

PEAQ CLASSROOM SESSIONS 2022-23 SEASON

GOAL SETTING, MINDSET, AND MOTIVATION



Introduction

Setting Goals is the foundation of your motivation to compete. Often times on deck, I hear, “Coach, I’m just not feeling motivated.” It’s hard to swim without a purpose. That doesn’t speculate that every Underwater Set, Hypoxic Work, and Best Average... Need to be done to perfection. However, having a clear mindset on where you want to go is needed. At PEAQ, the resources are bountiful and endless. Think of setting up your perfect environment, and attempting to execute that as many times at practice as possible. There is an old saying, “Train Hard, Win Easy”... I like the idea of “Prepare Hard, Compete Easy”. This classroom is going to cover the mindset we need to commit to our true goals, and then the actions needed to be taken to achieve them.

This sheet coincides with the PEAQ Goal Setting Worksheet, which should be returned to your lead coach during the short course season. This is helpful in tracking your goals and having a level of accountability. Take Your Time, Dream Big, and Chase Ambitiously!

The Traditional Format “SMART Goals”

This is the most traditional and simple format for goal setting. It breaks down key elements needed in your goal process, but for our purposes we want to focus on what each letter means within “SMART”

This goal setting is often called SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely.

1. **Specific** – Make sure each goal is both clear and well defined
2. **Measurable** – Be sure to include times and dates, so that you can measure whether goals have been met and what progress has been made.
3. **Attainable** – Each goal that gets set should be challenging, but realistic.
4. **Relevant** – Every short term goal should fit in with the end goal or dream, and should act as stepping stones to success.
5. **Timely** – Put a deadline on your goal. Make it clear exactly when the goal is aiming to be accomplished.

When you stick to those S-M-A-R-T strategies for goal-setting (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timed), you’re already on a good track to achieving your goals. If you stay honest with yourself about what you can achieve, you can believe in yourself and do everything to achieve your goals. Don’t be afraid to fail on your way there – this is a normal part of the process. It is okay to not reach all your goals by the time you want to reach them. And it is okay to adjust your goals as you go. Track your progress and work hard every day to make the best out of the situation you are in. And you will see, the long way to achieving your goals will be full of motivation and joy.

Don’t lose it, Write it down

It’s really important that when you set a goal, you write it down – and write it somewhere you will see it regularly. This will not only help with motivation and focus, but also will help to celebrate successes and achievements.

Writing down the goal will also act as a reminder to say yes to the things that will help in achieving the goal, and turning down anything that may hinder success.

Things to consider when writing down your goals

Here are a few strategies to use to radically optimize their growth arc:

1. Commit to one clear idea for the year. What's the one (or two) words that you want to commit to this year? Example, "The Year Of ____ (*fill in the blank*) ____." Making it incredibly simple will drive clarity of the one, big principle that will help create a high-performing sturdy and flexible psychological framework.

2. Make the path your primary goal. The path of mastery is not defined by goal attainment, success and achievement. It's the commitment to understand the nuances of self and craft. The path of mastery is the deepest reward.

3. Make goals bite-size. Set your mind on small, realistic and challenging, daily goals that support your "Year Of..." statement. For example, committing to a mindfulness training before you leave your house, finishing part of a project before you answer emails, or every time you have a conversation with someone, try to learn something new about them.

4. Cultivate optimism. Keep your mind focused on what you do want, not what you don't want. When athletes aim for excellence, they rarely try "not to miss." A more powerful way to engage in sport and life is to cultivate a fundamental belief that something amazing is about to happen. From that optimistic framework, it becomes much easier to aim for what you want (rather than try to avoid what could go wrong).

5. Get your recovery right. Spend time recovering from the busyness of life. Your mind and body perform at an optimal level when given proper rest. When you are better recovered, you're more likely to have the mental discipline to adjust to challenges. The basic pillars of recovery involve a consistency of high quality (and proper quantity) sleep; optimized nutrition and hydration; a smart plan for fitness; and a strong social support mechanism that helps you laugh (and cry).

