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NERVOUSNESS is GOOD!!

Probably the most powerful and under-rated ally that you possess during your races is your own nervousness! Almost every swimmer I speak to seems to regard nervousness as a sign of weakness, something bad and which they are often ashamed to admit. This is the exact opposite of what it really is! Nervousness creates great performances. If you are not the slightest bit nervous before a really big race, it's quite possible that you are not truly psyched for the event, and this may not provide you with your best possible swim on the day.

This is not to say that you should worry if you aren't nervous! (Boy, some people will look for anything to worry about!). This is to say that when you ARE nervous, know that this is exactly how you SHOULD be feeling right before a good swim, and learn to enjoy this feeling, and use it to its best advantage. Nervousness is a sign that your energy is ready to go. It is literally a huge reservoir of potential energy, just waiting to explode into a huge swimming performance. This nervousness (that you may have hated in the past) is probably the very thing which has helped you to win races and earn all the PB's you have achieved in the past!

The point I am really trying to make is that the last thing you want to do is waste your energy hating the nervousness. Instead, embrace it, regard it as a good friend who will look after you during your race. And here's a really good reason why: Swimmers who hate their nervousness tend to become overly nervous - which is a completely different physical and mental state which does not produce strong performances.

So just know that when you feel nervous before an event, it is perfectly natural. Don't worry about it at all - instead, smile and know that it means 'you're ready'. Actually, nervousness is really not the correct word for this state at all. The fact is, when you feel this way before a race, you are actually full of 'anticipation', not nervousness. Anticipation basically means to be absolutely ready and raring to go (and yes, fear can also be mixed in with this emotion as well, which is absolutely fine). This anticipation is what brings on the physical shivers associated with nervousness, as the actual nerves in your body are twitching in eagerness and getting ready to 'perform'.

So if the word 'nervous' conjures up negative feelings for you, ditch it - get rid of it completely. Instead, if someone asks you how you're feeling before a race, tell them you are full of 'anticipation'.

This sounds far more positive as well as being technically the truth, and it also reminds yourself that you're truly 'ready to go'.