

## *Peaq Classroom Sessions*

### **#6**

## *"Being A Good Teammate"*

### 12 Points to Start with...

#### **1) A great teammate gives relentless effort:**

Remember, your coach should not have to coach effort! You cannot control many things that will happen during your swimming season, but you can control how hard you swim. When you have an opportunity to get on the block and race... don't take it lightly. Experience is important! The only way to get better is to give your maximum effort. This not only makes you better, but it also pushes your teammates to get better as well. Atmosphere matters!

#### **2) A great teammate is unselfish:** Put the team first.

Your job is to do what it takes to help the team be successful. Think about the swimmers you ALWAYS want in your relay... now... imagine everyone was at the same speed. Who would you pick now? Being an unselfish teammate isn't always easy, but great teammates find a way to put the success of the team above their own success.

#### **3) A great teammate is honest:** All great teams and

relationships are built on honesty. Communication helps to build this trust through actions of honesty. Your coach and teammates need to know that they can trust you during the ups and downs of a season. Honesty helps create an atmosphere of collaboration and inclusiveness.

#### **4) A great teammate is humble:** Swimming is not

always a team sport. However, being a part of a team, make your stronger than going out as an

individual. You may be the star of your team or you may be a role player, either way, remember that the team comes first. Your role on the team is extremely important. So you may be the "High Point" Swimmer in your group at PEAQ, but maybe you are the lane leader for your lane... both are important. At times, Put your individual accomplishments aside and give praise to your teammates. Teams succeed when no one cares who does what, just that it gets done.

#### **5) A great teammate holds themselves and their**

**teammates accountable:** You should have high standards for yourself and your teammates. If a teammate is not fulfilling the duty to the team you can't be afraid to confront them and get them back on track. Be good to them, so they can be good to you when you need it. You might need to help them buy into a particular strategy or help them accept their role on the team. Don't accept a negative attitude from teammates, be the player that reaches out to them to help your team as a whole.

#### **6) A great teammate strives to improve:** You can

always be a better player tomorrow than you are today. Work to improve your technique and you will lift your teammates. Talk about what you feel is helping you succeed. Stay and talk after practice to your teammates about what went well and what did not.

#### **7) A great teammate is optimistic:** Don't be a

player constantly complaining to others about what's wrong. Look for the positives in your teammates and coaches. Pick your head out of the water and give compliments to your teammates. You have to build the atmosphere around you!

**8) A great teammate has respect for others:**

Respect your teammates. Respect your coaches. Respect your family, Respect your teachers. Respect your facilities. Respect your school. Look people in the eye. Nod and acknowledge your coach when they are addressing you. Clean up after yourself. Be polite. Encourage and cheer on your teammates. Help create a culture of mutual respect.

**9) A great teammate is a leader:** You don't have to be the best swimmer on PEAQ to be a leader. You don't even need to be a vocal leader. Every swimmer can lead by their actions. Is what you do on a daily basis making your team better? Challenge your teammates during drills. You'll improve and so will they. Bring energy to every practice. Don't talk bad about teammates or coaches outside the team environment. These are all ways you can lead your teammates towards success

**10) A great teammate is resilient:** Help your team use temporary setbacks or losses as an opportunity to grow and improve. Don't make excuses, look for solutions. As a mentally tough basketball player, pride yourself on being resilient. Your ability to bounce back will be infectious and help make your entire team more resilient. In any situation, one player's positive outlook can make a difference. Try to be that Swimmer.

**11) A great teammate helps foster a family atmosphere:** Support your teammates like family. Your season is going to have highs and lows, so are your teammates. Teams that build close relationships are usually the teams having the most fun and having the most success.

**12) A great teammate takes responsibility:** All of your actions, within and away from the team, are a representation of your team, your school or organization, and your family. Take responsibility for your behavior and actions at all times. Conduct yourself in such a way that your parents, coaches, and teachers would be proud of you. You never know who is looking at you for cues on how to behave.

***How do you Build Great Team Culture?***

Great culture is unmistakable: success is sustained no matter who swims there. The team performs consistently well. Athletes are motivated to be there.

Bad culture is hilariously easy to spot as well: The bad group body language. The inconsistent performances. The low motivation and lack of direction.

Culture is easy to talk about in the abstract. We all want it, after all. But intentions are not good enough. Great team culture isn't something you talk about, what you think or what you plan on doing. **Great team culture is what you do.**

Here are ten things swimmers can do to their part in creating a culture where they and the whole swim team are successful.

**IT STARTS WITH OWNERSHIP.**

It can be easy to look at the coach as the be-all and end-all for team culture, but at some point, athletes need to step up as well.

The reality is this: **an environment that encourages risk-tolerance, is psychologically safe, and promotes excellence benefits you just as much as it benefits anyone else.**

Don't wait for other swimmers to be the ones to step up. Yes, it can feel scary stepping up and taking the lead. It takes a lot to be the one to suggest doing one more rep above and beyond what is expected.

