

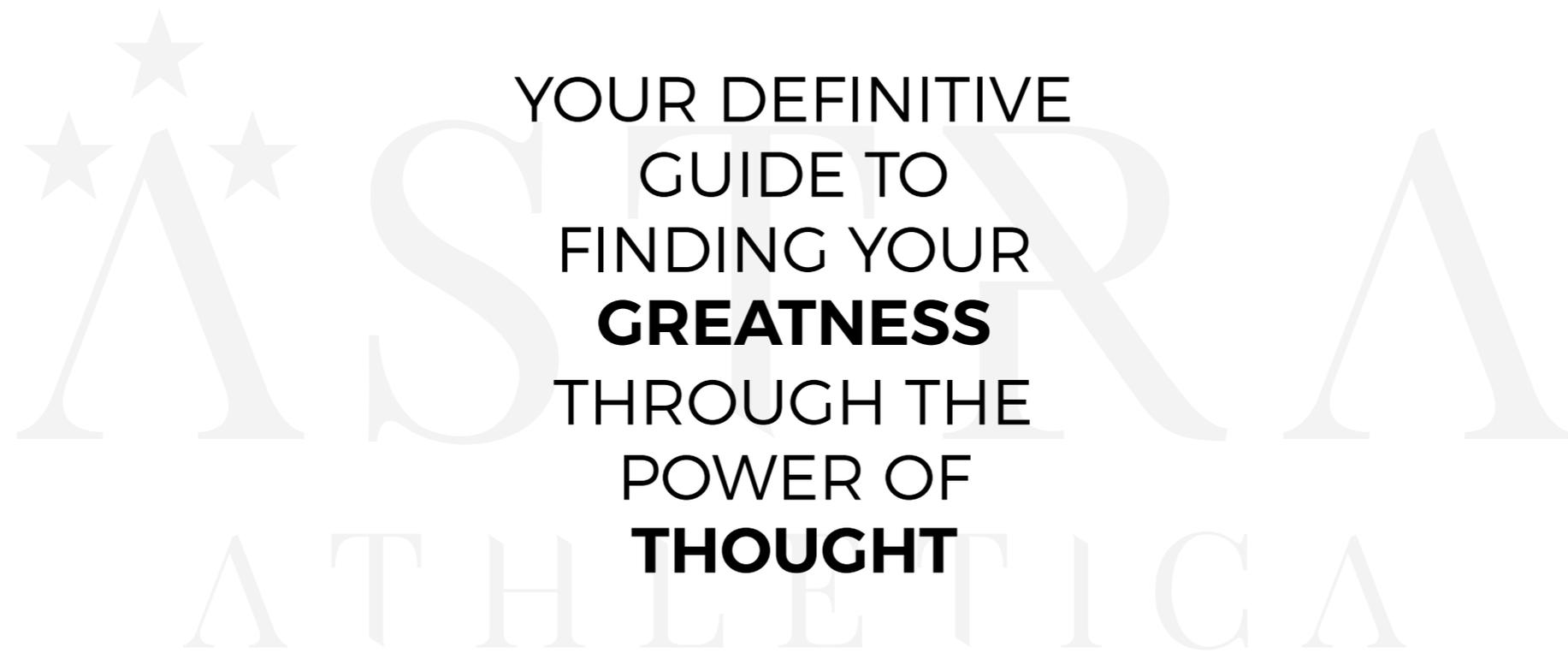


10 WAYS TO THINK LIKE AN OLYMPIAN

By Brent Hayden, OLY
Co-Founder Astra Athletica

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The background features a large, light gray watermark of the Astrathletica logo. The logo consists of the word "ASTRA" in a large, serif font, with three stars above the letter "A". Below "ASTRA" is the word "ATHLETICA" in a smaller, all-caps, serif font.

YOUR DEFINITIVE
GUIDE TO
FINDING YOUR
GREATNESS
THROUGH THE
POWER OF
THOUGHT

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FORWARD

“Becoming an Olympic swimmer certainly didn’t happen without its challenges and failures along the way. I personally think that talent isn’t enough because when winning is easy, we fail to learn the value of hard work, determination, and perseverance. A lot of that can be learned by the way we think about our challenges and failures that we experience.

