

Over the years swimming has taught, helped and made me the person I am today. Of course I owe most of it to all the wonderful coaches I have had over the years. Over the years I have had three amazing coaches that have all taught me many different life lessons. I have also learned lessons just from the discipline of the sport.

Swimming has always been a great outlet for me since school has never been my strong suit. I have dyslexia, and swimming has always been there for me if I had a bad day or school had been stressful. The thing I love most about swimming is that you are in control. If you want to go faster then you are in control if it. You can train harder and push yourself. This was something I learned in swimming and then applied to school. Once I figured it out through swimming, I was able to work through many struggles in school.

In the pool, I could always act out my frustrations, either with school or other situations in my life; it has always been there for me. Being able to jump into a pool and slap the water as I swam has been a release. I have also been able to scream under water during long distance sets. I love the way the water has always given me a place to go as well.

Swimming has taught me discipline. Swimming has taught me that you have to show up at 600 AM to work out. It taught me to put in a hard workout to get what I want, and how sometimes things don't work how you plan. I learned some of this on my own but some I learned from the amazing coaches that helped me in my swimming career.

Cindy Pitka, my head coach for most all of my childhood swimming was one of my most important role models. She taught me that you have to work hard for the prize, not just in the pool but in life was well. She pushed me in the pool more than anyone else has ever pushed me. This all taught me I will never know my limits unless I try. Coach Cliff Murray taught me that sometimes things just happen and we just gotta swim through it. Whether it was a bad first race or a bad practice, you just gotta push through. He also emphasized that it is good to feel pressure and butterflies before a big race. He taught me that it is good at times in your life to feel pressure or disheartened, but it is still necessary to push through. Lastly my coach Scott O'Brien taught me to have fun when I am doing a hard set, that I should laugh a

little, even if it's painful. He pointed out that I can enjoy the people around me who are going through the same thing.

Swimming has made me who I am, a hard worker who does not let setbacks make me quit, someone who can deal with stress and someone who can always find a reason to laugh and enjoy people. Between the people who coached me and my love of the sport I will always be grateful for swimming and all it has done for me.