



# Power Training. Powerful Results! **PEAKS COACHING GROUP**

**Name of Article:** More Important Than Winning

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That's right...there is something more important than winning! I know it is hard to believe, with as much as we focus on capturing that often elusive and very hard-earned race win, but there is something even more important than this. Actually there are several things. Enlighten me, you say? Gladly.

I like nothing more than to put in an amazingly hard or even easy effort and come up with a high placing or a win in a race. I train hard, am very disciplined and deserve to enjoy the fruits of my labor as do we all. This is to point out that just because we do not achieve what we intend to at the day's start, does not mean that all is lost. This is where perspective becomes very valuable. Something I believe in as a person, is that it is my job to build people up in every arena of life. This transcends into my coaching as well. Some may think it is akin to "blowing smoke" or just telling people what they want to hear. Avoid this sort of cynicism like the plague. This kind of thinking only evidences those who are afraid or unlucky enough to never have attempted to embrace living in the positive. They are not to blame, as they just haven't had the experience on which to base their opinions, and they are suffering from ignorance rather than malicious intent. Endurance sports are hard enough as it is without us being even harder on ourselves than we need to be.

I try to get people to believe in themselves and the possibilities. One of the single biggest limiters to success and performance are the boundaries we set for ourselves psychologically. You cannot achieve what you do not believe in, and changing this way of thinking takes time and practice and does not happen overnight. That being said, once positive thought is applied with diligence and consistency, the results are astounding. (This is all dependent, of course, on the fact that all of the other elements such as training, nutrition, etc., have been addressed thoroughly, as positive thought will not win a race alone). Getting people to change their minds and the way they approach life can be one of my greatest accomplishments as a coach. The funny thing is, that if this is the focus, then quite often the side effect of this is performance above and beyond what they could have imagined for themselves or anything they have ever experienced before.

Like I said earlier, winning is not everything, and can even be elusive if that is our only focus. I do everything in my own training and in coaching my athletes in order to set us all up for every possible chance for success. However, I also try to get them/me to let go of such attachment to the outcome. If we are overly focused on achievement, then we are constantly setting ourselves up for disappointment and failure if the result is anything other than victory. This is not to say that we don't give it everything we have, only that we are willing and able to accept the outcome, regardless of what it may be. Then what becomes more important is what we do with this experience. Are we going to get angry at ourselves and others? Are we going to get depressed and sulk for the rest of the day at what could have been? Are we just going to beat up on ourselves for the mistakes that we made? In all of these scenarios we are missing out on the lessons gained by defeat and making mistakes.

As a bike racer and as a human being, my greatest lessons have come from my mistakes, not from my victories. If I react in any of the ways mentioned above, my self-absorption engulfs me and keeps me from benefiting from the lessons inherent in the experience. Not only this, but it also keeps me from enjoying myself and being there for others. Why let outcomes that are not in our control ruin our day? Instead, what I try to convey to my athletes, friends, and acquaintances alike (as well as exemplify myself, and not always successfully so), is that what is truly important is not whether we win or lose, but how we handle these outcomes. Are we going to be humble in our victory? Are we going to hold our head high in defeat? What I have found to be most important is how I feel about the way I carried myself after it is all said and done, not whether I won or lost.

When I get a placing in a race other than what I wanted, I still feel bummed and upset, but I do my best to shrug it off. Then what I try to do is be there for everyone else to get my mind off my own "stuff." When I do not do this and let my emotions get the best of me, I am not happy at the end of the day with the way I carried myself. Our sport is self-centered enough not to get overly caught up in this way of thinking. When I am able to go cheer for my team-mates after I had a mechanical or a bad day, we all win and I feel much better about myself and the whole experience. Acting in a way in which I can respect myself makes me more fun to be around, a greater asset to bike racing, my athletes and my team mates, and makes getting that elusive win that much more worthwhile and exciting. (Not to mention the fact that others will be more likely to want to share it with you when it does come!)

In the coaching relationship, we as coaches have so many ways in which we can be of help and service to our athletes/clients. When this dynamic begins, it is often started in the guise of purely helping someone to achieve a very specific result. However, in the process of getting to know and work with an individual, we get many opportunities to help them improve their lives on so many levels. The little lessons we are able to convey, can, and often do transcend into so many other arenas of our athletes' lives besides racing and they, as well as we, are much better for it in the long run. Take advantage of these opportunities as a coach and as an athlete to practice the little things that make a big difference for us all, and ultimately make us better athletes, coaches and human beings.

Cycling and Endurance Sport Training Information By [Jeb Stewart](#)

\*Jeb Stewart is a USA Cycling Expert Level coach and has a Master's degree in Exercise Science and Health Promotion. He is certified by the ACSM, the NSCA, the NASM and is a head assistant coach and co-owner of the Peaks Coaching Group. He has a long history of competing in a variety of athletic endeavors at the national level and currently races on the road around the country annually. He specializes in coaching athletes of all walks of life using a holistic approach and is on the forefront of coaching cyclists with power. Jeb's passion for helping people go to the next level in all of their endeavors has led him to become a national presenter, writer, and consultant on anything related to training, performance, and wellness.

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