

8 QUESTIONS EVERY SWIMMER SHOULD ASK THEMSELVES

Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers. — Voltaire August 23, 2016.

To get clarity with our swimming goals – and in life in general – periodic reflection and evaluation can be immensely powerful. After all, although we tend to think otherwise, we often get wrapped up in the expectation of others, unrealistic comparisons and wishful thinking. Regular reflection can help you see things with more clarity, and to remind ourselves to focus in on the things that matter most.

Below are 8 questions every swimmer should be asking themselves on a daily basis.

1. What am I going to do today to make myself the best possible athlete?

Some people wake up and chase after their goals with everything they have. Others wake up, tell themselves they don't feel like it, or that the timing isn't right, or that tomorrow they'll get after it. Each morning set yourself up for the rest of the day by asking yourself what you are going to do to give yourself the best possible chance at unlocking your full potential. This simple question – and it's partner questions below – will lead you into the direction of better life decisions. Once you have had time to wind down from your two-a-day, and crushed an over-sized pot of pasta and are ready to zonk out in anticipation for tomorrow morning's work-out, ask yourself these seven questions before bed–

2. Did I do everything I could today to achieve my swimming goals?

The simple act of asking yourself this every night will condition you to behave in a manner over the course of the day so that you can give yourself a big “Hells yes!” as you lay in bed. The question will float around in the back of your mind during your daily activities. It will be there, giving you a snug reminder when you slow up on the last repeat of a set, when you are tired and your arms are dragging and you need that little jolt of a reminder to finish strong.

3. Why not me?

By believing that only a privileged or lucky few are capable of achieving their goals – and not you – you are performing a type of self-sabotage. The opposite form of this question generally sounds like—“Do I deserve it?” or “Why me?”

4. What are three things I am grateful for today?

The odds of us being here, right now, right at this moment in time are so mind-bogglingly tiny that it stings my melon just to think about it. Whether you are religious or not, being here, present, in this moment is something to be cherished.

Pick a couple things that you are particularly grateful for today. It could be a great set you banged out, your folks, your coach, a teammate, and so on. Being thankful and grateful can only make us happier people for it reminds us to cherish and value the things we do have, as opposed to wishing and pining for things we do not have.

5. What would I regret not fully doing?

This question will help you keep you focused on the big picture goals. Sometimes scaring ourselves with the eternal fear of regret can be just what we need to push a little further.

6. Did I do anything today to help my fellow swimmers?

This one can be a little more challenging, but it is not impossible. Helping a younger swimmer with a simple correction tool, giving a teammate some well-timed encouragement, being a good listener to someone having a bad day. When you open up yourself, including your experience, knowledge, and simply your time, it enriches the swimming experience many times over.

7. How do I function best?

Hacking yourself and figuring out the way you function and perform optimally is an eye-opening process. Finding the patterns that produce successful results gives you the opportunity to replicate them at future meets and practices. Some things will be painfully obvious. Like sleeping 7-8 hours a day. Or staying hydrated. Or eating a well-balanced diet. Simply thinking about them, and how they affect your performance, may be enough to make some small changes here and there.

8. What does success in the pool look like to me?

On the surface this looks like an easy one, right? After all, success is generally measured in minutes and seconds in the pool. A best time. A record. Tangible, measurable, even physical things.

There are other ways to generate success that aren't visible on a scoreboard. Things like helping out a fellow swimmer. Mentoring youngsters. Cheering on all your teammates – even the ones you don't necessarily like or get along with.

The answer to this question will be wildly unique with each of us, and truthfully, your definition of success tonight may be significantly different from the answer a week from now.

As Voltaire smartly said, the important part is in asking yourself the question, and not necessarily the answer.