

Doing what your competitors won't

In his autobiography, **Lawrence of Australia - Laurie Lawrence** (1993, Ironbark Press), Laurie set out a number of principles which helped to guide Duncan Armstrong to win that incredible 400m freestyle gold medal in Seoul in 1988.

On the night after winning gold in the 1986 Commonwealth Games, Duncan told Laurie, "I want to win in Seoul".

The response from Laurie was, "Miss no training for two years. Miss no training until you stand on the pool deck in Seoul! Do everything right to prepare yourself for gold".

With the pact sealed, Duncan had a very clear and identifiable goal. Importantly, he knew what was expected of him to achieve it.

However, as pointed out in the book, undertaking the task of 'miss no training' for a swimmer is no mean feat.

Swimmers train eleven sessions a week: in the pool - both mornings and afternoons. Often during the little time available in the middle of the day, the dedicated few who want to be Olympic champions, who want to stand up on the winner's dais, do the things that other swimmers are not prepared to do. These people, with their clearly definable objectives, work out further - doing cross-training or performing any of the 101 little extra things which give total confidence.

When champions stand on the blocks before the starter's gun goes, they have the competitive edge. They have the confidence to look across the pool at their rivals and say: "I'm ready, are you?" When that time comes, the real winner is able to say: "I could have done nothing more to prepare better."

Laurie continually points out that Duncan never missed training, even when suffering some injuries along the way. During this time, Duncan suffered a shoulder injury and a leg injury. But this did not stop or reduce his training. Simply, the temporary disabilities became an

opportunity to improve and to condition another part of the body.

Duncan was determined to do things that would give him the best chance to win gold. His goal was clearly defined and because of it he was able to overcome temporary obstacles and turn negatives into positives.

Laurie concludes that:

"I believe there is always something you can do in life to benefit your cause. There's always something positive that can be done to keep moving up that mountain.

It is my firm belief that if you want to be successful in life, you've got to do things that other people are not prepared to do.

The difference between good and great is a little extra effort."

Points to take away:

- Clearly defined goals
- Planning
- Doing what your competitors won't
- Turn negatives into positives

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