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COMMENTARY

“Retire? Moi???”

When we are younger we rarely think about retiring. We just keep at the job (or “lifestyle”, as Eddie Reese called it), not too different from running laps around the track, each lap being another year with the stopwatch and clipboard. We don’t focus too much on the number of years spent guiding and nurturing and supporting. We do it because we love it. If we don’t love it, have a passion for it, enjoy the giddiness of looking forward to the next season, well... maybe it’s time to retire. Sometimes the time to retire is because we become aware of the dwindling amount of sand remaining in the hourglass and contemplate the “what ifs”.

Many coaches with a lot of years behind them may have things they’d like to do while they are still healthy enough and able to do them. But as The Wall Street Journal noted in an article last fall, the transition isn’t always easy (“*The Best Things About Retirement*”, by Demetria Gallegos, November 18, 2024). “*There can be a loss of identity. Financial woes. Boredom.*” But there is also the flip side of that coin, the one where people **love** retirement.

The coaches who spend more years with their “kids” on the pool deck than their friends in the workplace world spend at their jobs are many.

(please turn to page 4)



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FROM THE EDITOR, *continued from front cover*

While reviewing the NISCA membership roster recently, we were inspired to discover that over 15 currently active coaches have dedicated more than 50 years to the sport, with over 60 contributing 40-50 years of service. We affectionately call them our "lifers"! Having spent 52 years around the pool myself, I suppose I count myself among them. But it raises an important question: *When is the right time to step away?*

Deciding to retire is a deeply personal choice, influenced by many factors. The fortunate ones are those who make this transition on a positive note, having taken time to thoughtfully consider their future beyond daily routines. The key is having a plan—because simply settling into a chair with a remote in hand isn't the healthiest approach. Some *Wall Street Journal* readers shared that they feel busier than ever *post-retirement*. They fill their days with activities they enjoy, like hobbies, exercise, travel, volunteering, reading, spending time with family, or even mentoring others. Others find joy in gardening, creative pursuits, or learning new skills. Many emphasized the importance of focusing on well-being—physically, mentally, and spiritually.

If you're retired, we'd love to hear how you've embraced this new chapter. How have you filled your days after transitioning from "work" to "retirement"? Share your experiences with us at nisca.journal01@gmail.com.

We're excited to introduce two new contributors to the NISCA Journal: **Tomer Rozenberg** and **Nate Tscholl**. Tomer is an Israeli author and strategist known for his insights into personal development and optimism. Holding degrees in political science and economics from Tel Aviv University, along with studies in business strategy from Harvard Business School Online, Tomer's diverse background, including military service, has shaped his

unique perspective.

In September 2024, Tomer published "***New Day, My Way, Your Life: Snooze Button Philosophy***." This engaging book blends humor and wisdom to highlight life's profound lessons found in everyday moments. It encourages readers to embrace joy, growth, and self-discovery through intentional living and humor. Before that, Tomer wrote "*Strategic Life: Learn to Use Strategy to Make Your Everyday Life Better*," combining business insights with personal development strategies.

Tomer regularly shares his thoughts on personal growth, success, and optimism through articles on his website. His mission is to help people embrace life's complexities with humor and grace, finding joy in small moments and perspective in life's surprises.

In this issue, we debut Tomer's essays, starting with "Appreciating What You've Already Done," which explores the concept of a "reverse bucket list," and "How Today Reverberates Into Tomorrow," reflecting on how our choices create lasting ripple effects. We think you'll enjoy these thought-provoking pieces!

Here's to celebrating experience, embracing change, and finding new ways to grow.

Also joining our contributor's stable is Nate Tscholl, creator of the Swimmerd Newsletter. We have two articles from his newsletter in this issue. The first is an edited podcast transcript with Swedish Olympian Emma Igelström on nurturing talent instead of burning it out, and the second is from a conversation on injury prevention strategies with Dr. Sandra Harrell, a performance and injury prevention specialist in California. *More about Nate in the next Journal!*



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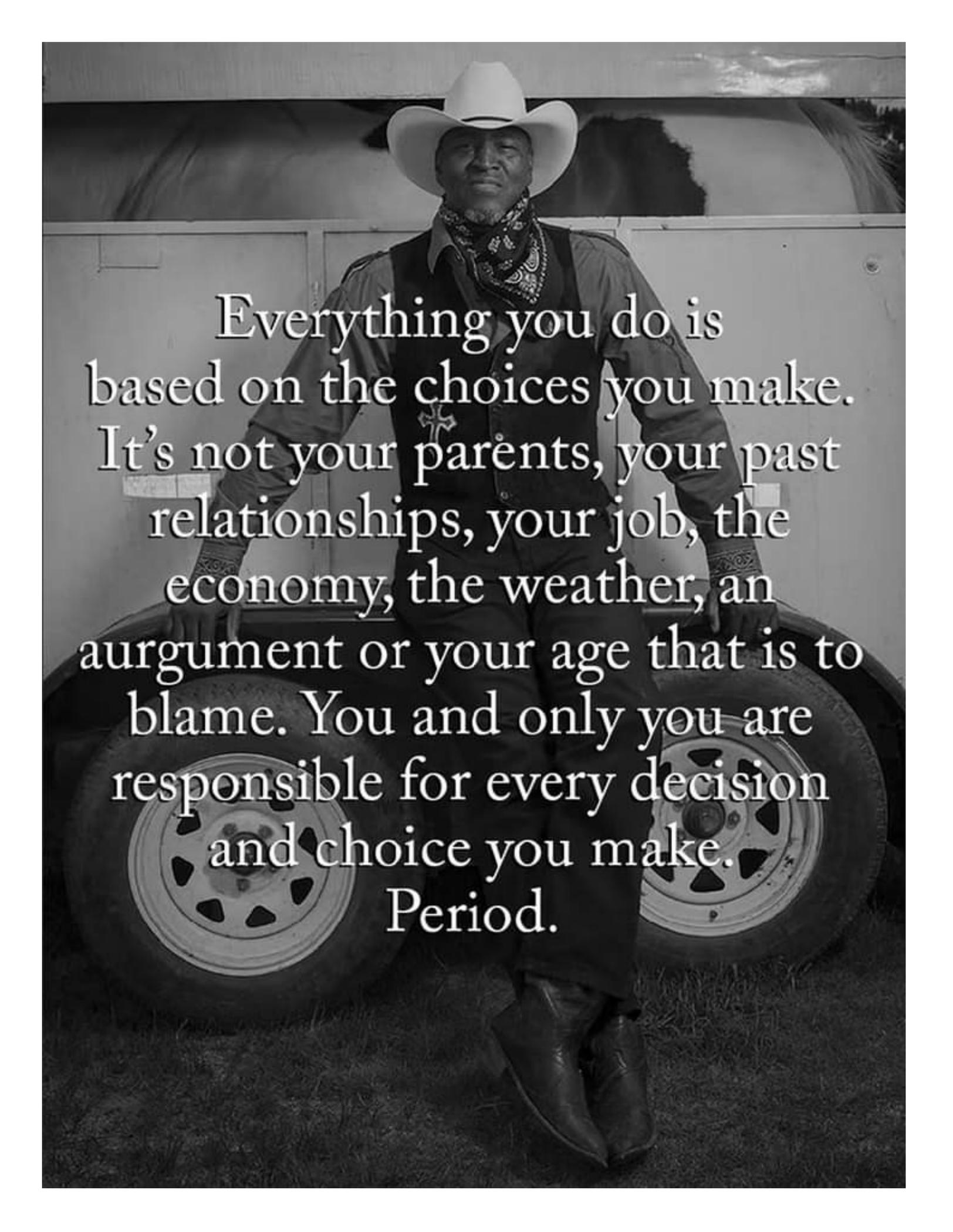
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National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association of America

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Coaches,

Recently, I read about a disturbing incident at a high school volleyball tournament where spectators spat on opposing players. It's disappointing that some students and parents still fail to conduct themselves appropriately at sporting events. Over the years, I've seen an increase in personal attacks on officials, athletes, and coaches, and many state associations are working to curb negative spectator behavior. If we, as coaches, don't take action, we may reach a point where fans are banned from events, forced to watch via live streaming.

A major consequence of this toxic environment is the nationwide decline in sports officials. Many have left, citing negative fan behavior as a key reason. When I coached high school, I always made it a point to thank officials, even having my team do the same. In my first season coaching water polo, I shook an official's hand after a tough loss and an athlete ejection. He assumed I was going to argue but was surprised when I simply asked for advice on how my athletes could improve. That led to a valuable discussion, something I fear is becoming rare. Too many officials now arrive at games already on the defensive, making it even harder to retain them. No one wants to work in a hostile environment.

Coaches aren't immune to this negativity either. This morning, I saw a post from a swimming coach who was verbally attacked by a parent at the end of the season. This coach had stepped in years ago to save a struggling program, yet now, because of one bad experience, they're considering quitting. While I understand that not every parent or athlete will like a coach's style, there is never an excuse for personal attacks.

Over the years, I've sat through many meetings where parents complained about their child's treatment. Early in my career, I took it personally, but I've learned to listen first, avoid getting defensive, and take notes. I reflect on their concerns and consider adjustments for the next season. If a parent waits until the end of the season to voice a complaint, I ask why they didn't bring it up earlier. Many times, a small issue could have been resolved quickly but instead grows into a larger, emotional grievance.

If you ever feel uncomfortable in a meeting with a parent, have a colleague, assistant coach, athletic director, or administrator present. It often helps keep the discussion rational. If a parent crosses the line into verbal attacks, document it and report it. You may find that the issue isn't about you but part of a pattern of behavior. Also, avoid discussing difficult parents with others—doing so can create more problems.

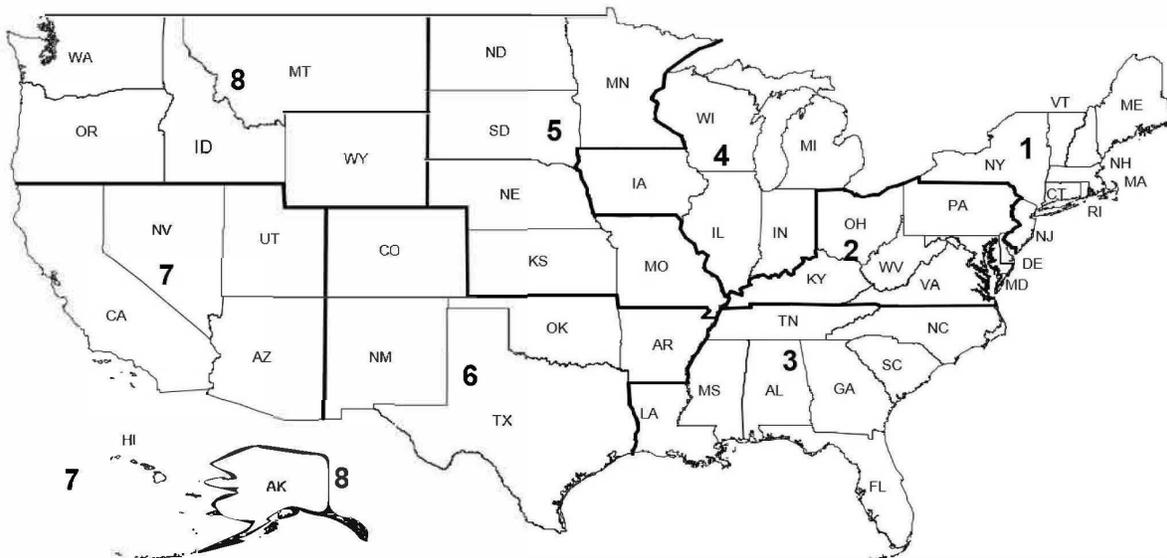
Finally, I hope you'll join us this June for the NISCA Conference in San Antonio. With great speakers and the event scheduled outside the school year, it's a perfect opportunity to learn and bring your family for a well-deserved break.

Mark Jedow

NISCA President

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In Celebration of Life



Kirkwood Taylor Price



Coach Price dedicated 45 years to Cherry Creek High School, serving as a math teacher, coach, and mentor. Many summers were spent running swim and tennis clubs.

His impact on high school tennis was profound and lasting. As the head coach of Cherry Creek boys' tennis (1976-2015), he built a nationally recognized program, winning 38 state championships. He founded the Colorado Tennis Coaches Association and directed tournaments benefiting youth tennis.

As head coach of boys' swimming (1969, 1985-2000), he led his teams to 8 state championships, and 2 national championship titles, coaching 188 All-Americans and a national record holder. His contributions extended beyond the pool, serving in leadership roles with state and national swim coaching associations.



Kirk's dedication was honored with multiple Coach of the Year awards, Hall of Fame inductions, and national coaching accolades. His legacy lives on in the lives of those he mentored, the championships he inspired, and the unwavering commitment he had to student-athletes.

He will be missed by all.

Longtime NISCA member and former Zone 6 Director Kirk Price passed away January 31, 2025. His presence at the NISCA Conference would always be thoughtful, engaging, and when he was not taking part in meetings and discussions (many lively!), he would be meeting up with old friends and making new ones.

He was not hesitant to share his thoughts and opinions, spoke frankly and honestly, and contributed to every meeting he participated in.

His jovial nature and long experience as a successful swimming and tennis coach enriched our lives and many others.

Kirk will be greatly missed.

In Loving Memory of Kirkwood T Price

Kirk Price, age 78, was a devoted father, grandfather, brother, coach, and mentor whose passion for education and athletics shaped countless lives. Kirk was born in Rhode Island and moved to Colorado with his mother when he was an infant. A graduate of Denver's George Washington High School, he earned his bachelor's from the University of Connecticut and a master's from the University of Colorado. He is survived by his daughters, Jennifer Morris and Julie Borgerding, their spouses and 5 grandchildren and 1 great-grandson, his brother Neal Price, and many beloved nieces, nephews, and friends.

His passion, generosity and kindness will never be forgotten.



How to Connect Training Sets with Energy Zone Requirements

By Dr. Sergei Beliaev

Super Sport Systems

Contact Sergei Beliaev at 3S: support@3ssite.com, 1-804-519-1201

The Training Targets

Every coach begins their day on deck by writing or revising training sets for their swimmers and groups. From a coach's perspective, this is an intuitive task: a "set of sets," or workout, serves as a natural way to communicate training goals and ideas with swimmers. But how do we ensure our ideas are both correct and effective, aligned with long-term plans and the swimmers' immediate needs?

The science of training, known as the Methodology of Sports Training, is a specialized field that helps organize this process and provides answers to such questions. Unsurprisingly, sports science is rooted in human physiology, where biological energy production mechanisms and their behavior under exercises of different intensities were identified as the leading factors of human performance. Accordingly, the proper development of different bioenergy pathways can be considered a primary goal of physical training, which, along with technical training, has the most significant impact on athletes' competitive abilities.

