



What's the Story?

What can you learn from an Olympic Gold medalist?

The Rio Olympics will no doubt write a new chapter in the field of human achievement. The winners will be those who have analysed the competition, planned every last detail and left nothing to chance.



Steve Redgrave, the British Olympic rower, tells a story of how he adopted a proven system to help him win his 5th Olympic gold medal.

Steve was inspired by an American swimmer, John Naber who was determined to win the 100 metres backstroke at the 1976 Montreal games. John analysed past records and plotted a graph of the fastest times. He noticed there was a definite pattern. His analysis suggested the winning time would be 55.5 seconds – 4 seconds faster than his current speed and a huge margin to find in a 100 metres race.

Achievable goals

Looking at the challenge more laterally, John broke it down into manageable pieces. There were four years to the next Olympics, so he'd need to save one second a year. Training 10 months per year, he'd need to save a tenth of a second a month.

Thirty days a month meant one-three-hundredth of a second to find per day. Four hours training per day, would mean a saving of one-twelve-hundredth of a second per hour. And this is where he really got his challenge into perspective.

Bite-size chunks

The blinking of an eye takes five twelve hundredths of a second – so he was looking for one-fifth of an eye blink improvement every hour of training. That he could imagine and was possible.

John won the gold medal in 1976 with a time of 55.49 seconds. Steve applied the same philosophy and made history by winning his 5th gold medal.

Break your goals into manageable steps that you believe you can achieve.

3 tips on writing your best stories

We're always on the lookout for top tips from successful storytellers. Here are 3 from the highly experienced blockbuster writer Jilly Cooper.

1. Keep a diary
2. Think of your story through your 5 senses – sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste. It will bring your language alive.
3. Write from the heart

Great Answers to Tough Questions at Work

We were asked to review a book by a speaker friend, Mike Dodd on “Great Answers to Tough Questions at Work”. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Great-Answers-Tough-Questions-Work/dp/0857086391>

Mike is an ex-journalist who has worked globally asking tough questions. We found his book interesting, entertaining and insightful on planning, preparing and practicing for both a big Q&A or for a tough question session with a discerning client.

It reminded us of the advice we give to our delegates when they're putting together their core messages. Just like a lawyer you need to have worked out your closing position in order to both ask and answer tough questions.

We liked Mike's book and gave him a testimonial which is on the book cover.

You will certainly be ready with Great Answers [and be able to pose some tough questions yourself] after reading this book.

Good luck with your stories, presentations and pitches in 2016.

Barry Graham & Sally Clare



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