



The NISCA Journal

Official Publication of the
National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association of America, Inc.

September - October - November 2025

niscaonline.org

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Sony Pictures Entertainment

COMMENTARY - Alex Trebek

“Accomplishments have come about as a result of people who had doubts.”

Alex Trebek once finished hosting *Jeopardy!* episodes while undergoing chemotherapy — his stomach in pain, his voice trembling — because he said *“the show must go on, pain or no pain.”*

It was 2019 when he revealed to the world that he had stage 4 pancreatic cancer. The diagnosis stunned millions — America’s unflappable quizmaster, the man who made intellect feel elegant, was quietly dying. His doctors urged him to rest. Trebek refused. *“I have a contract,”* he told them. *“I intend to keep it.”* And he did. Through months of chemo, surgeries, and bouts of exhaustion so severe he could barely stand, he kept filming.

Between takes, he would sit silently at his podium, hands gripping the edge, eyes closed until the next question rolled. He’d joke with contestants to ease the tension — and then go home and collapse. Crew members said he’d sometimes vomit backstage, wipe his face, straighten his tie, and walk back out smiling. *“We have contestants who’ve waited their whole lives for this,”* he’d say. *“I can give them half an hour.”*

The hidden story behind that calm wasn’t stoicism — it was a lifetime of discipline born from insecurity. Trebek had grown up in a small town in Ontario, the son of a hotel chef, and started broadcasting to escape poverty. He became obsessed with composure — never flustered, never unkind, always precise. Behind the polite wit was a man terrified of mediocrity. *“I like order,”* he said. *“Chaos scares me.”* That obsession made him perfect for *Jeopardy!* — a show where knowledge had rules and civility still mattered.

What few people know is that even as his body failed, Trebek rewrote *Jeopardy!* clues and fought producers over grammar. In his final weeks, he recorded episodes while barely able to walk, refusing to tell contestants how sick he was. His last episode aired ten days after his death. The final clue was about gratitude — the word he used most in his last speech: *“Thank you.”*

When asked once what he wanted people to remember, Trebek smiled and said, *“That I was fair.”*

Alex Trebek wasn’t just a host; he was proof that grace under pressure is a form of genius. Even as his body betrayed him, his poise never did. He didn’t chase legacy — he simply showed up, question after question, until the clock ran out.

(please turn to page 4)





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All of these are qualities we witnessed during Alex Trebek's television era on **Jeopardy!** we hope we can see in our coaches, our athletes, our colleagues, our parents, our children. By our success or consistency in modeling these same behaviors and qualities, we have a good chance of engendering those same attributes in those we mentor or spend time with.

"Walk the walk, don't talk the talk." It's the things we DO, not the things we SAY. It's the way we ACT and REACT that shows others who we really are. Can we change that for the better? Of course. And so can those we are teaching.

Coaching is teaching, and teaching is helping others to learn. And we can learn from *anybody*. Everyone has the potential to teach you something, whether through their positive (or negative) example, their mistakes, or their unique experiences. To learn from others you must adopt an open mindset, listen actively, and ask questions, even from strangers.

People from different backgrounds have unique life experiences and perspectives that can lead to new insights and wisdom. Building relationships and having conversations with different people can spark new ideas and initiatives that you might not have considered on your own.

Following are some quotes from Alex Trebek's book, **"The Answer is...: Reflections on My Life"**. Worth thinking about.

- "I just enjoy the moment I'm in. For me, life is a whole experience, not just a series of isolated moments. It's like submerging yourself into a warm bath rather than sticking your toe under the faucet. It's the totality of life"*

- "A good education and a kind heart will serve you well throughout your entire life."*
- "[M]ost of the great accomplishments of the world have not been made by people who were certain."*
- "There is nothing worse than deluding yourself and trying to make yourself out to be somebody you're not--somebody you're not comfortable being."*
- "When you are part of a group, then you have a common purpose. A common goal. Your resolve is increased and you can do marvelous, marvelous things together that would not be possible if you were left to your own devices."*
- "Keep your head up. Move forward. Keep going."*
- "[S]haring your feelings with others brings people closer together. It demonstrates an interest in developing an understanding. It demonstrates a caring."*
- "Have you ever met a successful person who wasn't restless—who was satisfied with where he or she was in life? They want new challenges. They want to get up and go ... and that's one of the reasons they're successful."*
- "I don't spend any time whatsoever thinking about what might have been."*
- "When you're in your 30s and actively pursuing a career and a home life, a wife, and children, you're busy doing as opposed to busy thinking. As you get older, even as you don't have as much time, I think you tend to think more and reflect more on what is happening in your own life."*
- "It's very important in life to know when to shut up. You should not be afraid of silence."*
- "My life is what it is, and I can't change it. I can change the future, but I can't do anything about the past."*
- "The secret to happiness, of course, is not getting what you want; it's wanting what you get."*



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THE NISCA JOURNAL
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2025
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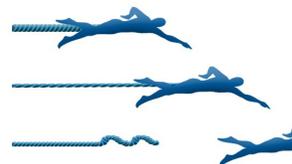


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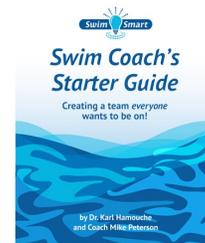
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Back to the Blocks: Starting the Season Right

Back-to-school season means one thing for coaching staff: it's time to shift gears and start building the foundation for a successful season. Whether you're returning state qualifiers or coaching a brand-new group of athletes, how you start the season will shape everything that follows. As we all know, what happens in September/October shows up on the scoreboard later in the season. Here are a few things I always try to lock in as the season begins, and I encourage you to do the same.

1. Map Out the Season Early

If you haven't already, get your full calendar finalized and shared—with your team, parents, athletic department, and booster group. Include meet dates, practice schedules, team events, and tapering timelines. A well-communicated season reduces confusion and keeps your program running smoothly.

Also, double-check that all athlete paperwork is squared away with the athletic office. Physicals, eligibility, and academic standing—get ahead of any red flags now, not the day before a big meet.

2. Evaluate, Don't Just Condition

The early weeks are more than just getting back into shape—they're an opportunity to assess where each athlete is starting. Use short sets, stroke drills, or diving basics to establish a technical and physical baseline.

This is your opportunity to set individualized goals, adjust training groups, and help each athlete see their path forward this season.

3. Reinforce Your Culture from Day One

Team culture doesn't form on its own. If you want respect, effort, and accountability, you need to model it and teach it. Hold a team meeting. Define expectations. If you have team captains, now is the time to empower them—give them the tools to lead, not just the title.

A strong team culture makes the hard practices easier and the victories even sweeter.

4. Get the Pool (and Your Gear) in Order

Check your equipment. Inspect your blocks, lane lines, backstroke flags, and diving boards. Make sure your timing system is working, and your facility is safe and ready to host. Broken gear equals lost time, and no coach has time to spare once the season starts rolling.

5. Coach the Person, Not Just the Athlete

Back-to-school is a whirlwind for your athletes. Between academic stress, social pressures, and general life challenges, mental health needs to be a priority. Keep your eyes and ears open. Be a steady presence. Create space for conversation, not just instruction. Your impact as a coach often goes far beyond the pool.

6. Stay Ahead on NISCA Tasks

This is a friendly reminder: please ensure your NISCA membership is current and start thinking about All-America applications, awards, and service recognitions early. These things come up fast, and we want to celebrate your athletes—and you.

As your NISCA President, I would like to thank you for the work you're doing in your pool, at your school, and for our sport. Coaching is demanding, but it's also one of the most rewarding things we get to do.

Have a great season—and I hope to see you on deck soon.

Kyle

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The Advice You Can't Take

People Want to Help, But...

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



"Have you tried just thinking more positively?"

I was telling a friend about a particularly challenging period in my life—feeling stuck in my career, exhausted by constant stress, and generally overwhelmed by everything on my plate. I had shared this vulnerability hoping for understanding, maybe some empathy, or just someone to listen.

Instead, I got advice. Well-meaning, technically correct, completely useless advice.

"Just think more positively." "Why don't you try meditation?" "You should probably exercise more." "Have you considered making a to-do list?" "Maybe you need better time management."

Each suggestion was logical. Each one was backed by research and success stories. Each one was something I had already thought of, tried before, or knew I "should" be doing. And each one made me feel more frustrated and more alone than before I had asked for support.

If you've ever been struggling and felt worse after receiving advice, you're not broken, ungrateful, or resistant to help. You're experiencing something that almost everyone faces but few people talk about openly: the gap between knowing what you should do and actually being able to do it.

Why Good Advice Falls Flat

The most frustrating thing about receiving advice when you're struggling is that it's often genuinely good advice. The people offering suggestions usually care about you and want to help. The recommendations they're making have worked for them or for people they know.

But there's something they're missing—something that makes their perfectly reasonable suggestions feel impossible to implement.

Context Blindness is perhaps the biggest reason advice fails to connect. When someone suggests "just exercise more" to help with stress, they're usually thinking about exercise in the context of their own life—when they have energy, motivation, and time. They're not considering what exercise feels like when you're already overwhelmed, when your schedule is completely packed, when you're emotionally depleted.

The advice isn't wrong, but it's not accounting for the reality of your current situation. It's like someone giving directions to a scenic route when you're calling from the middle of a traffic jam. The directions might be excellent for normal driving conditions, but they're not helpful for where you actually are right now.

Energy Assumptions create another disconnect. Most advice assumes you have the same baseline energy, motivation, and decision-making capacity as someone who isn't struggling. "Just wake up earlier" sounds simple until you're already exhausted and getting less sleep than you need. "Just meal prep on Sundays" sounds reasonable until you're spending every weekend catching up on work and household tasks you couldn't complete during the week.

When you're struggling, your available energy for implementing new approaches is often much lower than advisors assume. What sounds like simple adjustments to them might represent major undertakings given your current capacity.

The Starting Point Problem occurs when advice assumes you're starting from a stable foundation. "Try journaling for clarity" makes sense if you already have consistent routines and mental

space for reflection. It feels overwhelming if you're barely keeping up with existing responsibilities and don't have five spare minutes in your day.

Good advice often requires certain prerequisites—time, energy, emotional stability, or supportive environment—that struggling people don't currently have access to.

The Shame Spiral of Not Following Advice

Here's what makes this dynamic particularly painful: when good advice feels impossible to follow, many people conclude that something is wrong with them personally.

If meditation helps with stress and you can't seem to maintain a meditation practice, you might decide you lack discipline. If exercise improves mood and you can't motivate yourself to work out regularly, you might conclude you're lazy. If organization systems work for other people but you can't implement them, you might believe you're fundamentally disorganized.

This creates a secondary problem on top of whatever you were originally struggling with. Now you're not just dealing with stress, overwhelm, or whatever brought you to seek advice—you're also dealing with shame about your inability to fix the problem with solutions that work for everyone else.

The shame makes everything harder. It reduces your energy for problem-solving, increases your emotional distress, and often leads to isolation because you stop sharing your struggles with others who might respond with more suggestions you feel unable to follow.

When You're Not Ready for Solutions

Sometimes the reason advice feels impossible isn't that it's wrong or that you're incapable—it's that you're not ready for solutions yet.

When you're in acute stress, grief, overwhelm, or major life transition, your system is focused on basic survival and processing the current situation. Adding new practices, even beneficial ones, can feel like too much additional demand on an already overloaded system.

This doesn't mean you'll never be ready for change or that you should just accept difficult circumstances indefinitely. It means that sometimes the most helpful thing is acknowledging where you actually are instead of trying to immediately implement strategies designed for where you think you should be.

Processing Time might be what you need before you're ready for action-oriented advice. If you're dealing with loss, major disappointment, or significant life changes, your emotional system might need time to adapt before it has capacity for new approaches.

Stabilization might be the prerequisite for implementing optimization advice. If your basic needs for sleep, nutrition, or emotional support aren't being met, advice about advanced productivity or wellness strategies might be premature.

Support might be more immediately valuable than strategies. Sometimes what looks like resistance to advice is actually a

need for emotional validation and understanding before you're ready to focus on problem-solving.

The Advice That Actually Helps

The most useful advice I've received during difficult periods has shared certain characteristics that made it possible to actually use.

