

# The Ripple Effect: How Our Words Impact Our Team

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## Anxiety spreads. Confidence spreads too. You choose which one you pass on.

Science shows that emotions are contagious. When one athlete shows visible panic, negative self-talk, or fear, others unconsciously absorb that energy. The brain mirrors what it sees and hears.

This means your words in the changing area, on poolside, or in warm-up matter more than you realise.

You are always influencing the emotions of your team.

## Honesty vs. Unhelpful Panic Talk

Honesty = 'I feel nervous, but I'm ready to give my best.'

- Unhelpful panic: 'I'm going to fail. I can't do this.'
- Honesty builds connection
- Panic talk spreads doubt



## Reframing Language Before Competition

- Instead of: 'I'm scared I'll mess up.' → 'I'll focus on my first move'
- Instead of: 'Everyone is better than me.' → 'I'll swim my best.'
- Instead of: 'What if I fail?' → 'What if I succeed?'

## Becoming A Calm Leader

Leadership is not about being the loudest. It is about being steady. A calm tone of voice, controlled breathing, and positive body language signal safety to others.

- Speak slowly and clearly
- Stand tall with relaxed shoulders
- Encourage others before they ask for it

**We speak with confidence. We compete with courage.  
We rise together.**

# How To Support A Teammate Who Is Struggling

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## Strong teams don't leave anyone emotionally behind

Signs a Teammate May Be Overwhelmed:

- Withdrawal or unusual silence
- Irritability or frustration
- Negative self-talk
- Avoiding eye contact



## Be Someone Others Feel Safe Around

- Ask if they are okay
- Listen without interrupting
- Avoid dismissing their feelings
- Offer calm reassurance
- Use supportive language

## Teams thrive when athletes know they are supported regardless of results. Emotional safety builds great performance.

- We check on each other
- We do not blame each other for poor performance
- We encourage before criticising
- We celebrate effort
- No one competes alone



**“  
We win together  
We lose together  
Always together  
”**