



Training and Becoming a Committed Athlete

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Riding instructors wear so many hats they can sometimes feel like a multi-headed character straight out of “Beetlejuice.” One of your hats, committed athlete, needs to be sized big enough to fit MULTIPLE heads: you, as a competitor/athlete, and you, as a guide to your students as competitors/ath-

letes. As you know, juggling your desire to achieve your personal best while coaching your students can be challenging. It’s a journey that requires more than just physical prowess; it demands dedication, resilience and a deep-seated passion for your sport. A committed athlete understands that success

is not merely about winning but about the continuous pursuit of personal growth and improvement toward becoming your personal best.

This commitment manifests in various ways—early mornings spent training, late

nights analyzing videos and countless hours devoted to honing skills. It's about setting goals and pushing through obstacles, even when motivation wanes or challenges arise. A committed athlete embraces discipline in daily routines while also nurturing mental health and recognizing that balance is key to long-term success.

Being a committed trainer means fostering a supportive community within your barn while guiding with wisdom and encouragement. Remember, commitment is not just about individual achievements; it's about cultivating a kindred spirit in your barn.

Athletes dedicated to achieving their personal best demonstrate these attributes:

- ◆ **Discipline:** This is perhaps the most critical attribute of a committed athlete. Discipline involves adhering to a training schedule, maintaining a healthy diet, and making sacrifices in personal and social life. It's about showing up, even on days when motivation wanes. In short, it's persistence. As I explain in my book, "Perfect Enough," persistence means that the overcoming of difficulties may take some time or a few tries (or more!), but nothing can stop you – you persevere and are completely committed to success.
 - ◆ **Resilience:** The journey of an athlete is fraught with challenges – injuries, losses and setbacks and equestrians are also reliant on another living being that needs special consideration and care. A committed athlete views these obstacles as opportunities for growth rather than reasons to quit. They learn to bounce back, adapt and strive to reach their personal best. I offer an MP3, titled "Resilience for the Equestrian," that empowers you to exceed your own expectations while achieving your personal best at www.laurakinghypnosis.com/product/resilienceforthequestrian.TopofForm
 - ◆ **Growth Mindset:** A growth mindset is essential for fostering commitment. A positive mindset helps athletes maintain focus and concentration during high-pressure situations. When distractions arise, those with a positive outlook are better equipped to refocus their energy and attention on their goals. This mental clarity can be the key to executing skills effectively, making quick decisions, and ultimately, achieving success in competition.
 - ◆ **Passion:** A deep love for the sport fuels commitment. When athletes are passionate about what they do, the hard work feels less like a chore and more like a calling. This intrinsic motivation drives them to push their limits.
 - ◆ **Focus:** Committed athletes concentrate on their goals and block out distractions. Concentration is the ability to stay focused on the tasks you need to master in order to achieve your peak performance. We all have this ability, but most of us have difficulty concentrating consistently. Fortunately, you can improve dramatically with some practice. You can find and watch my free 58-minute training, "Focus and Positive Thinking for Competition," along with many other free videos on YouTube at www.youtube.com/@laurakingcoaching.
- ### The Role of Coaches and Trainers
- While athletes must embody these qualities, the role of coaches and trainers is crucial in nurturing commitment in their students and within the barn family. Check out some of my tips below to get you and your students on the road to becoming committed athletes.
- ◆ **Set Clear Expectations:** Meet with your students to help establish clear, attainable goals for them. The goals should be specific, achievable, relevant and time-bound. In my book, "The Power to Win," I explain my system I use for outcome creation, planning and achievement. The system takes advantage of hypnosis' ability to turn suggestions into behaviors and Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) to help manifest the desired outcomes. You can find my book on Amazon or go to www.laurakinghypnosis.com/power-towin to access my online course.
 - ◆ **Create a Positive Environment:** A supportive and positive barn atmosphere can significantly impact an athlete's commitment. Cultivate an environment where your riders feel safe to express themselves, make mistakes and learn.
 - ◆ **Model Commitment:** Trainers have the ideal opportunity to lead by example. Your dedication, work ethic and passion can inspire others to mirror these behaviors. When athletes see their coaches investing time and effort, they are more likely to adopt a similar mindset. Demonstrating commitment in practice, preparation and personal conduct sets a powerful precedent and allows them to model your behavior. The theory of modeling asserts that we can achieve excellence in anything by finding a place where it already exists and then copying that behavior. Modeling is a powerful way for your students to retrain their brains to achieve their personal best.
 - ◆ **Encourage Ownership:** Empowering athletes to take ownership of their training and performance can enhance commitment. Involve riders in the decision-making process, whether it's setting personal goals or strategizing for competitions. When your students feel a sense of ownership, they are more likely to invest in their progress.
 - ◆ **Build Relationships:** Strong relationships between trainers and athletes foster trust and loyalty. Take the time to understand students' motivations, fears and aspirations. This personal connection can inspire athletes to commit not just to their own success, but to the success of the entire barn family.

◆ **Instill a Growth Mindset:** A growth mindset is essential for fostering commitment and crucial to achieving success. Remember that what you think is what you get and every thought causes a physical reaction. When I wish to counter my negative thoughts whenever self-doubt or negative self-talk enters my mind, I mentally say the word “CANCEL.” Then, I replace the negative thought with a positive one.

To help you along your path toward a growth mindset, consider teaming up with a sports coach and/or sports hypnotist to elevate your performance. A sports coach can provide personalized strategies and help you set achievable goals with increased mental toughness and focus. A sports hypnotist can improve your self-belief, confidence, focus and motivation while helping you overcome mental barriers to excel at the highest levels. Plus, having someone in your corner can make the journey even more enjoyable! As both a sports coach and sports hypnotist, I can help you achieve your personal best. Call or text me at 561-841-7603 and let me help you instill a growth mindset.

◆ **Celebrate Progress:** Recognizing and celebrating both individual and barn achievements can reinforce commitment while boosting confidence and motivation. Highlight progress, no matter how small, to remind athletes of their journey and the fruits of their labor. Celebrations can range from verbal acknowledgment to social media brags to awards to barn parties.

◆ **Encourage Team/Barn Cohesion:** Building a strong sense of barn/team unity can enhance individual commitment. It’s also just more fun to be a part of the group!

◆ **Foster a love of the sport:** Ultimately, a committed athlete is one who loves their sport. Instill a passion for the horse and

the sport in your athletes and remind them of the joy and fulfillment that comes from time spent with their horses while on the path to becoming their personal best.

Becoming a committed athlete is a multifaceted journey requiring dedication, resilience and passion. It’s a path filled with challenges, but the rewards—growth for the horse and the rider, a sense of camaraderie and teamwork, and the thrill of competition—are immeasurable. Trainers play a pivotal role in this journey, serving as mentors, motivators and guides. By fostering an environment that emphasizes clear expectations, positive reinforcement and personal connection, you can inspire your athletes to commit not only to their sport but to their own development as individuals. In the end, commitment is not just about achieving success; it’s about embracing the journey and the lessons learned along the way.

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About the author:

Laura King is the Director and Founder of Summit Hypnosis and Wellness and is a Certified Hypnotist, NLP Practitioner, Life Coach, and Sports Performance Coach. Laura has written and published several books and workbooks, including “Power To Win” for equestrians and “Perfect Enough,” a guide to help you evaluate your perceptions and experiences around vital areas of your life.

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