I wrote this guide based on the top 10 lessons I learned that can be applied to anyone’s life. Whether you are an athlete, weekend gym warrior, artist, new parent, or entrepreneur, this guide will help you find your greatness by training the way you think.”

-Brent Hayden, OLY

Co-founder Astra Athletica

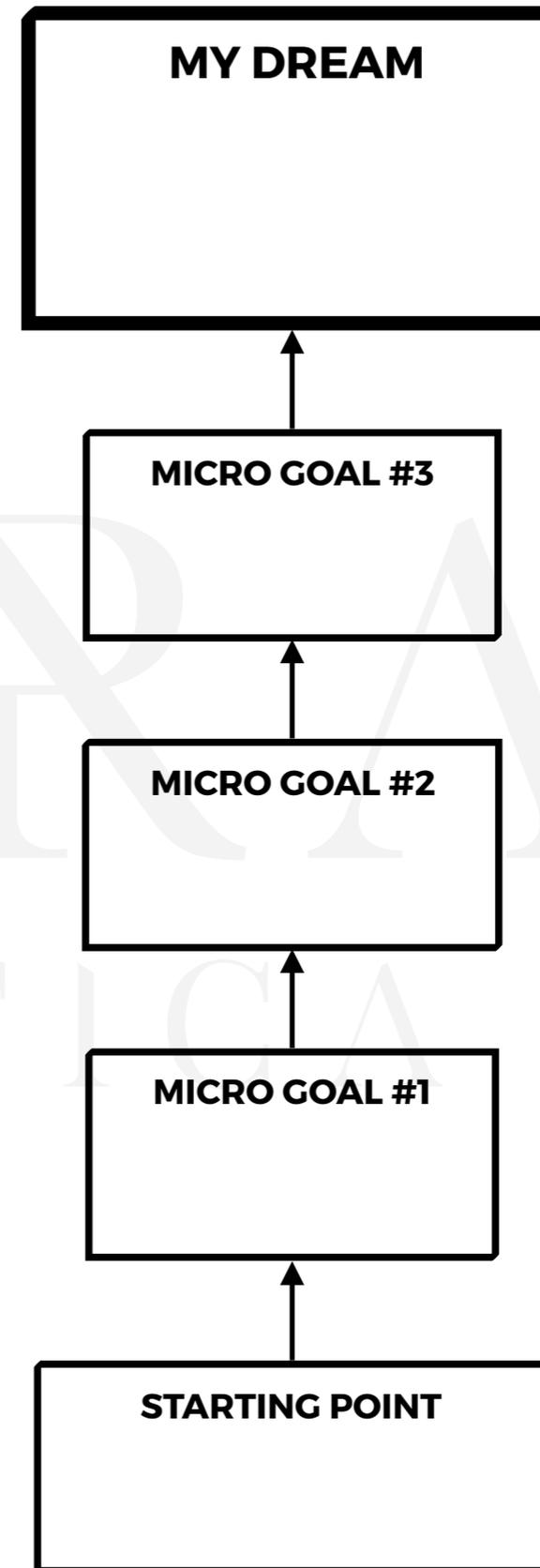
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1. PLAN TO DREAM

We've all heard that phrase "a dream without a plan is just a wish". But where do we start? Most people get discouraged at the very beginning because they look at where they are and where they want to be which can seem so far away and out of reach. Olympians don't allow themselves to be discouraged by this. The ultimate dream of standing on an Olympic podium is the sum of many smaller milestones that had to be accomplished first, all ultimately preparing them for the big moment. When I was going for my Olympic medal, there were a number of milestones I had to achieve for that to be a reality. First, I had to join a swim team! It took ten years before I finally won my first individual provincial gold medal, and from there I had to qualify for youth nationals and then junior nationals. By the following year I had qualified for my senior nationals before ultimately qualifying for my first national team in 2002. From there, every single summer, I had to re-qualify for the national team. And at every competition, I had to qualify for the finals. At my first two Olympics, I had accomplished all of the steps except for qualifying for finals. At my third Olympics, I finally reached that step to give myself the chance to swim for an Olympic medal. There were many other micro goals along the way, such as hitting certain times at in-season meets, or goals within practice, whether in the pool or in the gym. The more micro goals you can identify, the more progress you will be able to measure. It's like climbing a ladder, you can only get to the top by climbing each step on the way up.

