with my mother three days. She don't want that I go fight without father. I promised her it's going to be my last fight, and if I give my word, I have to follow this.”

— Khabib Nurmagomedov

“If it wasn't for my dad I wouldn't be where I am today. He motivated me, took me to the gym, taught me the basics in my teenage years. When you want to go out with your friends, he kicked me in the a** and kept me on the straight and narrow.”

— Joe Calzaghe

“Down in Kronk, we'd say if you don't come to perform, if you don't feel like fighting, don't go to Kronk. You come to Kronk and you're not ready, you get your hat brought to you.”

— Thomas Hearn

“Get up, get over it, seek help and let's do it together as a team.”

— Tyson Fury

“What this building brought for me was a chance at life. I got a chance to become somebody out of this building right here.”

— Thomas Hearn

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“I know I would rather my mate cry on my shoulder than go to his funeral next week.”

— Paddy Pimblett

“If Joe comes in 100 percent, I don't have to worry one damn bit about whether he boxes. Because at the end of the day, Joe boxes his own fight.”

— Enzo Calzaghe

“God made you this way for a reason.”

— Judy Robles

“I love what I do, man. I work real hard here, and I love especially helping out people. Why would I give it up? Plus, it keeps my mind off MMA.”

— Stipe Miocic

“I didn't make Cowboy Wrestling, it made me.”

— John Smith

“This is a community here. The businessmen who come in here meet Black and Hispanic youth whom they might not normally associate with, and they say, 'Hey, these kids are great. They're focused and concentrated.'”

— Bruce Silverglade

“That's bigger and better than any gold medal will ever be.”

— Kayla Harrison

“I try to honor the people that I've lost.”

— Daniel Cormier

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I am a fighter. It's what I do. Now I want to fight the good fight for those who can't."

— *Dustin Poirier*

"Nobody had to teach Duran how to fight. The first day I saw him, I told everybody around him, 'Don't change his style. Leave him alone. I don't want anybody to ever tell him what to do.'"

— *Ray Arce*

"This is the big one, Daddy. Get out there and run."

— *Angelo Dundee*

"The principle of maximum efficiency, whether applied to the art of attack and defence or to refining and perfecting daily life, demands above all that there be order and harmony among people. This can be realized only through mutual aid and concession, leading to mutual welfare and benefit."

— *Jigoro Kano*

"A single arrow is easily broken, but not ten in a bundle."

— *Traditional (Japanese proverb)*

"I just put the reflexes in the proper direction."

— *Angelo Dundee*

"I can't even explain how blessed I am and how fortunate that I have such a great team that believes in me."

— *Holly Holm*

"Be close to your parents, because you never know what is going to happen tomorrow."

— *Khabib Nurmagomedov*

THE FIGHT NIGHT SUPPORTERS' CIRCLE

More from Teamwork & Trust



Nobody does this alone.

“Nothing under the sun is greater than education. By educating one person and sending him into the society of his generation, we make a contribution extending a hundred generations to come.”

— Jigoro Kano

A few more from Teamwork & Trust



Trust, built in the ordinary weeks.

“All those things you saw me do in the ring didn't come to me naturally. Chappie taught me all of that. He was very patient. Without him in my corner, I never would have amounted to nothing.”

— Joe Louis

“When you get your a** knocked down, it's a lot easier to get up because of the program around you.”

— John Smith

“Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee. Rumble, young man, rumble!”

