



Jack Kyle

Denis Tuohy, native of Belfast, is a seasoned TV reporter of news and current affairs. In recent years he has been a frequent contributor to BBC Radio Ulster's *Thought for the Day*. 'He recalls one of Ireland's greatest sportsmen, rugby hero Jack Kyle. The editor recalls the excitement both of meeting Jack Kyle as a young boy and of watching him play.'



It has been my good fortune as a broadcaster to have known some outstanding players in various sports. What has often struck me is how their deeper awareness of the skills displayed by competitors can make them more dispassionate observers than fans who are focused on 'us against them'. There can be a modesty about their own achievements that discounts the awe with which spectators regard them.

Jack Kyle, legendary hero of Irish rugby, scored a dazzling try against France at Ravenhill in Belfast in 1953, weaving his way past mystified defenders. 'They seek him here, they seek him there,' wrote one reporter, 'those Frenchies seek him everywhere'. A friend of mine was watching as a very young schoolboy. 'Daddy', he said, 'why have all those Frenchmen fallen down?' I passed on my friend's recollection to

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the man himself when I had the good fortune of getting to know him long afterwards. As he chuckled and shook his head, I wondered how often down the years people must have asked him about that try and others like it.

But, true to form, he gave a courteous, thoughtful reply. 'All I can say is, there were times when good things somehow happened through me, I'm grateful for that.'

It didn't need saying, of course, that Jack had practised and developed his natural skills. But there were moments as an individual he did something so instinctively that he almost took himself by surprise. Somehow, as he put it, something good had happened through him.



And he was grateful.

I've gradually come to sense that this story can carry a wider message, even for someone like myself who has certainly never known a moment of intuitive genius. What I have known

are good moments in life, moments that don't happen because of any planning, moments that can suddenly take over. Joyous music on the car radio during traffic, a home-made greeting card from a grandchild, the light in the eye of someone special.

Those moments are moments to be grateful for, as Jack Kyle was grateful for the very special magic that would sometimes happen around him and through him. ❤️