

SPRING 2011

The

BLUEFISH

C U R R E N T

LEARNING TO SUCCEED



As I write this in late December in Fort Lauderdale, the air temperature is a “balmy” 42 degrees....well, balmy if you’re from Green Bay, Wisconsin, maybe. Here in South Florida, that’s a cold wave. We swim outside, and the water temperature is 75 degrees as the heaters can’t keep up when the air is this cold. The wind-chill factor, according to Channel 7, is...well, we don’t want to know the wind-chill with a nice brisk 20 mile an hour wind coming off the Everglades.

My phone rings at 5 AM and a small voice on the other end asks plaintively, “do we really have swim practice, Coach John?” Yes, we really do.

“WHY?” Is the next question, which I wrestle with myself on the 15 minute drive to the pool.... Why put teenagers in the water on this cold and nasty morning when both they and I would prefer to stay snuggled in at home for another hour or hour and a half?

Now, I KNOW why, but can I express it to my swimmers? Yes, I’ll try. Everyone, on the day after the high school state meet, vows that “next year” they will A) make a final, B) Make the meet C) win an event or D) write in your own goal here.

It’s easy to vow to do something the day after, when you are excited, full of the promise of life and get up and go. It’s a lot harder to REMEMBER what you wanted to do a couple months ago when it’s 5 AM and cold outside. Then it’s a lot harder and a lot easier to rationalize, “it’s just one workout.”

The problem is, when teenagers begin to learn to rationalize, they get really good at it really fast, and

pretty soon, the ACTION required to fulfill the commitments to those goals, falls prey to the rationalization. And after you rationalize the decision you want to make the first time, it’s so much easier to do it the next time, and the time after that, and pretty soon, the goal is just a dream, because you’re rationalized yourself into thinking “I’d like to do that if everything could be perfect for me, and it would never be cold in the morning, or no social events would ever conflict with practice, and time with my friends always went the way I want it to.”

But things never go perfectly. The ONLY thing you can successfully predict is that obstacles to your goal WILL come up, and little or nothing will go smoothly. And that consistency in preparation is the only way to raise the percentages of the chance you will reach your goal.

Read that again... “raise the percentages of the chance...” Not a guarantee. If it’s a good goal, there are no guarantees, EXCEPT that if you don’t prepare correctly, according to the plan, you won’t raise your chance of success, you’ll lower it.

So why go to practice at 5 AM in the cold? Because it’s part of the plan, and it raises your chance of success. But most of all, because you have told yourself that you will commit to doing it. And if you let yourself down, who won’t you let down? Prepare for a chance for success. And feel really good about doing that.

Because not very many people do.

by John Leonard

MIND-BODY CONNECTION

Karen Myers, eMerge Coaching Services, Inc.

THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS

Think about the last time you purchased something specific or saw something you thought was really cool – a new phone, a pair of boots, a jacket, a bathing suit, a puppy or dog or perhaps even a car. The item had some kind of emotional effect on you – you related to it, you decided you thought it was cool or that you wanted to buy it. You could ‘see’ yourself having or wearing that item or even imagine yourself in specific situations with that item.

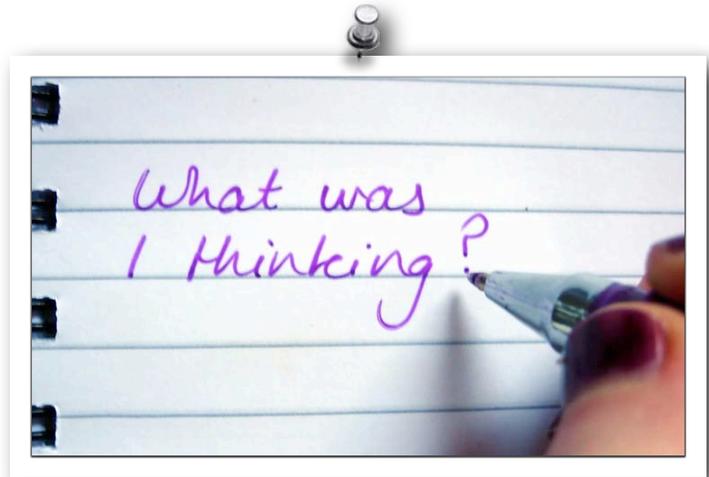
Next thing you know, that item seems to be everywhere! So many people have that same phone, those exact boots, that identical jacket, particular bathing suit, same kind of car or adorable puppy! Why, now that you’ve actually noticed it and decided it was something you could relate to, does it seem to appear everywhere you turn? How come you never noticed it everywhere around you before? Was it always there and you just didn’t notice? The answer is YES! And it is a NOT coincidence....

