Concept of the Month
Santa Barbara Swim Club

Self-Confidence

YES YOU CAN!

The importance of "Self Confidence" in Achieving Your Swimming Goals
By Wayne Goldsmith

"Belief is the knowledge that we can do something. It's the inner feeling that what we undertake, we can accomplish. For the most part, all of us have the ability to look at something and know whether or not we can do it. So, in belief there is power: our eyes are opened; our opportunities become plain; our visions become realities." - unknown.
Have you said (or thought) any of the following in the past few months???

- "I can't do it"
- "They are much faster than me. I'll come last".
- "I'm hopeless"
- "I've never been able to do that, so I know I can't do it now"
- "It's just too hard. It's impossible".

You are not alone. Many swimmers have these thoughts and say these words from time to time. Most swimmers (and people generally) have times when they get a little negative and lack faith in their abilities.
When swimmer's say "I can't or "it's too hard" what are they really saying?
Swimmer says: "I can't do it."
Swimmer means: "I am not prepared to try because if I fail I will look like a loser and people might think less of me."
Swimmer says: "They are faster than me. I'll come last."
Swimmer means: "If I can't win there's no point trying."
Swimmer says: "I'm hopeless."
Swimmer means: "I have no faith in myself or my ability to succeed. I have no confidence."
Swimmer says: "I've never been able to do that, so I know I can't do it now."
Swimmer means: "I've never really prepared for this or learnt how to do it correctly so the chances of me doing it now are not very good" or "I tried once and failed, so I am not going to try again."
Swimmer says: "It's just too hard. It's impossible."
Swimmer means: "I'm not prepared to try."
Confidence is believing in yourself to do what has to be done. To do what needs to be done, with faith in your ability to achieve it. To meet new challenges with an expectation that anything is possible. To accept failure as an opportunity to learn from the experience and try again.
And try again. And try again if necessary.
Confidence is trying to achieve and if you fail knowing that it was the nature of the task or the circumstances or just plain bad luck not your lack of character that is to blame. Confidence is learning from that failure and trying again with more energy, more commitment and greater determination than before. What do some of Australia's most successful people say about **CONFIDENCE**??
"Confidence comes from accepting a challenge and achieving it using the best of your ability. Confidence builds through training to meet your challenge." - Phil Rogers (Commonwealth Games and Olympic Medalist).
"Confidence is about believing in yourself and your ability to do something - not necessarily believing in your ability to do it perfectly or better than other people, but believing that you have as good a chance as anyone to achieve something. Confidence is having the courage to get up and try and face whatever the outcome is - good, bad or something in between." - Chloe Flutter (Australian Representative Swimmer - now Rhodes scholar).
"In my experience, confidence is best achieved through controlled independence. If a young athlete is constantly challenged to be independent (within reasonable bounds), they will learn to rely on themselves and know how to thrive without the assistance of others in moments of greatest need. The ability to follow good decision making processes is a crucial part of this. For young athletes, teach them to take personal responsibility (control the controllable and develop a chameleon-like

ability to deal with the rest). Confidence is the ability to believe you can do something and the courage to do it - if others have made the hard decisions for you and you have never had to live with the results of your own actions, you can never be expected to know full confidence and the power of the self." - Marty Roberts (Dual Olympian, Commonwealth Games Gold medalist, University Graduate, father of two).

"Attitudes such as belief, optimism, high aspirations, and anticipation of the best possible result--- all these positive states of mind add up to confidence, the keystone for success. But of course it pays for all of these to be built on the firm rock of a sound preparation." - Forbes Carlile (Legendary Coach, successful business man, author, leading anti-drugs in sport campaigner).

Confidence it seems, is a skill – a skill that can be learnt. You learnt to swim. You learnt to tumble turn. You learnt how to do butterfly. You can learn to be confident.

Leading Melbourne based Sports Psychologist, Dr Mark Andersen agrees: "Many people believe that confidence is something that comes from the inside, but we probably develop confidence from the models we have around us, that confidence really comes from the outside. If we have coaches, parents, teachers and instructors that model confidence in our abilities and let us know that they think we can do good things, slowly their confidence in us becomes internalized".

This is called the Ladder of Achievement. It shows how your attitude towards a goal or task can impact on your ability to achieve it.

Ladder Of Achievement

100% **I DID**
90% **I WILL**
80% **I CAN**
70% **I THINK I CAN**
60% **I MIGHT**
50% **I THINK I MIGHT**
40% **WHAT IS IT?**
30% **I WISH I COULD**
20% **I DON'T KNOW HOW**
10% **I CAN'T**
0% **I WON'T**

The ladder of achievement suggests that an attitude of "I can't" has almost no chance of success whilst "I wont" is no chance at all. Change "I can't and "I wont" to I CAN – I WILL – I DID!!

A few tips to develop confidence:

Accept who you are and learn to like and respect yourself.

Nothing helps build confidence like learning the 3 P's:

- **P**ractice to the best of your ability.
- Develop a **P**ositive Attitude to trying new tasks.
- **P**ersevere, **P**ersevere, **P**ersevere.

Understand what motivates you to do well then you can harness your energy in the right directions. Failure is a race or a meet or a task – it is not a person. Failure is not the person: it's not you – it's the performance. Learn to separate who you are from what you do.

Learn to talk to yourself…..positively. When the negative thoughts come, learn to replace them with positive ones. I can't = I can, I won't = I will, I will try = I did. Remember the old saying, "If you think you can or think you can't you're probably right".

"The greatest achievement is not in never failing but in getting up every time you fall". Keep trying and it will happen.

What you believe, you can, with effort and persistence, achieve.

Dream a dream, believe in that dream, work towards achieving it and live the dream.

Anything worth having is worth working to achieve.

Talent is important, but there are many talented swimmers who don't make it to the top. TOUGH, TENACIOUS TRAINING makes up for most talent limitations.

Successful people are not afraid to fail. They have the ability to accept their failures and continue on, knowing that failure is a natural consequence of trying.

The law of failure is one of the most powerful of all the success laws because you only really fail when you quit trying