

---

# IDEALS

---

*“I must uphold my ideals, for perhaps the time will come when I shall be able to carry them out.”*

~ **Anne Frank**

*“A belief is something you will argue about. A conviction is something you will die for.”*

~ **Howard Hendricks**

*“Conviction is not merely an opinion. It is something rooted so deeply in the conscience that to change a conviction would be to change the very essence of who you are.”*

~ **Ravi Zacharias**

*“Hearts are the strongest when they beat in response to noble ideals.”*

~ **Ralph Bunche**

*“Tomorrow will be better as long as America keeps alive the ideals of freedom and a better life.”*

~ **Walt Disney**

Former NFL player Pat Tillman once said, “Passion is what makes life interesting, what ignites our soul, fuels our love, carries our friendships, stimulates our intellect, and pushes our limits... A passion for life is contagious and uplifting. Passion cuts both ways... Those that make you feel on top of the world are equally able to turn it upside down... In my life I want to create passion in my own life and with those I care for. I want to feel, experience and live every emotion. I will suffer through the bad for the heights

of the good.”<sup>1</sup>

In order to be passionate about something, we must have a strong understanding of our ideals and convictions. We must know what is important to us and why it is important to us. Many of us have opinions, but oftentimes these can fluctuate. If we are to be truly committed to something, we must have a purpose. This purpose comes from our ideals.

Pat Tillman experienced a great deal of success as a football player. He helped his high school team win the Central Coast Division 1 Football Championship. He helped his Arizona State University Sun Devils make it to the 1997 Rose Bowl game, while earning Pac-10 Defensive Player of the Year and team MVP honors. Not only did he excel as an athlete but as a student he won the Clyde B. Smith Academic Award in 1996 and 1997. He also won the Honda Scholar-Athlete in 1997 and the Sun Angel Student Athlete of the year in 1998.

After his successful college career (which eventually earned him induction into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2010), Tillman was drafted by the Arizona Cardinals. He would start 10 games during his rookie year. In 2000, Sports Illustrated would name him to their All-Pro First-Team as a safety.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Tillman felt convicted to help in whatever way he could. At the conclusion of the 2001 season he turned down a lucrative contract extension and instead enlisted in the Army with his younger brother, Kevin. “Somewhere inside, we hear a voice”, said Tillman. “It leads us in the direction of the person we wish to

become. But it is up to us whether or not to follow.”<sup>2</sup>

Tillman knew what he had to do and made a hard decision to forgo millions of dollars and fame in football to fight to defend what he believed in. Many people hear a voice inside of them, but few are courageous enough like Tillman to follow their beliefs to the end.

Pat Tillman lived his life based on what he believed in. He was not afraid of the consequences of following his beliefs. Rather, he was bold in pursuing what he deemed true, what his principles were, and what he was passionate about.

Unfortunately, Pat Tillman passed away in the line of duty on April 22, 2004. His death was mourned around the nation. After his death he was awarded a Purple Heart and Silver Star medals from the military. The ASU Sun Devils and Arizona Cardinals retired his number in honor of him. When someone stands up and is courageous for his convictions it does not go unnoticed.

Tillman’s passion for life and for what he believed in was directly translated into action. He did not sit around and dream of a better life or a better country; he worked for it, he sacrificed for it, and he even died for it.

To have the strength of ideals. To have a true passion for something that you are willing to sacrifice something for is the truest form of commitment. Do we have ideals that we are truly committed to or merely opinions that come and go?