— Drew 'Bundini' Brown

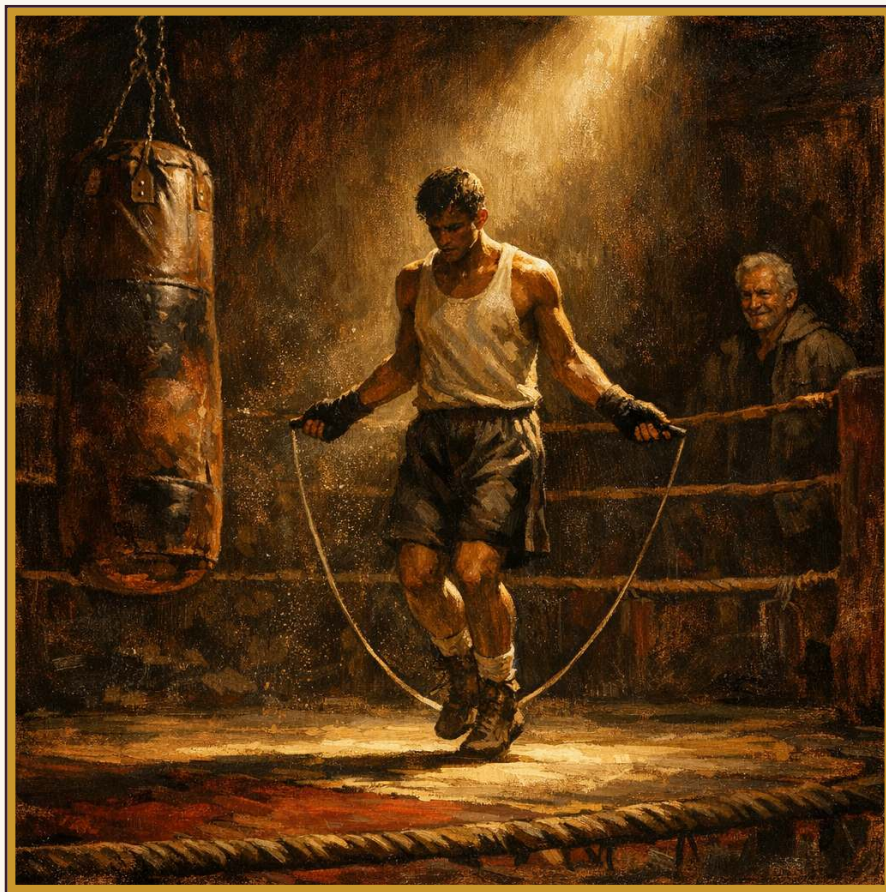
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The Fight Night Supporters' Circle · Teamwork & Trust

THEME 4 OF 7

Joy & Love of the Game

The rhythm of the gym, the play inside the craft — fighting's first language is delight.



Before it was ever a fight, it was a rhythm — rope, bag, breath, and the best hour of the day.

Joy & Love of the Game — in the game, in life

Before it is ever a contest, the fight game is a craft of play — and you can hear it. A boxing gym at evening is a percussion section: the skipping rope's whir, the speed bag's triple-time rattle, the heavy bag's deep answer, twenty people moving to rhythms they have each made their own. Children in judo clubs spend their first months mostly learning to fall — and mostly laughing while they learn. The martial arts are called arts for a reason: at their heart is the old human delight in what a trained body can do, the same delight as dance. Ask fighters what they love and the answers are rarely about winning. They talk about the gym in the early morning before anyone arrives. The flow of good sparring with a partner they trust, playful as a conversation. The day a movement that was impossible for a year suddenly became theirs. The fight game keeps this joy close because it has to; nobody endures the sport's hard seasons on ambition alone. The fighters who last decades are the ones who still love the smell of the gym, who shadow-box in hotel mirrors for the simple pleasure of the motion, who would train even if no bout were ever booked again. There is a rule of life folded into all this. Discipline is a good engine and a terrible fuel; the energy for your hardest rounds comes from the play you refuse to surrender. So keep your version of the evening gym — the instrument, the garden, the long slow run. Do it for its own sake, badly and happily. The day your craft stops being partly play, you have not become serious. You have only forgotten why you first walked in.

“I remember in my hotel room before the Moorer fight, I prayed. I said, 'God, I never bring this up, but if I win this time I'm gonna get on my knees and say thank you, Jesus.' And after it happened, I got down on my knees.”

— George Foreman

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Wrestling is a form of therapy and expression for me, so I had to come back.”

— Helen Maroulis

“We should have known that Muhammad Ali would not settle for any ordinary old resurrection. His had to have an additional flourish. So, having rolled away the rock, he hit George Foreman on the head with it.”

— Hugh McIlvanney

“When I'm sick, I just go to the gym and it goes away.”

— Freddie Roach

“Today is a different day for a simple reason: say goodbye to an entire life dedicated to my sport. Yesterday was so special. I went there to do what I love.”

— Anderson Silva

“Pinch me. It's so surreal looking around and to be back at home as the main event. I am super honored.”

— Amanda Serrano

“I've been telling you guys already, this is the 'Blessed' era.”

— Max Holloway

“I opened my gym, Wild Card, in hopes that the next Muhammad Ali would walk through the door. Little did I know that in 2001, my Muhammad Ali would weigh 122 pounds.”

— Freddie Roach

“To me, ultimately, martial art means honestly expressing yourself.”

— Bruce Lee

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Double champion forever. This is the perfect night to retire.”

— Amanda Nunes

“Everything — peace of mind, happiness, getting the most out of what you have — springs off of the word 'gratitude.'”

