

## *Tim Coy – Chapel, October 8, 2007*

Today, I wanted to talk a little bit about goal setting. One of **my** goals this year was to give a speech in Chapel. Since, like Hutch, I am pretty nervous right now, at this exact moment I would recommend to NOT set any goals EVER, because this is what can happen. But, as Mrs. Beare says, nothing worth having is easy, so here goes.

I am going to break this talk into two sections. The first is about inspiration, the second is about pushing your own personal limits, and as you'll hopefully see, the two are closely connected.

As many of you know, Ms O'Carroll ran in, and did incredibly well in, the Penticton Triathlon this past summer. This is truly an amazing accomplishment—especially when you consider everything that went into making it happen. For starters, she trained all last year while working full-time at the liesurely, “country-club-like pace” at Shawnigan Lake School! Just keeping up with your daily requirements can be a challenge around here, and when I tell you about Ms O'Carroll's training regimen, you should get a sense of the magnitude of her achievement.

She would normally train 6 days a week, taking Mondays off to do yoga. Her average week consisted of 2-3 hours of weights, 4-5 hours of swimming, 6 hours of running, and 8-10 hours of biking. When did she have time for all of this? Some days, she would get up at 5am, and work out until Chapel. Some nights, she would finish dinner, get changed and train until 10. And some days, she would train in the morning, teach all day, coach her sport, and then train in the evening. On the weekends, she often biked between 100 and 180kms. a day, taking her between 3 and 7 hours to complete. In order to do this, she obviously had to sacrifice a lot of her time, which meant no Internet, no staying up past 10pm, and most importantly to her, no “Grey's Anatomy” and no Dr. McDreamy! All of this hard work paid off for her because she finished third in her age group at the National Championship in Osoyoos in July—a podium finish which is very impressive. In August, she completed her year-long journey at the Ironman in Penticton—a nearly 4km swim, followed by a 180km bike ride, followed by a full marathon (42km run). In this international field, she placed 10<sup>th</sup> out of 77 with a time of 11 hours, 24 minutes and 26 seconds. Yes, she raced for 11 and a half hours! As some of you know, Mr. Kingstone also trained last year, but decided not to enter the Ironman, when he realized that 11 and a half hours of racing would rob him of 2-3 naps. I can assure you that Ms O'Carroll's inspirational efforts are only one of many similar stories in this very Chapel. For example, Max R. is competing in a Sports Illustrated sponsored All-Star Snowboarding competition in Colorado this March and Mr. Murray is climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro AND Mt. Everest in the spring.

Inspirational events are happening all around us. I will come back to that later, but now I would like to share with you a goal-setting strategy that I think works well. At this point, I want to stress that I am not saying this is the only way to approach your goals, but it is a strategy that you may find useful. Since coming to Shawnigan, I have learned a lot about the dangers involved in goal-setting. At the start of the year, you all filled out Student Plans where you listed your academic, athletic and Fine Art goal for the year. I'm sure some of you listed numerical or competition-based goals like “I hope to get 90% in Math,” or “I want to be Top 3 in the province in the 10k race.” These kinds of specific goals, in my mind, can be dangerous for 2 reasons. One: they are potentially limiting your level of achievement and 2: they are relying on factors that are out of your control. I am going to use 3 hypothetical situations now, and I will need to use some names, and so that I don't embarrass any students, I decided to make these names up. The first situation involves a cross-country runner named Ben K. His goal is to come 3<sup>rd</sup> in the province in the 10k. race. He trains hard all year. He runs in the morning, he runs at night. He sees Ms O'Carroll

biking as he runs around the lake every Sunday. Ben does everything possible to prepare for that race, dutifully lowering his time every month as the year progresses. On race day, Ben K. is ready. He is prepared and performs brilliantly, coming away with a great race and a new personal best time—and a 5<sup>th</sup> place finish. Should this be a running season that has a tinge of failure or disappointment associated with it? Ben K. had no control over what his competition was going to do that day and even though he trained as hard as possible, there were simply 4 people faster.

