

## **S.H.S. Boys' Cross Country**

### **Positive Self-Talk**

Successful athletes and people have many things in common. Three of those that directly relate to the belief system are:

- Total believe in themselves and in their abilities
- Analyzing any losses in order to improve performance and techniques and strategies.
- Never seeing themselves as losers, even after losing a competition or two.

Our lives are spent thinking, on both the conscious and subconscious levels. Psychologists tell us that the mind cannot distinguish between real events and imagined thoughts. It is known that we have approximately 10 million thoughts per day and that at least half of those are negative! That means that we negatively critique ourselves over 5 million times a day. This degree and extent of criticism limits our abilities, devalues our efforts and seeks to limit our achievement even before we have begun. As athletes, to combat this negativism we need to examine our thought patterns and begin to “feed ourselves” positive affirmations—positive statements about our abilities, our achievements and ourselves.

An affirmation is a positive self-statement that is usually not true at the time, but supports the way you wish to view yourself or your abilities or a goal you wish to achieve during a workout or competition. **Affirmations are always positive, stated in the present tense and personal.**

Consider your own thoughts before practice or pre and post competition. What messages are you sending yourself? Some thoughts might be like the following:

- “I am not as good as ...”
- “I have no endurance and can't run well.”
- “I can't or don't run hills well.”
- “I can't kick at the end of a race.”
- “I don't belong here.”
- “I can't do this.”

Once you have examined your own thinking, you need to write down 3-5 of these recurring negative thoughts. Then for each of them, prepare an affirmation. That is, a positive statement about the way you want to be. For example, if you had the self-limiting thought of: “I cannot run the entire 5 K race”, you might formulate an affirmation such as, “I am strong and prepared to race the entire distance”.

Muhammad Ali once said, “In order to be a great champion, you must believe you are the best...and if you're not, pretend that you are.”

IN OTHER WORDS, TO BE A CHAMPION YOU MUST **BELIEVE** THAT YOU ARE A CHAMPION, **ACT** LIKE A CHAMPION AND **THINK** LIKE A CHAMPION.