— Cael Sanderson

“I am the greatest! I shook up the world!”

— Muhammad Ali

“I quit school in the sixth grade because of pneumonia. Not because I had it, but because I couldn't spell it.”

— Rocky Graziano

“Don't push the horses.”

— Oleksandr Usyk

“I have to pinch myself every day. Truthfully, I feel like this is all a dream. This kid from East L.A., dreams do come true.”

— Oscar De La Hoya

“It happened! It happened!”

— Jim Lampley

“This was really an impossible dream a few years ago and here we are, this is going to be the iconic moment of my whole career.”

— Katie Taylor

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I'm so fast that last night I turned off the light switch in my hotel room and was in bed before the room was dark."

— Muhammad Ali

"The question isn't at what age I want to retire, it's at what income."

— George Foreman

"Judo saved my life. The sport gave me a goal and something to wake up for. If I didn't have that when I was a teenager, I might not even be here."

— Kayla Harrison

"Guys, I love life so much. I'm retired, guys... It's been 20 years. I'm turning 35 this year. I want to be a mom. I want to be a businesswoman. I appreciate you all. I love you, guys."

— Joanna Jędrzejczyk

"Not bad for an old man."

— Randy Couture

"Now, the only things that are important is my family, feeling love, and just being a part of the simplest things."

— Daniel Jacobs

"Oh my God, he's won the title back at 32!"

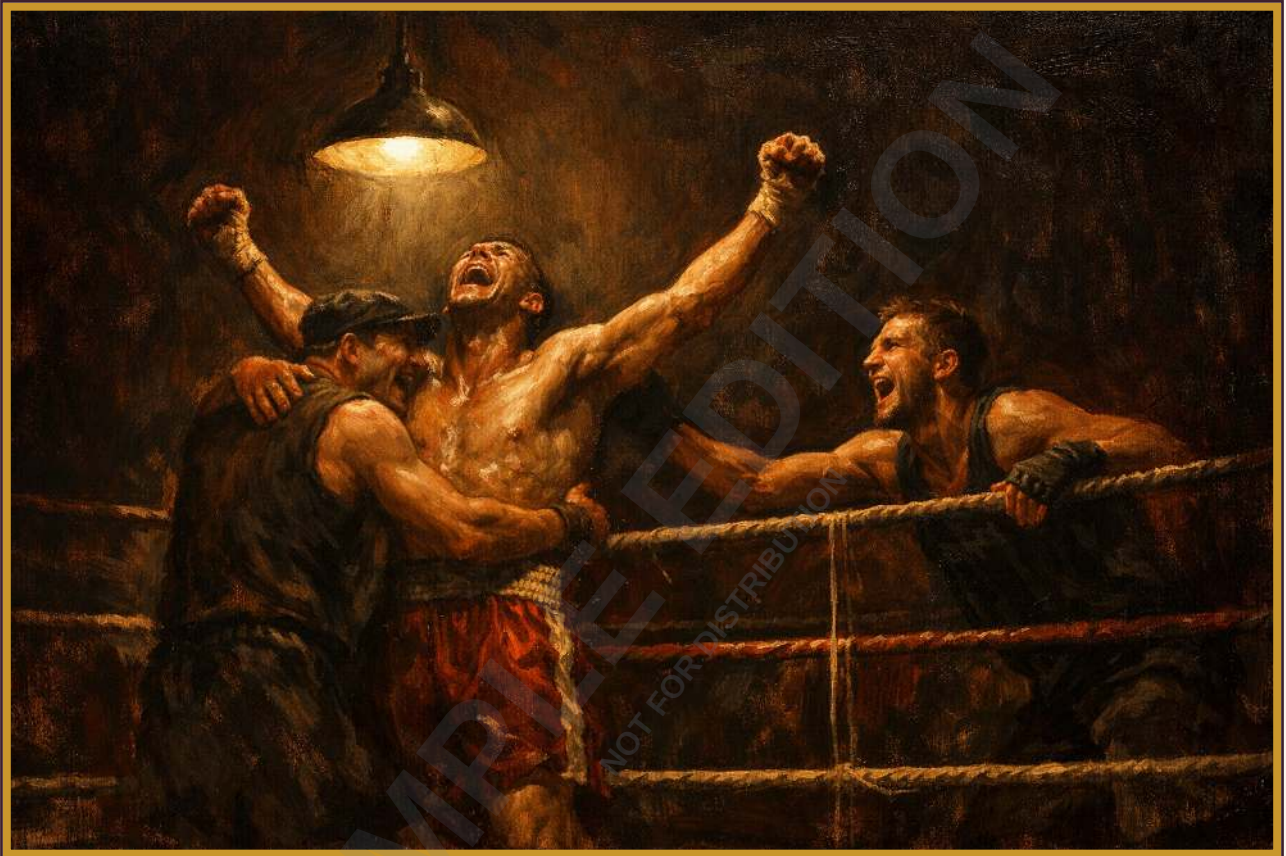
— Harry Carpenter

"I am very feel."