Once the training targets are understood, we must formalize their characteristics and standard reactions in response to standard exercises. These characteristics must be detailed to pinpoint the desired application area and increase the expected training effect.

At Super Sport Systems, our focus is on functional training. This article explores how to structure training sets to align with the requirements of each energy zone to maximize training effectiveness.

Energy Zones: Are We Speaking the Same Language?

Since physical activity can be executed at different intensity levels, it was generally agreed that "functional training" targets should be connected to specific energy production systems. However, while the energy pathways are well studied and universally identified, numerous "training zones" systems still exist. This diversity raises a key question: What is the difference between them, and which one is the "right" one for your needs?

Understanding these differences is difficult due to "media noise" and simply the lack of clarity about each approach. To get through the debris, one requires specialized knowledge in that field. The 3S University course (www.3SUniversity.com) is a great starting point, offering insights into contemporary sports training methods.

To evaluate any training zone system, it is essential to understand the criteria used to define zone boundaries under each

system. These boundaries can be quite different depending on the criteria used and call for different training sets by modality, intensity, and duration to produce the desired training effect. However, since the final targets, defined as energy pathways, remain the same, the application of different training recommendations to the same zone obviously either misses the target entirely or can be ineffective in achieving the desired physiological adaptations within each zone. Unfortunately, this situation is quite common.

Here's a summary of the four most commonly used training zone systems:

Color Systems (John Urbanek, University of Michigan)

John Urbanek's "color" system assigns training zones based on swimmers' skin color after exertion at varying intensities. This approach loosely correlates with lactate accumulation in muscles, which may affect skin tone. Influenced by traditional German methods, this system relies on observable physical parameters. While simple and suitable for beginners, its precision is limited.

USA Swimming (Circa 2007)

The USA Swimming Zone System comprises seven levels, resembling classic Western European lactate-based models. However, it struggles to provide clear guidance on specific training set parameters needed to achieve the desired effects. This limitation is a common challenge among physiology-based models, which often lack precise tools for season planning.

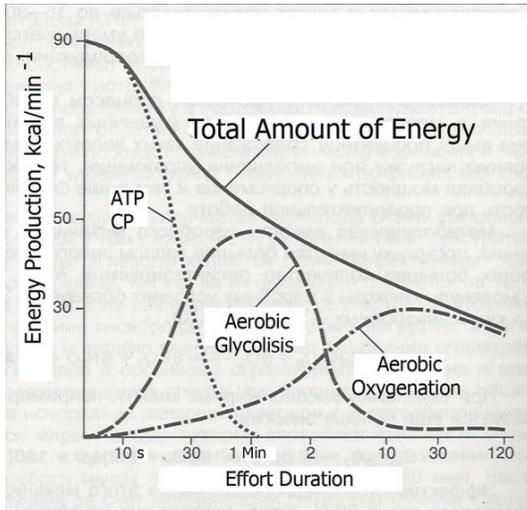
Jan Olbrecht's Lactate Dynamics Model

Jan Olbrecht's system builds on the German-originated lactate threshold training method founded by Dr. Alois Mader in the early 70s. It uses terms such as aerobic power and capacity and anaerobic power and capacity, though their interpretations of power and capacity differ from classic physiology definitions. Despite these differences, Olbrecht's approach uses the dynamics of physiological markers, such as speed of accumulation and removal of Lactate in blood, to guide training intensities. Among several drawbacks of this approach is its complexity and lack of a reliable connection with planning concepts (a common issue with practically all physiology-based approaches based on physiological responses to physical activity).

Ergometric Training Zone Model

An ergometric concept was offered as an alternative to physiology-only-based training methods, using different criteria for defining energy zones and an approach to training process management in general. Based on the Discrete Time of Maximum Effort-Power Output curve (N.I. Volkov 1972-2000), this system uses the Time of Maximum Effort – Maximum Zonal power as the primary criterion for zone determination.

Pic. 1 Sequence and Contribution of Anaerobic and Aerobic Energy Production Mechanisms Into Energy Supply Process of Maximum Effort Exercises of Different Duration (N.I. Volkov et All, Kitev, 2000).



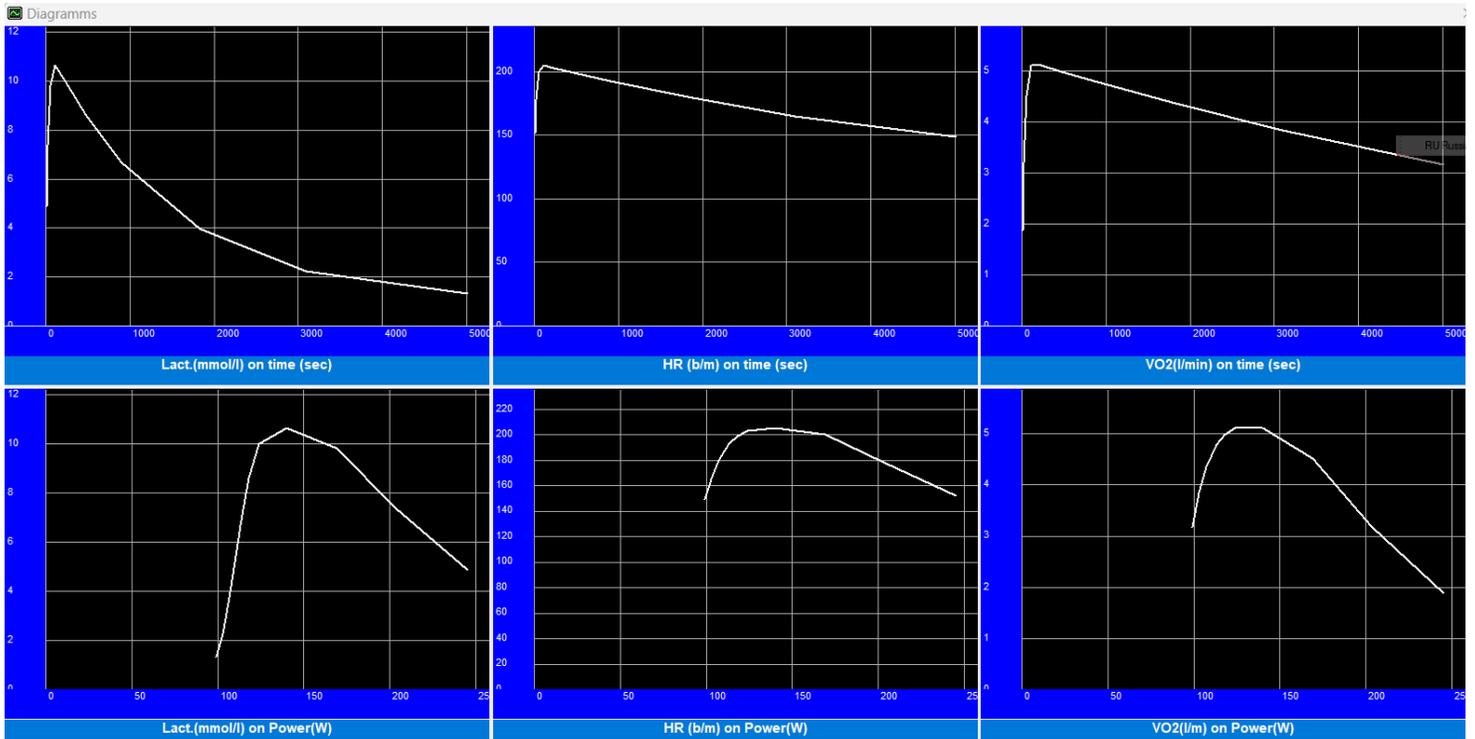
Since in sports, we compete in time and power (speed on distance = sustained power) and not on secondary physiological markers, this approach is a logical and the most direct way to define each energy production zone's boundaries clearly and precisely. More so, it also establishes a connection between zone requirements in terms of training duration and the modality of exercises that are most effective in each instance.

In addition to its usability and practicality, the Ergometric method has a direct connection with contemporary Periodization theory based on adaptation rules, where the rate of improvement is similar, if not identical, to human adaptation progression rates ("adaptation constants"), thus allowing for intelligent planning of training process and training loads distribution necessary to support desired adaptation at its optimum level.

The ergometric model does not discriminate between physiological parameters; it actually uses all of them as control factors when feasible or needed (for example, at national team level training), thus providing clear guidelines for their readings and determination of training direction. For example, using the same logic, we can easily receive individual Heart Rate (as well as La, VO₂ at any duration of maximal effort):

[See Picture 2, below]

Pic. 2. Individual Physiological Models (on Time/and Power), 3S Sport, 2002.



Super Sport Systems' models are based on the **Ergometric concept**, which represents a new paradigm in understanding sports training and its methods. This approach allows us to offer the most effective training exercises (training sets) and track dynamic intensities in each zone. Once you start thinking in this logic, you will find out that all elements of the training process, from seasonal planning to daily workouts and specific sets, are intertwined and interdependent.

Summary:

While more than one system exists, there are two main philosophies behind all of them:

“Reactive” – based on physiological reactions to exercises of different intensities and

“Direct” – based on sustained power output for the duration of the effort.

The precision, usability, and predictive qualities of each system differ depending on the sophistication of the proposed methods, where sophistication, especially in the physiological department, requires more invasive methods, instrumentation, and special knowledge in medicine, making their application expensive and difficult for results interpretation.

The “Direct” approach is typically much more straightforward, appropriate to the practice of sports, and also more universal. It allows the application of universal principles and markers throughout all elements of the training process, from season planning to set design.

Preferred Training Modalities for Different Zones

Training zones correspond to specific energy production pathways, each using distinct energy sources. As such, they require specific training formats tailored to their respective demands. From an energy pathway perspective, training methods can be categorized into four main types:

Continuous Effort: Sustained activity at a steady intensity. This type of activity is ideal for training in aerobic oxygenation departments. Considering the wide range of possible intensity levels within this category, the most effective sets should be pointed at thresholds: aerobic (at ~2 mMol/l lactate accumulation), and anaerobic (at ~4 mMol/l lactate accumulation), where the most effective duration of effort at “critical intensity” should correspond to energy pathway limits.

Interval Training: Alternating periods of work and rest, where intensity is set based on the total distance of the set. Example: The effective distance of 10 X 100 set equals 1000. Interval sets are the most effective for addressing VO2 maximum (aerobic power and capacity). Considering the peculiarities of reaching and sustaining effort at levels close to VO2 max, these zones' total duration of effort is between ~ 6 and 15 minutes, depending on the fraction you aim for. Rest between repetitions in interval sets serves as regulators of relative intensity ranging between ~15 and 30 seconds, where the shorter rest periods

are more effective.

Repetitive Training: Repeated efforts with rest intervals in between. Repetitive sets are most effective in reaching anaerobic mechanisms of energy production. The total duration of effort in these sets should not exceed 3-4 minutes. The rest between repetitions, contrary to Interval sets, should be longer to allow recovery of critical functionals between repetitions and usually are within 1-3 minutes range.

Maximum Effort: Short bursts of all-out intensity.

By understanding and applying these principles, coaches can design training sets that align with energy zone requirements, creating a more effective and efficient training process.

Maximization of Training Precision: Understanding Power, Capacity, and Efficiency

At the start of this article, we noted that training zones were created to establish effective training targets that impact performance. Training zones should guide training at all levels, from season planning to daily workouts. If viewed this way, we can further break down each zone to tailor training for faster and better swimmers. Each zone should focus on specific characteristics of the energy pathways it develops. Think of each energy pathway as a power plant, with three key aspects: maximum power (Power), how long power can be sustained (Capacity), and its efficiency (how much energy is used per unit of power). Efficiency links to technical skills, allowing athletes to cover more distance with less energy.

Training in just one zone is not enough for peak performance. To maximize results, we need to address all abilities within each zone, focusing on Power, Capacity, and Efficiency based on the athlete's unique skills and sport. Modern sports training emphasizes specialization and individualization, considering every detail that impacts performance. Despite this, the biggest opportunity for peak performance still lies in improving the quality of the training process.

What the 3S Platform can do for you

Coaches frequently ask how training exercises align with specific training zones, highlighting gaps in exercise physiology and modern sports training methods. Super Sport Systems addresses these gaps for coaches at all levels, from beginners to Olympians.

Our tools assist with daily tasks such as setting appropriate training volumes based on goals and available time, distributing training loads optimally across Energy Zones throughout the season, planning weekly load distributions with manual adjustments, suggesting effective training sets for each session with customizable options, tracking progress through regular training sets, **and providing weekly paces for each stroke, distance, and training zone for all team members via a mobile app.**

Call 1-804-519-1201 to speak directly to Dr. Sergei Beliaev

DIVING: Endangered?

New World Order: Whither Diving?

Will New NCAA Rules Kill College Diving? Is High School Safe?

By Mike Stott

As a high school swim coach whose teams won more than one state championship thanks to divers I've always appreciated the skill and athleticism those athletes bring to the boards – and the pool. Since May 23, 2024, when the NCAA reached a settlement in the case brought by Grant House and TCU/Oregon basketball player Sedona Price, questions have abounded regarding name, image and likeness payments to college sport participants. The biggest recurring query has been “*What’s next?*”

To Review

The resulting action from the House vs. NCAA settlement allows D-I college athletes to receive pay directly from their universities and agrees to back-pay damages to former Division I athletes who were unable to profit on their NIL rights. Also proposed is a revenue sharing model between schools and athletes. The settlement received preliminary approval October 6 by U.S. District Court Judge Claudia Wilken. The final approval hearing is set for April 7, 2025.

Under the \$2.78 billion settlement (back pay to former college athletes), the NCAA would be responsible for roughly \$1.2 billion from reserves. Power 4 conferences would be responsible for about 24 percent in withheld future revenues. Every collegiate athlete who competed between 2016 and 2021 will have the opportunity to opt into the revenue share.

FACT: College football and basketball generate close to 90 percent of all revenues from college sports. Those monies play a major role in the existence of what we know as Olympic sports. In the collegiate aquatic world most of the going forward discussion has centered around swim team roster sizes, recruiting implications, and more importantly, available financial resources and ultimate Olympic sport team survival. Very little attention has been focused on the swim team stepchild – diving.

To that end Swimming World sought out the opinion of four-time Olympic diving head coach Drew Johansen who also directs the diving program at the University of Indiana. Johansen is a former member of the USA Diving National Team and has coached club, collegiate, national and international squads. He has coached both the U.S. Diving World Championship and U.S. Diving Junior World Teams. Johansen founded the U.S. Elite Diving Academy in 2001, developing it into one of the largest and most successful junior and senior programs in the nation. Since 2007 he has been the head coach and owner of The American School for Diving, which is a USA Diving Center of Excellence and in 2012. In short, he knows diving at all levels.

