

Every four years it is the same. I try my best to keep disinterested but without realising it words like pike and tuck are joined by more unusual ones: salto, tsukahara, keirin, omnium etc.

I join with other armchair observers in giving quality decisions on diving, cycling and athletic technique. The Olympics and their television coverage turn me into an ignorant expert, inhabiting two conflicting worlds.

The first is being totally and utterly in awe of the Olympians and their skills and talents. I enjoy marvelling at the beauty of men and women at the peak of their professional abilities demonstrating their near super-human abilities.

The second is less noble, forgetting that they are way beyond my pathetic abilities and shouting at the television on minor points of technique, about which I truly have no knowledge or understanding. On the basis of the commentator's insights I find myself commenting on how they could be faster, sleeker and gain crucial advantages.

Somehow I forget that if I am feeling tired watching Andy Murray in the middle of the night, he must be exhausted running around in the heat of Brazil for 4 hours after playing so many other matches and practising beyond the point of it hurting.

Jesus gave a short but powerful parable warning us not to seek to remove a speck of sawdust out of someone's eye without first taking the plank out of our own. (Matthew 7:1-5) It reminds us that it is easy to become fixed on minor failings of others, whilst unobservant of the obvious problems for ourselves.

I am in no respects at all an athlete and the nearest I got to sporting glory was school and college teams. I am in no position to comment on the Olympians' performances except to be in awe of their abilities and achievements. The fact that I do proves I need to work on that plank in my eye a bit more!

On the more everyday level I need to this as well. I often comment on other drivers on the motorway, or the service I have received on the telephone, or whether or not a household chore has been done. (This might be done in the silence of my mind, but still the armchair critic voices its opinion.)

I forget that others can rightly comment with more justification on my shortcomings whether driving, at work, or domestically. I need to work on my major failings before being drawn into noticing the lesser problems with others, by doing so the world and my life would become better.

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