

Swim to Win!

BY WAYNE GOLDSMITH

thinking about it versus talking about it and making it happen is action.

It's not what you think or what you say—it's all about what you do!

THE COMMITMENT CONTINUUM

So how committed are you to being the best you can be?

Think of commitment as a "continuum":



- At one end of the sequence is a score of 1, meaning “**no commitment**” (i.e., having no interest or desire to improve).
- At the other end of the sequence is a score of 10 for “**total commitment**” (i.e., being completely committed to becoming the best you can be in all that you do.)

Take a moment and ask yourself: “*Where are you on the **Commitment Continuum?***”

More importantly, ask yourself: “Do your *actions* reflect where you sit on the Commitment Continuum?”

BUT YOU SAY: “I DON’T KNOW WHAT TO DO.” **WRONG!**

So you might be thinking: “*I’m really committed to being the best I can be. It’s just that I don’t know what I have to do to be a better swimmer.*”

Don’t think this way. Instead, imagine for a moment that the best swimmers in the world showed up at one of your workouts to train with your team. Imagine them diving in the water to swim with you and your teammates:

- What would you see?
- How would they push off the wall at the start of each repeat?
- How would they turn every turn?
- How would they finish every repeat?
- How would they swim—i.e., what would their technique and skills look like?

Most swimmers know what being the

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COMMITMENT—THE
DECISION TO TURN
THOUGHTS INTO
ACTIONS—IS THE
KEY TO SUCCESS
FOR EVERY
SWIMMER.

In every city, in every pool, there are swimmers swimming.
Some swim for fun.
Some swim to make friends.
Some swim to get fit and feel healthy.

And some—just a few—swim to win.
So the question is: “*What’s the difference between swimmers who swim for fun, friendship and fitness and those who swim to win?*”

In one word: **commitment.**

WHAT IS COMMITMENT?

Commitment is the decision you make to turn your thoughts and words into actions.

Some swimmers have thoughts about winning.

Some swimmers talk about being a better swimmer.

But the real difference between

Scoring Key:

1	NO COMMITMENT
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	TOTAL COMMITMENT

- Score 1 point for every “always” answer.
- Score 0 points for every “sometimes” answer.
- Score minus-1 point—i.e., take 1 point off your score—for every “never” answer.

Add up all your points from the **Commitment Quiz** and mark your score on the **Commitment Continuum** above.

SO, HOW COMMITTED ARE YOU?

- **Scores of 0 or less:** Hmm...it might be time to take up professional TV-watching or sofa-warming. Not much commitment here.
- **Scores of 1-3:** There are a few hopeful signs here. Maybe if you work hard every day for the next five years, you might eventually get enough commitment together to be able to wade across the kiddies’ pool.
- **Scores of 4-6:** Good swimmers get it right some of the time. You’re good—but you could be even better with a little more commitment.
- **Scores of 7-8:** A very good score—and you’re probably a very good swimmer. Getting it right most of the time means you’ll swim some great times now and then, but you’ll be just short of being all you can be.
- **Scores of 9-10:** You understand what commitment is and the difference it makes. Great things are ahead for you—and not just in swimming, but in every aspect of your life. ♦

The Commitment Quiz

How Committed Are You?

Let’s find out just how committed you are.

Take the following **Commitment Quiz**. Here are 10 questions designed to help you understand your own level of commitment and what it takes to change it—for the better.

1. When the alarm rings for morning workout, do you jump out of bed and immediately start getting ready for training?
a) Always
b) Sometimes
c) Never
2. Do you arrive on time for training?
a) Always
b) Sometimes
c) Never
3. Do you ask coach for extra work, extra training or extra exercises you can do at home?
a) Always
b) Sometimes
c) Never
4. When the set calls for 10 or 20 or whatever number of repeats, do you do every one of them to the best of your ability?
a) Always
b) Sometimes
c) Never
5. When the coach asks you for “maximum,” do you give the coach “maximum”?
a) Always
b) Sometimes
c) Never
6. When doing drills work and skills training, do you concentrate and focus on getting every detail 100 percent correct?
a) Always
b) Sometimes
c) Never
7. Do you take responsibility for your own swimming equipment? For example, do you pack and empty your own swim bag, wash and dry your towels, take care of your swimming equipment, etc?
a) Always
b) Sometimes
c) Never
8. When you push off from the wall, do you push off with power with a tight, long, perfect streamline and with race-quality underwater kicking?
a) Always
b) Sometimes
c) Never
9. Do you give your best—*your absolute best*—without holding anything back in everything you do?
a) Always
b) Sometimes
c) Never
10. Do you leave the pool after training every day, thinking, “*There’s nothing I could have done better today?*”
a) Always
b) Sometimes
c) Never

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best looks like and what it takes to be an outstanding swimmer. However, they just *choose* not to do it.

WIN OR LOSE, YOU CHOOSE— SUCCESS IS A CHOICE

The reason why commitment is so important is that it helps you make the right decision at the right time.

So, when the alarm goes off at 5 a.m., and it's time to go to morning workout, a swimmer who is totally committed to success will jump out of bed and drag Mom and Dad to the car so they can get to training.

A swimmer who is partially committed or not committed at all to success will choose to roll over, go back to sleep and leave training for another day.

The problem is that unless you shift your level of commitment, that day never comes—neither does the swimming success you want and deserve.

COMMITMENT MOMENTS— ARE YOU READY FOR THE CHALLENGE?

There are lots of times when your

commitment is tested—when your level of commitment to your swimming success will be challenged. I call these **Commitment Moments**.

For example:

- Do I go to training today?
- Do I do those extra stretching exercises that my coach has asked me to do?
- Should I give everything I've got to my gym and dryland workouts?
- Do I really need another piece of cake and some more soda?

To the swimmers who are totally committed to being successful, these decisions are relatively simple and easy to make because in every situation and at every challenge, they will decide to take the action that is most likely to help them realize their swimming potential. ♦

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

SUMMARY

1. COMMITMENT IS THE KEY TO SWIMMING SUCCESS.

Being talented is wonderful. Having a great coach to work with, that's cool. Being part of a hard-working team of swimmers is fantastic. But the key to your success is how committed you are to being the best you can be.

2. COMMITMENT IS ACTION.

It's not what you think or what you say—it's what you do that determines success. Committed people are all about *action*.

3. SUCCESS IS A CHOICE! Your

level of commitment helps you make the hard decisions, the right decisions and the decisions that you need to make to become the swimmer you want to be. ♦

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