PREFACE

"There is no greater glory for a man as long as he lives than that which he wins by his own hands and feet." This quotation from Homer's *Odyssey* reminds us of our long history in valuing physical accomplishments of the body. The joy of exercise, what it does for the body, the mind, and the soul cannot be measured in material terms. How does one describe the crisp wind in one's face when flying through weightless powder snow down a steep alpine slope? Or the thrill of arriving at the summit of a cliff, or a mountain just scaled? Or riding the crest of a wave on a foaming surf? Or the exhilaration of kicking a soccer ball past the diving goalie? These and so many more expressions of physical activity, of endurance, of body awareness, and of competition add up to happiness. The sense of well-being, of physical fitness, of the ability to compete in sports with others, of body awareness, and of body control are all a major and indispensable part of *joie de vivre.*

As a society, we cannot and must not overlook this great and critical component of the good life for the millions of physically disabled among us.

Limitation of physical performance is particularly poignant in the case of the amputee. Not only is structural physical capacity diminished by limb loss, the amputee also faces the obvious visible evidence of a lack of wholeness. The physical deficit, therefore, is not only structural, it is psychosocial as well. In the final analysis, only the amputee can understand and appreciate the meaning of limb loss. The sense of body image altered by the amputation presents a daily hurdle. Physical accomplishment lowers that hurdle. As the boundaries of the possible are increased, what seemed impossible can become possible, and the difficult can become easy; then, the easy becomes pleasant.

This book is written to help the many among us with limb loss, young and old, to experience the joy of physical recreation and sport; personal sport and competitive sport. It is dedicated to the profiles in courage which they exhibit each and every day.

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