



Off The Blocks



6 Things to Think About Next Time You Stumble with Your Swimming... By Olivier Poirier-Leroy

Go Long!

Now that March Madness is behind us and the LC training season has just begun, take some time to reflect on how this past Short Course season went. What worked and what didn't? What can you do better? Take a few minutes to re-evaluate and re-set your goals and maybe recommit to the sport you love.

Bill Marlin
PVS General Chair

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Our swimming doesn't always go, well, swimmingly. We lose that precious feel for the water.

That nagging ache in our shoulder or knee turns into something far more serious. We get frustrated at a lack of progression.

There will be times when we fall short. Sometimes rather spectacularly. This I can assure you. No matter what silver linings may eventually appear over the horizon, during that moment it is difficult to see beyond our bubble of pain. Here are 6 things to consider the next time you find yourself coming across rough seas with your swimming—

1. Friction is a part of growth.

Challenges are the doorways to excellence. Success isn't seamless or simple; it's a jagged climb up the mountain. It's easy to look at the elite swimmers of the world and imagine that their path to the

top of the podium was clean and easy. In reality, it is littered with false starts (not just the kind that get you DQ'd), wrong turns, and roadblocks. Those that hit the pinnacle of the sport understand that the ultimate triumph is only necessary because they kept a smile on their face and worked through the bumps and bruises along the way.

2. Complaining won't help you get there any faster.

Sure, complaining might make you feel faintly better during the moment, but in the end it brings you no closer to achieving your swim goals. When you complain and search for blame in the afterglow of a defeat or failure you miss out on the lessons that it provides. And while indulging in *ye olde* blame game may give you a faint sense of self-control, in reality it stunts you

from making the necessary changes to come back stronger, better and faster.

3. Failure is a temporary condition.

Simply because you have come up short on one occasion, it does not mean that you will continue to fail, or that you are now burdened to fail with every subsequent effort. A common example is a swimmer who has an awful swim on the first day at a competition. Yes, it stings that the race didn't go as planned. Does this mean that the rest of the meet is a lost cause? Absolutely not. The pain of your setbacks won't last forever, so trust yourself to be okay when they do happen and be willing to move on from them.

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Don't bunt. Aim out of the ballpark!

David Ogilvy

Successfully Tweaking and Resetting Milestones

Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another.

John Dewey

It has been said that the only thing constant in life is change. This is also true when it comes to your goals. If you set your achievement plan once and expect it to remain constant until you meet your goal, you're likely to be in for a struggle. When it comes to consistently getting things done, goal adjustment and regularly resetting your milestones is absolutely critical.

Down, But Not Out

When you've laid out your achievement plan, missing a milestone can be extremely demoralizing. Your presentation flopped. Your sales numbers have gone down even though you are working to move them up. It's frustrating and can make you question your whole purposes.

The key in these situations is to remember that the set backs are temporary. Resetting your goals will help you get back on track and go on to big things. Giving up, on the other hand, means you're through. Remember, Jack Welch blew up a factory he managed, and Babe Ruth also held the league record for strike outs as well as home runs. Both repeatedly stated that resilience and flexibility with their goals was a key component of recovering and moving forward.

Who Knew?

At other times, it isn't a set back that requires you to tweak and reset your milestones. As you work toward your objectives, new information is bound to turn up. You didn't have it when you set your goal, but as a result of the new data, things need to shift.

Rather than throwing out your whole plan, think about how you could incorporate your new knowledge into your plan. Don't sit around griping about surprises, or fall into a self-blaming pattern for not uncovering key facts up front. Learning as you go is a part of the process.

Five Steps To Building a Second Path to Success

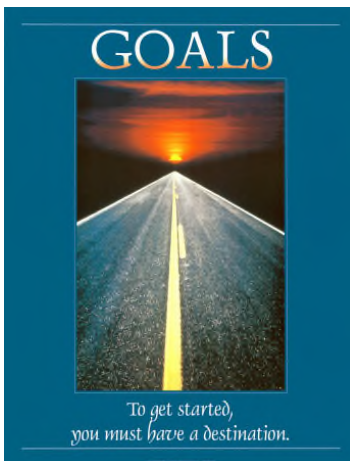
Successfully tweaking and resetting your objectives helps you build a second path to success. It doesn't have to be a derailing process. In fact, you may find that flexible goal adjustment helps you feel more in control of the situation and better able to achieve overall. Here's how it's done:

1. Accept that changes and set backs happen. The first step in moving forward is moving on. Don't waste your mental energy on what-ifs.

2. Bring out your original goals, and make a list of the new facts or realities on the ground that impact your goals. Evaluate what new steps might be needed to achieve your original objectives and be sure you understand how the mark has moved.
3. Build a new timeline and action plan, using the new reality as your starting point. Incorporate times for progress checks and flexible goal adjustment into your plan.
4. Begin work on your new plan. At each progress point and milestone, perform any ongoing goal adjustment that is necessary.

Complete your new objectives. Celebrate your success, and then start resetting goals for your next major achievement.

Though it is not a complex process, remember that many people give up at the first sign of difficulty. They can't adapt. You can. By being flexible, resilient, and adaptable, you can rework your goals in the face of set backs or new data so that you can continue to achieve your objectives.



A Goal is a dream with a deadline

Napoleon Hill

My Coach Doesn't Like Me

By David Benzil

Our heartstrings and our pride react when we hear our child come home from practice and share their hurt feelings in the form of "I don't think my coach likes me." We feel badly for them and at the same time we wonder incredulously, "Why wouldn't a coach like my kid?" I was recently asked during one of our webinars about the best way to react to this situation. If you've been faced with this scenario you've probably thought to yourself, "Why is a coach sending the signal to any child that they are not liked as much as others, or that some are more endearing/special than others?" There are two perspectives with which to examine this very common sport and social phenomenon — the coaches' perspective and your child's perspective. In the first we have little control, but in the second we have a great opportunity.