It can feel like you are the odd swimmer out by doing the workout properly and not complaining. This is okay—being excellent *isn't* normal.

While your coach lays out the workouts and sets a standard for what is expected, it's still on you to deliver on those expectations.

### **EMBRACE THE NEWBIES.**

When a swimmer first joins your group or lane they are most receptive to the tone and attitude of the group. It's your chance to make a great first impression and set the standard of what is expected.

Welcoming the new swimmers to the group also gives you a chance to remind yourself what kind of expectations you would like to have of the team and group.

### **WORK WITH THE YOUNGER SWIMMERS.**

Many of my favorite memories as a young age grouper were when the older swimmers—who I idolized—took a few moments of their practice to ask how my workout was going, to give me a quick pointer, or to encourage me to try a harder interval.

You don't need to be a world record holder to have a serious impact on other swimmers in the pool.

### **STRUGGLE TOGETHER.**

Getting through it together matters. Some of my favorite memories from my age group days have

nothing to do with personal best times or records. They stem from the times where as a lane or as a group we persevered through a set or a workout.

It felt like it was us against the coach or us against the workout. We didn't always win, but the times we did brought us together.

**Struggling through stuff together encourages cohesion.** There's no faking the bond that comes from throwing down on Hell Week together and coming through mostly unscathed.

### **PUT THE EQUIPMENT AWAY.**

When practice ends do you scurry to the locker room or are you helping put the lane ropes away? The backstroke flags? The yard sale of equipment behind the blocks?

You shouldn't have to wait for anyone to ask you to help with this stuff.

The New Zealand All-Black rugby team, arguably one of the most dominant teams on the planet, **clean their own locker room after games.** Not assistants, or a janitor, or stadium staff—these revered professional athletes take it upon themselves to “sweep the sheds.”

Stepping up and taking care of your training and competition environment isn't a chore—it's showing that you care enough about the culture and the environment to spend a sliver of your time looking after it.

When you care for your environment you develop team-building pride for your crew.



### STAND FOR YOUR TEAMMATES.

Here's a simple goal statement for you and your group: **On this team we cheer for each other like crazy.**

Get your cold, water-logged shorts off those chilly metal bleachers and stand up for your teammates when they are on the block. We've all experienced the chills and goosebumps before a big race when your squad gets up and does a banger of a cheer for you right before the whistle.

Make that the standard for your team. Not only will you swim hilariously well, but you'll have every other team looking over in envy.

### GET ON BOARD WITH THE BUDDY SYSTEM.

Accountability can work from a host of different directions. Here are some of the examples you are most familiar with: your parents getting on your case about working hard, and your coach on your case for showing up to practice.

But accountability seems to take on a different shade when it's coming from one of your peers. After all, you are in the chlorinated trenches together. So there's a kinship and an understanding there.

Partner up with a teammate who has similar goals as you (maybe not the exact same event) and work together to be more consistent in training.

### ADDRESS WHAT'S HURTING THE TEAM QUICKLY AND TOGETHER.

Problems happen to every club, good or bad, tiny or super. It's how quickly and in what manner they are addressed that makes all the difference.

Here are some ways to stay on top of adversity and use it to help propel the group further:

***Team captains.*** Weekly team meetings can help keep the ship on course through the season. Captains also manage some of the intra-personal stuff that can bubble up into real problems. They can help mediate issues and provide an added layer of accountability within the team.

***Evaluation.*** Where can we improve as a group? What are we doing that is totally working? Quick evaluations done regularly can help the group from drifting off mission and stay focused.

***Peer help.*** How can you help someone else in the group to be successful? We don't need to go this alone—when a group of swimmers gets together and supports each other some insanely awesome stuff starts to happen. Risk tolerance goes up (you feel more comfortable going all out on your goals when you know you have people behind you).

### EFFORT IS ALWAYS LOUDER THAN TALK.

At the end of the day, all the rousing speeches, the pep talks and the fancy championship banners don't matter a chlorinated lick if you aren't leading by effort.

This point is particularly applicable to swimmers who aren't naturally extroverts. Generally, we view leaders in the pool as being really vocal: but words don't mean much if they don't match up to the effort that is being put forth in the water.

**In fact, it's your actions that are the true barometer of your leadership abilities.** You can rah-rah your teammates until you're blue in the face, and talk about having a high expectation of excellence, but without the matching effort, it's got the opposite intended effect.

