

KEYS TO SUCCESS WITH 2008 OLYMPIAN CAROLINE BURCKLE



BELIEVE: I know this sounds cliché, but if you do not believe in yourself and what your mind and body are capable of, then there is no chance you will be successful. You have to buy into what you are doing and believe that the instruments you are given to work with – in this case, your body and mind – are exceptional and will be trained in a positive way, to *believe*. Believing in myself really and truly turned my swimming around a few years ago, and ever since, I don't doubt my capabilities, or think that I am not good enough.

DON'T OVERTHINK IT: So often, swimmers think their races through so much that they do more thinking than they do swimming. What will the outcome be? Will it hurt? What if I let myself and others down, or if I don't do well? You can play the "what if" game forever, but it is not going to get you anywhere. Before I race, the last thing I do is think. Thinking is for practice. The best swims come when you have nothing going on in your head at all. You are in autopilot mode. It should come naturally at this point, and over-thinking shouldn't even be an option.

LOVE WHAT YOU DO: It is easy to get into a rut with swimming, especially when you train a lot for a long period of time and get broken down. But you have to remember why you are doing it in the first place – because you *love* it. You *love* the competition, the feeling you get when you win that race, or make that time. You will be successful in *anything* you do in life if you love it. Passion is a huge aspect of my swimming, and I make sure that I don't let swimming define who I am as a person. Rather, I define swimming by how much passion I have for it and how much I give back to it.

FAILURE: You are probably asking me why I chose failure as a key to success. Without failure, you cannot succeed. I have failed more times than I can count, and after each and every time, I have picked myself up and realized how much better I want to do and how I cannot take failure as an answer. Some times are going to be harder than others to pick yourself back up, but it is all a learning experience. Once you get the hang of it, it becomes easier to fix your mistakes and move on in a positive manner.