

The G.O.A.T. Returns

This past summer, I caught Olympics fever. I waited with great anticipation for Simone Biles' return to her Olympic queendom. During the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Biles, the most decorated gymnast of all time, withdrew from several Olympic gymnastics events after experiencing the "twisties." As spectators, we watched as she did not stick her landing, and noticed that she also appeared disoriented and unsteady.

It turns out that the twisties are a frightening and dangerous predicament for a gymnast. The Cleveland Clinic describes the twisties as "a mental block that creates a dangerous disconnect between mind and body while gymnasts are airborne." Suddenly, while airborne, there's a disconnect in the feedback loop, the gymnast loses the mind-body connection, such that they cannot discern where their body is. Biles said she was "fighting demons" and trying to push past the experience on her own. It took her about 18 months to return to a more normal consistent practice and ultimately focus on the 2024 Olympics.

Finally, she began her redemption tour. After qualifying at the World Championships, Biles was set to compete at the Paris Olympics. She was back! She performed in true G.O.A.T. (greatest of all time) form. Possibly the greatest vaulter ever, she successfully executed the finals, earned the highest score and won the gold medal. In true Biles' style, she won a total of three golds. Even with a calf injury and a stumble, she still earned a silver medal in the women's floor event.

My takeaway: We may not successfully execute and stick our landing with everything we intend to accomplish. It may even appear that we have forfeited our heart's desire. However, if we are blessed to wake up the next day, we have another opportunity to realize our dreams.

I find Biles' joy, perseverance and commitment to untangle her twisties infectious. I watched with glee as she executed the seemingly impossible and demonstrated her mental equivalent. This year, as she flew, flipped and spun — sticking her landing — I noted the powerful combination of clear intention, infinite possibility and personal responsibility required in seeking and realizing our greatest yet to be. ✨



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