

## When There's Nothing: Try, Try Again



Melody Lipke  
—Co-Head Editor—

Today, I have no astute observations to offer. I have no wise advice, and no clever metaphor about improving life.

Call it writer's block or general frustration, but here I am wondering why I rolled out of bed just to be confounded by a blank screen.

That's why I'll be inspiring myself today, instead of everyone else.

Does that sound absurd? Why not stick around for it and see if it works?

Maybe by the end of this, I'll have cranked out a regular, full-on inspiring article full of superfluous adjectives and lots of "you can do it's". Who knows?

I need to start with something I find interesting. Let's see... I guess I can talk about chocolate. I like chocolate quite a lot. There's mild chocolate, dark chocolate, caramel, and white chocolate.

Ok, I think I've already exhausted that topic. Chocolate can't really be that interesting. In fact, if I haven't bored you to sleep, with that pathetic attempt, I'll take this as an opportunity to receive some

engaging conversation. .... Nothing? Fine, ok. I can take care of myself.

How do you fight apathy? Maybe a better question is: how did I end up here, drooling listlessly over a keyboard?

Perhaps I just spent so much time trying to be encouraging that I ran out of words. That- we both know- is a silly explanation for what is really just tiredness.

Life is tiring. We're all tired. Sometimes, we all complain. But I, your Friendly Neighborhood Commentary Writer, am not a quitter.

I will forge onward, despite a strong (sleepy) aversion to doing so. I will present for you, the reader, a glorious extravaganza of words, curated with exact care.

I will write about...my dog? Or maybe I can write about my recent fascination with cooking shows? I guess those are bad ideas. The big secret's out: I can't think of anything!

Nothing's really not working for me today. If you don't already know it- let me tell you: life is tough.

It seems like you can trudge through days, praying for a breakthrough, and...nothing.

But I'll never get this article done with that attitude! I need some "up-and-get-em",

some "vim and vigor", some... some "other synonym for the will to actually try".

What do I tell other people when they feel hopelessly uninspired and completely lackluster? Maybe if I tell myself those things I'll be able to write an article for you!

All right, myself, you can conquer the day! Even when you wake up and wish you could sleep another few hours but you know you can't. Even when success seems so, so far away, and all your efforts feel fruitless.

Even when you can't remember your reasons, when you can't find motivation in the same places you always did.

Even when you know how good a long break would be, but know you can't afford to take one. Even when it's the hardest thing you've ever done. Even when you feel like you'll give up, you take a deep breath and try.

It doesn't matter what you've achieved or failed to achieve in the past. What actually matters is the work that you put in every day to continue doing amazing things. If you don't like what you're doing, choose to do what you love. You won't love every moment: there will be times

when your motivation slips, and the most arbitrary, menial thing begins to feel impossible.

Each hour has potential. Every day. Each month. This builds up into years. Into stories, and legacies.

Ultimately, the biggest things in life are an accumulation of small things: of waking up when you don't want to, of working hard, unwaveringly.

Capture the stray moments of time, and don't let them slip through your fingers. Don't spend them doing something that won't matter to you tomorrow.

Human nature is by definition weak. It isn't instinctive to get up and work when you could just scroll through your phone for a couple hours.

Don't let a desire for life to be easy overtake your drive to succeed. Don't let daily tasks seem insurmountable just because you have to do them repeatedly, daily, and with the same focus.

The word impossible wants to break you. It wants to draw neat lines around you and confine your life to where you've already been and what you've already done. It wants you to put your worth in what you do instead of who you are. Don't believe in impossibility.

Sure, we all deserve a break sometimes, but you can't just earn your stripes and then kick back and relax for the rest of time.

It's important to always be forming new goals, to always have somewhere to go, and something to reach for.

Don't let little bits of lethargy smother your dreams.

Some days, you might not have any new ideas, you might lack style and energy.

Some days, there's no magical and brilliantly worded solution to your problems, but rather a simple one. Just keep going.

If you don't work very hard, don't find yourself straining a little bit every day, if you think that you've already met your biggest goals: its time to dream bigger.

If you are satisfied with your life- then great- keep at it and continue refining and chasing what you love. If you have passion, your desire to pursue it might wax and wane, but will never completely run dry.

Wow! I feel well enough to write an article now! I guess I used up all the space on myself though... Oh well.

