

The Battle for Medals on Ice

Elizabeth Manley, a Canadian, attracted the attention of the world as a competitive figure skater.

In the 1988 Olympics, no one expected her to do well because of her poor record in competition. She let it be known that she was going to have a good time and enjoy the experience. She didn't worry about failing; she tried things she wouldn't ordinarily attempt, and was relaxed in doing so. She ended up winning the silver medal.

Meanwhile, Debi Thomas, an American and the 1986 world champion, was favored to win the gold at those same Olympics. However, she drew the last slot and waited anxiously as the other skaters, including Manley, performed well. When Thomas' time came, she did as many others have done at times – she suffered under the pressure and her performance was not up to her usual standard.



Canada's Elizabeth Manley (left) celebrates her silver medal with German gold medalist Katarina Witt (center) and U.S. bronze medalist Debi Thomas.

Carl Mays, a motivational speaker who lives in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, who has spoken at some Life Care meetings, addresses that competition in his book *A Strategy for Winning*.

He said the performances of Manley and Thomas, and how each let the pressure of the moment affect them, is instructive for anyone in other fields of endeavor. For example, he said his son, Carl Mays II, was scheduled to test for a higher level in the martial art of Kung Fu.

“As I spoke with him on the phone about his test, I said, ‘You need to watch one of my video tapes to get psyched up.’ There was a brief silence. Then he said, ‘What I need is something to get me psyched-down!’”

Therein is the lesson for all of us. Do your homework. Prepare. Practice. Plan.

Then when the time comes to perform, try not to overthink. Put things on automatic as much as possible.

And most of all, don't fear failing.

– Beecher Hunter