Since coaches are human, they will find themselves attracted to some kids more than others for a variety of reasons that may have nothing to do with your child's qualities — whether it's personality, communication style, athletic talent, or because they like the parents. The best coaches — true *master* coaches

— don't let any of these factors affect how they treat each child. All young athletes are full of potential and therefore valuable. Each child is worth a coach's attention — regardless of talent. However a child who chooses **not** to invest energy and effort on a consistent basis will undoubtedly receive less attention than the child who is Gung Ho during practices. An emotionally mature coach will "like" all children equally but return energy invested with energy reinvested when he sees an eager student. It will be helpful to your child when you explain the difference between being liked and being rewarded for one's effort. This allows your child to choose a response that fits personal motivation levels.

In a larger sense, there's a great opportunity for a teaching moment with your child when he or she comes home and says any of the following: "My coach... My teacher... My friend... doesn't like me." This may sound strange, but the best response is probably, "Do YOU like you?" In that four-word question lays the answer to a child functioning well in the world and being free to become what she is meant to be. When

the answer is "YES!" a child is free of the opinions of others and can choose how to act, what to say, and who to become. When the answer is "No" a child is forever tormented with the chore of trying to get others to like him so he can feel good about himself. This becomes the root of manipulative behavior in the hopes of receiving acceptance

from the outside because it doesn't exist within. Imagine the possibilities when our children love themselves.

On a purely sport level the best athletes, who are also the best people, are the ones who are secure with themselves. They like themselves, and so they are free to perform well. To give our children this gift is worth more than the best equipment, the best facility, the best team, or the best scholarship.



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The most important thing about goals is having one.

Geoffrey F Abert

**PVS House of Delegates Meeting
will be on May 20th at 7:00 p.m. at
Overlee**

4 Steps to Effective Goal Setting Courtesy of BridgeAthletic

As the long course season begins, it is a great time to take a look at the big picture: what do you want to accomplish in the next year and what steps can you take to get there? Before we home in on how to set goals for the summer, let's discuss 4 steps to better goal setting in general that will make your dreams more tangible.

1. Communicate with your Coach

Speak with the person who is going to be designing your workouts, watching you train, and giving you feedback after your races. Schedule a meeting with your coach where you can discuss how to move forward with the next year of training. Make a rough outline for the year in terms of training cycles, dryland, meets, and end of season goals. The better communication you have with your coach, the eas-

ier it will be to trust in his or her training methods and the better relationship you both will have. Give feedback on the things you thought went well last season and areas where you think you can improve. Vocalize your long-term goals and discuss any new elements you may incorporate in your training.

2. Write Down your Goals

Once you have vocalized your goals, write them down. When they are in written form, goals cease to be an intangible idea in your mind and they take on a more realistic shape. Whether you like to have them written down where you see them every day, or simply put them on paper is up to you. This process helps you organize your thoughts and identify with what exactly you want to accomplish.

3. Be accountable- share with a teammate

The next step in effective goal setting is finding an accountability buddy. Share your goals with a teammate—maybe someone in your training group or someone you connect with—and listen to their goals in return. This will help you keep each other accountable when training gets hard in addition to understanding one another better. Your teammates push you to be better in workouts; respect their goals and remember that they will be an integral part of your success.

4. Make Big Plans

Swimmers are some of the toughest athletes out there—Dream big and set the bar high.

Going Back to the Drawing Board Courtesy of BridgeAthletic

When the championship meet is over—whether it's the Olympics, NCAA's, junior nationals, high school championships, or anything in between—swimmers need the opportunity to reset mentally, physically, and emotionally. With the short course and collegiate seasons behind you, April becomes the month to set a baseline for the long course season. This week it's all about finding ways to recharge, and how to move forward with big picture goals.

Staying Fresh

Many swimmers get a few days to one week off after their end-of-season meet. While this break is usually longer following the summer, the break now can be just as restorative to your overall well-being. Take this as an opportunity to step away from the pool. After a long period of intense focus on swimming, getting some physical space will help you gain perspective and balance in your life. Staying

out of the pool for a few days will also help your body recover from lingering injuries that built up from repetitive motion over the season.

Be Good to your Body

A week off does not have to mean a week without physical activity. On the flipside, it does **not** mean swimmers should jump into full-time running or heavy land-based exercise. If you desire to work out, try activities that are fun and invigorating such as hiking with friends, surfing, biking outdoors, or if you truly wish, swimming in a lake or the ocean. Be smart about what activities you attempt by not putting yourself at risk of injury (skiing and skydiving will still be around when you fully retire). Most importantly, give your body the rest it needs to repair itself! One of the best ways to prepare for the next season is to be healthy heading into it.

Do Something Fun

Elite athletes understand that a short break can ultimately benefit one's training and performance. Not only should you get some space from swimming, but you should also do something fun! With such little time off throughout the year, you should enjoy the ability to sleep in longer, hang out with friends, and do the things that make you happy. A happy swimmer is a fast swimmer—your hard work and dedication to the sport are only as good as your enjoyment of it. Breaks are a natural part of all sports for this reason. Take this time to recognize that swimming is *one part* of your life. Recover mentally, physically, and emotionally from last season and get re-energized to train hard for the next one. With a good week's rest, you'll be able to hit the ground running when you return.