

## LANCE ARMSTRONG LATEST ON NIKE'S LIST OF SHAMED CELEBRITIES. WHY DOES NIKE STAND BY ITS FALLEN HEROES?



It would be accepted that the celebrities chosen by marketers to advertise their services or products, would be much loved ones, who are role models for others to emulate and whose endorsement will be taken to heart by those who adore, respect and idolize them. By the same theory, it would be perhaps right to assume that those celebrities, who have fallen in their fans esteem owing to activities ranging from minor to really serious and perhaps having them to endorse products, would be ethically wrong and sending the wrong message. Nike obviously does not seem to think so. It continues to stand by its celebrity endorsers, Tiger Woods, Michael Vick, Kobe Bryant and the latest to fall from grace, Lance Armstrong. Tiger Woods philandering, extra-marital affairs and ensuing divorce and his subsequent fall from being an undisputed champion to an also-ran makes him a perfect example of how not to behave. Michael Vick was implicated in an illegal dog fighting ring that found him guilty of serious federal felony charges and almost two years in prison. Kobe Bryant was accused of a crime as heinous and despicable as sexual assault. Yet Nike continued to endorse such people and the latest on that list is Lance Armstrong. Apparently, extra-marital affairs, drug taking, sexual offenses are extra attributes that make you an even better bet for an advertising sponsorship as that guarantees and even larger viewership. The latest display of Nike's duplicitous approach is their declaration that they will not discontinue their sponsorship of Lance Armstrong. This coming in the wake of proven evidence that each one of Armstrong's victories were achieved through doping and that he kept it under wraps by spending part of his ill-gotten millions on doctors, lawyers and greasing palms. Worse he even ensured that those who were not with him were mercilessly hounded out of the sport. All Nike had to say was, "We are saddened that Lance Armstrong may no longer be able to participate in certain competitions and his titles appear to be impacted. Lance has stated his innocence and has been unwavering on this position. Nike plans to continue to support Lance and the Lance Armstrong Foundation, a foundation that Lance created to serve cancer survivors." Not done. You cannot rob from Peter to Paul. Civilized society does not allow that. Ends do not justify the means. Moreover, Armstrong has not apologized for his behavior, or admitted that he made a huge mistake and would like to devote the rest of his life undoing the damage he has done – but he has a massive ego, and humble fruit, one doubts he will ever eat, especially with endorsers like Nike accepting him the way he is. For long Armstrong was seen as the super athlete who came back from cancer to win against all-odds – but he is really a drug-cheat and an unrepentant one at that and Nike would do well to discard him, as presenting him as a good person who went astray will not be the right message to send to the youth of the country. Nike would do a service to the world if they told the world that they were dropping him because he is no hero but someone who had built his empire on doping and deception, on manipulation and pressure-tactics, of betrayal and fraudulence and that he is not deserving of our love and admiration but our scorn and contempt.