The View from Here

“It’s a scary time right now,” says Johansen. “The NCAA is in a transformational period across all sports including football and

basketball. There is not a whole lot of clarity right now. We have an idea of where the settlement will go, but until it goes there we won’t know. I do believe the settlement is needed. Once it is done, Congress will calm things down for the business of the NCAA. It’s vulnerable to antitrust suits right now. There is still a lot that needs to happen given the future projections people are making. A settlement will give us a sense of how to operate, especially regarding roster limits and revenue sharing.”

“I do see a future for Olympic sports as long as Congress supports the NCAA operating in the manner it has since inception. My worry is for diving. We are not a standalone sport in NCAA eyes. We fall under the umbrella of swimming. Given roster limit projections I hope we can carve out a space for diving that’s isolated.

“Right now if we end up with 22 men in the SEC as projected there isn’t a whole lot of space for diving when you are talking about a maximum 18-man NCAA championship roster. The SEC allows 22 athletes on the conference championship roster. Before the NCAA added the platform event, divers only counted one-third. The SEC changed the rule for NCAA championship inclusion so divers now count one roster spot making diving even less impactful in terms of an overall team score.

“That’s not been a major problem for teams like Cal, Texas and Michigan who have been able to win championships without putting resources to diving. If you have the swimming depth that Bob Bowman can attract -- and with unlimited scholarship dollars -- there is no need to do anything for diving. That’s a concern -- and I’m sure Bob Bowman doesn’t want to do that either.

“We just need to get our heads together and figure out the best way to move forward and give diving a space for the team sport we are. The swim coaches will make those decisions; diving coaches will never get a vote. Every swim coach is in the same position with a worry about preserving our sport. putting diving at the forefront when they are not sure about their roster size places them in a difficult spot to even think about or advocate for diving.

“There are some proposals out there. The SEC, ACC and Big Ten all have different championship meet formats.

- SEC championship meet format is 22 athletes, divers count 1:1
- ACC championship meet format scores 18 swimmers, guarantees three divers. Bring more than 3 divers substitute 1:1 with swimmers
- Big Ten follows the national format: 18 man roster size, divers count as ½

"I think some sort of hybrid could be our future. But it's tricky because you go to the NCAA and propose a change and they say 'that's interesting. If we see it at the conference level we'll do it.' Then we go to our conferences doing it three different ways with no unity – so there is no change at the conference level. The three conferences need to talk about creating the best possible format and commit to getting it to the national stage. That might settle this entire situation that has diving in jeopardy. And that's where the CSCAA and the swim coaches have to save a place for diving.

Growing the Sport

"Ray Looze and I are hoping the Big 10 will endorse roster size of 30 men and 30 women. If you are counting divers as one-half in the championship meet format then it makes sense to retain four or six divers on the team. That's because you need bench spots too.

"Diving coaches have been lobbying hard for a team event in the swimming and diving championships. The Big Ten has been running an exhibition event on the first day between the two opening relays and it has been well received. It takes about 18 minutes to run, doesn't require more athletes and adds nothing to the budget.

"It works this way. There are three divers from each team. Each does two dives from the 1, 3 and 10 meter heights. Last year the Big 12 scored it in their championship meet with the point value being equivalent to a relay.— That way diver value begins to match that of a swimmer. Adopting such a plan allows somebody with a really strong swim program (like Indiana) to say, 'we still need to support diving because we are not going to give relay points away.'

"It's been discussed at the SEC and Big Ten but no one has acted on it yet. Conferences are waiting for the dust to settle before acting on it. The benefit in accepting something similar would solve a lot of our problems and unify the swim coaches who are really steering the future of our sport. To have a space for diving in the current team structure is really exciting – in some cases more exciting than the Olympic Games. The energy and power of team is really amazing and I want to keep that alive if we can.

Impact on Youth Sports

"Youth sports in America is \$1 billion dollar industry. Parents first get kids involved in sports and games to have fun. If a child has some aptitude and is an area to get coaching there may be an opportunity to get to college – not necessarily to get a scholarship. Maybe diving ability helps a child get accepted or go to a D-II or D-III school. Any sport is a great way to enter college, acquire a friend group and/or get a mentor who helps them through the hard times. Now, if a scholarship happens, that can be another level up.

"Today's NCAA changes are going to affect the youth sport industry. I imagine youth football is going to explode in America – not just scholarships but revenue sharing. Some kids are going to make more than their parents, just by being on the football team and in any of those Power 4 schools.

"BUT, in Olympic sports we might see a down tick, just because

opportunities will be fewer. If the settlement continues as proposed there might be more scholarship dollars after roster limit adjustments. BUT not all schools are going to be able to do that. They've got to figure out how to handle a \$21 million hit without any new revenue coming in.

"Once things get settled and budgets are established I think we will have fewer elite programs in America, especially in diving. And some swimming programs may transition to more club-like/intramural programs when financed by the athletic department. Over time you might even see that drift away. We are going to see a whole different funding model. As years go by I hope

aquatics don't keep sliding away.

"The AD's are going to have to choose what sports they want to support. Schools are going to have to pick and choose sports at in which they wish to excel and which they want to keep as a part of the college experience. Here at Indiana my bet is they are going to want retain the storied program we have for swimming and diving.

Effect on U.S. Participation at the Olympic and International Levels

"That's the concern right now. The NCAA is truly the backbone of our Olympic effort. (*Ed. note: 82 percent of all American athletes in Paris came through the collegiate ranks.*) In China they are government funded. Russia, Australia, Mexico, the Brits all have some sort of government funding that subsidizes their Olympic efforts. With the changes and shrinking we are going to see fewer programs with the ability to produce Olympians or medalists.

"There will be fewer opportunities for people like 2020 3-meter Olympic medalist Krysta Palmer. She transitioned from trampoline and developed as a diver under a great coach at University of Nevada-Reno. Today that sort of thing happens and people develop in all sports.

"There are always athletes as juniors who are just under the elite level and develop to the Olympic level in college. In the future if they are not picked up by the schools who have facilities and coaches to train them that will hamper our efforts on the Olympic stage for sure.

Message to Recruits

"I can't speak for other coaches, but Indiana has had a diver on every U.S. Olympic team since 1964. I am recruiting future Olympians and people I think can reach that Olympic stage. I am confident that the legacy of our program will not change and that we will keep producing Olympians. That's what I am telling our recruits.

"Any program without a rich tradition and not in the Big Ten, which follows the national format and counts divers as one-half, will be in a program with fewer opportunities for diving. The Big Ten is the best conference for diving. Under the new system, with our tradition, revenue sharing and the settlement diving at Indiana is not in jeopardy.

Saving the Sport – One Suggestion

“Create a hybrid of the SEC, ACC, Big Ten formats.

- Have a 22 person championship roster, guaranteeing four diver roster spots
- Add the team event and score as a relay
- Count divers 1:1

“That carves out an appropriate space for diving, with divers representing 18 percent of the events. I want every school to have diving in order to win a championship. Such an accepted plan would solidify the future of swimming and diving. If all three conferences would adopt it, it would move to the national level for adoption and we could focus on managing our rosters, budgets and growing the sport.

“I have a lot of friends who are worried, as they should be. I am ready to work in any way possible to help swimming and diving in the NCAA carve out a new future for everybody, one that will preserve the sport as it is in the NCAA. Doing so will position us to start growing the sport, swimming and diving as a team, again. In essence, it is the format of swimming and diving we have to evaluate in order to save a space for diving.

“Right now nothing’s for sure. Even the wealthiest schools may not look at swimming and diving as a sport at which they want to succeed. An AD may inspect the results of a conference championship, see the team among the bottom rungs and ask why he wants to make an investment in a program that is not good for them. That’s when the sport is going to get smaller.

“I haven’t heard about Big Ten schools dropping programs, just exploring different funding models, whether it be scholarships and/or operating budgets. Those are the annual expenses that have to make up the \$20 million revenue that’s going to have to be shared with the athlete. All along the way you also have to raise money for NIL.

“I do see a future. We need to get the swim coaches on board. And need to preserve a space for diving with these new rules coming our way.”

Michael J. Stott is an ASCA Level 5 coach, golf and swimming writer. His critically acclaimed coming-of-age golf novel, “Too Much Loft,” is in its third printing, and is available from store.Bookbaby.com, Amazon, B&N and distributors worldwide.



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At its essence, coaching is a simple process. It is a series of decisions based upon information that is presented to the coach on daily basis, which are further refined as patterns emerge over time.

While the process may be simple, coaching effectiveness varies widely. What's the difference? Doc Counsilman, one of the sport's most successful and revolutionary coaches, was often asked what makes a great coach. In a talk about the X-Factor of great coaches, he said, "You must be able to recognize the important things and work on them; and to minimize the unimportant."

At each stage of the coaching process, coaching effectiveness is distinguished by the ability to understand what information is important and what is information is not. That effectiveness is further differentiated by what coaches decide to do with the information that is provided to them.

I've laid out a framework below that could be useful to coaches as they navigate their decision-making process. By starting with a clear structure, a younger coach can organize their thought processes. Overtime, the initial structure eventually allows that process to evolve into a much more fluid and intuitive one which characterizes expert coaching.

Understand What is Happening

There are many different aspects of reality that affects the process of coaching and the process of improving swimming performance. The more coaches can gain an understanding and appreciation of all of these areas, the better they can understand what is happening in front of them on a daily basis. The sooner this happens in a coach's development, the sooner they can learn to label and manage the various problems presented by the coaching process. To start with, consider the following areas:

- **Mechanics-** What are the underlying principles that support great movement? How do these principles apply specifically to swimming?
- **Learning-** How do swimmers best learn skills? What strategies are consistently effective?
- **Physiology-** What is happening physiologically when swimmers race and train? How does the body adapt to physical training?
- **Socio-cultural-** What social and cultural dynamics affect performance? How can these dynamics be influenced?
- **Psychological-** How do psychological dynamics can be expected in the training and competitive environment? What attributes are commonly seen in successful competitors?

The generalized answers to these questions become more apparent over time. The process can be accelerated by reading everything you can, watching and learning from other coaches, learning from your swimmers, and otherwise educating yourself about anything that affects performance, which is just about everything.

With an understand all of the aspects of reality that can affect performance, we can start to appreciate what factors may be most critical in driving performances forward. A foundation for separating the important from the unimportant can be created. With a broad perspective, we can begin to appreciate that what is important depends very much on the context. With a more global understanding, we are more likely to accurately discern what matters for each context.

It is this understanding that allows coaches begin to distinguish between what is important and what is unimportant.

Have a Clear Intent

Our actions are guided by our intentions. What are we trying to accomplish? In setting clear intentions and clear goals, coaches are defining what needs to be accomplished. Successful coaches will have a better understanding of what goals are most important for long-term success. As coaches gain a better understanding of what is important, the intentions surrounding the most important tasks will become clearer and clearer. The intention is very specifically outlined because the details matters.

For every aspect of development, goals will be determined. As knowledge and experience grow, better coaches will become more skilled in clearly defining what needs to be accomplished for long-term success. They can differentiate between goals that are important and goals that are unimportant.

Create an Intervention

Once intentions are clear, coaches use their knowledge and experience to create interventions to accomplish the goals that have been set. Better coaches will create better interventions that have a greater likelihood of successfully accomplishing the desired objectives. Better coaches have identified more of the strategies consistently produce positive outcomes and they learn to anticipate the potential problems that can arise and have developed strategies to pre-empt these problems.

As many different interventions can successfully improve performance, coaches must become skilled at choosing the appropriate solution for their specific context, as well as modifying those interventions for different individuals under their coaching influence. The more coaches can appreciate the different factors influencing their context, the greater the likelihood of selecting effective interventions.

There are infinite possible interventions for coaches to choose from when deciding how to intervene. Coaches must be able to distinguish the important aspects of an effective training intervention from the unimportant.

Observe

As interventions are created and implemented, coaches must then closely observe the impact of those interventions. Observing your swimmers on daily basis provides feedback to guide and manage the process. It's important to be looking for both the intended and unintended effects of the interventions, as well as

consider effects beyond performance. While coaches will certainly be aware of how performance is moving, they must also consider how technique is improving, how team dynamics are shifting, whether swimmers are remaining engaged, emotional status, etc.

Effective observation can arise from asking and answering the following simple questions:

- What do you expect to be happening?
- What is happening?
- What's the difference and how do you explain it?
- How are swimmers responding to the training program physically, psychologically, technically? How are group dynamics impacted?

It's critical to see what is in front of you, and not just what you are looking for. There will be an infinite amount of information available while observing. Effective observation arises from the ability to distinguish the information streams that are relevant from the information streams that are not.

Manage

On the basis of your observations of the effect of the training interventions, coaches are tasked with managing the training process by adjusting their interventions to remain aligned with the previously established goals. While management efforts can be reduced through clear goal setting and the creation of effective interventions, coaches cannot predict the future and training management will be required.

In most cases, managing training takes the form of subtle training adjustments that occurs on a daily basis based upon how swimmers present themselves in training due to small changes in training readiness. While these adjustments may not seem like a big deal, they are critical in ensuring progress towards stated goals.

In some cases, the training process will not unfold as expected, performance will stagnate, and coaches will have to design alternative interventions to achieve targeted goals. The danger here is always the desire to overreact. Coaches have to make a significant enough change to solve the problem without creating too much change that just leads to other problems.

On occasion, this will be as a result of circumstances beyond your control that significantly derail the training process. In these more extreme cases, goals will have to be re-clarified due to unforeseen changes.

All of these outcomes are inevitable to some degree as even the best planning is not infallible. However, effective management of training can prevent small problems from becoming large problems by effectively adjusting training on the basis of careful and thoughtful observation.

Interaction

While these five steps of the coaching process have been separated here in a linear manner for the purpose of clarity, they are constantly interacting with and influencing each other at every step of the process. Efforts at managing training will require modification in training interventions. Training goals may be influenced by the training interventions that are possible due to

time or equipment constraints, or the skillsets of the swimmers being coached.

Training goals will also influence how the training process is managed as different goals will require different management strategies. Finally, constantly repeating the coaching process will cause coaches to notice patterns which alter what you believe is happening at a foundational level as a swimmer improves. This will affect every other aspect of the coaching process.

Each step does not exist in isolation. Decisions at each level are constantly being balanced against the considerations present at other stages of the process. As such, coaches must be skilled at determining not only what is important within each step of the process, but what is important across the various steps of the process.

Conclusion

When witnessing great coaching, it seems like an effortless dance where problems are solved before they even occur. That intuitive and natural ease emerges from a process characterized by a series of decisions.

