

HEADSTRONG!

Winter - 2009

THE MENTAL *EDGE* ~ GAIL ROYCE ~ 10045 Morningside Dr. ~ Morrison, CO, 80465 ~ 303-697-6389 ~ mental_coach1@msn.com

Happy 2009! Hope you enjoyed a relaxing and fun holiday season with friends and family. I did, but must say I'm always glad to be back to my regular routine and workout schedule.

New Year's is usually associated with setting goals and making resolutions. But if you're like me, my "new year" is the start of the school year. So I do my goal setting around the first of September. I map out my competition goals and training plans for the next 12 months. But as things sometimes change, I like to do a mid-season check in around the first of March to review and tweak as needed. So that's on my to-do list in the next couple of weeks. This year I want to focus more on duathlons (run-cycle-run) so I can do more cycling. Right now my ultimate goal is a Fall duathlon- a 3.1 mile run/56 mile bike/13.1 mile run. But as I'm STILL dealing with a fairly major injury, I'll need to determine if I can get healthy enough to put in the necessary training time and intensity for a race of that length. Am thinking positive!

So as you're setting, reviewing, or adjusting your goals, here's a few reminders. Are your goals written down? Do you include the action steps you need to do on a daily, weekly, or occasional basis? Do you have a set time to review where you are in your goal plan and to determine what's working well or what needs to be adjusted? Do you evaluate your goal results at the end of the season? Do you "treat" yourself in some way when you achieve a major goal?

Truly rewarding goals are never easy to achieve. Be determined and relentless in the pursuit of yours!



Failure



Failure is not an option. To risk success, an athlete must also risk failure. Failing sucks. Failure breeds success.

So what's an athlete to believe? How can you expect success on one hand, but be told to accept failure on the other? Is failure a good thing or a bad thing? The best I have to offer is that failure just "*is*." It's not good or bad, right or wrong; it's just a side effect of being human and a competitive athlete. What is important and what separates the champions from the also-rans is how failure is viewed and dealt with. It's what you **DECIDE** to take from your mistakes and failures that lead you toward success or defeat. You can choose to view a failure as a personal defect and suffer through your own personal pity party (while your competitors are training away!) Or you can experience the pain of the loss/mistake/failure for an appropriate period of time; then get to work and figure out what you need to do differently to come back a stronger and more successful athlete.

Is it fun to fail? To feel angry, embarrassed, or humiliated about your performance? Absolutely not. But when you play or compete with a fear of failing, you're playing from a position of weakness. You're performing NOT to make a mistake. You execute with caution, indecision and uncertainty which usually creates the very failure that you fear. Hate to fail, but don't fear it.

Is it OK to feel frustrated, upset and disappointed with a poor competition? Absolutely. You've trained hard and not performed as expected. You need to be critical and tough on yourself if you expect to excel. But it's important to see a failure as a temporary event, a learning experience, a necessary part of the athletic experience. It's crucial not to take it personally and view yourself as a failure. Instead, see the individual practice/game/tournament/competition as what went wrong and needs to be worked on.

Ask yourself some good questions. Did you "fail" because you didn't prepare properly, because your thinking was in the wrong place, because you didn't manage the nerves/fear/pressure, because you didn't "put it all out there," because you took some risks and tried something new? Be honest; take full responsibility for your performance; learn from it and move on. Do not continue to re-visit or dwell on the issue. Brooding over and thinking about it only makes it worse and serves absolutely NO good purpose.

It's important to remember that if you really challenge yourself and are attempting things that will take you to the next level, there's no way you're going to succeed every time. If you're pushing yourself to the limits and stretching your capabilities then you will experience failure. Mistakes, falls, setbacks and losses are all a part of the athletic process. If you're not experiencing any of these then you're not growing and improving as an athlete.

Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team. What if he had chosen to be defeated by failure and never played again? What might you miss out on by not choosing to use a failure to your advantage?

Your failures do not define who you are as a person; your attitudes and responses DO define your character.

~Gail's Rules for Athletic Success~

Rule # 7- Remain confident, consistent, committed & competitive- in all circumstances.

Over your career your sport will throw every challenge in the book at you. Highs/lows, good/bad, failure/success, happiness/disappointment, illness/injury. But if you work hard at maintaining these 4 C's, you'll be able to manage most situations in a more effective and successful way.

Confidence is a permanent state of being. You might have a difficult or frustrating day, but deep inside you must maintain the belief that tomorrow, or the next day, you'll do better. You have to believe that you have what it takes to get the job done; that you have the heart, talent, work ethic and effort to achieve your goals. Sometimes up, some days down, your confidence may waver a little. But a successful athlete always finds that needed piece of confidence.

Consistency of effort, mood, work ethic, attendance at practice, use of your mental skills, eating habits- the list is long. But the more diligent you are at establishing consistent attitudes, routines and habits the more consistency you'll end up with in your competitions and performances.

Commitment- You must remain committed to your sport, your teammates, making improvements, hard work, and most importantly your goals. In some case you may need to fully commit to a pitch, a jump, a serve, a shot, a skill or a strategy. A question I like to ask is, "Are to hoping it will happen, or fully committed to making it happen?"

Competitive- Whether winning or losing, you maintain your competitive spirit, best effort, and strongest attitude through to the end. When playing against a lesser athlete or team, your execution shouldn't weaken or your thinking become lazy. When competing against a formidable opponent, you give them your best game and totally challenge theirs. Be competitive in practice- maybe against yourself or against a teammate. Just remember to keep your competitiveness in a positive and healthy place.



Brenna & Meagan- State HS Basketball Tournament- Go all the way!!
Karlee - Skate testing, choir tryout, Denver Invite
Elliot- High school baseball season
Jenni, Becky, Sara, Lauren, Olivia- Gymnastics Level 10/9/8 State-Regionals-Nationals
Ashley- High school soccer season
Jo- Pro Racquetball season, US Open
Drew- Recovery from surgery-get healthy!
Annabel, Charlie, Katie, Sofia, Sarah, Katey, Macy, Phoebe- Denver Invite and all upcoming competitions
Delaney- L7 season/state meet
Megan- USA Team Trials, US Open, Pan Ams!

Go to YouTube and type in "Michael Jordan failure commercial." Interesting!

Just for fun, attend (or try!) a sporting event you've never seen- you might learn something!

The Olympic Trials for curling are in Denver Feb. 21-28.

"The Winning Spirit" by Joe Montana is a great read- good motivation and reminders we all can use.



"The only real failure in life is the failure to try." Anonymous

"Success is 99% failure." Sochiro Honda

"Greatness comes from the lessons learned in failure."

"Success is never final; failure is never fatal."

"Those who try to do something and fail are infinitely better than those who try nothing and succeed." Lloyd Jones

"Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly." Robert F. Kennedy