Using the worksheet on this page, write in your dream that you want to achieve. Next, think about where you are currently and write that in as your starting point. From there, work your way up the ladder identifying three (3) micro goals that you need to achieve that will help you along your journey.



2. S-M-A-R-T GOALS

When setting goals, a good guide to follow is SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable (realistic), Relevant, and you have a specific Timeframe in which to accomplish it by. Use this table to turn any goal into a SMART one.

<p>Specific Well defined and easy to explain.</p>	<p>My goal is SPECIFIC because:</p>
<p>Measurable What measures will you judge your progress on?</p>	<p>I will be able to MEASURE my goal by:</p>
<p>Achievable Is the goal within the realm of possibility?</p>	<p>My goal is ACHIEVABLE because:</p>
<p>Relevant Is the goal important to you?</p>	<p>My goal is RELEVANT because:</p>
<p>Timeframe Have a clearly defined timeframe.</p>	<p>The TIMEFRAME I have to reach my goal by is:</p>

3. SACRIFICE vs. INVESTMENT

Olympians had to give up a lot of things that the rest might take for granted. This could be something as small as forgoing a night with their friends because they have early morning training the next day, to moving to a new city to have the opportunity to work with a new coach. But Olympians don't dwell on the things they miss out on. Instead, they focus on the investments, what they have to gain from making those decisions. When you focus on what you have to gain, it makes those tough decisions much easier to make, and not to mention, help you focus on the positive!

Going into my grade 11 year, I made the decision to begin training at a higher level. Unfortunately, my hometown didn't have a team that competed at this level and the closest one was 45 KM away. Four days a week, I had to wake up at 3:30 AM to be on the pool deck by 4:45 AM. I had to make the same distance afterwards to go school, and then again in the afternoon for the second practice before heading home. I never gave up going out to the movies with my friends or having much of a social life in high school. Instead, I invested in going to bed early so that I could get enough sleep for training.

Write down three (3) choices that you have or will need to make. Identify how the same choice can be perceived as a sacrifice and as an investment. Which one makes you feel more positive?

SACRIFICE

INVESTMENT

1. _____	→	_____
2. _____	→	_____
3. _____	→	_____

4. FAIL, SUCCESSFULLY

Athletes don't use failures as a measurement. Instead, it is simply a time to reflect and analyze. When an Olympian fails, one of the first things they do is debrief with their coach to find out the most obvious mistakes that he or she saw. Then, whenever available, they look at video of the performance. This often coincides with a metric readout of every point. If this were swimming, the swimmer and coach will look at the distance per stroke, the number of strokes per length, the arm cycle rotation, and velocity. When the error or weakness is recognized, it gives the athlete and their coach a chance to adjust their training and preparation to work on perfecting that area and moving forward. The more often an Olympian fails and continues to move forward, the more resilient they become. I personally failed at two Olympics, so that at my third, when all the odds were against me, I was finally able to stand on that podium. The secret is to make the failure mean something by learning from it.

I failed at: _____

List three (3) things that the failure taught you:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

5. OWN YOUR OWN LANE

Focusing on what you are doing, and not on what others are doing, or what they might think of you, is an important trait for Olympians. In school, I faced a lot of bullying because swimming wasn't a popular sport (mostly because of the speedos. Actually, probably 100% because of the speedos). But I couldn't let others have a negative impact on what I was going to do with my life. Sometimes we feel like we need to live up to their expectations so much that it actually hinders us. Remember, you are not the sum of what other people think of you, you are what you think of you. It is in swimming as it is in life, you have a lane, what you do in it is up to you. If you focus on performing your best in your lane, then the results will take care of themselves.

