

Perfectionists - Positive or Negative?

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Are you a perfectionist? This could be good, or it could be bad - it all depends on what type of perfectionist you are - a positive or a negative one. Many champion swimmers are perfectionists, never being 100% satisfied until they have achieved what they set out to do. These are swimmers who constantly encourage themselves to work harder and harder until they achieve their goal. These swimmers never criticize or put themselves down, preferring instead to inspire themselves to greater heights. This keeps the motivated and positive, because criticism almost always makes their performance worse, not better.

These swimmers respond to positive reinforcement, motivating words, encouragement, inspiration and powerful thoughts. I call these positive perfectionists. This is the type of swimmer everyone should aspire to become. However, if you happen to be a negative perfectionist, this is another story. Negative perfectionists are never, ever satisfied - even after swimming a fabulous time, because they always manage to find something wrong with the swim, even the smallest thing! Instead of focusing upon the fact that they swam a PB, instead they say that it should have been even better!

Instead of congratulating themselves, they criticize themselves - and this is crazy. There is no quicker way to drive yourself to frustration and failure than to constantly find fault with what you're doing! This way of thinking eventually becomes a huge drain on your energy and confidence, and takes away all the wonderful satisfaction you should be receiving after putting in a great swim.

Negative perfectionists see "congratulating themselves" as a sign of weakness or slacking off - but it's actually an essential part of success. It's the payback you must always give yourself after you achieve a goal, because this is the very thing that gives you the motivation to keep going - to even greater heights. Negative perfectionists always say they are never good enough - and the sad fact is this eventually turns out to be true. They criticize themselves constantly for so many years that inevitably they become negative people - and negative people never achieve anything.

To be successful in swimming, or even life, you have to be a positive person, Period. There can be no argument here - because many times history has shown that negative people do not achieve even close to that of positive people! So the point I am making is this - sure, sometimes the swim could have been better, but celebrate it anyway, and then vow to do even better next time. If you can keep yourself motivated and inspired, you will go a lot further than those who are wallowing in despair - which is what criticism will always bring.

Encourage yourself, congratulate yourself, boost yourself up, pat yourself on the back, tell yourself how wonderful you are - and then use this positive energy to push you on to even greater heights. This is the practice of champions, and let's face it, life is too short to go around criticizing yourself, there are always plenty of other people willing to do that for you anyway!

"The Mind controls the body, and the mind is unlimited".