Coaching is a relatively simple process characterized by the repeated separation of the important from the unimportant. It is a series of decisions that starts with an understanding of the factors that influence performance and then setting clear goals, creating effective interventions, observing the effects of the intervention, and modifying the whole process based upon those observations.

At each step of the process, coaches will be tasked with deciding what is important and what is unimportant. Throughout the coaching process, coaches can simply ask themselves, 'is this important'? Coaches should then be able to justify their choices with a clear and concise rationale. The ability to do so increases the likelihood that their decisions are accurately separating the important from the unimportant.

While most coaches, particularly experienced and highly skilled coaches, work through this process intuitively, it can be useful to clarify the process, especially in less skilled coaches. It allows coaches to refine how they are deciding to conduct practice sessions, as well as reflect on the effects of those training sessions, both positive and negative. The intuition that characterizes expert coaches arises from the repeated exposure to similar situations, and constant reflection as to how best manage those situations.

Some coaches may be incredibly skilled at observing their swimmers and using this information to manage the training process on a daily basis. However, their relative inability to create training interventions reflective of their goals may require excessive training management where problems that shouldn't be occurring must be solved. At the same time, coaches who create the most effective training plans, yet can't manage those plans will not be as effective as they could be.

With careful reflection, coaches can identify where their skillsets may be falling short, and then work to improve these skills, ensuring they are a complete coach.

Emma Igelström

Nurturing Talent Instead of Burning It Out

By Nate Tscholl

The SwimNerd Newsletter (Edited)

Emma Igelström (SWE) never expected to find herself in Saudi Arabia, pioneering swimming programs in a country where female competition only began three years ago. But the former world champion breaststroker and the first woman to ever break 30 seconds in the 50 SCM breaststroke, has always been drawn to challenges.

Emma's Career & Swimming's Evolution

Emma's career unfolded during a turning point in swimming. She remembers a time when training was a numbers game - grinding through meters until only the toughest survived.

"I still was in the shift of the generation of, you know, swim as many meters as you can, as many hours as you can, and for those who made it, they went good. Those who didn't make it, maybe you wasted lots of talent on the way."

That all changed with the rise of gym work and dryland training, which transformed the sport.

"You could basically place like 100 swimmers on the deck, and you couldn't know what stroke or what distance or whatever they swam. But today, you can see like, okay, these guys are sprinters. Here we have the long distancer. Here is the breaststroker. So, I mean, it's a new physical thing going on in swimming that was not even close when I was there."

Swimming in Saudi Arabia

Emma didn't plan to move to Saudi Arabia. Her husband's job brought them there, and at first, she wasn't sure if she'd stay. But once she saw the untapped potential in sports development, she couldn't walk away.

Saudi Arabia has come a long way in a short time. Women weren't even allowed in gyms until seven years ago. Female swimming competitions? Just three years old under the federation. Yet, change is happening.

"They have their first female Olympic swimmer ever now in Paris, which, of course, she's been a big role model for the girls in the country."

Still, barriers remain. When Saudi women race, no men are allowed - not as spectators, officials, or even coaches.

"It's a huge challenge because they don't have any female coaches. They don't have any female officials. So, you know, for me, it's been like a hell of a journey to adapt to this culture but also see the opportunity in the culture."

A Different Kind of Role Model

Emma knows the power of role models - she had them growing up in Sweden. She believes sports have the power to change societies. Emma wants to build a system that nurtures talent rather than burning it out.

What Emma Would Have Done Differently

Looking back, Emma knows what she would tell her younger self:

Take breaks. Recover. Don't tie your worth to medals.

"I don't even think I had one year with more than two weeks out from the pool."

Now, she sees swimmers like Sarah Sjöström taking months off and coming back even stronger.

*"I mean, Sarah, she's taking some - I mean, **months** [away from] the pool sometimes. I know this year she decided not to compete on a high level. Nowadays, swimmers and all athletes are brave enough to take this decision. But in my time, in our time, that was not even something to suggest."*

Her advice to today's athletes?

"When you go from the pool, you need to find a space, a place to not just be a swimmer. I think that's very, very important. Even if that's a friend who is not swimming or just, you know, finding a space where you can be yourself without the medals, without performing, without everything."



STRENGTH TRAINING

Strength and Power Training on a Budget

Charlie Hoolihan

ASCA Swimming Strength and Conditioning Specialist Coordinator

Many coaches recognize the benefits of strength and power training for swimmers but often face limitations in equipment and gym space. This is particularly true for high school teams that must compete with other sports for weight room access.

Effective strength and power training can be achieved with some adjustments in training programming.

In a previous NISCA journal (July-August 2024) research studies indicated heavy weights were not needed to improve strength. One study argued that training to failure isn't necessary for gaining strength, while a second suggested strength can be built with more than 5-10 repetitions.

Another recent NISCA article (May-June 2024) covered accommodated training as an effective means for gaining strength. Accommodated training is the practice of adding bands or chains to a traditional exercise to allow a more uniform strength gain throughout an exercises full range of motion.

All three of these techniques use lighter weights than traditional strength training.

Three other options for training strength are isometric pre-fatigue sets used prior to a strength set, plyometrics used after a strength set, and using bands in place of traditional exercises.

The equipment needed for these options can be as simple as an athlete's own bodyweight, or use 15-30 lbs. dumbbells/ kettlebells and exercise loop bands of light to moderate resistance levels.

The May-June 2024 Journal article covered the use of bands with barbell and body weight squats, bench press and pushups.

This article will add hip thrusts, deadlifts, band rows, dumbbell presses, and latissimus pulls to the list. (Note: You can receive a complimentary course on these and more exercises by emailing charliehoolihan@gmail.com)

Bands used in these exercises vary in resistance from approximately 20 lbs. up to 200 lbs. and are the loop versions which are about two feet long. Adolescent swimmers usually need 18-40 lbs. for upper body work and an additional 60 lbs. band for lower body exercises.

Band Hip Thrusts



Set-up – sit in the middle of a bench or elevated surface and place feet on the end loop of the band. Cross the band in an X-position and pull the other end loop above the mid-point of the thigh.

Execution of the exercise – Slowly walk the feet forward and lower into a seated position on the floor with the bottom of the scapula against the edge of the bench.

Place hands on the loop on the thighs to hold them in place and perform the hip thrust by pushing hips upward till they are parallel with the floor.

Hold this position for a three-count then lower it to a position about an inch above the floor.

Repeat exercise for 10-15 repetitions.

Single Leg deadlift.



Set-up - Place the band on the floor and put one foot in the middle of it and stand on two strands of the band. Grab the band with two hands and cross each end so it ends up in an X position. Stand up straight. This is the maximum tension of the band.

Resistance can be increased by holding a larger portion of the band or looping it around a dumbbell. Creating less resistance can come from standing on one strand of the band and adjusting hand position to find the best strength demand.

Execution

From the standing position, lift the heel of the leg without the resistance band and slowly lift it till the chest and leg are parallel to the floor. This will create less resistance to the banded leg.

After reaching parallel, return to the standing position slowly so tension increases on the banded leg.

If additional balance support is needed, allow hold the resistance with one hand and allowing the free hand to hold on to an object for support.

Repeat exercise for 5 to 10 repetitions on each leg.

Band seated row



Set-up

Place a two foot two by four in front of an anchor point (Pillar, pole, starting block). Loop the band around the anchor point and hold each end with hands.

Sit in an upright position on the floor and place feet on the board.

Extend your arms fully with moderate tension on the band.

Execution

Remain in the upright position and pull the band towards the body till the elbows are even with the rib cage.

Allow the band to pull their arms back to an extended position.

Band Latissimus pulls

Set-up - Loop band around the same anchor point used for the seated row at head height. Grab band with two hands.

Execution - Step back from anchor point till the first tension begins with arms fully extended.

Bend forward with the hips at approximately 135 degrees.

The hand contacts should be slightly wider than shoulder width.

Pull the band towards shoulders till hands are even with the head.

Slowly reverse movement to the extended position

Resistance can be changed by stepping forward, backward or changing bands.

Dumbbell chest press



Set up

Grab band at opposite ends and bring it over the head and behind the low back. This is like the pushup placement. Grab one light dumbbell in each hand. Sit on the end of a bench with dumbbells resting on knees.

Execution

Lay back onto the bench while bringing dumbbells to a position above the chest with arms fully extended with strong resistances.

Bring dumbbells towards the middle of chest as resistance decreases.

Finish point of descent is when the elbows fall below shoulders and hands are even with rib cage.

Reverse movement to push dumbbells and band to full resistance over the chest.

Isometric and plyometric combination workouts to enhance light weight.

As mentioned above, using isometrics and plyometrics in combination with strength exercises can increase the muscle stimulus of an exercise when only light weights are available.

For example, holding a push-up at the bottom part of the movement and hovering 10 to 30 seconds an inch above the ground prior to doing 5 to 15 repetitions increases the time the muscle is under tension.

Performing two to four sets of these is sufficient to increase muscle strength in the chest, shoulders and triceps.

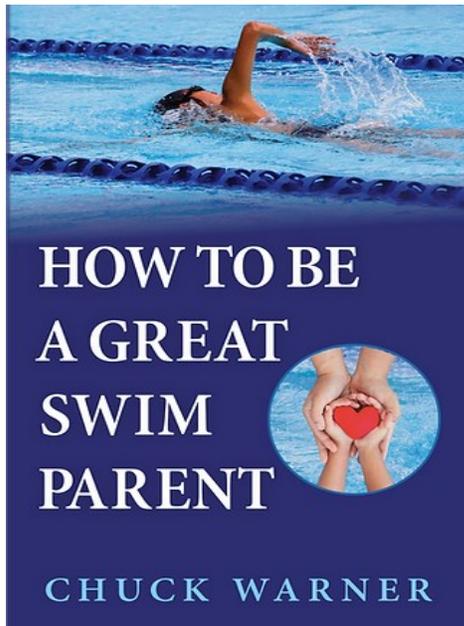
A plyometric example consists of performing banded squats for 5 to 15 repetitions then performing three to five broad jumps. This approach is called the **contrast method of training** which will be discussed in a future article.



Charlie Hoolihan is the Swimming Strength and Conditioning Specialist Certification Coordinator for the American Swim Coaches Association and has been strength training swimmers since 1990. He's also a presenter and writer for numerous national fitness organizations and publications.

You can set up a complimentary team-specific dryland training analysis of your resources and programming by contacting him at charliehoolihan@gmail.com

BOOKS WE RECOMMEND



Sage advice distilled from a Hall of Fame swim coach's years of interactions and astute observations, this straight-to-the-point guidebook for parents of young athletes describes how to support your child's journey to their dreams and capture their heart.

"This is the parent education piece that we all wish we'd had for years!"
—KATHLEEN PRINDLE, Head Coach/Founder, Performance Aquatics, Board Member, USA Swimming

"Wow!! What a gift to have this as a resource for any parent or coach in any sport!"
—MIKE KOLEBER, Nitro Swimming, former Board President/Board Member, American Swimming Coaches Association.

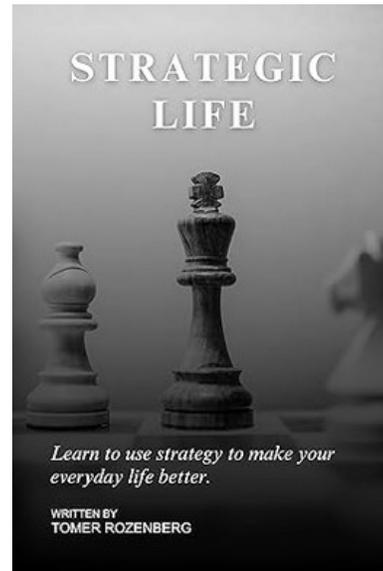
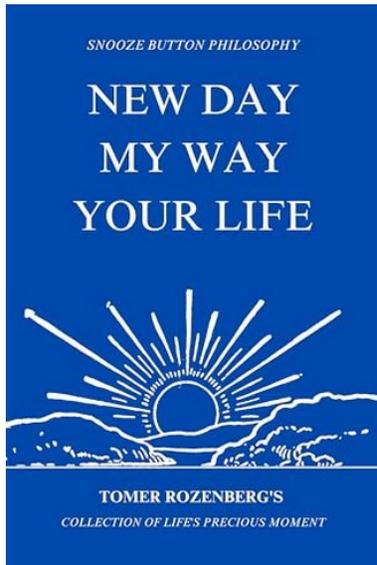
"Every parent wants to support their child, but the "how" very rarely comes from a Hall of Fame coach and mentor in the sport. Applying the ideas and anecdotes in this book has helped swimming bring my daughter and I closer."
—RICHARD QUAD, First Generation Swim Parent

"...an absolute joy to read...so critical to help educate new swim parents but will also be very informative for the veteran parents on your club."
—COACH IRA KLEIN, Head Coach Sarasota Tsunami, Board Member, USA Swimming

"I can't imagine a better resource to help us focus on the "right things" as we support the development of a young mind and body."
—MICKEY WENDER, Head Coach, Colorado Mesa University, 2024 NCAA DII Coach of the Year

"I highly recommend *How To Be A Great Swim Parent* to anyone seeking guidance and inspiration to be the best swim parent possible."
—MIKE MURRAY, President, American Swimming Coaches Association, Head Coach, The Victor Swim Club

The book we have needed for YEARS! Available at chuckwarnerbooks.com



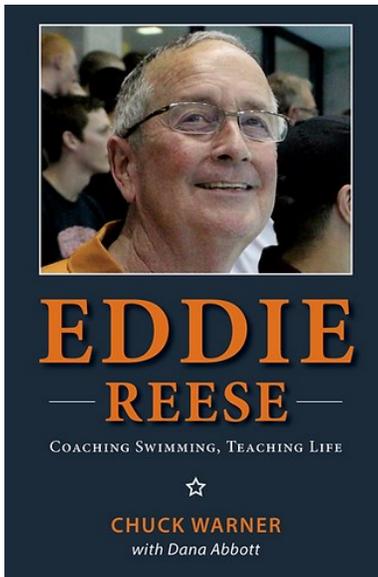
In this refreshing take on life management, you'll discover:

- How making your bed can set the tone for a productive day
- Strategies to defeat the dreaded alarm clock and start your mornings with purpose
- The art of turning your commute into a personal growth opportunity
- Ways to navigate the afternoon slump and maintain energy throughout the day
- The surprising benefits of well-crafted complaints
- How to find balance in a world of endless choices

This insightful book offers a step-by-step guide to help you develop the essential skills, habits, and mindset needed to live a strategic life. From setting clear goals and mastering time management to cultivating meaningful relationships and embracing change, this comprehensive resource covers every aspect of personal growth and development.