Your brain has many, many parts but a short explanation of the Conscious Mind, the Subconscious Mind and the Reticular Activating System (RAS) shows how your thoughts and emotions actually affect your daily experiences. It is an amazing phenomenon!

- *Your conscious mind sees, touches, feels the item and likes what it finds;*
- *Your subconscious mind connects that thought with positive feelings you have when thinking about it;*
- *Your RAS kicks in as the automatic mechanism that brings relevant information to your attention – thus you only notice what you’ve determined is important.*

The brain works the same with your experiences. When you attach a feeling to your experience in your subconscious, the RAS brings you more of it. So make sure you are ‘feeling’ what you do want, not what you don’t want.

So how does this apply to your swimming? In your conscious mind, you can tell yourself over and over that you want to be a great swimmer. But your subconscious mind is like a computer of stored memories –it remembers how you ‘feel’ each time you swim. The subconscious mind does exactly what it’s programmed to do and works with repetition. It remembers how you felt when you



performed poorly, felt ‘less than’, or fell short of your goal. When you relive these feelings, your RAS continues to bring you those same experiences.

You need to reprogram old memories with new stories – to override the ‘bad’ experiences and create new experiences with your thoughts and emotions - focus on what you want, not what you don’t want. You can’t change the past, but you can change how it feels to you.

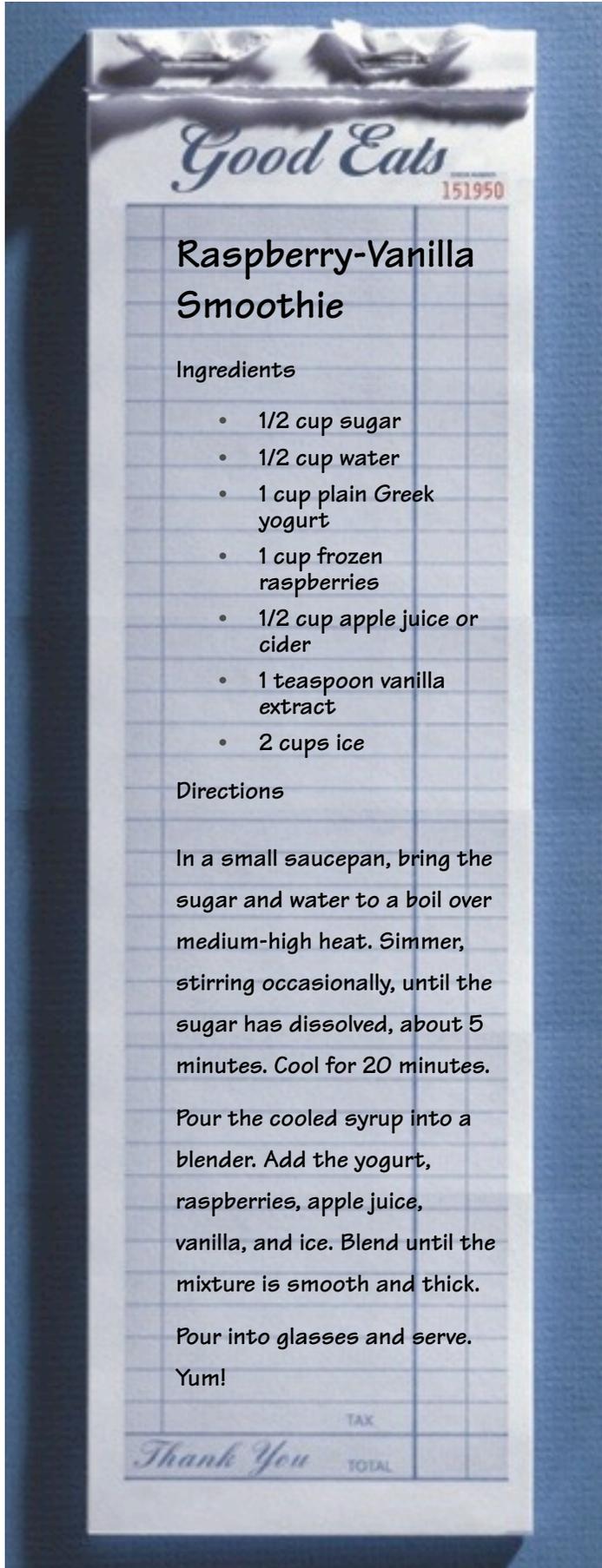
Tips:

