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# Between **the Lane** Lines

Volume 2010 Issue 1

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As we begin the new year, we encourage the swimmers and families to get psyched up for the second half of the season. The following are a few articles that will be a great addition to the physical workouts in the swimmers' training.

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## Mind Training Tips for Swimmers - The 5 Major Beliefs for Swim Success

by Craig Townsend

What you believe is more important than anything when you are about to race. Of course, thoughts are important, but your beliefs will actually determine your results. So I have come up with what I regard as the 5 most important beliefs to remember when you are approaching a meet - instill these into your mind and make them your automatic attitude to all meets from now on. These beliefs can transform your performance without even changing a single thing in your training - they create inner change which automatically creates the outer changes you desire. But creating these beliefs is the hard work which I leave up to you - this is where your discipline must come in.

Focus upon one of these beliefs each week, and allow it to wash through your mind regularly throughout that entire week. Then, the following week, focus upon the 2nd belief, and then the 3rd week on the third belief, and so on - until they become a normal part of your everyday belief system and mental attitude. If after 5 weeks you do not feel they have become part of your belief system, repeat this 5 week process again until they are. As soon as these begin to become your firm beliefs, you will begin to notice a major shift forward in your results - and the PB's will flow through much more easily.

Please note: These are purely thoughts you need to think only - NOT to be spoken to others.

- **HAVE NO LIMITS** - "I feel great today and there's nothing I can't do in the pool today. What's to stop me? Everybody look out!" You must know that there is absolutely nothing to stop you putting in a great performance. Think of yourself as unlimited, unstoppable, unbeatable, supreme and all-powerful.

- **THESE CONDITIONS ARE PERFECT FOR ME** - "These conditions are perfect for me today! There's water in the pool, heaps of competitors, and it's a great day for a win!" It doesn't matter what the conditions are - this must be your attitude regardless. Every day must be a perfect day to swim from now on. Don't let conditions get in the way of a great swim.
- **I'VE DONE THE WORK, AND I BELIEVE IN MY ABILITY** - "I deserve to win this race - I've done the work, put in the hours, and somebody has to win it - so why not me? I know I'm going to give this race a real shake, because I'm good enough to beat any of these people". Know that you can achieve your goal. Why shouldn't you?
- **NOTHING CAN AFFECT ME** - "I'm a machine! Nothing can bother me or stop me today, not the swimmers, not the pool, my schedule, nothing! I'm completely in control of my own thoughts. I'm untouchable". Never let anybody's comments or attitude get in your way - stay with your own positive thoughts, and surround yourself with positive people.
- **YOU HAVE ME TO WORRY ABOUT** - "These guys must be worried about me in this race - I'm going to be very tough to beat today! Don't waste your time worrying about your competitors - let them worry about you instead. Allow your mind to focus only upon positive things, leave it to your competitors to wallow in their doubts and fears.

## A Winning Philosophy for Youth Sports

### Excerpt from USA Swimming article

In terms of the educational benefits of sports, children can learn from both winning and losing. But for this to occur, winning must be placed in a healthy perspective. We have therefore developed a four-part philosophy of winning designed to maximize young athletes' enjoyment of sports and their chances of receiving the positive outcomes of participation.

1. Winning isn't everything, nor is it the only thing. Young athletes can't possibly learn from winning and losing if they think the only objective is to beat their opponents. Does this mean that children should not try to win? Definitely not! As a form of competition, sports involve a contest between opposing individuals or teams. It would be naive and unrealistic to believe that winning is not an important goal in sports. But it is not the most important objective. To play sports without striving to win is to be a dishonest competitor. But despite this fact, it is important that we not define success only as winning. Not every child can play on a championship team or become a star athlete. Yet every child can experience the true success that comes from trying his or her best to win. The opportunity to strive for success is the right of every young athlete.
2. Failure is not the same thing as losing. Athletes should not view losing as a sign of failure or as a threat to their personal value. They should be taught that losing a game is not a reflection of their own self-worth. In other words, when an individual or team loses a contest, it does not mean that they are worth less than if they had won. In fact, some valuable lessons can be learned from losing. Children can learn to persist in the face of obstacles and to support each other even when they do not achieve victory. They can also learn that mistakes are not totally negative but are important stepping stones to achievement. Mistakes provide valuable information necessary for improving performance. Thomas Edison was once asked whether he was discouraged by the failure of more than three thousand experiments leading to the development of the light bulb. Edison replied that he did not consider the experiments failures, for they had taught him three thousand ways not to create a light bulb, and each experiment had brought him closer to his goal.
3. Success is not equivalent to winning. Thus, neither success nor failure need depend on the outcome of a contest or on a won-lost record. Winning and losing apply to the outcome of a contest, whereas success and failure do not. How, then, can we define success in sports?
4. Children should be taught that success is found in striving for victory. The important idea is that success is related to effort! The only thing that athletes have complete control over is the amount of effort they give. They have only limited control over the outcome that is achieved. If we can impress on our children that they are never "losers" if they give maximum effort, we are giving them a priceless gift that will assist them in many of life's tasks. A youth soccer coach had the right idea when he told his team, *"You kids are always winners when you try your best! But sometimes the other team will score more goals."*

A major cause of athletic stress is fear of failure. When young athletes know that making mistakes or losing a contest while giving maximum effort is acceptable, a potent source of pressure is removed. Moreover, if adults apply this same standard of success to themselves, they will be less likely to define their own adequacy in terms of a won-lost record and will more likely focus on the important children's goals of participation, skill development, and fun. Parents and coaches will also be less likely to experience stress of their own when their athletes are not winning. When winning is kept in perspective, the child comes first and winning is second. In this case, the most important sport product is not a won-lost record, it is the quality of the experience provided for the athletes.

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"If one synchronized swimmer drowns, do all the rest have to drown too?" - Steven Wright

"Seven days of no swimming makes one weak." - Author Unknown

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