



Fall. Time to Get Down to Business

The spring is easy: goal setting, long ski trips, letting the mind relax for the first time in 11 months. The summer is a breeze: hard work comes easy, the motivation is high, the path to success is clear, and the breakthroughs are abundant.

The Fall is when everything comes to a screeching halt. Training gets hard, the weather can be miserable, the excuses come quick and fast, and the doubt starts to sink in. Did I do everything I could this year? Are these time trial results really indicators of the season to come or are they just flukes?

Every year, with no exception, these mental hurdles show themselves. I have come up with a few solutions for when they come that lets my mind refocus on what is important.

1. **Gratitude:** This Spring, I had the chance to speak with Deena Kastor, American marathon record holder, who gave me her keys to success. Every day, I find three different things I am grateful for and write them down. Slowly, this habit has worked its way into how I process everyday situations. When the weather turns or the snow isn't falling, there is always something I try to find to appreciate.
2. **Playing games:** People don't often associate skiing as a game, but I try to find as many opportunities as I can to play. Whether that is taking a downhill more aggressively than my teammates, seeing if I can "Klaebo-run" up the steepest hill I can find, or avoiding every falling leaf while I roller ski, I am always trying to bring my inner child out.
3. **Process goal reminders:** Covid-19 was not the easiest for goal setting. Sometimes, my only goal was to find a time of day that I could run on the trails and hope to not see anyone else. Eventually, I was able to ground myself enough to think further into the future and remind myself of the changes I want to make in my skiing and training. Fall is when I remind myself of those goals and update my plan to reach them.
4. **Team:** If you want to achieve your best performance, find (or make) a team made of people who are, genuine, optimistic, hardworking, and passionate. All of those qualities are not innate, they take work, and your team may not have them all, but they are all contagious and achievable.
5. **Silver linings:** This season will be full of silver linings. With plans changing daily, the goals may need to be rearranged or shelved for the time being. I know mine have. But it has allowed me to train in different ways, explore places I would never have gone to before. It will allow me to ski more this winter and potentially focus more on local racing. Overall, it has given me an appreciation for my sport and my community that will carry me beyond this year and will lead to my success in the future.
6. **Meditation or mindfulness:** I use the app "Headspace", and even though I am not consistent, it is one of the most eye-opening experiences and a huge tool I use when I am struggling. I suggest everyone to try it.
7. **Are you hangry?** Part of becoming an athlete is learning how to eat like an athlete. I recommend "Run Fast, Eat Slow" by Shalane Flanagan which includes my favorite post-workout snack "Superhero Muffins".

This is not an exhaustive list of every trick to turn Fall into the best time of the year. If you have some ideas that you think would help me, let me know. Write me on my website at www.tylerkornfield.com/connect

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