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Dear Coaches,

Quote of the week:

The quality of our expectations determines the quality of our actions."

~Andres Godin

Our Core Objectives & Cultural Values

The Chuck Wielgus Blog:

The senior staff leadership team at USA Swimming is hard at work putting together the business plan for the next quad (2017-20). The 2020 Business Plan will provide an outline of the goals and strategies that we, as an organization and individuals, will be working toward.

Our planning, and the work we follow through with over the next four years, will ensure that USA Swimming continues to grow, remains among the most prominent of all Olympic sport programs and invites even more young swimmers into our sport.

The first step we took in starting to construct the 2020 Business Plan was to re-affirm our belief and our commitment to the three aspirational objectives that we have worked by for almost 20 years now: BUILD, PROMOTE and ACHIEVE.

[Learn more here:](#)

Now What? Trials Sold Out...How to still Get Tickets!

We know many athletes have recently qualified and their families are looking for tickets. Starting on April 1st the ticket exchange site will open.

PrimeSport is the Official Ticket Exchange for USA Swimming and the only approved marketplace for fans to buy and re-sell tickets in a convenient, safe and guaranteed environment.

www.PrimeSport.com

The 400m IM: Where Strategy Meets Everything Else

By Matt Barbini, USA Swimming National Team High Performance Consultant

Strategy in swimming is a relative concept. A 50 freestyler might have a point of emphasis to think about. A 100 freestyler might have desired tempos and a back 50 split in mind. A 200 freestyler may plan for easy front end speed. 400, 800, and 1500 freestylers likely think about pace.

A 400 IMer, however, better have a true strategy.

[Learn more here:](#)



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Do Your Athletes Understand You?

By Scott Rosberg, Coaches Toolbox, March 2016

This post is the second of a few that come from some ideas I wrote in my first two booklets A Head Coach's Guide for Working with Assistants and The Assistant Coach's Guide to Coaching. While those booklets were born out of some specific head coach/assistant coach issues I was facing with some members of a coaching staff for whom I was an athletic director, many of the ideas in them form the basis for good coaching principles in general. Today, I want to talk about the three messages that occur anytime we communicate with people.

As an English teacher for 18 years, I tried to teach my students many facets of good communication. Interestingly, most of the lessons on communication that I taught played a huge role not only in the classroom, but also in the athletic arena and elsewhere in life. One important lesson is that whenever we communicate with others, we need to be aware of three types of messages – Intended, Actual, and Received/Perceived Messages.

[Learn more here:](#)

Three Little Words That Will Change Your Life Forever

By Beth Buelow, Author, Speaker, LinkedIn Pulse, Mar 10, 2016

One rainy afternoon a few years ago, I was driving into Seattle for a networking event when my husband called me on my cell. I answered (this was pre-hands-free law) and listened, noting the barely perceptible panic in his voice: something unexpected had come up, and he needed the car for an off-site meeting. Since I was in the car, traveling up I-5 at 65mph in the opposite direction from him, he clearly had a problem.

There was a time when I would have sighed, said, "I'll be right there," and gotten off at the next exit and turned around. He called me with a problem; I had to save the day, right? I would have felt mildly annoyed but, in a twisted way, virtuous for having come to his rescue and fixed his problem. (Oh, and my strong introvert side would have felt relieved... no networking event!)

But that's not how this story ends. I listened to his description of the situation and said, "Oh dear, I'm sorry to hear that. How else can you get to the meeting?"

We brainstormed for a moment, he said, "I'll figure it out," and we hung up. And I forgot about the conversation until I got home later that evening.

This might not be a big deal to some people, but it was a true turning point for me. It was one of the first times I'd intentionally taken a concept I learned in coach training and put it into practice personally:

[Learn more here:](#)

The Interleaving Effect: Mixing It Up Boosts Learning

Studying related skills or concepts in parallel is a surprisingly effective way to train your brain

By Steven C. Pan, Scientific American, August 4, 2015

We've all heard the adage: practice makes perfect! In other words, acquiring skills takes time and effort. But how exactly does one go about learning a complex subject such as tennis, calculus, or even how to play the violin? An age-old answer is: practice one skill at a time. A beginning pianist might rehearse scales before chords. A young tennis player practices the forehand before the backhand. Learning researchers call this "blocking," and because it is commonsensical and easy to schedule, blocking is dominant in schools, training programs, and other settings.

However another strategy promises improved results. Enter "interleaving," a largely unheard-of technique that is capturing the attention of cognitive psychologists and neuroscientists. Whereas blocking involves practicing one skill at a time before the next

(for example, “skill A” before “skill B” and so on, forming the pattern “AAABBBCCC”), in interleaving one mixes, or interleaves, practice on several related skills together (forming for example the pattern “ABCABCABC”). For instance, a pianist alternates practice between scales, chords, and arpeggios, while a tennis player alternates practice between forehands, backhands, and volleys.

[Learn more here:](#)

How to Learn New Skills Twice as Fast, According to Science

Learning a sport or instrument? A new study says this subtle change to how you practice will help you improve twice as fast.

By Jessica Stillman, Contributor, Inc.com, February 16, 2016

You probably practice your favorite hobby for the simple reason that it's fun, but there are other reasons having an after-hours pastime is awesome. Not only does science show that hobbies can boost your work performance, but many of them, from playing video games to playing guitar, can also make you smarter.

So, if you want to intensify your commitment to whatever it is you enjoy in your free time, be it violin or ultimate Frisbee, how can you learn your new game or instrument even faster and make the most of your limited practice time?

The secret, according to new research, isn't grinding out more hours mastering a skill, but being clever about how you practice.

[Learn more here:](#)

Love All of It

By Jon Gordon, Author, March 21, 2016

I sat for a while staring at the computer screen. I couldn't write. Not even a sentence. It had been a week since I started to write a new book but I had nothing. Each December I write a new book and it usually flows well, but not this time. This time I was filled with fear.

Fear that I would disappoint the people who enjoyed my other books. Fear that I couldn't live up to the success of The Energy Bus.

Fear that people would say my best writing was behind me. Fear that I would write a piece of junk.

[Learn more here:](#)

Five Lessons On Achieving Goals You Can Apply Today

By John G. Miller, QBQ, March 22, 2016

Over the weekend, while watching the NCAA wrestling tourney on TV, I was reminded of my dad, coach Jimmy Miller. Serving as Cornell's head wrestling coach for more than 25 years, he oversaw many young men with intense goals. And many of them found success. During those years, he frequently made two comments about semifinal versus final matches.

One interesting, one wise.

First, he felt that semis almost always bested finals in excitement, passion, and intensity. He'd say that an athlete's strong desire and goal to make it to the last round made a semifinal match way more fun to watch. He was right, and it wasn't just in wrestling.

Think about the 1980 USA Olympic hockey victory over the Soviet Union: a semifinal never to be forgotten. Many people who were alive then and watched that game on TV, have no idea who the USA beat in the finals for the gold.

[Learn more here:](#)

Critical Things You Must Quit Doing Now To Be More Successful

By Travis Bradberry, Coauthor Emotional Intelligence 2.0, linkedin Pulse, March 9, 2016

Most of us grew up hearing the mantra "Don't be a quitter," and we've internalized it to the point where we feel guilty even if we don't finish a book that's boring us to death. Our parents weren't entirely wrong in saying that persistence is necessary for success, but sometimes quitting is the most effective course of action. Whether it's a failed project, a thankless job, or a doomed relationship, quitting can be a virtue.

"Quitting is leading too." – Nelson Mandela

[Learn more here:](#)