6. VISUALIZE

Olympians are great at visualizing the task before they do it. They are so good in fact even their heart rate increases. The more you see yourself performing a task or accomplishing a goal, the more realistic it is for you to achieve it. Olympians don't just visualize what they are going to do, they visualize how they are going to do it. For example, at the Beijing Olympics, I visualized myself winning a medal, and I then I didn't make the final. At the London Olympics, I never visualized the result. I visualized myself walking out on to the deck, standing on the blocks, hearing the starter's gun go off, hitting the water in a tight streamline, feeling my underwater dolphin kicks and transitioning into my breakout. I visualized my breathing pattern, my stroke rate and stroke length. I visualized my flip turn and not breathing off the first stroke off the wall. I visualized what I would tell myself when the pain to keep going became too unbearable. I visualized not breathing inside the last 8-10 meters and stretching out to touch the wall. I visualized everything I needed to perform.

7. THE POWER OF “YET”

Olympians have to understand that there are things about their sport that they might not be good at or as good as they need to be. I was notorious for my either slow or inconsistent starts. Instead of just accepting that as just something I'm not good at, I told myself “I'm not good at it...yet”. In my last two years of my career, I worked with one of the best sprinters in the world to learn his skills, and went to Estonia to work with a world renowned bio-mechanist. Finally, in my 100m freestyle final, I nailed the one perfect start that put an exclamation mark on my swimming career. Next time there's something you want to be able to do but you don't think you're good at it, just add “yet” to the end of your sentence.

Take a moment to think about something in your life that at one point you were not very good at that you are quite proud of today. This could be a music instrument, a sport, photography or painting, anything really. Can you imagine what would have happened if at the beginning of learning that thing, you just accepted that you weren't good at it? But you didn't, because you knew that it was part of the journey! Now think about something else that you want to be able to do but currently can't do it. Finish these sentences:

“I am not good at _____...yet”

“I can't _____...yet”

8. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE

You are a reflection of the people you keep around you. As Benjamin Franklin said, “If you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas”. You can’t rise up if you are surrounded by people who bring you down. They might not even be intentionally trying to do this but their general attitude in life could be. That is, they might be the kind of people who constantly complain about not being happy, where they are in life, or complaining about their co-workers or lousy customers. If you’re an artist, you should surround yourself with other creative people. If health, wellness, and fitness are important then surround yourself with those kinds of people too. You don’t have to surround yourself with successful people in order to be successful but they should be genuinely motivating and inspiring to be around. We all achieve more when we have supportive, inspiring, and/or motivating people around us.

9. CELEBRATE OTHERS’ SUCCESSES

It’s very simple: people who don’t celebrate other people’s successes are rarely successful themselves. When you see someone achieving a goal of theirs, be conscious of how you feel. Do you feel genuinely happy for that person? Or do you feel jealous? The more you are genuine in celebrating others’ successes, the more success is drawn to you.

In swimming, whether it was my own teammates, or my competitors, being supportive of everyone’s successes made swimming more enjoyable and ultimately, that supportive nature pushed me harder to succeed. As long as I had a good personal performance, I couldn’t help but feel proud of whoever swam faster than me. And when I got to stand on the podium, it just made it even sweeter when I was standing there with two other people who pushed me to get there.

10. THE THREE STAR LIFESTYLE

No matter how much you prepare, no matter how many self-help books you read, nothing is going to get you to where you want to be if you don't commit to living by your three inner stars; your mind, your body, and your soul. This idea has been built into our brand to empower you every day to keep going no matter the challenges you will face along the way. For me, the three stars were most tested at the London 2012 Olympic Games. Two weeks before the games, I suffered a severe back spasm that left me unable to walk for 4 days. I began to be consumed with thoughts of doubt and early retirement. Luckily, I had a coach who knew exactly what I needed to hear. He gave me that push I needed to realign my stars and refocus on my goal of standing on the Olympic podium. I walked out into that final as the oldest swimmer by 5 years and with a displaced rib that showed up that morning. But despite all the reasons I had to fail, that was when I succeeded.

The three stars in our logo represent the battles between your mind, body, and soul. They are placed in the tier position to represent an Olympic podium. Their position over the "A" represents you overcoming your challenges meanwhile, the "A" under the stars represent you reaching for your dreams.

Everybody has greatness inside them. I hope this workbook will help you find yours.

