

Build confidence through the actions you control, not in expected results

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Quite often I'll have conversations with swimmers and wish I could have been talking to the entire group as my thoughts came together on the question. One of those times came up last Tuesday morning, and I wanted to be sure to share the message here.

We've talked all season about building your self-confidence, connecting all of the work you have done, all of your steps forward in the process, and everything you committed to all season long to be ready at the end. Your confidence in yourself needs to be about your work ethic, your fight, your grit, your growth mindset, your focus on the process, your improvement in training. It needs to be built off of things that no individual and no "result" can ever take away.

The bottom line of the question asked was what if I don't get the result you want or think you have earned. How does one remain confident in themselves when the results aren't what you want?

You do that not by building expectations in your head of what you have earned, but instead by building a belief that you have earned it and if it doesn't come this time, you better believe that it's coming the next time you get the opportunity. We aren't shooting for nice safe goals. We aren't just trying to be better than average. You are training at elite levels and very few people in the country ever put themselves on the line like this. So yes, as much as it kills me as a coach, you are going to "fail", if that means not reaching your goals every time you race. BUT, I don't believe missing goals is a failure at all. Not if you've done all you could and it didn't quite work out. Even if sometimes it's a racing strategy "failure" that you may have known better or something you believe you had control over, the bottom line is you should never consider yourself to have failed if you have given it all you had. In fact, most of those types of racing mistakes, etc., come from not having quite enough confidence to stay true to your best strategy. Build a belief in yourself so strongly through your process that even in situations where most would lose their minds, you stay calm, cool, and collected, and just go out and do your thing. This lesson and this type of confidence gets lost when we let emotions cloud our judgement.

So we build confidence from the things you have done and earned that no one can ever take away now. The 2 week camp was a perfect snapshot of just that. You all took major steps forward and the more you can hold on to those things, the more your goals come into reach. No one can take away how you rose to every challenge I threw your way, and there

were quite a few. No one can take away that time where you thought you couldn't do a single more stroke, but you did and you did it well.

So build your confidence in YOU! Not a result. Build it in your ability to handle anything and everything thrown your way. Build it not in never "failing", but getting up from each and every "failure" a better and stronger person and athlete.

Disappointment may come, it may just not be time... yet. But your focus must be to use that disappointment to fuel the fire. Use it to race harder/smarter the next race or use it to take you into the next season of growth and opportunity.

And one last thing, never take a result as a personal reflection of you. Never judge yourself in this process, as that will only lead to negativity. Instead, look forward to what you can do to be better next time, because you have the self-confidence to know you are better than a single result may show. Maybe you just need more time? Maybe there's process changes you need to work with your coach on? In the end, don't judge yourself on your results, you've earned better than that. Look forward with positivity and excitement, and learn to love the chase much more than just the result itself.

Believe in yourselves!