

News For SWIM PARENTS

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The Positive Attitude

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Just as it is of utmost importance that coaches be continually positive and optimistic, so too must parents. It has been said that 95% of us are predominantly negative in our approach to life—so most of us have a problem!

These notes are equally applicable to parents, and if not understood and acted upon by the whole swimming family, swimmers will be greatly handicapped and not reach full potential. Being critical, no matter how much it may seem justified to the parents ("who have spent so much money and time") is clearly a negative approach with a strongly undermining effect. When constructive criticism is needed to form the foundations of a revised plan for improvement, parents should express their ideas to the coaches. The secure coach will be able to handle such help. Most coaching organizations welcome constructive criticism, presented in the right way at the appropriate time.

Parents should continually protect their children from the damaging input of negative thoughts. If they can make a habit of being positive, swimmers will be given the greatest opportunity to transcend existing performance levels. Clearly, the training must be as good as well, but in addition, an atmosphere of positive self-expectancy must be continually promoted by coaches and family. Even when progress seems to be slow and the going difficult, swimmers must have the right mental approach. While doing their best to carry out all aspects of preparation well, swimmers will learn to regard themselves as winners, and eventually succeed in reaching realistic goals. Even when being confronted with a less than successful event this experience can be taken as a positive if it is looked upon as a learning experience. It is all about how the experience is translated by coach, parents and the swimmer. The chances of this diminish greatly when parents, and or coaches because personal shortcomings (in having a pessimistic, negative nature) continually remind a child of the lack of improvement or failure. Swimmers should continually be programming their subconscious by positive self-talk and visual imagery of success. This task should be made easy by reinforcing positive vibrations around them.

It is important for the swimmers to know that they are loved no matter what their swimming performance. The negative fear of failure is much less likely to develop when parents emphasize their love and compassion no matter to level of performance..

When setbacks occur, the attitude of parents and coaches must express the idea..."Well, you did not do as well as you are capable of this time, but let's see what we can do to improve and see what happens next time." This creates a mindset of positive self-expectancy and optimism and programs the subconscious mind of what we should be striving for. The coach and swimmer should analyze and determine what can be improved on and what positive action taken. Parents should be the least critical and never suggest that what has happened is more than a temporary setback. If such principles are applied to all our thinking we might well improve our lives too. It is not only the swimming development of the child that parents can help by the right psychological approach. We can all benefit greatly.

The parent's eventual reward for their sacrifices of time and money will be when the swimmer ultimately reaches their potential as both a swimmer and a person. The biggest thing to remember is to provide your children the love and support they need to grow and flourish, and do this in a positive non critical way.