It met me where I was instead of where I should have been. Instead of "you should exercise daily," it was "when you're overwhelmed, even a five-minute walk can help reset your mental state." Instead of "develop a morning routine," it was "what's one small thing you could do differently when you first wake up?"

It acknowledged my constraints rather than ignoring them. "Given that you're already working 60-hour weeks, here's how you might find small moments for stress relief" versus "you need better work-life balance."

It offered micro-steps instead of complete overhauls. "Try taking three deep breaths before difficult conversations" versus "you need to work on your communication skills." Small changes feel manageable when you're already overwhelmed; large changes feel impossible.

It validated the difficulty instead of minimizing it. "This situation sounds genuinely challenging" versus "just stay positive." When someone acknowledges that your struggle is real and understandable, you have more energy available for problem-solving.

It provided options instead of prescriptions. "Some people find that X helps, others prefer Y, and some need to try Z" versus "you should definitely do X." Options feel empowering; prescriptions can feel overwhelming when you're already struggling.

Giving Yourself Permission to Not Take Advice

One of the most liberating realizations is that you don't have to take advice just because it's good advice or because someone cares enough to offer it.

You're allowed to say "thank you for the suggestion" and then not implement it without feeling guilty. You're allowed to know that certain approaches work for other people but aren't right for your current situation, personality, or circumstances.

You're also allowed to file advice away for later. Something that feels impossible now might be exactly what you need six months from now when your situation or capacity has changed.

Learning to receive advice gracefully without feeling obligated to follow it immediately removes a lot of pressure from both seeking help and offering it to others.

The Timing of Readiness

What I've learned from my own experiences and watching others navigate difficult periods is that timing matters enormously for when advice becomes actionable.

The same suggestion that feels overwhelming during acute stress might feel helpful and manageable once you've stabilized. The exercise routine that seemed impossible when you were working 70-hour weeks might become appealing once your schedule normalizes. The relationship advice that felt irrelevant during a period of major life change might be exactly what you need once you've settled into your new circumstances.

This isn't about making excuses or avoiding growth—it's about recognizing that sustainable change often requires building capacity gradually rather than forcing immediate implementation of optimization strategies.

How to Ask for What You Actually Need

If traditional advice isn't what you need right now, what is? Sometimes the most helpful thing you can do is get clear about what kind of support would actually be valuable and ask for that specifically.

Maybe you need someone to listen without offering solutions. Maybe you need practical help with immediate tasks so you have space to think. Maybe you need perspective from someone who's been through something similar. Maybe you need permission to take time to figure things out instead of pressure to fix everything immediately.

Being honest about what kind of support you need—and being willing to ask for it directly—often leads to much more helpful interactions than hoping people will intuitively know how to help.

The Long View on Struggle

Here's something that becomes clear when you've been through difficult periods and emerged from them: struggling doesn't mean you're doing life wrong. It means you're human.

Everyone goes through periods when good advice feels impossible to follow, when simple solutions don't work for complex problems, when they can't seem to implement strategies that work for other people.

These periods aren't failures or signs of weakness—they're often necessary parts of growth, processing, and figuring out what actually works for your specific circumstances and personality.

The people who seem to effortlessly follow good advice and maintain optimal routines have usually been through their own periods of struggle. They've learned what works for them through trial and error, not because they were naturally good at implementing every suggestion they received.

Final Thoughts

If you're in a place where good advice feels impossible to follow, you're not broken. You're not lazy, undisciplined, or resistant to growth. You're human, dealing with human complexity in human circumstances that don't always align with ideal conditions for implementing optimization strategies.

The advice will still be there when you're ready for it. The people who care about you will still care about you even if you can't immediately implement their suggestions. Your struggle is valid and temporary, even if it doesn't feel temporary right now.

Sometimes the most helpful thing you can do is give yourself permission to not take advice that doesn't fit your current reality. Sometimes you need to focus on surviving and processing before you're ready for thriving and optimizing.

And sometimes the best advice is simply this: you're allowed to be where you are, struggling with what you're struggling with, for as long as it takes to work through it authentically.

The path forward will become clear when you're ready to see it. Until then, be patient with yourself. The advice will wait.



Building Bulletproof Skills, Part I (edited for clarity and length)

Andrew Sheaff - www.coachandrewsheaff.com

Bulletproof Skills

Skills win races. Faster swimmers are better swimmers.

It makes sense to work to improve these skills in training. Coaches often take this to mean the implementation of technical drills they see described in coaching books or presented at coaching conferences.

However, there is a big difference between executing a skill in the sterile environment of a controlled drill and executing it in the last 25 meters of a championship race, where the swimmer is in contention for the win.

Executing in the former situation is easy. Just about anyone can do it.

Executing in the latter situation is hard. Very hard. Only those with bulletproof skills can find a way to get it done.

Fortunately, while some swimmers have a natural inclination to swim well under all circumstances, bulletproofing a swimmer's skills is possible for every coach. However, it is not going to happen by chance. It's going to happen as the result of a directed attempt to achieve a specific outcome.

In this article, we'll explore how.

Stress

What's the difference between executing a skill in a simple, sterile environment versus a complex, chaotic one?

Stress.

In stressful situations, learned skills are under pressure. These skills are tested not only by whether the swimmer has the physical resources to execute them, but also by whether the swimmer has the psychological focus to maintain them. Swimmers must train to withstand pressure, learn what to focus on, and practice how to maintain that focus.

If swimmers can do this through exposure to the right learning environments, they will be bulletproof to the inevitable stress of racing.

Physiological Pressure

When individuals get tired—regardless of the source of fatigue—it becomes more and more difficult to execute any skill. However, the ability to continue to execute is itself a skill that can be improved. That improvement comes when swimmers are exposed to physiological pressure and expected to execute their skills to a very high standard. With consistent exposure and high-performance standards, swimmers can reduce the impact of fatigue on their ability to swim well.

Critically, the impact of physiological pressure is not consistent.

Different stressors will affect swimmers differently, and the ability to retain skilled movement does not always transfer from one setting to another. For instance, executing skills under aerobic fatigue is not the same as executing skills in a racing context. Executing skills when the legs are completely fatigued is not the same as when the arms are fatigued.

Regardless of which type of physiological pressure is more "specific" to racing, they all have value as training tools. As we'll explore later, becoming more robust in any situation helps develop robustness in every situation.

Beyond the direct physical challenges associated with fatigue, pain is a major distraction. Maintaining skilled execution requires retaining focus, and it is hard to stay focused when every warning system in the body is screaming to stop. Physical sensation is a distraction, and swimmers must learn how to overcome it.

Physical sensations also vary. Executing skills when out of breath due to aerobic challenge is very different from executing skills when the legs lock up at the end of a sprint, or when there is a lack of oxygen due to restricted breathing.

All of these situations are unique, and effective execution in one does not necessarily ensure effective execution in another. Take the example of the hardened trainer who consistently excels during endurance and sprint sets. Expose that swimmer to challenging hypoxic sets at high intensity, and they will struggle. While some of this is purely physiological, much of it is also about managing a novel distraction.

Swimmers must be ready for all of these challenges.

Psychological Pressure

A better description of psychological pressure is panic. When the stakes are high, swimmers can lose the ability to focus on what is important (their skills). Instead, they focus on results (times, winning, etc.) and the implications of those results (status, recognition, even money). The more uncertain the outcome, and the less confident swimmers are in their ability to achieve it, the more likely they will lose focus.

While managing pressure and retaining focus are critical parts of preparation, the solution often comes from knowing that the required skills can be executed in nearly any situation. This creates confidence.

Where does this confidence come from? It comes from actually executing the required skills over and over in training under a wide range of conditions. This happens when there is a plan to create bulletproof skills, rather than simply "getting through" training.

Beyond confidence, swimmers must also learn what to focus on.

This must be taught. As a race progresses and fatigue sets in, swimmers need to adjust their focus to different aspects of their skills. They may need to shift to tempo, body position, or something else entirely.

There isn't one "right" answer—it differs for each swimmer. However, consistent strategies can be learned by exposing swimmers to the environments that demand them. With experience, swimmers learn what to focus on.

Strategies for Becoming Bulletproof

Having explored the pressures swimmers face during racing, and the obstacles they must overcome to execute their skills, let's look at strategies for bulletproofing those critical skills.

A Critical Note

Skilled execution is not always the end goal. What matters most is the attempt to execute skills well. We are not seeking perfection, but rather the struggle for perfection. If swimmers are consistently executing their skills flawlessly, the challenge is not sufficient and needs to be increased. There should be some failure as well as fatigue.

There's no magic ratio, but both elements must be present. Too much failure? Dial it down. Not enough failure? Dial it up. The right balance is when there is a sense of challenge paired with a belief that success is possible. If there's no challenge, it's too easy. If swimmers don't believe success is possible, it's too hard.

The focus should always be on striving to execute the desired skills. That's where learning happens—not in executing perfectly every time. The struggle creates the learning.

Fatigue

Swimmers get tired in races, and this impairs their ability to execute skills. Impaired execution creates more fatigue, and the cycle worsens. To finish races strong, swimmers must be able to execute their skills in the face of mounting fatigue.

While race efforts alone could expose swimmers to fatigue, this is not an efficient strategy. Instead, coaches can create specific types of fatigue and require swimmers to execute their skills in that state.

Any fatigue stimulus has some value, but targeted fatigue can address particular weaknesses. For example, if swimmers fail to stay underwater off the last wall of a 100 backstroke, coaches can design sets that challenge breath-holding, or that fatigue the legs before race efforts. In both cases, the goal is clear: execute the desired skills under pressure. If a swimmer struggles more with hypoxia than with leg fatigue, focus on the hypoxic challenge, and vice versa.

The key is relentless effort to execute skills under any fatigue condition.

Types of Fatigue

Different types of fatigue create different opportunities for learning. They prepare swimmers to be resilient in specific situa-

tions and more adaptable overall. While some categories overlap, each offers a unique perspective for designing effective sets.

Local Fatigue

With local fatigue, stress is targeted to specific body areas. Pulling and kicking are good examples. Using these tools, we can preferentially fatigue the upper or lower body, then require swimmers to execute skills under those conditions.

Race situations often involve one area of the body fatiguing first, sometimes catastrophically. Swimmers must be prepared.

Examples include:

- Sculling sets to fatigue the forearms and hands, making it harder to "feel" the water.

- Breaststrokers fatiguing shin muscles, then sustaining effective kicking technique.

Fatiguing activities can also come from land-based work. Push-ups before breaststroke, for instance, affect holding water. The same push-ups before butterfly compromise recovery rhythm. Either way, swimmers must adapt. Doing so helps bulletproof their skills.

Global Fatigue

Global fatigue affects the entire body. The goal is simply to get tired, then execute skills anyway.

Executing skills during hard aerobic work is different from executing them during racing, but both situations have value. Almost any full-stroke swimming set creates global fatigue, and every one of these is an opportunity to bulletproof skills.

Respiratory Fatigue

Running out of air induces panic. Respiratory fatigue can come from high oxygen demand (due to elevated heart and breathing rates) or from restricted breathing (staying underwater, breathing every few strokes).

Coaches can create great learning environments by restricting breathing or creating high respiratory demands. Swimmers who master execution under these conditions are far more robust during races.

Muscular Fatigue

Muscles drive the race. If they are fatigued, execution suffers. Muscular fatigue may not always come with elevated heart rate, but it is still a major challenge.

Fatiguing muscles—globally or locally—creates novel learning environments. It also prepares swimmers for the inevitable muscular fatigue at the end of races.

Not all muscular fatigue is the same. The fatigue at the end of a sprint differs from that after a 3,000-meter swim. Fatigue from land-based activity is different still. Swimmers should learn to execute under all of these.

High-Force Fatigue

High-force fatigue occurs after sprint efforts, especially with resistance (parachutes, cords, etc.). These overload the muscles, accelerate fatigue, and create valuable training conditions.

An added benefit is that swimmers worry less about times when resistance is involved, so they can focus more on execution.

Another strategy is combining land-based efforts (e.g., push-ups, squats) immediately before sprints. Swimmers must learn to swim well even when their muscles feel like rubber.

