



In this Newsletter

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Dear Coaches,

Quote of the week:

“You can’t climb up to the second floor without a ladder. When you set your aim too high and don’t fulfill it, then your enthusiasm turns to bitterness. Try for a goal that’s reasonable, and then gradually raise it. That’s the only way to get to the top.”
~Emil Zatopek (1922-) Czech Middle Distance Runner

The Chuck Wielgus Blog: 5 Ways to Success for a Young Professional

A special blog this week written by Russell Mark. Russell has been a High Performance Consultant on USA Swimming’s National Team staff in Colorado Springs since 2002. Over the years he has worked closely with our sport’s most elite-level athletes and coaches, including the last three U.S. Olympic Teams. Russell is sought-after for speeches and presentations on swimming technique, and he has contributed to many professional journals and published books. A graduate of the University of Virginia, where he was a competitive swimmer, Russell worked for Pratt & Whitney’s experimental military jet engine program before joining the USA Swimming National Team staff.

Everybody defines success a little differently, depending on your viewpoint and goals.

I feel lucky to consider myself professionally successful, most importantly, because I feel happy and challenged every day with my work. One measure of that fulfillment is that I’ve worked at USA Swimming from ages 22 to 35. Who does that nowadays? Research says that millennials expect to change jobs every three years.

My happiness stems from feeling like I’m contributing every day to helping our swimming community – coaches getting better, athletes getting faster, or learning something new. It still amazes me that hundreds of people will come listen to me talk about technique and performance. It’s truly gratifying and keeps me motivated to continue to better every day.

While success for a young professional includes financial security, the days are long gone where money alone and/or climbing the corporate ladder is fulfilling enough. Many of today’s young professionals have a job but still struggle to figure it out. That’s because we also want to channel purpose and have meaning through our work. We seek to make a deeper impact.

Whether you’re a soon-to-be or recent college grad, a young swim coach for life or just temporarily – I’ve got words for you because I’ve lived it.

After being unhappy in my first job, I made a 180-degree career turn and started at the very bottom. And now I’m viewed as an authority. I’ve seen other young professionals rise to success, while others struggle. Here’s how to be fulfilled and be influential in your job:

Enjoy What You Do

Don’t take a job because you like the paycheck, the perks (travel, free gear, the Olympics, etc.), the job promotion or the fame. It’s totally basic, but in order to be effective in your job, you have to be passionate and genuinely interested in it.

By studying my craft and attacking every day to deliver my best, I’ve been fortunate to be a part of Team USA for three Olympic Games and help advise our coaches and athletes on the way to medal-winning performances. But I never intended to go to three Olympics or become an expert on technique. The goal was – and still is – to help people improve and challenge myself academically.



Randy Julian
Sport Development
Consultant
Central Zone
USA Swimming

[719-866-3578](tel:719-866-3578) [719-866-3578](tel:719-866-3578)
Direct

[719-440-2421](tel:719-440-2421) [719-440-2421](tel:719-440-2421)
Cell
[719-866-4669](tel:719-866-4669) Fax

[719-866-4578](tel:719-866-4578) [719-866-4578](tel:719-866-4578)
Office
1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Spring, Colorado
80909
[email](#)

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So identify those “big picture” goals that will satisfy you. That’s what you should pursue daily.

I took an engineering job right out of college that paid me very well but I was pretty miserable. I could buy anything I wanted but that wasn’t important at all. I took a pay cut of over \$50k to make less than \$7/hour at an internship with USA Swimming. It was easily the best decision of my life.

Respect Old School Ways

While my own viewpoints on technique may conflict with long-standing teachings, I read and loved Doc Counsilman’s book “The New Science of Swimming.” Doc had a very effective way with words, and I easily understood how his thoughts and perspective became dominant for decades to follow.

I also read Ernie Maglischo’s work and numerous research articles that were considered influential. Just as important, I listened to what every coach and athlete said, especially my office mentors, Jonty Skinner and John Walker. For 3 years, that’s all I did – listen and learn.

In other words, it took a long time and some patience. I had to respect and understand those long-standing practices if I were to make any changes.

