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PEAKS COACHING GROUP

Name of Article: The "N" Word: Changing your mindset and using it for a better performance.

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There it is again , your old pal. He always shows up right before that big presentation at work, before you ask for that raise, and of course before each and every important race that you do. The "N" word. Nervous... Are you nervous? Are you feeling that same old queasy feeling before your race? How do you deal with it? Do you get upset, do you let it get to you, or do you revel in the feeling and let it flow through your body?

If after all of those years of running, training, racing, you still get those "feelings", then you are probably in one of three camps. One, you hate it and feel that it is the worst part of being a competitive athlete/person or two, you have learned to deal with it and accept it as part of the experience. Or third, you have realized that it is an essential part of you and your race (presentation, etc.). Those in the third camp have recognized that feeling "excited" before the race is quite a great thing and something to look forward to. They realize that it is just their body telling them that their muscles are ready and strong for a "peak performance". That is the purpose of this article, let's try to teach you how to recognize the inherent positive in that "energy". From now on, because I think just saying the word nervousness can bring on "bad" connotations, I will refer to the feeling as "excitement" or "being excited". At some point in my career, I decided to change the way I looked at "being excited". I decided that instead of fighting the feeling and using essential race energy to fight it off, I would instead just let it run through my body and use it for a better performance. I have coached many athletes now and it is interesting to see how each has a different way of dealing with this subject. The really top athletes, professionals, Olympians, etc. are all in the third camp. They use the "energy" and make it work toward their advantage. All of the top athletes get "excited": Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Summer Sanders, and even the great one- Wayne Gretsky. You just can't tell it from watching them on TV. Those top athletes have recognized the feeling of "being excited" as good and then they use it to raise their performance to an even higher level.

Have you ever been at a concert or gone dancing when a loud band was playing? You are up there close to the stage, the music is good, the company is great and you are really enjoying yourself? The music is loud, but the rhythm is great and you can literally "feel" the music running through your body. The deep "thump" of the bassdrum, the smooth rhythm of the guitar, the steady beat of the drums. What you are feeling is the vibration of the music and "energy" coming from the instruments and the musicians themselves. You have decided to accept this feeling and just let it flow throughout your body. BINGO! You have made a decision, conscious or not, but you have "allowed" yourself to become part of the energy that is being created by the band. Now, how does this relate to running and "being excited"? Well, it is similar in the manner that when you get excited before a presentation or race, your body naturally creates this "energy" and it moves throughout your body. It is a powerful and strong force. So strong that many people are not comfortable with it at all. They have incorrectly learned somewhere in their past, maybe it

was in the fifth grade play, that it was "bad". They were really "excited" beforehand, and had a major role in the play, but their belt came unbuckled during the play and their pants fell down, all of the way down.... and all of the kids laughed at them. Boom, their brain now begins to associate "excitement" with embarrassment and failure. So, the rest of their life, everytime they get "excited", they feel those impending signs of doom coming on.

Your job is to change your thinking, your paradigm, and "allow" your mind to relax and enjoy the feeling that your body/mind connection is creating. Change those "old" false beliefs about yourself and your bodies energy. Here is the key, pay attention now, **ALLOW** yourself to let the feelings just flow through you and **DECIDE** to **ENJOY** them. Feel the energy flowing into your arms, hands, legs, through your chest, into your back and up and down your spine. Just take a minute the next time you get "excited" to sit back and really **FEEL** that energy.

Once you have done that, then compare it with the same "energy" that you have felt when you were excited about a great success: when you got married, when you won your first race, when you had a child, when you had a great training run, or when you got that big promotion or raise. How does it compare? It's the same feeling, right? It is exactly the same tingling that you have when you watch your favorite team win a "down to the wire" game. That "tingling" gives you a feeling and it is the same exact feeling that you receive when you get "excited". They are one and the same. It is just incorrect thought patterns and false beliefs that have created a difference between the two supposedly separate feelings.

The energy that you get when you are "excited" is of great benefit to you in your everyday life and in your races. It opens you up, allows you to perform at your maximum, and gets you focused and ready for the effort. You must use it and realize how important it is to have those "feelings". IT IS GOOD ! Allow your body to flow with the energy and when you feel that "excitement" next time, you will know that it means you are ready for a peak performance in the office, on the track, or in the local 10k. Recognize it, allow it to flow through your body, accept it as "good and important" and then put it to good use...

Till next time...

Make it a healthy day.

Hunter Allen



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