## gale sayers i am third

Gale Sayers I Am Third: The Story Behind a Timeless Message

gale sayers i am third is more than just a phrase; it represents a powerful philosophy and a remarkable story that has inspired countless people around the world. This phrase is closely tied to Gale Sayers, an NFL legend, whose life and career embodied humility, faith, and service. Understanding the meaning behind "I Am Third" reveals a unique perspective on life that goes beyond football, touching on personal values, teamwork, and the importance of putting others before oneself.

## The Origin of "Gale Sayers I Am Third"

The phrase "I Am Third" is famously associated with Gale Sayers, the Hall of Fame running back for the Chicago Bears. However, it wasn't originally coined by him but was popularized through his endorsement and life story. The concept emphasizes that God comes first, others come second, and oneself comes third. This principle guided Sayers throughout his career and personal life, shaping his approach to challenges and success.

## **Gale Sayers' Early Life and Career**

Before diving into the philosophy of "I Am Third," it's important to understand who Gale Sayers was. Born in 1943 in Wichita, Kansas, Sayers quickly rose to fame as one of the most electrifying running backs in NFL history. His agility, speed, and vision on the field earned him the nickname "The Kansas Comet." Despite his impressive stats and records, Sayers remained grounded, attributing his achievements to a higher power and the support of those around him.

#### The Birth of the "I Am Third" Movement

The "I Am Third" message came to broader public attention through a short film and a book that featured Gale Sayers as a central figure. The film, originally made in the 1970s, was a motivational piece that highlighted the importance of faith and humility in sports and life. With Sayers narrating his experiences, the narrative underlined how putting God and others before oneself leads to true fulfillment and success.

## **Understanding the Philosophy Behind "I Am Third"**

At its core, "I Am Third" is about prioritizing values in a way that nurtures character and community. It challenges the common notion of self-first that often dominates competitive environments like professional sports and business.

#### **God First**

The first and foremost priority in "I Am Third" is God or a higher spiritual power. For Gale Sayers, faith was the foundation upon which he built his life. This spiritual perspective provided him with strength during tough times, including career-threatening injuries and personal struggles.

#### **Others Second**

Next in line is the focus on others—family, teammates, friends, and community. Sayers believed that success is not just about individual accomplishments but about how one contributes to the well-being and growth of others. This belief made him not only a great athlete but also a respected leader and role model.

#### **Self Third**

Lastly comes the self. This doesn't mean neglecting personal needs or goals but rather placing one's own ambitions and desires after faith and the needs of others. This mindset encourages humility, selflessness, and a balanced approach to life.

## How "Gale Sayers I Am Third" Influences Leadership and Teamwork

The philosophy behind "I Am Third" is incredibly relevant to leadership and teamwork, especially in high-pressure environments like sports teams or corporate settings.

#### **Building Trust and Respect**

Leaders who adopt the "I Am Third" approach often gain deeper trust and respect from their teams. By putting the team's needs and a greater purpose above personal gain, leaders foster an environment where everyone feels valued and motivated.

## **Encouraging Collaboration**

When individuals prioritize others, collaboration becomes natural. Gale Sayers' career was marked by his ability to work seamlessly with teammates, demonstrating that personal glory is secondary to team success. This attitude helps break down barriers and promotes unity.

## **Maintaining Humility Amid Success**

Success can easily lead to arrogance, but the "I Am Third" mindset helps maintain humility. Gale Sayers' story shows that no matter how talented or famous you become, remembering your place in the bigger picture keeps egos in check and encourages continuous growth.

## Lessons from Gale Sayers' Life That Embody "I Am Third"

Gale Sayers' life was filled with moments that illustrated the power of the "I Am Third" philosophy.

## **Overcoming Adversity**

Sayers faced numerous injuries that threatened to end his career prematurely. Instead of giving up or focusing solely on himself, he leaned on his faith and the support of others. This resilience reflects the core of "I Am Third"—trusting in something greater and valuing community.