Low-Force Fatigue

Low-force fatigue is different from the exhaustion of sprinting—it's the dead heaviness that comes after prolonged efforts.

This can be created through sustained swims, prolonged pull/kick work, or extended swims in one stroke followed by race efforts in another. The muscles are fatigued by duration rather than intensity, and swimmers must learn to execute despite this heaviness.

Conclusion

The ability to execute skills at the end of a race is what wins races. The more bulletproof a swimmer's skills are, the better they will hold up under pressure. This ability can be learned.

To succeed, swimmers must have both the physical resources to perform the required actions and the mental tools to focus appropriately. The best way to develop these traits is to expose swimmers to compromised situations where they are forced to produce results.

In this article, we looked at how coaches can use various types of fatigue to spur learning. In Part II, we'll examine the use of resistance training to build the strength to hold skills together, as well as practical examples of all these strategies.

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My Way

By Kevin Pierce, NISCA Education Chair

There are songs that you enjoy, songs that get stuck in your head for a week, songs that bring you back to a certain time or place. And then there are songs that feel like they were written for your soul, as if every note and every lyric somehow captures the very essence of the way you want to live. For me, that song is *My Way* by Frank Sinatra. It is more than a piece of music, it is a declaration, a philosophy, a compass. Every time I hear it, I am reminded of what it means to live boldly, to own my choices, and to walk through life without apology. That is why it is, without question, my favorite song.

The first time you really listen to *My Way*, you notice how unapologetic it is. There is no sugarcoating, no pretending that life is always perfect. Sinatra does not sing about a flawless journey, he sings about one filled with mistakes, detours, risks, and triumphs. And yet, when it is all said and done, he can stand there with conviction and say he did it his way. That honesty is rare. It is raw. And it is exactly the kind of courage I want to live with.

When Sinatra delivers the lyrics, you hear not just a man reflecting on a career, but a human being summing up what it means to live without compromise. That kind of message does not just belong to a single singer or a single generation. It belongs to anyone willing to embrace their authenticity. And I think that is why the song has stood the test of time. It is not about the 1960s or about Sinatra himself, it is about all of us.

There is a temptation in life to second guess everything. To look back on decisions with regret, to wonder how things might have turned out if only you had zigged instead of zagged. The song refuses to indulge in that kind of thinking. It says yes, there were mistakes. Yes, there were times when things did not go perfectly. But those moments are mine. They are a part of the journey. And to strip them away would be to strip away my identity. That is powerful. Too often, we try to sanitize our past, to hide the parts we think make us look weak or flawed. But what if those are the very parts that make us real? What if those are the very parts that make us strong? *My Way* tells us to embrace them, to own them, to never be ashamed of the totality of who we are.

I think about how this plays out in everyday life. For some, it is in the career choices they make, choosing the profession that speaks to their heart instead of the one that comes with the biggest paycheck. For others, it is in relationships, walking away from ones that stifle their spirit and embracing ones that nurture their growth. For many, it is in the small, daily decisions, the way you choose to raise your kids, the way you choose to spend your time, the way you choose to speak up or stay silent. Each choice is a brushstroke on the canvas of your life, and the question is, are you painting your own picture, or are you letting someone else hold the brush? That is what this song reminds me to ask.

History is full of people who chose to paint their own picture,

even when the world told them to do otherwise. Think of Jackie Robinson. He broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball not because it was easy, not because it was convenient, but because it was the path he was called to walk. He endured insults, jeers, even threats, but he refused to bend. His way was not about personal comfort, it was about staying true to the belief that he belonged, that his talent deserved the same stage as anyone else's. When I hear *My Way*, I think of the courage it must have taken for him to step onto the field every day, knowing the world was watching, and still play the game with dignity.

Or consider Steve Jobs. Love him or hate him, you cannot deny that he lived life his way. He was fired from the very company he built, only to return and change the world with products that redefined how we live. He was not always easy to work with, and he certainly was not flawless, but he was authentic to his vision. He did not compromise on what he believed a product should be, and because of that stubborn authenticity, the world changed. *My Way* could have been his anthem too, because at the end of his life, Jobs did not measure success by approval ratings. He measured it by whether he stayed true to the vision inside him.

The same could be said for artists like Prince. Here was a man who fought record labels for the rights to his own music, who changed his name to a symbol rather than surrender creative control. People called him eccentric, difficult, even bizarre at times, but what he was at the core was authentic. He refused to let the industry dictate who he was or how he created. His way was often misunderstood, but it was his. That is what *My Way* is about, not being universally accepted, but being undeniably yourself.

It is not easy. Doing things your way means that sometimes people will not understand. Sometimes they will criticize. Sometimes you will be left standing alone. That is the cost of authenticity. But the alternative, living a life that is not yours, costs far more. It costs your soul. And when you get to the end, when you look back at the road behind you, what good will it be to realize you spent your years trying to please everyone else? I would rather walk into the final chapter of my life knowing that every step, every misstep, every victory, every loss, was mine. That is what Sinatra's voice carries when he sings those lines. That is what makes the song timeless.

One of the things I love most about *My Way* is that it does not deny the existence of fear or failure. Instead, it acknowledges them and dares you to move forward anyway. Life is not about being fearless, it is about refusing to let fear dictate your story. Think of Serena Williams, who refused to let anyone else define her ceiling in tennis. From the very beginning, she and Venus were doubted, criticized, even mocked for their style of play, for their confidence, for not fitting the mold of what tennis had "always been." And yet, Serena carved her own legacy, not just

with trophies, but with the way she redefined what greatness could look like. She did not conform. She did not ask for permission. She did it her way, and now she stands as one of the greatest athletes of all time.

I apply this philosophy to my own life in ways big and small. When I have faced decisions that scared me, I have often thought back to the idea of living with no regrets. Not no mistakes, because those are inevitable, but no regrets. There is a difference. A mistake is something you can learn from, regret is something that eats at you forever. So I would rather step out, take the chance, risk the fall, and know that I was true to myself, than sit on the sidelines and forever wonder what might have been.

There is also something deeply liberating about living this way. When you stop trying to please everyone, when you stop bending your life to meet every expectation, when you stop chasing approval that is always fleeting, you find freedom. You find joy. You find peace. You realize that your life does not have to look like anyone else's to be meaningful. You realize that comparison is a thief, and that happiness is found in alignment, not applause. That is the deeper wisdom hidden in this song. It is not just about stubbornly doing things your way, it is about finding fulfillment in being authentically you.

And let us be honest, there is a swagger to it too. When Sinatra sang, he did not just deliver a message, he delivered it with a confidence that made you believe he meant every word. That is part of the allure. We all want to feel that way about our lives. We all want to stand tall and say we stayed true to ourselves. But you do not get that kind of conviction by accident. You get it by making daily choices that align with your values, by refusing to sell out your integrity, by staying rooted in who you are no matter how tempting it is to become someone else for acceptance.

Think of Muhammad Ali, who gave up years of his prime fighting career because he refused to be drafted into a war he did not believe in. He was vilified, stripped of his title, called a traitor by some. But he did not back down. He did not apologize for his convictions. He stood by them, even when it cost him everything. And in the end, history vindicated him. He was more than

a boxer, he was a man who lived life his way. That is the kind of courage this song is about.

I have often thought about how this applies to the end of life. It is easy to get caught up in the day to day grind and forget that one day, we will each reach the final curtain. When that moment comes, will I be able to look back and say I did it my way? That is the question. And that is why this song matters so much to me. It is a reminder that the time to live boldly is not later, it is now. Tomorrow is not promised. If I want to live a life that ends with no regrets, I have to live that way today.

People often talk about legacy. What will you leave behind? How will you be remembered? I think *My Way* offers an answer. Legacy is not about fame or fortune. It is not about having your name in lights. Legacy is about authenticity. It is about the people who knew you being able to say, "They lived true to themselves. They did not compromise who they were." That is the kind of legacy that matters. That is the kind of legacy I want.

Every time I hear the opening chords of *My Way*, I am reminded of all of this. It is not just background music. It is a call to live deliberately, courageously, and unapologetically. And while my journey is not perfect, while it is filled with detours, mistakes, and lessons, I would not trade it for someone else's. Because it is mine. Because I did it my way.

That is why this song will always be my favorite. Because it does not just live in my playlist. It lives in my heart. It lives in the way I make decisions. It lives in the way I coach others, teach, parent, love, and lead. It lives in the daily choice to show up as myself, not as the version of me that others might prefer. And it will continue to live there, reminding me, every step of the way, that the most important thing I can do with this one life I have been given is to make sure it is mine.

And when the final note is sung, when the curtain does fall, I want to be able to say, without hesitation, without apology, and without regret, that I lived it my way.



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2025 NISCA Outstanding Service Award



John Barnes
Winfield, IL

Presenter:
**Ryan Barnes &
Jeremy Harris**

John Barnes began his coaching career with Saint Thomas Academy in Minnesota in 1986, and has had an incredible career. In 20 years of high school coaching, the team earned 15 state titles (the most in MN state history) and never finished below 3rd at the state meet. They had a dual meet record of 162-2-1, including a streak of 152 wins (most in MN state history). He has coached 20 High School All-Americans and has had 32 athletes continue in college swimming, including 6 Olympic Trials qualifiers. John grew the club swim team to 600% of its membership when he arrived, coached his way to becoming an ASCA Level 5 coach, and was recognized as the Minnesota Coach of the Year 6 times.



Tim Foulks
Neenah, WI

Presenter: Mike Schuelke

Tim Foulks has coached diving for 41 years. He has coached all levels, spending time with several age group teams, five different high schools across Wisconsin, and Lawrence University. In his time coaching diving, he has coached 19 divers to become NISCA All-American divers. While coaching, Tim has served in other capacities as well, serving as the WISCA Treasurer for 13 years. He has received recognition for both his coaching and his service via the David H. Robertson Award for Excellence in Coaching (2017), the Red Smith Coaching Award (2013), the WISCA Dive Coach of the Year (17 times), the WISCA Outstanding Service Award (2011 & 2019), and installation into the Wauwatosa West High School Hall of Fame (2015).

2025 NISCA Outstanding Service Award



Dan Johnson
Winfield, IL

Presenter:
Angela Johnson Reier

Dan Johnson was a head swim coach for 40 years, 38 of which were in West Chicago, Illinois where he opened a pool and began the swimming and diving programs for the high school. Over his career he had many All-State and All-American swimmers, several sectional championships, and brought his girls team to a 3rd place finish at the Illinois Girls State Meet. During his career, Dan also served as a mentor to fellow coaches, seeing their successes as part of his own. He also never turned away a swimmer based on financial need, always finding ways to offer financial assistance to the kids in a community that struggled with poverty. He has been honored as Sectional Coach of the Year three times, as the State Coach of the Year in 1991, has been inducted into the Illinois State swimming and Diving Association Hall of Fame, had an annual award for coaches named in his honor to recognize coaches who support and mentor their peers, and had the "Dan R. Johnson Natatorium" dedicated in his honor by the West Chicago School District.



Kevin Murphy
North Richland Hills, TX

Kevin Murphy has had a 41-year career coaching high school swimming in the states of Oklahoma and Texas. As the Southlake Carroll boys and girls head swim coach from 2005 to 2025, his girls team won 20 consecutive district championships, while his boys won 17 of 20 district championships over the same time span. His boys were State Champions in Texas' highest division for 9 consecutive years (2011-2019, & 2022), and his girls had 5 state titles, most recently in 2022. At the regional level, his girls team has had a run of 18 consecutive regional championships, while his boys team has won 15 of the last 18 in the same time span. Combined, his Southlake Carroll teams have finished in the Top 3 at Texas University Interscholastic League State Championships 26 out of 32 times since 2010. He has coached 123 individuals to a combined 256 All-American listings and both of his teams have been NISCA Power-Point National Champions multiple times - Girls overall champions (2012 & 2020) and public school champions (2023), and Boys public school champions (2015-2017). His dual meet career records are 343-49 (boys) and 336-46 (girls). Kevin is an ASCA Level 5 high school swim coach. Throughout his career, he has participated in multiple proposals and rule change presentations to benefit swimmers and coaches in the state of Texas. Kevin has also been recognized as Coach of the Year and Coach of the Meet multiple times at the District, Region, and State levels in both Oklahoma and Texas, as well as receiving NFHS Sectional Girl's Coach of the Year in 2012.



