

## **DON'T DUMB IT DOWN**

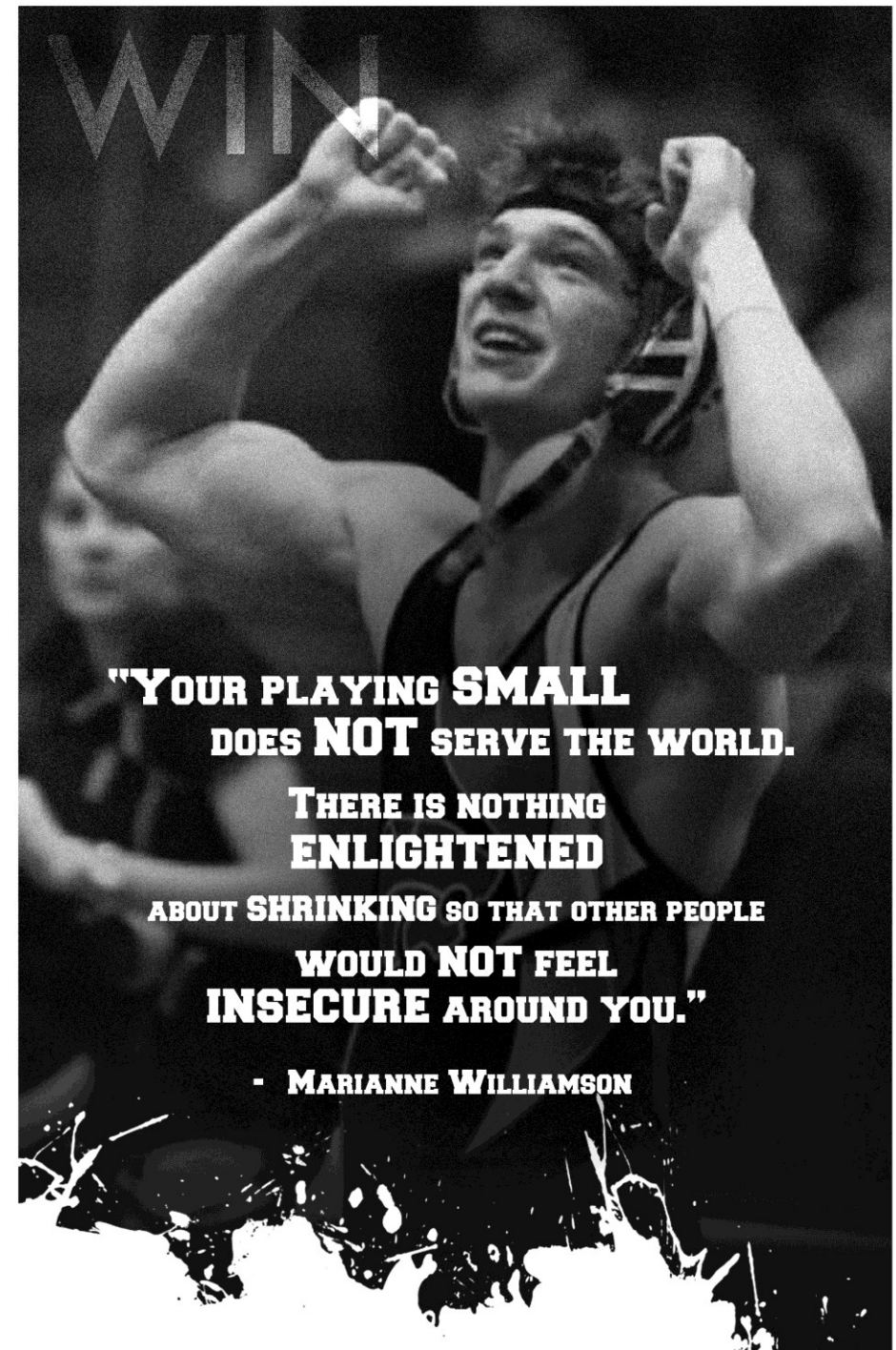
It is hard to be around cocky people – especially those who think they are all that. They brag about their possessions and exaggerate stories of their accomplishments. The folks around them just roll their eyes, wishing they could plug their ears. Nobody wants to be around people like that.

The other side of that is those kids who downplay their accomplishments. They intentionally hide their gifts so others won't feel bad. They pretend not to be gifted or skilled. They don't want to be perceived as "different." They go out of their way to hide the things that make them special.

They will dumb down who they are, including their academic and athletic success in order to make others around them feel more comfortable. Just like bragging is unhealthy, so is dumbing down who you are. This behavior is not helping anyone!

Show the world the real you, and share your unique abilities or accomplishments. You owe it to yourself, as well as the rest of the world, to share your complete self.

**Be yourself, and reveal to all just how great you are!.**



## ONE OF A KIND

I was looking at my hands one day and something caught my attention. I noticed the swirls of skin on my fingertips. On just a small area, these swirls create a design that we call a fingerprint.