Another example of how these types of goals can be dangerous is the person whose goal is to get 90% in Math. We'll call this person Erica L. Now, Erica L. works diligently all year, never misses an assignment, goes to tutorial, makes cookies for her teacher, studies hard for every quiz and test, and after classes in June, she has a 96% in math. Wanting to know what she needs on the final exam to achieve her goal (and because she's really good in Math, she can do this), she figures out that she needs a 64% on the exam in order to have a 90% final mark. She doesn't consciously turn off the intensity, but deep down she knows that a 64 will be a breeze. She studies, but not overly hard, and receives a 73 on the exam and a 91 in Math. Her goal was achieved, but she was probably capable of more. At times, your goal can unwittingly serve as a limiting factor.

So if these types of concrete, numerical competition-based goals can be dangerous, how should you prepare for something that you really want to do well in? Well, it all relates to a simple phrase that most of us have heard since we were young. For this example, I again need to choose a hypothetical student—again nobody in particular—uhmmm, let's call him Marcus. Hypothetical Marcus, in this instance, is a bit of a loser. One day, when fictional Marcus (from Copeman's) was 6 years old, he was playing soccer when he tripped and gave the ball to the other team, who proceeded to score the winning goal. Obviously upset, little Marcus went crying over to his mom on the sidelines. Trying to console him, she pats his back and says, "What's wrong Marcus P.?" Oh, that's the mom's nickname for this fictional Marcus. Through tears, he says, "I tripped and gave the ball away and we lost, and this is like the 7<sup>th</sup> week in a row that I've done that!" The mom then says the phrase that most of us have heard, "It's ok, you did your best." [pause] "It's ok, you did your best," is a phrase that has turned into the lament of the loser. It's ironic to me because "your best" should be your ultimate goal. In the future, I would like to hear commentators say, "Congratulations to Roger Federer, 5-time Wimbledon champion, he did his best." Or "Here are the Gold-medal winning Canadian Women's Olympic Hockey Team. They did their best."

So, if your best is the ultimate goal, how do you go about finding your best, and how do you know when you've found it? As Mr. Robertson and Mr. Perry have both suggested earlier this year, it is inside of you. And how you get it out, is not easy. You need to make a commitment to push yourself everyday and everyday to improve, and raise the bar just that little bit. It takes discipline and mental toughness because the only person who knows if are truly giving it your best, is you. By preparing in this manner, by challenging yourself on a daily basis to try to find your limits, you will inevitably be prepared for that final game, exam or race. And how do you know when you've found your best? Well, the beautiful thing is that you don't ever actually find it. It's like Mr. Samuel said, "we don't really find what we're looking for, but we should never stop looking." Ask any golfer about their score that day and even if it was their best ever, they'll talk about how it could have easily been 1 or 2 shots lower with a putt here or a better bounce there. Your best is inside of you and if you work, and work and work, you will get close to finding it but you can always improve, always do better.

Now, some of you might be thinking, "but I do try hard and push myself, but I never win or people always do better than I do." What I'm hoping to show you is that the preparation is the

challenge, not the final test. Your job is to work hard all year, test yourself each day and on game day or exam day or race day, you'll be ready. If you know that you've done all you can to prepare, then the result on that day shouldn't matter. The only time you should hang your head or feel a sense of failure is if you did not give your all in the preparation.

There is no shame in doing your very best and finding out that someone out there is better—or was on that day. Should Ms O'Carroll feel bad that 9 people beat her this summer? Should she revel in the fact that she beat 67 people? Or should she just feel proud of her remarkable achievement and of the knowledge that she was at her best on that day because she was prepared? After Mr. Murray climbs Mt. Everest, should he feel bad that he wasn't the first one up there, or the fastest one up there? Or should he feel a great sense of accomplishment in completing a difficult journey?

If you need to be inspired, you can look around this Chapel and find many other stories of incredible achievements and accomplishments, but be sure to look inside of yourself as well. That is where your best lies and that is where you can find what you are truly capable of. And remember, it doesn't matter if you complete your journey and you're not "the" fastest or get "the" highest mark or are not "the" best. What really counts is that on that day you are "your" fastest, or earn "your" highest mark, or are "your" best.

Thank you.