

# Introduction

ARCHERY IS A VERY honest sport. Other sports have luck as the deciding factor between winners and losers. When luck is involved, reflecting on winning and losing is impossible because the pure moment is always cloudy. With archery, this is not the case. Whatever you do, you will see the answer on the target. It is this honesty, this transparency, which makes archery one of the last remaining pure sports. Yes, a judge can make a difference, but an archer's fate is always his own doing. In the end, that is what drew me to archery the most.

I first started shooting when I was fifteen or sixteen, at the beginning of high school. The funny thing is that I hated sports and I hated competing, and so the reason why I chose archery is I did not believe it was a sport. To me, it was more like a martial art. In time, I grew to enjoy competition, but I did not start archery as a sport. It was training for me, by myself, for my life.

My first exposure to archery was as a little boy, not yet ten years old. My father was very involved in shooting the Korean traditional bow, and I followed him several times to the range to watch his practice. I stayed beside him, listened to what he had to say, and just allowed archery to go on around me. I knew archery was more than a sport—it was an art, a martial art. That was a very big influence for me.

So when I first shot a bow and arrow, I was at high school. I had watched a practice a few days earlier and my teacher noticed that my eyes danced with the flying arrows. He asked me to try it, and straight away I wanted to do it because I knew it was what I liked. For me, archery does not have too much competition. In other sports, I see too much competitiveness. It makes some people barely human—not right—and certainly not whole. These people compete with each other too much, attacking those around them, and the only reason: winning. However, in archery, winning is different. Competition is different. This point is always there in my mind. One does not learn this just from doing archery. Even before I tried it, I knew it was an art from watching my father. When I became a



Photo by Di Zinno

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coach, because I could help people, I saw how this art could truly change people's lives. This change happens not only because this sport is very difficult, especially to maintain performance every day, it happens because this sport predisposes one to being patient.

I would not say I am a patient man, but I am always learning from my archery career. I felt like I learned a lot when I was an archer, but I would say I have learned 100 times more from coaching. To me, coaching is a very patient job. When I shot, I only had to deal with myself, with my emotions, my control. But when you are coaching, you need to deal with every person, with everyone's level of patience, and with all of their differences. To me, archery is a great sport because you can learn that kind of patience, either as a coach or as an archer.

I would not have always described archery as being a sport of honesty. But after I became a coach and I saw my archers fighting their battles, then I could see it. I could see through their lies to themselves, and slowly, I could see how those old ideas melted away as they became more honest inside their hearts. This is one of my happiest memories because I could see how archery was changing them. Even though I was not telling them to change their hearts, they learned themselves—from archery! Now, whenever people learn this kind of lesson, they become a better person, a better shooter, and a better competitor. This is the greatest prize for me, to see people growing in this way.

*Inside the Archer* is a special book that is the continuation of my desire to spread archery throughout the world: to witness how archery changes lives. It builds on the principles originally set in *Total Archery*, and is the second in a trilogy of books that encompasses theory, technique, and coaching. No one book tells the whole story—*Inside the Archer* builds off of *Total Archery*, just like my future book on coaching will, too. I have been very happy to work with Tyler Benner on this book because I do not think anyone else in the world could have written as he has. He trained under me for over two years at the USA Olympic Training Center and not a day went by that he was not asking questions, writing notes, and studying video. He continually found new words and explanations that have refined my message and teachings. We will all become better archers because of Tyler's ability to find the true essence of technique and convey its spirit through words.

You still might be wondering what honesty in archery is. To this, I can only say that being honest means: you are honest—honest with your performance as the archer, the artist, and not with where your arrows hit on the target. I always tell my archers, "Throw one arrow! Throw it away! Just miss the target! One arrow, try to miss the target!" Because if that is what it takes, for my archer to aim away from his fear and shoot an arrow into the grass for the freedom of shooting one beautiful arrow, without caring where it goes, then that is what he must do. The arrow is not lying. The arrow never lies to you! Whatever you do, the arrow is the answer. But people will not accept that. They just say, "I am doing everything, I am shooting correctly, but the bow and the equipment is not right." These people blame everything but themselves, but that is not the way of archery!

This is why archery is a sport of honesty. Whatever you do, the arrow is the answer. If you shoot well, the arrows will group. If you do not shoot well, the arrows will not group. It is not equipment, not anything—just you. As long as you know this truth, you can be a great champion.