- *Always focus on what you did well and continue to focus on what you want; hanging on to negative feelings will only hold you back.*
- *Recognize your best will change every day so accept your accomplishments each day. Beating yourself up after a race only reinforces the old negative programs in your mind.*
- *Thrive on your best memories – remember and relive those positive feelings as often as you can.*
- *Avoid comparing yourself to others – It’s ok to want to swim as fast as someone else – but don’t let yourself feel ‘less than’ in the process. Continually focusing on who swims faster than you will reinforce that they will always swim faster than you.*
- *Never give up. You can’t change your performance in a day but you can change its direction immediately. To move forward keep your thoughts, feelings and actions pointing in the same direction.*
- *Set and commit to realistic goals. If you want to achieve that goal, what can you commit to doing differently each day? Measure your success based on your own goals, not anyone else’s.*
- *Be present and look forward toward your goals. Don’t live in your past filled with fear based memories. Approach each race as a brand new experience.*

We are all wired to succeed! Most of your limitations are actually self-imposed boundaries created by your thoughts and feelings.

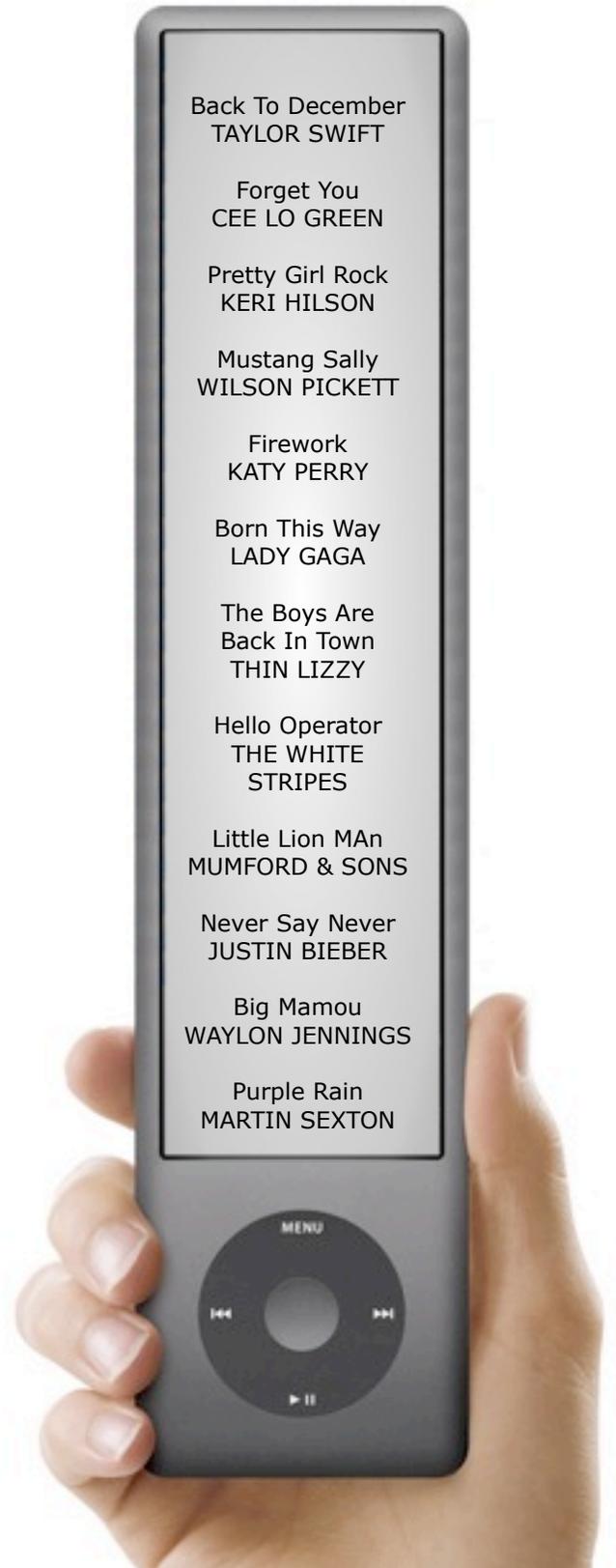
“When we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change.”