— Oleksandr Usyk

THE FIGHT NIGHT SUPPORTERS' CIRCLE

More from Joy & Love of the Game



Why anyone starts.

“I would like for them to say: he took a few cups of love, he took one tablespoon of patience, one tablespoon of generosity, one pint of kindness. He took one quart of laughter, one pinch of concern, and then he mixed willingness with happiness. He added lots of faith, and he stirred it up well. Then he spread it over a span of a lifetime, and he served it to each and every deserving person he met.”

— Muhammad Ali

A few more from Joy & Love of the Game



The part nobody has to be told to love.

"I need to come here — I don't have to come here but I want to come here."

— Freddie Roach

"The desire comes out of my love for boxing. I love this sport. There's nothing wrong with the pyjamas I wear!"

— Canelo Álvarez

"The only thing I wanted was to be Mexico's first heavyweight champion and to beat that big guy that everybody was scared of."

— Andy Ruiz Jr

This copy belongs to: Sample Reader

The Fight Night Supporters' Circle · Joy & Love of the Game

THEME 5 OF 7

Mastery & Practice

Ten thousand repetitions in an empty gym behind every effortless round.



The crowd sees one perfect punch; the empty gym saw the ten thousand that bought it.

Mastery & Practice — in the game, in life

The fight game is built on a mathematics of repetition that borders on the monastic. A jab that decides a championship round was thrown, by conservative arithmetic, tens of thousands of times before — at the bag, at the mitts, at the air, in the dark. Judo folds the idea into its very method: the same throw, drilled with a patient partner, a thousand times and then a thousand more, until the technique stops being something you do and becomes something you are. The belt around a martial artist's waist is not a prize; it is a receipt for years. What makes fighting mastery so instructive is its terrible honesty. In the ring there is nowhere to hide a skipped lesson. Under pressure a fighter does not rise to the occasion; they fall to the level of their training — the fight game knew that truth long before the business world borrowed it. Fatigue strips away everything decorative in the later rounds, and what remains is whatever was drilled deepest: the guard that stays up by itself, the feet that keep their angles, the breathing that continues when thought has stopped. And the craft is ruthlessly democratic. The heavy bag does not know your surname, your followers or your excuses; it answers effort with progress and neglect with nothing, and it never flatters. Nearly everything worth doing in your life obeys the same law — the language, the trade, the instrument, the patient art of staying calm with people. Choose your craft, and find your empty gym: the hour nobody watches, the standard nobody demands but you. Count your repetitions privately, because the crowd only ever counts the visible ones. Skill that looks like magic is only practice that kept its secrets.

“If there's magic in boxing, it's the magic of fighting battles beyond endurance, beyond cracked ribs, ruptured kidneys and detached retinas. It's the magic of risking everything for a dream that nobody sees but you.”

— Paul Haggis (screenwriter, from F.X. Toole's stories), narrated by Morgan Freeman as Eddie 'Scrap-Iron' Dupris

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Mentality over technique.”

— Gichin Funakoshi

“I visualized that if the head kick was there to go for it. We didn't want to go out of our way searching for it and force it.”

— Holly Holm

“Every soul who comes to earth with a leg or two at birth must wrestle his opponents knowing it's not what is, but what can be, that measures worth.”

— Anthony Robles

“In boxing you create a strategy to beat each new opponent, it's just like chess.”

— Lennox Lewis

“Hit and don't get hit.”

— Boxing proverb

“If you can see it here, and have the courage enough to speak it, it will happen.”

— Conor McGregor

“You can do all the right things out of the ring. If you don't have an offense and a defense to protect that brain, you're not going to last. I don't give a damn how good your lifestyle is.”

— Bernard Hopkins

“I see something.”

— Max Schmeling

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, indomitable spirit.”

— Choi Hong Hi

“I never have a day off. I'm in the gym every day, it's part of life.”

— Freddie Roach

“No man can say what he will do in the future, but barring poverty, the ring has seen the last of me.”

