

15 Things I've Learned in 15 Days

It has been 15 days since I saw my NCSA National Juniors Team, the last day I was on deck. We were 3 days from leaving for Orlando when the meet was cancelled and the world around us has changed. The NCSA Jr Team, Ross, & I sacrificed our Spring Break to stay home, train, challenge ourselves at the next level, represent SSAN with some of the best 18&under athletes, have break throughs and be together. I have thought of Friday, March 15 every day with sadness and worry. All the planning, preparation and goals left unfinished on hold due to a virus that has rocked the world with heartache. I'm sad we have missed valuable time with all our athletes including our Senior Class. I'm sad that we won't be going to Omaha this summer to watch one of our own compete at the Olympic Trials. I'm sad with the cancellation of the Olympics, one of my favorite things every 4 years. I'm sad for our team not being able to swim right now. And I'm worried because of all the uncertainty around us. But I am HOPEFUL. We shall overcome. We will be stronger. We will get through this.

I've had 15 days to think, to truly review what is important to me and here's what I've learned.

1. **The words THANK YOU.** How many of you have used these words often throughout the day? Being thankful is a choice, an appreciation, an attitude, a way of life. I hope we all choose to be thankful every day for all that we have and all that we are. I am thankful for my husband, my family, my health, to have a voice, to be a leader, my education, my athletic career, my ability to give back & care, and of course the team I love, Swim Streamline.
2. **Being proactive.** In the face of uncertainty be proactive vs reactive. Actions speak louder than words.
3. **Know.** Knowing when to step in and step back as needed to tackle any situation.
4. **Follow your head and heart when making decisions.** When they are in sync you will always try and do your best for yourself and everyone around you.
5. **Home is wherever you make it (and where your heart is).** Our home for SSAN is usually on the pool deck but these days it's been in and around our own homes. But still, we are home together caring and supporting each other.
6. **Character.** We talk about this all the time. One of the most valuable attributes we have. Protect, work on, and own all that you do that makes you, YOU.
7. **Have Faith.** This word is not just about religious faith it also represents trust and confidence in someone or something. Find your faith. I have faith all of us will get through this trying time together and stronger because of it.
8. **Kindness.** Be kind to one another always. We are all human. We make mistakes. We make tough decisions. But whatever you do, understand why a mistake or decision was made and respond in kindness the best you can.
9. **Be thoughtful.** We need to be the example for others to follow. Showing careful consideration for others. We aren't perfect but I know SSAN families care about each other and help in times of need.
10. **Be strong.** Time and time again this season our strength has been tested in and out of the pool. Our current tests are not swimming due to COVID-19. We lost one of our strong family members this year, Coach Kara. I think of her and her beautiful smile all the time. I know she is watching over us and acknowledging our strength each day. As I've said

before, we must stay strong and create the positive ripples in the pool and beyond. Finish strong!

11. **Creativity.** I recently showed a dear friend my wedding scrapbook from 2008. This was completed before all the fancy apps and websites. You couldn't take digital photos and create one easily. This one was real arts and crafts, printing an actual picture with my own mind and 2 hands, try some creativity. I remembered all the memories of our special wedding day with a smile. I have been challenged the past 15 days of getting creative off deck to find activities for my staff and team to do to keep us moving forward. I hope that you have found some time to be creative and think outside the box too.
12. **Well-being.** There is so much discussion these days about mental health and well-being. The struggle is real! I know I have time to reflect, decompress and focus on me a little more each day through a walk, run, or just reaching out to someone to say thank you. Make sure to make time for yourself and do something good for others. I promise this will help you feel better.
13. **Sacrifice.** We have all made sacrifices this season. Take a moment to celebrate and honor the many swimmers (including yourself) all over the world who are not getting a chance to finish their athletic goals in short course, at Trials, or at the Olympics. Take a moment to give yourself credit for the sacrifices you, your family, your friends, your team made to help you reach your goals. Remember this feeling of sacrifice and let it inspire you and rejuvenate you to help set the next goal, dream the next dream, and swim the next race. We honor and look forward to the next phase of sacrifices, dedication, passion, and opportunities that lie ahead for all SSAN.
14. **Support.** Support your family, your friends, your team, small businesses, & one another. It doesn't always involve money. Pick up the phone, mail a card, like/tag/share a picture or post, comment with appreciation or leave a review. Most importantly BE PRESENT in support of your family, friends, SSAN and your community!
15. **Know your WHY!** I love my career. I love our sport. I love helping others. I miss being on-deck every day. I miss the meets. I miss the laughter and communication with my groups every day. I miss my team. I know my why! I look forward to my return to the pool deck to continue my mission on helping kids be better swimmers IN and OUT of the pool every day.

When we get through it, may we find that we have become more like the people we always knew we could be but were just too busy to appreciate it. May we find and appreciate who we are called to be. May we find the strength to be the swimmers, coaches and parents that we know we can be. **Together we are STREAMLINE STRONG!**

Coach Laura