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The Secrets of Top Performers and What It Takes to Be Truly Great

Daniel Pink and Anders Ericsson

“The deliberate part of deliberate practice—that’s really where the magic is.”

What does it take to become a top performer? Whether in music, sports, dance, or chess, our understanding of the road to expertise has been profoundly shaped by the research of internationally acclaimed psychologist Anders Ericsson. Ericsson recently joined Daniel Pink, the bestselling author of *Drive* and *To Sell Is Human*, for a Heleo Conversation on deliberate practice, the need for great teachers, and what it takes to get to the top.

Daniel: Some of your work goes to the question, as simple as it sounds, of nature versus nurture: how much of human success, performance, and expertise is innate, how much is something that we build? This is a debate that’s been going on in psychology for a very long time. So what do we know about success and expertise?

Anders: In our research, we identified people who were objectively more able to do a certain type of performance and then asked: What is it that allowed them to reach that level? And what we found is that exceptionally productive and successful people have a very unique training background. The practice history is really related to the probability that they would be among the most successful.

Daniel: It’s interesting that you used the word ‘probability.’ It gets to part of the confusion, or controversy, around what we’re talking about. Your research doesn’t show if you do deliberate practice, you are guaranteed to be a top performer in whatever field you choose.

Anders: We would argue that it’s far more complex, especially as you’re getting up to the very highest levels, where you basically have to do something that nobody has done, which obviously is hard.

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To make that point even clearer, let’s consider it with sports performance. If you look at the best gold medal marathon winners at the early Olympics, there are now several thousands of people running the Boston Marathon as fast or faster than those times. So if you’re talking about becoming the very best in the world, that is obviously going to be a relative term—you have tens of thousands of other people who are using all the knowledge available and trying now to become the best person.

Daniel: Do you have a sense of how much of success is due simply to the innate ability of that person?

Anders: I'm not sure that that's an interesting question as much as, given what we can understand about the detailed practice history, what are the things that an individual is unable to do? If you're asking what are the things that people cannot achieve with training, you come up with a pretty short list.

If you look at things that people have proposed as being limiting factors—and people have been searching for almost fifteen years—they really haven't been able to identify individual genes that they can seriously argue are necessary for somebody to be successful, except for the genes that are related to height and the length of bones.

Daniel: The universe of things that are essentially fixed is relatively small, so the rest of performance expertise comes from practicing the correct way.

Anders: There may well be a lot of genetic factors that will be uncovered in the near future, and maybe there are very complex sets of hundreds of genes that interact in some way. I guess my point is why accept this without the scientific evidence that you require for other things?

Daniel: Absolutely.

Anders: That's one reason why I'm not so interested in that question, how much this and that, because we're on this scientific journey. Maybe it's possible that certain kinds of genes, if they're stimulated by a certain type of practice, is going to explain some of it.

Daniel: I think you make an interesting point in that even the operative metaphor we use in a lot of the popular conversation is a pie chart: How much is talent? How much is practice? How much is luck? What you're saying is you're basically at a higher level of math: it's not pie chart math, it's interaction math. When you start adding interactions, then things start increasing exponentially. So the complexity of it is far higher than we can think of in a pie chart. Does that make sense?

"We're now accumulating insights into where training actually has an effect at a given age. For example, perfect pitch seems to be only possible to really acquire between ages three and five."

Anders: That makes tremendous sense. We're now accumulating insights into where training actually has an effect at a given age. For example, perfect pitch seems to be only possible to really acquire between ages three and five.

Daniel: Wow.

Anders: We also know with ballet dancers, actually changing that joint structure that allows you to turnout, that's something we're training between eight and maybe twelve. That time is really critical. It's the same thing with baseball pitchers: it's the shoulder joint that you really need to modify. We're enumerating more and more of those interactions, between a particular type of training and development.

Daniel: What about cognitive abilities? The way you're describing ballet and baseball is literally the performance of the joints. What about for things requiring cognitive skill, whether it's mathematics or, say, learning another language?

Anders: That, I think, is where the frontier is. There is research now showing that somebody who starts training with a musical instrument when they're young will actually have myelination patterns that are different from those who start at a later age. There are so many domains where you can actually see somebody who starts between ages three and five are far more likely to be successful.

Trending: The Science Behind Effortless Weight Loss

The advantage in some domains is really striking. In downhill skiing, if you haven't started by age seven, there's no example of somebody who's made it into the international top hundred.

Daniel: I didn't learn how to ski until I was thirty, and I always tell people I feel like somebody who emigrated from one country to another, learning the language as an adult. I say I ski with an accent. I'm not even talking about performing at high levels of international competition, I'm just talking about basic elegance. And yet, age is a factor, but it doesn't impose a ceiling on most things—or does it?

Anders: If we take the perfect pitch and turnout examples, in those cases, if you're outside that developmental window, I would say you cannot attain the same kind of physiological configurations. But what is interesting is that age seems to have an indirect effect. If you start with a teacher who helps you acquire the correct fundamentals, that seems to be a critical factor. Because if you learn to do it by yourself as an adolescent... I know a lot of coaches who would say it takes a couple of years for them to just change what you're doing so you will actually have the right fundamentals to build on.

The more that we get insights into what is actually being acquired, how to describe and measure that, that's when we're going to be able to help individuals reach their highest levels of performance.

Daniel: Deliberate practice has become a very widely known term, but I think that at some level, it's not fully understood. You talk in your book about what deliberate practice is not. Can you explain that? To me that was one of the big takeaways.

Anders: A lot of people, if you ask them how you get good at something—whether it's soccer or chess or participating in an orchestra—they have this sense that the activity somehow magically accumulates, and if you put in the right number of hours, you will be an expert and excel. That's exactly what we find is not the case. Playing may be fun, but it's not contributing to you changing your performance, building on it.

Deliberate practice is when you have a one-on-one teaching situation with a coach or music teacher—that teacher can assess where you are and what things can help you improve. Here are the training activities that you can be doing by yourself for ten to twenty hours in the week until you see the music teacher again. You can see how somebody's performance changes. Two weeks ago they couldn't do this, but now they can. This gradually builds up, and eventually, with the right teacher, allows you to reach very high levels of performance.

Daniel: Let's talk about the constituent elements of that—one of them was a coach. Why is that important?

“When children or even adults try to do something by themselves, they're not ending up with the correct foundation that would allow them to keep building. A teacher can draw on centuries of knowledge of effective training.”

Anders: When children or even adults try to do something by themselves, they're not ending up with the correct foundation that would allow them to keep building. A teacher can draw on centuries of knowledge of effective training. In music, there are certain things, like polyrhythms, playing the piano with different tempos and different hands, that may take ten to eleven years of prior instruction to acquire, so if you try to do that in your second year, you're bound to fail.

It's like building a house. If you don't know anything about building, how likely is it that you're going to build a house that you can then expand to meet all your needs? Compare that with a builder who's built many, many houses, and then you can have some assurance that the current house will be livable.

Daniel: So the role of the coach is his or her own expertise, knowledge of a particular domain. Whether it's sports or music, there is existing knowledge about how to do things, and the coach becomes the person with the expertise to understand that domain and then recognize the gap between that person's performance and true expertise in that domain.

Another aspect of deliberate practice is the importance of feedback. I run five times a week, but I'm not trying to get faster. If I really wanted to get faster, I would get a running coach and meticulously record my times to see how I'm doing. Why is feedback important?

Anders: When it comes to increasing your running speed, one of the most effective training activities is interval training, where you run at a maximum for a hundred yards, get thirty seconds to recoup, then run maximum again. When we look at professional runners, they've been doing this at a pretty impressive level. It is an activity that most runners find very aversive.

Daniel: Oh, it's completely unpleasant. That's why I don't do it. How important is discomfort in deliberate practice?

Anders: That's one of those really interesting challenges where having a teacher is appropriate because it is possible for you to push yourself so much that you are injured. There is this ideal zone where you're pushing yourself sufficiently, that will lead to physiological reprogramming of your body in a way that more capillaries will allow you to give more oxygen to the muscles that are needed. It turns out that even the size of the arteries will change for long distance runners in order to maximize blood flow.

Daniel: It's discomfort, but on a Yerkes–Dodson spectrum, where you want it to be somewhat uncomfortable, but if it's so uncomfortable that it's painful, it can be deleterious. It's a Goldilocks level of discomfort.

Anders: Right. Some people say, "No pain, no gain." It's not seeking out the pain. It's trying to focus so you get the right strain on those physiological systems that you want to adapt to be able to perform more effectively in the future.

Daniel: Does deliberate practice mean doing something every single day?

Anders: If you can make practice a habit, that's going to make it a lot easier to engage in. It's also important that, when you start out, you don't try to do four or five hours. Anybody who wants to do a marathon and then goes out and runs for four or five hours is going to lie in bed for a week. You need to accept gradual change.

"In a world where we're expected to get the answers right away and move very quickly, there are massive, long-term returns to being deliberate, whether it's in our reasoning or in a way that we develop expertise."

Daniel: Daniel Kahneman has his System 1 and his System 2 ways of thinking. System 1 is fast and System 2 is slow, deliberate. There's a case for slowing down, for being more deliberate, for not expecting instant results. Between your work and Kahneman's, that's a bigger picture form of navigational guidance. In a world where we're expected to get the answers right away and move very quickly, there are massive, long-term returns to being deliberate, whether it's in our reasoning or in a way that we develop expertise.

Anders: I totally agree. When we look at chess players selecting moves, they engage in all sorts of systemic evaluation before they commit. That's the same thing with a surgeon. If you're relying on intuition, you may be right a fair number of cases, but if you're going to injure a patient or make a really disastrous decision, then you need that slow thinking that is the assurance that you're not making a mistake.

Daniel: The deliberate part of deliberate practice—that's really where the magic is. The trouble is that most of us don't like to be deliberate. Most of us would rather go fast and get easy answers. What you and Kahneman are saying is, "Sorry folks, no shortcuts."

Anders: Right. You're going to fail a number of times before you're able to consistently perform at this new level. Very few people like to make mistakes. Embedding it in a long-term process where you get better, that's the foundation for providing you with the information that you need to be able to make adjustments.

Daniel: So failure would come under the practice part. Think about the difference between shooting a free throw and shooting a lay-up. I can make my lay-ups a lot, whereas shooting free throws, it's something to practice. There's an interesting paper about how talent needs trauma. What they're saying is that athletes who reach the top are more likely to have experienced trauma/failure than athletes who have not.

Anders: There's an interesting connection. During the Second World War, in the concentration camps, there were several people who developed excellent mental calculators. They said that living in the concentration camp was so aversive that the only way they could defend themselves was to engage in an intellectually demanding activity. There's some suggestion that Bobby Fischer didn't have a father and that that led him to seek out a relationship with an adult chess master. Basically, once we're describing the development path of successful individuals, we'll find that investing in training may be more motivating for some individuals than others who have access to rewards where they don't have to put in that investment.

Daniel: When we look at success, whether I started a company that's worth a lot of money, or I've become a tenured professor, or I have achieved at some professional level, I've always had this nagging belief that we have understated the role of luck, of circumstance. What do you think of that?

Anders: It's very clear, especially if you're looking at the individuals who become really famous, that they had no insight when they started out. For example, the Curies, who discovered radioactivity—when they tried to refine the reactive element, they thought that it was much more dense. They had to work on it for five, ten years. Then they only came up with a gram based on a mountain of that mineral. The fact that they were wrong and kept pursuing it made the significance, because the degree of radioactivity of that concentrated matter was the scientific insight that changed our world.

Daniel: I'm even wondering at another level. If you look at SAT scores, the standardized tests that American high school students take, they correlate perfectly with household income. "Oh, look at this person, such a good student. Got an 800 on the SAT." In fact, if we were to look at the person's parents' tax returns, we might be able to identify that as the driver rather than innate ability or practice.

Anders: That's really interesting, given that we have a system where your SAT scores will influence where you go to university.

"I don't believe purely in this deterministic view of human life, but as much as I am a Westerner, educated in the Western tradition, an American who believes in individual sovereignty and free markets, there is a dimension that is not of one's life outcomes that is not fully volitional."

Daniel: It's true that, as one moves through life, you start out with many paths available to you, regardless of your socioeconomic status, and by going down one path, you foreclose other things and all the other paths that those things would lead to. There's a degree of luck and circumstance that is deep and profound, but that makes us very uneasy. The idea that if I look at myself, I completely lucked out. Why? I was born in the United States. If I was born in Gabon or a village in India, I might be a completely different person.

Anders: I totally agree. What I would say is that some of this research is still quite important and valuable.

Daniel: Absolutely. I don't believe purely in this deterministic view of human life, but as much as I am a Westerner, educated in the Western tradition, an American who believes in individual sovereignty and free markets, there is a dimension that is not of one's life outcomes that is not fully volitional. It's not fully within your control.

Let's go from philosophy to psychology: tell us how your work relates to Carol Dweck's work on fixed and growth mindsets.

Anders: There's a lot of commonality. We're trying to look at the mechanisms by which you can improve and change. Just believing that you can change, I don't believe is successful. You need the teacher, you need to make a commitment to some domain. Those specific things, that's where we help an individual understand what they need to do in order to be successful to pursue a goal.

Daniel: Although I would think having that growth mindset would be a precondition. If you have a completely fixed mindset, if you're a complete entity theorist, then why even do deliberate practice? What about Angela Duckworth's notion of grit?

Anders: I'm fortunate enough to know Angela well, and we've been talking about this. The difference between me and Angela is that we believe that as you're building the skill, that's where the motivational issues come in. Grit is not so much a general ability factor that you can apply to all sorts of different situations, but is a part of skill acquisition or commitment to attain a very high level in a domain where you seek out motivational sources that will provide with you more direct motivation. It's not just a matter of persisting against what normal people would find adverse.

For example, for musicians, when you have the skills so you can sit down at a piano and create new musical experiences for yourself, that is very enjoyable. When it comes to scientists, when they can design their own projects, that's enjoyable. Looking for enjoyable aspects can sustain somebody in a career that may last for ten to forty years.

Daniel: Teresa Amabile talks about the importance of progress in motivation. That seems connected.

Anders: That's where the teacher comes in, helping find ways that you can relate to others that you admire. We encourage people to have video diaries, so you would be able to follow how Tiger Woods step-by-step was developing. There is this gradual change, but essentially there's very little documentation over that change.

Daniel: Is there a way for individuals to do self-documentation so they can see progress that deepens their motivation?

Anders: Once you can measure the performance that you're aspiring to, like a golf handicap, then you will be able to collect data that will show how you're changing. It's consistent with designing practice. If you can find a practice task that's highly correlated with your putting average, you can record this and see how that improves, and then be able to track that along with the golf handicap.

Daniel: I'm sure people come to you for advice. What do you tell people when they say, "I've seen your work. I really want to get better"?

Anders: Try to find a teacher who has trained individuals like yourself to achieve the level of performance that you want to achieve.

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National Team Coach Incentive and Rewards Program

GAs in past years, USA Swimming has awarded a total of \$330,000 in award grants to coaches whose athletes won medals at the year's most important international event. Of course, in 2016 that event was the Rio Olympic Games. Since its inception, this program has handed out more than \$4M to coaches. Following are some quick facts related to the 2016 grants:

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WAYS TO INSPIRE EVERYONE AROUND YOU

BY MARC CHERNOFF



Ways to Inspire Everyone Around You

by Marc Chernoff

Be authentic and true to yourself. – In this crazy world that's trying to make you like everyone else, find the courage to keep being your awesome self. Embrace that individual inside you that has ideas, strengths and beauty like no one else. Be the person you know yourself to be – the best version of you – on your terms. Above all, be true to YOU, and if you cannot put your heart in it, take yourself out of it. No it won't always be easy; because when it comes to living as a compassionate, non-judgmental human being, the only challenge greater than learning to walk a mile in someone else's shoes, is learning to walk a lifetime, comfortably in your own.

Stick with what you love.

– Take part in something you believe in. This could be anything. Some people take an active role in their local city council, some find refuge in religious faith, some join social clubs supporting causes they believe in, and others find passion in their work. In each case the psychological outcome is the same. They engage themselves in something they strongly believe in. This engagement brings happiness and meaning into their lives. It's hard not to be inspired by someone who's passionate about what they're doing.

Express your enthusiasm.

– Passion is something you must be willing to express if you want to inspire others. You can gain a lot of influence just by publicly expressing that you are excited and passionate about a topic. Expressive passion is contagious because of the curiosity it stirs in others. You'll get people wondering why you love what you love so much. Naturally, some of them will take the time necessary to understand what it is about the topic that moves you. (Read [How To Win Friends and Influence People](#).)

Excel at what you do.

– People watch what you do more than they listen to what you say. Be someone worth emulating. Most people are

inspired by GREAT musicians, writers, painters, speakers, entrepreneurs, engineers, mothers, fathers, athletes, etc. There's only one thing they all have in common: They excel at what they do. There's no point in doing something if you aren't going to do it right. Excel at your work and excel at your hobbies. Develop a reputation for yourself, a reputation for consistent excellence.

Focus on building your character.

– Be more concerned with your character than your reputation. Your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others temporarily think you are. A genuinely good character always shines and inspires in the long run.

Care about people.

– People don't care about how much you know, until they know how much you care.

Challenge people to do their best.

– As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be." If people know we expect great things from them, they will often go to great lengths to live up to our expectations.

Lead by example.

– Practice what you preach or don't preach at all. Walk the talk! Be the change you want to see in the world. If you really want to inspire others to do something, then this 'something' should be a big part of your life. You don't necessarily need to be an expert at it, but you do need to be passionately involved.

Articulate what everyone else is thinking.

– We are very connected to each other in various ways, the most important of which is our thoughts. Out of fear, or passive shyness, lots of people hesitate to articulate their thoughts. If you take the risk and say the things others are holding back, you become the glue that brings people together.

Make people feel good about themselves.

– People will rarely remember what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel. Start noticing what you like about others and tell them. Go out of your way to personally acknowledge and complement the people who have gone out of their way to excel. As von Goethe once said, "Treat a man as he appears to be, and you make him worse. But treat a man as if he already were what he potentially could be, and you make him what he should be."

Help people heal.

– Instead of judging people by their past, stand by them and help repair their future. In life, you get what you put in. When you make a positive impact in someone else's life, you also make a positive impact in your own life. Do something that's greater than you – something that helps someone else to be happy or to suffer less. Everyone values the gift of unexpected assistance and those who supply it.

Share lessons from your successes and failures.

– When you can, be a resource to those around you. If you have access to essential information, don't hoard it,

share it openly. You have more to share than you realize. Mine the rich experiences of your life and share your wisdom from your unique point of view. Be vulnerable. Be willing to share your failures as well as your successes. Others will relate to you. They'll understand that they're not the only ones with challenges. (Read *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.)

Keep your cool in tense situations.

– What you do in a tense situation says a lot about your limits. People take note of how far the pressure or social discomfort around you goes until you lose control of yourself and the situation. President Obama, who often displays a calm and collected persona, had a joke in his speech at the White House Correspondent's Dinner awhile back where he said, "In the next 100 days, I will strongly consider losing my cool." Obviously this made him appear even more calm and collected. Bottom line: Keeping your cool in tense situations lets people know you have a mind of steel – a personality trait most people are drawn to.

Focus on the positive.

– Be happy with who you are now, and let your positivity inspire your journey into tomorrow. Everything that happens in life is neither good nor bad. It just depends on your perspective. And no matter how it turns out, it always ends up just the way it should. Either you succeed or you learn something. So stay positive, appreciate the pleasant outcomes, and learn from the rest. Your positivity will help encourage those around you.

Keep your promises and tell the truth.

– Inspire people with your dependability and commitment to the truth. If you say you're going to do something, DO IT! If you say you're going to be somewhere, BE THERE! If you say you feel something, MEAN IT! If you can't, won't, and don't, then DON'T LIE. It's always better to tell people the truth up front. (Read *The Four Agreements*.)

Listen intently to what others say.

– Make people feel important, and inspire them by showing them that they are. Eyes focused, ears tuned, mobile phone off. In a world that can't move fast enough, someone who can find time to listen to others is always appreciated.

Communicate clearly.

– Mystery does not inspire. Say what you mean and mean what you say. Share your vision and ideas often with those around you. Also, be sure to maintain eye contact when communicating; it's one of the most alluring forms of personal communication. When executed properly, eye contact injects closeness into human interaction, which captivates attention.

Be faithful to your significant other

. – There's nothing more inspiring than the unwavering love and commitment between two individuals. Furthermore, your sustained fidelity in a long-term intimate relationship creates a healthy foundation for everything else you do.

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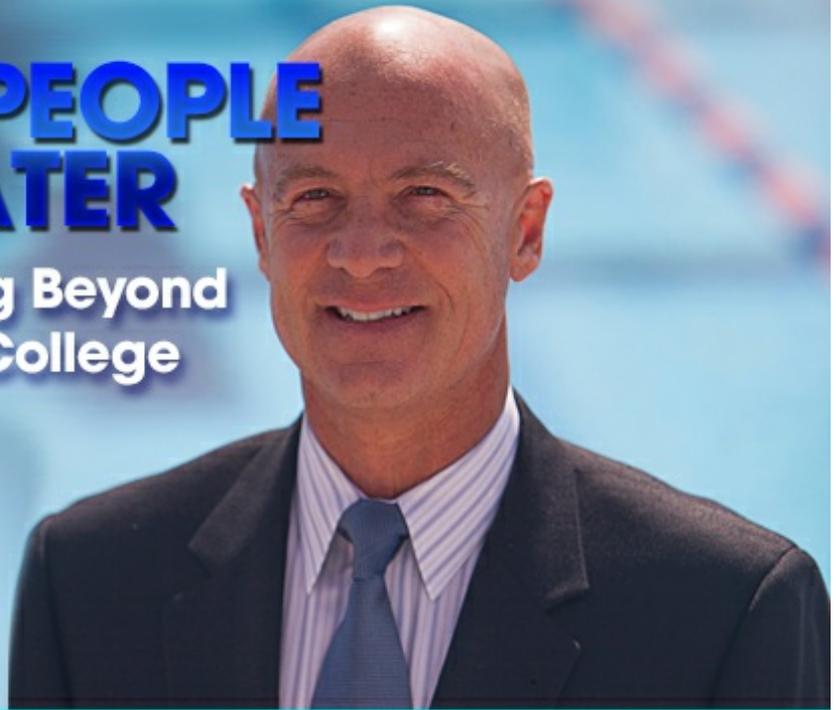
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KEEPING PEOPLE IN THE WATER

Master's Coaching Beyond High School and College



Bill Brenner, US Masters Swimming

Keeping People in the Water – Masters Coaching Beyond High School and College

by Coach Bill Brenner

[introduction] by Scott Bay

He is currently the Director of Club and Coach Services for United States Master Swimming. But he is indeed the coach; he has been coaching in all levels from Age Group to Senior to college and Masters. And he is also, ah, been one of those people instrumental in a lot of our committees for USMS. And I am very, very excited to be working with him, not only with the certification program but with also helping to grow USMS. So without me saying too much more, I would like to introduce Bill Brenner.

[Brenner begins]

Thanks Scott. How many Masters coaches do we have in here today? And anybody coach Age Group or high school as well? Excellent. Good; this will help you. I am very fortunate in my position as the *Club and Coach Service Director* to be able to travel across the country and see programs much like yours, that have different kinds of programming. The majority that I visit, obviously, have a Masters program; but on-occasion I will go visit a club that has an Age Group but no Masters program. And I ask myself: *Looked at all these children swimming in the pool, one day I wonder how many of them will end up being a Masters swimmer?* And right now, based on the history of where we have come from, that number is not very good. It is actually quite small.

And what we need to do as an organization, and what I would like to get some help from you—as Masters coaches and Age Group coaches—is to kind of change that culture and try to figure out why we are having such difficulty in keeping people in the pool. We all know the health benefits that swimming provides. And it does not stop because they get to a certain age; and we will call it age 18. Quite a few other things may enter into their life that make it difficult for them to want to stay in the pool. And if you are a parent, you understand it; if you are a coach, you

understand it; but it does not mean that we can just turn our heads and just ignore the fact that maybe we are not doing as much as we can to help them stay in the water.