## **Giving Back to the Community**

After retiring, Sayers dedicated much of his time to charity work and mentoring young athletes. His commitment to serving others highlights how the message of "I Am Third" extends beyond personal success into lifelong service.

#### **Inspiring Future Generations**

Through his speeches, interviews, and the "I Am Third" film, Gale Sayers inspired countless individuals to embrace humility, faith, and teamwork. His legacy continues to influence athletes, leaders, and everyday people searching for meaning and balance.

## Applying "Gale Sayers I Am Third" in Daily Life

The principles behind "I Am Third" are not limited to professional athletes or public figures; anyone can apply them to enrich their lives.

#### **Developing a Personal Value System**

Start by identifying your core beliefs and priorities. Consider what you place first in your life—whether it's spiritual faith, family, or community. Reflect on how these priorities influence your decisions and

interactions.

## **Practicing Humility and Service**

Incorporate small acts of kindness and selflessness into your routine. Whether it's helping a colleague, volunteering, or simply listening to others, putting others before yourself can create meaningful connections and improve your well-being.

#### **Balancing Ambition with Compassion**

Ambition is important, but balancing it with care for others and a sense of purpose leads to more sustainable success. Like Gale Sayers, strive to achieve your goals while lifting others up along the way.

## Why "Gale Sayers I Am Third" Remains Relevant Today

In an era often characterized by individualism and self-promotion, the "I Am Third" message offers a refreshing reminder of the power of humility and faith. Its timeless nature makes it applicable not only to athletes but also to business leaders, educators, and anyone seeking a meaningful life.

The story of Gale Sayers and the "I Am Third" philosophy continues to resonate because it addresses fundamental human needs: connection, purpose, and integrity. By embracing this mindset, people can navigate challenges with grace and build communities grounded in mutual respect and love.

Exploring the depths of "gale sayers i am third" reveals a philosophy that transcends sports history and inspires a way of living that prioritizes what truly matters. It's a call to live with faith, serve others, and keep oneself in humble perspective—a message that remains powerful and relevant across generations.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

## What is the main theme of Gale Savers' 'I Am Third'?

The main theme of 'I Am Third' is the importance of prioritizing God first, others second, and oneself third, emphasizing humility, faith, and service.

## Who co-authored the book 'I Am Third' with Gale Sayers?

Al Silverman co-authored the book 'I Am Third' with Gale Sayers.

## When was the book 'I Am Third' by Gale Sayers published?

'I Am Third' was published in 1973.

## How did 'I Am Third' influence Gale Sayers' public image?

'I Am Third' helped establish Gale Sayers as not only a talented athlete but also a person of strong character and faith, inspiring many through his humility and perspective on life.

## What life experiences does Gale Sayers discuss in 'I Am Third'?

In 'I Am Third', Gale Sayers discusses his childhood, football career, struggles with injuries, and his spiritual journey, highlighting how faith guided him through challenges.

## Is 'I Am Third' only about football or does it cover other aspects of life?

While 'I Am Third' includes stories about football, it primarily focuses on broader life lessons, spirituality, and personal growth beyond sports.

#### **Additional Resources**

Gale Sayers I Am Third: The Legacy of Humility and Excellence in Football

gale sayers i am third is more than just a phrase; it is a philosophy that embodies the ethos of one of the most remarkable athletes in NFL history. Gale Sayers, a Hall of Fame running back for the Chicago Bears, famously co-authored the book titled "I Am Third," which explores themes of faith, humility, and teamwork. This phrase and the values behind it continue to resonate within sports culture and beyond, offering timeless lessons about placing others before oneself and the true meaning of success.

## The Origin and Meaning of "I Am Third"

The phrase "I Am Third" originated from the book co-written by Gale Sayers and William D. Lyman in 1973. The title itself reflects a unique worldview: "God is first, others are second, and I am third." This hierarchy underscores a commitment to spirituality and selflessness, setting a stark contrast to the often ego-driven world of professional sports. Sayers, who overcame numerous obstacles in his career, including severe injuries, used this message to illustrate that true greatness is anchored not just in talent, but in character.

