



Your Focus Determines Your Results

by Four-time Olympian Ruben Gonzalez

I started luge in 1984. For 24 years I didn't like the sport of luge. I forced myself to slide because the luge was my ticket to the Olympics. The Olympic dream kept me going. And the dream was always in focus.

Whenever I was up at the start tower preparing to slide, my heart hammered in my chest, my mouth dried out and my hands were covered with sweat. Fear gripped every fiber of my being.

The fear increased as my sled gained speed down the track. By the time I crossed the finish line I was absolutely petrified. I was out of breath and on the verge of hyperventilating after every run. Each run produced a physical strain on my body that was felt in muscles I never even knew I had.

After a day of training (5 – 6 runs) I was so tired that I just wanted lay down and sleep. Needless to say, back then, the sport of luge wasn't a very exciting experience for me. The only thing that kept me going was the Olympic dream. And the dream was clearly in focus.

I've always believed that successful people are willing to do the things that unsuccessful people are not willing to do. By acting on that belief and maintaining my focus, I was able to realize my Olympic Dream three times.

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In 2008, 20 years after competing in the 1988 Calgary Olympics I found out that no one had ever competed in four Winter Olympics each in a different decade. That meant that if I competed in the 2010 Vancouver Olympics I would become the first person to do so. The idea of making Olympic history made me decide to make a comeback after a 6 year break.

Before returning to the luge tracks, I called my good friend Jonathan Edwards. Jonathan competed in the 1994 Lillehammer Olympics. Jonathan actually enjoys the luge. I thought he might be able to give me some insights that would help me get over my fear of speed. By the way, if at this point you think it's ironic for a luger to be afraid of speed, I'm with you. In fact I couldn't agree with you more.

When I told Jonathan about my fear of speed, he said, "Ruben, you're focusing on the wrong thing. Luge isn't about speed. Every luge track is fast. That's a given. Luge is about who has the best time. You could be clocked at the highest speed but if you crash, you lose the race. You need to start focusing on what you need to be doing in each section of the curves to insure that you have the best time. Focus on the steering and the fear will disappear."

It made sense. I was focusing on the circumstances – the speed. I needed to focus on the action steps that lead to a successful luge run – proper steering.

I went to the track with renewed determination. I would focus 100% on my steering and 0% on fear. Incredibly, when I did, the fear disappeared. Overnight, simply by shifting my focus, the luge went from being an awful experience to being a fun and exhilarating ride.

Note that it didn't take me weeks, months or years to transform my fear into fun. The transformation occurred the moment I stopped focusing on my circumstances and started focusing on what I needed to do to succeed.

What about you? What are you focusing on at work or at home? Are you focusing on the economy or on how you can be the best that you can be?

Are you focusing on how little the other guy does at work or how you can become the most valuable person at work? Market conditions and other people's attitudes are out of your control.

Don't focus on the challenge. Focus on what you need to do to excel– at work, at home, in your relationships and in every other area of your life.

When you do, you'll immediately transform your experience and begin gaining confidence. You'll start getting the best results in your life. Guaranteed!

Put It into Action:

Stop focusing on your circumstances. Focus on what you need to do this minute to get your intended results.



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