So what we are going to talk a little bit about today is transitioning these young athletes into Masters swimmers. And why some of the things that we want to encourage them to do, and what we are going to promote within our own programs, is going to help them make that transition. And whether it is volunteering efforts, whether it is officiating, whether it is coach involvement. Now see I had put that up because you are like *how is any of that going to connect?* And maybe it will get your attention in the fact that maybe I should pay a little closer attention and figure out how this comes full-circle as we move further along here.

Okay, how many of us have known somebody that was an Age Group swimmer that really they had it all. I mean, they were successful as a swimmer, they were successful as a teammate, they were the kind of person that you thought who was going to really turn-out to be a very successful adult. It was the kind of person that you would want your own child to be friends with. That kind of person. But how many of you have seen somebody that when they became an adult later on, did not quite turn out the way you envisioned that they would when they were youngster? Okay. Well, what went wrong? And we are going to try to pay a little bit of attention to that today, and figure out: is there anything that we could have done as coaches to effect a better outcome.

Now obviously we cannot take responsibility for every one of our athletes that comes through our program, that we mentor. But what can we do to maybe even keep one from following into a despair situation? Well as coaches, this is what we are trying to do. We are trying to develop a partnership with our athletes. We have certain talents as coaches; and our athletes have time, talents and hopefully some knowledge and ability. But how do we develop and keep that partnership going beyond the time that they are in our program?

Well, we are also trying to develop a certain amount of trust that we have with one another. You know, they are trusting us that we are going to, as coaches we are going to look out for their best interest. And as athletes, we are going to trust that they are going to give us the effort that we are asking them to give us, whether it is in practice or in the meets. But yet at the same time, why does that trust have to stop? Why does it stop with the last race? You know, so many times you see okay, well, the athletes just finished, they have done their last race—whether it is an Olympic Trials, whether it is, you know, a Sectional; whatever the case may be... or their last high school meet. And maybe as a coach you are thinking: *Well, the next coach will take responsibility.* Or if there is not going to be a next coach, *Hey, they are old enough; they can take care of themselves now. I have done my job as a coach.*

I would like to challenge everyone—whether you are an Age Group coach, a Masters coach, a high school coach, a college coach—maintain that level of responsibility beyond your program. And as Masters coaches especially—and I will touch on this later—welcome these people into your programs. Do not wait and stay on the deck, wait for them to show up; go seek those young athletes out. Whether it is seeking them out at their high schools and their coaches at high-school level, or their Age Group program. Do not wait; be proactive.

And always accept the challenge to open-up doors to a positive pathway. Sounds kind of altruistic, but it is really true. You want to, like I said, go out and seek these people; do not just sit back and wait. And really help that one athlete from falling into despair. Because you may think, *oh, what is the worst thing that can happen?* Well, there is a lot of bad things that can happen, especially when they get away from home, away from their support structure, that they are so used to being involved in.

You know, we as swimmers... and my wife will tell me all the time: you guys are crazy. They are like: you depend on your routine, you depend on your support structure with your athletes, with the other people that are in the sport with you—whether you travel across the country—and you really are into this thing about goals. Okay, it is real important that each day, it seems like you are waking up with something... you have got a mission, you have got an agenda. Well you know what, so do these athletes when they were in these Age Group programs and even the high school programs. You can bet that they are working their butts off, and they are trying like crazy, to obtain their certain goals.

And their coaches do a really good job of two things:

- one, helping them establish goals, and
- also helping them... what I want to call *manage the expectations*.

Every athlete has certain abilities, and they have certain talents; and as coaches, you need to not set the bars too high, where they are going to fail. We, as coaches, need to understand: nobody wants to fail, they want to succeed. And that is why we set goals that are attainable. And as Masters coaches that is very important too. You know, as adults we all want to set goals; we want to attain certain levels. You know, can we become national champions on a Masters level? Well maybe some can and maybe some cannot, but what other goals can we help them establish?

The point I am getting is when people get away from their routines, they tend to pick-up bad habits. And these bad habits can lead to quite some astounding figures. So, there was a study done back in 2009 by the Women's Sports Foundation; and this is kind of common sense. And I thought 'well, I am just going to say this out loud,' but I said, "You know what, I really need to find some facts." I think people just make all these assumptions: you know, swimming is good for you. Okay, yeah, if you swim with a group, it is going to help, it is going to help your self-esteem. Okay, great. But had they really studied this? And so I thought I would present some things to you today that maybe you can go back and do some research on to expand your knowledge level to: how can I apply this to my program, and is this that important.

So here is this study. And they just really studied women; and I am sure that applies to men as well. But the benefits of sports helps reduce all these or preventing risk to women: obesity, coronary heart disease, etc., etc., you know everything to eating disorders, okay. But there is even one more that is really probably something that maybe has touched every one of you in some way, you know: the risk of not participating. So here are the benefits of participating, and here is the risk of not participating.

Another study that was done, and it really studied the amount of depression that is out there with young people. And this is both men and women. And the risk of suicide, okay. Studies conducted by Brown and Blanton show that young adults who participate in sports, a team activity—and that is very important—because that team activity, okay... well are less likely to attempt to suicide. But that team activity provides about three different things that are very important: it provides a coach that is giving some support; it provides other athletes in the program or in that sport that are going to be a support structure, and in many cases there is parental involvement. Okay. Now not every athlete has parental involvement, I understand that; but it is just one more of those support structures that provide that sense of being, that sense of... not being alone. So many times, the depression happens when people feel that they are alone and it helps to be involved in a team activity.

More risk, okay. Well is suicide that big a deal with this age group? And I am saying this is like the, you know, 16-24 age group—well, 15-24, excuse me. Well the U.S. Center for Disease Control did a study in 2008, and determined that suicide is the third leading cause of death amongst this age group in America. And it is only followed by, *suicide* is only followed by *homicide* and *accidental death*. Okay?

So the number is really... if you hear about a death, there is a good chance that... 1 in 8 deaths is a suicide. I have been touched by a suicide; I have seen the devastating effects that it can cause. Not someone on my team, thank goodness, but my family friend's daughter. And it was just very devastating. And everybody was asking: what could I have done? You know, we were not... it was just very, very sad, and *what could we have done*. And hopefully we as coaches can reduce that by including more and more people into our programs and keeping them swimming.

Well who are these people? You know, we keep using *them, those, this*. And Scott Bay, he always asks when I talk about *them* and *they*—not necessarily with *this*—but: *who are they?* You know, he is like, *can you define who those people are?* Well, I wanted to define who those people are, and try to understand them a little bit better. Has anybody heard the word *Millennials*? Okay, it is the *Generation Y*. And it is these 18-34 year-olds that have been born between 1982 and 2001, okay. Do you realize they account for 27% now of our U.S. population? That is 86

million people. That is a big number.

Now these Millennials, the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association of America conducted a study in 2011 and they found that 60% of those 86 million Millennials are engaged in a *fitness pursuit*, okay. But what kind of fitness pursuit? I mean, are they doing push-ups, sit-ups; what are they doing? Are they swimming? Well, those 60%, they want to gravitate towards a group fitness; it is very important to understand this group. Now, this group fitness is different than a team sport, because a team sport basically has a winner and a loser. This group does not necessarily want to participate in something that has a winner and a loser; they want to participate in an event or in a sport where they can motivate each other to do their personal bests.

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Now can we think of any examples of some of these events that are going on in this day and age that we did not have 20 years ago? Triathlon; that is great, good. How about Tough Mudders? Things like that. I mean, even down I know my kids have been doing this color run, you know. It is not about the winning and losing; it is about the participating. And sometimes it is just about the accomplishment of finish.

Well as Masters coaches I want you to learn from some of this, because I want you to be able to go back to your programs and say, *what can I do that is going to attract these people?* Well, you are going to have to make it fun; and you are going to have to try to figure out how to make it a group effort, not just an individual effort—like so much of our sport really is. So they value that team effort for participants to achieve individual goals; just maybe the sense of accomplishment of completing the event. Completing a 5K or 10K, you know, half a marathon or a marathon. So that is real important to understand that as we bring this back to our programs.

Now the Millennials, okay. This day and age, it is a lot about socialization; I mean, look at the what we have got with this interactive community going on between Twitter and Facebook. They are connected 24/7, unlike generations before them. How do we use this as a media to attract people to our programs? Well, if you have got a website, great; but you may still be ten years behind-the-time if you have not gone to some other social media to attract these people and make it fun for them to be active in your program. So look at including some more things.

Now, I am not expecting... I do not know how to do all these things. But I want to recruit somebody in my program that does, that may be much better at it than I am. You know, it is always, in programs, looking for: who else can contribute, who else can take some ownership in the program, who else can help me be better at what I do, and who can attract some of these people that are going to come into the program and have more fun?

Now these Millennials, also based on this research that has been done, they have a greater participation in team sports than any generation before them. Important. Because while we are a sport of individual performances, we should still consider our sport and our programs as a team activity—very important.

So are youth swimmers staying in the pool? Well how many youth swimmers are out there? And when I thought about this, I was like: well are there really that many? I mean, how many people, how many kids swim USA [Swimming] or high school? Let us do high school first? (That is this first slide.) Here is 2012-2013 academic year; there were 302,000+ swimmers, boys and girls, that swam or dove. And I cannot believe the majority of those were divers; I am thinking they were probably majority were swimmers. We have got that many athlete participating as freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors, okay? Now USA Swimming, they have got 331,000+ total athletes. And this is the age groups, here, that we are looking at. This is these ages right here: there is that many 16 year-olds, that many 17 year-olds, 18 year-olds, 19+. 59,000, okay. That is a lot of swimmers; not as many as high school, but that is quite a big number. Okay, now NCAA. This is the Division I, II, and III; 2011-12 season. There were 21,000 total swimmers and divers.

Now what do we have for Masters swimmers in this age group? Well, we have 55,000 total members. This is the part that kind of got my attention. In this age group, only 3,275 men and women participate in Masters swimming. It is 6% of our membership, which is, I think, extremely low, based on the fact that there is this pool of swimmers. It is not like we have to teach these people to swim, you know. So here is the source of swimmers, here is the number, and that is kind of the ration of the ration of people participating; and it is just very low. And I think when coaches, Masters coaches especially, are looking for *hey, how am I going to grow my program*; well let us look at the source and see if maybe we can tap-into all these people that already know how to swim that may want to participate and we just need to make it fun and give them what the benefits are of swimming.

So here is the problem: can you really burn-out of Swimming at age 18? I can understand, maybe, burning-out of competing at a very high level. But let us all face it: how many of us in here actually swim? Do we have some swimmers? I mean, we do not burn-out of that feeling of how we feel when we finish a swim practice? That is a great sense of accomplishment, just doing a swim practice when you are an adult, or maybe even as a Millennial. Why shouldn't they want to continue-on with that feeling? I can understand the competition; but I just do not understand why we cannot want them to have that feeling of accomplishment, even if it is just something as simple as a swim practice.

So let us look at these obstacles and objections. And I call them *excuses*, because... well they are obstacles and objections, but I hear the excuses when I approach these young people.

I don't want to wake-up and go to the pool at five a.m. . Hey, I do not either, you know. I do not swim at five a.m.; I do not even like coaching at five a.m.. But guess what? Masters, we have plenty of times available that are not five o'clock in the morning. And if you do not have that as an option in your program, look to try to include maybe an 8:30, maybe a Noon practice, maybe an evening practice. So that is not really my favorite one.

I am tired of competing. I hear that a lot, and I understand. Hey, guess what? 70% of our membership in United States Masters Swimming does not compete. They do it for the fitness; they do it maybe to help with another sport, like to do a triathlon. And most of these people I swim with, they do it for socialization. They want to be around other like-minded individuals, they have something in common they share with. You know, maybe their spouse does not swim and does not understand that, but when they get around other swimmers, hey, we are all won big happy family. And you really would be surprised how you can open-up to people that are just not really friends, but that are swimmers because they are just have a common bond.

I want to try a different sport. I would want to try the sport she is doing right now, if she was going to help me learn how to do a better push up. I understand that, you know. They have done Swimming. And Swimming is a year-round sport; it does not give them very many opportunities to participate in other sports—I understand that. But when you get to this level in the Masters situation, it can complement other sports, even if they want to just swim a couple of times a week. And it can also enhance maybe some of the other performances. It does not have to be a triathlon; it can be running or cycling.

I don't have time. And I get that a lot too, because you know, life gets in the way. There are a lot of people that go off to college and they have got to study and they have got to work, they have got to support themselves through school—a lot of things. But you know what? When you feel that sense of accomplishment of just getting through a practice and you are in a great positive environment; you are going to find enough time, even if it is just two or three times a week, to really get that feeling. And really understand, hey, this is important, I should continue this, and I will find the right amount of time if you can help them.

And it cost too much money. You know, they are on limited budgets, maybe; or maybe they are just starting-out with their family and there is just like... yeah, just more one bill I can afford to pay. The good news is that the yearly registration fee for United States Masters Swimming—by the time the LMSC tacks on their fee—is an average of \$40. \$40 for the year; I mean, we are talking one cup of coffee a month, you know. And then some programs have a fee, but they will waive it for you, for even seasoned swimmers. So that may be an obstacle, but maybe it is something that you can help them overcome. Maybe you can set-up a scholarship fund, and maybe you can have some of the older athletes in your program develop, you know, some financial aid for these swimmers.

Here is one: *most Masters swimmers are old and slow.* I am going to get in there and it is going to be a terrible workout; I would rather just swim on my own. Well, you know what? We are not all old and slow. You know, membership begins at age 18. We have got everything from beginner swimmers all the way up to Olympic athletes that swim in our program. And I like to make sure they understand that competition is optional, having fun is mandatory, and the byproduct is really a fitness and a healthy lifestyle.

So the more that we as coaches know this and can really tell people about this, the better chance we are going to have of them participating. Well, those are the obstacles, but let us listen to somebody that actually is a young swimmer.

...have access to really knowledgeable coaches that can help us, inspire us, learn about the techniques. and you know, push us to do better... people who have more knowledge and more experience... and then more knowledge about things outside of swimming as well.

Does it help you with the stress level as well?

Oh my gosh, yes. ... To be able to get away, I look forward to that all day long. Getting away, having an hour and 15 minutes to really just crank-in-out in the pool. Forget about everything for a few minutes. It is really nice.

Would you recommend Masters Swimming for other colleges and universities?

Of course. I have been swimming since my freshman years, since I came to Butler. Starting out my freshman year, I had a difficult time transitioning to college, and I think Masters is kind of what helped me to stick with, you know, staying away from home and being able to kind of create a community of really welcoming people that just really helped me get through school.

[Brenner]: Well I hope you got kind of a feel for that, but there are actually quite a few people out there that do participate and find benefits in the programming.

Well when do you start thinking about: *hey, you should think about swimming Masters?* I mean, is this too young? I do not know. Maybe they just need to be aware of what Masters is, you know. First of all, these people probably will become Master swimmers because they like the equipment; they like the snorkel, the fins. And most Master swimmers that I coach, you know, when the going gets tough, they just start throwing that on equipment on to make practice a little bit more fun and a little easier. So, these probably could become Master swimmers without too much effort.

A little story. Cal Berkeley: anybody from California, in that area? Yeah. They have a nice program there; they have a rec center. The sport and rec center of the university runs the facilities, the two pools that they have on campus. And they have a Masters program that is called *Cal Aquatic Masters*. Well earlier this year, they invited me to come-up because they were having this real problem recruiting young people. Here it is: they are the sport and rec department at Cal Berkeley and they cannot figure out ways to get more young people, the 18-24 year-olds, to participate on their Masters team. They have opened the Masters team up to the community. They have got 185 members; but of the 185, only 10 were age 18-24, on this campus of 30,000 students.

So they are coming to me saying... well they are inviting me to come-out and asking me: what can we do to promote swimming for this age group? What does USMS have that we can use to increase the number of students that are participating? We are the student activity center, we are the student rec center, our mission is to provide benefits and services to the students; it is their student fees that are running this pool.

And I am like, *wow, okay, what do we have?* Well we have coaches and we educate our coaches in how to really welcome these people in, but we really do not have any specific programs. And I said, "What have you tried?" And they have tried quite a few things and nothing worked. Well I said, "When do the students come back to school?" They come back to school at the end of August. And fortunately I knew that they had this thing called *Caltopia*, which is an expo where a lot of vendors, a lot of student clubs, a lot of sponsors of the university come and set-up booths for these students. Basically a welcoming party that lasts two days. So I said, "Well look, let me come out to Caltopia and let's set up a booth. Let's find out a little bit more about what these people are looking for."

Not only did we set-up a booth for two days—that we were in for seven hours and we did something interactive where they were tossing a ring around caps and they were winning prizes that USMS provided—but I also set up a stroke clinic. Because it is one thing to talk about it, but let us get to the pool; let me encourage you to come and touch the water, listen to one of the coaches, and find out more about maybe some of the teammates that you will be participating with, swimming with.

Well, over two days—it was seven hours on a Sunday and a seven hours on a Monday—we had quite a few people come by the booth, and the biggest thing was they were just not aware of what United States Masters Swimming was. They were not aware of what Masters Swimming was; they were not aware that there was a club that they could even swim on at the university. Now, not all of these were freshman, because these were not only the... you know, all underclassmen, grad students, faculty, staff, alumni; they were all invited to this Caltopia. And it really was like *wow, there is just so many people that just do not even know what we are about*.

Now, when you throw that word *Masters* out, then they are like, first thing they are thinking, *well I am not good enough*. Okay, we have got to overcome that. Or *I do not know all four strokes, so I must not be able to participate*. Got to overcome that. But when the day was done, or those two days were done, we had over 750 people sign-up to receive more information. We did a good enough job in the short amount of time that we had with each of those people, to give them something that they would want to find out more about.

Now on the Tuesday, I had made arrangements with one of the Cal assistant men's coaches to help me run a clinic; because I thought it would be a little more star-power if I could get him to do it with me and also four of his athletes to

show backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle. And so, fortunately, he cooperated, and we had a stroke clinic. We had 55 people there, which was a pretty good number. I mean, we did not have to pull teeth to get them there, we just had to raffle-off a backpack. But they got in the water and they could swim. There was nobody that got in the pool that could not swim, that we were going to start from scratch. They were just, wow, this was so nice to be able to find out something, and be encouraged to come; not wait for me to find it.

So as coaches, I hope that you can maybe take a little bit something back of how important it is to be pro-active with this group. You know, maybe they want to find it in the social media or maybe they need to find it on a website, or maybe they need to find it just by me putting a flier up in the right place at the right time. But inviting them in.

And this awareness, it really is important to make sure you understand what these Millennials are about and what they are looking for. They want to have fun and they want to participate as a group. It is not about individual sports. And maybe a few of them will, but most of them will not.

You know, hey look, our meet do not have qualifying times; if we do, they are very liberal. So they need to understand: well am I going to be chasing that time again, am I going to be chasing that qualifying time that they had to chase all those years as our competitor swimmers, as kids. Or are they going to be able to participate with us, where it is very liberal. And also the beauty of this relay structure that we have, we add the ages, especially for meters; that is beautiful. They love that, where they can swim with not just their age group, but they can swim with maybe their parents, maybe they can swim with... other members that are not just in that same very narrow age. So that is a good thing to promote.

Also we are going to promote what these benefits are. Now we know these, but do they know it? Do they realize how important it is? Probably not. They usually do not realize it until it is too late. So make sure that you are going through these benefits, and talk about this continuity of lifestyle. Being able to establish goals, being able to maintain routines and key positive habits. And here is one part that they really do not get yet because they are too young. I mean, how many of us would have loved it if we had gotten into a situation where we knew or had a good chance that we were going to be able to find a job, get a job reference, get some sort of help financially, maybe some advice colleges... you know, a multitude of things that we as Masters swimmers can provide to our youth through networking. You know, I wish I had that when I was growing up, but I did not even... I probably would not have accepted it even if somebody told me about it because I just did not realize the value of it. Well I think now with our economy, with the way that job market is etc., I think you are going to find more young people accepting of the fact that *hey, networking is a good thing and I really want to be around these people that are going to look out for me and help me.*

This indoctrination of these kids, it really needs to come without forcing it down their throat. And what we have seen in some of the programs is, you know, this is a two way street. We like this volunteering, where the kids are volunteering at our Masters meets and our Masters swimmers are volunteering at the kids meets, because it shows that there is a common bond and it does not stop when you just stop swimming as an Age Group swimmer. It sees that hey look, they can respect what we do when we were swimming; and not only can we respect what they do, but we are the advocates, we are the ambassadors, of our sport.

And we know how to speak swim-speak, and we should take the opportunity to do that when we are volunteering as timers or anytime that we are on the deck when we have young swimmers around, and praise what they do in swim-speak. You know, they will respect that because you are talking something that they maybe do not hear other adults talk about. You know, everything from hey, that was a great start, that was a good streamline, hey you had a good second-half split; whatever it is that really gets their attention that man, they were paying attention to what I was doing and they are talking this language that I understand.

The other thing I like to see is when Age Group programs, high school programs, even college programs, work to volunteer together for a common goal away from the deck. Whether it is raising money for a common cause, through swim-a-thons, car washes—whacky-relay days I like to call them. And also providing community service as

a group for something that is coming into the pool, whether it is Special Olympics, or learn-to-swim clinics; something that gives-back to the community that makes you feel... builds that unity.

So how early on do you start? You start as soon as you can, mingling the two groups. It is just a life-long thing that you as coaches, as Age Group coaches especially, want to make sure that you are teaching these kids, that you are giving them, a skill that you expect them to learn and you expect them to use for the rest of their lives. Not just until they are done with your program. This is something I want to see you continue until you cannot swim anymore. This is swimming for life, and very important.

Banquet participation—this is just one more little quick idea. Where you are, maybe as Masters swimmers/coaches, are volunteering at their awards banquet. And maybe at yours, you are recognizing some of their swimmers for being great volunteers at your events. You know, nobody can get too much praise. And if you look for opportunities to do something positive and to speak positive and to recognize people for the work that they do; take that opportunity to do it and give an award out.

Okay, this guy, I know you cannot really see the expression on his face, but it was like... he is a USA [Swimming] official, and somebody asked him to officiate a Masters meet. As he is looking like, *who me?* Well, yes, you. We want to make sure that as many officials are helping each other in these events as possible. You know, the successful events that we run as Masters or the successful events you run as Age Group, depend on volunteers. I mean, we are not paying for people to be timers, we are not paying for people to be food runners, etc. Or officials, in most cases. Sometimes you will give them a gift, and maybe in some LMSCs or LSCs you do pay them. But in Florida, we do not; we just depend on their generosity and where they are willing to donate their time and talent. But we are encouraging it because it just creates more of that overlap: it is not *them* and *us*, it is *we*.

Now coaches here is the tricky part: what do you do as a coach to really be as effective as you possibly can be in recruiting new members, as Masters coaches, that are in this age group? And also as Age Group and high school and college coaches, to make that awareness.

You know, one of the obstacles that we did not talk about and I want to talk about here is, you know, a lot of people do not want to continue to swim because they did not like their coach. They did not like the way they were treated, they did not like it getting yelled at; and I will be damned, they are not going to do it as an adult. They are not going to put themselves in that situation.

Now Masters coaches, you have to realize, they may not have had the same experience that maybe you did as an Age Group swimmer with your coach. So what kind of coach are you going to be for these Master swimmers? Are you going to take the time to really understand what they are looking for? Are you going to reach-out to them and explain the fact that hey, you are here to help them and help them reach their goals, but you are not going to do it, maybe, as they were treated before. Maybe that is what they are looking for; maybe it is not. But so many times I am coming across that: I just did not like my coach and I am not going to be put in that situation again. So I challenge you as Masters coaches to be the best coach that you can, set goals, for your way as a coach.

You know, a lot of coaches say: well am I good coach? Well, how do I evaluate myself as a coach? Here is how I look at it: you can have all the national qualifiers, you can have national champions, and you can have award-winning teams; but at the end of the day, if as a Masters coach, you do not retain your members, then there is something wrong. You know, if those swimmers that are in your program do not want to come back to your program, year-after-year, then you should evaluate, maybe, some of the mistakes that you are making and, maybe, figure-out ways that you can retain that membership.

We as an organization, our national average is 63%. So that means that 37% of the people do not renew their membership the next year. Why? Well, we have not done real studies on that yet, but a lot of it is got to do with the coaching leadership. Because what we have done is we have looked at our Masters coach certification program, and when we empowered coaches to become better coaches and we have identified those coaches that want to

continue their education, we have gone back after a year now and studied their retention rate. National average, 63%; coaches that are looking to expand their education, 88%. There is a big difference; I mean, that is huge. It is just not 1% or 2%; we are talking 27%. So that is a good sign.

