

SAILING FIT

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Sailing has really introduced me to so many different people from all walks of life. Along the way I ran into someone who had a pretty cool story to tell. This self description is what caught my eye " A Buffett fan looking to turn all my dreams into reality. Several years ago I decided to sell everything and move to Costa Rica. Best decision of my life" After digging a little deeper I realized he had something to offer that I thought all of us could benefit from.

Dr. Timothy Laskis is the author of "Finding your Costa Rica", sought after motivational speaker, behavior expert, personal development coach and organizational consultant. He holds a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology with an emphasis in Organizational Behavior from the California School of Professional Psychology (CSPP), Masters in Psychology from CSPP and Bachelors in Psychology from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Both his doctoral training and clinical internship are fully accredited by the American Psychological Association.

Tim's book, articles and/or personal story have been featured in a number of publications including Latitudes & Attitudes Magazine, The Fresno Bee, The Greenville News, A.M. Costa Rica and Valley Voice.

What is it that makes some of us put the rest of our lives on hold to travel around the world to compete in a 14ft one man sail boat, knowing that only 1 of us will go to the Olympics every 4 years. I am not trying to include myself as one of the sailors, but if you didn't already know, I quit a corporate job, left my apartment and the life I was living, to travel around with one of you.(Best thing I have ever done by the way) What makes some want to be the best sailor locally, nationally or at their club? Most importantly what's holding them back from achieving that goal? I've often thought that the fear of the unknown or success/failure could really hold us back.

Well when I met Dr.Tim I decided to ask an expert and see if I was just crazy or maybe I was onto something. I asked him if he thought the fear of success/failure could hold you back in competitive situations. I found his response to be pretty interesting especially in a race situation. He told me that if we have a fear of failure we focus on the failure. Consciously or unconsciously we look for reasons to validate that fear and the fear builds. For instance, if you are afraid of not doing well in a race and you go out there and miss a wind shift you may say to yourself "see that's exactly what I didn't want to happen" . Now you are focusing on that instead of your goals for the race. As your focus is drawn to that missed shift you are losing boats and one thing leads to another and you are at the back of the fleet. Now the fear builds for the next race and unless you can just shake it off it has a spiraling affect. Instead you need to focus on your goals and begin to validate those. So you missed a shift, your goal is to place better than you did in the last race. You keep thinking about that goal and you are more in tune with what's going on in that race and you were able to pass some boats. Now the success builds and you start the next race out on a positive note.

Goals! I bet some of you never even thought about your goals for any one particular race. That led me to my next question. I asked what his advice would be about setting goals to achieve better race results. He explained that you need to have two types of goals, short term and long term. Decide on your long term goal. Whether it be to go to the Olympics or win the summer series at the end of the summer at your club. Then break it down into smaller short term goals. Think about the steps to take to achieve to each short term and long term goal. Next WRITE IT DOWN and put it a place you will see it everyday. This will help make it more concrete. Our minds have so many things flying around in it that it would be easy to loose track of one your goals. He says to keep in mind that it's ok if you don't have all of the steps because your goals will grow and change along the way. With each goal that you set out to achieve you may learn something that will change one of the goals you set for down the road. He said one of the best things he thinks you can do is to find someone who is better than you or someone who has achieved one of your goals and ask them if you can pick their brain. Chances are they already have a blueprint or a plan they have followed and you can just copy some of the steps to help get you on your way. I really agree with that one. While laser sailing is pretty competitive on the water, off the water the sailors are one of the most helpful groups of people I have ever met.

Dr.Tim reccomeds that as you work toward these goals reward yourself for your accomplishments and keep it fresh. This way you won't loose momentum and "your sail will always be full of wind".

He also told me that visualization was a good tool to use. There are a lot of top athletes in all different sports who do this to help improve their game. He says to visualize an upcoming race or one that you have already done. This will help train your brain in knowing the skill you are trying to acquire. One thing he told me really surprised me, but after he explained it made sense. He states that "winning is an uncomfortable situation for some people". It can be threatening if you have never been there before and all of the sudden you have a whole fleet of boats following you. Some find it more comfortable to be back in the fleet where they usually are. They know what to expect. This is why you should visualize your race and where you want to be. Get used to the feeling in that situation. You can also visualize past races to see where you would have made changes thus training your brain for that to be a more natural pattern. Then when faced with that situation again you are comfortable with making the right moves to put you where you want to be.

Finding your Costa Rica came about from Dr.Tim's studies and his own experiences including his time living aboard on the east coast of Florida. I wanted to know what he wanted people to gain the most from what he has accomplished. The answer.."That they can make a change and to give them hope. It's ok to go left when everyone else is going right" He hopes that he can help people realize they have the tools that allow them to do whatever they want and that they can "thrive not just survive"

I really appreciate Dr. Tim taking the time to talk with me and hopefully you can use some of these tools to get the results your looking for on the race course. If you want to learn more about him you can go to

www.findingyourcostarica.com.

On a separate note. Two people who are turning a dream into reality are Anna(Tunnickliffe) Funk and Andrew Campbell. They will be in China representing the laser class in the 2008 Olympic games are both working very hard and deserve all the support we can give them. Visit www.annatunnickliffe.com and www.campbellsailing.com.

As always, if you want to hear about a certain topic or have any questions about this experiment feel free to contact me. You can always find me at www.sailfit.com or email directly to meka@sailfit.com. I look forward to hearing from you