Many young professionals are anxious to be heard, make changes, and make their mark. But don’t force the issue. Even if you think it doesn’t make any sense and it should be done differently, you first have to understand how success has been achieved. Listen and learn why it worked. Everybody hates a know-it-all, so don’t be that person.

Talk to Those Who Have Achieved Success

For younger folks, talking to older generations can be awkward and intimidating. What do you have in common? How do you start conversation? How do you fill the uncomfortable pauses in conversation? Does it make me look bad to ask for help or advice?

Many people rationalize that it’s not worth it, and choose to keep to themselves.

But get over it! Push your ego aside and put yourself out there. Take the initiative to learn from all those who have more experience and success than you. In addition to the institutional knowledge you will gain, these people can help you get things done.

I guarantee that I can do things better, faster, and easier than my co-workers who don’t have those relationships. Get used to always introducing yourself to people (and it’s amazing how many people don’t know how to do that) and asking a couple questions. This is a key part of forming relationships.

It comes naturally to outgoing people. But for many others, like me, it doesn’t. But it’s a social skill I made a conscious decision to practice before I got comfortable and good at it.

Whether in the office or on pool deck – where every Olympic coach and virtually every National Team coach is still older than me – I definitely didn’t get where I am on my own. I still ask a ton of questions, seek out feedback and welcome help.

If you genuinely care about your job and your success, you’ll value the relationships with older colleagues, mentors, swim parents and others. Some might appear at first to be in the periphery but developing these connections can open doors unbeknownst to you.

It’s Not What You Know, It’s How You Say It

You can be the smartest person in the whole world, have all the answers for your company, or think you know how to make the fastest swimmer. But, if you want to make an impact or truly help people, that knowledge needs to be transferred to others.

“Communication” is such a clichéd term in business, but I’d say that having good communication skills is MORE important than the actual knowledge.

Think about social media posts, advertisements, or movies that resonate with you. Now think about a science research article and how the message is convoluted and

ineffective.

Your message needs to be simple and versatile so that it can be easily understood by anyone you possibly want to reach. If nobody is reading your work or listening when you speak, don't get frustrated. Think about your delivery. You have the opportunity to change it.

It took me years to refine how I talk and write about technique. I'm still constantly self-evaluating to make it most powerful. Part of my process is keen observation of the best coaches in the country. As a group, their common trait isn't being swim nerds, physiology experts, or the most well-read coaches, but they are great storytellers and motivators. In other words, great communicators.

Under Promise, Over Deliver

When I was working as an engineer, a mentor at that company told me those four words, and it's been the mantra of my entire career: Under-promise, Over-deliver.

Anyone trying to establish themselves in the workplace has the natural urge to impress or gain opportunities by talking big or being the first person to say something. Resist the urge!

It's always better to manage expectations and blow people away with the quality and depth of your work. Especially being new, it's difficult to anticipate how long something will take or what obstacles can pop up.

It doesn't pay to do things fastest, just to be the first to show a result. It pays to do it super well. Do your due diligence, don't take shortcuts, and be an overachiever.

I feel so fortunate to have a job that gives me the opportunity to be happy in the work aspect of my life. While I might not be a millionaire, I don't strive to be. Every day, my goals are to be happy and make an impact on the world around me. No matter where you are in your work situation, I'm telling you it's possible.

What is Sport Psychology?

By Dr. Jim Bauman, Special Contributor

Sport psychology is a profession that utilizes psychological theory, research, strategies and applied experience to move individuals toward capturing their highest athletic potentials (talent) by collaboratively working with the athlete, other support staff and coaches. That collaborative work results in increasingly higher levels of performance with a consistent ability to perform on demand – individually, as a team, in the pool, and out of the pool.

Similar to computers and computer systems, we need performance-oriented people who are knowledgeable about “hardware” (strength-conditioning, physiology, bio-mechanics, medicine, physical therapy, chiropractic, massage, nutrition, video analysis); people who are knowledgeable about “software” (psychologist); and people who are knowledgeable about “systems” (coaches.) These are the members of your “pit crew.”