So I encourage you as coaches: be looking to innovate. Change your style if you feel like that is going to help you retain members and be a better coach. (And we are just totally off this slide now, because I just... I really like talking about how to judge what a good coach would be like.)

Dual programming is very important. You know, Masters, and they really have to understand they have a couple of things going for them, Masters swimmers especially. Why more Age Group programs do not have Masters programs in them, I do not know. But I know the ones that do, have a better... have a more-stable pool situation. Because Masters swimmers have two things: they have pockets, with money in them in most cases, and they have some political clout, they vote. Okay.

And that is very important, when you are facing pool closure; when you are facing maybe even in a facility, limited pool time, reduced lane space etc. We are providing a great service to the community. We are a community program; we are not a swim team, we are a program. And it is for adults, age 18 and up, that choose Swimming as their form of exercise.

(Oh, maybe there is another slide. Oh, I think there is not another slide.) At this point, do you have any specific questions of the things that we have talked about? We will do those first, and then maybe we will talk about some things that were just not even presented today that you may want to share with the rest of the people in the pool... (in the pool?) in the audience or with me.

Any questions? Yes sir.

[audience member]: Is that age group the lowest percent of USMS? I mean, I know you are talking about that it is roughly 15% of all people that were in the 15-19 age group that swim. How do the numbers of that age group compare to all the other age groups?

[Brenner]: Well, we have got this bell curve going on. The biggest age group for United States Masters Swimming, is the 45-49 range for men and 40-44 range for women.

[audience]: Now, is the push from U.S. Masters to grow the younger side, or... is that why this talk is important to you? Or is that-

[Brenner]: It is important to our organization; it is important to the growth of the organization. We can continue to try to grow at the top end and we can try to continue to grow at the tail end. But if we do not retain members, from one thing, we are not going to grow, because that is where growth starts, is with retention. But it also starts with: why do not we take this pool of people that can swim and get them involved early, and there is a good chance they will stay involved and even grow the numbers even more.

So it is for growth, and it is for coaches too, because there are so many coaches out there that would love to make this as a profession, even Masters coaches. And you can do it with the right number of people, okay. With the right plan, with the right business plan. But when you are only in a situation where there is: *oh, how am I going to do this with 50 people? I am going to have to charge them \$500 a month to be able to support me and my family.* Well, what we are trying to do is increase the numbers: we are trying to increase the numbers of facilities that offer Masters Swimming, and we are also trying to increase the number of people that want to participate in Masters Swimming. So coaches then have a bigger pool of people—so to speak, *pool*—that will be able to generate revenue, whether it is through program fees, whether it is through events that they host, clinics that they hold, or even private swim lessons. So that is kind of the push, and it is trying to really find the benefits that those Millennials are looking for.

[audience]: What is the highest returning rate? I am just curious if it is that 25-29 age group? What is the biggest group of new members? What group—do you guys know that—where the most new people join? Do you know what ages?

[Brenner]: Well most people come back into the sport at 40. And I do not know the number, but that is kind of that is that point where more new people are coming-in at that age than any other age. So give and take a few years, in that range.

Yes?

[audience member]: I just... from my personal experience. When I was 34 years-old—and I am now 52—a neighbor of mine said *oh, what do you do for fun*. And I had a two-year-old at the time. And I said, “Well, I simply kind of take care of the two-year-old,” or whatever. And she goes, *Well did you used to swim?* And knowing that I originally come from California, said like, “Yeah, I did.” She goes: *oh, well you should come do Masters*. And the first thing I thought was ‘Oh, I am not that good.’ You know, whatever. I had not been in the pool for 13 years and certainly was competent, but I was like you know *Masters* to me it... the name implied, you know, champion. That you are a master, whatever.

[Brenner]: Yes. That word *Masters*. Yes. Proficiency, competition.

[audience]: So I went to practice, and I have been going ever since. And it got me back into... I coached in college, I coached in high school; it got me all back into it. And it was a real eye-opener, and it has been a load of fun. And, I mean, our oldest swimmer was is in his 90s when he passed away, and our youngest swimmer, we did get some 18-24 year-olds.

But I think kind of the same thing is going on, where the name sometimes is misleading. And if you can get those kids to join, they have a ball and they bring such energy to your club. And we brought a couple to Y Nationals, and they had a ball. You know, realizing that hey, this is not just a bunch of old fogies. And even if we are old fogies, we still are fit and having fun. And we are not... you know, our team has been around for a long time.

[Brenner]: If they can see that early enough on, even as those young kids, as volunteers at the meets, you have got a good chance that they at least have some awareness; because that is what is lacking. When I am standing in line at Caltopia talking to high school swimmers that *yeah, I swam in high school*. Well have you heard about Masters? *Never heard about it*. Well, did that coach not really even mention it? And that is what I am thinking to myself, like are we as national organization doing that poor of a job of encouraging high school coaches, college coaches, Age Group coaches, to even bring-up the subject of: there is some continuity if you want to continue on. We are just not doing it.

[audience]: I actually coach high school now—I am on the East Coast, and have coached high school for eight years. And always at my banquets, with the parents and with the kids at the end of the season when people are moving on, I say, “Hey, I do not want any of you to forget,” including the parents, because they might not have even thought about it, “Hey, there is something after high school, if you are not going on to swim in college.” You know, that here is an option for you to keep in it, and you can compete or not compete. And some kids have come back to me and say *hey, coach, I am swimming* or whatever. I am like: that is awesome.

[Brenner]: It is just trying to connect the two. It is not assuming that they are going to make that connection, because they are going to get off and get busy. You know, it is *hey, let me introduce you to the Masters coach* in the city where you are moving to. Or let me, you know, as a Masters coach go search those people out who are coming into the college, you know. Is there anybody here that I should look for? Are you looking into the lap lanes? Are you offering some sort of orientation to your program? Are you offering a swim clinic with maybe some of the... you know, some participation for United States Masters Swimming or somebody on the college team there.

Yes?

[*audience member*]: I am 27 and I know exactly... I mean I can completely relate. There are so many of my peers who have no clue what I do, you know. And when they find out about it, they are like *really?* Yes, that thing exists. Because you know, I was a competitive swimmer, and my coaches never mentioned Masters. I mean, in the morning we knew Master would be swimming in the pool and started practice at like four a.m.; but they never really introduced to us, it was never really brought-up. So I think it is very important, especially for people who are working to recruit younger ages, because they are looking for it.

[*Brenner*]: Good. I agree with you and that is why we are trying to just create awareness not only for the athletes, but with the coaches. And why would not you want to make that as an option for your people; because, you know, if they do not have that structure, so many of them just fall into this sphere. And it is really happening out there.

Yes?

[*audience member*]: How do you... when you talk to former swimmers or maybe those who really are not swimmers in the past, and they get really hung-up on that term "Masters", how did you inform them about what that term really means and not in terms of economical raising money for the swimmer?

[*Brenner*]: Well I just basically I do not go into even an appointment where there is not a Masters program or talk to somebody about Masters Swimming. You know I am from United States Masters Swimming, but I am here to promote an adult aquatic-fitness program. And even some of our stickers that we provide through United States Masters Swimming may say *USMS* on it, but it will say *adult aquatic fitness program*. So the sooner as that we can get-away from two things, one is the word *Masters* when we are talking about Masters Masters Masters, and get away from *team*, team, team, it is a team. It is a program, you know. It is a program for adults who have chosen swimming as their form of exercise.

And one more quick fact, while we are on it. That same Sporting Good Manufacturers Association report in 2011, it stated that swimming is the most popular form of exercise for adults in the United States. Okay. Swimming is the most popular. If you could choose one sport to do for one hour, what sport would you choose? The most popular one is swimming.

Now here is the other fact: 37% of the population in the United States cannot swim the length of the pool, 50% cannot tread water. But yet they would aspire to swim as their form of exercise. Not only do you Masters coaches have this great pool of swimmers—that 16 to 18-whatever age group that is coming and then 18 to 24 that know how to swim—but you have got this other great pool of people that would love to learn how to swim, given the right situation.

Now, the other thing I would like to point out is (we are getting a little bit off topic, but this is important), you know, name one other sport that you can learn that can save your life? That is Swimming. And as we move forward as an organization, not only are we going to try to keep attracting people that can swim in this age group, but we are going to start teaching people how to swim.

We are encouraging adults to swim, but if we are not teaching them, who is? We are depending-on the American Red Cross? No, they are teaching youth. *SwimAmerica*; youth. Who is the organization that is leading the cause of teaching adults to swim? And I think we should be that organization, and I am going to do what I can, in my position as an educator, to try to develop programs that teach people how to instruct adults to swim. There is just not enough of it out there; and I am hoping that you guys as Masters coaches can support that whether it is at your local level or your LMSC level, or if you are on a national committee and promote the fact. That is what we should be doing.

Yes?

[audience member]: On the adults-swim end, because I am also instructor year-round, as well. I work with 4-year-olds, and my two oldest were 75-year-olds, who had that on their bucket list: learn to swim. They both learned how to swim, and that was a big deal. But what I found during my summer-league coaching, is a lot of parents... you know I would run a program, at six o'clock in the morning for parents who wanted a swim class or get some pointers, you know, very informal: just show-up and swim as much as you want. And then I had people saying that they could not come early and they had work, but they really wanted to swim but they did not want anybody to see them doing it. And that really is a problem: finding those hours where you could actually have a privacy at the pool, and work.

You know, it is hard to work one-on-one because, you know, that is a lot of energy to put into one person and financially it is very hard to make a living doing it that way. But that seems to be a very common thread, is to allow these older... and by *older* I mean anybody 20+ who has not learned how to swim does not want to be seen being taught either in the water, or just flailing and embarrassing themselves. It came up all summer long, you know. It was like okay, I am going to make it work for you, but you have to work your day around here and maybe find a couple of friends and do it.

[Brenner]: That is part of it, absolutely. Very good.

Yes?

[audience member]: Our LMSC has already approved: we are going to, this year, at our state high school meet in November, to have an ad. We are going to put an ad in for Masters Swimming so it will be for the whole state. And ended up listening to you, and we host all the high school meets in our LMSC. And I do not know if anybody else has this opportunity, but we will have packets and we will know who is a senior. And we could put in that packet for each senior, three months free membership to come-in after they finish their high school. Because most of those are going to be coming out of high school, they are not going to be in college.

[Brenner]: Great idea. You just have to be proactive, and that is a great idea. And you know, we can help you with promotion materials from the national office too, all free of charge, that can go in that goody bag kind of thing as well so.

[audience member]: I work at a gym and the gym will not let us... we talked last year about joining U.S. Masters, and the gym refuses to let go of that grasp because they think as soon as you join U.S. Masters that those people are going to give you all of their money. And so I have made a lot of the trainers mad because I have just dropped term *Masters* and done *Swimming*. And even the high schools, I have kind of ticked-off the coaches because I have recruited their 17+18 year-olds to come swim with me at five o'clock in the morning. Because I am here, our workouts are between 2,000-5,000 yards; we just like to be social and have fun and have a good time. And high school coaches are high school coaches in Houston; they are *ornery*.

[second audience member]: Just as long as it is not a USA Swimming club, it should not be a conflict for the high school kids to swim.

[audience 1]: Well not yet. They have put me in charge of making it a USA club now.

[audience 2]: Yeah, a USA club. And as a club, you will see there is a track for club swimming and high school swimming.

[Brenner]: The challenges that we have. That is okay, and it keeps us young. Any other questions back there? All right.

Well, I am just going to leave you with one other thing, one little quick fact. When it comes to adults and Swimming—because we mentioned it so much here today—USA Swimming has put something out too that it is so important that we look as an organization to teach adults to swim as well. Because if a parent of a child does not know how to swim, there is only a 13% chance—I said 13% chance—that their child will know how to swim or ever learn how to

swim. And it has been going on for generation after generation; we have tried to teach the kids to swim, but until we get adults not afraid of the water and not afraid to get their kids around water, we are never going to solve it.

So we as United States Masters Swimming coaches should attack it from the adults side; and let like USA Swimming and organizations like ASCA attack it from the youth side; and let us see what we can do to solve the problem of drowning. There were 3,600 drownings last year in the United States: 20% were children, 80% adults. And in many cases those adults drowned trying to save their child. And it is just sad, and I think we, as adults and as an organization, should do more. Just take what you can do at your local level, and if you can encourage adults to swim or learn how to swim, do it: it is going to save somebody one day. So that is what you can do.

Well I appreciate it. Thank you so much for coming. If you have any other questions, please contact me. I have enjoyed it. Thank you.

end

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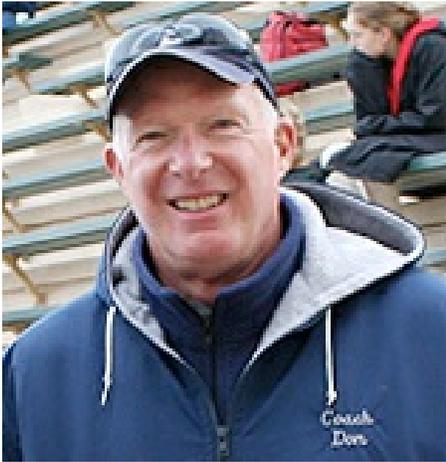


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Great Things Happen When You Put Your Mind to It

Coach Don Swartz

TK came to workout yesterday and shared The following with us. We continually talk about these kinds of things and his Mom showed this to him and his immediate thought was to share it with his coaches. our immediate reaction was, "We'll share this world wide". So thanks to TK, his Mom and all of you ... oh, one other thing; this goes for parent and coaches as well as athletes. (PS: Talent is overrated)



10 THINGS THAT REQUIRE ZERO TALENT

1. Being on Time
2. Work Ethic
3. Effort
4. Body Language
5. Energy
6. Attitude
7. Passion
8. Being Coachable
9. Doing Extra
10. Being Prepared



REQUIRED CERTIFICATION SCHOOLS

In the following list, we explain content and intent of each of the five courses



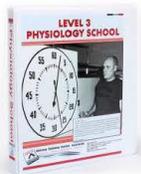
LEVEL 1: FOUNDATIONS OF COACHING

The Foundations of Coaching course is designed to increase your knowledge and teaching skills to help you become a better coach. Inside you will find: Interviews with some of the top coaches in the U.S.; Coaching advice and stroke drills; Technical instruction and information. Guidance on developing young athletes. The 2014 revision is currently available in two forms: a home study course, which can be completed "via notebook" on paper, or the preferred method, the video-based online course. When ordering, please be sure that you carefully choose which version you'd like: Online OR Book version **the Cost for the Course is \$25.00 (Video Based \$37.00)**



LEVEL 2: STROKE SCHOOL

The Level 2: Stroke School is the most popular course in ASCA's history. Over 14,000 coaches have taken the Level 2 Stroke School since 1986. The purpose of the Stroke School is to give the coach practical, useful tools to construct and to a lesser extent correct swimming strokes. This manual is a practical text for teaching. We do just enough science to give you the necessary foundation and then move on to the things that are helpful to you on deck every day. This is the *NEW* 5th edition by John Leonard. Designed to help coaches in the teaching and correction of swimming strokes. The 2013 revision is currently available in two forms: a home study course, which can be completed "via notebook" on paper, or the preferred method, the video-based online course. When ordering, please be sure that you carefully choose which version you'd like: Online OR Book version **The cost for this course ONLY \$45.00 (Video Based \$47.00)**



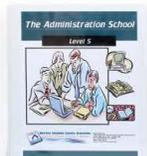
LEVEL 3: PHYSIOLOGY SCHOOL

The **Physiology School** is the third of ASCA's five certification courses. Level 3 offers a review of how the body can react and adapt to training, as well as serving as a resource for developing on knowledge on training structure. The course gives practical knowledge on how to develop a long- and short-term training plan, and how to incorporate progressions to bring-about improvements. The Physiology School is written in a simple, coach-oriented style, and comes in a loose-leaf format for you to add articles of interest. It begins with a review of the interaction of various physical and mental systems, continues with the scientific background for training, descriptions of training methodologies and terms, and then proceeds to discuss the planning of training for both new, developmental swimmers and accomplished swimmers of all ages, up to and including Senior and Masters Swimmers. **The cost for this course ONLY \$45.00 (Video Based version \$57.00)**



LEVEL 4: LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

The **Leadership School** is the fourth of ASCA's five certification courses. One can argue that effective coaching is *all* about effective leadership, and, therefore, Level 4 is a course to take *early* in your coaching career. Leaders are not born, they are made. This course can help make them. Developed from our highly successful clinic course, the Leadership School manual teaches specific skills and steps that you need to master to lead children, or other adults, effectively. The school helps coaches understand the agencies and organizations that administratively run the world of swimming. As each swimming organization is presented, suggestions on how individual coaches can be involved are also provided. The leadership function is then represented in sections that provide education on the skills, abilities and methodology important in making presentations of all sorts, including written and oral styles. The Leadership School also contains a review of modern leadership literature, a section on personal goals, and 50 great sales ideas to help you coach better. **The cost for this course ONLY \$50.00**



LEVEL 5: ADMINISTRATION SCHOOL

The **Administration School** is the fifth of ASCA's five certification courses. For the coach who is, or aspires to be, the head coach of any organization (high school, college, YMCA, club, etc.); Level 5 covers every topic, among them: budgeting; communications; fundraising; team entries; hosting meets; and working successfully with assistant coaches, volunteers and boards of directors. Frequently described as the area coaches are "weak" in their job, this course is designed to give new head coaches a tutorial on how to deal with administrative tasks--before they become "administrative issues". There are sections devoted to the special needs of high school and college coaches. While not about the "fun" parts of coaching, the Administration School is about the parts that allow a coach to get, keep and prosper in a good job. We recommend that the wise coach take this course *long* before they expect to "need it". Having this information will help you *get* the job you're dreaming about. **The cost for this course ONLY \$50.00**

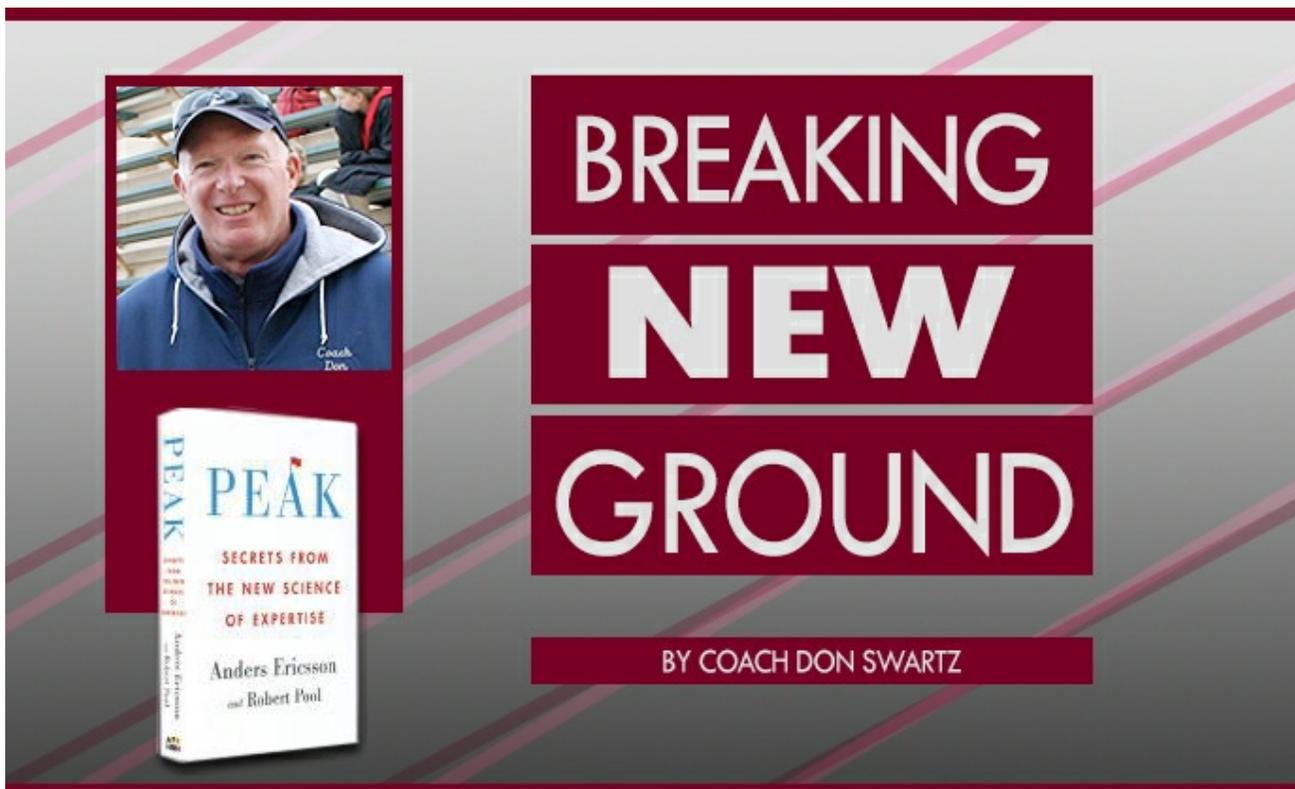
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Breaking New Ground – PEAK

by Coach Don Swartz

In his new book PEAK Andres Ericsson (with Robert Pool) describes in detail how neuro science can now measure that which coaches (and teachers) have known for decades; namely that to move forward in pursuit of excellence you must break free of your comfort zone(s).

The value of deliberate practice, not merely 10,000 hours of practice, is measurable these days in a variety of ways. Sports, music, chess, and surgery – you name it and the evidence is irrefutable. You simply must push past what you already know and or can do in order to get better.

Another key component is developing mental representations of mastery. In our sport of swimming this would be in the area of developing flawless technique. Teach a competitive swimmer how to best move through the water using mental representations. Simply put, have a swimmer look at a video clip or even a still picture of a proper technique point, then film him/her and let them see the comparison. Then allow them to develop their own mental representation of them doing it correctly. Then allow them hours and hours of deliberate practice to adapt to that representation...all the while giving them information in the form of visual feedback.

We often use our phone to film a swimmer doing one thing or another that we are focusing on, and then send it to them so they can see it later. Sometimes, we will even show it to them at the pool if time allows.

It seems to us that there are the two equal parts to faster swimming...and we realize this is risky business, boiling things down to simplistic terms...technique and physical capabilities.

So we keep working the technique side...daily. And we have been emphasizing the comfort zone side daily as well, even if for only short periods of time.

Today we warmed up for about an hour then gave them a Finis tempo trainer. If you set it to function #2 you can set a time to a full second. Then we had them do a 200 or a 100 or even a 50 at goal pace. So, if a guy wants to swim 50 in 20.0 we had him set the TT at 10. He went from the block when the TT beeped and then stopped after the TT beeped for the 3rd time – the 2nd time he was in the water. If he was 4 yards short of the touch pad the conversation went like this. “When you put a suit on, rest and

shave you will get some of the 4 yards but the remainder of the 4 yards comes from the work you do daily over the next several weeks”.

We are reinforcing the value of the daily work in training when we ask them to push outside of their current comfort zone. This constant daily pushing, breaking new ground, plus developing mental representations is going to be key to their speed going forward; plus their confidence improves over time. Next week we will do the same set and give them a chance to see if they are improving.

Swimming is beautiful –and brutal – in that the stopwatch never lies (thanks to Pete at UCD for that bit of wisdom).

Thanks to Craig at Brentwood Seawolves for untangling the TT. You must have a number divisible by 4 since the TT doesn't have tenths of a second in setting #2. For example, a 1:56 200 you would set the TT at 29 while a 56 100 you would set it at 14.

Break new ground daily and you must get faster. As Steve Bultman at Texas A&M says, “You just don't know when it will happen, but it will”.

end



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The Coach, The Marketplace and the Money

by Wayne Goldsmith

[introduction], by Tim Welsh

Okay, here we go. We are on the business track for this afternoon. We are talking for the next hour about *The Coach, the Marketplace and the Money*, and our speaker is Wayne Goldsmith. I am sure Wayne is familiar to you. You will notice right away that he is from Australia. He consults on a wide variety of sports; not only Swimming, but Rugby, Football, Tennis, Triathlon. He is all over that business. And what he does in particular is to help teams perform at a high level. And why he is on the business side is because he is also able to translate good sports philosophy into good business philosophy. You may have been aware of his website, that is *Sport Coaching Brain*; but he also has a *Business Coaching Brain* website, which does similar work transforming us to business. What are the most important things when you look at his website? Three things: people, people, people—is what he says. And a take-away sentence to introduce us to Wayne; “passionate people doing what they love doing and consistently performing to their potential are unstoppable.” So, Coach Wayne, make us unstoppable.

