

THE SIX P's FOR SUCCESS

By Bob Byard

Let me make a few suggestions as you build, monitor or revise your "plan of attack" for the new training and competitive season. There are a few things that can make your focus and efforts more rewarding and your goals more realistic and attainable. Think about the following:

Don't only plan the distances, types, and intensity of workouts of your upcoming training season. An integral part of athletic success is to think about why you're training and racing. Understand the significance of how your competitive philosophy and personal values guide (or misdirect) your physical efforts. The success of the upcoming season will not be dictated solely by times, distances or heart rate levels, but more importantly by mental attitude, motivation and commitment - what I call the six "Ps". They show themselves in every pursuit:

Perspective, Preparation, Persistence, Patience, Pace and Pride.

Ultimately when you have the perspective of why you're competing and what you're trying to pursue, the rest just falls into place.

The *Perspective* of "why" you train and compete reflects in your attitude - is it to win, to participate, for the camaraderie? What gets you out of bed to swim or run at 6:00 a.m.? How you view or evaluate your drive and the value that you put on your goal will give direction and strength to your commitment.

Your level of commitment to achieve the "why" of what you pursue further clarifies how much mental *Preparation* you are willing to expend. More specific, harder-to-attain goals (i.e., 21:30 minutes in a mile swim or a 7:20 minute mile) require more intense, focused effort than a goal of running 10k in under an hour. More ambitious goals require more preparation, psychologically as much as physically.



Stick-to-it-ive-ness

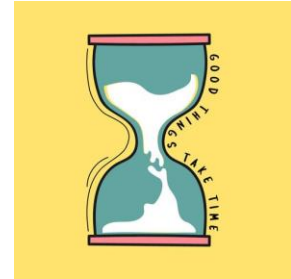
[stik- 'tū-? -tiv-n?z]

-noun

1. dogged perseverance
2. the quality that allows someone to continue trying to do something even though it is difficult or unpleasant

Coupled with preparation is *Persistence*, or as I call it, "stick-to-it-tiveness" - that level that you realize is needed to attain and maintain in your training regime. It boils down to how focused you are (persistent) in getting ready (preparation) to achieve your goal which, in turn, will define your overall approach (perspective) to the sport. Focus requires commitment.

Patience is a trait that can be learned and requires consistent use over time to show benefits. And that's true in training and during competition - improvement in speed or at a distance takes time to attain, and trailing someone on the bike with a plan to pass them on the run takes the discipline of self-control. Patience is a virtue; an elusive quality that needs to be nurtured and used.



Inseparable from patience is **Pace**: using your brain to understand your strengths and weaknesses enables you to maximize your abilities to reach your goal, be it a time, a distance, whatever. Knowing your limitations and strengths enhances your potential to put forward the best effort possible. Timing is so important.

And whatever you do, do it with **Pride**. Respect the competition, treat others as you'd like to be treated, obey the rules, and do what's right. If you do, you'll be more proud, and justifiably so, of your level of performance. Don't be an "I, me, mine" person. How you achieve a goal should be just as important as what you achieve. That's true pride in performance and participation.



Bottom line? Know why you do what you do and what satisfaction you get out of it. Realistically plan how much effort you can expend and stick to it. Don't expect instant success - you've got to work on your weaknesses, while not ignoring your strengths. Draw satisfaction from the fact that you did your best honestly and with respect for others. Follow these tips and you can definitely make the most out of your training and racing this year.