— Rocky Marciano

“Discipline is doing what you hate to do, but do it like you love it.”

— Mike Tyson

“I had to be like a pitbull on a bone. I knew I had to be patient and find the perfect moment.”

— Miesha Tate

“The success or failure of Taekwon-Do training depends largely on how one observes and implements the tenets of Taekwon-Do.”

— Choi Hong Hi

“Don't you understand anything about commitment, about being a pro, about sticking with what you say you wanna be?”

— Teddy Atlas

“If you're not humble, life will visit humbleness upon you.”

— Mike Tyson

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Boxing can seriously damage your health, but teaches self-discipline and gets you fit. Smoking, drinking and drugs just damage your health.”

— *Brendan Ingle*

“It will take your entire life to learn karate; there is no limit.”

— *Gichin Funakoshi*

“I proved to Muhammad Ali that women can fight.”

— *Laila Ali*

“Perceive those things which cannot be seen.”

— *Miyamoto Musashi*

“Boxing is a kind of magic. It gives discipline to the wild.”

— *Wladimir Klitschko*

“Maximum efficiency, minimum effort.”

— *Jigoro Kano*

“Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee. The hands can't hit what the eyes can't see.”

— *Muhammad Ali*

“It's just a job. Grass grows, birds fly, waves pound the sand. I beat people up.”

— *Muhammad Ali*

THE FIGHT NIGHT SUPPORTERS' CIRCLE

More from Mastery & Practice



The thousandth repetition.

“Absorb what is useful, discard what is useless, add what is specifically your own.”

— Bruce Lee

This copy belongs to: Sample Reader

The Fight Night Supporters' Circle · Mastery & Practice

A few more from Mastery & Practice



Hard-won, quietly.

“Today is victory over yourself of yesterday; tomorrow is your victory over lesser men.”

— Miyamoto Musashi

“I follow boxing, I've looked at all these women through time and I don't think there's a woman who can match me. Out of all the great women out there, I don't think any could match me.”

— Claressa Shields

“It's what life has to be if you're going to survive, because if you don't forgive nobody, you're going to be a mad person.”

— Evander Holyfield

THEME 6 OF 7

Rivalry & Respect

The opponent as mirror — and the embrace at the final bell that makes it sport.



For twelve rounds they are enemies; at the bell they are the only two people who know what it cost.

Rivalry & Respect — in the game, in life

No sport asks more of its rivals, and none honours them more strangely. Two people spend months preparing to defeat each other, then meet in the most intense contest sport allows — and when the final bell rings, something happens that first-time watchers never expect: they embrace. Not politely — fiercely, foreheads together, words no microphone catches. It is one of the most moving sights in all of sport, and it is no accident. The martial arts build respect into their very grammar: judoka bow before they grip; fighters touch gloves before the first punch. The bow and the touch say the same thing — I take you seriously, and this contest will be honest. Fighters understand what the rest of us learn slowly: that an opponent is not an enemy but a mirror, the one person who will show you exactly what you are, with a candour no friend could afford. Great rivals raise each other; the fight game's most storied names come in pairs, and the members of those pairs, in old age, speak of each other with something close to love. They know a rival is the co-author of their best self — that without that particular someone, the extra rounds would never have been run. Life will give you rivals too, though we are usually too polite to use the word: the colleague whose brilliance needles you, the peer whose progress you check at midnight. Use them the fighter's way. Envy studies a rival's victories; wisdom studies their preparation. Let the contest be total and the respect be real — the two are not opposites but partners. And when your final bell rings, cross the ring, and mean the embrace.

“Before and after practicing judo or engaging in a match, opponents bow to each other. Bowing is an expression of gratitude and respect. In effect, you are thanking your opponent for giving you the opportunity to improve your technique.”

— Jigoro Kano

Rivalry & Respect

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Surprise, surprise. The king is back. If you want this trilogy, it's on my terms.”

— *Conor McGregor*

“I wish I was 50 years younger and I would kick your a**.”

— *Larry Merchant*

“It cost me a lot of grief but I'm glad it happened because it gave me an opportunity to talk about what forgiveness is.”

— *Evander Holyfield*

“We're all fighters but not all of us are martial artists, and she's definitely a true martial artist.”

— *Rose Namajunas*

“They were fighting for the heavyweight championship of each other.”

— *Jerry Izenberg*

“To be the best in the world, you have to beat them all anyway.”

— *Ronda Rousey*

“Make adjustments according to your opponent.”