The book "I Am Third" serves not only as a memoir but also as an inspirational guide, emphasizing teamwork, perseverance, and faith. For Gale Sayers, a player known for his electrifying runs and record-breaking speed, the mantra was a reminder that individual achievements are secondary to collective effort and higher principles.

# Gale Sayers: A Career Defined by Excellence and Adversity

Before delving deeper into the impact of "I Am Third," it is crucial to appreciate Gale Sayers' remarkable football career. Drafted by the Chicago Bears in 1965, Sayers quickly became one of the most dynamic running backs in NFL history. His rookie season set records, including the most touchdowns scored by a rookie, and he was named the NFL Rookie of the Year.

Sayers' playing style was characterized by his agility, vision, and elusiveness, which allowed him to evade defenders with ease. Despite his relatively small stature at 6 feet and 198 pounds, he made a significant impact on the field, earning five Pro Bowl selections and eventually being inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

However, Sayers' career was tragically cut short by injuries, particularly a devastating knee injury that limited his playing time after just seven seasons. His perseverance in the face of adversity added depth to the message of "I Am Third," illustrating how humility and faith can guide an athlete through challenges.

## The Spiritual and Team-Oriented Philosophy

A central theme in Gale Sayers' "I Am Third" is the prioritization of faith and teamwork. This philosophy is reflected not only in his book but also in his approach to football and life. By placing God first, Sayers emphasized reliance on spiritual strength and purpose, which fueled his resilience during hardships.

Placing others second reinforced the value of selflessness on the football field. Sayers believed that individual accolades were secondary to contributing to the team's success. This viewpoint challenged the prevalent culture of self-promotion in professional sports, advocating instead for cooperation and mutual respect.

Finally, putting himself third highlighted a humility rarely seen among sports stars. Despite his incredible talent and fame, Sayers consistently credited his teammates and coaches for his achievements. This humility endeared him to fans and peers alike, cementing his legacy as a role model both on and off the field.

## Impact and Relevance of "I Am Third" in Sports Culture

The message of "I Am Third" transcends the boundaries of football, influencing athletes and coaches across various disciplines. The principles of faith, humility, and teamwork resonate deeply in sports environments where ego and individualism often dominate.

Several contemporary athletes have cited Gale Sayers and his philosophy as an inspiration for balancing personal ambition with collective goals. The concept encourages players to view their roles within a larger framework, fostering unity and shared purpose.

Moreover, "I Am Third" has been used in leadership training and motivational programs beyond sports, illustrating its universal appeal. The book's enduring popularity reflects a hunger for values-driven success stories and ethical role models.

## **Comparisons to Other Sports Philosophies**

While many athletes promote dedication and hard work, the explicit integration of spirituality and selflessness in "I Am Third" sets Gale Sayers apart. For example:

- Michael Jordan's "Be Like Mike" mindset focuses on relentless competitiveness and individual excellence.
- **Bill Belichick's team-first coaching philosophy** emphasizes discipline and collective responsibility but is less focused on spirituality.
- Jim Valvano's "Don't Give Up, Don't Ever Give Up" mantra centers on perseverance, similar to Sayers' resilience but with a more secular tone.

In this context, Sayers' approach uniquely blends faith with athletic performance, offering a holistic model that addresses both the mental and spiritual dimensions of sportsmanship.

## Legacy of Gale Sayers and the Enduring Significance of "I Am Third"

Gale Sayers' legacy is inseparable from the ideals expressed in "I Am Third." Beyond his statistical achievements and Hall of Fame status, Sayers is remembered for his character and the inspirational message he shared with the world.

