

“How Optimism Has Paved My Road to Success”

The passion for competitive swimming is not for everyone. As a young girl, I recall loving the water and playing with my friends in the pool or at the beach. One day, my friend invited me to swim club and a world that was unknown to me magically opened up, but it wasn't easy. Swimming is a tough sport that requires commitment and it can be very easy to take long breaks or stop altogether. Everyone has bad days, but the support from my family, my coach, the goals I have set for myself, and watching other professional swimmers provide an optimistic atmosphere that helps pave my swimming success.

When I first started swimming competitively, I was 7 years old. On the first day of practice, my coach asked me to swim down in the deep end to see what level of a swimmer I was. After I swam, he said that I was a natural and that I was going to be good one day. It's crazy how a coach could predict that in a swimmer, but that made me excited for the future. Throughout my swimming career, my coach gave me the confidence and hope to achieve all state swimmer as a freshman and become a two-time All-State champion. Without the goals and optimism of my coach pushing me throughout the season, I would not have had the success I did. One of my favorite moments was when my coach approached me after a record-breaking race and said how proud he was of me. That gave me even more encouragement to keep going.

Another thing that has paved my road to success as a swimmer is setting goals for myself. I knew it would be hard to break records, but that was something that I strived to achieve. I continued to swim all year round. During the summer, I didn't just swim, but I swam double practices. I was swimming 4 hours a day for almost 3 months straight, and on top of that, I was swimming at USA swim meets on a long course. I wanted to break those records and at the first middle school meet of the season, I broke not only one, but four records. Success drives me, and I crave those hard practices. I work so hard because I have huge goals and always want to better myself in my sport. Those days were long, but so worth it. My body would be sore most days, but I took it as dedication to hard work.

Another thing that has paved my way to being a successful swimmer is watching other swimmer's techniques. When it comes to swimming, I'm always pushing my limits. Even after getting first in my races, if I didn't improve my time, I would watch it again and see what I needed to change to hopefully go faster next time. Everyone has bad days in their sport, but I take those days as a learning experience and a way to self-improve. For example, I was struggling with my starts and turns so I watched YouTube videos of other swimmers to learn new things. Seeing other swimmers' techniques and trying new things in practice have helped me improve my techniques and give me hope for future improvement.

Swim camps play a vital role in enhancing my performance and giving me optimism as I learn new things. I've attended several camps; most run by dedicated D1 college coaches. What's especially inspiring is that some have featured former Olympians who share their incredible skills and insights with us. This experience fills me with confidence and excitement for my future swims, especially as I learn to refine my strokes, turns, and starts.

Reading about swimming is also very beneficial for my swimming progression. This summer, I read the book *"Just Add Water"* by Katie Ledecky and it made me realize that amazing swimmers like her are just as ordinary as everyone else. She didn't start as a great swimmer; it was the process and time that made her great. Things don't happen overnight, and this gives me hope for future accomplishments.

Michael Phelps said, "If you want to be the best, you have to do things that other people aren't willing to do." My ultimate goal is to swim for The University of Michigan and go d1; no other girl has ever done that in my school's swimming history. Having optimism and working hard towards goals that are set by my coach, myself, and other swimmers have paved the road for me to be the successful swimmer I am today.

Bibliography Page

"15 Michael Phelps Quotes That Will Inspire You to be Your Best Self." Inc.com, 6 February 2025,

<https://www.inc.com/peter-economy/15-michael-phelps-quotes-that-will-inspire-you-to-be-your-best-self.html>