

# Read

## Goals for the Gold

If you want to earn an award — like a medal in sports or a place on the honor roll — it helps to set goals. One expert in goals is Santiago “Jimmy” Mellado, president of Compassion! Jimmy was born in El Salvador, and he grew up in seven different countries. He loved sports, especially the high jump. This is his true story of how he competed in the Olympic Games! He trained for 16 years to get there, and he set many small and big goals along the way.



Hi! I'm Jimmy. I want to tell you about the power of goals. Goals help you imagine and dream big. Then they give you direction for reaching those dreams!

A great goal will stretch us to do the very best we can. And after giving it our best, we can rely on God for the results. When we put our best efforts in the hands of our miraculous God, things we can't even imagine are possible!



I started high jumping in Nicaragua when I was 8 or 9 years old. I don't know why. I was short, and short people don't go into high jump. But I did.



My friends and I started out jumping over tree limbs. There were no mats or anything to land on. We jumped over, and ... dirt.



By the time I was 12 years old, I was able to jump so high that I would have been able to make it over my own head! Then I set a new goal: to see how much higher I could jump over my own standing height (which kept going up as I grew older).



In 1983 when I was in college, I was on a track and field championship team.



Then I competed in the 1987 Pan American Games. I kept training in all the sporting events that are part of the decathlon, a multi-day Olympic event.



Then in 1988, I competed in the decathlon at the Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea. I was competing for El Salvador.



I was in the same group as the world-record holder in the high jump, Daley Thompson from Great Britain. The bar kept getting pushed up higher and higher as we kept clearing it.

Finally, everyone got eliminated except the two of us. The bar was getting close to 7 feet! I was thinking ...



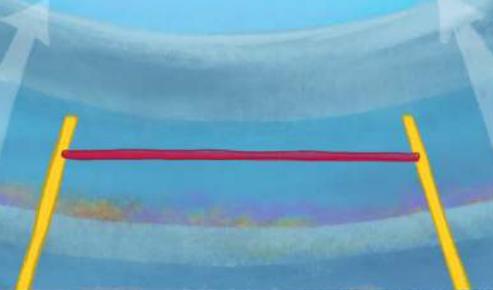
“Wow, that's high. That's really high.”



In training, every time I believed the bar was too high, I never made it. Every time I doubted I could make it, I never made it.



Now that doesn't mean that every time I believed I made it. But every time I doubted, I missed it.



I had to take a different perspective, or viewpoint, of my goal. I looked up at the top of the stadium, then back at the bar. I thought, “That bar's not high. The top of the stadium is high. It's really high. The bar's not high.” Compared with the roof, the bar didn't seem so high anymore.

Right in that moment, I believed I could get over. In my mind I saw myself clearing the bar. Sometimes when you simply change your perspective, the unbelievable becomes believable.



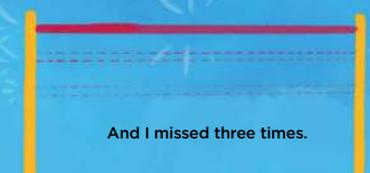
Then, I ran.



I jumped.



I made it.



Daley missed his last attempt. I won for my group in high jump as the shortest decathlete in the group. But it didn't end there! What do you think they did with the bar after that? They raised it again!

And I missed three times.



But I did not feel like a failure. Why not? First, I realized that every high jump event ends in failure at some point, since the bar keeps getting raised higher and higher until the jumper doesn't make it over. Second, I was so happy that the Lord gave me the gift of making that last jump in Seoul.



I walked away after that and retired as an athlete. I left the high jump with this big lesson:

Goals don't define you, but they can help you achieve things you never expected ... and sometimes it's the best parts of you that you didn't know were there!

## Dizzy Decathlon

Jimmy is ready to start a decathlon [duh-KATH-lahn], a competition of 10 track and field events. But this track is wack! Guide Jimmy to the end of the maze, through all 10 events and the tips he needs to remember for reaching his goals.