The phrase continues to be cited in discussions about leadership, ethics, and the role of faith in professional sports. Many coaches incorporate elements of this philosophy to cultivate team cohesion and personal growth among players.

In recent years, renewed interest in Sayers' story, including documentaries and retrospectives, has introduced "I Am Third" to new generations. This resurgence highlights the timeless nature of his message and its capacity to inspire beyond the gridiron.

#### The Book's Place in Sports Literature

"I Am Third" stands as a seminal work in the genre of athlete memoirs and motivational literature. Unlike many sports biographies that focus solely on competition and personal triumph, this book offers a reflective and values-based perspective.

Readers and critics have praised the book for its candidness, emotional depth, and practical wisdom. Its influence is evident in the way it has shaped athlete narratives, encouraging more nuanced portrayals of sports figures as multidimensional individuals.

# Integrating "I Am Third" Principles in Modern Athletic Development

Modern athletic programs increasingly recognize the importance of mental and emotional well-being alongside physical training. The principles embodied in "I Am Third" align with this holistic approach, emphasizing character development as integral to performance.

Sports psychologists and coaches often draw on themes from Sayers' philosophy to help athletes manage pressure, cultivate resilience, and foster team spirit. The prioritization of spirituality or a personal sense of purpose can also serve as a stabilizing force during periods of stress or injury.

By promoting humility and placing the team above the individual, "I Am Third" offers a blueprint for sustainable success that transcends the short-term focus on statistics and awards.

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Gale Sayers' "I Am Third" remains a powerful testament to the enduring power of faith, humility, and teamwork in sports and life. Its message continues to inspire athletes, coaches, and fans, reminding us that true greatness lies not only in personal achievement but in the grace and integrity with which it is pursued.

## **Gale Sayers I Am Third**

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gale sayers i am third: The Book of Sports Virtues Fritz Knapp, 2012-01-23 The Book of Sports Virtues: High Impact Athletes and Coaches is a masterful collection of stories about the struggles and triumphs of many celebrated athletes. Each chapter is assigned a trait or virtue and uses an athlete's story as a lens through which the reader can gain the insight needed to achieve that trait or virtue. The chapter on appreciation is the story of Lou Gehrig and Jacky Robinson's story is used to exemplify and define nobility. What emerges after reading these stories is not only a greater understanding and appreciation of the virtues that these icons needed to get through life,

but also an inspiration for the reader. Each story is followed by a small quotation from literature to amplify the meaning and application of the positive virtue. This book makes for the perfect gift from parents to children or for adult mentors to their students. Its ability to be read one story at a time makes it perfect for the bookshelf or coffee table.

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gale savers i am third: My Story... From Humble Beginnings to Professional Success James M. Durant III, Jeffrey M. Allen, 2024-08-28 Practical and authentic, this essential career handbook provides every young person with inspiration and practical pathways to overcome socio-economic adversity and achieve their career ambitions. Written by an impressive group of senior professionals who have excelled despite seemingly insurmountable circumstances, including barriers such as racism and economic hardship, this book provides the roadmap to professional career success. With students and graduates from diverse and economically adverse backgrounds specifically in mind, the book breaks from the notion that one has to become a superstar, a Supreme Court Justice, a movie star, or an internationally famous athlete to be successful. It provides a grounded and realistic approach to achieve social, economic, and professional advancement for the majority of college students. High-level professionals and leaders in industry, government, non-profit, education, medicine, military, and the law share their unique stories, each filled with spirit, hope, advice, success strategies, and approaches to dealing with failures along the way. The book offers direction and guidance for self-determination and professional development, while also inspiring excellence in organizational leadership and management, with a focus on leadership, character, and tangible skills. This is essential reading for college students and graduates from all backgrounds, with a focus on underrepresented groups in particular. It will also benefit instructors, professors, and professionals in higher education, as well as leaders in the public, private, and third sectors who are focused on uplifting students and recent graduates of adverse and diverse backgrounds.