— *Gichin Funakoshi*

“He can run, but he can't hide.”

— *Joe Louis*

Rivalry & Respect

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Me and this guy both come from basically the sewer. We watched each other grow to become established and esteemed fighters. I just want you to know it's been a pleasure passing through life being acquainted with you.”

— Mike Tyson

“There are no contests in the Art of Peace. A true warrior is invincible because he or she contests with nothing.”

— Morihei Ueshiba

“When did I think I could beat him? About 10 minutes ago. I kept saying, 'I think I can. I think I can.' But it wasn't until it was over that I knew I could.”

— Rulon Gardner

“Cris is a great fighter — nothing but respect. It was an awesome opportunity to share the octagon with her. I'm very thankful to her for this.”

— Amanda Nunes

“I'd like to take this chance to apologize... to absolutely nobody! The double champ does what he wants.”

— Conor McGregor

“Why waltz with a guy for ten rounds if you can knock him out in one?”

— Rocky Marciano

“Man, I hit him with punches that'd bring down the walls of a city. Lawdy, lawdy, he's a great champion.”

— Joe Frazier

“In a way, Joe's right. I said a lot of things in the heat of the moment that I shouldn't have said. I apologize for that. I'm sorry.”

— Muhammad Ali

Rivalry & Respect

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I do not like to seem immodest. But if I am asked, I must be truthful. Yes, I see fear in the eyes of most of my opponents."

— Aleksandr Karelin

"I can't tell you how sorry I am."

— Chris Eubank Sr

"You won't be forgiven unless you forgive. I realized that I needed to be forgiven."

— Evander Holyfield

"Send me location."

— Khabib Nurmagomedov

"The biggest night of my career for sure. People will absolutely be talking about myself and Amanda Serrano for years and years to come."

— Katie Taylor

"It was a great fight tonight, worthy of the best of trilogies."

— Tyson Fury

"He could have whopped any fighter in the world, except me. He is great — greater than I thought. He is one hell of a fighter and it was one hell of a fight."