[Goldsmith begins]

Oh man, thank you very much for that introduction. It’s good to get yet another death shift, straight after lunch. If you had a whole bunch of meat, that tryptophan starting to kick in; and you know in about half hour, I’ll be looking for the doozies; I’ll be looking for the people who are trying to stay in my world, but they’ve gone off to their world.

In the last session I did, I talked very briefly about an experience that I had in church, in March, which was dull and boring and I didn’t buy-into it all. But I learned a lot about coaching. I want to tell you the follow-up to that story. The follow-up of the story was, we have a group in Australia called Hillsong; and they are a different church, they are a little bit of a New Age church. But again I learned more about coaching and where coaching is going to that session, than I have in just about anything I have for a long time.

Because when you arrive at their church, which is in a building... the church, itself is upstairs. You arrive downstairs and there's all these young guys walking around like, *Hi! My name is John. Welcome; can I help you?* So straightaway they're welcoming you into the environment. And then they say, "Would you like a coffee? Would you like a tea? Would you like some water?" That was very cool.

And then you get into the elevator to go up to where the church is, and already it's just like it's going off. You know, it's bopping; you can hear the music while you are in the elevator. And you get out of the elevator and you walk in to the church, and everyone is on their feet, dancing and singing, and they're right into it. And on stage, there's this great-looking group: great male lead singer, two unbelievably-talented female backing singers, a saxophone, a clarinet, an organ, a drummer, a bass player, a lead guitarist. And it's rocking; it's absolutely rocking.

The pastor comes out—who looks like he should be a male model instead of being a pastor. Comes out and says, "Welcome everybody. This is not so much of church, as a big living room. Let's all get to know each other." And they bring out trays of chocolate from the back of the room; all those little single-serve pieces Mars bar and Snickers and those things. And you just turn to your neighbor and say, *Hey, guy, I'm Wayne. Where are you from? and I'm just visiting.* And you talk for a little while.

And then they pull this big box out on stage, and it was just all quiet. And they say, "Guys, let's talk today." And so it's all quiet, nobody is saying anything. A little bit of lighting and bang! out of this box jumps the guest speaker for the night. And he says "As Christians, we've got to break out of the box. We've got to break out of the mold that's limited us for so long. What's holding you back?" And he was brilliant!; he was an outstanding speaker.

And he finished, there was another song, everyone was on their feet, so into it. No cell phones on: everyone totally engaged with what's going on. And they said, "Put your hand up if you don't have a bible." And every hand that went up empty, had one in hand when they brought it back down again—giving out free bibles during the session. And as they were leaving, people were welcoming you, saying "Thank you for coming" at the door.

And I went: *again, that's where coaching has got to be.* Are we welcoming swimmers and their families coming to our pool? Are we making everything we do exciting and interesting and engaging? Because if you want to talk about making money, you want to talk about successful business; what you're selling is you. Nothing is going to sell better than quality coaching. Because quality coaching leads to happy kids, successful kids, great programs; it will sell itself.

So I am going to try and convince you, over the next forty-five minutes or so, to look at your coaching and what you're actually selling. Make sure you understand that. And then take you through and look at what the market really is now.

Just a little postscript on that church story again—the New Age church is Hillsong Church. Quite fascinating as he told this story, his terminology was great; he talked about *unbelieving believers* and *believing believers*. And it was a fascinating little talk. Because I always love to go and talk to people, and I went-up and spoke to the pastor afterwards. And he said that he gets frustrated that there are so many people who go to church, who go there because they have to, or they feel they are obligated to because their families have always gone to church. Or they feel that if they don't go, they just have a fear of eternal damnation. He said, "I find that really frustrating. What I want are people who desperately want to come-in and learn how to be great Christians. They want to come-in and learn all that I have got to learn."

The Coach

So he talks about *unbelieving believers* and *believing believers*, and challenged the group: which group are you? Are you an unbelieving believer? Are you doing it by obligation, or are you doing because it's what fills your heart?

So guys, the same thing for you. Why are you coaching? What is your coaching about? Are you doing it because: seems like a good idea at the time? Because you can't do anything else, because it's all you know. Or are you

passionate and driven to help kids realize their potential? Why are you doing it for? It's an important question that I will come back to over and over again.

So let's talk about you. Write down, or memorize—I prefer if you write it down—what you charge for an hour of your time? Just write it down. Or put it on your phone. (Those of you that are playing with phones, I *know* that you're just looking up things about swimming. You're not looking at football scores, or texting family or friends, or tweeting about what you had for lunch—I understand all that.) Anything. Anything. What do you think your time is worth, per hour? If I wanted to come and sit down with you and say, *Coach, give me some coaching*, what would you charge me for an hour? Everyone got it?

Have a really good look at it. Without knowing you, it's less than half what your worth. In all honesty when I've done this exercise with coaches around the world, we all undervalue the quality of the service that we can provide. We all completely underestimate our value as coaches. Why? Because too many of us undervalue our worth and our qualities as human beings. It never ceases to amaze me when you are working with successful business leaders and you say *Tell me what you charge per hour*, some of these guys are consultants and they are charging \$1,000, \$2,000 an hour. And they are still undercharging and undervaluing what they're really worth.

Have a look at that figure. Because I need to convince you at the end of 45 minutes, at the very least, have convinced you that the next time you work to double that fee. And that's when you are starting to get a little closer to what you're really worth. Because look at your skill set; you have an amazing skill-set as a coach. Planning, programming, physiology, biomechanics, nutrition—to say the least. The ability to get the most out of athletes. Time management, inspiration, motivation, negotiator, peacemaker, communicator, leader, teacher, instructor. How many skills have you got? It's a skill set that you'd expect from a successful executive of a large and successful company. So let's see if I can convince you how to change that figure.

The next exercise I want you to do for me guys is this: write down what's your trademark. Not the logo that you've got—North Shore Swim Club. What is your trademark as a coach? What are you known for? So Coke used to be known as what? (See how old some of you are.) *The real thing*. A product like McDonald's, what's their saying? Do they have a saying? What's their motto? We call it Macca's [*or "Mackers"*] at home, which is a lot of fun. There are actually a couple of Australian stores that have now got Macca's under the big arches—they've picked it up. So the trademark is like "the real thing", but what's your coaching trademark? Think about it for a moment and write it down.

My trademark: John Smith's my name; my trademark is: commitment, dedication, expertise. My trademark is: never give in. My trademark: is the power of potential. My trademark is: be all you can be. What's your trademark? It's a very, very important question? Can you tell me, can you define for me, what your coaching trademark is?

Okay, who is going to offer it? You smiled; oh, you looked-up and smiled at the wrong time.

[*audience member*]: Anyone can succeed if they want to.

[*Goldsmith*]: Fantastic. Anybody else here yeah?

[*audience member*]: Coaching excellence through hard work.

[*Goldsmith*]: Very, very good.

[*audience member*]: Desire, discipline, dedication.

[*Goldsmith*]: Fantastic.

Guys, why is this so important? Why is this so important when we're trying to establish a position in a marketplace? So imagine you went to Arby's; I had to go to Arby's—I know: it's a weakness. [*laughter*] I had to go to Arby's because I was watching *Die Hard 4* on the plane on the way over. And there's this young guy hanging out

with Bruce Willis and he was hungry. And he just kept, “I got to have Arby’s. Just stop for an Arby’s.” And I reckon it was because Arby’s were funding the making of the movie; that’s the most likely. (I know: I’m cynical. I sound cynical.) The most likely scenario was Arby’s kicked in five million to make *Die Hard 4*. So I saw the sign, I went: *I’ve got to go to Arby’s*.

Now, you imagine, if you walked into Arby’s and you were hungry, and the people behind the counter said, “Well, I don’t really know what we are selling.” But I’m hungry. “Yeah; I don’t know what we sell. Hang on, I will ask somebody. What are we selling here? Oh, I don’t know; some sort of a meat on a bun or something.” One of the core foundations of any business success is to really understand what your trademark is; what is it that you are selling?

Now when I see programs that struggle when they fail, is that coaches are trying to be all things to all people: we’ll take anybody. We’ll take any kid who wants to swim; we’ll take any family; we can cater for the lot. But there are some families who want Arby’s—without picking on them. There are some people who want McDonald’s. There’s some people who want a la carte lobster thermidor. They want a different level of service. And, coaches, I think that one area of your business you need to be looking at is: what is your trademark, what is the target that you’re really looking to attract in your program.

Who thinks they are high-performance coach? Don’t lie, put your hand up! Every swimming coach in the world—there is one here, for real—every swimming coach in the world that I’ve ever met thinks they are high-performance coach. Every single coach will tell you *I can coach everybody*, from a 3-year-old bubble-and-breathe-and-float through to Michael Phelps. Everyone thinks they are high-performance.

Guys, high-performance is an ugly, ugly place. Long hours, 20 to 30 hours a week contact time; very small groups. Hard work. You think about it, you live it, you’re totally dedicated to it. To a higher degree than the athlete. It’s relentless, it’s ruthless, and it’s uncompromising. There are no excuses, no days off. Because your opposition will get an advantage over any sign of weakness or anywhere that you stuff up.

Why, as a coach in high-performance, do I have to be like that? Why do I have to be hard and disciplined and relentless and ruthless and uncompromising? Why? To people I like, who pay me money to coach them. Why do I have to adopt that approach? Because the opposition are there to exploit and expose any weakness that we have. And for me to help this person, this high-performance athlete, realize their full potential; I have to put more pressure on them and be unyielding and uncompromising with them because that’s what the competitive environment will demand. And it’s hard guys; it’s really tough.

Not only that, it’s next to impossible to make a dollar out of it. One of the best coaches we’ve ever had in Australia is sitting in this room. (He is very humble, he won’t identify himself.) Telling me the other day about the amount of money that programs lose to high-performance. And it happens all over the world; it’s really tough. But he knows who he is. And a high-performance coach will accept that and they’ll work in that space. And they’ll deliberately attract athletes who want that type of coaching.

Now let’s go to the other end of the business, where the money is: learn-to-swim, junior squads. We call them *learn-to-sing lessons*. Now what do you do those first...? Get the kids in the water; you play *Ring a Ring a Rosie*, you play *Pop Goes the Weasel*. You play *Humpty Dumpty Sat on the Wall* and everybody falls in. You play *Find the Fishes in the Pool*. We do all that sort of stuff, and it’s all about fun and enjoyment and family and excitement and friendships and building relationships. And junior squad, got to keep them in it. They can’t swim fast, if they’re not swimming; so you’ve got to keep them in the sport. Make it enjoyable, and fun, and really welcoming and all-embracing. And it’s a completely different space. Guys, it’s almost a different sport! To *this*.

This is small numbers, tough work, ruthless, uncompromising, total commitment. This is about fun, enjoyment, games, having a great time, learning, and keeping them in the sport.

So go back to your trademark. Is what you've written representative of where you are in that mix? Some of the biggest learn-to-swim schools in the world—and we've got some huge learn-to-swim schools—don't produce world-class athletes. Why? What do you think? It's not what they build for; the core business purpose is completely different. These guys are McDonald's, these guys are lobster thermidor: completely different market. Formula 1 cars don't come off a production line, okay? Over here we're building Edsels. (Ah, you're old enough to remember that.) Over here we're building Fords, right? Very, very different.

And I think guys, if I can give you one small piece of advice about your business, is to understand what you're really targeting. Because when you set out... where I see coaches fail, is they try to be all things to all people. And they end up... you heard that there is a great Chinese proverb that says: *the fox who chases two rabbits goes hungry*. So that if you're desperately chasing one, you compromise the other—if you desperately chasing this, you compromise that. And if you start to look at what you are actually doing in your business: does it actually reflect who you are? Because you are selling you; you are selling coaching; you are selling your quality. So have a look at your trademark.

The next exercise I want you to do guys is to write down this. If you haven't done this, it is a fantastic exercise. Write down your three greatest strengths as a coach. What are your three great strengths? If you were talking to somebody and said, *I tell you what I do really well as a coach; these three things are at my core of who I am as a coach*.

Does anyone here own a black dog? Yep? Anyone here own a black dog? Okay, you can go first; what are your three strengths? *[laughter]* Yeah, that's okay so what are your three strengths?

[audience member]: My three strengths are: enthusiasm, knowledge and *[inaudible]*.

[Goldsmith]: Ah, wise! How old are you? 62, that's old enough to be called *wise*, I think. Very good. Anybody else? Yep.

[inaudible audience comment]

Yeah so you got four; so we got 25% bonus or a 33% bonus. That's okay, yep, very good.

Guy with the white shirt, saying "please don't be me".

[audience member]: Motivating athletes... *[rest inaudible]*.

[Goldsmith]: Fantastic. It's interesting how motivation and enthusiasm come through.

All right what I want you to do now is: have a look at your trademark, have a look at your strengths. Are they linked? Do they reflect each other? Can you see your trademark reflected in who you are and what you think your strengths are? Because, guys, people will succeed on their strengths—that's the nature of the beast. Bill Gates doesn't lift weights. You succeed on your strengths, on the things that you do well.

See, a lot of people in business go: *You know what we've got to do? I am really passionate, I am really enthusiastic, I am really motivating, I love the sport, I love kids; I want to be a high-performance coach!* Well, I won't be doing anything of that stuff; I'd just working my butt for no money. And the moment you go away from what you really good at, from what you get excited about, you can't achieve your full potential in your coaching or in your business. And these questions are so important.

I want you to do one more thing, and this is maybe one of the most important things I can ever help you with or teach you. I want you to draw a line about 7 or 8 inches long, across the page. And at one end, on the left hand side, I want you to write "0". And at the other end, if you are a male, I want you to write the number 77; and if you are a female, I want you to write the number 81. Because, guys, looking at the average life expectancy rates according to some of your government figures, guys are going to live 77 years on average, women are going to live 81.

I want you to think about your age, and I want you to mark it on that line relative to that those two figures. Where are you on that line between 0 and 77 or 0 and 81? And have a really good look at it. Because you don't have a day to waste; none of us have a moment to get this wrong. Scary if you are in your 40s or over, to look at that line and have your life expectancy stare back at you from a page. That's what you have got, if you're lucky! Don't waste any more time.

Guys, don't waste any more time. When I talk to coaches—and I've talked to a lot even today—about becoming successful, what I hear back from the coaches is that they are not quite sure what success looks like. What will success be for them? Where are they really heading? Do they want Michael Phelps? Do they want business growth? Do they want a big number of Age Group kids? Do they just want to see kids improve their strokes and get a great opportunity to go to a good college? What do they want?

And what I see from the majority is they don't really know what they want, they don't really know what they stand for, and they don't understand their own strengths. Therefore, what are you selling? I always go back to that line. I encourage you to put that on the wall somewhere at home, and realize that you don't have a lot of time to get it wrong, so let's try and get it right.

So that first part of the talk is about you as a coach. The second part is about the marketplace. (I talked about this, this morning.)

The Marketplace

Write down this for me, answer these questions:

- *What is my market?* What am I targeting? Do I really understand that?
- *Who is my market?* Is that adults, is it triathletes, is it Masters? Is it kids, juniors, learn-to-swim, babies? Moms and babies, dads and babies? Dads-and-babies classes are fun; who's run learn-to-swim and done dads-and-babies classes? That is such a cool day, isn't it? It's such a cool thing. Because a lot of the dads who come in—in the things that I've run over the years—the dad hasn't had a lot of time or he has been travelling, and it's the only time he gets, maybe, with the baby on the weekend. It's fantastic to get him in the water and play games, and take them underwater and all that stuff.

So *what is your market* and *who is your market*, and the third question is...

- *Where is your market?* Do you know? Do you know where they are? How to get in touch with them; how to touch them? Social media, direct advertising, face-to-face, mail-outs, parties. Do you know what the market looks like?

Just take a moment to write that down. (I'm just going to go around, see if we're getting drifters at the moment, any dozers.)

So why is this important coaches, why is this part important?

[inaudible audience comment]

Absolutely. You've got to know who to sell it to, and how to sell it to them. For example, again, McDonald's has shown us the way. What does little kids think about when you say the word *McDonald's*? *Yay! Happy Meals, fun, junk food.*

There's a little thing, guys, I will encourage. One of our best-ever sports psychologist said "Wayne, you've got to try and convince the coaches, to then convince parents not to use junk food as a reward for personal best times." Great message for you to take back to parents. Because, in his view, we've got a big problem at Senior-level around

the world with binge drinking on the final night of big championships.

And he is drawing a very long bow on this, but I respect this guy—born and raised in US, but one of our best *sports psychs*. He said, “When you’re 10 and I do a P.B. [*personal best*], I’m happy to get a Happy Meal on the way home. When I’m, 22 a Happy Meal is not going to cut it anymore, and it becomes 26 nips of bourbon.” So he said to break the association: don’t reward great swimming with junk food. Because it then translate to a whole bunch of much worse behavior, as adults.

But think about McDonald’s, again, we’ve got... when they have got Happy Meals, that’s how they, McDonald’s, sell to them through that. How do they sell to kids even younger than that? Birthday parties; fun, enjoyment. How do they sell to moms and dads? Coffee. They sell the same product, but differently to different groups, depending on how they are targeting. So that’s why this is so important.

If I understand who I am—if I understand my trademark, if I understand what it is that all I am selling—and I understand the market who I am selling to—where they are and what I am selling—then I can start to build a successful business. But if I don’t know either of those things, it’s potluck; and the results that you get will be really inconsistent.

So have a look at what you have just written. Who can clearly identify their market? Who can say: *my market is bang*. Yep?

[*inaudible audience member’s market description*]

Very good. Is your Spanish good? Ahh, that’s good. But you can clearly identify what it is you’re targeting. That’s the thing I liked best about your answer, is that you went: *bang, I know exactly what I’m doing, exactly what I’m targeting*.

[*second inaudible market description*]

Yeah, interesting. How do you deal your parent group in that situation? Do you bring them in and make them partners in what you are doing? Or... how do you balance their need with your needs?

[*inaudible response*]

I think why this is import—I might just go into this for a little bit. She just said that middle-class parents, high expectations, with cultures that are demanding excellence, hasn’t done a great job to-date of educating and working with them effectively. (If I got that right.) So I’m just going to carry on from that.

Guys, where we were with swimming and parents for a long time was: you drop off, you pay, you come back later. Where they want to be, I think increasingly, is they want to be seen as partners in the performance of the child in some way. Now before everybody throws things at me...

The challenge we’ve got with parents is that they are now the most-informed they’ve ever been as consumers of our product. About 10 or 15 years ago, they had to say *whatever you say coach is fine*, because they couldn’t access information about coaching or technical skill. Now they can be on-deck and they can say, *Why aren’t they doing this drill that David Marsh has got on YouTube? You obviously don’t know what you’re talking about*. And they can access exactly the same information and knowledge that you’ve got. We don’t have a knowledge-based advantage over parents anymore. So one of the reasons I believe we’ve got to embrace them and bring them in more actively and more effectively is because of that: they know what we know and we have no secrets over them. There is no mystery around taper or any words that we used to blow their minds with in the past, because they have got access to all that stuff.

I often say to parents that the three of us in this partnership have got a job to do.

- The athlete's job is to do every session to the full extent of their potential.
- My job [*coach*] is to provide technical leadership, training, physiology, strength and conditioning, flexibility. build a successful team environment, create a winning daily training environment.
- Your job as a parent: teach values, virtues, time management, nutrition, make sure they get their school work done, teach them responsibility.

How many times does a kid use his fingers or her fingers on buttons during the day? 2,000? 5,000? So what you are telling me is that a kid can't go: *power-On, dishwasher-Start?* [*laughter*] Or how many times a day does a kid pick up their bag, carry it along and then do *this [texting motion]* while they're walking? So you are telling me they can't pick-up a hamper, put it in the washing machine, and press *power-Start*. So you talk to parents about their contribution and actively encourage them to do their job well—and do their job really well.

And sell it to them like that; really give them a clear job description. At the beginning of the season sit down and say: *guys these are my expectations to parents: integrity, honesty, sincerity, humility, courage, discipline, respect. Teach values because they're so important in our team and you are the only ones that can teach it, time management, self-responsibility, self-reliance.* All those things.

Bring them in and make them part of the deal. But do it with very, very clear parameters; give them jobs to do. I think that's where you can really make some inroads there.

So guys anybody else want to share their target market or knowledge of their market? Yes, the good-looking Australian [*Ian Pope*] at the back of the room.

[*inaudible audience question*]

[*Goldsmith*]: Are you asking me seriously, Popey? (We didn't work on this before. This isn't a pre-prepared section.)

Guys, the answer that I'd give to Coach Pope would be that... my question to you, Popey, would be: *what's your point of difference?* What's your POD? What differentiates you in an elite market from the other elite coaches? What is that about you?

Now, I know you reasonably well. Your reputation for consistent success over twenty years, straight or more years, would go: *I've got a pretty good chance of doing well with this guy*. I'd look at the number of Olympians you've had, and what events and what strokes and what distances you had them in. Have you been really good with males, females or both? So I'd want to look at that. But I'd also want to have a chat to you, as an elite athlete, I'd be saying: *what's your point of difference?* How are you going to help me achieve my goal? What have you got that's unique or special that you can sell me?

Now great story. A guy called Greg Bennett, who was an Australian triathlete, I got to work with him leading into Athens [*2004 Olympics*]. He now lives in Denver, and married an American girl, Laura. Fantastic couple; very, very professional triathletes. Probably the most professional guy that I have ever worked with. I met him in Geneva. He had come off the flight from New York, and he dropped into Geneva for the pre-Athens training camp. And he had in his carry-on luggage: supplements, water and a fold-up mat and some training gear. And he said to me, "Wayne, can you wait for our bags, and put them in the truck?" I said *yeah, sure*. He said, "We are going for run." So they got straight off a flight, went for run, came back, took supplements, drunk pure water, and did some yoga stretches in Geneva airport before we left, to make sure they'd commence the recovery process. Just the way you'd want athletes to be.

Anyway, I wanted him to be part of the Australian program. And Bennett said, "Wayne what can you offer me that's going to make me better?" I said, *We got really good sports trainers*. He said, "Man, I can buy that." I said, *Well, we've got really good Swimming coaches*. He said, "Man, I can pay to go and see any Swimming coach I want in the

world. What else you got?"

And it was a huge challenge, Popey, to go: when it comes down to it, what can I actually offer this guy to give him an edge that he can't buy? And in the end for me it was: *I can create the most challenging environment for you that will test you every day. That whatever you think your limit is, I can create something with this group that will challenge you to a higher level than any other training group in the world.* And he said, "Okay, you've got me."

So that's what I would ask you to do. Is what is it about you and your program that differs; where's your point of difference? What's your edge? What are you actually selling? If it's only coaching world, it's going to come on a relationship.

Questions

Okay guys, what I am going to do now, to change pace—because I've seen the way this place operates—I am going to take questions now, then do the last bit of the talk. Ha, ha, ha: just when you thought you could get out of here easily! I will take questions now, then do the last bit; that's stops everybody from walking out when questions are supposed to be on.

(There is always a way isn't it?) So questions come on yeah.

[indiscernible audience question]

Yeah, not a problem. Because the whole picture is to convince them that as a team, specifically focused on the potential and the performance of their child, together the three of us will do great things. The child can't coach, the coach can't parent, the parent doesn't swim; everyone has their own job.

I often say them: guys we're a company, where our product is your child's potential. So you wouldn't go to Ford and have the guy who puts the wheels on also being the accountant. You don't have the CEO filing the cars up with petrol. Everyone has got a role to make sure those products are the highest-possible standard.

My job is technical leadership, tactical leadership, strategic leadership; training, training set design, travel management, physiology, all that stuff, biomechanics, technique. So I've got a very clear job. I'm trained to do it; it's what I love, it's what I am really good at. So that's your sell to them.

Your child's job is to do everything that I give them to the full extent of their potential. So some of the stuff I talked about this morning. Their job, and their job... I just say *your job is so important*. What you can give them no one else can give. Values, virtues, time management, nutrition, self-responsibility, self-reliance. And all those core skills, but give them... say that's what you give this child, this is what you bring to our company, where your child is the product at the end.

