

1 February 2023

Learn from Lionel Messi

Today I'm going to talk about one of the greatest footballers of all time. He's from Argentina. Yes, it's **Lionel Messi**. Everyone knows him, as he just won the World Cup on Dec. 18, 2022, at the age of 35.

I think everyone would agree that the final match of this year's World Cup was a super wonderful match, with so many unexpected turns. Thanks to the contributions of Angel Di Maria and Messi, Argentina was leading 2-0 against France, the world champion team, through the first 79 minutes of the 90 minute match. However, Mbappé, the French superstar, closed the gap with 2 shots in just a few minutes, extending the match for another 30 minutes.

In extra time, Messi contributed a goal, leading Argentina closer to the championship. However, once again Mbappé played the role of saviour by contributing a penalty kick, sending the game into penalty shots.

Finally, with the super performance of the goalkeeper Martínez and the penalty shooters, Argentina won the World Cup with 4 penalty shots to 2. It was really a sensational and touching moment for Messi and his team when he raised the World Cup on the podium.

We know that it was the first time for Messi to win the FIFA Cup, an achievement which he has longed for 16 years. It is no exaggeration to say that he is a great dream seeker. Argentina hadn't won the World Cup since 1986. From 2006, Messi started to play for the national team and, all together, he participated in 5 World Cups, ending in 2022. He has been waiting for the Cup for 16 years. Yes, 16 years isn't a short period. Over such a long time, there must have been numerous hopes and frustrations. There must have been lots of hard times. But eventually, with his perseverance and a strong desire to win the trophy for himself and his teammates, Messi made his dream come true.

Actually, his dream began when he first touched a football at the age of four. He loved it deeply. However, he had a problem. When he was young, he was diagnosed with a rare disease called Growth Hormone Deficiency (GHD), which stopped him from growing tall. The disease almost ruined his football career. He had to get injection in both of his feet every night, day by day and year by year, for a total of 3 years. His family and his football club couldn't support the medical expenses, so his family eventually moved to Spain, where Messi managed to join the Barcelona youth team, and the club was willing to pay for Messi's medical expenses.

His perseverance was perhaps inherited from his grandmother, whom Messi highly respected. As Messi was short when he was young, the coach ignored him and did not send him to the game. Seeing that her grandson was so talented, she argued with the coach and insisted that the coach should give Messi a chance. The coach backed down. He sent Messi into a match and Messi scored two goals. He was valued from then onwards.

Boys and girls, you may tell me that you are not Messi and we won't be successful as he is. I understand. But we can still learn from him in our own capacity. What is your dream? How much have you done to pursue your dream? What are your limitations? Can you overcome them? Will you be hardworking and persevering like Messi in order to be closer to your dream? With sufficient effort and perseverance, and with God's grace, perhaps your dream will come true one day. So please keep going!

That's the end of my sharing today. Thank you!