John Pearson
Dryden, MI

Presenter: Don Mason

John Pearson has been coaching diving for 43 years, coaching for 4 different Michigan High Schools during that time: Rochester, Romeo, and currently Oxford and Lake Orion High Schools. He has also been heavily involved in coaching club diving for both AAU and USA Diving. In his time coaching in Michigan, he has coached divers to become county, league, regional, and state champions. He has coached 9 NISCA All-American divers, and has had 14 divers continue their diving careers with the NCAA, including the current NCAA Division II 3-meter record holder. He has been named MISCA Zone 1 Coach of the Year, MISCA Regional Dive Coach of the Year (5 times), and Macomb County Coach of the Year (9 times), was awarded the MISCA Bruce Harland Award (2016), and was inducted into the Michigan High School Coaches Hall of Fame in 2022. John's service includes MISCA Zone 1 Vice President, MISCA Diving Chair, Diving Meet Manager positions at multiple levels, service on the NISCA AA Selection Committee, AAU National Diving Championship Event Coordinator, and service as a board member for the Macomb County Swim Coaches Association.

Collegiate-Scholastic Swimming Award



2025 Recipient

Eve Julian

Ottawa Hills High School

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Presenter: Ryan Julian

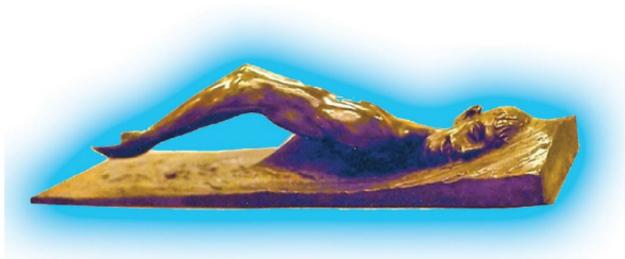


Eve Julian has been coaching swimming since 1999. She began her coaching career in Indianapolis, IN with Warren Central High School for three years before moving to Grand Rapids, Michigan. In Michigan, she began as a volunteer assistant coach for her alma mater, Ottawa Hills High School for three years before becoming the head coach for both the boys and girls programs in 2005. While she led the girls program for only 5 years, she continues to coach the boys program to this day, and this is where she has seen some amazing growth.

Eve inherited a program with 5 kids who had never had any kind of competitive experience or formal swim training. She grew the team to consistently have 20 or more boys each year, with a peak team size of 33 athletes. In recent years, the team has gone from consistently placing 3rd or higher at their Conference meet to winning it, and have had All-Conference athletes in each of the last 13 years. Since 2011 the program has had at least one representative compete in the state meet (Division 3 for 5 years and Division 2 for 9 years), with multiple athletes/relays competing in 13 of those years. In 2018, the team had 5 athletes competing at the state meet and placed 23rd out of 41 teams (Division 3) and in 2019, they had athletes competing in 11 of the 12 events, finishing 16th in the meet (Division 3). In 2021, the team won their first of 4 back to back Conference Championships, sent 4 athletes to state and placed 28th (Division 2). The team has had individual conference champions in the past several years and has had numerous Academic All-Americans. Eve's growth of the Ottawa Hills High School boys team earned the team recognition as the Outstanding Program of the Year for Grand Rapids Public Schools in 2013.

Eve's service in the world of swimming extends well beyond her amazing transformation of the Ottawa Hills High School boys team. She helped create the middle school swimming program for the Grand Rapids Public Schools in 2003, she has served as the NISCA Webmaster since 2008 and has been the NISCA Secretary since 2010. She has been a speaker for the 2014 NorCal Pacific Swim Coaches Clinic (2014) and the ASCA World Clinic (2015). In 2017, Eve was named on the list of Swimming World's 10 Most Impactful People in Swimming. MISCA has recognized Eve as the Zone 5 Boys Coach of the Year (2017-2018), and NISCA has recognized Eve with an Outstanding Service Award (2019).

2025 NISCA Hall of Fame Award



Jesse Cole

Dallas Highland Park High School
Plano, Texas

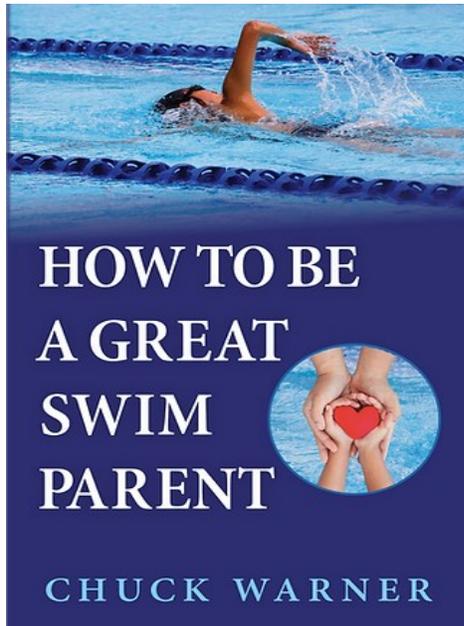
Presenter: Dana Abbott

Jesse Cole has had an outstanding coaching career coaching over 35 years for Dallas Highland Park High School in Plano, Texas. His coaching accolades include over 50 District Championships, over 40 Region Championships, and 11 State Championships (1988, 1991-1992, 1998, 2008-2010, 2012-2013, 2017, & 2018). He has coached over 40 All-American relays and individuals, and has even had a relay team post a National Relay Record. The Dallas Highland Park High School team has also been honored as a National Champion Team.

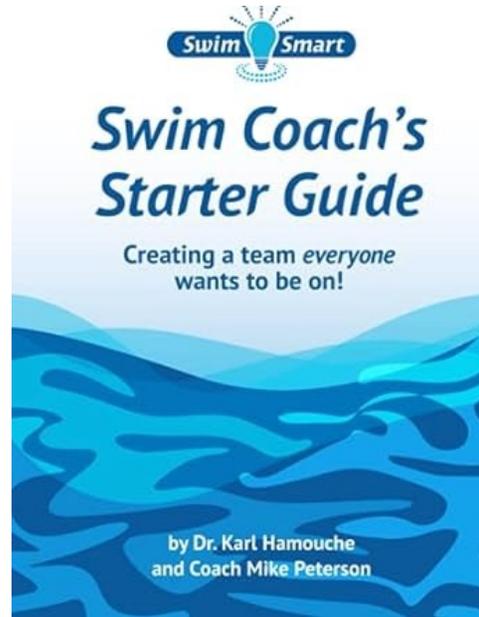
Throughout his coaching career, Jesse has been honored with numerous awards. These include receiving NISCA's Outstanding Service Award (2020) and David H. Robertson Award for Excellence in Coaching Swimming, the Highland Park Independent School District Professional Achievement Award 9 times (2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017, and 2018), the Dallas Morning News Coach of the Year 5 times (1988, 1991, 1992, 2008, and 2009), and the Dallas All-Sports Association Swim Coach of the Year 4 times (1988, 1991, 2008, and 2009). Jesse has also received recognition from the Texas Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association through the receipt of numerous Coach of the Year awards. He has received 17 District TISCA Swim Coach of the Year Awards (1994, 1997-2000, 2005-2006, 2008-2010, and 2012-2018), he has received 12 Regional TISCA Swim Coach of the Year Awards (1997-2000, 2005-2006, 2008-2010, 2014, and 2017-2018), and he has received State TISCA Swim Coach of the Year six times (1988, 1991-1992, 2009-2010, and 2013).

To round off this amazing coaching career, Jesse has served as a Texas Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association Region Rep and as the TISCA treasurer during his coaching career.

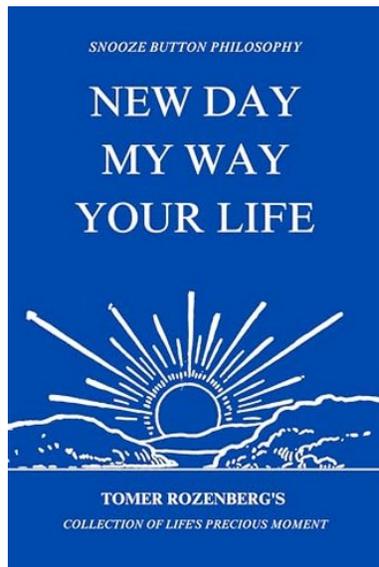
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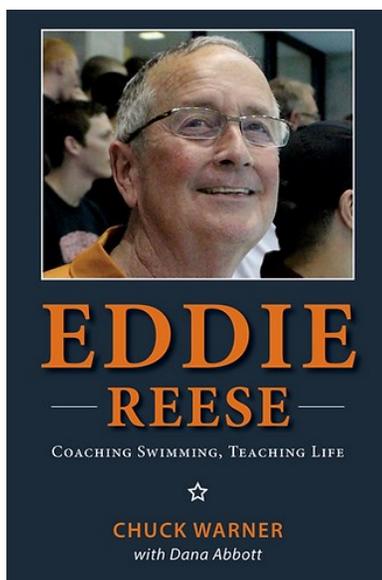
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Both books by Tomer Rozenberg are available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

BOOKS WE RECOMMEND



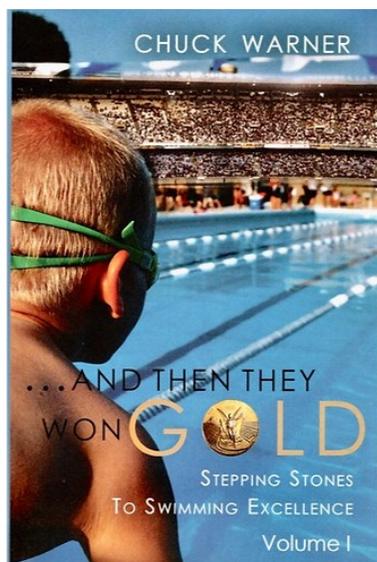
Eddie Reese is one of the most successful and effective coaches in sports history. His method of building his swimmers' character first has resulted in unprecedented success at The University of Texas including:

- 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.

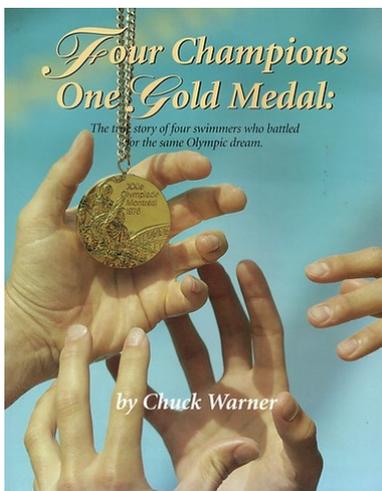
Technique tips.



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



Four Champions, One Gold Medal, is a monumental achievement! Descriptive, prescriptive and inspirational, it recounts--step-by-step--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 extraordinary athletes--incredibly hard-working, and totally focused on their common goal of winning the 1500 meters at the 1976 Olympic Games. 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.

Life Member Award

This award is given by the NISCA Awards Committee to longtime serving members of the NISCA organization. These members have dedicated their careers to aquatics sports, and served the aquatics coaching community through their volunteer work with the NISCA organization. Service can include holding officer positions, working as a Zone director, and serving on the various committees within NISCA. This award is not awarded annually, but on occasion based on the nomination and selection by the awards committee. Previous awardees are listed on page 6 in the program.

2025 Life Member Award



Mel Roberts
Toole, Utah

Presenter: Don Roberts

Mel Roberts has been an influential member of NISCA for decades in numerous roles. He has served as a NISCA State Delegate, a Zone Director, the All-America Coordinator, Chairman of the Awards Committee, and was a member of the Executive Board for 6 years. Mel served on the National Federation of State Activities Association Swimming and Diving Rules Committee for four years and has conducted clinics for swimming coaches' associations in Texas, Colorado, Washington, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Utah.