I will do my job really well, I'm confident your child will; I need you to do your job really, really well. I'd even hold them account to it. If you want to get really serious about it, I'd have them sit down in regular parent meetings and hold them. Say: *how we are going with our development of respect, integrity, sincerity, humility, courage discipline, work ethic all those things.* Because all those things will underpin what you do. If I've got a kid...

Guys, what we quite often do—I don't know if you've done this at your workplace; I encourage you to do this—is a value exercise day with a group. So you bring all your staff in and you bring in some of the swimmers and the team committee, and say: *guys what do we stand for? What are our own values? What are the values that underpin the decisions we make and the actions we take as a group?* The most common one I get when I work with corporates, or football teams, is *honesty*. They will go: we're really honest, we're an honest group, we want to be known as being honest. And I say that's great; what does honesty look like?

What does honesty look like? Because every time I go through these values... have you done it in your workplace? Anyone done a values thing where the company brings somebody in and they say: what do we stand for, what's our

values, our philosophies, mission statement all that stuff? So we've got some people who have done it, yeah. So they got through the exercise and the most common word is *honest*—we want to be known as honest.

And so what is honesty look like? What is honesty look like in the gym? Well to me honesty looks like: they turned up early, they stretched without being told. They clarified their workout; they did their workout to the full extent of their potential. They carried a towel. They drank all the way through; they refueled and rehydrated all the way through. They encouraged their teammates. They finished their workout and wrote down what they actually did, and not just what's scheduled to be done. And they immediately commenced recovery. That's an honest workout.

So I think if you go through this exercise, you say to parents like *I want you to help me build this basic values and virtues*; you have to go through a process of telling them: *what does it look like*. Because that will then underpin, those sense of values will underpin, who the child is in water. (Good question, there.)

Guys, another question? No other questions, ok... the final thing is about money.

The Money

Write down how much money, one, you think you need in a year. Two, how much money you'd like in year. You, personally. (Ahh, you're just drifting off, you are a drifter—a high-plains drifter.) How much money do you need? And how much money would you like or how much do you want? Very, very important question to ask.

Before I ask for your numbers—anyone who's brave enough to give me those answers—why is this important? What's the first thing they do when you go to Weight Watchers? *A goal is a dream with a deadline*. There is a few nodding heads here who; we've obviously have... probably a little too comfortable in take-away food stalls and liquor barns. But one of the first things they do when you go to Weight Watchers: *a goal is a dream with a deadline*. They set a goal or a target.

What's the first thing we do in work with swimmers? Got State championships coming up, it's going to take 1:22 to win 13-year-old's 100 Breaststroke, I think we can do that; let's look at your splits. We start setting goals and targets, with clear timeframes.

Guys, one of the things that coaches don't see their business succeed is that they never define what success looks like and what success will be for them. They just go, *I want more money*. That's not going to make it happen. And particularly if you put all the concepts that we've spoken about together: I don't know who I am, I don't know my strengths, I don't know my trademark, I don't know what the market really is, I don't know what I am targeting and I don't know where they are, and I really don't know how much money I want to make. Well, then what are you doing? What are you actually running?

You know what you are running? You are running what I call an *accidental business*. Whoever walks past the pool and goes, *Swimming looks like a good idea*, and you just happen to be there. That's how you make your money. Now just think about that for a minute.

Take the same approach to your business growth as you would take to growing a swimmer. A swimmer comes in and the first thing we do is: *what can this kid do?* We might do a test. We talk to them about who they are and we get an understanding of their strengths. The next thing is, we go *where does this this kid actually fit in?* You know, is this a state level, national level, high school level, world-class; where are they in their market? And then finally we go: *what sort of goals and targets and aspirations do we have for this child* with times and deadlines and timeframes.

Guys, you are very, very good already at doing the things you need to do to grow your business, because that's what you do every day with your swimmers. Who are you? What have you got? What is the market, the group, we are trying to beat? How are we going to get there, what are exactly trying to achieve and when we are going to try and achieve it? You already know this stuff, but the majority of us don't apply it to ourselves.

You have already every business tool and all the business knowledge you ever needed. You don't need an MBA, you've got this skill-set already. It's the way we work: we're really goal-oriented. We understand people's strengths and weaknesses. We know how to win and be successful in different environments. We know what it's going to take to set a goal, a deadline, and a timeframe and work systematically towards it. That's a high level of executive skill in any business. Which is why I said at the outset: you completely undervalue yourselves and the worth of the skill-set you've got. You don't know what you've already got inside. You don't understand just how good you are at doing the things you need to be successful in business as well as Swimming.

Let's go back to those two figures. Did anyone write, where it says *the money I need versus the money I want*, has anyone got more than a double difference? So if you said \$100,000 a year, you have got \$200,000 on top or underneath; has anyone got double? That's really good. Because do you know what the most common answer is? What do you think the most common answer is when you say to someone *what do you need versus what do you want*. What do you think the biggest difference people will say? About 10%. Most people will only say....

Guys, I did an exercise with a law firm last year, and it was an exercise in saying: *where we will be in five years*. And sometimes you've got to admit when you are wrong—normally my source for that is my wife, she just tells me, okay. But sometimes you've got to admit when you are wrong, and these guys were paying me a lot of money to do this futurism exercise. So what we did is we got the guys in, and I said, "Guys, where will your business be in five years?" It was a brainstorm. It wasn't working. I said, "Well, what does your business look like in five years?" That wasn't working. And it was like pulling teeth and it just wasn't going anywhere.

And I felt bad at the end; I walked away. And my wife Helen said, "How did your session go today?" I said, "It was terrible, to be honest. I sucked." I felt bad. So I went and I rang-up John, the guy, the managing partner of the law firm. I said, "John, I want to another crack at it, and I am not going to charge you because I stuffed up—that was not good." So I thought about it, I went back to him and said "This is what I want to do."

So I got the managing partners in and I said: "Guys, I want you to clear your desks, get everything off your desks. And I want you to get a file, and put in the file the names of the clients that you will be dealing with in 2017. And I want you to write down the value of the business that you'll be working with in 2017. The type of business it is, who your staff will be, where that business will be located. I want you to make-up files that specifically tell me what your business will look like, how much money you will be making, how it will be generated. You are going to have to do some homework, and then let's get together in a week."

And that worked. Because once I went through the process of saying to them: *really see your business, see what it's going to look like, clarify what it's going to look*. As soon as I clarified their goals and clarified exactly how they are going to make their money, it all fell in the place. That was a really successful day when we eventually got together.

Have a look at your own business. Have you gone through that sort of process? And I encourage you to.

Guys where is Swimming going to be in five years? Quick ideas, let's go. What's that? Blowing up? Getting bigger? Smaller? It's really interesting, in the States, it is. A couple of guys from USA Swimming pulled me up before and challenged me on the shrinking of Swimming around the world. You guys are bucking the trend; you guys are doing something really, really well.

What else do you think? What are the trends do you think we might see? *[inaudible audience comment]* Absolutely, I think you are right. I think we will also see a deregulation—this is a scary thing for John Leonard. I think we'll see a deregulation of the coaching market. There will be more and more people who think they can coach because they can get drills off the internet. And they'll go *Well, that's all there is to coaching* because so many people can download stuff. As long as they can talk, they'll think *well, I can coach*. I think there will be a lot of people popping up and trying coaching. A bigger market means bigger opportunities. All that information freely available, I think there will be a lot of people popping up trying to coach.

[inaudible audience comment]

Yeah, in what way?

[inaudible audience comment]

Totally agree. So that's going to present challenges with languages, understanding different cultures. Yep. It's very, very interesting.

In some of the sports in Australia, we have a big influx in the football clubs of athletes from the Pacific Islands. And the clubs that are doing really well have Pacific Islander cultural offices; and people that understand not just Rugby and Football, but who understand faith. Because in places like Samoa, Tonga and Fiji, faith is a critical aspect of their communities and their culture. And if we keep them happy and feeling safe and nurtured in the cultural environment, then they think to play rugby really well. So, yeah, those sorts of things might become important to clubs.

All right is there anybody else? Yeah?

[inaudible audience comment]

I agree with Coach Pope. I think two or three things that are dead in coaching are the *coffee coach*, standing at the end screaming times four hours a day. I think the other model of coaching that will be challenged significantly will be: if I've got six coaches, I put one coach over each lane and they all do exactly the same things. I think we'll see a lot more team coaching: we'll see someone at the end doing turns, someone doing starts, someone giving feedback. I think we'll see mental-skills professionals working on deck a lot more. People actually offering a higher quality of service, particularly in that mid-teens area.

So here is your homework. And I promise you that if anyone actually does this and sends it to me at my web address, my email; I will give you some feedback. Here is your homework: I want you in the next week to go home and look at your program and go through this exercise for real. I want you to write down a week of your practice for 2018. What is it going to look like on-deck?

Because just as I said before, most people when you ask them how much money they really want, they will add 10% to what they're currently getting. Because they don't see any further than the next bill, to make life just a little bit easier in the next term. When you do futurism exercises with most people, they think about next week, next month, and maybe next year. Very few people really sit down and spend some time thinking about *where is this going to be in five years*, and understand it. And then have the insight to work towards that.

Pool Deck 2018 is the name of the exercise. How will my coaches be coaching?

One of my friends, a coach called Shannon Rollason, who coached Jodie Henry to the 2004 Olympic gold medal in the 100 free. He said, "Goldie..."—which is what they call me back home, amongst a lot of other things that are not quite so polite. But he said, "Goldie, I think in five years, I have to face the reality of producing elite swimmers on one session a day." This is a guy, an Olympic gold medal coach; please don't all go and change your programs to one session a day. But it was a challenge, and he said, "I think I'm going to have to change the way I think; I'm going to have to change the way I do things. So I think it will be six sessions a week, probably two-and-a-half to three hours a day, and it will be one session a day. Because I think that's where I need to go, because I think that's where the sport is going." Just one coaches view.

But if you can clearly define where you think the sport is going, at a time when it's growing. Set yourself up as an insightful person. Putting those systems and structures in-place before anyone else, there is a market advantage.

So guys there is my exercise for you this week: 2018 Pool Deck, what does it look like? Who is in the water? How many coaches do you have and how are they coaching? What does your workout actually look like? How are you

coaching and leading the program? How are you engaging with families? How are you engaging with the kids? Are you using internet more, and how are you doing that? What's the content of your workout?

I want to finish on this: I've been so lucky in my life to work with some of the greatest Swimming coaches in sport around the world. I've seen a lot of very, very talented, gifted and driven and successful people. And I always get to the point where I think: *what's the common thread?* The common thread is difference; they're unique. They did things before anybody else was prepared to do them. They dared to be different. They found a point of difference, they exploited it, and they went after it with all they had.

My challenge to you is: *will you dare to be different?* Will your program change by that tiny little bit over the next five years, and you'll still be frustrated? Will you see the future clearly?

Why do they call a vision, a *vision*? It's really obvious when you think about it. So someone says *I had a vision about the future*, why do they call a vision a vision? Because you can see it! And the people who are successful have a vision of the future that is so clear, that when they speak and when they lead and when they inspire other people, they are able to put that vision as clearly in your head as it is in their own head. The clearer you see the vision as a leader, the more detail you see in the vision as a leader, the better able you are to put that in the heads of the other people around you that are going to help you achieve that vision. It's why they call a vision a vision is that you see it.

You guys, change works like this: I can't come to your pool and change everybody. That's a myth. "Hey, Coach Wayne, will you come and motivate my parents and swimmers and everyone in the pool." Doesn't work. Motivation talks don't work. Change doesn't work like that.

Guys, every change, every important change you make in your life, is a personal commitment to change. Change happens one person at a time. And the way it happens with business and the way it happens with being successful, is that the vision is so clear, I can see it, I can taste it. I know exactly what 2018 is going to be like and we're getting after it.

And we go out for a coffee, we have a beer, and I tell him and I will share it with him, one-on-one. And I get him as excited about it, so that he sees that as much as I do. And he wants it just as badly. So then he talking to you, and he says, "I was out having a beer with Coach Wayne the other night. Man, he has really got some great ideas, he can see... wow, we've got to get on-board. This is so cool where he is going. No one else will be doing this stuff, man." And then we tell them. And all of a sudden, we've got everybody on-board as committed and as clear about where we are going as I or as you as coaches as leaders where to begin with. That's how you make it happen.

And it starts with you being so clear about *Deck 2018* that you can inspire. I call it the *change virus*. I am going to infect him (positively and kindly and nicely). I am going to... (*a swimming transmitted disease*, we should use that; an STD). That I'm going to infect him with my enthusiasm and my vision so that he catches it and he has got it just badly as I have.

Let's end it there. Thank you very much. And I will take questions, anyway.

[inaudible audience question]

Recreation teams. So you need to decide what's important to you and understand what you stand for very clearly there. Because you will attract athletes and families who've also got high expectations, if that's what....

So what I'd suggest is that in that situation, you might want to put on second coach, or an assistant coach, and have like a participation program, a development squad—come up with another name. You know a group that still comes-in and enjoys the club, and gets to know you and can build a relationship with you. But they are not giving you the commitment that you want and they'll come across if they love it.

[inaudible audience member]

Have you thought about creating like a separate feeder program and calling it something different? So creating a break away?

I haven't got an easy answer/solution for you. But my other suggestions to you might be hiring out your coaching services to other teams. So you go out and you might do either top end or... there is a whole range of things that are just coming into my mind at the moment.

But you are right, that if you... the biggest challenge we've got is: *how do we keep that income growth with the large numbers that we need and focus on the top end?* And there is no easy way of doing both without compromising one or the other. But if you've got your stamp on this group, I would clearly identify what that group is. Say you know this is our *gold group*, this is our *gold medal group*—whatever it is—so that there is a clear delineation between that end of the market and the growth/development/ participation end of the market. So the clients who are buying your service can say *well there is the clear difference in the product.*

[inaudible audience member]

I think you are the right track, because I suspect that the ones who know your reputation, they will come in by word-of-mouth because they know the sport and they will be attracted in. You won't have to advertise high-end, elite-level services because success is its own reward. They'll just go *well, you guys are the fastest group locally*, so that will attract them anyway. You don't have to just market to them, just market to the other group. That would make sense. (Isn't it good, we just sort of bashed that out a little bit. All good ideas come like that.)

Guys any other questions? Yeah?

[audience member]: I always leave the clinic totally inspired and motivated. And I'm great for about two months, and then I get caught up back in the minutiae...

[Goldsmith]: Good word: *minutiae*.

[audience member]: In the daily grid, and I lose that steam. How do you keep that all year long? Not just for one or two...

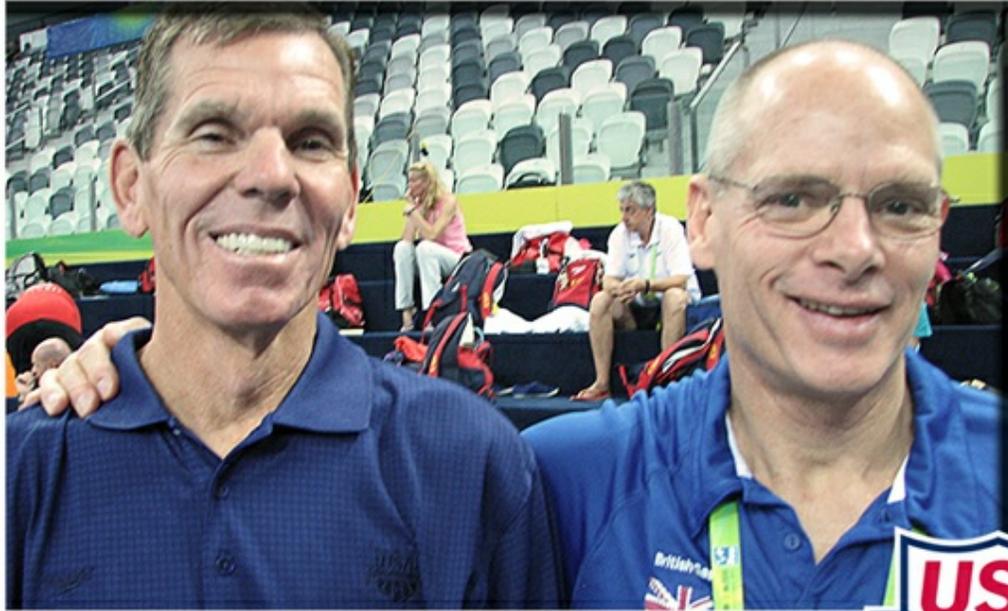
[Goldsmith]: I'll give you a sneaky, little trick that we do with corporates sometimes and it works very well. (Good to see you guys, finally out of bed.) It's a little bit corny, but it does work. As soon as you get home, write yourself three or four very simple notes. And go *do you remember the commitment that I made to business success and excellence* dah, dah, dah. And mail one to yourself now, and get somebody else in the group to mail you one in three months, and get someone to mail you one five months after that.

And it's in your own handwriting and you pick it up and it's one of the most humbling exercises you can do. Because you'd say, "Man, I made a personal commitment in my own writing to do this and I am not doing this anymore; wake-up." Because if you get an email, an automated email, it doesn't mean anything. But if it's *this is what I said that I would do on that day* and I haven't done it. Or this is where I need a bit of a pick-up.

It's simple. And just give it to your friends and say... tell them to put in their diary. *Can you mail this to me in four months and can you email me the next one in six months.* And you will forget about it, and just when you need it, you will open-up the post and you go, *Man, okay.* And I'm back on track. It's a very powerful tool.

Guys, any questions? If not, then I'll go. So I thank you again. Thank you. ##### end #####

HISTORY



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Keys to Perfection – Practice Drills for All Strokes

by Coach Abi Liu, PEAK Swimming

I swam for University of Nevada, Reno for couple of years. Figure it out: you know what? I've done enough swimming, I don't want to be in the water anymore. And I like to stay with the field and stay in contact with the sport, and because that's something that I love to do, and start developing coaching. Moved to the Bay Area, San Francisco, worked with De Anza Cupertino Aquatics for seven and a half years, was great years, great learning, learned a lot through, both with the kids and the coaches and, just American swimming in general.

For the next four and a half years, I worked with Palo Alto Stanford Aquatics under Scott Shea. The team really grew and it went from about 900 to about 1,500. I think PASA now has about 1,700 registered. So it was quite a learning experience in working with the big clubs. In 2010 we founded PEAK Swimming. The reason why wasn't because just one day I woke up and said, "You know what? I'm going to do my own team." Not like that. It was a group of investors, ironically they're all Chinese, came and found me and said, "Look. We would like invite you to become one of our partners. We're going to secure a facility, a property, we're going to build an indoor pool and run a swim school business." And I thought, "Wow, that's a coach's dream come true."

How many of you guys would like an opportunity like this presented to you? "Hey, we just want your expertise, and just come in and this is the percentage of your ownership, here's a \$5,000,000 project. Take it. Now it's all yours." Awesome. I was super, super excited. I think from sitting in the lectures at clinics and listening to people talk, I think for this opportunity a swim lessons program is the way to do it. Whether you do it just as a swim school, or tied into your swim team as part of pre-competitive lesson program, as a feeder program into your swim team, because not only we, as swim coaches, we want a fast swim high performance, but by the end of the day, we also want to be able to balance our books.

So I'm fortunate that have had this opportunity in 2010. So of course, my heart lies in, with high level or competitive swimming, so I said, "Look. If you going to have a swim school from water babies all the way to pre-comp, eight

different levels, it only makes sense if we have a swim team and I'd like to coach that." And so we did. And PEAK Swimming formed in 2010. It's been three and a half years and I'm proud to say that we're having a lot of fun, great coaching staff, great kids, and we've done pretty much all levels throughout including nationally and internationally, minus the Olympics. We would love to go to the Olympics, one day. But, we're a work in progress.

Last year, 2012, in June, 2012, we opened another swim school. Because the first swim school, the growth went really fast. We profited after the first year. And, so, 2012, another swim school opened. To this day, the second swim school is doing way better than the first swim school. In combined, we have about 4,000 to 4,500 students going through the swim school program weekly. And I'm look forward to the coming, the next couple of years that both programs will feed swimmers, entry-level swimmers to our swim team. Our swim team started off with 26 kids and now we have about 160. So we're looking forward for the growth coming out of our own swim school. We call it our home grown kids, and so now I would like to do a little bit about that, and about my coaching philosophy.

In our program, we believe that technique is key to the success. Listening to Wayne Goldsmith this morning, I had so much fun when he talked about the progression, the seven steps progression — intro their skills, and I think that was the very first thing. And then the way he ordered the skills and mastered the skill and then speed. We all know that in the first stage of motor learning, there is a speed accuracy trade off. So the speed does not come before the skill learning.

So when you introduce the speed, a stroke or a skill, you've got to slow it down first until they master, and then you do it with the fast speed. I believe quantity is the key, not the quality. If we want to decrease the yardage, the concept is if you can do things right, under any stage whether you are feeling great or they're feeling tired, or whether you're feeling fatigued. And, keep the intensity up. We do a lot of descending kicking sets, descending drilling sets, and this is the one thing I'd like to share with you. There are all kinds of different kind of drills we do in our practice daily.

For junior high school and freshman and sophomore kids, we do about 5,000 yards. Within 5,000 yards at about 1,500-2,000 yards of warm up and warm down. And, six workouts a week for the middle-schoolers; eight workouts for the high-schoolers and it's IM based. I am a firm believer that we don't emphasis a single stroke at early stage because their body is still changing, they're still growing and the proportion and composition, everything's changing rapidly. So if we focus on one stroke, I feel like we are closing many doors for them.

I believe we are all teachers. Typically people think of swim coaches as: you're on deck with your sunglasses, big old straw hat on, watches, whistling and yelling all day long. But I believe that we are teachers before we're coaches. Not only do we teach the techniques, but we also are teaching the fundamentals of swimming. And, we are really trying to nurture the passion of swimming to our young swimmers, not just yelling and going up and down the deck. Clear communication, I hope you guys can support this. I think that nobody should ever sit down during a practice session. I think that whenever your swimmer is in the pool racing, you should stand up. Be there. Support them and this is a way of connecting with them — connecting with your swimmers and communicate with them.

If they think that you care, you're walking up and down the pool deck, you're there, just like Wayne was saying, if we're doing 21 100's, you go 3 100's, you're standing this side of pool, 3 100's over there, 6 100's you're walking up and down. My goal every day, is before, everybody goes home they have at least one thing that I said personally to them. It's not just about, "Hey, everybody, go faster." It's about, "Hey, Johnny, your head is up too high. Let's try to look down a little bit." Give them something to walk away with. And, keep a consistency. You can't just say, "You do this." And never say it again. Kids need the reminders. They're such an E-generation – oh great. This generation is E-generation. Their attention span cannot last more than 30 seconds. They watch MTV all day long, everything flashing so fast. So you, as a coach, you need adapt and change and improve and be creative.

Now we're just going go right into strokes. I don't know why I picked freestyle first, because I think a lot of people do a lot of freestyle every day, so it's not in any particular order. So I would like to list a few comments, common problems in freestyle. First, finding balance in left and right. It's a bi-lateral stroke, and long axle stroke. I believe

we all have our preferred sides and so it is difficult for kids try to balance left and right. Control the long axis. How many of you guys have swimmers swimming freestyle either with a bottom up and down or cha-cha, or do basically hula-hooping?

We have some drills for that will help. Breathing position and timing, which I think is key to control the balance of the strokes, the timing of your strokes as well as body position. Head position. Everybody was say, "Oh put your head down and keep that horizontal body position." If somebody who has bigger legs, or bigger thighs, he or she might need to put a head down lower than others. Or somebody have a long torso, you need to do things a little differently. And, or, have particular drills and help with that. Kick on the side. A lot of people do so. But, when we do it we like to put both arms down by their sides. And you guys will notice how the body is stabilized, the shoulders stack up, hips stack up, the body is moving straight.

Throughout this particular drill, you can also, the kids themselves also can monitor their range of motion of their kicks. If he or she is kicking too far forward, the back is going to scrape the lane line. And vice versa the face. So in this drill, they can control how far forward or backward they can kick and really feel the upbeat and downbeat kick both side of the legs. And, of course, I would recommend to do kicking on the both sides. This is a good drill, I think, to get rid of all the cha cha and hula hooping here.

