

PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR HEALTH

November 3, 1938

"Physical Education and the New Psychology"  
(Dr. R. H. Wheeler and Mr. Jim Raport)

- Announcer: We are breaking in on a conversation between Dr. R. H. Wheeler, internationally known authority on psychology, a leading Gestalt psychologist, and head of the Psychology Department here at the University, and Mr. Jim H. Raport, instructor in Physical Education, who are discussing psychology and its relation to physical education.
- Mr. Raport Physical education teachers believe, Dr. Wheeler, that physical education is far more important for the individual and for the community than most people realize. They believe that physical education is not only a safeguard for physical health, but also for mental health. Do you as a psychologist subscribe to this point of view?
- Dr. Wheeler Yes, Mr. Raport, I think you are right. While it is true that a certain number of the world's greatest minds have lived in weak bodies, this was because they were determined to accomplish big things in spite of their handicaps. All the evidence goes to show that when the individual is adequately inspired or encouraged the best minds live in the best bodies. This is true of children as well as of adults, so that every possible care should be taken to guarantee physical health.
- Mr. Raport I am glad to hear you say that, Dr. Wheeler. But is there not another important reason why physical education is valuable, especially for the growing child and for youth? Isn't it true that a sound and strong body works for better mental health, better attitude of mind, a happier individual?
- Dr. Wheeler Yes, indeed, other things being equal, it is natural for one to take pride in being vigorous, strong, and healthy. Pride generates mental energy, and, as a consequence, the individual is less easily broken mentally by disappointments or failures. In this way physical education is a valuable aid in promoting adequate mental adjustment to life.
- Mr. Raport Here is another question that I would like to ask you, Dr. Wheeler, while we are discussing the values of physical education. We hear it said that if a society or a nation spent more time in sports and games that they would be more peaceful and less anxious for war. Is this true, in your estimation?
- Dr. Wheeler That is a difficult question to answer. But I believe that human beings, either as individuals or in groups, are naturally pugnacious, at least to some degree. They are aggressive and selfish. And, until adequately socialized, they will fight in the belief that a