

Winning – The “W” word.

By Wayne Goldsmith

Winning. Winning. Winning. There, I said it.

That felt good. I’ll say it again. **Winning.**

That felt so good I’ll do it again. **WINNING!!**

It’s time we made the “W” word fashionable again.

Everyone talks about “doing your best” and “trying really hard” and “never giving up” and “achieving my personal best” but when is the last time you heard someone get up and say, “**I am here to win**”.

So let’s start thinking about winning, talking about winning and doing things in training, preparation and competition that make winning as certain as night follows day, dogs chase cats, and having too much homework to do on weekends.

Winning. To come **first**. To be **the best**. To be **better than your competition**. To be **the leader**.

All these things sound really positive and worth striving for but why have they become so difficult to talk about and so rare to find?

Because talking “winning” means putting yourself “on the line”. It means making a clear statement that your intention is to win and that second is unacceptable. Making a statement like “I am here to win” means you have made a commitment that nothing except the Gold Medal matters. It is absolute – it is finite – there is no misunderstanding: you thirst to be first! You want to go for the gold and leave the silverware for someone making a dinner setting.

And that’s why it is so scary and so intimidating for so many people....there is no “out” clause, no excuses, no alternatives – it’s win or it’s lose. When you declare “I am going for the win” there is no ambiguity, no misunderstandings, no confusion...winning means winning.

It’s ok to talk about pushing for the podium, to go for the gold and to want to win.....IF and this is a big IF, your winning **thoughts** and winning **words** are supported by winning **actions**.

Winning thoughts – The process of winning begins with Winning thoughts. Winning thoughts are dreams, and everyone dreams. They are those moments when your spirit soars, when your imagination flies and you dream about achieving great things. They are the fire – the inspiration for all the great things you want to do and will do in the future. Lots of people dream about winning – lots of people can even imagine (visualise) themselves holding up the Olympic Gold, doing the press

conference in front of the world's media and some people even imagine what they will say when they get asked "So what does it feel like to be the Olympic Champion". Having winning thoughts is not the issue.....it's going to the next step and saying (and meaning) winning words.

Winning words – If your dreams are the fire – the spark of your winning ways, then your words – your winning words are your fuel. We all use some form of self talk in everyday life – you know that little voice that says "I can do this" or "This isn't so tough" or "Hang in there – this pain will pass". Winning is about taking these inner voices and actually giving them a *real* voice. Letting winning thoughts out and hearing them makes them real. It takes them out of the world of dreams and imagination and into the real world where they can be heard – by you and others. Saying it is one thing...now comes the big step: turning winning words into winning actions.

Winning actions...and the key to it all is action. Winning thoughts are easy to think. Winning words are easy to say. But winning actions....they require something different – they require your energy, your enthusiasm, your commitment and you taking responsibility to make your dreams real. It's easy to dream "Wow – I really wish I could win". It's easy to say "I really want to win". But the reason why so many people never actually win is that they are not prepared to do what it takes to prepare to win.

Imagine for a moment you were looking through a magic mirror at the swimmer who will be the Olympic Gold medallist in your favourite event in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. They are in a pool somewhere in the world today, doing what you are doing, training, stretching, kicking, doing drills and all the other stuff that you do every day in every workout.

It's not what they are doing...it's how they are doing it.

They got to the pool early and did some extra stretching and strengthening work.

They had their own drink bottle and drank regularly throughout workout.

They attacked every turn like it was the final turn of an Olympic final.

They drove off every wall with power and speed.

They finished off every repeat on the wall with race quality finishes.

They completed all their sprint work at maximum speed – holding nothing back in spite of the pain and discomfort.

As soon as workout finished, they immediately started recovering from training and began the preparation process for the next session

They made a decision that they would out-train, out-stretch, out-strengthen, out-kick, out-pull, out-dive, out-turn, out-swim, and out-prepare any swimmer in their event in the world and that's why

they will win the Gold medal in Rio. They had a dream – they spoke it – they believed it – they put it into action and...they will win.

So, my question to you is this...if you know what it will take to win the Gold Medal in Rio in 2016...why aren't you doing it now? You've got the dream. You know the words. You know what actions you have to take....so do it! You can do it.

Summary:

1. So don't be afraid of thinking about and talking about winning: **winning is a good thing;**
2. But....and this is the key to it all....it's only cool to think about and talk about winning IF you then turn your **winning thoughts** and **winning words** into **winning actions** with outstanding, consistently brilliant and uncompromisingly excellent training and preparation;
3. And, if you don't win....**learn, learn, learn from it.** Winning means improvement and improvement comes from learning. So every experience, win, lose or draw is learning. **Learn more – improve faster – win more often.**
4. **What the mind can conceive, and with words can believe, the body can achieve.**

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About Wayne Goldsmith:

Wayne is one of the world's leading experts in elite level swimming and high performance sport. To read more about Wayne visit his blog at www.sportscoachingbrain.com