Or maybe, just maybe, you'll find something for yourself there?

## The Failure to Control Our Brains Habits



Dominique Lopez  
—Section Editor—

I absolutely enjoy everything that I do in my everyday life but there is always something that gets in the way of me being able to fulfill my passions.

It comes from how quickly my mind changes my thoughts and how I feel I will be able to do. That I believe I can no longer achieve the success I want to achieve. It doesn't matter the event or even if it is just a test that will affect my whole life.

This happens the most to me when it comes to a swim meet, whether it be during the high school or summer season. When I see that we are swimming against one of our largest rivals or I'm swimming in one of my worst events, I automatically assume the worst is going to happen.

By the worst I mean: I'm going to miss the wall on my backstroke or I lose my momentum going into the last bit of the event and miss my state time. I find this to be the biggest problem I face when I am trying to perform faster than I have ever performed before no matter the amount of motivational music I listen to or the amount of times I tell myself I am the best I still fail.

If it isn't this problem than it happens in school when I realize that I have a hard test like finals that I'm super nervous about being my best and staying up for hours on end to study still convincing myself that I might not do the best I can.

It could be the simplest of things just for me to realize that I may not be able to do my best, I feel sick, or I am swimming and tell myself that I can't push myself to hard because otherwise I am going to not have enough energy for my other races even though I have about 1000 yards or 14ish minutes until I have to race again.

Yet somehow in this world I still feel like I am not the only one who enters such a nervous state that I can't even do the event without feeling like I am going to fail. It doesn't have to happen the same way as me it can even happen to others in their own way. And even then, it can happen out of the blue with no idea as to why you can't do this anymore if it never was a problem before.

It just takes that one moment to rattle us just enough for our motivation to leave and make us think we can't handle the event and that automatically makes it hard for us to perform at the best of

our ability. This could even be the fact that we have one mess up that it follows us around for the rest of our life. That's why I have the fear of missing my turn on backstroke.

Even though it was like two years ago I still have that fear and almost miss my turns because I psych myself out. This then leads to me slowing down my time because I look at the officials when I felt like I missed my turn to see if they are going to DQ me. (DQ doesn't me Dairy Queen it means Disqualify.)

According to Gregory Ciotti from Buffer blog there are five different ways your brain distracts itself and no longer becomes able to achieve what you believe you can. These include "fantasizing, visualizing the worst, choosing to "abandon ship," mindless busy work disguised as progress, and "winging it."

All of these are large factors that will play apart in my life but probably the most prominent one is visualizing the worst in every situation. Learning about all of these different types of brain buffers I realize how much I fall into these categories.

It doesn't matter the situation that I find myself in I always tell myself that it's not going to be the best that it can be and that I will never

end up achieving what I want so badly to achieve.

I sometimes wish that these problems didn't hold me back as much as I let them, I rather hope that I'll finally be able to push past not being able to see the future and rather move on no matter what.

All of these situations are specific based off of who we are causing us to feel as though we fall into more than one category. For example, my brain generally wanders when doing something that I don't enjoy. It's inevitable and even then, trying to fix it is putting me up to failure, and even then, the consequences are unbearable. Of course, by trying to fix it I mean I just take the simple step of holding myself captive in my room.

As I get better with these situations I still find myself not being where I want to be. I'm at the point in my life where I realize I need to begin the search for college and life goals but, no matter what, getting there I need to search for my opportunities where I can best excel yet still face the trouble of achieving success.

From swimming or being in a specific event for school to taking test we all are attempting to become our best selves somehow. Still we end

up with no end in sight of our mind not getting in the way. Attempting to be the best we can and not achieving it is where our brain gets the best of us. We are the allowance of this situation and not allowing it to happen is where failure finally finds its way into our life.

This is sadly the situation where we can't find ourselves achieving what we deserve to achieve and no matter how much we try to leave it in our past, so it doesn't affect us it still finds it way of changing how we feel.

As great as it feels to have your brain there to achieve the ability of being able to have muscle memory or even being able to memorize so you can perform at the best of your ability for a test still somehow our brains are enabled with more power than can seems to be grantable at all.

The power that our brains have to possess such memory where without them we can't be our absolute selves our even learn for a test. Yet our brains still don't have the ability of never allowing our thoughts to get in our way. They are useful for a learning, yet they get in the way of our ability to believe that we will be the best we can unaffected completely.