gale sayers i am third: When Illness Goes Public Barron H. Lerner, 2006-11-20 Outstanding Academic Title, 2007, Choice magazine Steve McQueen had cancer and was keeping it secret. Then the media found out, and soon all of America knew. McQueen's high profile changed forever the way the public perceived a dreaded disease. In When Illness Goes Public, Barron H. Lerner describes the evolution of celebrities' illnesses from private matters to stories of great public interest. Famous people who have become symbols of illness include Lou Gehrig, the first "celebrity patient"; Rita Hayworth, whose Alzheimer disease went undiagnosed for years; and Arthur Ashe, who courageously went public with his AIDS diagnosis before the media could reveal his secret. And then there are private citizens like Barney Clark, the first recipient of a permanent artificial heart, and Lorenzo Odone, whose neurological disorder became the subject of a Hollywood film. While celebrity illnesses have helped to inform patients about treatment options, ethical controversies, and scientific proof, the stories surrounding these illnesses have also assumed mythical characteristics that may be misleading. Marrying great storytelling to an exploration of the intersection of science, journalism, fame, and legend, this book is a groundbreaking contribution to our understanding of health and illness.

gale sayers i am third: LeRoy Neiman Travis Vogan, 2024-10-08 The untold story of an American hustler who upset the art world and became a pop culture icon, cutting a swath across twentieth-century history and culture. LeRoy Neiman—the cigar-smoking and mustachioed artist famous for his Playboy illustrations, sports paintings, and brash interviews—stood among the twentieth century's most famous, wealthy, and polarizing artists. His stylish renderings of musicians, athletes, and sporting events captivated fans but baffled critics, who accused Neiman of debasing art with popular culture. Neiman cashed in on the controversy, and his extraordinary popularity

challenged the norms of what art should be, where it belongs, and who should have access to it. The story of a Depression-era ragamuffin-turned-army chef-turned-celebrity artist, Neiman's biography is a rollicking ride through twentieth-century American history, punctuated by encounters with the likes of Muhammad Ali, Frank Sinatra, Joe Namath, and Andy Warhol. In the whirlwind of his life, Neiman himself once remarked that even he didn't know who he really was—but, he said, the fame and money that came his way made it all worth it. In this first biography of the captivating and infamous man, Travis Vogan hunts for the real Neiman amid the America that made him.

**gale sayers i am third:** *African Americans in Sports* David K. Wiggins, 2015-03-26 This two-volume set features 400 articles on African-Americans in sports, including biographical entries as well as entries on events, tournaments, leagues, clubs, films, and associations. The entries cover all professional, amateur, and college sports such as baseball, tennis, and golf.

**gale sayers i am third:** Catalog of Copyright Entries. Third Series Library of Congress. Copyright Office, 1973

gale sayers i am third: Modern Augustinian Confession James Curtis Geist, 2016-12-29 Geists memoir is written in the tradition of Saint Augustines book, Confessions. Confessions is considered the first Western autobiography chronicling the saints struggles with sin, lust, and his life in Christian ministry. With brutal honesty, Jim Geist shares stories of struggle with character defects, addiction, and obsessive-compulsive behavior. It is a series of antidotal stories from elementary school, little league sports, family stories, and funny stories from hunting camp, graduate school, ministry, and his job as a high school social studies teacher in New York City. In his fifteen years as an educator, dozens of students encouraged Mr. Geist to write a memoir because they found his stories interesting, humorous, and inspirational. He was voted Teacher of the Year in 2012 by his peers, the same year his assistant principal took him to arbitration to steal his livelihood for him speaking out against the change from teacher-centered teaching to classes becoming times of group work where most of the time was not being spent on the curriculum or preparing for the New York state exams. It is a memoir of his careers, marriage, divorce, heartbreak, relationships, human rights activism against genocide, and modern-day slavery. It is a story of an urban teacher, in the midst of changes in the public education paradigm and a failed political candidate shot with slings and arrows of dirty tricks and false charges. It has stories of arbitration and court battles and recovery from codependency through the twelve-step program, learning how to accept life on lifes terms. You will find yourself laughing on almost every page and identifying with many of the human conundrums we face in life because life is often stranger than fiction.