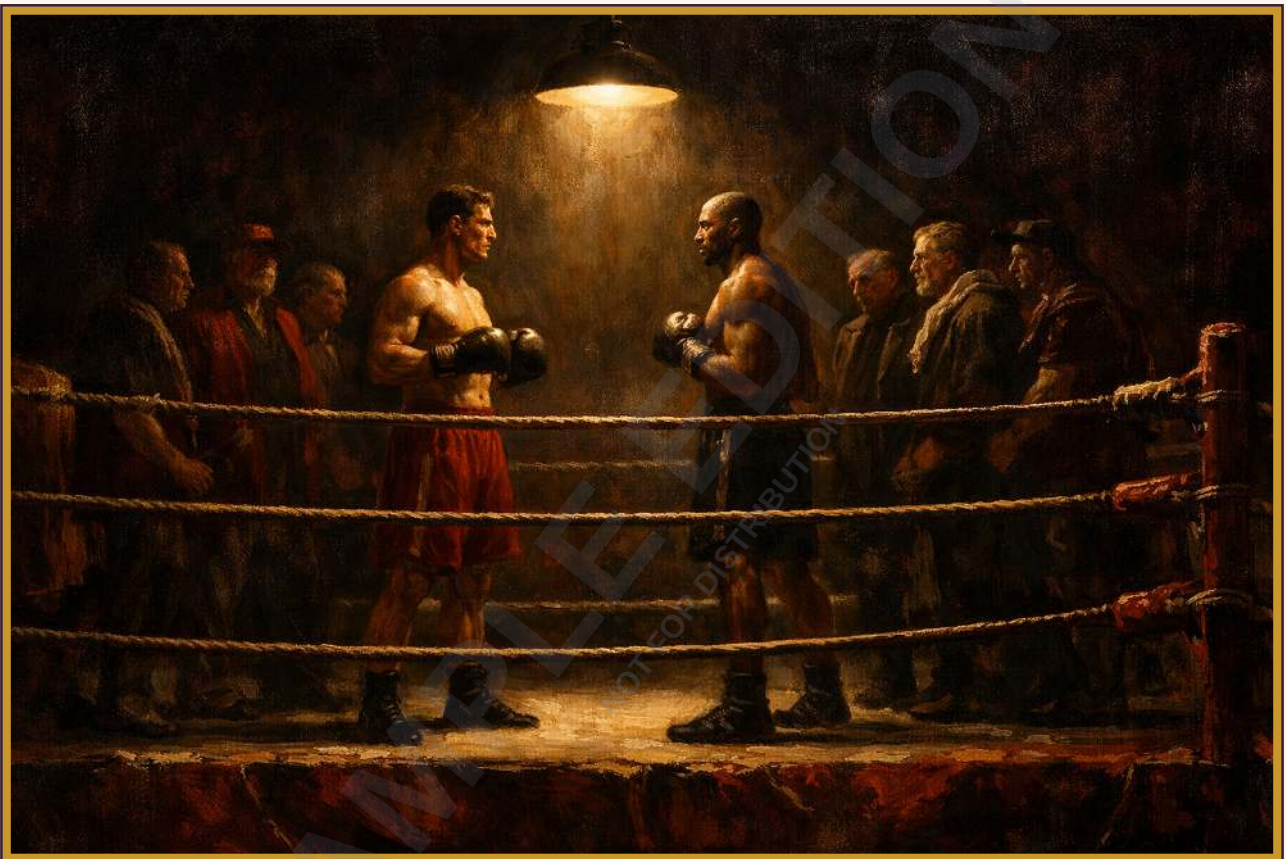
— Muhammad Ali

"To know oneself is to study oneself in action with another person."

— Bruce Lee

THE FIGHT NIGHT SUPPORTERS' CIRCLE

More from Rivalry & Respect



Opponents, not enemies.

“Thank you so much, Justin. I know you are a great man. I know how you take care of your people.”

— **Khabib Nurmagomedov**

A few more from Rivalry & Respect



Respect, earned the hard way.

“Ali, Frazier and Foreman, we were one guy. A part of me slipped away, the greatest piece.”

— George Foreman

“The boxer meets an opponent who is a dream-distortion of himself in the sense that his weaknesses, his capacity to fail and to be seriously hurt, his intellectual miscalculations—all can be interpreted as strengths belonging to the Other.”

— Joyce Carol Oates

“I’ll accept it, shake his hand and hug him when I see him. Life’s too short.”

— Joe Frazier

THEME 7 OF 7

Watching & Belonging

Fight nights, gym families and shared vigils — why we gather to watch, and stay.



The fight lasts half an hour; the room that watched it together remembers it for thirty years.

Watching & Belonging — in the game, in life

Fight night is watched differently from any other sport. It gathers people at strange hours — the big bouts arrive after midnight in half the world — and it gathers them close: a living room full of friends who have stayed up together, a gym that opened its doors and dragged chairs in front of a screen, a hall where the whole neighbourhood seems to hold one breath. However big the event, watching the fights remains an intimate act, because everyone in the room knows what the two people in the ring are risking, and the knowledge makes the watching solemn and electric at once. Fight crowds have their own liturgy: the collective gasp, the surge to standing that nobody decides and everybody joins, the sudden hush when a fighter is hurt — a silence that is pure respect — and the roar when they rise. Around the watching stands the gym community, one of sport's best-kept secrets: a place where teenagers and grandmothers, doctors and doormen skip rope side by side, where the fight game quietly does its oldest work of giving structure, belonging and an honest mirror to anyone who walks in. Fans of this game pass their devotion down like an heirloom — the classic bouts shown to a child like family photographs, the same stories retold until they become inheritance. It is a masterclass in something the modern world keeps forgetting: caring together, in one room, at full attention. So find your fight night, in sport and beyond it — the gathered friends, the shared vigil, the thing you stay up late for in company. The screen matters less than the room. Belonging is mostly a practice of showing up, and the feeling follows the faithfulness.

“I always envisioned hearing them say, 'and new' and wrapping that belt around me and thinking of all the things I was fighting for. Not just for me and my family and not just the continent, but for everyone around the world that comes from humble beginnings and doesn't know where their next meal is going to come from.”

— Kamaru Usman

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“When you drop a pebble into a pool of water, the pebble starts a series of ripples that expand until they encompass the whole pool.”

— Bruce Lee

“A clean, hard-fought wrestling match is the most honest of athletic contests. There is no technological interventions, no teammates to blame, no panel of judges to bias the score. In wrestling, you compete or you quit. No alibis.”

— Dan Gable

“Boxing is a mug's game.”

— Chris Eubank Sr

“As boxing states, you leave your ego at the door and respect your opponent, so a massive shout-out to Wladimir Klitschko for taking part.”

— Anthony Joshua

“A lot of people will be coming to see boxing for the first time, so it would be good if I could show them how great boxing is.”