Both books by Tomer Rozenberg are available on Amazon.com

BOOKS WE RECOMMEND



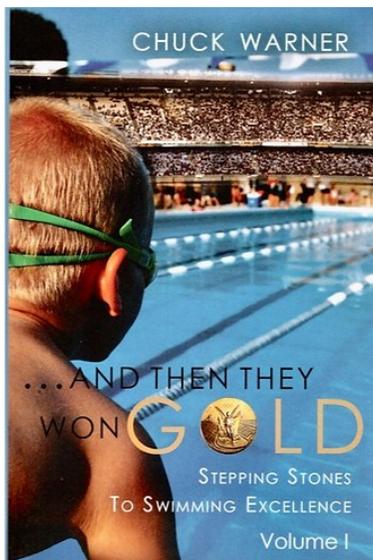
Eddie Reese is one of the most successful and effective coaches in sports history. His method of building his swimmers' character first has resulted in unprecedented success at The University of Texas including:

15 DI Men's Team Titles - a record
25 D1 Men's Team Top 2 Finishes - a record
39 Olympic Gold Medals.

The book contains:

130 "Eddie-isms" that provide in his own words some of his wit and wisdom.
Over 50 stories from past swimmers and coaching colleagues.

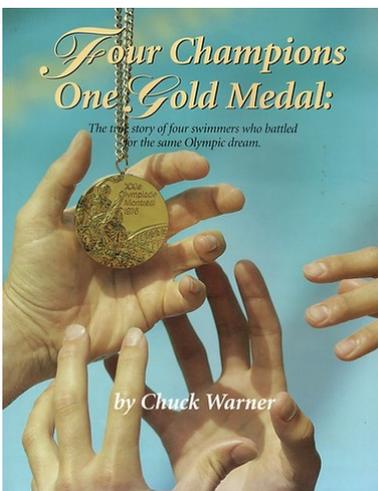
Technique tips.



Learn how eight of the greatest male swimmers in recent swimming history progressed from summer league swimming to collectively win 28 Olympic Gold Medals.

Included are technique tips from the swimmers themselves and practice samples from each stage of their development. The legendary swimmers included are:

Matt Biondi - Olympics 84, 88, 92
Dave Berkoff - Olympics 88, 92
Mike Barrowman - Olympics 88, 92
Josh Davis - Olympics 96, 2000
Lenny Krayzelburg - Olympics 2000, 2004
Ian Crocker - Olympics 2000, 04, 08
Grant Hackett - Olympics 2000, 04, 08
Aaron Peirsol - Olympics 2000, 04, 08



The road taken by four world-class athletes in quest of Olympic gold:

Americans Tim Shaw, Brian Goodell and Bobby Hackett, and Australian Steve Holland.

All four were champions in every sense of the word. Yet only three made it to the blocks at the start of the 1500 in Montreal. And, of course, only one emerged as Olympic champion.

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Snack to Soar

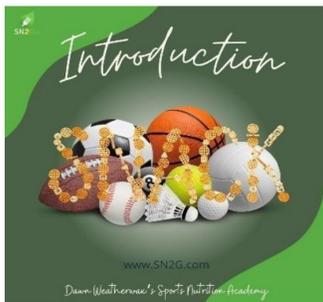
Pre-Workout Snacks for Workout Fuel

By Dawn Weatherwax, RD, LD, ATC, CSCS

Snack to Soar: Pre-Workout Fuel to Smash Your Goals!

Introduction

Whether you're aiming to build lean muscle, boost brain function, increase speed, jump higher, or simply enhance strength, the key to success is optimal pre-workout nutrition. From gamers seeking sharper concentration to athletes looking for explosive power, our snack solutions are tailored to meet your specific sports needs and objectives.



Transform

Your Performance with Pre-Workout Snacks

Why is Pre-Workout Nutrition Critical?

Energy Boost: Carbohydrates are the primary fuel source for your muscles.

Mental Focus: Proteins and healthy fats aid cognitive clarity.

Goal-Oriented Fueling: Customized nutrition can assist in bulking up, getting leaner, or excelling in your sport.

Snack Ideas for Every Performance Goal Gain Lean Weight

- 2 Carton's School Milk + Banana + Almond Butter + Honey Sandwich
- Rise Bar + Pretzels + Apple
- Altitude Trail Mix, Dried Fruit, Reg Cheerios and OWYN/Slate/Core Power RTD

Combines protein and carbohydrates for sustained energy and optimal recovery. Provides essential nutrients and concentrated energy for muscle development. Offers a balanced mix of protein, fiber, and vitamins for overall health.



Boost Brainpower

- Greek/Chobani Complete Drinkable Yogurt + Honey (optional) + Freeze Dried Blueberries
- Smoothie with Spinach/Carrot + Pineapple + Mango/Peaches + Fairlife Milk + Chia Seeds

Rich in antioxidants and protein to improve mental acuity. Ensures hydration and enhances concentration. **Get Faster and Stronger**

- Protein Pretzels + 88 Acres Sunflower Butter + Bolt House Strawberry Banana Smoothie
- Wheaties Protein Cereal + Dried Cherries

Provides nutrient-rich fuel for muscle recovery: Delivers a quick energy boost to enhance performance.

Jump Higher

- Oatmeal/Kodiak Protein + Super Seeds + Raisins + Water/Milk
- Organic Applegate Turkey + Organic Eureka Tortilla + Spinach/Lettuce + Primal Kitchen Dressing + Fruit of choice

Provides lean protein and nutrients for top athletic performance. Offers complex carbohydrates for sustained energy and endurance.

Get Leaner

- Hard-Boiled Eggs + Triscuit Crisps + Laughing Cow + Carrots + Hummus + Clementines
- Cottage Cheese + Sliced Peaches + Sunflower seeds.

Provides sustained energy with protein, a nutrient-rich choice.

Timing Is Everything

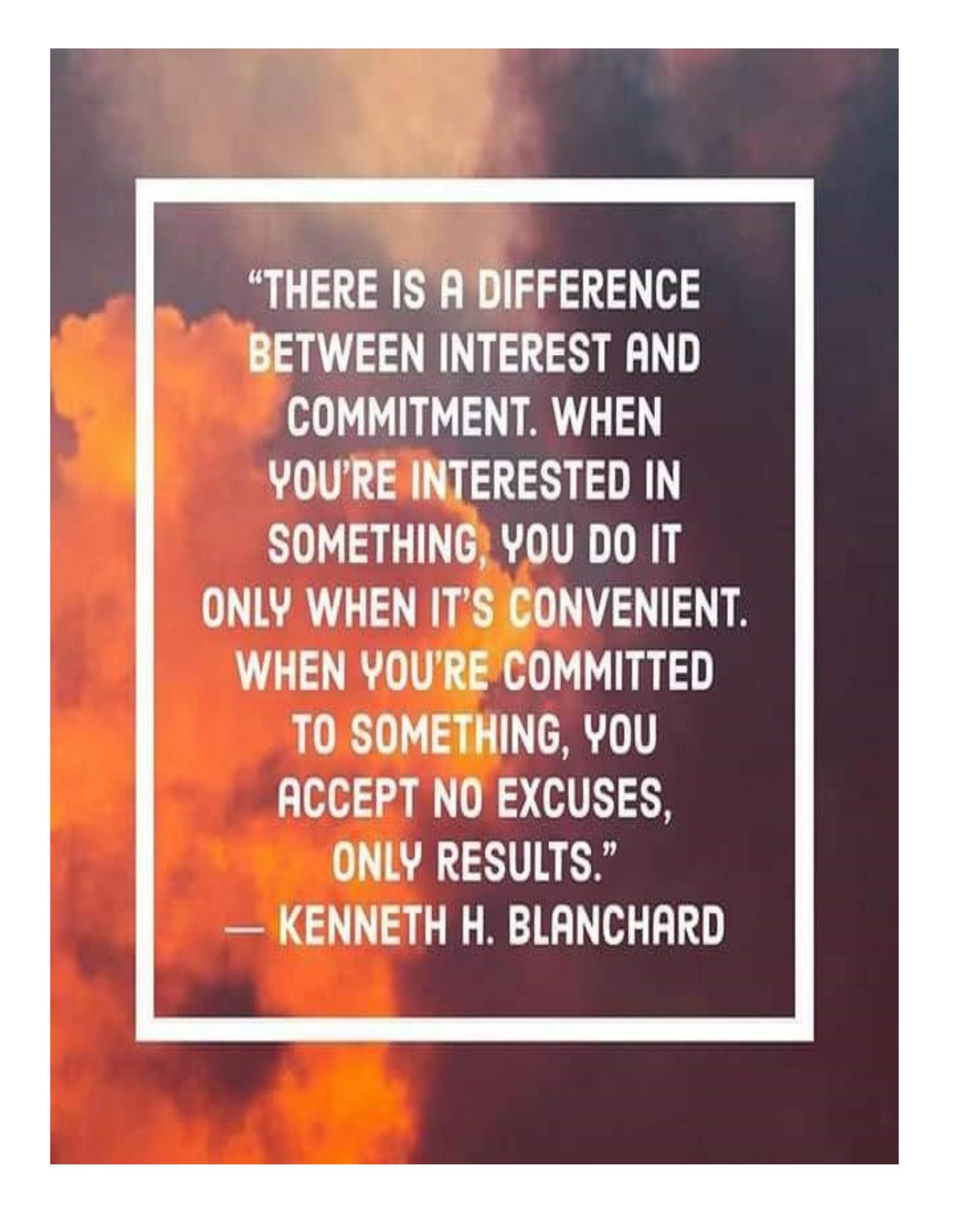
- **30-60 Minutes Before Exercise:** Opt for quick carbohydrates for immediate energy, like a banana or an applesauce pouch. Many may need extra fuel. Personalization is essential.
- **60-90 Minutes Before Exercise:** Select balanced snacks combining protein and carbohydrates, such as a yogurt parfait or a turkey sandwich with peanut butter pretzels. The options mentioned earlier are also suitable.



Optimize Your Nutrition:

Tailor your nutrition plan to your specific needs and goals. For more personalized guidance, consider consulting with experts like Dawn Weatherwax's Sports Nutrition Academy.

Remember, fueling your body is key to achieving your personal best! 🌟🏆

The background of the image is a vibrant, abstract scene of orange and red flames or a sunset sky, with darker, smoky tones at the top. The text is centered within a white rectangular border.

**“THERE IS A DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN INTEREST AND
COMMITMENT. WHEN
YOU’RE INTERESTED IN
SOMETHING, YOU DO IT
ONLY WHEN IT’S CONVENIENT.
WHEN YOU’RE COMMITTED
TO SOMETHING, YOU
ACCEPT NO EXCUSES,
ONLY RESULTS.”**

— KENNETH H. BLANCHARD

Inspiring Swimmers/Testing Limits

Michael J. Stott

Inspiration/motivation to complete a task in swimming, indeed life, can come from many different sources. It can be from within, a family member, coach, teammates or some other external source.

Once put into motion the resulting action often involves a test of one's limits. Swimming is littered with examples, perhaps one of the most celebrated is Jason Lezak's overhauling of Frenchman Alain Bernard in the 4 x 100 meter free relay in Beijing. His motivation was obvious. He had teammates, a country's national pride and gold medals at stake. Testing limits was surely in play as his 46.06 relay split, the fastest in history, attests.

Below, four veteran coaches share insights on how they view motivate the athletes entrusted to their care.

Gregg Troy – (3x Olympic and former University of Florida coach)

"To inspire swimmers and test limits successfully you have to create a group culture looking for certain goals. Those goals might differ from individual to individual but the culture has to be goal and performance oriented. If it is, then each individual can figure out their niche.

At that point it becomes an individual discussion with the athlete, i.e. where do you want to be and how can I help you get there? And that becomes the platform to decide 'OK, this is where you want to be and what kinds of things are we going to need to get there?'

"That changes a little bit by age. In high school you might have to take it in smaller bits because you may not be able to see quite so far in advance. And you've got to make sure the parents and administration are on board because if you see one thing, the athlete sees another and someone else sees something else, it's a recipe to be unsuccessful. It's a matter of getting all the entities on board and understanding the time required to get there.

"The professional athletes I'm working with now are taking a different direction. We've established what the goal is – get to Tokyo. I've asked "What kinds of things do you have to do that will make you comfortable moving forward toward the goals. The big task then is how do we get to Tokyo and how do we do when we get there?"

"At Bolles, we had a fall high school season and the rest of the year. We used the high school season platform and results to set the stage for work necessary to get us to the summer.

"Communication is the key. Sometimes goals become wish lists. So, you've got to understand what it takes to reach the goals. Sometimes they aren't as achievable as people think. I tell people if it was easy, everybody would be great and it wouldn't be worth very much. Coaches don't want to put a ceiling on what an athlete can do, but sometimes the ceiling needs to be adjusted regarding the length of time it takes to reach that ceiling.

"The intermediate steps are every bit as important as the goal. The last thing you want to do is discourage a kid and tone those goals down, but I think you have to temper them enough so they understand it. It's a process.

"We live in an instant gratification society and a delayed gratification sport. And, unfortunately, the goal setting aspect is probably neglected given that you want the athlete to set big goals. It can feel counterproductive when you occasionally have to say 'Whoa, hold on.' If you want your swimmers to be really good you have to set really high goals. And if you do you are going to fall short of them – a lot. Then you have to figure out how to deal with the disappointment and restructure where you are.

"I believe the athletes will appreciate the high goals if you are honest with them. If you allow them to set goals and you've bought into a goal too high and they fall short, athletes start to lose confidence in you. A coach doesn't want to be reactive later and say "you couldn't make the goal because we didn't do this... so you have to tell them what they did wrong along the way. That's the hard part of coaching.

"If we are going to set extremely high goals, they require that athletes be dedicated to them on a very regular basis. That's hard to do. Athletes tend to forget the days they didn't do the things they were asked to do as well as they needed to do them. If you don't tell them clearly... 'this goal and this action aren't going to get us to this goal then the action has to improve.'

"That's why logbooks and some reflective mechanism is important. When swimmers get to the end of the season, if they are lucky enough to make the goal they can then celebrate and make new ones. If they've fallen short then you have some way to evaluate why they've fallen short. It wasn't just 'you've given me a bad program.'

"There is a mutual responsibility. In order for the athlete to be successful you've got to be honest. If you are not, the long term success won't be there. That's because next season if you are not willing to tell them the goal is out of line they will assume otherwise. Then, if they don't make the goal and there is no evaluation tool to explain why they didn't, then you've actually lost their trust.

"And that's where coaches run into problems. I saw a lot of this with club kids when I was recruiting. A swimmer would be told 'you'd could really be great if you came to practice more often. If you made all the practices, you'd be fantastic.' The kid then comes to all the practices, but doesn't do the correct things at practice, what happens at the end of the season? He's not fantastic, just a little bit better.