~ Wayne Dyer



THE PLAYLIST

A RANDOM SELECTION OF SONGS
FROM SWIMMER'S IPODS

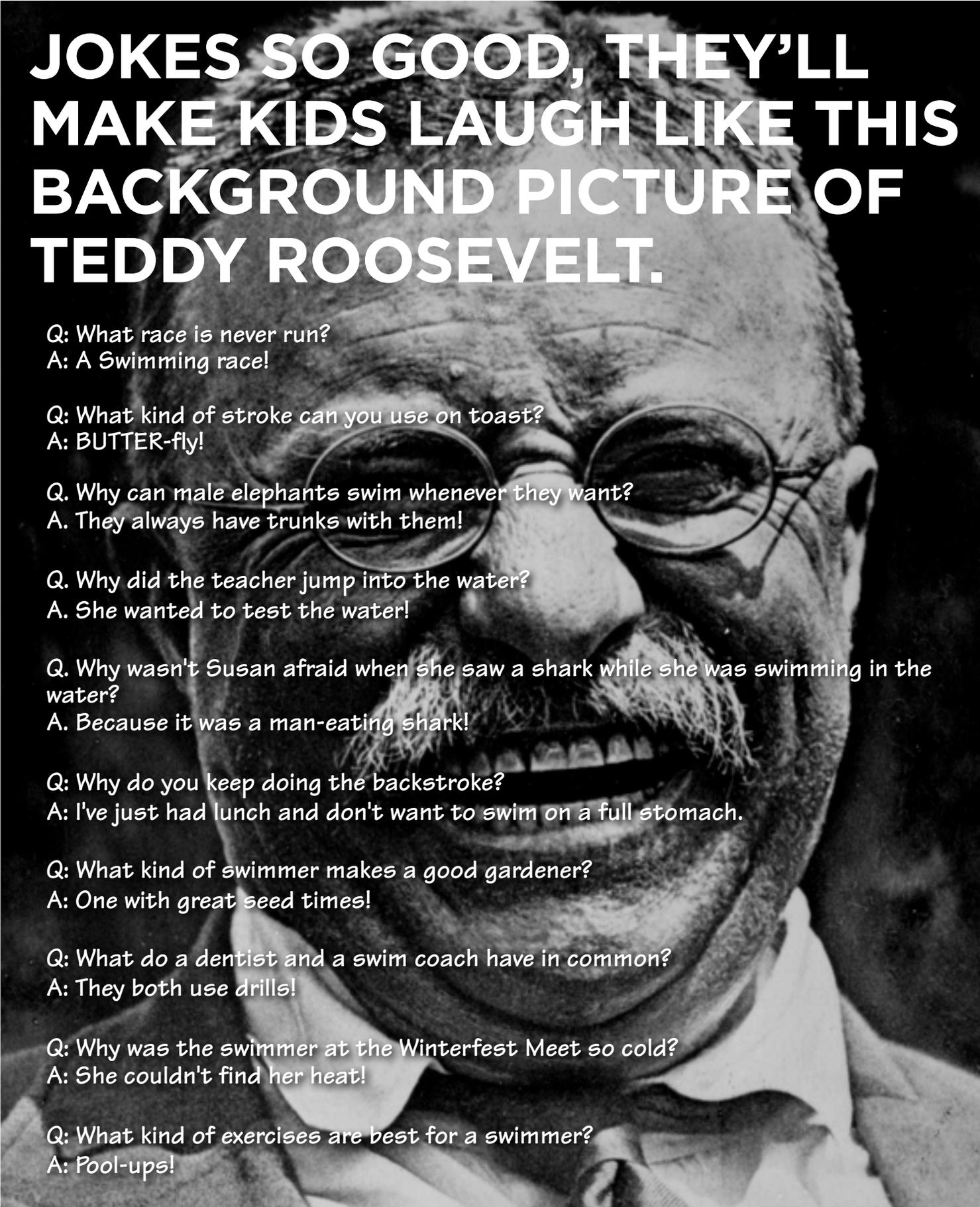


HEY! SMARTY PANTS

Sure, you know how to do a flip-turn, but do you know who invented it? Neither do we, but here are some swimming questions we DO know the answers to. See how many you can answer.

1. The first recorded swimming races were held in 36 B.C in what country?
 - a. Greece
 - b. England
 - c. Japan
 - d. Africa
2. What country was the first to develop swimming into a competitive sport?
 - a. England
 - b. Russia
 - c. France
 - d. Greece
3. Swimming has been included in the modern version of the Olympics games since their beginning in 1896.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Women were not allowed to compete in Olympic swimming until what year?
 - a. 1920
 - b. 1912
 - c. 1935
 - d. 1930
5. Swimming was included in the ancient Greek Olympics.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Answers: 1. Japan 2. England 3. True 4. 1912 5. False



JOKES SO GOOD, THEY'LL MAKE KIDS LAUGH LIKE THIS BACKGROUND PICTURE OF TEDDY ROOSEVELT.

Q: What race is never run?

A: A Swimming race!

