

Preparing Emotionally & Spiritually for Competition: from Queen Pageants to NFR Rodeo... Be Prepared!

by Joyce Loomis

Written especially for Carrie Markley competing for Miss Rodeo Oklahoma and
Bobbie Jo Loomis competing for Miss Rodeo America — both in 1997.

We are made up of three parts: body, soul and spirit (2 Thess. 5:23). To be prepared in every area of our being means to be *totally* prepared. To prepare in one or two areas means to be *partially* prepared.

For example, everyone understands the body part of preparation (hair, makeup, fitness, tuning skills, eating right, being rested, and physically at your best), so you look the best in those Wrangler jeans. And guys, you need to be ready to take on ten head of rodeo's toughest stock. The girls have to practice riding different horses for diversity, and the ropers have to have their horses tuned and ready. It's all part of being physically ready.

Your soul area includes your mind (thinker, your will) chooser, and your emotions — feelers. You hear a lot about positive thinking and focusing on believing in yourself, etc. This is an important part of total preparation.

MIND — thinking positive thoughts, surrounding yourself with positive, truthful folks who support you one hundred percent.

WILL — choosing and making wise choices.

EMOTIONS — listening to your emotions, but not being controlled by them.

EMOTIONAL PREPARATION:

Why are you competing? This is an important thing to identify. Humans have two basic needs:

1. To be connected — loved, nurtured and accepted.
2. To have purpose — contributing to someone or something.

Many of us have grown up searching for basic needs to be met. Apart from the knowledge of God and God's plan for us, we create misplaced dependencies. In simple words, we search to become whole either through excelling, through another person, through success at school, work, talent or winning, etc.

To the degree we are unwhole, we tend to imbalance and search for wholeness. We are not blaming parents (none of us were raised perfect), we are identifying our motivations here.

My life is a very good example of this. I grew up in an alcoholic home

which resulted in my mother's death by a car accident, and my father's death by suicide. Basic needs were unmet in many ways. I searched for significance in many ways. I did not find fulfillment in World titles, marriages, money, land or successes. I found fulfillment of my basic needs after accepting Christ into my heart and learning His plan for my life.

Learning who I am in Christ, what I have in Him, and what I have as a child of God was a learning process that has literally changed my life. I found out that someone loves me so much that nothing I ever do will change or dim that



Preparation through prayer behind the bucking chutes at the NHSRA Finals.

love. He loves me — win, lose or draw! He and only He knows what is best for us as individuals.

Remember the line in the movie, *Cool Running*, "If you're not enough without the GOLD, you'll never be enough with the GOLD." Winning will not bring the acceptance you are longing for deep in your soul area. If you are competing to find acceptance, you have probably suffered rejection. If you are competing to feel good about yourself, you probably have low self-esteem. (Low self-esteem is a worldly term for *I don't know who I am in Christ*.) If you are competing to fulfill an emotional need,

you have probably heard some emotionally abusive statements such as: "you are stupid," "you are a loser," and "you will never amount to anything." If you are competing to feel loved, you have probably had a lack of nurturing love shown to you.

**Only God can fill all our needs.
He does this in marvelous ways!**

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION:

We are a created being — again remember we are body, soul and spirit. The spiritual preparation is often limited to a few "Help me win, Lord" prayers. The God who created us has left us some awesome guidelines for success! Let's look at one of them.

God says, "I have plans for you, plans to prosper you." God knows you better than you know yourself. He knows what will be the greatest blessing to you!

You might say, "Are you telling me not to set my goals to win? Isn't this being negative?"

NO, I am telling you that there is a fine line between negativity and reality. What I am saying is to look at your competing in the light of God's Word.

In 1 Cor. 9:24 Paul tells us, "Don't you know that all run in a race and only one will win?" He goes on to say, "*Run to win. All who strive to master something learn to be diligent and temperate.*"

He isn't saying not to compete, but to compete with an incorruptible goal in mind, as well as the earthly win.

THINK ABOUT THIS... prepare with all your heart — absolutely — but make your greatest aim to *seek* the Kingdom of God first (Matt. 6:33), and all other things will be added to you. The world has it backwards... seek the worldly things first, give God an hour on Sunday. Prepare diligently, **BUT** leave the results with God. Only one will win!

Many young women take a leave from their lives to represent their state and prepare to compete in the MRA pageant. Their whole focus is to win MRA, and they are not thinking of anything beyond the pageant other than being the winner. When I am coaching

a contestant, one of my first questions is, "What is your plan B; what is your plan C?" This creates a flexibility in your thinking. I have watched contests and competition, both in queens and barrel racing, for many years. People who have no plan B usually leave competition...

- ... devastated,
- ... saying the competition was rigged (political is the favorite word),
- ... being bitter,
- ... having a hard time letting go of their titles if they have one,
- ... making themselves look bad and giving pageants a bad name.

This attitude usually carries on in their families and friends. It's hard to remain objective and, at the same time, flexible and trusting. It is hard to see a loved one prepare, dream and work toward a goal, and then that goal doesn't come to fruition. This is where trust comes in.

Talk about this before starting into competition, not at the end. Ask God, "What is your plan for my life?" Tell God you will prepare 100%, but you will trust *Him* with the outcome. Have a plan B; give yourself some break time, then move into that plan.

Can losing be a win? ABSOLUTELY! I believe that pageants and rodeo competition give young men and women tremendous opportunities. It teaches you discipline, poise, and gives you more confidence to be in front of the public and in your capabilities. It prepares you for public speaking and TV and radio interviews. You will also make lifelong friends.

I have seen ladies years after a pageant competition who still carry scars of rejection due to the state of mind they had when they went into competition. So whether for NFR or MRA...

- ... prepare for all you are worth,
- ... remember that only one will win,
- ... have a plan B and plan C.

May God bless you in all you do, and may you grow closer to God in all you do and trust Him with all your heart (Proverbs 3:5,6).

Some of the greatest blessings come from the prayers that God answered... No! Sometimes His plan is far better.