"Again, communication is critical. That's where you pinpoint the challenges and work required. If someone needs to go 4 x 50 in x time to go a 200 freestyle you need to see some version of that in practice and design some things to get you there.

Kids will work just as hard as those in earlier times. These days they just want to know why. If you tell them why things become much different. There is more understanding and awareness. From a coaching standpoint it creates an interest in the individual. When you do that some of your parent problems go away because the parent knows you are interested in the child.

Catherine Vogt (associate head coach University of Southern California, Olympic open water coach)

“I believe that trust – building it, maintaining it and teaching coach/athlete ownership is the foundation for athlete successes. Also, motivation is really important to me. It can be derived from the athlete, coach, environment or team and I try to be mindful what is important to the swimmers. Learning about them as people, especially understanding THEIR expectations. I try to be cognizant, observant and aware of the many little moments of training and racing. How they respond to failure, challenge and/or feedback can tell me a lot about people.

“Mindset can ultimately be one of the most important elements especially for open water athletes, who have 2 hours of mental stress, self-talk and staying focused. So, understanding your athlete and learning over the racing and training opportunities is why I love coaching them!

Below is a SCY set we did earlier this year with USC and Olympic and World Championship open water medalist Haley Anderson.

4 x

- ◇ 100 on 1:00
- ◇ 2 x 75 on :45
- ◇ 3 x 50 on :30
- ◇ 4 x 25 on :15
- ◇ 50 easy

“I did have a second interval of 1:05/:50/:35/:20 (for the women)”

“Haley had already looked fast after warming up. When I said what lanes were what intervals I watched her wonder if she should go with the men on top interval. She looked at me for guidance and I said, ‘yes, try it,’ but didn’t make a big deal about it. On the last round I told her to go on the slower interval and go even faster -- and she DID. I think part of challenging kids is watching them for cues – some days you can push, and some days you can’t. And then knowing the right thing to say is important as well.

“I also remember giving Chip Peterson 8 x 800 on 9:00 LCM one day (which he didn’t complete) because I had heard Mark Warkentin had done this set. It was not the right time for me to ask Chip to do it and we probably took two steps back that week!! So, when I looked back, I wish I had approached the set, the delivery or both differently! But that is what old age makes us realize! I think sometimes as coaches we get hungry and want athletes to give more, push more, but sometimes it’s nice to be patient.

Richard Hunter—Associate head coach TIDE Swimming

“In my 8+ years of coaching I have been fortunate to swim under some of the top coaches in our sport, including Siga and Bill Rose at MVN and Mike Bottom, Nort Thornton, Dave Durden

and Greg Meehan at U.C. Berkeley. There was one principle that seemed paramount to each of their coaching styles. That was to build relationships based on the person first, and the athlete second. Being asked to go 12 x 200 best average, breaststroke with flip turns and double pulldowns seemed a lot more palatable coming from someone I trusted and knew aligned with my own goals.

As a coach I have spent significant time on deck with both Bill Rose and Jack Roach. Each is a great proponent of coaching the individual, rather than the athlete. During my time at Mission Viejo I worked with athletes from ages 12-to-18 with my primary focus being on the 13-14 year-olds. This age group is particularly fun because they are just coming into their own and figuring out what makes them tick as people. Physically, they have a large capacity for work and can bounce back quickly from practice to practice.

“A big emphasis with these athletes is helping them connect the dots between what they want and the process required to achieve. As a coach, it is so easy to look at the potential of an athlete and get caught up in my own goals for them. Instead, I start each season by asking the athletes to fill out a goal sheet. This is the jumping off point for our conversation on the process required.

“It is important that the athletes be the driving force given that they will be doing the work. We try to break down each step so that they know how to measure progress and can stay focused during the day-to-day grind. I also highlight how to deal with adversity and differing paths to success. If there was a universal equation for breaking 2:00 in a 200m fly, we could have computers replace coaches.

“Once we put this plan into place, each athlete needs to know that it is just an outline that we will constantly adjust based on season results. Rarely is the path to success a direct one. My role, as coach, is to help them understand what various levels of commitment look like. And with age groupers, I encourage them to buy into their own potential.

“Since 2016 my primary responsibility has been working with the top Senior group, which includes high school age athletes. With that population I have found it even more crucial to approach each practice with an understanding that I am working with people with increasingly busy and complicated lives. They are navigating and balancing academics, social activities, extra-curriculars, relationships with peers, family and preparing for, and pursuing, their college futures. All before setting foot on a pool deck!

“Consequently, I do not see myself as a motivator, but rather someone trying to understand what is going on so that we can maximize what athletes bring to the pool. If they are stressed and fatigued from their day, and are operating at 70% capacity, then we want to shoot for 100 per cent of that 70 percent. In order to do this, both the athletes and I have to rely heavily on measurable data points. We are constantly talking about heart rate, stroke count and time and how these three relate and play off one another.

“Knowing goal pace is one thing, knowing how to swim at that pace in the same way they will swim in the actual race is another

er. Equally crucial is that athletes know their training values when it comes to aerobic versus threshold versus anaerobic work. If something is off, we can discuss and adjust as needed based on objective measurements. For these athletes, I try to provide a fluid framework for the practice and then modify to fit individual needs. This gives them a larger degree of ownership of their swimming and their results.

"I actively look to test each athlete's limits in some capacity every day. This can be based on energy systems, dryland or their ability to focus in on technical work. Generally, athletes look for outside factors to establish their own limitations. Height is not necessarily a limitation, unless it is relative to someone else's. Limits are largely self-imposed. If an athlete is only looking at themselves and not competitors nor time standards, then we can measure progress based on the individual's own body of work. Striving towards a goal then becomes simply a series of choices to commit to a program as it relates to practice attendance, attitude, effort and pushing through discomfort. Again, my job as coach is to provide that framework for individual achievement and educate swimmers on how they can better approach every opportunity."

Jessica O'Donnell (Former head age group coach Sun Devil Aquatics, family therapist)

"At meets before you can help pull that stellar performance out of a swimmer it's about knowing the swimmer as an individual. What motivates them? Does a loud public declaration of their goal in front of teammates ignite their fire? Or maybe a quiet whisper of 'you've got this.' I remember being at our LSC champs and gazing at one of my ten-year-olds who was currently in the lead for high point (which was a total shock to her) looking like she was going to vomit before her final race.

"You've got to know your swimmers. Her teammates went to the end of her lane to cheer her on and the louder they got, the greener she got. So, I visited her behind the block. We talked about her crazy socks and what kind of pasta she wanted for dinner. Suddenly she got out of her head and swam a great race.

"When I worked at BEST before Sun Devil Aquatics I once heard Michael Brooks tell his swimmers 'jump into the lion's den prepared to fight the lion.' That thought has stuck with me. But in order to be successful at meets, you first have to lay the foundation for stellar performances consistently in practice. Then, when you get to a meet, you can look the swimmer in the eye and say 'you've done A, B, and C. This is just the icing on the cake.'

"I look at how we are setting up our season plan. What challenge sets (test sets sounds too mundane) are in place to test physical capabilities and build swimmer confidence? If swimmers are not consistently achieving in one area, i.e.: the third 50 of a 200, you have to make sure you are providing opportunities to test their limits in practice. Give them opportunities to succeed, and challenge them in practice with something that doesn't guarantee success -- even if it means getting the snarky parent email 'why did you make this hard for my kid?'"

Michael J. Stott is an ASCA Level 5 coach whose Collegiate School (Richmond, Va.) teams won nine state high school championships in 15 years. A member of that school's Athletic Hall of Fame, he is also a recipient of NISCA's Outstanding Service Award.



**Motivation is momentary,
Inspiration can last a lifetime.
Motivation comes from outside,
Inspiration comes from inside.
Motivation pushes you,
Inspiration pulls you.**

DEANBOKHARI.COM

Holding Your Teammates and Classmates Accountable

By Kevin Pierce, NISCA Education Chair

In high school, friendships and teamwork are important building blocks in shaping who you are. But being a good friend or teammate doesn't just mean going along with everything your peers do. True leadership—whether in the classroom or on the field—requires the courage to hold others accountable, even when it's uncomfortable. It's about stepping up and saying something when you know someone is being disrespectful, making poor decisions, or acting in ways that don't align with your values.

Accountability Starts with Respect

As high school students, you're developing into young adults who will soon step into greater responsibilities. A key part of that growth is understanding the importance of respect—for yourself, for others, and for the community you're part of. When you see a classmate or teammate behaving disrespectfully or being ignorant, staying silent sends the message that their behavior is acceptable. But if you have the courage to speak up, you reinforce the value of respect and create a better environment for everyone.

Imagine a teammate making rude comments to another student or talking back to a coach. If no one steps up, that behavior will likely continue and even spread. But when someone has the courage to say, "That's not okay," it sets a clear boundary for how people should treat each other. Holding someone accountable shows that you care about the well-being of others and won't tolerate disrespect, no matter who it comes from.

Ignorance Thrives in Silence

Sometimes, people act out of ignorance—they don't realize their words or actions are hurtful. In these moments, your leadership can make a big difference. When you respectfully confront someone who is being ignorant, you offer them the opportunity to learn and grow. For example, if a classmate makes an offhand comment that is insensitive or offensive, you can choose to stay silent, or you can take the harder path of explaining why their words are harmful.

It's easy to ignore these situations, especially if the person involved is a friend. But ignorance thrives in silence. If no one ever says anything, people won't learn from their mistakes. Leaders understand that accountability isn't about embarrassing or shaming someone; it's about helping them become better. By speaking up, you can shift the culture in your school or on your team toward one of mutual respect and growth.

The Power of Integrity

There's another side to holding people accountable—it's about doing what's right, even when it's difficult. You may find yourself in situations where someone you care about is making poor choices, cutting corners, or treating others unfairly. While it's easy to look the other way when friends are involved, true integrity means speaking up, even when it's hard.

Why is this important? Because accountability builds trust and credibility. When you let a friend's bad behavior slide, it sends the message that you're willing to compromise your values. Over time, this can harm both your friendship and your reputation. By holding your friends accountable, you show that you care about them enough to want the best for them. You also strengthen the trust within your group, knowing that you won't shy away from calling out what's wrong, even when it's tough.

Leadership Requires Courage

Holding others accountable is one of the hardest things to do, but it's also one of the most important aspects of leadership. It takes courage to confront a classmate or teammate, especially when you risk losing their approval or friendship. But leaders aren't driven by the need to be liked; they're driven by the desire to do what's right.

When someone is not pulling their weight on a group project or slacking off in practice, it's easy to stay quiet and let them slide. But think about the impact that behavior has on the rest of the group. Everyone else has to work harder to make up for it, which breeds frustration and resentment. Holding that person accountable may not be the easy choice, but it's the right one. It's how teams, classrooms, and communities grow stronger.

You Set the Standard

By holding others accountable, you set a standard for your peers. You show them that leadership isn't just about giving speeches or being popular—it's about living by your values, standing up for what's right, and encouraging those around you to do the same. When you take a stand against disrespect or ignorance, you send a powerful message that those behaviors won't be tolerated.

This doesn't mean being confrontational or judgmental. Accountability is about constructive criticism, offering solutions, and helping others see where they can improve. It's about saying, "I care about you, but this behavior needs to change."

Stepping Up When It's Hard

Holding classmates and teammates accountable isn't always easy, but it's necessary for creating a positive and respectful environment. When you step up and say something, even when it's hard, you demonstrate leadership and integrity. You show that you care about your friends, your team, and your school enough to make sure everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

True leadership isn't about being liked or taking the easy way out. It's about having the courage to do what's right, even when it's hard. By holding others accountable, you not only help them grow but also strengthen the bonds of trust and respect within your community. And in doing so, you become the kind of leader others want to follow.

The Swimmer's Doc:

Injury Prevention Strategies and Performance Enhancement

From A Conversation With Dr. Sandra Harrell, excerpted and edited from *The Swimmerd Newsletter*

Dr. Harrell focuses on the common injuries swimmers face, particularly shoulder issues, and emphasizes the importance of proper strength training, mobility work, and understanding individual biomechanics to prevent and address these issues.

She stresses the importance of maintaining a long and healthy swimming career by mastering basic principles like proper hydration, nutrition, and recovery strategies.

Common Swimming Injuries & Causes:

Shoulder Injuries: The most common issue, primarily caused by repetitive stress, muscle imbalances (overdeveloped front, underdeveloped back), and lack of specific strength training.

"Oftentimes it's also preparation in order to do that specific amount and intensity of training, too. So a lot of injuries for swimmers occur as they become more like the elite, the senior group, your fifteen to eighteen year olds."

Thoracic Outlet Syndrome: A lesser-known but increasingly prevalent issue affecting nerves and blood vessels in the shoulder and neck area, leading to pain, numbness, and weakness. Can be caused by muscle tightness, poor posture, and stress.

"It can be insidious, just gradually occurring, or it can be due to a traumatic incident where you fall on a shoulder or you dropped something heavy on your shoulder."

Tendonitis: Inflammation of tendons, often caused by overuse, improper biomechanics, and stiffness.

"Your program cannot look like somebody just down the street, who perhaps work nine to five sitting at a desk who maybe is not very active."

Scoliosis: Curvature of the spine, requiring management strategies like strength training and bracing, and potentially surgery depending on severity.

"Scoliosis is a little bit different, just depending on the severity as well as the type."

Injury Prevention Strategies:

Individualized Strength & Conditioning: Programs tailored to address specific muscle imbalances, mobility limitations, and joint stability needs.

Proper Technique: Efficient movement patterns reduce stress on joints and muscles.

"This is why where technique matters. Technique is so important, not just to swim fast, but also to make sure that you are pulling, pushing, pressing all these different movement patterns properly"

Early Intervention: Addressing issues promptly prevents them

from becoming chronic and more difficult to manage.

"If you have injuries in club, you can bet that those are going to get worse if you do not address them in high school and in club team."

Key Elements for Longevity:

Hydration: Crucial for performance, nutrient delivery, joint lubrication, and overall bodily functions.

"There isn't like a magic number necessarily for everyone to be drinking. We just have different body types. We live in different environments, some more humid, some more arid."

Nutrition: Adequate protein intake is essential for muscle repair and recovery. Quality of food matters.

"It's the only macronutrient that can help rebuild muscles. And when athletes aren't consuming enough protein, you start to see injuries, you start to see burnout, you start to see symptoms of overtraining"

Recovery: Prioritizing sleep, active recovery techniques, and stress management.

"Stress management affects your mental resilience. There's a lot of benefit to athlete education about their condition, managing their recovery expectations, timelines, prognosis, etc."

Importance of Self-Reflection:

Understanding Individual Needs: Identifying what works best for each athlete in terms of food, training, sleep, and mental approach.

