



MOTIVATION OR SELF-DISCIPLINE?

Self- discipline: The ability to control one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses

Motivation is a tricky thing, isn't it? It's unpredictable. It's stubborn.

And there is a list of things that affect how motivated we feel each day:

- how much sleep we got last night (sleep deprivation makes things feel harder than usual)
- how well we ate today (energy levels affect how much we “feel” like doing stuff)
- where we are in the week (accumulated fatigue means it's harder to get fired up)
- our mindset (when our self-talk sucks “I can't do this” it suffices to say we aren't going to be motivated)

So, yeah, motivation is kind of an unreliable thing. Sort of like that friend you text to hang out but know that they will bail at the last second. Like always. Instead of trying to be motivated this season, work on being more disciplined.

After all:

- Being disciplined takes away the mental back-and-forth. You don't need to have a tug-of-war with your brain to see if you should work hard today at practice.
- It takes away the waiting game. You aren't peeking out the blinds wondering if motivation is waiting outside to drive you to morning practice.
- And it means you are avoiding the stressful and emotional roller coaster of wondering why one day you are *sooo* motivated and super-not the next.

So where to start?

Great, you might be thinking, I'm going to be disciplined. So disciplined. All. The. Time. The secret to discipline is this: Be the swimmer that is obsessive about starting the hard stuff.

Discipline is simply the art of starting, just take the first step, then one more. That really, really hard set? The week of workouts you were dreading for months? It's always easier when you start. Always.

After all—every time you started that 5k for time, or the Hell Week of workouts, after climbing over the resistance of starting you found yourself saying “Hey, this ain’t so bad.” The disciplined swimmer isn’t necessarily the mentally tougher swimmer, they are simply better at bargaining themselves into starting things that are difficult:

“Okay, I’ll do the first round of this hard set and take things from there”. “Wow, that workout is going to kick my butt all over the pool deck. I’ll do the warm-up and see how I feel after that”.

Being disciplined sounds like this big, greasy personal attribute that only the most iron-headed swimmers possess. Or we mistakenly believe that it’s an innate thing that we have or we don’t have. But you can achieve “disciplined swimmer” status just by conquering the little habit of starting the hard things.

Sounds simple, almost too simple, right? Maybe that is the problem—everyone thinks the right thing to do is the most complicated thing. Daily disciplines (habits) are one of the things that separate top swimmers from the rest.

Focus on the daily disciplines of:

- Giving your best effort in the main set no matter how you feel.
- Setting session process goals.
- Finding “Little Wins” through the course of your workout e.g. through superior technique.
- Doing the things outside the pool that influence your swim practices e.g. get enough sleep



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