

Simplicity

By Jenny Hayes, Okehampton Quaker Meeting

So many people have greatly enjoyed the Olympic Games and now the wonderful Paralympics. The thing that I admire most about the athletes is their ability to keep focused on their task despite the enormous pressure of the occasion.

Single-mindedness is a quality anyone can develop, helping us to be fully present to whatever we are doing. Whether carrying out simple daily tasks or engaging and relaxing with friends or dealing with a more complex and demanding situation.

A Quaker book entitled 'Answering That of God: Discovering Spirit Within' by Peter Parr, contains these wise words which recognise the value of being truly present.

'Busyness and a focus on material things can mean we lose sight of that of God within us... there are inward distractions to be aware of: mental clutter which drowns out the still small voice, guilt over past actions, anxieties about the future and judgements about other people..... Simplicity is about stripping away what isn't essential to make room for what is.....allowing our true nature to shine through.'

This definition of simplicity requires a discipline based on a real intention to loosen the tangle of thoughts and preoccupations we easily get tied up with; by noticing them and choosing to let them go.

We may not all be talented athletes but we all have a unique part to play in this world. I think that developing our capacity for simplicity is a clue to what it means to love and live with **all** our heart and soul and mind.

Okehampton Times, 6 September 2012

Jenny Hayes