Most people pull with buoy between the thighs. When kids hear that they think this is only upper body workout. But when we swim or when we are racing, we use the whole body. So if you put buoy between the ankles, engage the entire body. They use their inner thighs, the body is straight and you take a look at the swimmer's body right here it is completely straight. And he is one of my cha cha boys. Whenever you put the buoy between the ankles, it can eliminate the problem altogether. Try that and in the beginning, kids will say, "You know what? The buoy is too slippery." But guess what? They're not squeezing hard enough. Just don't blame on the buoy.

Breathing position and timing. In single arm freestyle like to keep, the key point here, the non-pulling arm is by their side. How many of you guys like have the kids breathe on their non-pulling side? Yeah, and how many breathe on the pulling side? None. Ah. I like to hear that. I like to have them breathe on both sides. The reason why is when they breathe on the non-pulling side, they're actually working on body position. The breathing position: When they're breathing on the pulling side, it works on the timing of the breathing. If the breathing is too late and they don't have the other arm to support, they will be bouncing and they will end up breathing into, or smelling their own armpits, so this is, I believe, that if they breathe on both sides, it would be very helpful at helping with the positioning and timing.

Finding the best balance. We also talk about because of different body composition, they may have different ways, different position or height put their heads so we start as a head up to head down drill. We start out with head up every two strokes, every stroke cycle the swimmer will lower the head down little by little until he or she finds that perfect balance for themselves. So there's no certain thing, it's just looking down. But I think that this is a little bit more specific throughout the progression of the drill. And, and when they do head up they can also pay attention to which way they enter. Whether they're overreaching or their hands are tipping too much, they can have control over that.

Just to summarize that, kick on both sides with both arms down, pull with buoy between ankles to eliminate the cha cha and control the lower body. I encourage you, all the coaches, try yourselves and you'll feel, first you'll gain a new level of appreciation of how hard your kids are working, but secondly, I think you'll understand the concept and what you're trying to achieve a little better and when you deliver, when you explain it to your kids, I think it will help them to understand. Single arm freestyle breathe on both sides helps with the timing and then positioning. Head up to head down drill.

Any questions so far with freestyle?

Q: Your first drill, do you have the kids kick directly to the side or down on an angle?

A: On the side.

Q: When you have them drop their head down, how do you let them know that's how far they should drop it?

A: First, I look and I videotape and secondly I also ask for feedback of when, at what level and what degree they can get rid of the puddle on the lower back. If, if their head is too high, there will be a lot of water on the lower back — until they connect and they can feel that straight line on, through the lower back. And that's where I think I use it, to, as a measure— measurement.

Q: Lane line....

A: For some reason they're always looking for their security; looking for their safety net. They always try to stay on the lane line side. Even though they don't need to, and I would encourage you guys have them go reverse circles from time to time, and you will see dramatic changes when left side comes up the rotation's even. But try to start doing it by 25's so to avoid any head-on collision.

Okay? Backstroke. I was a backstroker so I put backstroke next. Uneven rotation. Here's a question for the audience. I think 85-90% of backstrokers rotate unevenly. If you look, the shoulders, right shoulder's, most— mostly right shoulders higher than the left. And why?

The entry position and finishing position, I think it's important. And crucial to keep the midline, the body line straight. And as I shared yesterday when I was little, I had coach who hung mirrors from the roof. And I was watching myself every single stroke. It was very helpful and I wish, maybe some of you guys can help me come up with an idea and we can do the backstroke mirrors. But, a lot of times, you see kids getting out here or getting out here instead of correct, "Hey get your hands out in the middle." I typically look at where the other hand is. Where is the entry position? Oftentimes if this arm gets out wide, it's an indicator of this arm's getting in overreaching and pushing and it's try to overcompensate. We have a fun team drill for that.

Timing. Throughout each stroke there's acceleration throughout the range of motion. You have the preparation, you have the catching and you have the acceleration phase. So in long axis stroke, both backstroke and freestyle, the difficult thing is both arms are asymmetric always. You have one arm's always accelerating, one arm's always preparing. So it's not just the bicycle pedals, one up one down, one up one down. There's always a little bit of a catching.

So to understand that, it's really simple. It's one arm going slower to catch, one arm's accelerating getting out. But, a particular drill that I like to share with you later on, is called the 160 degree drill. We kick. Backstroke I think is the most difficult, the most challenging stroke in core. More so than butterfly just because we don't swim a lot on the backs and so the kids don't get chance, don't get the chance to practice on their backs so much. I would encourage coaches that anytime when you get a chance, even to brush your kick on the back. And some kids you can just tell they're not comfortable on their backs. They're not, they don't swim enough on their backs, so I'd like to encourage that as well.

Hand strength: I think it's overlooked a lot of times. A lot of people do a lot of bicep curls, tricep and pushups, but, no matter how big your arms are, if you cannot hold the water you cannot be fast. I remember when I was racing the 200 breaststroke, by the time the second 50 breaststroke comes around, I literally saw my hands were like this. And I wish I knew why. My hands are fatigued. And although these guys were probably doing okay, because your fine muscles fatigue before the, the bigger muscle groups. So I wish that I knew that I could work on my hand strengthening, do a lot more sculling, do a lot more hand strengthening exercises on land so that I didn't end up like chicken feet here.

On our backstroke drill here you have one swimmer in the front holding the streamline, the swimmer in the back,

what is he working on? Crossover. If the backstroke swimmer crosses over, he will hit the front swimmer's legs. At the same time, her head is still. She cannot move her head. And it's a fun team activity for the kids to do. "Oh yeah, I'm going to push you." This and that. I have an underwater version of it. Anybody can do it. And you can apply this drill to all ages. The head is on the top of the head, make sure it's not on the forehead, top of the head, the swimmer in the front, depends on the level, they can be with the arms on the side they can scull a little bit, help direct or be in the streamline — just push straight through. It helps the person in the front also who is getting a workout with streamline as well.

160 degrees: We talked about the timing. Why the bottom arm comes out first. So a lot of people do the sailboat drill, 90 degrees. I think it's a little bit over, and so, we have the kids just get up into the 180 degrees, have them stay here at 160 degrees and you can do a progression of drills. Start with six kicks, three kicks and then eventually nothing. Just kind of get used to the timing that they're not going one, when one comes out one goes down. The bottom arm always comes out first because of acceleration.

Sit-up kick. I love this kick. You work on core strengthening. We talked about backstroke kick, backstroke core, have the arms across on the chest and there, they are sitting upright. One thing I also like, in addition to the core training, I also really like how the swimmers can visually look at their own kicks and to control the height of the kick and knowing how hard he or she had to kick just try to get the toes out of the water. You can, with the younger swimmers, you may want to start with the fins, or with a little bit sculling on the side as they getting more advanced you can take the fins off, hands across on the chest. And, then, you can see from this video, underwater the work's pretty hard. Take look the shoulders — it works on the core that the shoulders are not wobbly. The shoulders are pretty even. Stabilized. I often say if you can't hold a teacup on your forehead, then your core is not strong enough, during this drill.

Q: Do you want them to kick the surface (inaudible0[0:24:13])

A: Correct. Correct. And depends on the level. They can also, if they are younger kids, they can back a little bit just doing the head up rather than the sit up, and then, you know, if you really want to punish this kid who's 30 minutes late, you have them sit up really high. Or holding on to a dumbbell, or something. Hand strengthening is same thing. Not only the body position works on the core, you holding the table top and show the table, the hands are sculling. And after 25, you'll feel it. Right on your hands, your forearms, you're fatiguing. Also, notice the swimmer when he sculls in, his thumb is up. This is how I would like them to finish on a backstroke stroke.

Lot of kids like to finish just here with palms facing down, and try to get up this way. I'd like to have them finish it and slap on the thigh to get out. The reason why, if, if you have the kids just do this simple tests, hands by here, if they have them lift their hands up, really heavy; you put a lot of pressure on the triceps. If the thumbs up, lift out, same speed, it'll be much easier on the shoulders. The faster you go, the more force, more drag force you're facing. So you go here, the faster you go, the triceps, the biceps, the, the deltoid are going to fatigue much sooner. And it's not as efficient, either. So when you finish it, you get a little sculling, you get a little speed going forward and make the exit little easier and faster.

Summarizing that: overreaching, very simple, you can apply the partner drill with that. Timing 160 degrees is the 180. Kicking, sit up kick. We do a lot of sit up kicking. You can use that for butterfly kick and later on you'll see that as well. Just in general, kicking exercise or core exercise. Hand strengthening, sit up scull.

Breaststroke. Breaststroke is such an interesting stroke. There are so many different styles that can be applied to different types of a bodies. But, I'm just picking out a few general ones.

When the little kids were taught how to swim breaststroke, it's monkey, airplane, soldier, cha cha cha. Right? But, airplane is kicking out. We want to move forward. Simple physics, you better push back, kick back. So breaststroke kick is actually kicking back rather than kicking out. It's not about how wide you kick, it's about how

good you can turn out with your ankles. So you do a lot of ankle flexibility, awareness of the inside ankles how they kick, working on ankle flexibility as well. Hand strengthening, it's so important. The hands are facing in different directions throughout breaststroke phases and it is important to have that timing and acceleration. We can have a drill for that.

Basically you want to make sure that when the arms start to pull, the body's in a rather streamlined position and when the most powerful phase of the kick begins the arms and upper body are in the streamlined position, or close, so that you get the maximum power out of each stroke.

Body position while breathing. I hear all kinds of different versions. Breathe up, breathe down, breathe 45 degrees. I don't teach my swimmers, "Hey, you've got to look in this place." What I'm looking at is when, while they're taking their breath, I'm looking at the effect on the body. If the body is getting low, I tell them breathe little lower, or breathe down a little bit. Or if the body is high and they're still breathing up, I don't really correct that. As long as the body's in a efficient, streamlined position.

Breaststroke kick on the back. We do egg beater kick. It's not necessarily the water polo egg beater kick. In this stroke, the swimmer stays on the back, the front of the hips open, he's actually doing egg beater kick, just on the ankles. I'll show you an underwater video, you'll see it little better how much he turns out on his ankles. Streamlined, and just really stirring with the feet. Not a very big breaststroke kicks or anything, just ankles. Just whipping around, big feet, too.

This is a fun drill. We talked about awareness of your hands, hand strengthening. Knowing which way your palms are facing, knowing what your hands are doing. We do the "peace" drill. And you can do one, two, three, four, five finger, drill, it just basically every two strokes the swimmer adds one finger. You start with the one, and then two strokes later you do two fingers - "peace" symbol. And then you do "okay" sign. By the end they appreciate the whole hand. They have a much better feeling of the grab of the palms — the pressure in center of palms better.

Timing between the arms and legs. I am so fortunate that I get to work with so many great coaches whether at the swim meets or coming to conferences. I stole this drill from a coach from Reno, where at the far western pool deck and he had his swimmers, the entire team doing that. How many guys do breast stroke arms with dolphin kicks as part of a drill? Great. How many of you guys have the kids doing one stroke with two dolphin kicks? That's great. With head down, right? In this drill, the head is up — you're going one stroke with one dolphin kick. It challenges their core before the head drops off. The arms start, need to start pull and they have to time perfectly in order to keep the body up. Very well connected. The body stays up the whole time. The head is not allowed to drop. Only one kick. There's no second kick whatsoever. It, it's such a high intensity drill, I would suggest maybe start doing just 25's before, before you move on to any distance. Or you can in conjunction alternate this drill with a regular 25 breaststroke swim and see if that makes, makes any difference in their timing.

Q: So once the hands are pulling forward...

A: The thrust. That dolphin kick.

Q: ...[Inaudible]

A: Direction of the kick: you can do egg beater kick on the back, egg beater kick on the belly. When you do it on the belly, I will suggest that use a snorkel and just have them hold streamline.

Timing between the limbs — hands position or strengthening, just be aware of their hands and their finger tips, their nerve ends. Try to develop that. It's one piece, okay.

Disconnect. We have kids who don't know how long they should glide or really disconnect between the arm stroke and leg stroke. I find this really helpful. We just started using a couple years ago. Use a tempo trainer. Some people like to use a tempo trainer for the arms. I have my kids do the kick with a tempo trainer. So they have to

finish the arm stroke before the kick and they wait. And during the time period, I normally have them set up between 1.4-1.5 per stroke cycle. It depends how fast I want them to swim, but if really working on the stroke, maybe 1.6 and just have them during the gliding period have them reset their body and having the legs follow the tempo trainer. Not the arms.

How high should the body be? We talked about that. As long as the body, the spine from the bottom of the skull to your tailbone, is in a straight line, that's the indicator of their moving in a straight, streamlined position forward. It doesn't really matter where they should be breathing or how high they should be breathing.

Eyes looking. It's the same thing. Whether I'm looking down, up, sideways — as long as shoulders are even they're going forward. I remember one of my colleagues, Dana Kirk, who is a side breather in butterfly, it worked out for her. And that didn't change or alter her body position. There's no right or wrong.

Butterfly.

How many of you guys use the butterfly as a punishment? "Johnny, you're 20 minutes late. Get in the water and do a 200 butterfly." Please don't. Please don't. I think this is a very early stage where we developed a fear of butterfly. Every time they hear the butterfly word, you can always see they all start crying so don't use the butterfly as punishment. Don't encourage that.

Common problems. Disconnect between upper and lower body. There are a few things for either when the timing is off with the kick or the breathing timing is off or just a simply a weak core. Weak core causes weak kick or vice versa.

Spinal flexibility. Oftentimes people refer spine from upper mid to lower. I look when I work with kids on the butterfly, I look at spinal column in two different parts. Upper thoracic and lower spine. I believe that upper, which is from your sternum up, should be in a straight line. And from the lower back, it should be very flexible and doing all the dolphin like up and down motion. I'm sure everybody watches Michael Phelps swim butterfly. I'd like to ask the kids that question whenever they swim butterfly. I said, "When you watch Michael Phelps swim butterfly, does he go up and down, or forward?" They said, "Forward." Okay. Then you pull out your smart phone, and go to YouTube and find Michael Phelps underwater butterfly and you'll see how much he moves his hips underwater. How much he moves his legs. But if you look at his upper spine, it's straight forward.

So apply that concept. Use the particular drills to develop that and have them understand they're doing two different things between the upper and lower spinal column.

Difficulty exiting stroke. Some kids can't get their hands out. In my mind I think butterfly recovery is the easiest portion of the butterfly. If you do your timing right, if the kicking is right, if the acceleration is right, the recovery is just part of the momentum. It's effortless. Some kids like to enter here, some kids enter here, I like to have my kids entering with fingertips down with shoulder width. Just because, if they're entering too close, they're actually disengaging the pectorals here. If they are entering too wide, their lats are not working. So as you notice, if they do pushups with hands together, it's harder. Or hands wide apart, it's harder. And with the hands, with the arms right below the shoulders, it's easiest. Why? Because that's your strongest angle of attack. You engage your pecs and lats. So this is where I like to have my swimmers enter at the extension of the shoulder lines. They can immediately apply the maximum power.

Breathing. Forward, upward, timing, when they should be breath — when they should take their breath. It's just common problems. Yes?

Q: One of the things, also, that I see with some of my younger swimmers is they put the head in first then bring the arms around...

A: One that helps with that is, is the fins.

A: I think it may be they're breathing a little bit too late. That's, that's part of it, and second, maybe their second kick is not strong enough. If the second kick is strong, they get a good enough support to breathe forward and at same time lift their arms out.

Butterfly pressing drill. We talked about developing the spinal flexibility. Upper and lower spine. This swimmer has the arms in the superwoman position. The head does not go underwater, pretty much stays in the same thing. Upper spine stable, lower spine is very active and take a look at the kick. And we'll take a look underwater for each as well.

Look at the upper, upper chest. It's pretty stable. On this one the knees are also bending a lot. And I'll explain it in the next slide or so, angle of attack. I like to have my swimmers bend their knees to kick in butterfly kick. I'll explain why. Let me pause right here. The shins and the ankles are pushing back. Now, if we don't bend our knees and we just bend on the hips, the legs are up and down. Where does this send your body? Sends the body up and down, right? I like to have them bend their knees a little bit. In this case he bends a lot, I actually like that. His shins and ankles are pushing straight back. Now, end result is going to push the body forward.

Now as long as he can control his upper body, he pushes back. If the legs are completely straight, they're pretty much sticking, not whipping. With this, it creates a whipping motion and same thing with some of the flutter kicks as well.

Q: Are you afraid with the younger swimmers that they won't get their kicks up?

A: Right. The degree of bending really depends on how well they can engage their core first, their hips first. And then how well they can hold all the way up.

Q: So obviously he is a more advanced swimmer.

A: Yeah, he's about a 1:57 200 meter butterflyer.

Q: Obviously he doesn't have the issues that they have with the younger swimmers. We would wait in the bent knees, or?

A: I wouldn't emphasize the straight knees to begin with. If the hips are not moving so much, then I would tell them move the hips more. I would not emphasize keep your legs straight.

A: You're not emphasizing, "Okay, you bend to here and then push back." And they end up just flapping their feet out of the water. Just flapping, we all see that. Another thing I like to emphasize is the ankle flexibility here. If the ankles are not flexible, no matter how much you're bending the knees, you'll actually end up going backwards. Actually seeing people doing flutter kick with really tight ankles that are not going anywhere but backward.

When I was little, my coach emphasized a lot in the flexibility, we would just sit on our feet before practice and as he's walking us through with the workout that day, we just sit on our ankles.

Butterfly kicking drill. We can do the same thing. Sit up, kick and work on the core, work on the stability on the upper body, keep the head out of the water. We have underwater video of that. In this, he can also see and control how high, how hard he should kick. The range of motion on the kicks as well, and the power of the kicks.

Snorkel. I love, love, love, love use snorkels in butterfly. It's the same reason as I talked about earlier — the head does not generate the wave, it's the hips, it's the lower body. So use of snorkel, the kids can tell you, put the control in their own hands. See, if you ever have the water going through the tubes, that means your head is dropping too much. You're moving your head too much rather than generating it from your chest below. You also want to make sure that the arms are also in the right place.

There are different ways to do single arm butterfly. Some people like to do it with arms down, some people like do it

with non-pulling arm up. I do it with both ways and this I like to have them also pay attention to where the hand should be in the more of a superman position. This is the underwater version of it. Just try to keep the upper body straight and not drop the head.

Seal kick. This is a fun one. Kids love that. Pretty much working on the same thing. Your core strengthening, the stability of upper spine, the flexibility of lower spine, you keep the eyes above the water. In the easier version, the hands are by the side. An even easier version is with fins and then you can take them off. Take the fins off as they get better.

I'll show you underwater video. Here it is. Still the hips are very active, the knees are very active kicking back rather than sticking up and down, the shoulders are stable, the shoulders always pointing forward, upper chest is controlled forward.

List of the things that happen when kids cannot get their arms out. One, delay of breathing. One of the coaches asked that, dropping the head. So I like to have them start breathing when their hands are still in front of the chest. If the breath is too late, the head tries to come up, the arms try to get out of the water, they're contradicting two different motions. They're not synched. So when that happens, when they're having a hard time getting the arms out, first thing I look at is if they're breathing timing is right. If it's too late, just tell them start breathing a bit earlier.

Breathing position. Little kids think that it's human nature where when we are in survival mode, when we're getting tired and having hard time breathing, we get up higher. We try to jump out of the water. So I like to have them breathe forward with the chin still slightly on the water and shoulders forward. Some kids, they're super, super flexible. They can get their head up and still be pressing forward, but really just adding unnecessary load on their body. And just try to emphasize a straight spinal column just like we talked about earlier in breaststroke: breathe forward, keep the body streamlined.

Recovery position. Now, higher is better. So I like to have them getting out at 45 degrees with thumbs down. Some kids like to recover this way. Understand when they do this, immediately they have to lift their arm up higher about a palm length higher in order to clear the water. So I like to have them get their fingertips to point out, recover as low as possible without dragging on the water.

Weak second kick. We emphasize a lot on the second kick. Some people think the first kick is strong, second kick is tap. When, during teaching, during delivery, I like to have them think the second kick is harder than the first kick. When the second kick happens as hard as the first one, you almost are guaranteed to have a great acceleration; to have a great exit and forward and that helps with recovery. It takes the hard part of butterfly out, which is recovery.

Hyperextension of the arms. I often hear coaches say, "Push your arms all the way back." Great. I'm pushing my arms all the way back. How am I going to get my arms out? I'm stuck. It's hyperextension. Encourage kids once their hands get past their navel, it's a 45 degrees outward sweeping, and that's so it just comes with the recovery — just follow through that they don't have to try to muscle it. One of the coaches said, (she coaches 8 and unders) they push all the way back and they have to get their butt up and drop the head and flip the arms around. You see young kids do that all the time. Flipping their arms, with the arms around. They don't have to push all the way back.

Butterfly summary. Differences between the upper and lower spine. I think it's really important to understand that, and establish the motion, forward motion. Breaching between the hips and feet, core strength. Some people think a core is just your six packs. And I think of the core as from the sternum below all the way to your quads. All the way around, front and back and sides. And that's your core. Not just the six packs. Importance of the second kick. We talked about helps with acceleration, elevation of the body and power, of course. Use of snorkel and tempo trainer. I use tempo trainer as well. Now, I understand that the timing between the first kick and second kick, and the second kick to the first kick is very different. But, just establish the idea of first and second kick I put a tempo trainer on them. Again, have them referring the tempo trainer with the kicks not the arms. I will have them set up as .70 seconds so each beep they perform a kick. Beep, beep. And it just give an idea the legs never go easy on the legs.

There is never skip a single kick. And then if you want to time the arms for sure it's 1.4 stroke cycle tempo right there. Kids, the, the older they get, they appreciate that a little bit more. Younger kids, they, they hate it. But when they hate it, you know it's a good thing.

Additional fun partner games also incorporate a lot of the drills. Here is this kicking drill: You just start at center point, put a kick board in the middle, one swimmer on each side. Their goal is try to push the opponents backwards. The interval we do normally is about a one minute. They get one minute or kick and 30 seconds rest. The reason why we're doing one minute is most of the 100 yards races are under a minute. And so, it's a high intensity kick for one minute. And gets better, the losers, the loser get to push the winner all the way across the pool. Winner just holds the streamline, enjoy the ride, loser earns it.

Sculling battle as well. They're in the table top position. The person in the front is actually doing backstroke sculling. This one is doing breaststroke sculling forward. They're holding their table top. In this case they're trying to be nice to each other. Nobody wins. But, they got to end up pushing each other back and forth.

Surfing. We tell the kids don't ever sit or stand on the board. They stand on the board and they're sculling. Things to watch for is make sure the knees don't bend. They stand straight down. Works on the control of the core all the way around and of course it increases the resistance as well. If their knees are bent, it's easier to scull. You can do this forward, backwards, sideways, sideways; works on the obliques as well. I found when I did it myself, I'm just kind of fooling around in the water, when you do backwards it almost feels like a shoulder rehab exercises as well.

Final notes. Be creative. My inspiration is to get on the pool deck and watch other coaches at swim meets, to come to the conference and talk to people. I've had many years of great, great mentors, Steve being one in the audience, very encouraging whenever I have a questions or difficult times. I really appreciate that, thank you. So there, there are no right or wrong drills — just the ones that work for you. Find the ones that works for you then they're the right ones.

Observe. Watch kids play. One day, I was on deck and we were trying to deliver this workout and the kids were just talking, talking, talking non-stop. And I looked down, and this eight year old was doing this — she's trying to keep her head above the water and she's holding her leg and she's kicking really hard. I'm looking down, I'm like, "That's a great drill!" So this is where our single leg drill comes from. A snorkel, you wear a snorkel, you hold streamline, one leg sticks out of the water, and you kick one leg. The body is not allowed to jump up and down. It takes great control in the middle and now one foot kicks super hard if they want to go forward. And you can alternate, 25 right, 25 left and when they do that last 25 with both legs, the speed that comes out of it is impressive. So watch kids play. You'll learn so much. And 99% of us are visual learners and we watch. I hope that watching the video helped a lot rather than me standing here and trying to demonstrate. Use that with the kids as well. They watch, they learn.

Q: What equipment do you use for that underwater video?