"I spent a lot of time studying other people watching my competition, dealing with understanding training mechanisms and all that sort of stuff but it wasn't until I really looked inside and figured out who am I and how do I operate, how do I move, how do I function?"

Mindfulness & Introspection:

Taking time to evaluate performance, identify areas for improvement, and make adjustments.

"Probably the first thing, just slow down and give yourself five, ten minutes a day at the end of the day, to just start working on being more mindful."

Dr. Sandra Harrell is a former 5-time NCAA All-American swimmer and a 2-time pool record holder at UC San Diego. She is a performance and injury prevention specialist who trains and treats various sports and orthopedic conditions ranging from youth to professional swimmers and Ironman triathletes for injury management, recovery, injury prevention, and performance. She is also the assistant coach of the Men's & Women's Swim & Dive program at CSU Bakersfield, a USA Swimming Coach for Roadrunner Aquatics, and a consultant for several USA Swimming teams.

Appreciating What You've Already Done

By Tomer Rozenberg, Author of *“New Day, My Way, Your Life”*
Discovering life lessons in everyday moments

We're often told to make a bucket list—a collection of grand experiences and achievements we hope to accomplish before we die. **But what if, instead of focusing on what's left to do, we took a moment to appreciate everything we've already done?**

Enter the **Reverse Bucket List**, a way of looking back and celebrating the moments, challenges, and milestones that have already shaped us.

We spend so much time chasing new goals that we forget to acknowledge how far we've come. By reflecting on our past, we gain perspective, gratitude, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Why a Reverse Bucket List Matters

Our brains are wired to focus on what's next—what we haven't done, what we still need to achieve. But constantly looking ahead without pausing for reflection can make success feel like a moving target.

No matter how much you accomplish, if you never take stock, you'll always feel like you're behind.

A Reverse Bucket List shifts your perspective. It's a reminder that you have already lived, achieved, and experienced things that were once only dreams. **It turns gratitude into a practice, rather than an afterthought.**

Looking back at what we've already done not only fosters appreciation but also offers validation. We often discount our own achievements because we become accustomed to them, yet they are the very markers of growth and resilience.

How to Reflect on Your Reverse Bucket List

Think about the pivotal moments that have shaped your life so far. What experiences, challenges, and victories stand out? Maybe it was the time you traveled alone for the first time and realized your own independence. Or the moment when you conquered a fear, no matter how small.

Perhaps it was the friendships and relationships that shaped your outlook on life, or the unexpected joys that brightened an ordinary day. Every experience carries value, even the ones that seemed insignificant at the time.

Rather than categorizing achievements into a checklist, let your memories flow naturally. Write about them, talk about them, or simply take a moment to appreciate them.

Acknowledging your past accomplishments fosters a deeper connection to the person you've become. Reflecting on these memories also helps us redefine success.

We often think of success as external—career milestones, financial wealth, or recognition—but success is also found in small personal victories, emotional growth, and moments of courage.

The Layers of Accomplishment

Your Reverse Bucket List is more than just events—it's about transformation. Think about the moments in which you grew as a person. Have you learned to be more patient, more confident, or more compassionate over the years?

Consider the times when you endured hardships, loss, or failure but managed to rise stronger. Think about the friendships and relationships that changed your life.

Reflect on the experiences that pushed you outside your comfort zone, whether it was traveling somewhere unfamiliar, trying something new that once scared you, or taking a risk that ultimately paid off.

Also, acknowledge the small but meaningful acts of kindness—times when you helped someone, even in a minor way, that made a difference in their life.

By identifying these layers, you start to see your life as a rich tapestry, woven together by experiences both big and small. Every challenge overcome, every joyful moment, and every lesson learned contributes to your unique journey.

What This Practice Gives You

Reflecting on your Reverse Bucket List provides a sense of progress. When you realize how much you've already accomplished, you'll feel more confident moving forward. It boosts gratitude, making you more mindful of the present.

It also provides motivation for what's next—rather than feeling pressure about the future, you'll feel inspired by your past ability to achieve and grow. Seeing your own achievements can shift your perspective, helping you redefine success beyond traditional benchmarks.

Finally, this practice allows you to celebrate life, reminding you that fulfillment is not just about the big milestones but also about the small, meaningful moments in between.

Conclusion

We often chase the next big thing without stopping to honor the journey we've already traveled. **But a fulfilling life isn't just about what's ahead—it's also about valuing what's behind.**

So, take a moment. Write your Reverse Bucket List. **Celebrate the wins, big and small, and recognize that your story is already full of incredible moments.** This isn't about standing still; it's about acknowledging the foundation you've built so you can step forward with confidence.

And then, with a deeper appreciation for your journey, keep writing the next chapter. Because just as you've already accomplished more than you realize, the best is still to come.

How Today Reverberates Through Tomorrow

By Tomer Rozenberg, Author of *“New Day, My Way, Your Life”*

Discovering life lessons in everyday moments

Every day, we make countless choices—some big, some small, and most so seemingly insignificant that we hardly notice them. **But these choices, no matter how small, are not without consequence.**

They create ripples that echo into the future, shaping the world we live in tomorrow.

The power of everyday choices lies not in their immediacy, but in their ability to accumulate, to grow, and to influence the trajectory of our lives in ways we can't always predict.

It's easy to think that only grand gestures or significant events are the ones that truly matter. **But more often than not, it's the small, consistent decisions we make that define our lives.**

Choosing to wake up a little earlier, to read a chapter of a book, to smile at a stranger, to take a walk when you could stay on the couch—all of these choices may seem trivial, but they add up.

They create habits, they influence others, and they slowly but surely shape the path you're on.

The Power of Accumulation

Think of each choice as a seed. Some seeds sprout quickly, while others take time to grow beneath the surface before they break through.

The small actions we take today may not yield results immediately, but over time, they accumulate, creating a lasting impact.

Imagine if, every day, you chose to spend just ten minutes meditating, or practicing gratitude, or learning something new. On any given day, ten minutes might not seem like much.

But over a year, those minutes add up to over sixty hours—sixty hours of self-improvement, reflection, and growth. That's the power of accumulation.

This same concept applies to negative choices as well. **The choice to procrastinate, to give in to fear, or to avoid challenges may feel inconsequential in the moment, but these choices, too, add up.**

They create patterns that can hold us back and prevent us from reaching our full potential.

Recognizing the power of everyday choices means understanding that each decision, no matter how small, is a step toward something—either toward growth or away from it.

The Echoes We Send Out

Our choices don't just affect us; they affect those around us. **The way we treat others, the energy we bring into a room, and the actions we take all create echoes that impact the people in our lives.**

When you choose to be kind, to be patient, or to help someone in need, you're not just shaping your own future—you're also contributing to someone else's.

These echoes ripple outward, touching lives in ways we may never fully see or understand.

Think about the times when someone else's actions affected you—perhaps a teacher who believed in you when you didn't believe in yourself, or a friend who showed up when you needed support.

Their choices created echoes that shaped your life, just as your choices create echoes that shape the lives of others.

It's a reminder that our actions, no matter how small, have the power to make a difference—not just in our own lives, but in the lives of those around us.

Choosing with Intention

If every choice we make today echoes into tomorrow, then it's worth considering how we can choose with intention. **How can we make choices that align with the future we want to create?**

It starts with being mindful—recognizing that every action, no matter how small, is a part of the bigger picture. It's about taking a moment before reacting, considering whether our actions are moving us closer to or further away from the life we envision.

Intentional choices don't need to be complicated. They can be as simple as deciding to listen without judgment, to be patient with yourself, or to take one small step toward a goal.

It's about being aware of the echoes you're sending out into the world and making sure they reflect the kind of person you want to be and the kind of future you want to create.

Building a Future, One Choice at a Time

The future isn't built in a day, and it isn't shaped by one monumental decision. **It's crafted through the accumulation of small, everyday choices—the ones we make when no one else is watching, the ones that seem too small to matter.**

But those choices do matter. They create habits, they define our character, and they set the course for the future we're moving toward.

So today, choose with intention. Choose to take one small step toward the life you want to build. **Because the choices you make today aren't just about today—they're about the future you're creating, one echo at a time.**

Make your choices count. Let them echo with purpose.

THE DAILY COACH

"No one will ever fully be able to understand the internal battles you had to endure just to heal, just to grow, just to make it here today. You should be proud of the way you fought to save yourself. You should be proud of the way you survived." — Bianca Sparacino, *A Gentle Reminder*

To Create Order from Chaos

The reality is that the world we live in is fundamentally chaotic and unpredictable. The path forward is rarely clear or straightforward.

- There are always obstacles to overcome, setbacks to weather, and unexpected detours to navigate. It can be disorienting and daunting.
- But in that chaos lies opportunity—the chance to forge our own way, to create meaning and purpose where none exists.
- By imposing structure and order on the disorder around us, we can begin to chart a course through the unknown.

We can break down big, amorphous goals into tangible, achievable steps. We can cut through the clutter and noise to focus on what really matters.

Source: *What You're Made For*, George Raveling and Ryan Holiday

The Creative Act: A Way of Being

Creativity has a place in everyone's life, and everyone can make that place larger. In fact, there are few more important responsibilities.

- ◆ It doesn't matter if the work begins as an inspired idea or a homework assignment, as a passion or a throwaway. Your greatest work may come from your least inspired moment.
- ◆ The work reveals itself as you go. It tells you what it wants to be.
- ◆ The goal is always to get closer to your true self.
- ◆ Aiming at greatness is different than aiming at being better than someone else.
- ◆ The goal is to progress and get better at your craft. Fortunately, this is something everyone can do.

Source: *The Creative Act*, Rick Rubin

Nothing in life is of any value unless it is shared with others.

The Body Keeps the Score

Your body keeps score of everything your mind tries to ignore.

- ◆ If you feel it in your chest, it's fear.
- ◆ If you feel it in your stomach, it's intuition.
- ◆ If you feel it in your head, it's overthinking.
- ◆ If you feel it in your throat, it's words you swallowed instead of speaking.
- ◆ If you feel it in your shoulders, it's the weight of responsibilities you were never meant to carry.
- ◆ If you feel it in your muscles, it's stress you've been holding onto for too long.

Emotions don't just disappear. They linger. They settle into your body, waiting for you to notice. Waiting for you to release them. So instead of pushing it down, pause. Where do you feel it today? And what is your body trying to tell you?

Because the healing starts when you finally listen.

Source: *The Body Keeps the Score*, Bessel van der Kolk

Make People Feel Important

Never underestimate the power of a...

- kind word,
- touch,
- or a smile.

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

⇒ You can't be a real leader and a people pleaser.

⇒ One of the most liberating experiences in life is when we can cultivate the courage to release the grasp on what we cannot change or control.

⇒ Setbacks and wrong turns are not failures, but lessons that bring you closer to your true path.

⇒ Be mindful of who you allow into your inner world—everyone deserves access.

⇒ Letting go is not quitting. It is a courageous step towards greater personal freedom and transformation.

⇒ Our worth is not defined by uncontrollable circumstances or past mistakes. Our power resides in our ability to venture boldly and remain grounded, even when navigating the unknown.

Nine useful principles for offering apologies that are meaningful and rooted in substance

1. A true apology does not include the word "but." When you say, "I'm sorry, but..." whatever follows that "but" is going to be a criticism, a justification, or an excuse.
2. A true apology keeps the focus on your actions, not on the other person's response.
3. A true apology includes an offer of reparation or restitution that fits the situation.
4. A true apology does not overdo.
5. A true apology doesn't get caught up in who's more to blame or who started it. You apologize for your part of the problem, even if the other person can't see their part.
6. A true apology requires that you do your best to avoid a repeat performance.
7. A true apology should not serve to silence another person. For example: "I said I'm sorry 10 times. Let's not bring it up anymore."
8. A true apology should not be offered to make you feel better if it risks making the hurt party feel worse. All apologies are not welcome.
9. A true apology does not ask the hurt party to do anything—not even to forgive.

In life and leadership, mistakes are inevitable—it's how we respond, acknowledge, and take accountability for them that truly matters.

"You can't avoid being misunderstood, but when you understand yourself better, you'll be less concerned with other people's assumptions. Take time to learn more about who you really are. Listen to yourself. Interrogate your triggers. Acknowledge your weaknesses. Leverage your strengths. Poke holes in your limiting beliefs. Make peace with your true self."

— Michell C. Clark, *Eyes on the Road*

"The biggest struggle people face isn't the world around them—it's themselves."

Evy Poumpouras—former U.S. Secret Service Special Agent

"You won. You won, and you're still winning. You won—because you're still breathing. So keep winning. Keep winning."

The Evolution Blueprint

- **EDUCATE** Your mind. There is always something new to learn.
- **ENHANCE** Your resilience. Failures are your foundations to strength.
- **EMBRACE** Your fears. They are there to teach you.
- **ENLIGHTEN** Your inner dark spots. Be a creator of light.
- **EMBOLDEN** Your spirit to find your brave. Think less. Do more.
- **EXPLORE** The world around you. Safe takes you nowhere.
- **EVOLVE** Your soul. It is your moral compass in life.
- **EXPAND** Your circle of people. Be around who you want to become.
- **EXECUTE** Your dreams. Take action to make things happen.

Source: Evy Poumpouras, Creator of *Beyond Bulletproof*

- ◆ **Coaching** is not about control; it's about connection. And life, in its essence, is not about winning but about showing up for the people and the missions that matter most.
- ◆ Do not shrink yourself. Do not silence your gifts. Keep moving forward, step by step.
- ◆ In a world that constantly demands your attention, find moments for stillness. For connection—with yourself.
- ◆ **Never take a job for money. Always take a job for opportunity.**
- ◆ It's never too late for a new beginning. The rest of your life can indeed be the best of your life.
- ◆ **Sometimes, doing the right thing is neither easy nor popular, but it is in these moments that our character and integrity are truly tested.**

- **Speak with conviction. It's not what you say, but how you say it.**
- **If you don't believe in your words, then no one else will. Own what you say.**
- **Respect is a gift. If someone wants to give it to you, they will. If they don't, they won't. So stop chasing it. The respect you desire comes from within.**
- **Master the art of silence. The person who speaks the least has the most power in the conversation. The more you speak, the less you learn and the more you reveal.**
- **Serve something greater than yourself. Help others. Be a champion for humanity. Your time here is temporary. Leave the world better than how you found it.**

The Daily Coach

A daily hands-on approach to becoming a better leader. With the help of some unique wisdom as well as an action plan to tackle your day, **The Daily Coach** aims to be an inspiration in your email inbox each

BRAIN FOOD: Ideas, Thoughts, Insights, and Links To Get You Thinking (<http://fs.blog>)



Tiny Thoughts

- **What works gets ignored; what fails gets attention.**
- **Spend time more carefully than money - you only run out of time once.**
- **Optimism is a performance-enhancing drug that's both legal and free.**

While experts predicted failure, Sam Walton opened discount stores in small towns. When critics said 'too risky,' FedEx launched overnight delivery.

While pessimists write reports, optimists write history.

Kobe Bryant on having the courage to look like a fool:

"if I wanted to implement something new into my game, I'd see it and try incorporating it immediately. I wasn't scared of missing, looking bad, or being embarrassed. That's because I always kept the end result, the long game, in my mind."

Steve Jobs on finding satisfaction through work:

"You've got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do.... Don't settle."

Tiny Thoughts #2

- **Once something is obvious and working, people tend to underestimate it.**
- **Most people quit before they reach their best work.**
- **Excellence lives in doing a bit more than others.**
- **The meaning you give work determines its difficulty.**
- **A coder working on a passion project works 12 hours straight and calls it energizing. That same programmer, doing maintenance on legacy code they consider meaningless, feels exhausted after 2 hours.**

Your relationship with the work shapes its weight more than the work itself.

- ◆ **Persistence isn't just pushing harder—it's having energy that demands new ideas.**
- ◆ **Think of a founder solving a problem. Someone with just determination keeps trying the same approach. But a truly persistent founder has a restless energy that demands new solutions. When one approach fails, their energy compels them to imagine new ones. This cycle—energy demanding imagination, imagination feeding energy—is rare.**
- ◆ **Energy without imagination is force. Energy with imagination is persistence.**

Leonardo da Vinci on self-mastery:

"One can have no smaller or greater mastery than mastery of oneself; you will never have a greater or lesser dominion than that over yourself; the height of your success is gauged by your self-mastery, the depth of your failure by your self-abandonment. Those who cannot establish dominion over themselves will have no dominion over others."

Vincent Van Gogh on the accumulation of small things:

"Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together. The trick is to focus on the first small thing. Starting small is still starting, and small beginnings often lead to extraordinary endings."

George Leonard on how mastery is nothing but a series of plateaus with brief spurts of progress:

"The most important lessons here — especially for young people — is that even if you're shooting for the stars, you're going to spend most of your time on a plateau. That's where the deepest, most lasting learning takes place, so you might as well enjoy it. When I was first learning...I just assumed that I would steadily improve. My first plateau was something of a shock and disappointment, but I persevered and finally experienced an apparent spurt of learning. The next time my outward progress stopped, I said to myself 'oh damn, another plateau'. After a few months, there was another spurt of progress and then, of course, the inevitable plateau. This time, something marvellous happened. I found myself thinking 'Oh boy, another plateau. Good, if I stay on it and keep practicing, I'm absolutely assured another surge of progress. It was one of the best and warmest moments of my life.'"

— Source: Esquire Magazine, May 1987

General Thinking Tools | Inversion

A lot of advantages can be gained simply by avoiding the standard paths to failure.

Inversion is not the way we are taught to think. We are taught to identify what we want and explore things that will move us closer to our objective. However, by identifying and avoiding things that will ensure we don't get what we want, we dramatically increase our odds of success.

Often, we get so fixated on solving a problem in a particular way that we miss simpler, more elegant solutions. Inversion forces us to consider the opposite side of the equation. Instead of asking, "How do I solve this problem?" inversion asks, "What would guarantee failure?"

Instead of asking, "How can I achieve this goal?" it asks, "What is preventing me from achieving it?" By inverting the question, we can gain insights that our normal thought patterns might miss. The next time you find yourself struggling, try inverting your thinking. Ask yourself how you could guarantee failure. The answers may surprise you and open up new avenues for possible solutions.

Source: *The Great Mental Models v1: General Thinking Tools*

Alan Watts on applying "yay one thinking" to yourself:

"You are under no obligation to be the same person you were five minutes ago."

Charlie Munger on preparation:

"Neither Warren nor I are smart enough to make decisions with no time to think. We make actual decisions very rapidly, but that's because we have spent so much time preparing ourselves by quietly reading."

Jim Rohn on failure:

"Failure is rarely the result of some isolated event. Rather, it is a consequence of a long list of accumulated little failures which happen as a result of too little discipline. Failure occurs each time we fail to think ... today, act ... today, care, strive, climb, learn, or just keep going ... today. If your goal requires that today you write ten letters and you write only three, you are behind by seven letters ... today. If you commit yourself to making five phone calls and you make only one, you are behind by four phone calls ... today. If your financial plan requires that you save ten dollars and you save none, you are behind ten dollars ... today. The danger comes when we look at a day squandered and conclude that no harm has been done. After all, it was just one day. But add up these days to make a year and then add up these years to make a lifetime and perhaps you can now see how repeating today's small failures can easily turn your life into a major disaster."

◆ Source: *7 Strategies for Wealth and Happiness*

From *All I Want To Know Is Where I'm Going To Die So I'll Never Go There: Buffett & Munger - A Study in Simplicity and Uncommon, Common Sense*

The main takeaways:

1. Wisdom is prevention.
2. The fundamental algorithm of life: repeat what works.
3. The wise of every generation discover the same truths.
4. Avoid distraction.
5. Spend time thinking.
6. Position yourself for opportunity.
7. Invert: Much of success comes from simply avoiding common paths to failure.
8. Avoiding stupidity is easier than seeking brilliance.
9. The weakest link causes the problem.

Tom Brady (lightly edited) on how the right people in your life double the pleasure and divide the pain:

"Things happen in life that you don't want to happen—whether you lose a game, things don't go well at work, or something happens with your child. There are many moments in our personal and professional lives that don't go the way we want. How do you deal with them? Do you handle them with class and integrity, with courage and resilience? Are you able to share your emotions with others?"

Do you have people in your life who can help you through those challenges? I'm blessed to have had people walk through those moments with me. They always say, "Double the pleasure and divide the pain," and that's what relationships are all about. When you care for and love those around you, they give back—and that's where the reward comes."

Occam's razor is the intellectual equivalent of "keep it simple."

When faced with competing explanations or solutions, Occam's razor suggests that the correct explanation is most likely the simplest one, making the fewest assumptions.

This doesn't mean the simplest theory is always true, only that it should be preferred until proven otherwise. Sometimes, the truth is complex, and the simplest explanation doesn't account for all the facts.

The key to Occam's Razor is understanding when it works for you and against you. A theory that is too simple will fail to capture reality, and one that is too complex will collapse under its own weight.

— Source: *The Great Mental Models v1: General Thinking Tools*



***"The Road to Character"* by David Brooks**

By Kevin Pierce, NISCA Education Chair

David Brooks' *The Road to Character* is a transformative work that delves deeply into the meaning of leading a life rich in moral depth rather than mere success. Through a series of character studies and reflections, Brooks articulates a framework that distinguishes between two sets of virtues: "résumé virtues" (those that contribute to external success) and "eulogy virtues" (those that define one's inner character). For a high school teacher and coach dedicated to nurturing teen leaders, this distinction is particularly compelling, serving as a guide to helping young people prioritize values that will carry them through life, well beyond high school achievements.

Teaching Eulogy Virtues in the Classroom

In the fast-paced, achievement-driven culture of modern education, the emphasis often falls on résumé virtues—good grades, extracurricular achievements, college acceptance, and sports accolades. These are important, but as Brooks argues, they do not define a person's moral compass or determine their lasting impact on others. For a teacher in the classroom, *The Road to Character* is a reminder that true education extends beyond academic rigor. It involves guiding students to develop virtues like kindness, humility, courage, and integrity.

The book's historical profiles—ranging from leaders like Frances Perkins, who championed labor reforms, to activists like Dorothy Day, who committed her life to serving the poor—highlight the kind of character that cannot be quantified by traditional success metrics. Each story presents an opportunity for teachers to show students how personal struggles, sacrifices, and setbacks can foster growth. Using these examples, educators can initiate discussions about perseverance, empathy, and moral courage, challenging students to reflect on their own character and the kind of people they aspire to become.

Incorporating these lessons into a high school social studies or literature class could involve assigning reflective essays where students analyze how a character's journey shaped their values, discussing ethical dilemmas from history or literature, or leading Socratic seminars on what constitutes a good life. The stories in *The Road to Character* provide a springboard for rich, meaningful conversations about what it means to live with purpose.

Coaching for Character, Not Just Victory

For coaches, Brooks' concept of "eulogy virtues" has particular resonance. Athletics naturally provide a platform for teaching life lessons, but it requires intentionality to go beyond merely focusing on skill development, winning records, or scholarship opportunities. *The Road to Character* encourages coaches to redefine what success looks like for their athletes, emphasizing qualities like perseverance, teamwork, sportsmanship, and personal accountability.

The stories Brooks shares illustrate how growth often comes through struggle. Dwight Eisenhower, for example, learned to control his temper and develop self-discipline through adversity. Similarly, Frances Perkins overcame resistance and hardships in her fight for workers' rights. When working with teenage athletes, these stories can help frame challenges like losing a game or recovering from an injury as essential parts of the character-building process. By relating such historical figures' struggles to the athletes' own experiences, coaches can emphasize that true greatness is about how they respond to adversity, not just about the accolades they achieve.

To make these lessons concrete, coaches can incorporate character discussions into regular team meetings, post-practice debriefs, or even leadership workshops. Activities that focus on qualities like mental toughness, accountability, and humility can shift the emphasis away from just physical training to include personal growth. For example, holding players accountable for their behavior in practice or challenging them to praise a teammate for their effort rather than their performance can reinforce the values Brooks discusses.

Developing Teen Leaders with a Focus on Moral Depth

As a leader tasked with developing the next generation, the goal should be to cultivate not just competent individuals, but ones who lead with compassion and principle. *The Road to Character* provides a roadmap for doing just that by illustrating how deep, meaningful leadership comes from a place of moral conviction rather than the pursuit of personal glory. Brooks' analysis of "Adam I" and "Adam II"—the former representing our outward, achievement-oriented self and the latter our inner, morally-driven self—offers a model for discussing with teens how they can balance external success with internal values.

Many teens struggle with questions of identity and self-worth, especially in environments that reward extrinsic achievements. By adopting Brooks' framework, educators and coaches can guide students through the process of building a solid foundation of character. This might involve helping students identify personal values, setting goals that align with these values, and reflecting on how they can contribute to their communities in meaningful ways.

Practical applications in a leadership development program could include:

Self-Reflection Exercises: Encouraging students to write about personal experiences that shaped their character and the values they learned.

Service Projects: Involving teens in community service, where they can practice humility and empathy by helping others.

Peer Mentorship: Setting up systems where older students mentor younger ones, fostering a culture of leadership that emphasizes guiding others and setting positive examples.

Character Contracts: Having student-athletes commit to specific behaviors and attitudes that align with eulogy virtues, such as supporting teammates, showing gratitude, or remaining composed under pressure.

Modeling the Path to Character

One of the most important aspects of Brooks' message is that character development is a lifelong journey. As educators and coaches, there is a responsibility to not only teach these lessons but to model them as well. If we want our students to learn the value of perseverance, we must demonstrate resilience in our own challenges. If we want them to prioritize kindness, we must show compassion in how we interact with others.

Brooks does not suggest that developing character is easy; in fact, he acknowledges that it often requires hard work, introspection, and even failure. This is a vital message for teens who may feel pressured to be perfect. By sharing our own stories of struggle and growth, we can.

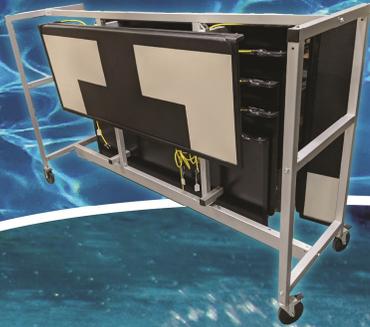
David Brooks' *The Road to Character* offers educators and coaches a profound reminder that our greatest legacy is not measured by the number of trophies on a shelf or lines on a résumé but by the depth of our character and the impact we have on others. For those who work with teenagers, the book is an invaluable resource for teaching students that life's greatest achievements often come from cultivating inner virtues rather than external accolades.

The principles Brooks outlines challenge us to ask not only, "What do I want to achieve?" but more importantly, "What kind of person do I want to be?" By helping young people navigate these questions, we can inspire them to become leaders who embody the eulogy virtues—leaders who will carry their character with them long after their time in the classroom or on the field has ended.





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3	CIRCLE SWIM*****NO DIVING		3
4	TREVANS		4
5	CIRCLE SWIM*****NO DIVING		5
6	FEET FIRST ENTRY* * *CIRCLE SWIM		6
7	CIRCLE SWIM*****NO DIVING		7
8	FEET FIRST ENTRY* * *CIRCLE SWIM		8

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Good Morning!

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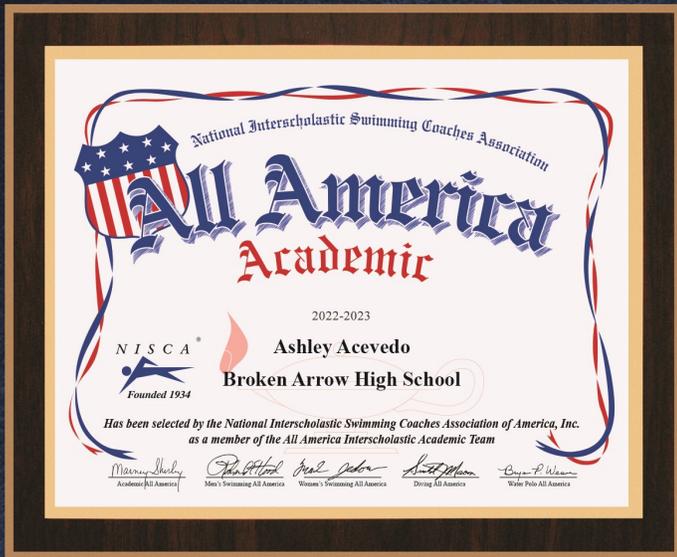


At the end of life, what really matters is not what we bought, but what we built; not what we got, but what we shared; not our competence, but our character; and not our success, but our significance. Live a life that matters. Live a life of love.

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Individual Stroke (Back, Breast, Fly, Free)	\$ 55*
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12" x 12" Color Montage (above) of All Four Strokes	\$125*
12" x 12" Sepia Montage (above) of All Four Strokes	\$100*

Secure Packaging and Priority Shipping **\$ 15**

Order your prints from: nancybryantstudio.com

Questions? Contact Nancy here: <https://www.nancybryantstudio.com/contact>

Nancy donates a portion of all sales from these prints to NISCA!

Speak to your children as if
they are the wisest, kindest, most
beautiful and magical humans on
Earth, for what they believe
is what they become.

– brooke hampton