Though he may not have known it at the time, his extensive career in the swimming world started when he became a lifeguard at the Tooele Memorial Swimming pool as a freshman in 1958. This foot-in-the-door led to being a swim instructor, an age group coach, office supervisor, and pool manager for 62 years. His Tooele High School coaching career started when he became a math teacher and coach in 1969, and lasted through 2017. In his time as a swim coach, his boys' and girls' swimming and diving teams had 1,016 wins and only 218 losses. His teams won 11 state championships and 43 region championships in the state of Utah. One of those state championships came from a team that had graduated 11 seniors the year before. Mel also coached the Utah High School team that competed in the Moscow Youth Games in Russia in 2003. He has been honored by his high school and town through induction into the Tooele High School Hall of Fame, being named Tooele County Citizen of the Year, serving as the Grand Marshall of the 2017 4th of July celebration parade in Tooele, and through the naming of the competition pool in Tooele in his honor.

Prior to this Life Member Award, NISCA has awarded Mel with The Outstanding Service Award, Induction into the NISCA Hall of Fame, the Collegiate Scholastic Award, and the David H. Robertson Award for Excellence in Coaching. All of these awards have recognized Mel's success and service in NISCA, but Mel's service to the swimming community extends beyond NISCA, with his service as an officer in the Utah Swimming Coaches Association for 45 years and his role in the foundation of the Utah Sports Hall of Fame. Success in coaching and extensive service in Utah brought more awards and recognition to Mel throughout his career including winning Coach of the Year 11 times, being named National Coach of the Year three times (2005 & 2016 for girls and 2010 for boys), and his induction into the Utah High School Athletic Administrators Hall of Fame. Mel has also been awarded the Outstanding Service Award from the Utah High School Athletic Administrators and the Meritorious Service and Circle of Fame awards through the Utah High School Athletic Association.

Honorary Member

This award is given by the NISCA Awards Committee to individuals or organizations that have contributed to the work or the goals of the NISCA organization. These honorees are being recognized as having made a significant impact on interscholastic aquatic sports through their work or service. While the honoree has not been a formal member of NISCA, our organization recognizes them with honorary membership to show our respect and appreciation for their work and service. Previous awardees are listed on page 6 in the program.

2025 Honorary Member



Sandy Searcy
Bloomington, IN

Presenter: Peter Hugo



Sandy Searcy began her career as a swimming coach in Bloomington, Indiana in 1983 where she spent time as assistant coach and head coach for Bloomington South High School, Bloomington Swim Club, Bloomington North High School, Bloomington Aquatic Club, and Tri-North Middle School, covering boys and girls teams throughout the 1980's and '90s. During her coaching tenure, she was selected as a coach and lecturer for the Indiana University Swim Camp, and coached the Clarion University Stroke Camp. She was also awarded the Indiana High School Swim Coaches Association Sectional Coach of the Year multiple times in her coaching career (1987-89, & 1992-94), and twice received the Indiana Coaches of Girls Sports Association Coach of the Year (1990 & 1992).

At the turn of the millennium, Sandy began working at the Indiana High School Athletic Association where she administered the sports of volleyball, swimming and diving, and softball. She has served on many rules committees with the NFHS including softball, volleyball, gymnastics, and swimming and diving, including serving as the Committee Chair for the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Committee in 2014 & 2015. She began a new career working for the National Federation of High School sports in 2015. She has served an integral role in creating and refining rules for high school swimming and diving over the past two decades and has been recognized by NISCA for her role with a NISCA Special Commendation Award in 2017.

Sandy's contributions to sports extend far beyond her contributions to rules committees. She has been heavily involved in her alma mater serving on the Indiana University Alumni Association Board of Managers, was the first female president of the I Association (comprised of IU letterwinners), and an IU Athletics Committee Member. She has served on the USA Diving Board of Directors, the American Association of Adapted Sports Program Board of Directors, the ASA Softball Properties Board, the NFHS Spirit of Sport Committee, and was Co-Chair of the 2024 USA Swimming Olympic Trials Meeting Operations.

In her multitude of roles, Sandy has been recognized with awards such as the Indiana University Alumni Association President's Award (2019), the Indiana High School Swimming and Diving Hall of Fame Contributors Award (2019), the Indiana Coaches of Girls Sports Association Marian Archer Award (2018) and induction into the association's Softball Hall of Fame (2017), the Marion County Coaches of Girls sports Jan Brown Award (2018), the Indiana University School of Public Health Anita Aldrich Distinguished Alumni Award (2012), the I Association President's Award (2012) & Leanne Grotke Award (2011), the Indiana Coaches of Girls Sports Association Phyllis Tubbs Service Award (2006), and a National Federation of State High School Associations Citation (2014).

Currently, Sandy is serving on the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Committee, the USA Softball Board of Directors, its Equipment Committee as Vice Chair & as Chair for their DEI Task Force, and the American Association of Adapted Sports Vice Chair, as well as serving on the Monroe County Sports Hall of Fame Board of Directors, all while also continuing her career with the NFHS.

Award for Excellence in Media Coverage of Interscholastic Aquatic Sports

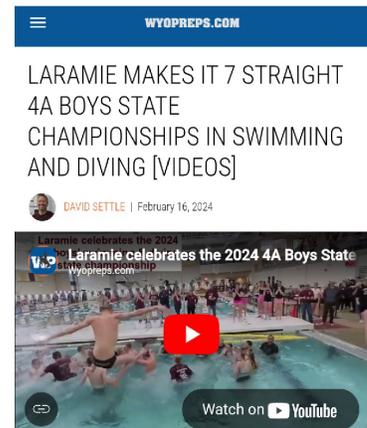
2024 was the inaugural year for this award. The Professional Awards Committee introduced this award to recognize work that displays creative, in-depth, and innovative coverage of high school aquatic sports - especially larger issues and trends related to interscholastic levels of athletic competition. The award is intended to recognize work by daily and weekly newspapers, periodical magazines, local and national television news broadcasts, national news organizations, and multimedia and online news outlets. Nominations are collected from NISCA coaches across the country to be considered during the annual conference.

Past award winners: Brent Rutemiller, Phoenix, AZ



David Settle
Laramie, Wyoming

David Settle has been a high school sports media specialist for years, having been around prep sports for more than 25 years in Wyoming. He is in his sixth year as the WyoPreps.com Brand Manager, overseeing day-to-day operations of WyoPreps, a website dedicated to covering nothing but varsity high school sports in Wyoming. The site features coverage of all 14 sanctioned high school sports in the state, plus high school rodeo events, and Laramie American Legion Baseball. David performs interviews via audio for radio coverage on KOWB Radio - Laramie's Sports News Leader. He also performs video interviews for publication on WyoPreps.com and YouTube. These interviews combine with written articles and results publications to keep news about our athletes and teams circulated around the state and the country as families share them with their loved ones. David does a great job representing all high school sports, but doesn't sell swimming and diving short. This quality, equitable coverage of all sports has led to his nomination for this award and his selection as this year's recipient of the Award for Excellence in Media Coverage of Interscholastic Aquatic Sports. David will get to add this award to his accolades which include being the radio voice of Laramie High football and basketball, Laramie American Legion Baseball, and the University of Wyoming Cowgirl Basketball, as well as his Wyoming Broadcaster of the Year 2020 award from the National Sports Media Association and his numerous Wyoming Association of Broadcasters Awards for Best Play-by-Play and Best Sports Coverage.



David H. Robertson Excellence in Coaching Award

To be nominated for the David H. Robertson Excellence in Coaching Award, the head swimming and/or water polo coach must win five State Championships. Diving coaches must have coached four or more different state champions. Champions may be boys, girls, or boys/girls combined and may come from more than one team in one or more states.

Alabama

Lee Farless
Rose Mary Adams

Alaska

Mike Smithers
Steve Polk
Jerry Chambers
Scott O'Brien
Craig Cummins
Father Jim LaCasse
Bill Doebbler
Bill Kopas
Gerry Seaquist
Jeff Seaquist
Mike Ward
Jake Giles

California

George Haines

Colorado

Lou Parker
Mike Doherty
Mark Moorehouse
Kirk Price
Stringy Ervin
Eric Craven
Ron Begg
Jan Howard

Connecticut

Larry Amann
Edward Aston
Bob Hartman
Richard Hawks

Delaware

Terry Lowe
Chip Hannig

Florida

Garry Butts
William Diaz
Bruce Follensbee
Glenn Kaye
Tom Lamar
Jack Nelson
Jimmy Parmenter
Don Prokes
Alex Pussieldi
Larry Shofe
Nobutaka Tan
Greg Troy

Georgia

Pete Higgins
Rick Creed
Les Fouts
Glenn T. Meeden
Greg Puckett

Hawaii

Tom Haine
Steve Borowski
Jeff Meister
Brian Lee

Idaho

Robert Broyles
Bill VonTagen

Illinois

Sam Marsulo
John Newman
Edgar B. Jackson
William Burton
David H. Robertson
Don Watson
Carol Lambert Bobo
Bruce Woodbury
Jennifer Heyer
Mark P. Onstott
Bill Schalz

Indiana

John Wilmore
Duane Borrows
Jon Jepson
Ray Lawrence
Tony Young
Ken Stopkotte
Tom Burchill

Iowa

Judd Anderson
Clark Munger
Dan Flannery
Howard Judd
Hal Krizan
Jim Voss
Dick Marcussen
Mike Arends
Wayne Fanchett

Kansas

John Charlesworth
Bob Timmons
Charles Hatter
Greg House
Pat Grzenda
Carolyn Howard
Arvel F. McElroy
Russell R. Ingold

Kentucky

Br. Fabius
Marty O'Toole
Ted Pierce
Todd Larkin
Louisiana
Dick Bower
Jack Jordan
Richard Culpepper
George Newport
Wally Fall
Jan Ripple
Nan Muratagh

Maine

George Crimmins
Harold Paulson
Phil Emery
Harvey Wheeler
Dave Ploch
Don Richards
Robby MacDonald
Robe Hale
Doug Springer
Kerry Kertes
John F. Keyes
Cindy Howard
Tony DeMuro

Massachusetts

Caitlyn Klick
Wilmot Babcock
Larry Boyle
Peter Foley
Robert Asquith
Paul Murphy
Jeffrey F. Johnson
David Fox*

Michigan

Charles McCaffree
Don Kimble
Robert Mowerson
Dennis Hill
Ron Richards
James Schaffer
Tom Stubbs
Pete Bly
Milton Briggs
Shanon Dunworth
Mike Lane
Al Bentley
Matt Williams
Michael Torrey
John Vincent
Don Mason*

Minnesota

Harry Boardman
C.G. Giffel
Paul Lukens
Evar Silvernagle
Art Downey
Tim Daly
John Barnes
John Healey
Jeff Mace
Scott Johnson*

Missouri

Brian Wright*
Michelle Carlson*

Montana

Lane Page
Dan Hinrichs
Jean Chaard
Paul J. Winkler

Nebraska

Paul Stetler
C.C. Hubbard
John Reta
Cal Bentz
Doug Krecklow
Pat DiBiase
Tom Beck
Dennis Kemmesat
David Huffmire
Roger Nekton
Kathy Nutt Nekton

New Jersey

Francis Coll
George Schonheiter
Al Neuschaefer
Al Thomas
Walter Hack
John Schereirman
Marilyn Diamond
Bruce Johnson
Bob Lemley

New Mexico

John A. Casadia
Mike Schiavo
Steve Whittington
Bill Reichle

New York

Dave Barney
Quint Seckler

North Carolina

Dominick Galimi

North Dakota

Stephan Howard

Ohio

Ken Disher
Kathy Aspaas

Ohio

Ted Branin
Mark Cahalane
Dennis White

Oklahoma

Jim Brower
Brian S. Perry
Jerry Holtrey
N.B. "Bim" Stults
Peter Payne
John Turner
Steve Riggs

Oregon

Bill Eilertson
Don Jacklin
Burt Stratton
Bud Taylor
Rob Harman

Pennsylvania

Pat Campbell
Greg Fastrich
Corky Semler
Bill Bartle

Rhode Island

Ed Golden
Jim Lynch
Bruce Calvert
David Hanson

Tennessee

Polly Linden
Daniel Flack*

Texas

CJ "Trey" Collins
Kent W. Kirchner
Lanny Lantroop
Al Marks
Kevin Murphy
Peter Payne
Richard Quick
Dan Murphy
Russell Duin*
Ron Raper*

Utah

Leigh Pratt
Tom Thorum
Darwin Killpack
Russell Lauber
Mel Roberts
Larry Swim
Richard Coston
Terry Sue Gault
Jim Koehrt
Jay Leach
Bruce Marchionda
Rod Montrie
Jeff Scott
Michael J. Stott
Dan Bledsoe

Washington

Dick Hannula
Don Helling
Chauntelle Johnson
Wally Streeter
Craig Martin
Frank Ceteznik
Jack Ridley
Don Wolfrom
Paul Von Destion
Rick Wertman

West Virginia

Richard Hawkins

Wisconsin

Peter Colisimo
Tim Foulks
Bob Hanke
Rollie Bestor
Phil Cibik
Tom Hargraves
Gary Kolpin
Beth Emshoff
Bob Jenkyns
Kelly Chadash
Blaine Carlson

Wyoming

Layne Kopischka
Bruce Gresly
Mike Miller
Gene Dozah
Larry Steiger
Pat Kirk
Ray Beiber
Tom Hudson
Phil Rehard
Shawna Morgan
Ben Herdt
Tamara Bretting*

*2025 awardees

Letting Go of Old Ideas

Intentional Forgetting

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

We typically regard forgetting as a flaw—something to avoid or overcome. In our pursuit of knowledge, memory and retention are valued above all.

