

THE POSITIVE SIDE OF LOSING

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So, what's so positive about losing? Well, absolutely nothing when it's happening to you. Especially if you just missed a ball that cost you the match and you're sitting there stewing in anger and frustration as you watch your opponent run out to win. It's difficult to be positive in that situation, but rest assured that after the smoke clears and the dust settles, there are some positive things that come out of losing.

For starters, while losing is not on anyone's agenda, for as long as we compete in this great game of pool, losing will always be a part of it and no one is exempt. The greatest pool players in our history have all suffered their fair share of losses in their journey to becoming great champions. Losing is part of the process in achieving greatness.

There are lessons to be learned from our losses. We learn which shots cost us games and matches and we work to improve those areas of our games. Losing tells us we need to strengthen certain parts of our game whether it's mechanical or mental. A heartbreaking loss can motivate us to become better and stronger players.

Every defeat has a lesson that can be learned to improve the chances for future victories. We gain experience, growth, and improve as players and competitors when we fall short of winning. Losing tests our patience, determination, dedication, and love we have for the game. It spurs us on to achieve greatness. Just as we learn how to walk by falling down, we learn how to win by losing.

It reminds me of the story of Benjamin Franklin and how he failed over 100 times while experimenting with one of his inventions. His assistant asked him how it felt to have failed 100 times and his reply was; "I haven't failed 100 times. I've discovered how it's not going to work 100 different ways."

Our defeats teach us to re-evaluate our mistakes so that we can make adjustments, fine tune our games, and learn how to achieve success. It is said that: "Experience is what you get, when you didn't get what you wanted."

Years ago while playing in a tournament; I sat in my chair watching my opponent run the last few balls off the table to win the event. It occurred to me why I was about to lose; I simply made more mistakes than my opponent and I failed to execute when I had the chance. As I sat there in my chair I created an acronym for the word "**LOSE**" to help me remember why I lost: **LACK OF SOME EXECUTION.**

Often times when we lose, the only thing we remember is that our opponent got lucky and won the match. But how did they get to the table in the first place? How did they win the other games and get on the hill? By taking a close look at our losses, we will see that at some point we failed to execute. Either we missed a ball, played poor position, a bad safety, scratched, fouled, etc. In other words, too many unforced errors. At the highest levels of play the error can be as small as failing to pocket a ball on the break. One way or another, at some point in the match, there was some lack of execution on our part. Losing teaches us that we need to make fewer mistakes if we want to win. The player, who makes the least errors and therefore plays the better game, wins in the long run. If we make fewer mistakes than our opponents and capitalize on their mistakes, we will find ourselves winning more games, matches, and tournaments.

The next time you fall short of victory, take a close look at where you failed to execute and make it a point to work on those things in your next practice session. The bad news might be that you lost, but the good news is that those shots are golden opportunities for future events. The shots will come up again and

next time you'll be ready; perhaps in a much more important match or tournament. Remember that losing is part of the growing process in our journey to obtain greatness.

Until next time, keep practicing, play well, and we'll see you in the winners circle!

Jim Carmona