A: I use a security camera. That sits on the bottom of the pool. Not like I'm try to spying on my kids, but the security camera that's weather-proof, really. It's really simple. The camera doesn't sink — I tied it up, duct taped up to a Tupperware container and throw river rocks in the container so it sinks on the bottom and an angle and I have the video monitor on the deck. And I have the DVD recorder. You can record, play or you can just watch it. I also use a very simple Sony underwater video water-proof video camera. It's about \$150. And have kids tape each other. And they watch, they learn. Not only the ones that are swimming are learning, but also the ones taping, they're helping each other out, too, "Hey, I, I think your arms are crossing over a little bit." Have them take the initiatives. Have them help each other out.

Visual learners. We all have smart phones. \$90. Get a waterproof cover, case, and just have them watch it. And we use the ECOS goggles as well. They watch for about for about three, four minutes, they get in with the dark out

goggles. They can't see. There's no distraction. But all they remember is the image that played in their head. And it's just perfect example of visual learning. And have fun. A lot of it is just coming, coming from game playing and have fun. We don't do a lot of yardage. And we, we believe in quality. And over the years with the 5-5,000, 5,500 yards, we have been able to produce kids 14 year old going, 3:54 400 IM, 2:01 200 breaststroke. One of my kids just went 1:45 200 back as a 14 year old. So I think the accuracy and the intensity is the key to me. It's not the yardage.

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How to Implement a Culture of Learning for the Coaching Staff

by Coach Sergio Lopez (2014 Yearbook)

[introduction, by Jennifer Gibson]

Okay, I know we still have people walking in, especially with kind of change in location. I am Jennifer Gibson; I am fortunate enough to be a member of the ASCA board. As part of the ASCA board we are asked to introduce speakers. I got very fortunate as far as the young men that I get to introduce this afternoon. And we always seem that a theme that can start coming out of clinics each year. And when I was writing some thoughts down about Sergio, one thing [that] really came to mind about him is: when I looked back, where he started and came from, he just was surrounded—and I am sure with some thought on his part with this too, but maybe did not realize the impact—from his arrival here in the States, how surrounded he was by great mentors. And it is one thing to be mentored; but it is another thing to really take what you are being shown and taught and inspired with, and really use it in your career. And I think Sergio just really symbolizes what mentoring can do for us.

He was born in Spain. He came to the U.S. to swim for Doc Councilmen. And with that, Sergio's name became well-known within USA Swimming ranks. He was the 1988 bronze medalist at the Olympic Games in the 200 Breaststroke. He then swam for the famous—well, infamously famous—and very successful coach Jozef Nagy. He began his coaching career—and I had to get corrected on this—he started out with the club Hillenbrand, and from there, for 7 years he was in the collegiate leagues with Northwestern and then moving on as the head coach at West Virginia. And then, as we know, in 2007 Sergio moved here to Jacksonville; pretty proud to say he is one of Jacksonville's own now. Moved to the Bolles School, to lead both the high school and the club teams. His high school guys and girls had been absolutely amazing, being national mythical champs several times; his girls have been runner-up. His club teams have won at the Junior National level numerous times. And with his latest young man—that we all know about and watch with such interest—is our national teamer Ryan Murphy.

And just want to say: just seems like wherever Sergio goes, he has the ability to bring out the best in people. So I

would like to introduce Sergio Lopez.

[Lopez begins] Hi. First of all, I want to thank you all for being here, and listening to me and my thoughts. And also I want to thank John Leonard and the ASCA staff for giving us this opportunity to share what we do with the coaching staff at Bolles. I think... I find it fascinating; I really enjoy it. So I hope some of you get something out of it and can implement it in your clubs.

Before I go into the talk, I want to thank my coaching staff; I have three coaches here from my coaching staff. But I think, you know, as a coach I always believe that you are as good as the talent that you have, and the swimmers. The same thing as a head coach: you are as good as you are going to be with the talent that you have with your assistant coaches or the people that work with you. So I want to thank my coaching staff: Coach Dale, Coach Jason, Coach Jon. I also want to thank Coach Jon [Sakovich]. Coach Jon has been at Bolles... 14 years? 14 years—he was there before I got there. And from Day 1, he embraced me as a colleague and as a friend, and we have become very good friends. (I am a little bit emotional; as passionate as I am, I am a little bit emotional.) So... so he has been there for me for good things and for bad things. So I just [want to recognize] Coach Jon. [applause]

When they asked me to talk about something, I thought that, you know, the last few years we have been... the dynamics of our coaching staff is very interesting and I do not think many clubs do what we do. I thought that would be a good opportunity to share with all of you and see if you can take something home that works for you, you know. I want to start telling you, just briefly, how I learn what I know; you know by... as a coach by trial and error, reading. I am not a very good reader; I fall asleep after the second page, but I try. I think by not being afraid to fail, I think that is the most important thing.

My path as a coach: my first job was being a head coach of what is now known as Tucson Ford Dealers—it used to be known as Hillenbrand Aquatics of Tucson. When Frank Busch interviewed me for the job... well interview me: I called him up and said, "I want that job". I just finished my career as a swimmer. His question was: but you don't have any experience? I said, "Well, just believe me: I can coach it. I can really do a good job with the kids." And he said, What about the clubs? "Well, I don't have a clue about the club, but I'm willing to learn. And I used to follow rules and used to listen to people, I don't think it's that difficult. So please give me the job." A week later, he called me and gave me the job. I had no clue what I was getting into, but I think I did it. But I was a head coach at Hillenbrand Aquatics.

Then, after few years, I wanted to become a college coach. And I set my goals like we do when we were swimmers, and my goal was to, at least in my career, to win one NCAA championship in my life. So I interviewed in different places and I found Bob Groseth and Northwestern. A brilliant person and a brilliant mentor; and he gave me an opportunity to be an assistant coach over there. And he did wonderful. From Day 1, he let me run, he let me crash; and he always guided me. Most important, he taught me one thing: about taking care of my family and making sure that I never forgot about that. And so that is another thing that I learnt hopefully with my coaching staff: making sure that they take care of that.

After that, you know, I left for my first head coaching job at college; it was at West Virginia University. And then, for personal reasons, three years after I got there, I left West Virginia and moved to Bolles. I never thought that I would be back at the high school/Age Group level, but I have been... it has been kind of one of those things that I found myself in a place, and I did not know what I was doing there, but it turned out to be a very good thing. So I am very thankful about all that.

I think the most important thing that we have to learn is: I think being successful—and I do not want to sound conceited—but I think being successful is not that difficult. I think if you work hard and you believe in yourself and you push, you will be successful. I think the hardest part is, you know, how to keep it there. Sustainable, long-term success is the hardest thing. I learned that as an Olympic athlete. And it was like... you know, I spent the last 6-8 years of my professional Swimming career in a very dark place just because my federation, the press, many different people took ownership from my swimming. And I had to... you know, thank God that before I retired I went back to

understanding what Swimming was for me. So, the hard part is to keep it up there all the time.

I think... the question... now, we are going to talk about how to align a coaching staff here. The question is how we align a coaching staff as a business. I know most of us, we start coaching because we love the sport, not because we want to be in the business world. But if you are a head coach, you are running a business and you have got to learn how to do that. And you have got to make sure that every single piece is really working perfectly.

In my opinion it is: how do you maintain... or create, develop and maintain sustainable long-term success? By aligning the coaching staff as a business, by empowering the coaches to understand their talent, not to be afraid to think and develop their own thought, to share their knowledge and learn from the rest of the coaching staff, and by teaching them not to feel threatened and to be confident.

You know, one of the things when I first came to America—I do not speak French, but I studied French for seven years—so I came with no English. And I spent a lot of hours with Doc Councilman—he was like my granddad. And many things that he said to me is like: “Sergio, remember: coaching is sharing.” Coaching is sharing: that stuck with me for a long time. And that is one of the things that I try to do. You know, I do not feel threatened because I share my thoughts, because my job is to beat you. You know, you are my competition, my job is to beat you; I have to be confident about that. So it is okay for me to tell you how I do things. We have tried to create that culture with our coaching staff.

All of you know what it means to be a head coach. But in my book, what I believe to be a head coach is three important things:

1. You have to have a business mind. Nowadays, you have to. Understanding each part of the organization—and I mean each department—and the coaching staff to develop and follow the goals of the organization. (That is too big of a sentence for me. I wrote it, but it is too big of a sentence for me. [laughter] But, you know, you get the idea.)
2. The next one will be to have a manager’s mind. Understanding the needs of the organization by successfully hiring the staff, the right staff, and by empowering each individual to develop their talent to the highest level. And that is the challenge; that is a big challenge.
3. And the third one that I think.... Most of us when we start coaching we only think about: heh, I’m going to make those kids swim fast, we’re going to win Juniors or we’re going to have ten Olympic Trials qualifiers. It will be to develop plans and strategies for the swimmer to develop themselves and perform at the highest level in the water, in the classroom and, most important, as people.

One of the reasons why I know that I am going to be good is because when I was a kid I was alone, a lot. My father left when I was a kid, when I was 4 years-old. And I spent a lot of time on the subway going to practice by myself, since I was 9 years-old or 10 years-old. And I got to learn how to think and spend time and understand who I was. That is a scary thing; it is a very scary thing.

And I think most important is: each kid that goes through your pool has a talent. What level of the talent, who knows? But they have a talent. And most of your kids... you know that you felt bad as a swimmer, or when you have done something.... You know that they had a practice in a random day that you did not even pay attention to them, and they are in the shower thinking: Wow, I’m so powerful. I did something good today. You know. So our job is to develop that, to make them understand that and to make them have ownership of that, so they can become good people. I think that kind of makes you appreciate things in life.

And, then, to develop different season plans and strategies for the coaching staff and the administrative staff; to empower them to keep growing with knowledge, curiosity, to be the best they can be; and, ultimately, become great head coaches and managers, somewhere else. That is the legacy, hopefully, that coaches like Jon Urbanek and the other coaches that are here, when you had a chance to coach for many years, you have many coaches place everywhere; that they are doing a great job, and they are empowering people to be good.

I think it is important, at least, that you know how I hire people. I know when I got to Bolles and I started hiring the

way I hire people, I had very, very successful professional parents coming to my office telling me that I was an incompetent a person, that I did not know what I was doing, that... blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I kept telling them: listen, this is my business. I need to hire, well, you know, whoever I feel that I can work with, that I believe is going to follow me and teach me too. Teach me what I need to be do, needs to be done, you know. It is very hard.

I was lucky that I was, for seven years, a college coach. And I love the fact of recruiting; so I spent a lot of time watching people and trying to understand how people move, how people talk, how people look. And I have been hiring people that... giving opportunities to people to grow; people that I recruited as athletes, because I am lucky enough that I have been coaching for 17 years and I had enough swimmers going through my program that now want to be coaches.

So swimmers that I have recruited and that I had a chance to coach, that they have knowledge of swimming, that they are passionate about Swimming and empowering young people to be the best they can be. That they really want to be coaches. And I put that in-between quotations because being a coach is not a profession; being a coach is a vocation. And it is not what people think; you know, I just finished my degree in engineering, I could not find a job, I'm going to go and be a coach, you know. Some of them become very good coaches, but some of them, they just crash. So, you know, you really need to understand that concept of being a coach. Being away for weekends, and more weekends. When your spouse or your companion tells you: What the heck are you doing? You care more about that kid that is going to leave you next year than about me. How you deal about all that. Coaches that will go the extra mile, that are loyal or learn to be loyal, that they are curious and willing to learn and share. That is the people I try to hire.

What do I really need in a coach? Coaches that are willing to do what I ask. Coaches that are better than me. And there are three things: in areas that I am too busy to take care of, or that I do not want to do anymore, or that I do not have a clue of how to do. And it is, you know... if you are on your own, you are on your own; and the bigger you get, the more complicated things we make. So you need people that are better than you, most of the time.

Coaches that complement me. That is a hard thing to find. But it is hopefully with everything that you do, you know, they become a complement or you become a complement with them and you adapt to one another. And, again, coaches that want to learn and share their knowledge with no fear. I think right now in our coaching staff, when we talk about swimming, I do not think my coaches feel bad about expressing what they think. And if they have a thought about hey, if I move my pinkie this way and they teach that, my swimmer is swimming very fast, ahh, because we are going to say you're nuts, were you drinking last night or what? So they do not think how about that; they are very confident people.

Now, there are many problems. You know, me as a manager, if I think about the problems that I might have within my coaching staff that I need to solve, I think the biggest problem that I have—in my opinion, in my case is—is with looking at an assistant. Assistant coach, the biggest problem is that he or she becomes successful too quickly, and at one point he/she thinks that he/she knows more and that he/she can do a better job. (Which I know it is very complicated, but with equality and all these animals [on slide]: is it a she or...? [laughter]) I think that is the biggest problem.

And you know why, because coaching is a very egotistical job. And now you guys think that ego is a bad word. No; ego is a good word. You know, we all have a good ego, and we need to look at the positive side of that. And we coach because it feeds our ego. You want to tell me that I coach because it makes me happy and la, la, la, but look at you, you know.

Sometimes we get blinded by things. And, you know, a young guy thinks that they know more than you because they do not know many things that are happening, but it seems that you might and you do not want to bother them with that. You know when that happens, he or she starts undermining you in front of the swimmers, parents and coaches. We all have that. He/she starts playing the group, playing a division between the team and explaining themselves out of the goals: the goals are bad, the coaching staff made a bad decision.... That is a big problem.

And to me that is the biggest problem that I need to solve as a head coach, as a manager. You know you might have systems of how to do things and how not to do things, but if everybody is not on the same page and believing in one another and being confident enough to say: Coach Sergio, you're wrong. Why don't you think like this? Or you have a coach that is confident enough to say Oh wow, Coach John or Coach Jason have an awesome job; I need to do that. And then I empower them to feel good, and they do not think: oh, I am better than them.

Why do I think it is the biggest problem? I was an assistant that became very successful, and I could feel the nation's heart. Now I was a head coach before and I learned a whole lot; in the three and a half years that I was there, I learned a lot. So I hope that when I talk about this... when I was at Northwestern with Bob Groseth... (I don't know if Bob is here? I hope he doesn't take it the wrong way, because he is my mentor. You know, he is like the uncle/godfather to my kids.) But he gave me the chance to do something, and I ran with it. And I recruited and I did this and remade the team from nothing. In five years, I think, they went from nothing to top-40 in the country.

And, a lot of the recruits—because I was the one recruiting—wanted to come and swim with me. And everybody was like “Sergio, Sergio, you're so good” that your head is like this big.

(Louder, Sergio; we can hardly hear you. Turn your mic on.)

That is why I have assistants. So, (woah!) [louder: microphone on].

So I recognize that with Bob too, and I did not leave because of that. But it was a cost too, for me too to think I left, because, like, my paycheck was \$700 less than my mortgage. And I had to find somebody else to be able... at that point I had two kids. And I was spending... I think at one point when I was living... the year before I left I was living 40 miles away. Outside of Chicago, 40 miles. You know, I got up at 3:30 in the morning to shovel snow, and got back at 10:30 at night. So it was not a good thing. So I left.

But also I left because I felt that that was his thing. And even though he asked me, he said, Sergio, why you don't stay? In four more years, I'm going to retire and you can be the head coach. I told him, I was like, what about in four years you do not retire? I cannot ask you to retire. This is your team; you have been here for 25 years, it is your team. You deserve all these. And plus, I could not make it financially.

One of the things that we talk about is spouses. You know, I have been with my wife for 24 years. And when we moved to Chicago, she had a good job, did not make a lot of money. And when my son was born, my second kid was born, she wanted to stay home. So I had to get... at one point I had two jobs—when I was a coach at Northwestern—so she could be a stay-at-home mom. So that is the partnership that you create. So it was getting too hard, so we had to move-on somewhere else.

Since my first job, I had the same issue with one too many assistants, and I could see a pattern. And that was something that maybe hurt me so much when I started coaching, but that is something that I pay a lot of attention. So a few of my assistants, they have left, and they have gone to be either head coaches or assistant coaches at other places. They have reached out to me and apologize for the way they acted, or this or that. On their own. And I am like, “Oh, wow.” But that was a learning experience for me. So that is why I think it is the biggest problem in my opinion, and I need to make sure that that does not happen.

Umm, now to change it a little bit: how we came to a program of what we do at Bolles. When I got to Bolles, after a while I realized I had a group of really-gifted kids. Not just gifted because they could swim fast, but gifted because they had the tools mentally and physically to be some of the best in the world. And in my opinion, I really wanted to prepare them in a four or five year cycle, the best I could.

So, the mind is so powerful and it is underutilized. And I have always done augmentations, visualizations, moving energy, and all that hocus pocus—you know, the New Age thing. But I have been doing it since I was a kid, and I really believe in that.

Conversations with my brother. (I will give you a little background later on.) But my brother was an ex-swimmer and he was always fascinated with the way the teams that I coached developed to be good. And we talk about how we motivate and how we talk to them. And I talk with him about... now he is a consultant and he coaches executives, if he would help me create a specific program for the swimmers. So he created a program and after the success of the program I ask my brother to think about doing what he does with executives of companies to do with us, with the coaching staff. Not at that high level. And so he developed a program for us.

This is my brother Mark; he went to Florida Atlantic. He was a very good swimmer, very talented, gifted, back in Spain. Went to Florida Atlantic University and became a captain of the team, also coach, an assistant and coach at some club or something. But, you know, what he wanted to do was consulting. He got a master's degree in Engineering, and some certified... and training in access management, emotional intelligence, peak intelligence. But we complement [each other] a lot. And we talk the same thought... like you know, with our mind. So I thought that he could help me make these kids better.

So... sorry. [pause]

So I am going to let Coach Jon [Sakovich] talk; explain a little bit of the program for the coaches and the swimmers. And then I will come back.

[Sakovich begins] Ahh, first of all thank you, Sergio, for giving me this opportunity to talk to you guys, and thank you ASCA for giving him the opportunity to give to me to come up here and talk. First I would like to say in this part of the presentation, if we go back a few slides where he talks about things he does not like to do: that is right here; that is my job. If you see my name, it is not assistant coach or anything; it is the guy that does the things Sergio does not like to do, so. [laughter]

Okay...

[Lopez]: Here, here. We did not rehearse.

[Sakovich]: There was no rehearsal, so.... (I will try to stand next to here, since I do not have a private mic—it is going to be a little tough. Alright, try not to walk around too much.)

But, the peak performance program that we talked about: FAST. Meaning:

- Foundation,
- Action,
- Solution, and
- Transformation.

Combines knowledge and methodologies that work on the mental aspects of practice and competition to help participants reach higher levels of performance. So, basically, everybody's goal here is to get your swimmers to be at the utmost level that they can reach. The objectives of the program....

Actually when we did this, we decided that we needed to... you know, we have over a 100 Senior kids in our program, we could not have them all do this. So over one Christmas break we decided to kind of take the top 10-15 swimmers that we felt were the most serious about to coming practice, put in the best work ethic over that time, and, you know, were kind of in that Junior National range. And we also felt that they were, mentally, fairly mature; that they could handle something like this.

So after the end of Christmas break, we pulled the 15 swimmers aside, and said: Hey, we want to do this program with you; are you guys interested? And it's not, you know, you come to one or two classes or whatever; it's you come to all of them or you don't come at all. And for the guys that did it, and girls, they also had to stay after practice for an extra half hour to an hour to do this. I think it was like once a week or so, for about a couple of months—10 weeks. So it was something that they really had to commit to because they were missing-out on homework time, sleep, that

sort of thing.

The objectives of the program:

- To gain clarity. We all know if we do not have very clear goals, we are not going anywhere very fast.
- Keep the focus. You get halfway through a season and you start flaking-out, or the swimmers start flaking out; just kind of teaching them to help keep that focus.
- Reduction of anxiety. (Right here, right now.)
- Increased physical and mental energy. [If you] reduce the anxiety, you tend to think clearer, have little bit more energy for your performance, speech, practices whatever.
- And then increase self-confidence.

We started with, from FAST, we have got the foundation. (I know, up there) This is the presentation that his brother Marcos gave us—some things might be a little different. But...

- Foundation: basically, where you are starting from. Where these athletes were mentally. Whether they were swimmers that did great in practice and then could not handle it at swim meets—they got scared, they got nervous, whatever it was. That was our foundation; our starting point.
- The action: taking risks. They had to do things they were not comfortable with. If a swimmer was very shy and, you know, kind of walk up to the block like a scared little child, we had to get them to stand-up tall. Talk to the person next to them, to open up a little bit. Do things that made them very uncomfortable. So, taking the risks.
- The solution: self-awareness, understanding. The reason why we needed people that were fairly mature was: they needed to be able to self-evaluate. To have that maturity to look at themselves in the mirror and say, Yes, I wimped out on that set yesterday. Yes, I slept-in because I really didn't want to go to practice. Or whatever it is. You know, not making excuses. So that is self-awareness and understanding what is going on.
- And then the transformation. Using the things that his brother Marcos worked with, that we helped him with, to help change that mentality, help change that brain a little bit.

And then from the transformation, we get back to the foundation: once you have changed and adapted, that is your new foundation. And what is the next step we are going to take? Then we go back through the cycle again. (There is a little arrow.)

The program's structure is based on six main elements:

1. They have the kick off meeting. Basically, the first meeting they were at. Kind of introducing them, talking to them, about what is going on. That they are going to be challenged. That there is going to be uncomfortableness. That they had to put forth their best effort. They could not just do the homework at the last minute; that there was some homework. And I, myself, went through this with his brother Marcos; just, kind of, for me, personally, to help out. So I kind of understand a lot of this. And there are definitely a lot of areas where you have to become uncomfortable in order to become better. So kick off meeting,
2. Work session: first big session that they had. They were given a program guide, kind of like a syllabus. Basically, it had all the activities and stuff they were going to do.
3. Daily reflections. They had a journal that they had to write in. You know: did I have a good day? A bad day? What kept me from being good? So on and so forth.
4. And then probably one of the most important things: feed-forward. Everybody has heard of feedback; this is the opposite. And what Marcos did was he brought each kid in, in a meeting with the coach that coaches them directly, and we had to do a feed-forward meeting. They would tell us their goals. And we had to, without

saying anything negative, without saying anything about their past performances, we had to give them tips on being... on moving forward. So we could not say, Hey, yesterday was a bad practice, you could have done better. It had to be: Well, today, you know, we're doing 5x1000s, and we really want to look forward to you focusing on negative splinting. Or whatever it is. So feed-forward.

5. Follow up. Pretty simple.

6. And then the transition. As they were transitioning from their old selves into their new selves. (Phew.)

Program requirements. For this program to be successful, specific key factors that were present during each phase of the program. Okay?

- Like I said earlier-on, we had to have commitment from each participant that they were going to do the homework that they were given. (Excuse me.)
- Support from the coaching staff to the program and the participants by providing periodic feed-forward. And as you can see, it is underlined because Sergio and the rest of the coaching staff felt that this is probably one of the most important things. You can coach a kid all you want; but if you do not develop a relationship and work with them and understand them, they are not going to become as good as they could be. Okay? So we felt that was extremely important; that is why it is underlined.
- And then understanding that the program is a process and not just an event, and results will appear as the program progresses and new behaviors come forward. So that was... the most important thing was, as you know, teenagers, this day and age, they want everything yesterday. Well, this type of program, swimming: it does not work like that. It is a long, periodic process. And so they had to be mature enough, again, to be able to understand that between Thursday's meeting and next Thursday's meeting that they were not going to all of a sudden be better. And that they had to work at it. And that they were going to get better, and then they were going to fall down; and they were going to step back up, and back down. And up and down until they were able to implement the new changes that they wanted.

Now as Sergio said: we also did this with the coaches. We felt it was extremely important to have a coaching staff that was... I do not want to say single-minded but we all had the same goals. You can still have the same goals, but we wanted to make sure that we were implementing these goals as a team and not, you know, this person doing it this way, this person doing it that way or that person doing it that way.

So what we did was hired Sergio's brother, Marcos, to come-in and kind of do the same thing he does with corporations. Although we could not do it to that level, thank goodness. But we did it... it was supposed to be about 12 weeks; it ended-up being—I don't know—6 or 7, little bit more. By 8-9 weeks, he ended up having to take a better job off in Africa, somewhere. So we as the coaches, every Thursday came in, sat down and he made us do activities, projects and things that some of us were not comfortable with.

The objective was to develop strong team alignment and improve the team effectiveness to achieve the club's goals. The methodology: develop the four key elements of a high-performance organization; meaning the process, the management system, people and leadership.

Steps. First one, obviously, we had to figure out where we wanted to be. Second step was to establish where we currently were. Analyze the gap between where we want to be and where we currently are. Develop an action plan. And then follow up.

