

Nothing Comes for Free (worth having)

SWIMMING, HOW IT HELPS ME?

Unfortunately, some of you may not realize until you can look back- what you COULD have done. I'm sure you have heard adults "I wish I would have done this....I wish that I had that opportunity." Hindsight is 20/20. Whether you believe that you have unlimited potential or just hope to be a stronger asset to your team, you will NOT be able to accomplish this when you don't have a plan. You have all admired other swimmers.... what do they have that you don't? Oh, so-and-so swims in the summer, that's why they are so good. True, they are there, but what do they do when they are there? The skills that you gain from swimming are not only to get faster, but typically swimmers have higher GPAs, better work ethic, and are a sought after commodity in the workforce. Why? Because they are the ones that dragged themselves out of bed to be at practice when others stayed in bed. Commitment and desire....what employer doesn't want that? They are the ones that were willing to give up something that their peers were doing, to improve and reach their goals.

FLIP ROLES:

You be the coach, I'm the swimmer. My mom and dad paid for me to swim. I have some friends on the team and like being around them. I can only be at some of the practices because I have a LIFE! When I am at practice I can't keep up very well with the others that have been at practice. I sit out a lot of the swimming sets because I can't make them, this is hard, I'm just gonna sit out another one and hope that YOU don't notice, what's the difference? I watch the clock, hoping we finish early and many times I leave early....because I haveuh....homework. It takes me a long time to do my homework because I want to watch TV or listen to my Ipod while I do it.

During practices, I don't streamline off the walls, its too hard to remember. All the posture and line work we focus on is too hard for me, so I just swim through that. I notice that YOU stay around a lot to help those that ask for help, but I'd rather get home to play video games or text my friends from school, so I don't do any of that. As you watch me swim, you notice these things....and you also notice a few other swimmers who ARE at all the practices. YOU have been around all of us enough, you know when I'm trying my hardest – and when I am just telling you that I am. You also know who gives their best effort all(most) of the time. Now you have to make a decision, who are you going to be spending the most time with trying to help improve? Duh. Will you have "favorites"? You better betcha you will. If you are a motivated coach, you want to work with motivated athletes.

Fun at Practice:

Fun? How is it fun to push your body to its pain threshold? Practice isn't necessarily fun, but accomplishing something in practice (making a set –20X50 on :40 for the first time) can be as rewarding as any meet performance. Hopefully everyone realizes that the better you practice, both physically and mentally (lower your stroke count – better streamline), the more fun you will have when you go to race. You feel better, you improve, you can hold off the competition or even catch them at the end of the race. Now that's fun, no matter how you look at it. When you finish and get your time and know that all that work you did pays off....that's FUN!

My Take On It:

Personally, as a coach, and previously as an athlete just like you, I am VERY competitive. I like to watch my swimmers touch out the competition or look up at a results board and see that smile crack, even though their body just went through some intense pain..... now that is cool. I can remember being in races when I just felt like my arms were gonna drop off my body. But about that time, I see a swimmer in the next lane that is looking back at me. They very likely feel like I do—pain—and they are there to beat me to that wall. At this point, I have a decision to make. I give in, they win OR you dig a little deeper and see if you have what it takes to leave them in the dust (bubbles). Amazingly, when you make the decision to beat them – you forget about the pain. I don't understand, nor do I have any desire to understand why some people just don't seem to mind getting beat by others. "That's just little Susan's personality." NOT. Complacency and apathy are NOT qualities that you strive for in life (PERIOD). Everyone is competitive. Some people maybe a little too much....others just need to find it, it may be deep inside, but I GUARANTEE you its there. You've experienced it before. Maybe in a swim practice, maybe in the classroom, maybe it's seeing the team you like on TV win. Its one of those things that may give you goose bumps because its just that exciting. It makes you feel good! No, it makes you feel GREAT! Finding that place in you is very important...that is why you have coaches, that is why you are here. It's what it is ALL ABOUT.

In the end, it is not Mom, Dad, Brother/Sisters, Coaches, Teachers, Teammates, or anyone else that is going to make you successful. It is only YOU! These others may be able to assist you, but it is only YOU that can ultimately choose your path. In swimming, you must identify your weaknesses—work on them daily to make them your strengths! If your turns are bad...practice them better, every time you make a turn in practice. If your butterfly is weak, do more of it, until it gets stronger. Do what it takes to get yourself where YOU want to be!

Ask yourself these questions:

Why do you swim?

Are you a competitor? Or are you a participant?

Do you believe that you can improve?

Do you frequently give up? Take the easy way out?

What did you do at your last practice to make yourself better?

What do you plan to do at your next practice to get better?

Do you make every possible effort to be at ALL the practices, start to finish? Do you leave practice early?