— Naoya Inoue

“I have no difficulty justifying boxing as a sport because I have never thought of it as a sport.”

— Joyce Carol Oates

“The Sweet Science is joined onto the past like a man's arm to his shoulder.”

— A.J. Liebling

“When Ali appeared, it was the greatest collective gasp any of us had ever heard.”

— Dick Ebersol

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Under the sky, under the heavens, man, there is but one family.”

— Bruce Lee

“I wouldn't choose sides. People appreciated that.”

— Barry McGuigan

“Joe Louis is a credit to his race — the human race.”

— Jimmy Cannon

“Boxing is the only sport you can get your brain shook, your money took and your name in the undertaker book.”

— Joe Frazier

“Here is this country that has been so instrumental to the culture and sport of wrestling. They are the greatest fans in the world.”

— Jordan Burroughs

“You can't be what you can't see. If people can see me doing it, then maybe they'll believe they can too.”

— Ramlā Ali

“I wanted to establish a relationship between American blacks and Africans. The fight was about racial problems, Vietnam.”

— Muhammad Ali

“I devote this victory to my country, to my family, to my team, to all the military defending this country.”

— Oleksandr Usyk

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“It is an honor to represent my country on these dates. It is an honor for me to honor Mexico wherever I stand.”

— Saúl “Canelo” Álvarez

“The damp air on this dawn is full of the n'golo of the living and the thirst of the dead.”

— Norman Mailer

“My thought was always to make sure the fans got their money's worth when they saw me fight. I never wanted anybody to say Tommy Hearn gave a bad show.”

— Thomas Hearn

“Watching a fight on television has always seemed to me a poor substitute for being there.”

— A.J. Liebling

“You feel lovable to all the people. And you want to reach out and kiss everybody—men and women—and after the Liston fight somebody told me I actually blew a kiss to the crowd from the ring.”

— Floyd Patterson

“A lot of people will pay to see someone shut your mouth. So keep on bragging, keep on sassing and always be outrageous.”

— Gorgeous George

“What is one million dollars compared to the love of eight million Cubans?”

— Teófilo Stevenson

“He kept his hands in his pockets the way a hunter lays his rifle back into its velvet case.”

— Norman Mailer

THE FIGHT NIGHT SUPPORTERS' CIRCLE

More from Watching & Belonging



Belonging, in the stands.

“Let's get ready to rumble!”

— Michael Buffer

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A few more from Watching & Belonging



The people who turn up.

“Women can sell, women can fight and we put on a hell of a show.”

— Amanda Serrano

“I saw 15,000 people comin' to see this man get beat. And his talking did it.”

— Muhammad Ali

“At its moments of greatest intensity it seems to contain so complete and powerful an image of life—life's beauty, vulnerability, despair, incalculable and often self-destructive courage—that boxing is life, and hardly a mere game.”

— Joyce Carol Oates

This copy belongs to: Sample Reader

The Fight Night Supporters' Circle · Watching & Belonging

About The Fight Night Supporters' Circle

The Fight Night Supporters' Circle is a demonstration client, invented to show how a branded edition looks and reads. In a real edition this page carries your own history, your own words, and the details your people would want to keep.

Website: sportsmart4life.co.za

After the final whistle



Until the next one.

Between the Whistles

The final bell is only ever half true. Somewhere a rope is already turning — a gym opening early, a session ending late, a beginner learning to wrap their hands for the first time. May the voices in this collection walk with you between the rounds of your own life.

SportSmart4Life is the intelligent spectator's toolkit — learn the games you love, watch them smarter, and let the wisdom of sport walk into your life. Explore the sports, SpectatorIQ and the Voices of the Game at sportsmart4life.co.za.

Go Deeper with SportSmart

This collection began as a way of watching. If the voices in these pages made you want to watch with sharper eyes — and let more of the game walk into your life — here is where the journey continues.

- **The Fight Sports Spectator Module**

eight tools that teach you the game itself — read the play, know the laws, follow the season's plots, and grow your Fan IQ match by match.

sportsmart4life.co.za

- **SportSmart4Life Membership**

the intelligent spectator's home — modules across 80+ sports, one member dashboard, and wisdom tools that turn watching into wellbeing.

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- **SpectatorIQ — the Quiz Show**

test your sports brain in our quiz show — ladders, live rounds and power-ups across every sport we cover.

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- **Voices of the Game**

the living library behind this book - thousands of verified voices to explore, sport by sport and theme by theme.

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Every quotation in this collection is real, verified and honestly attributed — that is the Voices of the Game promise.