

Coach Koehr's Swimming Awards Banquet Talk – March 11, 2012

A Growth Mindset

1. Let's look at the following four sentences and note whether you agree or disagree with each one
 - a. You are a certain kind of person and there's not much you can really do to change that
 - b. No matter what kind of person you are, you can change substantially
 - c. You can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are really can't be changed
 - d. You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are
2. Which did you agree with?
 - a. If you agreed with #1 and #3, you might tend to be a person with a "Fixed Mindset"
 - b. If you agreed with #2 and #4, you might tend to be a person with a "Growth Mindset"
 - c. If you agreed with #1 and #2, your just confused
 - i. Talk to Mr. Bennett after this
3. Why important?
 - a. It determines how you handle failure
 - b. How doggedly you pursue change in your life
 - c. Probably also determines how successful you will be in your career
 - i. And maybe even your marriage
4. Susan Thomas Story
5. People ask me why I'm going to Darden
 - a. Maybe some of them are really just trying to compliment me
 - b. But some people, maybe even some of you, are baffled?
6. Fixed Mindset
 - a. You believe that your abilities are basically static
 - b. Maybe you can get a bit better or a bit worse, but your abilities are basically the way you are wired
 - i. You have what God gave you
 - c. You may tend to avoid challenges
 - i. You may see failure as an indication of your true abilities
 - ii. So failure just means you're a loser
 - d. Why try harder if nothing is really going to change?

7. Growth Mindset
 - a. You believe your abilities are like muscles
 - i. You can build them up with practice
 - ii. You're not necessarily a born weakling
 - b. You believe that you can make yourself better with concerted effort
 - i. You can in fact become a substantially better writer
 - ii. You can in fact become a substantially better husband
 - iii. You can in fact become a substantially better swimmer
 - c. People with a growth mindset are more willing to accept criticism, because it is not an attack on their essence
 - i. It is an opportunity to get better
8. If you want to make progress in your career and your life, you need to
 - a. Stretch yourself
 - b. Take risks
 - c. Accept feedback
 - d. Take longer-term views
 - e. In other words, keep a growth mindset
9. There are so many great examples of this on the swim team this year, but I'd like to recognize a couple of those examples with this year's coach's awards:
 - a. **Jude Van de Voorde**
 - i. Not the most naturally talented swimmer on the team
 - ii. But that was not going to stop him
 - iii. He made Varsity as the 4th breaststroker, so he was practicing with other Varsity swimmers
 - iv. Objectively, he was just not at their level of ability, but the guy would not quit
 - v. Coach Lowell would actually have to tell him to sit out a set to get his heartrate back down in the range he wanted
 - vi. And he dropped a from 1:24.27 to 1:17.36 in 100 Breaststroke, most of that at the end of the season
 - vii. He even ended up scoring 6th place at DAC Champs
 - b. **Monica Byers**
 - i. A perfect example of what I'm looking for in a captain
 1. Stretched with the younger kids
 2. Took the lead on t-shirts for States
 3. Always thought of others before herself
 4. And always smiled

- ii. Most impressive though was her membership in the penguins
 1. Like the den mother for the 8th grade girls
 2. These little girls were killing her, but she wasn't all in
 3. Many other seniors would have bailed to an easier lane

Conclusion

- Seton Swimming has become something special
- We're all lucky to be a part of something that is bigger than any of us individually
- I'm already looking forward to next season
- In the meantime, work hard in everything you do, and remember to keep that growth mindset
 - The abilities that you ultimately exhibit in your life are not pre-programmed
 - The only thing pre-programmed is your starting point
 - Don't make that your ending point