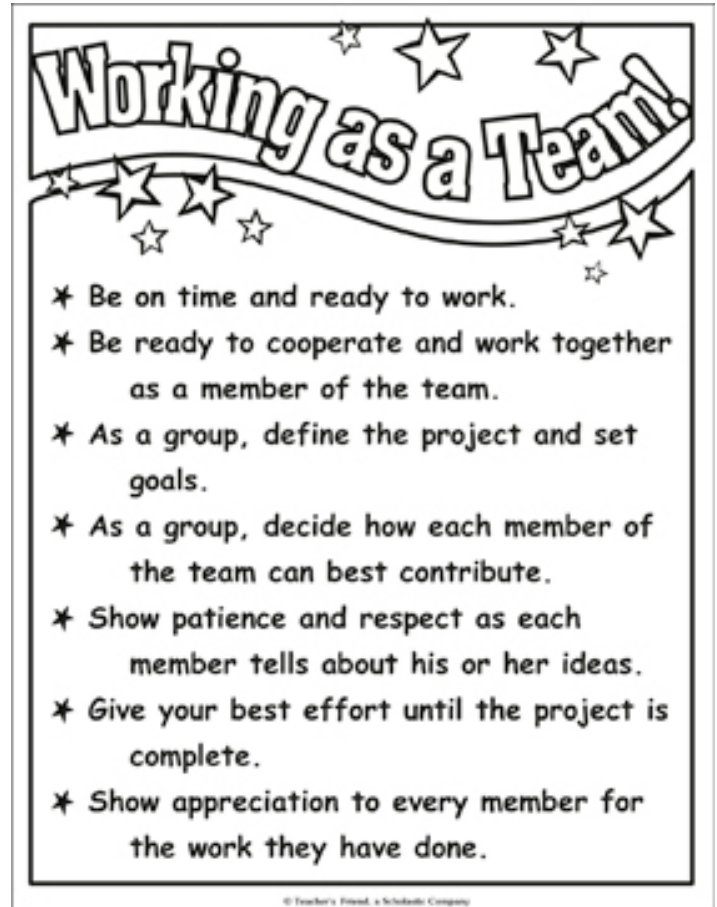
Look, no one is perfect. No disputing that. You're human, which means that you are indebted the same amount of off days as every other swimmer on the team. But if you are leading, and the expectation is that you want an all-in effort from other swimmers in the group, you better be bringing the noise in the pool as well.

### **LEADERSHIP IS FOUND IN THE QUIET MOMENTS.**

Listening to a teammate who is having a rough day or a bad practice. Give another teammate a reassuring pat on the back after a bad race. Pushing a teammate to a breakthrough performance in training even though your workout isn't going as great as you'd like.

Leadership is found just as much, if not more so, beyond the rah-rah speeches and the boisterous cheers. It's in the countless little moments where success and failure happen on your way to a championship season.

This is great news for the quiet swimmer who prefers to lead by example. You can be a world-class introvert and still lead like a champion.



“4 Tips on Championship Team Success”

Written by [Garrett Weber-Gale](#)

You want all the work you've put in this season to pay off at exactly the right time, the championship meets: sectionals, zones, states, nationals, etc. There's no better feeling than realizing a dream you've worked so hard for. Many athletes think swimming fast at the big meet is a big mystery, but it doesn't need to be. You may be wondering how fast you can actually go, or will your taper take full form and lead you to greatness. Here are a few AthleticFoodie™ tips that will help you perform at your best:

1. **What you put in is what you get out.** Nutrition is truly the key to unlocking your athletic potential. Focus on fueling your body with the highest quality foods you can (particularly carbohydrates, at competitions). On race day, you want to feel light and nimble, don't overeat.
2. **“Trust your training, trust your coach, and trust your stroke.”** You work hard for a reason. You choose to swim for a particular coach because you believe they can help you get to where you want to go. Hopefully, you've been continuously working on your stroke so that you are efficient and powerful. These three key concepts should give you a lot of confidence in the probability of going very fast at your meet.
3. **Help someone else.** It's easy to get caught up in your own swimming when the big meets come around. Try to be a positive influence on your teammates. Tell people they look good in the water when they do. Make sure to congratulate others when they swim fast and get excited to support those around you. Not only will this positive energy help foster an environment around you for fast swimming, but it will make you feel good...and feeling good means fast swimming.

4. **Think about the game plan you want to execute, before race day.** You've raced dozens of times before, but once again; talk with your coach about the best way for you to swim your race. Imagine swimming your perfect race when you go to bed at night. Think about how the race is going to feel, at what point you're going to really have to drop the hammer, and about the sharp execution you will make on all of the finer points during the race. Get confident in your racing ability, before you step on the block, and that comes from understanding exactly what you aim to do.

You might be heading to a meet you've never been to before. All of the preparation you've done to this point; your positive attitude, focus on nutrition, technique refinement, and physical capability, will all lead towards great swimming. Get excited, happy, and ready to take charge of your championship meet!

### **QUICK BIO**

*Garrett Weber-Gale*

*Olympian (2008)*

*2x Olympic Medalist (2 Gold)*

*5x LCM World Championship Medalist*

Swam at the University of Texas  
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In 2011, I had the second-fastest relay split in the world at the 2011 World Championships at 47.3. Also helped team USA win a silver and a bronze at the 2010 and 2011 World Championships. US National Champ in the 100 free at the 2011 US Nationals. Won NCAA titles in the 400 medley-relay in 2004 and the 100 free in 2006. Won his first Nationals in the 100 free in 2004. Narrowly missed a spot on the 2004 Olympic team by finishing seventh in the 100 free at the Olympic Trials at age 18.