

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LIVE SPORTS

Being There Guide

Use this guide to see why a stadium feels like so much more than a way to watch a game.

PEOPLE
PLACES
BIGGER
TOGETHER

SAME
HUMAN
HEARTS
BRIGHTER
TOGETHER

FEELING IT TOGETHER *Notice the collective state.*



- A crowd united in hope and release can enter collective effervescence.
- Emotion spreads by contagion, so a whole stand amplifies each person's feeling.
- Chanting and moving in synchrony turns a collection of people into one feeling body.

SHARED
EMOTIONS
STRONGER
PEOPLE



BELONGING TO SOMETHING

Value the membership.

- A team offers stable membership and continuity across a whole life.
- Support is often inherited, connecting parent and child and place.
- Attendance is the ritual that renews belonging, and even strangers connect.

DR. Z TAKEAWAY

Attending a live sporting event makes little sense as a way of watching a game and complete sense as a way of belonging to something. The identification, the collective roar, the real and uncertain stakes, and the inherited membership are the point, and no superior view of the game can replace being there.



MY TEAM, MY SELF

See the identification.

- A team gets incorporated into your sense of self, so its results feel like yours.
- After a win fans say *we won*; after a loss, they lost.
- Wearing the colors among thousands makes an abstract identity physical and visible.



INVESTMENT WITHOUT CONTROL *Understand the volatility.*

- You care enormously and can do nothing to affect the result.
- Superstitions and lucky routines are the powerless reaching for a gesture of control.
- Real, uncertain stakes are exactly what make the elation and the grief so intense.

MORE
THAN A GAME
A BRIGHTER
YOU



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Connection heals. Conversations help.