The most successful NASCAR teams have smart, well-trained, and high-functioning “pit crews” to support the driver. Sport Psychology is an integral part of USA Swimming's High Performance Pit Crew and you're the driver! Use your entire pit crew!

Read more:

Choose Wisely When Dining Out

By Chris Rosenbloom, PhD, RDN, CSSD

Dining out at quick service restaurants is an easy option for many busy swimming families. I've written on healthy choices while eating out in the past, and the restaurant industry continues to expand delicious and nutritious options.

Today's consumer wants choices. So while there are high-calorie, high-fat, and high sodium foods at restaurants, increasingly there are many more options that can keep swimmers in the lane of good health.

By the end of this year, calorie labeling on menus will be required under the Affordable Care Act. Many food service establishments are already posting calorie information on menus, menu boards or posters. Most quick service restaurants have informative websites or apps that highlight the better-for-you choices.

[Here are a few places](#) that swimmers have asked about over the past year, with the best choices for swimmers:

Spring Regional Coach Clinic Registration Now Open

The Regional Coaching Clinic program brings affordable clinics directly to teams in their own LSCs. These clinics are designed for the entire coaching staff from the novice coach to the senior level coach.

Clinics are priced to encourage coaching staffs to attend the clinic together. \$75 per coach or \$200 for a coaching staff of 3 or more.

Atlanta, GA: April 10-12, 2015
Seattle, WA: April 10-12, 2015
Elkhart, IN: April 24-26, 2015
Billerica, MA(outside of Boston): April 24-26, 2015

Spring 2015 [registration links](#) are now open.

Exciting New Video From USA Swimming Foundation

Not all gifts can be wrapped. The USA Swimming Foundation released its [30-second video](#) showing what giving the gift of swimming looks like. Tomorrow's club swimmers and Olympians begin with swim lessons, and the contributions to the USA Swimming Foundation supports the mission of saving lives and building champions – in the pool and in life.

10 Life Lessons from Legendary North Carolina Basketball Coach Dean Smith

By Kathleen Elkins, Business Insider, February 9, 2015

Legendary University of North Carolina men's basketball coach Dean Smith knew how to win a ball game.

Smith, who died at age 83 at his home on Saturday, coached the Tar Heels from 1961 to 1997. In those 36 seasons, he led the team to two National Championships, 13 ACC tournament titles, and 11 Final Four appearances.

He also led the United States basketball team to a gold medal at the 1976 Montreal Olympics and became the winningest coach in college basketball history two decades later in 1997.

Smith coached a generation of players who went on to have successful careers in the NBA, including perhaps the greatest player basketball has ever seen, Michael Jordan. He not only taught his players how to win a basketball game — he taught them how to win at life.

Remembered for his quiet humility, social activism, and impact on his players just as much as his impeccable coaching résumé, we can draw valuable life lessons from 10 of his best quotes, which come from his co-authored book, "The Carolina Way: Leadership Lessons from a Life in Coaching," interviews, and pre-practice team meetings.

[Read more:](#)

Three Goals for Playing Your Best on Game Day

By Dr. Jim Taylor, PrimeSports, February, 2015

Defining success in sports is a difficult task. When I ask most athletes and coaches how they define success, it is usually in terms of results, whether wins, rankings, or times. Though, admittedly, results are the ultimate determinant of success, I have found that a preoccupation with them can both interfere with achieving those results and can produce feelings of disappointment and frustration (or worse). One problem is that focusing on results can actually prevent you from getting the results you want for two reasons. First, if you're focusing on results before a competition, you're not focusing on what you need to do to get those results. Second, focusing on results, specifically, the possibility of bad results, is what causes you to get nervous before competitions which will only hurt your performances. Another problem with sports is that your efforts don't always lead directly to the results you want because you can't control everything in a competition. In other words, "S&# Happens" in sports that can derail your best efforts. To help demonstrate this point, let's compare success and failure in sports to success and failure in school. Let's say you have an exam coming up. If you study hard and are well prepared, assuming the test is fair, the chances of your doing well are very high, say, over 95%. Why? Because there are few external variables that can prevent you from doing well. Sports, however, are very different. You can be completely ready to have a great competition, but things don't work out in your favor. For example, you experience bad weather, such as fog or high wind, or make a costly mistake that you can't recover from. The odds of doing well in a competition are, if you are really prepared, I would say, around 80%. Given the uncertainty of sports, basing how you feel about your performance (and about yourself!) solely on your results is a recipe for experiencing the very thing you want to avoid—failure—and some pretty bad feelings. I prefer to define success in terms that are controllable.