But what if forgetting isn't always negative? What if intentionally letting go of outdated beliefs, practices, and ideas is precisely what allows us to evolve and innovate?

Forgetting as a Path to Progress

Progress often requires the courage to discard what's no longer working. Our beliefs, assumptions, and routines shape our daily lives, guiding our actions and decisions. Yet, clinging tightly to outdated or disproven ideas prevents us from adapting to new circumstances and stifles growth.

Consider the business that refuses to abandon outdated strategies despite declining performance or the individual who holds onto limiting beliefs long past their relevance. In both cases, forgetting—consciously letting go—isn't a failure; it's essential for moving forward.

Why Forgetting is Difficult

One reason we struggle to forget outdated ideas is our attachment to familiarity. Familiar beliefs and routines provide comfort and predictability, even when they're no longer helpful. Additionally, admitting that an old idea is wrong or ineffective can challenge our ego and identity.

This difficulty highlights why forgetting isn't simply about erasing memories. It's about deliberately choosing to release attachment to ideas or habits that no longer serve us, creating space for new possibilities and perspectives.

The Power of Intentional Forgetting

Intentional forgetting involves consciously identifying and releasing outdated beliefs and behaviors. It's a proactive choice to open up mental and emotional space, enabling fresh insights and innovations.

When we intentionally forget, we engage in a deliberate act of mental decluttering. It's similar to pruning a garden: removing dead or unnecessary parts allows energy and resources to flow to healthier growth. Forgetting old ideas works similarly, clearing space for new and improved ways of thinking and doing.

Practical Steps to Master the Art of Forgetting

Here's how to practice intentional forgetting:

- **Regular Reflection:** Set aside time to evaluate your beliefs and practices critically. Ask yourself: Are these ideas still valid, beneficial, or relevant?
- **Encourage Curiosity:** Actively seek new information and perspectives that challenge your existing beliefs.
- **Accept and Embrace Change:** Remind yourself that **adapting and changing your mind is a strength, not a weakness.**
- **Replace, Don't Just Remove:** When you discard an outdated idea, intentionally adopt a new, more useful one. This ensures you move forward positively.

Everyday Examples of Effective Forgetting

- **Career Growth:** Letting go of outdated skills and learning new ones is vital for professional growth and staying relevant.
- **Relationships:** Forgetting old grievances or assumptions can rejuvenate friendships, family connections, and professional relationships.
- **Personal Development:** Forgetting limiting beliefs about yourself, such as “I'm not creative” or “I can't lead,” opens opportunities for personal exploration and growth.

Conclusion

The art of forgetting is a powerful, yet often overlooked skill. It encourages adaptability, resilience, and ongoing growth. By intentionally letting go of outdated ideas, you make room for innovation, improvement, and evolution.

Embrace forgetting not as a flaw, but as a fundamental part of learning, adapting, and growing. Sometimes, the most important step forward is simply letting go.



leaders aren't
Born they are made.
and they are made
just like
anything
else, through
hard work.
and that's the
Price we'll
have to pay to
achieve
that **goal,** or
GOAL

Vince Lombardi

This poster can be ordered from [fineartamerica](https://www.fineartamerica.com) as a personalized greeting card. Scan the QR code for ordering information.



Give Them A Chance to Learn and Grow (Sure They'll Mess Up. Sometimes. Usually. Let Them. It's OK.)

Why We Shouldn't Underestimate Kids

Too often, adults assume kids aren't ready for real responsibility until they're well into their teens. We picture them as fragile, easily overwhelmed, and in constant need of our management. But if we're honest, that perception says more about us than it does about them. Children—especially those between the ages of 10 and 16—are far more capable than we give them credit for. In fact, when we step back and allow them to try, stumble, and learn, they often surprise us with just how much they can do.

Take the example of a 13-year-old managing her family's grocery budget. At first glance, that might sound like "too much" responsibility. Some adults react with shock: "She's too young," or "That's unfair." But responsibility isn't a burden when framed as trust and empowerment—it's an opportunity. By being trusted with real-life tasks, kids not only learn practical skills but also develop confidence, problem-solving ability, and independence.

The Myth of "Too Young"

Adults frequently underestimate what children are ready for. We imagine that responsibility should wait until later: budgeting at 18, cooking at college, time management once they start their first job. But why? A child doesn't need to be an adult to begin practicing adult skills. They need practice long before the stakes are high.

When kids are told, "You're too young," what they often hear is, "I don't think you're capable." Over time, this message can erode self-belief. Contrast that with the message they get when we say, "I trust you with this." Even if they fail, they've learned that they are capable of trying. And in trying, they build resilience.

Struggle Is Part of the Lesson

Letting children take on responsibility isn't neat or convenient. A 5-year-old helping with dishes creates a flood zone. A 10-year-old mowing the lawn misses entire patches. A 12-year-old cooking dinner may burn the rice. But every crookedly folded towel, every messy attempt, is a step toward competence.

If adults swoop in and "fix" everything, kids never experience the natural progression from frustration to mastery. Life isn't about getting everything right the first time—it's about learning

through mistakes. By shielding children from the struggle, we unintentionally rob them of the opportunity to prove to themselves that they can handle challenges.

Building Capable Adults Starts Early

A confident, self-sufficient 16-year-old doesn't appear overnight. Those qualities are built brick by brick, starting with small responsibilities early on. Allowing a preschooler to pour their own cereal—even if milk ends up on the floor—plants the seed. Giving a grade-schooler control of the family pet's feeding schedule fosters accountability. Asking a teenager to manage a grocery budget develops real-world math, planning, and prioritization skills.

Each task, however "messy," sends a powerful message: I believe in you. You can do this.

Trust Is the Greatest Gift

The world our kids are growing into demands flexibility, problem-solving, and resilience. They won't get those traits from always being managed, entertained, or protected from difficulty. They get them when adults trust them enough to let go.

It's tempting to do everything ourselves—after all, it's faster, cleaner, and less frustrating. But convenience for the parent is often a disservice to the child. The greatest gift we can give our kids isn't comfort or ease—it's confidence in their own abilities.

So the next time someone calls a parent "lazy" for letting their child take on responsibility, maybe that's a compliment. Because it means that child is being given room to grow. And growth is never neat, never perfect, but always worth it.

Kids aren't fragile. They're fierce, capable, and ready to rise if we'll only let them.



I CHOOSE
TO LIVE BY CHOICE,
NOT CHANCE;
TO BE MOTIVATED,
NOT MANIPULATED;
TO BE USEFUL,
NOT USED;
TO MAKE CHANGES,
NOT EXCUSES;
TO EXCEL,
NOT COMPETE.
I CHOOSE
SELF-ESTEEM,
NOT SELF-PITY,
I CHOOSE TO
LISTEN TO MY
INNER VOICE,
NOT TO
THE RANDOM
OPINION OF OTHERS.



This poster can be purchased at Amazon. Scan the QR code for purchase information.

THE DAILY COACH

- ◆ *There's a difference between growing old and becoming an elder. One happens with time, the other with courage.*
- ◆ *Don't spend your life proving your worth. Spend it discovering your light.*
- ◆ *You don't need everyone to understand you. Just make sure you're not betraying yourself to be understood.*
- ◆ *When your body begins to fade, let your spirit rise. The light within you is your final, and most enduring gift.*
- ◆ *Most people are not listening. But speak with love anyway. Your voice may be the one that awakens them.*
- ◆ *We are all just stories in motion—live a life worth retelling, not just recording.*
- ◆ *Success without soul feels like sand in your hands—impressive for a moment, and then gone.*

Your Response Is Your Power

Life inevitably brings adversity and uncontrollable experiences. Each day, we have the power to choose how we respond.

We can deliberately control our:

- * *Attitude*
- * *Behavior*
- * *Mindset*
- * *Reactions to challenges*

Practicing daily patience and empathy makes a meaningful difference.

- ⇒ *The spirit knows what the calendar does not. Don't let time trick you into thinking you've run out of it.*
- ⇒ *Joy is not the absence of pain. It's the ability to hold both in the same breath.*
- ⇒ *You will never regret loving too much—but you will regret holding back when it mattered.*
- ⇒ *Make time to bless the ordinary. That's where the sacred hides.*
- ⇒ *We outlive most of our possessions. But the energy we leave in others? That's eternal.*
- ⇒ *Speak to children like they are listening with their future selves. Because they are.*
- ⇒ *Do not chase relevance. Chase resonance. One fades, the other echoes.*

"Time flies...2026 is a few months away. 2020 is nearly six years gone. In between, everything changed, quietly, slowly, all at once. We lost people. We let go of things we thought would last forever. We found pieces of ourselves in the wreckage. Time didn't wait. It moved, and we had to follow. Some of it broke us. Some of it made us. But you're still here. Different. Tired. Still trying. And that means more than you think."

Happiness Isn't Waiting at the Finish Line

The easiest trap to fall into:

- *Once I get X, then I'll be happy. Once I make more money. Once I hit that goal. Once everything falls into place.*
- *But life isn't waiting for you on the other side of achievement— it's happening right now.*

If you can't enjoy the process, you won't enjoy the outcome. Because the finish line always moves. The secret isn't in getting there. It's in learning to live here.

Source: Jay Yang, *You Can Just Do Things*

In the Direction of Life

At the end of the day, I want to be proud of the way I showed up.

- ◆ *Of the way I existed in this world, of the way I dedicated myself to living the kind of life that was full, that allowed for happiness, and sadness, and growth to flow through me like rain.*
- ◆ *At the end of the day, I want to be proud of the way I fell in love with my life, of the way I fell in love with a version of happiness that I created from the deepest parts of my soul.*
- ◆ *At the end of the day, I want to be proud of the fact that I never took a back seat to my pain, that I never let my past convince me that I did not deserve the potential the future was holding for me.*
- ◆ *I want to be proud of the way I moved in the direction of life, in the direction of living, in the direction of experience, in the direction of love. At the end of the day, I want to be proud of the way I risked my soul, I want to be proud of the way I honored it.*

Source: Bianca Sparacino, *A Gentle Reminder*

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 morning. Plus, it's **FREE**. Sign up for **The Daily Coach**: www.thedaily.coach/subscribe

The Legacy That Lives in Others

- The essence of your legacy as a leader will not be defined by the titles you hold or the accomplishments listed on your resume.
- Instead, it will be shaped by the lasting impression you leave on the people you encounter throughout your life.
- It's the feelings you evoke in others, the kindness you show, and the connections you build that will resonate long after your time has passed.
- Strive to be someone who is remembered for their positive impact, generosity, and genuine interactions.
- Aim to be unforgettable not for accolades or achievements, but for the warmth and authenticity you bring into every relationship.