Q: What kind of stroke can you use on toast?

A: BUTTER-fly!

Q. Why can male elephants swim whenever they want?

A. They always have trunks with them!

Q. Why did the teacher jump into the water?

A. She wanted to test the water!

Q. Why wasn't Susan afraid when she saw a shark while she was swimming in the water?

A. Because it was a man-eating shark!

Q: Why do you keep doing the backstroke?

A: I've just had lunch and don't want to swim on a full stomach.

Q: What kind of swimmer makes a good gardener?

A: One with great seed times!

Q: What do a dentist and a swim coach have in common?

A: They both use drills!

Q: Why was the swimmer at the Winterfest Meet so cold?

A: She couldn't find her heat!

Q: What kind of exercises are best for a swimmer?

A: Pool-ups!

THE MYTH OF AN OVERNIGHT SUCCESS

By Nancy Hennessy, ASCA Level 3 Age Group Coach, Gator Swim Club, Gainesville, FL

When Mary was 12 she qualified first in the preliminaries at the championship meet. Never before had she qualified for a championship final.

“WOW!”

“That came out of nowhere.”

“Unbelievable.”

Such were the comments that Mary received. Her coach, though very excited, was not at all surprised. Mary’s “overnight success” had been a long term developmental process in the making for 6 years. Only now had Mary begun to tap into her potential.

Mary began swimming at the age of 6. When she turned 7 she began swimming at the local year round club. In her first year, Mary swam 2 days a week with the beginners’ group where stroke technique was the primary focus. The group was designed with a lot of kicking and drilling and FUN!

In the summer Mary swam primarily with her summer club but still continued to practice with her year round club 2 days a week as her parents and year round coach were seeking consistency in coaching and the continued encouragement of the year round coach. Mary remained in this group for 4 months following the end of the summer season building upon her skills and aerobic base while laying down the first block of her foundation.

In the early spring of her second season, Mary moved to the next developmental group in her year round program. She was now legal in all four strokes and displayed the strength, desire and ability to move up. At this time she began swimming 3 days a week. The emphasis remained on kicking and stroke drill work with a bit more intensity aerobically and lots of FUN! Most of the stroke drills were repetition for Mary. As she grew stronger and more aerobically fit, Mary was able to do the stroke drills for longer durations with greater proficiency. In a sense, this was a review for Mary, only a bit more demanding. She spent 2 years in this group. She maintained very consistent attendance during both the short course and long course seasons while still being able to enjoy her rewards in summer league swimming as well. The second layer of cement was drying.

In the fall of the next season, Mary moved into the next developmental group. Due to her consistent attendance and much repetition in the previous group, the transition into this group went smoothly. It was quite challenging, but with sound fundamentals, she was able to take on the new

challenges and up the ante aerobically. She was now practicing 3-4 days a week for 1 and ½ hours per practice. Most of the stroke drills were repetitious in nature but there were added steps to each drill and more conditioning while performing the drills. In her first season with this group, Mary had 100% attendance over the holiday training period. With this commitment she immediately added another block to her foundation. At this level Mary was now becoming more accountable for her swimming, more frequently making stroke corrections without a coach’s request, knowing and staying on intervals and beginning to keep a log and knowing her best times.

During the long course season, Mary, again regularly attended the recommended number of practices, continued to improve and learn stroke drills, and aerobically improved her ability to train due to the challenges of long course training. She repeated this cycle in her 2nd year with this group adding one day per week more consistently. The foundation was growing ever stronger.

In Mary’s 5th season, she entered the top group in the age group program. Her stroke drills were very proficient though she continued to improve them and make stroke corrections. She was aerobically very fit coming off a summer of long course training and high attendance percentages throughout her time in the sport. Because of these, she was very well prepared for the rigors of the training at this level. At this time she stepped up her attendance to 5-6 days a week and in her first year in this group won an award for 90% attendance for the year. This was a big goal and accomplishment for Mary.

Now in her 6th season and a top 3 finisher at a championship meet, it comes as no surprise. All of Mary’s coaches have participated in her “overnight success” over the past 6 years. Each season she has made all the necessary adjustments and raised her level of commitment. Some came more easily than others, mentally as well as physically. As she grew and matured, as she became more aerobically fit, and as she faithfully built her blocks and securely cemented them into place, Mary’s “overnight success” could only be explained as PREPARATION.

Mary always participated in meets along the way and usually improved yet never set the pool on fire for many to notice. She was patient, she had very loving and committed parents, and she listened to her coaches. She quietly and cheerfully built her blocks, with a broad base, one on top of another, that has become a solid foundation for many successes to follow.