gale sayers i am third: Why Docudrama? Alan Rosenthal, 1999 Defining and examining the rationale of docudrama, the nine essayists in the first part discuss the history and development of docudrama on TV and in film; they also consider the place of truth in docudrama, the main critiques of the form, and the audience's susceptibilities and expectations. In investigating the actual filmmaking process, the eight essays in the second part focus on how docudrama as a 'commodity' is created in the United States and England. Part essay, part case study, and part interview, this section also explores how Hollywood and the commercial networks as well as producers and writers work and think. The final part presents an in-depth critique of a number of controversial docudramas that have helped form and shape public opinion, including Battleship Potemkin, Roots, Reds, JFK, Mississippi Burning, Schindler's List, and In the Name of the Father.

gale sayers i am third: God's Word, Your World! 2013-2014, 2013-07-01 gale sayers i am third: African-American Sports Greats David L. Porter, 1995-10-30 African-American athletes have played a significant role in the development and popularity of American professional sports, and have encountered numerous obstacles on the road to athletic success. This is the first comprehensive multi-sport biographical dictionary of African Americans who reached the pinnacles of success in their sport. It contains more personal and career profiles of African-American sports greats than are found in any other single source. Biographical profiles of 166 noted athletes, coaches, and administrators in team and individual sports include both Ristorical figures such as Jesse Owens and Satchel Paige and contemporary stars such as Charles Barkley, Ken

Griffey, Jr., Michael Jordan, Jackie Joyner-Kersee, Shaguille O'Neal, and Emmitt Smith. Forty-four sports historians contributed the colorfully written biographies, which blend both personal background information and athletic career accomplishments. All information is current through the middle of 1995. The dictionary covers the contributions made by African-American greats in football, baseball, basketball, track and field, boxing, wrestling, auto and stock car racing, golf, thoroughbred racing, tennis, cycling, and figure skating. More than two-thirds of the entries represent team sports. The dictionary is organized alphabetically by person. Each colorfully written profile is 800-1,000 words in length and traces the subject's personal life, family and educational background, personal struggles, career accomplishments, records set, statistical data, awards and honors, and overall impact; and features lively quotations by and about the sports luminaries. Each entry contains a handy bibliography of books and articles about the subject. Biographies of managers, coaches, and club executives describe their teams, statistical achievements, accomplishments, strategy, and sports impact. A general introduction traces the historic struggle of African-American athletes in professional and Olympic sports and appendices provide alphabetical listings of biographical entries and entries by sport. A selection of photos complement the profiles. For the sports fan or librarian, this is a first stop for biographical information that captures the personality of the athlete and includes all the pertinent information about his or her accomplishments. It is an essential addition to the reference sections of junior high, high school, and public libraries.

gale sayers i am third: The Making of a Man Bible Study Guide Tim Brown, 2014-09-09 What Does It Take to Be a Godly Man? Every young boy dreams about what he wants to be when he grows up. Some have goals of becoming an astronaut, or a fireman, or a professional athlete. But what does it take to be a man? How does a young person get there? In this six-session video-based curriculum (DVD/digital video sold separately), NFL All-Pro, sports analyst, and businessman Tim Brown uses experiences from his life to teach men the principles and priorities he has learned for leading a life that honors God. Through his stories of struggling with God, overcoming temptations, and discovering what it takes to be a good husband and father, he shares what true manhood is all about and what guys must do to attain it. These principles have helped Tim lead a life of honor and integrity that has made him one of the most respected men in the world of sports. The Making of a Man will not only inspire men of all ages but also challenge them to measure their lives and success by a higher standard. Designed for use with The Making of a Man Video Study (sold separately).

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