

Evan Fischer

10/7/2013

This I Believe

Just Keep Swimming

I would like to start by saying a quote and if you recognize this quote please raise hand. Don't say what it is from or who says it but just raise your hand. "When life gets you down do you know whatcha gotta do? Just keep swimming, just keep swimming, just keep swimming, swimming, swimming, what do we do? We swim, swim, swim..." Yes, this is said by our little blue fishy friend Dory from under the sea in that 2003 Pixar Disney Classic "Finding Nemo". Now when I heard this as a kid I more laughed than understood what it was really saying. I mean when you're in third grade are you really supposed to pick up on the life lessons that are being shown in movies? But it wasn't until some years later that I really thought about what she said and what she meant. And I think the best way to show what she meant is by telling a story about myself that I doubt any of you know.

Now you can ask just about anyone that really knows me and they will tell you that I am all about swimming. Not the kind of swimming we did in Brazil or the kind you do when you are hanging out with friends at a pool. I'm talking about the Michael Phelps, Ryan Lochte, get up at 4:45 every morning for practice, work till you feel like death kind of swimming. And if anyone let me have the chance I would talk about swimming until the cows come home. I could watch swimming 24/7 and not grow a bit bored. And in junior high and in high school that's what I was, a swimmer. Everything I did during the season and off season was tied to swimming. What other sports I did, how I worked myself out, everything! It was all tied to it somehow. Everyone goes through some kind of change in high school, whether it be in interests, friends or sports and I went through those changes too but something that held true from 7 grade to my senior year was that I was a swimmer, that's who I was. It defined me.

My senior year I had many goals that I wished to accomplish but the one that stood above them all was my goal to go to state in the 500 yard freestyle. For those of you that don't know a 500 yard freestyle race is twenty laps as in one going down, two coming back, three going down,

four coming back and so on. And that was my race. It was the one I was best at and the one I loved the most. I lived for it. Everyone else hated because it was considered one of, if not the, hardest race in high school swimming. But not me. I had loved that race since I was a freshman and I was always the teams 500 guy. Whenever coach said “Does anyone else want to try swim the 500 in this next meet?” Everyone would say “No just let Evan do it he’s crazy enough.” And I was pumped for the season to begin. The previous season I had had some troubles but this season I was ready to tear up the water. I had a goal and I wanted to achieve it. And then about 2 or 3 meets in I was already about 10 to 15 seconds away from getting on the schools fast five board. I was so ecstatic! The season had just begun and I was already going faster than I had the year before! I was pumped! I kept telling myself “keep this up and you’ll not only go to state but you’ll be in the top heat!” But then life through a hay maker at me and something happened to me that all swimmers dread. I plateaued. The same thing that had happened to me the previous year. A plateau in swimming is where your time for a race never really leaves the spot it is in. Doesn’t gain more than 5 seconds but doesn’t drop much more than 5 either. I was very upset! I tried all these different things that I could think to drop time but I never did. I talked to other swimmers, swimmers who had graduated and were swimming in college, my parents and of course my coaches but it didn’t work. I was getting so fed up. Meet after meet rolled by and as everyone else dropped time in their events my 500 did not.

And then one day towards the end of the season I was talking to my coach before warm-ups for practice and I said “Coach! I’m trying everything I know, I’m trying all these different things, I’m stretching real good before races, I’ve never missed a practice yet, I’ve been to every morning practice and Saturday practice, I’m not exhausting myself outside of practice, I’m getting as much sleep as I can, I’m eating pretty healthy, I even bought a friggin tape to listen to when I sleep to try and make my body not get tired during a race. I’ve done everything you and Mandy have ever told me to do without question, I’ve swam every yard in practice that I can, I have done so much technique work. So many times I’ve told people sorry I can’t I have practice in the morning, I’d love to but I have a meet Saturday and I would love to go to the basketball game but I am drained” I think because of swimming I went to about 7 or 8 basketball games in my entire high school career. “I will do anything and everything I can to achieve my dream of going to state, there is no sacrifice I won’t make! I have cared more about this than anything I have ever done; I have put more into this sport than any guy on this team or is this state! Please

coach! What am I doing wrong!?! Swimming is everything to me! This is all I am, this is WHO I am! Please! What am I doing wrong?! The season is nearly over and district's is only a few weeks away! What am I doing wrong?!"

My coach looked me right in the eyes and said something that will stick with me till the day I die and even after "You aren't doing anything wrong and don't you ever say or think that. I don't know why you can't drop time but I do how we get over it. We just have to keep doing what we're doing. Just keep swimming. It'll all fall together. It has taken longer than you or I would've liked but it will fall together. We just have to keep doing what we're doing. You just have to keep swimming." I told him fine and put my goggles on and jumped in for warm-ups.

And while I was warming up I thought about he told me to do and I have no idea why but every time I thought of "just keep swimming," Dorey popped into my head. And then I thought about what she said and I told myself "Alright, I'm gonna keep swimming, I'm not going to let this beat me! I'm not gonna back down or give up. I just need to keep doin what I'm doin." That very next meet I dropped 10 seconds. I was on the fast five board in the 5th spot, next meet which was conference, I dropped about 7 or 8 more and I was number 4, at districts I dropped about 5 seconds. I was 3rd fastest time in school history with a 5:03.69. For state they take the top 25 guys and I was number 24. I had done it! My dream was coming true. Now state is another story for another time but I had done it! I just kept at it and I was going to state. I kept swimming.

That's what you have to do. That's what we all have to do. Just keep swimming. Whether that be literal or figurative. No matter what the circumstance is. Whether it be school, relationships, sports or even choir, we just have to keep at it. We can never say die, we can never give up, and we can never back down. We have to keep swimming. Its mid-term time and I know some of you are probably getting pretty stressed, especially you freshman who have never been through something like this, I know because I'm going through it too. And it may feel like our work is in vain, that all the studying and writing and practicing isn't doing anything but it is. Never back down. Just keep studying, keep practicing, keep writing those papers, keep working on those projects, keep rehearsing your choral music and it will pay off. You may have to change a few things here and there along the way but in the end, even if it takes till the end of the semester, it will pay off. If you stumble along the way, pick yourself up, dust yourself off, learn

from your mistake and keep going, don't think that because of one fall you are permanently down. Get up and just like our little blue friend says, "Just keep swimming"

I'm Evan Fischer and I believe in just keep swimming. Thank you.