Action plan: basically, these are the steps that we are going to take. We would have a meeting, we would come back the next Thursday, we would sit down and he would ask us: Okay, show us your action plan. Did you do all the steps that you needed to do between last week and this week in order to improve what we're supposed to do. And it could have been something as simple as each coach writing their own goals for the program, putting them all together and figuring it out or... you know, whatever it was.

So we have got the four steps.

The work processes: the steps that define the way that work needs to be done. For instance, when you are doing... we have got 6-7 full-time coaches, and if we are all trying to do meet entries, we have to do it a certain way; otherwise there is going to be people getting cut out, double entries, kids entered in events that they are not supposed to be in, so on and so forth. So we have to have a certain format in order to do that. If we do not do it, then we have chaos at the meet. So the processes.

The management system: the tools used to manage the work processes and evaluate how well we are doing. One of the ways, with meet entries, is you find out at the end if everybody got to swim the events they wanted. And you are not running-around trying to deck-enter and scratch and all that fun stuff, at the end so.

The people: coaches and staff. Very important parts of each program. And then the leader. And leader's job is keeping everybody kind of inline and making sure that we are always continuously moving forward.

This is just one example of the activities that we had to do; basically it is a priority wheel. To give you example: if we take an underwater dolphin kick, okay. You have a swimmer that really wants to work on their underwater dolphin kick—that is their priority. You have got eight segments—eight pieces of the pie—and you put down the eight different things that are going to contribute to that underwater dolphin kick. It could be the streamline, their push-off, their flexibility, their up-kick, their down-kick; whatever it is.

And then you have got a rating of 0-10; 0 being the very center, 10 being the outside [of the wheel]. And the goal is to kind of use that chart to gauge where you are and improve. As you can see, that one has got lines all over the place. And you rate: my flexibility is not very good, I am about a 2; my streamline is excellent, I am about an 8. And, you know, we have got a different circle. The goal is to have that perfect-10 circle. That is just one of the things; there are a lot of others that I am not going to even get into.

The outcome: by the shortened end of it, we had our short- and long-term goals. Both team and individual. We still have our 2012-2016 goals posted. Every now and then Coach Dale [Porter] will call us all together and tell us that we just crossed-off another of our quadrennium goals. Whether it is winning Junior Nationals, how we are ranked in the Virtual Club Championships, we had 10 kids swim a mile at a meet. Whatever it is, we cross those off as we go through.

The action plan. Each of us coaches, you know, our daily action plan is what we are going to do that day. But also every time we have a staff meeting, we start off with an action plan. Coach Dale will sit down and go over everything that we discussed the week before, to make sure that things are getting done. If it is an activity that you cannot do, we cross it off or we put it to the next week or whatever it is. But it is a step/tool to help us keep moving forward.

Swim group goals and time frames: just the goals for each group. What they want to accomplish.

Group structure: how we wanted the team to look, as far as... you know, we want our 8 and 9 year-olds with the 10 year-olds or with the 6 year-olds—how ever. Just setting that up, so everybody in the program knew where kids were supposed to be.

Team roles and responsibilities. We have one person that is in charge of the computer stuff; whether it is the website, setting-up the meets online—whatever it is, that is their job. Another coach is in charge of helping set-up the swim meets. Another coach is in charge of our swim camps. Each thing, Sergio grabbed everything together and then doled it out based on our best attributes. He felt: Hey, you're pretty good with the computer, you're doing this. You're not good with the computer, you're not doing that so.

And then: weekly coach's meeting structure. When we first started-out having our weekly meetings, they kind of went off on tangents everywhere. After Marcos came in, helped us align it, and now we get through our meetings within an hour pretty easily. Actually, we can probably be a lot quicker, but we still go off on tangents, here or there. But we

have each section: each coach is supposed to report what they have done, or go through the action log. We talk about what needs to be done for the next week, the next month, or whatever it is. So this is all part of our outcome here.

And now I am going to turn it back over to Sergio.

[Lopez returns] (Can you hear me?) Thank you, Jon.

I think the result of this two months of working with my brother: we became like a small business and really align. And most important: when I got to Bolles I had 11 coaches; at one point we were 19 coaches—I think when my brother started that we grew up to 19 coaches. And we had 7 full-time coaches, and all the full-time coaches had to be at the meeting and the part-time coaches were invited. Many times they [the part-time coaches] could not come, because of work or school or whatever. But I think what I saw is like: we became a unity. You know, we really started understanding how everybody else was thinking and I think we felt comfortable with one another.

I think, like Coach Jon said, Tuesday's coach's meetings became more effective; we can go through things a lot better and we have more accountability for things to get done. As it is, we are coaches, so we still have to learn a lot about being accountable with outside things that are not really designing a practice or teaching a kid how to do things. But I think we are at a very high level.

Ahh, we traded... when my brother left for Africa and I started, the coaches were so excited about it. I thought about trading the coach's workshops. I talked with Coach Dale, Coach Jon and asked them about what do they think about doing that, and they thought it would be a great idea. So the way it works for us: on Tuesdays, we have an administrative meeting that last an hour, and on Thursdays we have created a coach's workshop.

And what the coach's workshop is: Coach Jon assigns one Thursday to each one of the coaches—so we keep rotating. And each coach needs to think about something. You can think about: the way you design the practice or you could, you know... I will show you all the talks that we have done. And what you need to do is prepare yourself and give a presentation in front of the other coaches. So we set it up in our office or in our dryland room—now we have a nice office, but a couple of years ago we had a dryland room, so we set up over there. And, you know, the coach had to present whatever it was. And you had the freedom to choose. So it was not, oh, we've got to talk about this; no, no. So we went from bullying to high-level training, to how to be a successful coach, to anything.

Different reasons that I thought these workshops were to be good is because these young coaches have to learn how to, you know, portray, communicate and project. They started doing an awesome job, and they felt good. They saw us taking notes and asking questions, and I think that empowered them to feel good about their jobs. And then if they are underpaid, keep working hard. So that is the most important thing.

That has taught us to learn how to share things, how to share thoughts, to create and accept constructive criticism. You know, I think if Coach Jason comes up to me and tells me, "Hey, Sergio, during this, do you think you could do that in a different way?" Yeah, it pisses me off. Not pisses me off, but internally it kind of... hoah, you know, like, I'm doing something wrong? But I do not take it personal; I think about it: you know what, he is right. And you learn how to take that criticism in a good way, because we are all looking at the same goal. Well, what is our goal? We want to be the best. Being the best is a relative word, but we want to be the best, you know. And with the talent that we have, we can be the best. But, hey, if he thinks did not, then I realize....

Like with the coaches meetings, at one point what I learned how to do was like, if I had an issue that I have to solve, I would go the coaches meetings: Okay, we have to... we have to fix those 60 chairs. I would like you to think how we're going to fix those sixty chairs, and next Tuesday when we meet, let's talk about it. I already knew how to fix those sixty chairs, most of the time; or I knew how I was going to fix them. But if the coaches came in and they brought in an idea that was pretty much the same, everybody; I would do that idea instead of mine—like it is the bunch. And at the end of the day, those sixty chairs got fixed. So things like that, where you start making them feel appreciated, I am developing my talent.

You know, like, when Ryan Murphy came into my group, I did not coach him for the first year—he should have been in my group. There was a talented coach in that age-group range and I told the parents he is not going to be in my group. And what I did, it was great for me because I had four more years after that, he was with a very-talented coach, and I watched, I observed. I watched how the parents were, I watched how the kid reacted. And the coach grew a lot; he learned so much. Because, you know, we all learn from the talent we have, and when you have a gifted kid, you learn at a higher rate.

So, you know, for me, I was surprised that I did that, because, you know, you always want to coach the best swimmers. But I think that empowered them to feel good about it; the same thing with Coach Jon and the same thing with other coaches. So that is very important and I think that has changed the dynamic of our team and has made our coaching staff have an appreciation for what we have.

The results of the program. We developed the 2012-2016 quad goals, and there are four departments in that sense. The club performances, like he said. We want to win Junior Nationals in the next four years, two times. We want to have 20 kids at Olympic Trials. We want... whatever it was that we thought, with everybody's thought, we could accomplish, that is what we could. Group plans for each one of the groups. Proper structure: how we could improve it, how we could improve our business model. And the facility improvement: just thoughts of how we can either, not fundraise, but give ideas to the school or talk to the parents on what we think are needs to start putting the seed on the administration. So I was very happy that we were able to do that.

I think that is a guide that everybody should have. Because when I was by myself as a coach, at West Virginia, I was running two teams with my assistant. And sure, he was one of my best friends, and I could sit with him and we could chat and we knew. But when you have 10 coaches, 6 coaches, 14 coaches—or like SwimMAC has, what, 50 coaches—either you have some sort of organization and some sort of like goal structure or you will not be successful.

After we developed those goals [and] we started the coach's workshops, we sat down and we developed... we started talking about how we could develop a manual of what we think is the perfect stroke for our kids. From 6 years-old to the time that they are 18. Because our job as Age Group coaches is to prepare the best package possible for somebody else to develop it at a high level; and we need to accept that.

So we thought it was going to be a short thing, but it took us one year of every Thursday meeting and talking, because, you know, I think this one and that one and I think this movement, this behavior. And we ended up with a 16-page manual that we have with our thoughts of how to teach and develop strokes and behaviors. We are in the earlier stages of utilizing all these, but it is something that brought us together. And really, I learned a lot, I learned a lot about things that I took for granted with the stroke that I do not see any more, and hopefully each coach learned a lot.

Like I said, after that we created an internal coach's continuing-education with the coach's workshops. Here [on slide] I put some of the topics that we have. I think this is the best tool: if you cannot really organize yourself as a business and do all that, you know, get together and have a workshop like that with your coaches and just brainstorm. Because... you know, I always tell the coaches that I have that if you have been swimming for 15 years, that does not mean that you are going to be a good coach. But if you have been swimming for 15 years, you have three coaches, four coaches, you are really passionate about this sport; right there, you are walking encyclopedia of knowledge. Now what happens, that knowledge is hidden somewhere. So it is how you treat different things, to stimulate your brain to let them out.

I think... I am very thankful that I am here to try to explain all this to you. But when I started, I went to the ASCA [World] Clinic in 1997 for the first time, and then I did not go for many years. Why? Because I thought, you know... — and I believe in this—I told the coaches, I said, You know, I have knowledge. I don't understand it, but I'm going to set my philosophy and I'm going to set a plan, and I'm going to go. And I'm going to push it, and I'm going to see if I

fail. And I am going to see if my plan is this, I know that if I analyze it four years later, it is totally different but I still think it is the same. If that makes sense.

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If I start getting all this information, and nowadays it is so complicated because Instagram/no Instagram, YouTube/no YouTube. I love Instagram—do not get me wrong—it is a good way to be connected with my kids. And nowadays you better catch the train or you are going to be out of it. Be careful with it. But there is so much information that at one point: what do you do? You know.

Like, if you do not believe that your thought process two months ago was good, get the hell out of this business. How can you stand on the pool deck and tell your swimmers okay, we're going to do 8×50 on 1:00, 200-pace+1. the first two dah-dah-dah... when you do not believe it? And the hard part—like I said before—is being alone and having to think. Having to think and having to reach deep inside. It is, you know... I am going to stay the course, and I am going to see where we go. And if where you go is to the bottom, you are going to stand up and you are going to go the bottom with pride. And then you learn.

If I learn something from another coach, I do not try to implement it right way. You know, I leave it right there. And if I am a thinker and I try to evolve, randomly that thought is going to melt into what I do. But if I try to push it and it is not the way I think, it probably will not work.

So I think these coach's workshops, they are a great tool. And like you can see here, Coach Jon, being an assistant coach, this was awesome. Because, you know, he talked about being loyal and doing what Sergio says....

[Sakovich]: Folks you are not going to see it. There is nothing here because he did not want to put....

[Lopez]: Oh! I forgot. I forgot: I did not put the head assistant coach, I did not give him a title. But I put you first. [laughter] [Ok, I'll take it; we're good.] I put myself last. But that is because when we are in Spain, if you did not put yourself last, you get smacked in the head.

But, you know, like you can see, being an assistant coach that I think it is very hard to understand what it is to be an assistant coach and be loyal. And be able to, even if you do not agree with the head coach, ham-up, where the kids do not feel anything and you do what you need to do for them to swim fast. And then you deal with your issues with the head coach or with whatever it is, in the office at a different time. And hopefully you can compromise, get to a happy place.

Like this one, Skype with Michigan. This started with Coach Jason; [it] was one day that he had to give a talk. So he contacted Russell Mark at USA Swimming. And this was the first Skype session that we did. And I will show you a video, if we have time—hopefully we have time. What time is it? [Two o'clock. We have got time.]

He called Russell Mark, and he said, "Would you be interested in having a session with us through Skype, with the coaching staff." And he said: sure—he did not know what he was getting into. So Coach Jason sent him like a battery of questions about butterfly. And I think he said that he only had 45 minutes in that day, but we ended up talking for an hour and fifteen minutes or an hour. And what happened is: we went from the butterfly to the breaststroke, because there are a lot of similarities with what you do with your hands. And at one point, before we were done with the session, Russell is like: wow, this was a very stimulating session, I didn't expect this. He was challenged, because we had 7 people/8 people with big egos trying to prove: this moves this way, this moves that way, you know.

So then we thought: Wow. Why we don't we do this more often? So that was why, the one before, later on when one of the times when Coach Jon—our head assistant coach—had to do the talk, he contacted Michigan. And we had a Skype session that was an hour and 20 minutes/15 minutes with Michigan. But, you know, you see, some of the talks are very interesting. Like Coach Dale had a Skype session with University of Nevada; that is Abby Steketee, used to work with me. I think she is one of the best, upcoming, young, woman coaches in America. She coaches at a small school, but she is unbelievably intelligent and organized. So we had a session that was very interesting for my coaches.

But... Coach Jason – learn how to develop talent. Journey to the Olympic Trials – Michael Walker. We had a

roundtable too with Auburn; that was breaststroke pullout—he analyzed which pullout would be the best. Sports Psychology. So we have developed some very good talks, and we did not have to pay anything—our budget is good.

But here, this is a Skype session that we did, so you can see. I will keep talking or I can answer questions; after that, we should be done.

[Skype video begins] Um, this is pretty much our whole full-time coaching staff here. I will go ahead and introduce them: that's Mike Walker, here; Stephen Brooks, our camp director; Sergio. We've got Dale Porter, Head Age Group Coach; Jason Calanog, our Late Night Coach; and, Josh, we've never met, but I'm Jon Sakovich. (Nice to meet you.) Nice to meet you both. Rick, I already know you, but....

[Lopez]: This is just like six minutes long. Like, we were seven coaches or six coaches, right out here. Mike Bottom was recruiting, but he joined us through the phone, so that was very interesting. This talk is only two or three minutes, just to show you how we did it; but it lasted an hour and 15 or 20 minutes. So it is very....

:Is there any preference on the order you guys would like to go in? Or just top-to-bottom?

(Josh?) Did you lose us? (Let me pull that out... we'll go... let's go top-to-bottom....)

[Lopez]: I think, like you can see, this is a very relaxed way to learn and to open up.

And before I forget, if anybody is interested in doing something like this with us, please let me know. We will be more than happy to do.

: ...and last week we talked to Auburn, a little bit about their, you know, sprint, not-so-sprint, and kind of easier freestyle. So we kind of wanted to hear your guys' take on it. And then we'd also like to see if you guys have any differences, technical differences, that you do between the 50s and 100s of, you know, fly, back and breast, as far as, you know, change this, change that to try to go a little bit faster or whatever.

(You want to take this one or do you want me to take this? I'll start and you can jump-in. When we talk about the Three-style Freestyle, when we look at what Mike has come up with. He's done a little research over the years coming up with a concept of looking at how the freestyle has several different parts to it....)

[Lopez]: All these coaches have been very graceful; they really share a lot of stuff with us and we shared a lot of stuff with them.

As it finishes up, does anybody have any questions?

I just wanted to show you so you can see. I think it creates... (ahh, which one I'm talking to?). It creates a camaraderie and it creates... it makes you feel good to be a coach when you can do all these things. Share thoughts and see that other people really respect what you do and they're curious about what we do, you know. I welcome anyone of you that wants to have a session like that with us, just to let me know and hopefully we can make it happen.

Um, but, does anybody have any questions?

[audience member]: You said one of the things you look for in an assistant coach is loyalty. I mean, it is no secret that in some clubs they cannot afford a full-time assistant; I am living that life right now—you know, post-grad, student loans. What do you define as a head coach to be loyal? Are you looking for long-term in the assistant coach or are you just looking for someone who is going to be there with you, day-in and day-out?

[Lopez]: No. I think, with loyalty, even if they are with me for six months, what I look for is somebody who respects me—and I know that you have to earn the respect—but who is willing to, if there is an issue, come up to me and let's talk about it and deal with it. And even if six months later they are someone else, that is fine.

I think a lot of us, we start coaching... even though I was a head coach, I do not want to tell you my salary when I took the job. And then I had volunteer assistants. One of my volunteer assistants became a very successful college coach, and he was working 10 hours a day for 150 bucks, you know. And that guy was really loyal, and you feel bad about asking him anything but he would do it. And, you know, if there was an issue, he would tell you. So, you know, there is that type of loyalty, you know; I think that is very important.

Yes?

[audience member]: You talked about the biggest problem with an assistant coach would be trying to undermine the head coach, and then you said you have to handle it. How do you handle it?

[Lopez]: Well, I am the type of person, and maybe it is because... I think one of my talents. You know, when I was a kid I was not a very good swimming, and I became good. And I spent a lot of time watching people in the subway; you know, alone. It is something that if I look back on my life, I think, taught me how to observe how people move. And I used to watch people stealing, like their wallets; you know, the gypsies—you know, it is what it is. And you are 9 years-old/10 years-old, live in a city like New York, and you have to go to school on your own because your mom is working. So I was very lucky to watch.

You can ask my coaches, you know. Even with a swimmer, we have new swimmer, oh, this kid in a year-and-a-half might go 53 in 100 breast. And in a year-and-a-half, if he works hard, yeah, he is 53. Because I can feel certain things. Makes sense? So with a person, I can feel it; I can feel when that person....

And you see it with your... if you have kids or with your companion. When my wife comes to me and talks in a different way, you know; or she puts her hands somewhere, like that. So if my assistant now does not look at me in the eyes, or does not... usually used to come to say certain things and now he is avoiding. You know, you can see certain behaviors. So you have to address those; you have to really address those. And I think it's important.

Like I said, it hurts my ego when one of them tells me something. And nowadays, the person that really is my support is my wife. So I go home, [fire breathe]. And my wife is like, Oh, don't worry, blah, blah, blah, you know. Maybe we should try this. "Oh, you don't know anything," dah, dah, dah. And then, you know, I try that and my life is better.

Yes?

[audience member]: Yeah. Do you do evaluations of staff? And how do you do them? Formal? Rigid?

[Lopez]: Yeah, we did; though the school, because the club team is owned by the school. So a Human Resources person. I did for the first five years or six years, and then we had... this is our fourth headmaster that is coming in. And I don't know, they are going through things, so I have not done them for the last few years. I think right now, I was thinking about start doing them again. But I feel that, for the last couple of years, the seven full-time coaches that I have, we spend so much time together and we are really talking about things that we need to improve in this and issues, that, you know, I did not need to do it.

Also, a lot of evaluations, either I fire somebody or... you know, one of them I go and say, Listen, if you continue doing this, I am going to have to let go. You're a very talented coach, but you need to learn this, this, this. If I let him go, I let him go, because he does not do that, that I told him 150 times.

But the evaluations, more or less, are to raise their salaries and this and that. And you know how the economy is. So sometimes we cannot raise anybody's salary, so the school is not asking us for anything. It has not been because I do not want to. And also the last couple of years, I have been traveling a lot at the end of the season, so I did not do my own evaluations. But it is a good thing—it is a good thing.

Any other questions?

[audience member]: Just a little comment. I think that you guys have done the uncomfortable, hard work, and done the staff meetings. And at first it just seems like process, process, process. But you are an example of a group that

was willing to get in there, roll your sleeves up, go through the process—just grind it out—and then you come out the other side and you can all look at each other in the eye and be really unified.

[Lopez]: Thanks. I feel that way. I feel... now I feel—I am sorry that I forgot about this title [laughter]—but I feel that I can leave. Like this summer, I was pretty much gone for seven weeks, at different meets with the kids and all this, with different kids. I did not feel like I felt my first two years or three years, because I know everything is taken care of, and it is moving in a good direction, you know. It makes my job now a very comfortable job. And honestly, as a head coach, if you are a head coach, that is what you want, you know: you want a comfortable job. The assistants can be uncomfortable, like we were uncomfortable after a while. And then they will become head coaches, and they can do that: create that type of culture.

[audience member]: Sergio? (Yes?) Does or has your brother gone out to other teams to evaluate them?

[Lopez]: Uhh... he has done work with one or two university teams. He has done work individually with swimmers from different levels.

What happens is that, also, with traveling outside of the country for his job. Because mainly he either works in Columbia or in South America. Or he is going to Mexico too; he was in Africa. He was in Peru for a year-and-a-half. It is very hard. He started this program because he wanted to stay in Jacksonville, or around there, and at one point do this. But, you know, a lot of the coaches when we send them this stuff, they were very skeptical. So, you know, you need to eat. And, honestly, he is not going to get paid what he gets paid doing what he does now; or what he was doing with the Swimming side—he won't.

Yes?

[audience member]: With your FAST program that you were showing, does that only pertain to your Senior group or is it something that all of your coaches are using as like your format for structure?

[Lopez]: Well what we did is we chose 15 kids and those kids follow-up. And many of them stay in touch with my brother. But because of the traveling and all that, we stopped. Like, we do things, but we have not implemented that program more and more and more with a group of kids. Because, honestly, even though my job is comfortable now, and I feel good about it, there is not that much time for me or for one of our coaches to really implement that and follow-up. So what we have done is adapt what we can, the best we can, within our coaching philosophy and the way we need to do things.

Yes?

[audience member]: Do you actually get into a situation where you can take them off the program if they do not live up to expectations?

[Lopez]: I am a believer that if a kid is willing to come and, you know... our job at this level is to give a second chance to people, or third chance at times. Because you never know the family situation that they have, you never know. So, I think in seven years we have got two kids of this profile, yeah? And one of them, I am sorry to say that, ended up in jail not long ago. But we worked so hard with parents and them to give them a chance. We do not kick people off.

We have even this thing where we have a couple of Chinese kids that have joined our program, because when they applied for the school, they put that they were swimmers. And they come in, and they are coming with big surfing pants. They can barely go to 25. But they are still swimming. One of them, Charles, you know, this is his second year; he does everything that we ask him. We put him in the outer lane that is wide enough, and the kid is so happy. And the day that you gave him the shirt and you told him, hey, you're part of the team, he was... he could not believe it. He was like ooh!

So we do not kick people off the team. I would love to kick parents off the team. [laughter] (That's a good one.) But they pay the bills.

Any other question? Well thank you very much for having us. [applause] ##### asca #####



TEACHING WISDOM

from International Swimming Hall of Fame
and ASCA Hall of Fame
Coach Richard Jochums

Teaching Wisdom

From International Swimming Hall of Fame and ASCA Hall of Fame Coach Richard Jochums:

Sometime you have heard me say that men and women teach differently and I believe women in teaching movement while men teach skill, are far ahead of men in this view.

Like almost everything we do in life, learning is done by the individual doing the activity and not the one who is running the workout. Until the doer understands what is going on the workout can't and won't be successful;. Of all the things I have said during my presentations this seems to be the one no one has heard or understood. You get to that point by having the swimmer tell you what he is doing and that includes stroke. It takes time to ask your swimmer questions and listen to their answers, over and over again, until what they are doing is what they say is happening. We as coaches keep thinking that by doing something over and over again will get us to where we want to be. But until; the person who is doing what we are demanding of them the correct way and knows the difference between right and wrong nothing changes.

This is a truth of just not stroke correction but of actual workout performances. When it becomes their stroke, their workout, their program that the believe in and not just the coaches, then you can see something very special begin to happen each and everyday. You as a coach are no longer the leader but you become a partner in your swimmers life. It doesn't get better than that.

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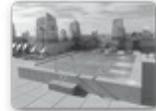
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