Source: *Leadership First, Finding the Courage to Lead*

"Time is the only currency you spend without ever knowing your balance: you never check your account and you never get a statement, you just keep spending it hoping there's more where that came from. We act like we have forever. We postpone dreams, delay joy and assume that "later" is guaranteed. But "later" often becomes "never." And no one ever feels the moment they cross the line from "I still have time" to "I thought I had more." Truth is: you don't get to control how much time you have, but you do get to choose how you spend it. Every day, you're trading your life for something. Make sure it's worth it. Because you want to avoid the tragic scenario of living as if you're never going to die and then die having never truly lived."

— Simon Alexander Ong, Energize

The hardest battle we fight is to live in a world where every single day someone is trying to make you a person you do not want to be.

People put labels on you, and once the labels are there, they build fences around you.

There's a world called "me," and there's a world called "society." I control the world called me.

When you get up in the morning, give yourself two choices: you can either be happy or very happy.

Try to have "think time" daily — a deep, rich, constructive conversation with yourself.

The Three Pillars of a Productive Day

Plan every day around three things.

Simplify your day by focusing on what truly matters —

- *Time management*
- *Energy management*
- *Environmental management*

- ◆ *If I can't say I grew as a person today, then I just wasted 86,400 seconds.*
- ◆ *Figure out who you are, why you're here, and what you can contribute, then live it.*
- ◆ *Listening to understand is one of the greatest skills a person can have.*
- ◆ *You lead and coach three things: behavior, attitude, and performance.*
- ◆ *If all you learn from me is how to shoot and rebound, then I've failed you.*
- ◆ *It doesn't matter that you love someone. It only matters if you show that you love them.*
- ◆ *Coaching is about more than winning games. It's about teaching people how to win in the game of life.*

-
- ⇒ *The two Gs: gratitude and generosity.*
 - ⇒ *Leave people enough space to be real.*
 - ⇒ *Many times they need you more than they love you.*
 - ⇒ *Before a difficult conversation, map out the conversation you want to have.*
 - ⇒ *Finding time for anything that matters will always be a challenge.*
 - ⇒ *There are days when life comes at you fast — days when it feels as if we're pummeled with news and developments. It's overwhelming. In those moments, take a step back and simply breathe.*

Gentle reminders and affirmations for today and the month ahead:

I'm better than this moment. It will pass.

I love myself at and in every evolution. Both beneficial and non-beneficial. Good, bad or indifferent.

I honor myself for operating in the fullness that I could at that time and at that space.

I'm proud of myself for the bravery to grow. I'm proud of myself for finding tools and figuring out this game called life.

I will give myself grace to figure it out. Grace to stumble. Grace to pause.

I give myself permission to evolve and let go as often as I need, in whatever way I need, without explanation.

It's a new dawn, it's a new day, and I will celebrate this moment by returning to my breath and simply saying thank you.

Source: Janelle Monáe, Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter





BRAIN FOOD



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

Telling yourself you'll do it tomorrow is how dreams die.

The problem with success is that it teaches you the wrong lessons. What worked yesterday becomes religion, and religions don't adapt.

People think good decision-making is about being right all the time. It's not. It's about lowering the cost of being wrong and changing your mind.

When the cost of mistakes is high, we're paralyzed with fear. When the cost of mistakes is low, we can move fast and adapt.

Make mistakes cheap, not rare.

Philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer on the need to not only accumulate information but also to reflect and digest it:

"You may accumulate a vast amount of knowledge but it will be of far less value to you than a much smaller amount if you have not thought it over for yourself; because only through ordering what you know by comparing every truth with every other truth can you take complete possession of your knowledge and get it into your power."

"What truly separates people isn't some magical talent, but an almost irrational commitment to pushing through pain that would break most people.

... Everything around you—every convenience you enjoy, every space you inhabit, every service you use—was one person's refusal to accept the world as it was.

The world progresses from a collection of irrational dedication."

Try to teach the kids is the concept of 'one more.'

- One more rep.*
- One more step.*
- One more minute.*
- One more revision.*
- One more practice test.*

It's so easy to stop, but most of the value comes from one more.

School often teaches that correct answers are obvious. Reality is the opposite.

We drill kids on facts that seem obvious once known, never mentioning that almost all of them were buried behind a door of 'that doesn't make sense.' Gravity baffled us for millennia. We didn't think hand washing mattered, even the idea of germs causing sickness sounded insane.

Every breakthrough started as heresy. But we teach kids to flee from the very feeling that precedes discovery.

Football Coach Marshall Faulk on effort:

"Effort requires no talent. Hustle requires no talent."

Your capacity for excellence is inversely proportional to the number of your commitments.

When your primary goal is to be liked, you can't take risks. You can't disagree. You can't push boundaries. You become a prisoner of other people's expectations.

When you truly understand something, you can express it at any level of detail while maintaining coherence.

The master can provide the one-sentence version, the paragraph version, and the chapter version, all of which tell the same story at different resolutions. The novice can only repeat what they've memorized at one resolution.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) on wisdom:

"Real wisdom is not the knowledge of everything, but the knowledge of which things in life are necessary, which are less necessary, and which are completely unnecessary to know.

Among the most necessary knowledge is the knowledge of how to live well, that is, how to produce the least possible evil and the greatest goodness in one's life. At present, people study useless sciences, but forget to study this, the most important knowledge."

Some really good articles on Self-Improvement:

<https://fs.blog/category/self-improvement/>

Tiny Thoughts

- * Make your mood, or it makes you.
- * Most complexity is unnecessary, but we manage it instead of removing it because deletion requires courage that addition doesn't.
- * We avoid doing simple things that work because they don't make us look smart.
- * Smart people feel stupid doing simple things, so we invent complicated alternatives that accomplish less but feel more intellectually satisfying.
- * Meanwhile, the people who dominate their fields are doing embarrassingly basic things, but they do them better than everyone else.



Actress Lucille Ball on the myth of overnight success:

"Remember that there are practically no "overnight" successes. Before that brilliant hit performance came ten, fifteen, sometimes twenty years in the salt mines, sweating it out."



Dr. Orison Swett Marden on habits:

"The beginning of a habit is like an invisible thread, but every time we repeat the act, we strengthen the strand, add to it another filament, until it becomes a great cable and binds us irrevocably in thought and act."



From a conversation with Barry Diller:

1. No job is below you.
2. Conflict is better than consensus.
3. Conventional wisdom is uninteresting.
4. Don't treat your job as a stepping stone.
5. To get the job you want, master the one you have.
6. If you don't get what you want, be prepared to walk away.
7. "The world belongs to the discontented." - Robert Woodruff
8. Make all decisions from a place of optimism, not pessimism.
9. "Data can tell you what has happened, not what can or will happen."
10. Most of the time, you don't need to ask for responsibility; you can take it.



Author Paul Smith, on seeing what we want to see:

"What we see in people is determined, in large part, by what we expect to find."

When you truly understand something, you can express it at any level of detail while maintaining coherence.

The master can provide the one-sentence version, the paragraph version, and the chapter version, all of which tell the same story at different resolutions. The novice can only repeat what they've memorized at one resolution.



Co-authors Rosamund and Benjamin Zander, on finding the right frame:

"Every problem, every dilemma, every dead end we find ourselves facing in life, only appears unsolvable inside a particular frame or point of view. Enlarge the box, or create another frame around the data, and problems vanish, while new opportunities appear."



The longer you delay that thing you know you should do, the more difficult it gets. The easier thing in the short run is often the harder thing in the long run. Pain today, gain tomorrow.



It doesn't matter what position you find yourself in right now. What matters is whether you improve your position today. Every ordinary moment is an opportunity to make the future easier or harder.



Swim in your lane.

Every second you spend looking at a person in another lane comes at the cost of your progress.

Focus on yourself.



Impatience is an expensive emotion.

Every app wants your decision in seconds. Every employer wants results this quarter. Every investment platform profits when you trade. Meanwhile, the boring investor who indexed and touched nothing decades ago owns your neighborhood. Who's winning?

The patient inherit everything the impatient leave behind.

FILM AND MEDIA: “When Everyone Swims”

“When Everyone Swims” is a compilation of inspirational and insightful stories about how people from every walk of life can have a healthy and fulfilling relationship with the water through water literacy.

The documentary features compelling voices from Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, White, and Asian interviewees of all ages along with Olympic swimmers Cullen Jones, Lilly King, Maritza McClendon, Cody Miller and Summer Sanders. Howard University Head Swim Coach Nic Askew, New York Times editorial board member Mara Gay, historian Jeff Wiltse and Indiana University School of Public Health associate Professor, Dr. Bill Ramos also shared their experience and insights in the film.

At its heart, When Everyone Swims is a call to action. It follows those who are fighting to make swimming accessible to all—parents determined to protect their children, instructors breaking down fears, and communities rallying to ensure no one is left behind. It is a story of resilience, determination, and the belief that every person, regardless of background or circumstance, should have the opportunity to feel safe and confident in the water. This is especially important because approximately 11 people die due to drowning every day. Drowning is also the number one cause of injury death following motor vehicle crashes – and the primary cause of death among children ages 1-4.

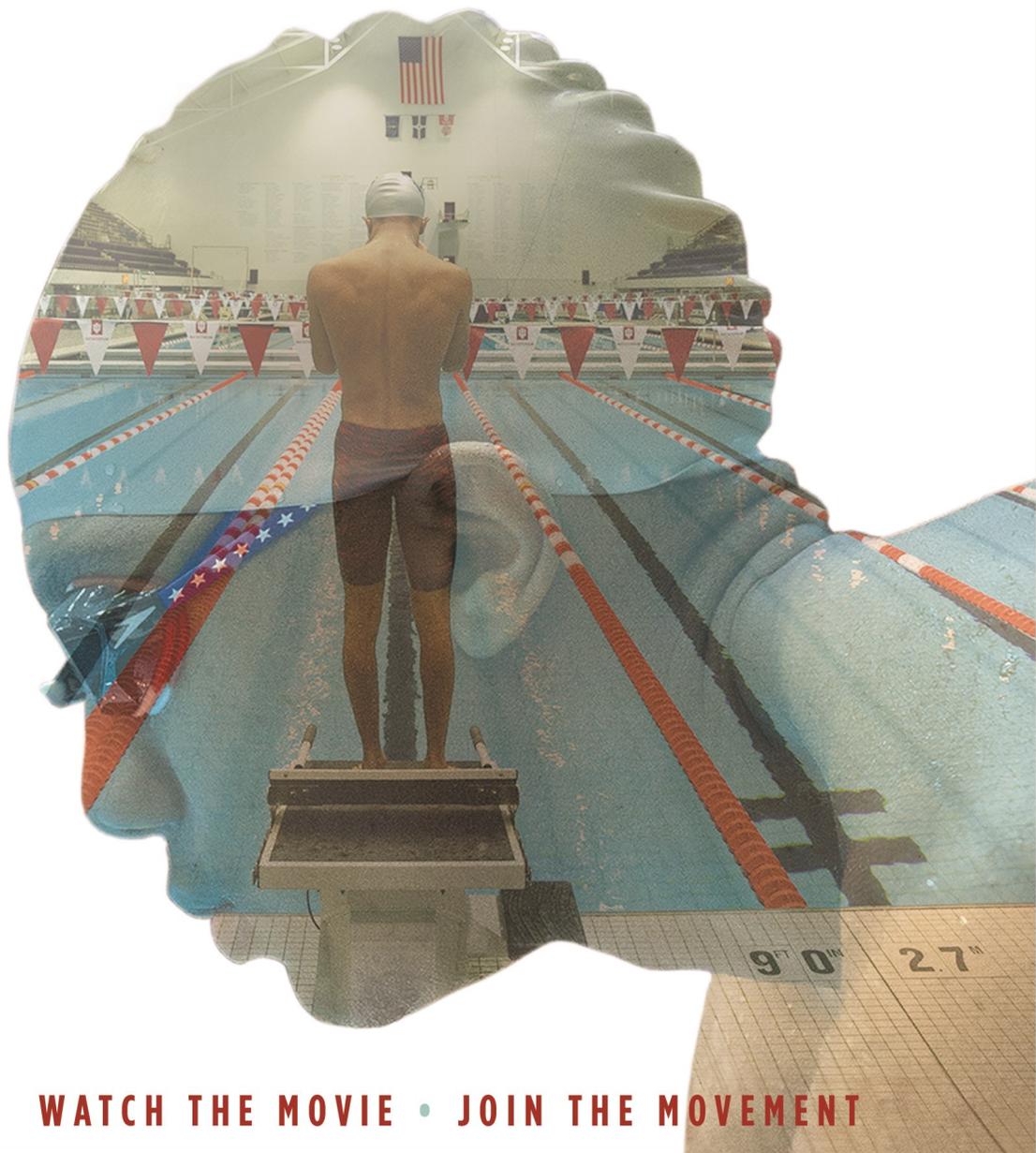
Here are the 10 Essential Water Safety Tips.

