

Outstanding vs. Valuable

Earvin “Magic” Johnson won the National Basketball Association’s Most Valuable Player award three times – in 1987, 1989 and 1990. Michael “Air” Jordan, whose biography on the official NBA website states, “By acclamation, Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player of all time,” won the MVP honor five times: 1988, 1991, 1992, 1996 and 1998.

In most years, the MVP winners have been such standout players that nobody could disagree with the final selection – guys like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Wilt Chamberlain and Larry Bird deserved it and won it, hands down.

But one year, it was so incredibly close between Johnson and Jordan that the final tally resulted in Johnson winning it by the narrowest of margins. The choice boiled down to an understanding of the definition of *valuable* as opposed to the definition of *outstanding*. As one sportswriter correctly stated, few people would disagree that Jordan was the single-most “outstanding” player that year.

In spite of that, however, Jordan was not voted MVP. Why? Because the award is reserved for the man who exemplifies the best all-around qualities of a basketball player. The MVP honor not only takes into consideration of superb individual performance, but also the ability to inspire and involve one’s teammates, encouraging and enabling them to excel. And when that dimension was added, there was no question that Magic was more deserving at that time.

Most outstanding? That would have been Jordan. But most valuable? That was Magic.

It occurs to me that in our ranks in Life Care and Century Park there are some “superstars” – extremely capable women and men who have been appointed and anointed by God to occupy significant roles of responsibility. As significant as these outstanding folks may be, the greater award goes to the most valuable – those individuals who may not be as impressive or as popular or even as capable on their own, but who can inspire and involve others on the team. Whenever they are engaged in the action, good things happen.

(more)



What are the qualities needed to be valuable? Here are some suggestions:

- Initiative – being a self-starter with contagious energy.
- Vision – seeing beyond the obvious, claiming new objectives.
- Unselfishness – releasing the controls and the glory.
- Teamwork – involving, encouraging and supporting others.
- Faithfulness – hanging in there in season and out.
- Enthusiasm – providing affirmation, bringing excitement to a task.
- Discipline – modeling great character, regardless of the odds.
- Confidence – representing security, faith and determination.



Are you ready for a challenge? Stop worrying about being more outstanding as an individual and start focusing on being more valuable as a team player. It's not nearly as much pressure, and it's a lot more fun.

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another (Proverbs 27:17 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter