

What Motivates the Coach?

From News for Swim Parents

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It's obvious that it's the coaches job to motivate the swimmers, but the question has come up as to who or what motivates the coach on a daily basis? We asked Coach Steve Bultman, ASCA Level 5, what motivates him. His answer:

"One of our problems has been that lots of good coaches have left the sport for various reasons and loss of motivation is a big part of that. I've found motivation in various places. First, I think the swimmers, above all, motivate the coach. One of the neatest things about our job is working with outstanding young individuals to help them reach their goals. When you have that kind of relationship, it's highly rewarding.

"The performance of the team also motivates the coach. There are days where you just have a great practice and everything goes well, and it's a great feeling.

"Other things also help keep a coach happy and involved with swimming. Parents who really believe in what you're doing and pitch in and help out where they're needed definitely make the job go better. I've also found that going to the ASCA Clinic gets your batteries charged and fills you with energy and ideas.

Another way to motivate your coach is to give him or her a chance to be an "explorer"; a chance to maintain or improve their creative ability. Roger Von Oech, author of *A Whack on the Side of the Head* and *A Kick in the Seat of the Pants* spoke at the ASCA World Clinic in 1987. He said:

"I believe that in order to create anything, whether it's an idea for a new swimming project, or a new business, or a new recipe for chicken, or a new fund raising idea, you have to have the materials in which to create. That means having facts, information, concepts, knowledge, experiences. Now, I find that a lot of people tend to look for information only in their own area. I do a lot of work with computer companies and I find computer people spending most of their time talking to other computer people. I work with bankers and they spend most of their time talking with other financial people.

"I would imagine there is some of the same thing in the swimming community. That's fine initially. Talk to your colleagues and peers, that is what this clinic is all about. Early on, I also encourage you to do this: put on the hat of the explorer and get outside your box. Venture off the beaten path and look for ideas in other fields, other sports, and other industries. Again and again, I've seen people poke around in outside areas, find something and bring it back to their own sport, give it a twist, and come up with something highly innovative.

Too often we expect coaches to be coaches 24 hours a day. Not only should we allow them time to be explorers, we should actively encourage them to seek activities, hobbies, and professional seminars to help them be better coaches. (Why not send your coach to a sales seminar?)

In addition to encouraging and financially supporting coaches to attend seminars, coaches appreciate and are motivated by the Board of Director's respect for their well being. Due to competitive schedules and overlapping seasons coaches often go weeks and sometimes months without a single day off and some

coaches rarely take vacations. Remember that our coaches need time to renew, re-energize, relax, and recreate to be their best for the athletes.