1. **Make Learning to Swim and Water Safety a Family Affair** Enroll yourself and your children in age-appropriate swim lessons to build confidence and essential survival skills. Reinforce water safety rules and encourage regular practice in safe, supervised environments.
2. **Always Supervise Children Near Water** Never leave children unattended near pools, lakes, bathtubs, or any body of water, even for a moment. Designate a responsible adult to supervise closely and constantly when children are in or near water.
3. **Use Life Jackets, Not Floaties** Ensure all non-swimmers and young children wear properly fitted, U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets, especially near open water. Floaties, noodles, and inflatable toys are not safety devices.
4. **Swim in Designated Areas Supervised by Lifeguards** Choose swimming spots that are monitored by trained lifeguards and marked safe for public use. Lifeguards are equipped to respond quickly in emergencies.
5. **Know the Rules of the Pool** Establish clear safety rules such as “no running,” “no diving in shallow areas,” and “swim with a buddy.” Install secure barriers around home pools or hot tubs to restrict unsupervised access.
6. **Know First Aid, CPR, and Emergency Response** Get trained in CPR and basic first aid—it can save a life. Courses are available online and in-person through the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, and local organizations.
7. **Avoid Alcohol and Drugs Around Water** Alcohol and drugs impair coordination and judgment. Avoid them before and during swimming, boating, or supervising children around water.
8. **Understand and Respect Water Hazards** Be aware of rip currents, sudden drop-offs, and underwater obstacles. If caught in a rip current, remain calm, swim parallel to the shore, and then angle back toward land.
9. **Secure Pools and Hot Tubs at Home** Use four-sided fencing with self-latching gates. Install pool alarms and use covers when pools or hot tubs are not in use. Remove ladders from above-ground pools when unsupervised.
10. **Teach Water Safety Through Education and Conversation** Start early. Talk to children about water rules using age-appropriate stories, games, and visuals. Reinforce habits like asking permission before approaching water and always swimming with a buddy in fun, engaging ways.

“When Everyone Swims” is produced and directed by Jerald B. Harkness of Studio Auteur. Executive Producers are Jon Goynshor of Lincolnwoodland Productions, Jerald B. Harkness, Joy Ann Reid, Jason Reid and Adrienne Lopez. Luke Renner of Bird Shine Films serves as Editor and Story Producer. The film’s fiscal partner is Diversity in Aquatics.

You can learn more about the film and to host your own screening at WhenEveryoneSwims.org.

WHENEVERONESWIMS



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CONSULTANTS DR. MIRIAM LYNCH DR. ANGELA BEALE-TAWFEEQ DR. TIFFANY QUASH
VISUAL DESIGN BARBARA RUDE-HARKNESS COMPOSER DEREK REEVES
PRODUCTION CONSULTANT ERIC JOHNSON ASSOCIATE PRODUCER KATELYN CALHOUN
PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY JERALD B. HARKNESS

www.wheneveryoneswims.org



The Attention Dilemma

By Kevin Pierce, NISCA Education Chair

Somewhere along the way, something shifted. You start a drill and within seconds someone is looking toward the bleachers. You give directions and two athletes are whispering about something completely unrelated. You go over the game plan and see eyes glaze over like you are speaking another language. You call for their attention and wonder if you even have it. Because attention now is not assumed. It is something you have to win. Over and over again. And not just win it. You have to compete for it. Against phones. Against group chats. Against Snapchat streaks and TikTok notifications. Against a world designed to steal it before you can ever make use of it. And that is the challenge of coaching today. You are not just teaching a sport. You are fighting for attention in an era that has made it a scarce resource.

Every coach can feel it. The mental drift. The constant pull. The inability to stay locked in for more than a few seconds at a time. You see it in the way your athletes fidget. In the way they check their phones the second they think there is a break. In the way they ask what they are supposed to do immediately after you just explained it. It is not because they do not care. It is because they have been conditioned to consume information in fast bursts and move on. They are being rewired by the world around them. By algorithms designed to hold their attention just long enough to move them to the next shiny thing. That rewiring shows up everywhere. In the classroom. In friendships. In practice. In competition. And especially in moments that require stillness, focus, or sustained effort.

Eight seconds. That is the number often cited. The average attention span of a teenager today. Some say it is less. Some say it is slightly more. But whatever the exact number, the truth is clear. They are not built to focus the way previous generations were. And the problem is, sports demand attention. Growth demands repetition. Mastery demands focus. None of that can happen in a distracted state. And yet, that is the state most athletes now live in. So the question becomes, how do you coach in that world? How do you lead a team when your athletes cannot focus long enough to absorb the message? How do you teach discipline, communication, and awareness when the default mode is scattered and reactive?

It starts by understanding that attention is not the same as obedience. You can get an athlete to comply without ever truly getting them engaged. You can bark out instructions and get a short term reaction. But what you want is investment. You want buy in. You want them present, not just physically but mentally. And that takes more than volume. It takes intention. It takes clarity. It takes creativity. Because if you are not engaging them, something else will. And whatever that something is, be it a screen, a joke, or a stray thought it will win the battle for their mind.

So we have to coach differently. We have to meet them where

they are. That means simplifying when possible. Shortening instruction. Breaking things into pieces. Teaching in reps and rhythms that match the way their minds work. It does not mean dumbing things down. It means making things digestible. You can still teach complex ideas. You can still raise the standard. But you have to deliver it in a way that makes sense in their world. That might mean using visuals. That might mean stopping drills more often for teaching moments. That might mean involving them in the explanation. That might mean asking them to repeat things back. That might mean using stories or analogies they can relate to. The content can be high level. But the format has to evolve.

We also have to model focus. That means we as coaches cannot be distracted either. We cannot preach attention and then check our phones during water breaks. We cannot demand presence and then drift mentally when we are frustrated. Our focus becomes the standard they see. Our ability to stay locked in shapes theirs. And in a world full of distractions, they are hungry for someone who is fully present. Someone who sees them. Someone who listens. Someone who shows what locked in leadership looks like. Because attention is contagious. When you bring it, they feel it. When you lose it, they sense it.

Another key is variety. Repetition is essential in sport, but monotony is the enemy of attention. That means we need to find ways to make things fresh without sacrificing fundamentals. Change the order of drills. Switch up the groups. Add an element of competition. Use time limits. Use scoring. Use accountability. Keep them on their toes. Not with chaos, but with intention. Because variety wakes the brain up. And a brain that is awake is a brain that can learn.

We also have to be honest about what we are up against. Most of our athletes are on their phones for hours a day. Many are watching videos that change every five to ten seconds. Many are scrolling endlessly through content designed to be addictive. That is not going away. So rather than ignore it or pretend it is not real, we have to talk about it. We have to help them see the effect it is having on their ability to focus. We have to teach them how to take back control. That might mean setting phone boundaries during practice. That might mean having conversations about mental clarity and performance. That might mean encouraging mindfulness, breath work, or intentional breaks. It is not about being anti phone. It is about being pro focus. And that has to be taught.

There is also a deeper layer. Attention is not just about the mind. It is about the heart. When an athlete is truly invested, focus becomes easier. When they care, they lock in. When they understand how their effort connects to something bigger than themselves, they stop drifting. That means we have to coach with purpose. We have to make it matter. We have to connect drills to outcomes. Connect roles to team goals. Connect the

work to their identity. When an athlete feels like their presence makes a difference, they start to show up with more presence.

There are going to be days when you feel like a broken record. When you explain something three times and still have to redirect someone. When you see the same mistakes because the message did not stick. When you wonder if you are making any progress. But you are. Because attention, like anything else, can be trained. It can be strengthened. It takes time. It takes patience. But it can improve. The key is not giving up. Not lowering the bar. Not deciding they just cannot focus and leaving it at that. The key is staying in the fight. Staying consistent. Staying creative. And above all, staying connected.

Because when you get their attention, everything changes. Suddenly the drill has life. The practice has energy. The feedback lands. The growth accelerates. That is what we are chasing. Not just compliance. Not just effort. But engagement. Presence. Intentionality. That is what turns teams into families. That is what turns athletes into leaders. That is what turns seasons into something more than just a schedule.

It will not be easy. Nothing worth doing is. But it is possible. I have seen teams go from scattered to sharp. I have seen athletes who could not stay focused for five minutes become captains who set the tone. I have seen groups who started off distracted become locked in and disciplined. It starts with belief. Belief that they are capable. Belief that attention is a skill. Belief that you as the coach can help shape it. And belief that the game is worth their full presence.

In the end, coaching athletes with eight second attention spans is not just about keeping them entertained. It is about drawing them into something real. Something that demands more. Something that asks them to focus not because they have to, but because they want to. Because they care. Because they belong. Because they know that in this space, their focus has purpose.

And that is how we win the attention dilemma. Not with gimmicks. Not with fear. But with clarity, connection, and consistency. One moment, one drill, one locked in rep at a time.

Follow Coach Kevin Pierce on **The Leadership Launchpad** as he shares insights on leadership, coaching, and personal development. There you will find strategies, stories, and resources to help build stronger leaders in sports and in life.

You can follow Kevin on social media:

Instagram: @coachkevinpierce

X (Twitter): @kevpierce14

Website: www.coachkevinpierce.com

You can also subscribe to Kevin's newsletters from his Substack page:

<https://kevinpierce.substack.com/>



I READ THAT THE AVERAGE CONSUMER HAS A LOWER ATTENTION SPAN THAN A GOLDFISH.

SORRY, DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?



A DAY WITHOUT
SWIMMING
IS LIKE
..JUST KIDDING..
I HAVE NO IDEA

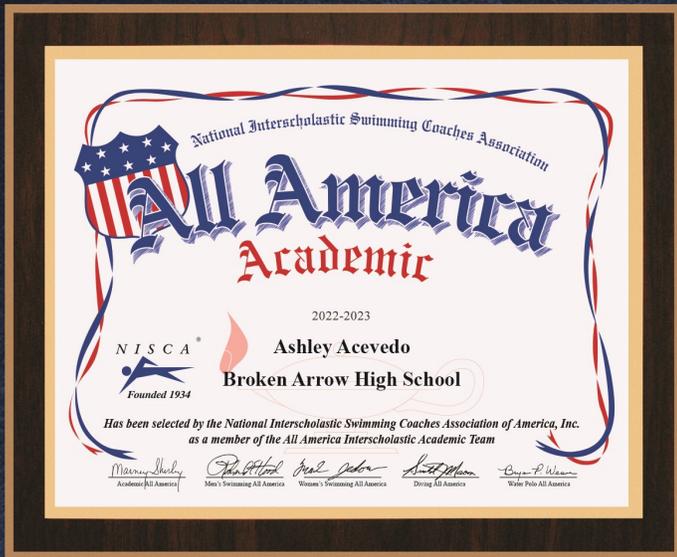


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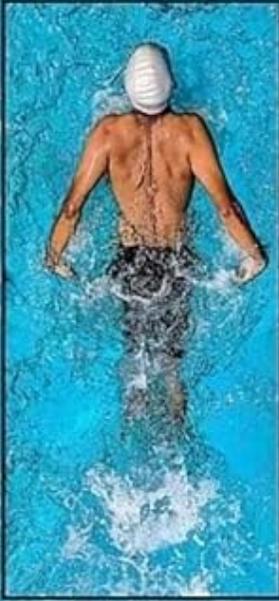
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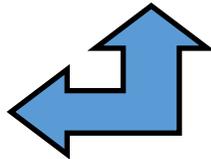
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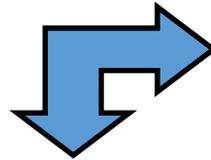
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