

The Wrong Stuff

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Thursday, 12 July 2007
Last Updated Sunday, 15 July 2007

One of the hopefully unintended consequences of the whole sports industry - from physical education and soccer camp to Sports Networks to shoe commercials - is the message that we have the wrong stuff. We have the wrong kinds of bodies, the wrong kind of equipment, the wrong kinds of clothes. In sum, what we have and who we are isn't good enough.

In a way it's a valuable message - one that challenges us to improve ourselves, physically and materially. And for those of us who are motivated by that challenge, it proves to be a remarkably successful path to self improvement.

Unfortunately, those people are in the minority.

For the vast majority of us, the message is: you're not good enough. You don't have the right stuff. You're not made of the right stuff. And you never will be.

And for these people, the only path is consumption. Watch others play sports, eat granola bars and trail mix, drink sports drinks from sports bottles, wear athletic socks and shoes and t-shirts, eat vitamins and subscribe to health publications. Junkyard Sports, Junk Art, Junk Music - these are celebrations of the wrong stuff - of all the fun we can have, the art we can create, the joy we can share with the wrong stuff. With the stuff that is thrown out, rejected. With torn socks and pantyhose and plastic shopping bags, water bottles and newspaper and bubblewrap, we can make games of deep and lasting fun, we can make art that makes us laugh, music that makes us dance. We can play we can dance, we can create, all of us together, fat and skinny, English and Hispanic, seniors and juniors, able and labeled.

With the wrong stuff.

And the right mind.

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