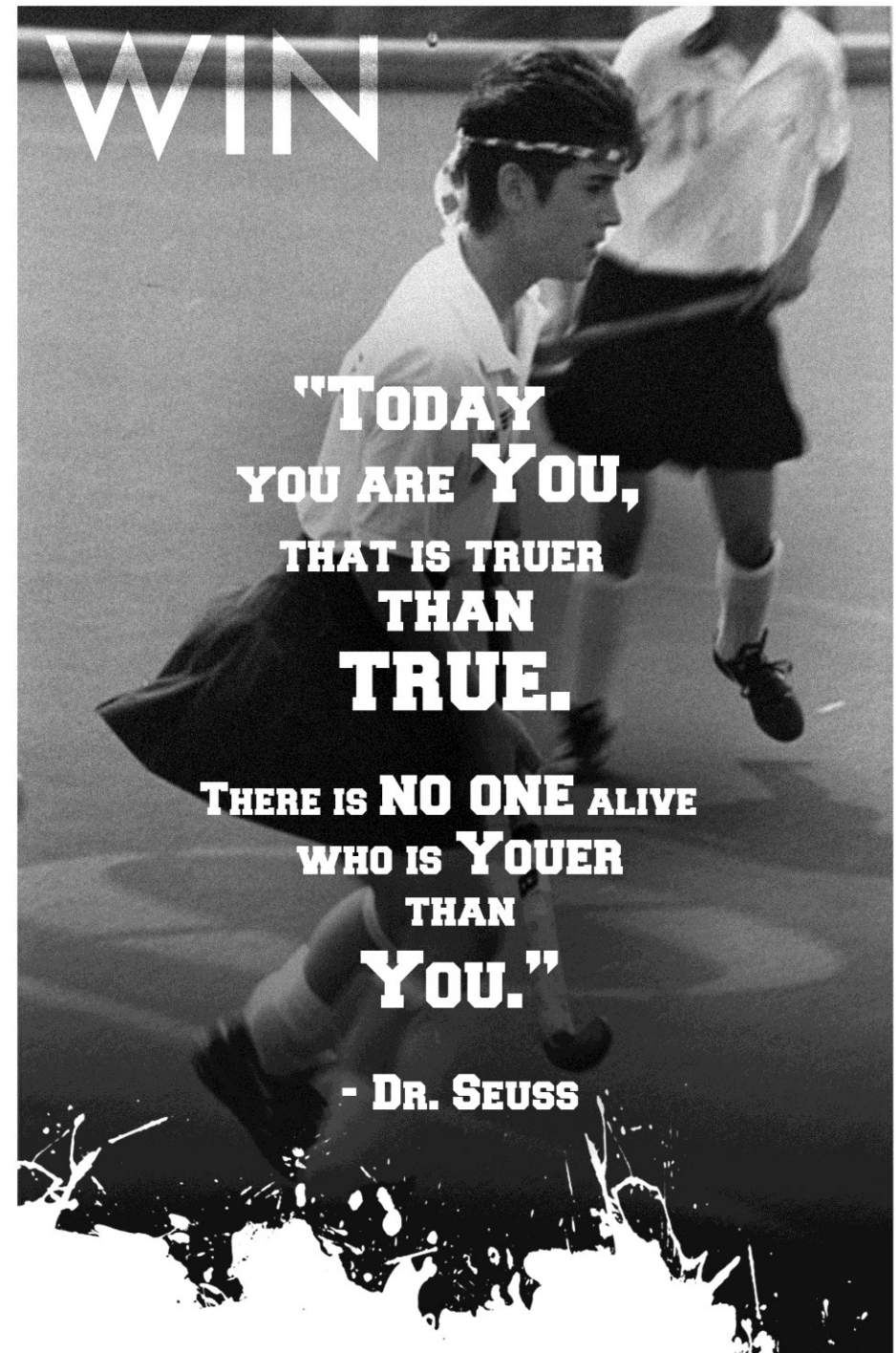
The amazing thing is that each of my fingers has a design that is unlike anyone else's design. Of the nearly 7 billion people that share the Earth with me, no one has a fingerprint like mine!

My fingerprint is completely unique. It may seem like no big deal at first glance, but having my own, unique fingerprint is really something special. It means that I am an original. There is no one in the world exactly like me. To have that much creativity invested in ME, I must be special.

That is important to remember, because we all have days when we don't feel special at all. We may be tempted to compare ourselves with other students, athletes, or even celebrities. This can lead to us feeling inferior or uninteresting.

When this happens, take a look at your fingerprints. They will remind you of just how unique and special you really are.

**Feel great about who you are. You are one of a kind!**



# **YOU CAN'T WIN 'EM ALL**

Very few teams go undefeated for an entire season. In professional sports, the teams that win the championship almost always have suffered a loss at some point throughout the season. So, even the best teams have bad days and lose.

I don't like losing. I never did. My dad told me that I came home from school one day in the first grade crying and upset because my teacher beat me two games to one in checkers. It may be OK for a first-grader to throw a tantrum because they lost, but that same behavior is not acceptable for someone your age!

This may sound strange, but I have come to appreciate the value of losing. There are critical lessons to be learned when you lose. In fact, I grew as an athlete more from watching my mistakes on film than I did admiring the things I did well.

When you don't do well on an assignment or test, you now have any opportunity to go back, learn what you need to learn, and try it again.

Make sure that you don't fall into the trap of blaming others, like your coaches, teammates, and officials, when you lose. When you don't take responsibility for your actions during a loss, you can't learn and grow from the experience.

**Every loss/failure carries with in the seed of improvement.**