6. Learn from and then let go of past failures. Keep your focus on what you are in control of in the present moment. Then, choose excellent actions in the here-and-now. Top performers consistently hold on to what is good about themselves and let go of those parts that don't serve them any longer.

7. Become aware of your inner dialog. Self-talk (what you say to yourself) has a massive impact on who you become and how you respond to the unfolding and unpredictable unknown. Mindfulness is a great way to create awareness of your inner dialog. With an increased awareness of what works and what doesn't work, you can begin to upgrade your psychological framework, as well as your self-talk.

8. Enjoy the challenges. Smile often, laugh more, and find regular moments of silence.

Goal Setting & MindSet Final Tricks

1. Define What Success Means for You as a Swimmer.

What does success in the pool look like to you? Is it qualifying for a particular meet? Dropping XYZ seconds off a best time? Being the first swimmer to swim butterfly and freestyle at the same time? (Dare to dream, right?) This is the extraordinarily fun part of the goal setting process; where your inner dreamer lets loose and imagines all of the things you'd love to do with your swimming. Don't censor yourself quite yet, and don't constrain yourself with what others might think; write out what success looks like for you.

2. Slap a Specific Date and Number on Your Goal.

Next, we are going to take that lofty goal and bring it down from the clouds and into reality. To do so we are going to slap a very specific number on that goal. This is done to avoid any ambiguity, or reliance on the performance of others to achieve your goals. Here are some examples: Nope: I want to swim fast this year. Meh: I want to qualify for the World Juniors team next summer. Whammy: I want to swim a 22.43 at XYZ swim meet for the 50m freestyle, July 2015. If your goal is to make a specific team, do your best to figure out the time you will have to go. Saying that you want to place top 3 isn't good enough, as achieving this goal is reliant on how your competition does (i.e. things which you have no control over). Focusing on you and your performance alone sheds you of the burden of feeling discouraged when you see a competitor swimming particularly well; you can only control how you swim so dial in on that.

3. Break it Down Here is where you need to get into guts of your goals while also trying to be as objective as you can regarding your own strengths and weaknesses.

(Collaborating with your coach on this point in particular is almost a given.) What parts of your race are you going to need to focus on? What technical, mental, and physical improvements will you have to see? Does your start need work? Does your underwater butterfly kicking need to improve? Break down the major opportunities for improvement, and write out how you are going to tackle each one of them. So, let's say you want to improve your fly kicks. What are you going to do each day at practice to make them better? Write out the steps until you have a concrete plan of action to move forward with.

4. Set the Roadposts

You've got your final end time. The things you will need to do to put you in the condition necessary to achieve it. Now to set smaller goals or road-posts along your journey so that you have an idea of how close you are to being on track. These smaller bench marks serve two main purposes: 1. They provide an opportunity to assess how far you have come along. 2. They provide real world proof how sensible and realistic your goal setting is. Setting goals is a skill, something you need to hone. List the major meets between now and the end of the season. Starting from your final goal, move backwards from meet to meet, charting the times you'll have to swim, until you have returned to where you are standing right now.

5. Start Living Your Goals

Positive thinking is nice and dandy, but much better and far more effective is positive action. Fake it till you make it isn't just a rhyming catchphrase, it's an actual, like, real thing. In research done as far back as 1970 at Clark University showed that the moods exhibited by participants quickly mirrored the expressions they were asked to make. When told to smile they felt happier, when asked to clench their teeth their anger quickly rose. If you have seen the movie Boiler Room you have already heard of "acting as if." This same technique can be applied to your swimming. Act as if you are a champion swimmer. Act as if you love the hard sets. Act as if you love the grind. Acting as if doesn't mean sitting around, thinking and dreaming about your goal and expecting it to happen. Acting as if implies exactly what it says – acting. That part is unavoidably critical – you must act, or take action in accordance with your goal