Goal #1:

[Read more:](#)

2015 Zone Select Camp Assistant Coach/Manager Applications Available

The 2015 Zone Select Camps will be held in May/June and the assistant coach and assistant manager positions are filled through an online application process. Applicants for these positions must complete the online application form by March 1, 2015. Applicants are to apply for the camp in their own Zone. If you are interested in one of these positions, please click on the correct link below and complete the form by 3/1/15. If

you have any questions, please contact [Bill Krumm](#) or call [719-866-3582](#) [719-866-3582](#).

[Eastern Zone Select Camp Assistant Application Form](#)
[Central Zone Select Camp Assistant Application Form](#)
[Southern Zone Select Camp Assistant Application Form](#)
[Western Zone Select Camp Assistant Application Form](#)

For more information on the 2015 Zone Select Camps, [click here](#).

The Enemy of Excellence in Youth Sports

By Changingthegame project, February 2015

"My daughter is the tallest fourth grader in her class and loves to play basketball," said a father to me recently. "Sadly, I know that she will ultimately grow to be of average height. Since she is now only allowed to rebound and give the ball to shorter-ball handler players on her team, she will never develop the skills she will need to play basketball. After her last game, she told her 5-year old sister that she did not shoot or score because her job is to rebound and play defense, because that is what her coach told her. What should I do?"

The plight of this parent highlights what I believe to be the greatest obstacle to a child-centered youth sports environment.

It causes many children to drop out and quit.

It turns the focus of youth sports away from the priorities and needs of children, and towards the values of adults.

It cuts at the very essence of what sports is supposed to be about: a quest for excellence.

[Read more:](#)

Ways to Build Trust

By Jon Gordon, Author, Speaker, February 9, 2015

In my book *Soup* I discussed how trust is one of the essential ingredients to build a great relationship, winning team and culture of greatness. Without trust you can't have engaged relationships and without engaged relationships you won't be a successful leader, manager, sales person, team member, principal, teacher, nurse, coach, etc.

In this spirit I wanted to share some thoughts about how we can build the trust that is essential for great relationships. Many of the suggestions you are already know. Many ideas I share are common sense. However, I've found that so often amidst the chaos of life and work we forget the simple and powerful truths that matter most. So here are 11 thoughts about trust. Feel free to share these simple reminders with your leaders, colleagues and team.

1. Say what you are going to do and then do what you say!
2. Communicate, communicate, communicate. Frequent, honest communication builds trust. Poor communication is one of the key reasons marriages and work relationships fall apart.
3. Trust is built one day, one interaction at a time, and yet it can be lost in a moment because of one poor decision. Make the right decision.
4. Value long term relationships more than short term success.
5. Sell without selling out. Focus more on your core principles and customer loyalty than short term commissions and profits.
6. Trust generates commitment; commitment fosters teamwork; and teamwork delivers results. When people trust their team members they not only work harder, but they work harder for the good of the team.
7. Be honest! My mother always told me to tell the truth. She would say, "If you lie to me then we can't be a strong family. So don't ever lie to me even if the news isn't good."
8. Become a coach. Coach your customers. Coach your team at work. Guide people, help them be better and you will earn their trust.
9. Show people you care about them. When people know you care about their interests as much as your own they will trust you. If they know you are out for yourself, their internal alarm sounds and they will say to themselves "watch out for that person."
10. Always do the right thing. We trust those who live, walk and work with integrity.
11. When you don't do the right thing, admit it. Be transparent, authentic and willing to share your mistakes and faults. When you are vulnerable and have nothing to hide you radiate trust.

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