

Goals

Swim Florida, Cape Coral

March 2004

Swimming without goals is like taking a trip in the car to nowhere in particular. How would you like to have your folks tell you to get in the car, and when you ask where you were going, they said they didn't know. What would you take with you? How long will you be driving? Should you pack something to eat or drink?

Well, swimming without goals is much the same. When you don't have meaningful goals, you don't have a purpose. It really doesn't matter if you miss a practice, skip a lap, or take extended trips to the bathroom. You also need not concern yourself with the effort you put into each set.

Some swimmers steer clear of setting goals because they feel they can avoid 'failing'. Hey, if you don't plan on making a particular cut, or make finals at an upcoming meet, you don't have to answer to anyone, not even yourself. "I really don't care if I make a J.O. cut." Sound familiar, something **you** might think or say? How about, "I don't have a chance to make a J.O. cut. That's something only the good swimmers can do." And, "I just aged up, I have a year before I can make a cut." Or, "Sure, she makes cuts, it's easy for her." Well, it's this kind of thinking, negative thinking, that separates swimmers at the different levels. It's easy to accept ones 'place', and another thing to do something about it.

Let me give you some thoughts I found in a book written by Dr. Keith Bell. I've been a fan of Dr. Bell for many years, and have read several books and articles written by him. These ideas are taken from his book, "What It Takes, The ABCs of Excelling", Keel Publications.

Goals. ...A goal is an excuse for the game. Goals form the games, providing opportunity for involvement. They bring meaning and excitement to each and all of your endeavors, to the game of life.

Goals provide structure for the games you play. They direct your activities, guiding you

toward your destination efficiently and expediently.

Goals provide incentive. They fuel your journey.

Goals absorb you in the game. They capture and hold your attention, enhance your concentration and generate total involvement.

Goal Setting. Set a goal to go where no one ever before has gone. Then set goals for each step of the way there.

Set goals for each week, each day, and each activity. Approach everything you do in a goal-oriented manner,

knowing what you want to accomplish and having specified the activities and level of performance that will yield the desired result.

Dr. Bell also describes, what he calls **building blocks**.

The most important goals you can set are the goals you set for today.

opportunity you have to act. Ask yourself what you can do today to foster your success. Set goals to take

the identified action. Then go for your goals. Daily actions toward goal-attainment are the building blocks of success.

There is another element that goes into all of this.

Yardsticks. Make sure your goals are measurable. That way, you can periodically evaluate your progress. You want to **know** how you are doing, not guess.

A good goal is time-limited. It has a definite end point; a specified time by which your goal is to be met.

Goals should be irrefutable. If it makes sense to attach a number to it you will be able to measure goal-attainment. If attaching a number to it doesn't make sense, you probably will not be able to tell whether or not you reached your goal.

Coach Ed

When you don't have meaningful goals, you don't have a purpose.

The most important goals you can set are the goals you set for today.