

60 Second Leadership



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This book is dedicated to my wife of over 25 years, Amy. You are the quiet leader to whom I reference in Time Out 12. One of your favorite sayings is a verse in a country song, “Life’s so sweet in the passenger seat”. Happy to be in that seat, you quietly impart remarkable influence and wisdom in my personal and professional life. You are the rock and inspiration behind all I do. Every day, I’m inspired and incredibly grateful to come home to you!

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I don't need easy; I just need possible.

– Bethany Hamilton

Time Out 1

Goals Drive Performance

It was 1982. I was 16 years old and pursuing a goal. My dad and I got on the bus, and they drove us 26.2 miles away. We got out and headed to the start of the Philadelphia Marathon. My first. His, uh...probably somewhere around 60 or 61st. The gun went off and so did dad. I didn't see him for maybe half a day. So much for a nice father/son marathon experience. No matter. He had his goal; I had mine: to finish all 26.2 miles without stopping, and for a bonus – do it under 3 hours. Five miles in I bailed on the bonus.

At the halfway point, I was feeling pretty good, though that was somewhat relative because I had another 13.1 miles to go! Plus, I had some perspective. Two weeks earlier, as part of Coach Dad's training plan, I ran 20 miles of the Harrisburg Marathon. After 20 miles I practically crawled to my car and drove home.

Eighteen miles into this marathon, significant pain was enjoying a visit on the left side of my leg and hip. It's important now to remember that they drove us 26.2 miles out. Fact is, I had to get back, so running seemed most efficient, even with the pain. So I just kept pushing through. At 22 miles, I had no more pain. In fact, I don't remember feeling much at all. Not sure that was good, but I just kept going. At 24 miles, I knew I would finish, though not like I've

seen others do it. No kick at the end for me – I was clearly on auto pilot. Nothing extra. Just finish. I was proud – 16 and completing my first marathon.

Then, I met her. Tabitha. I saw her name on signs all along the course. I even heard her name as I was running, but never really processed anything about it other than thinking it would be nice to hear and see my name occasionally. After all, Mike is a pretty common name. Just throw it out there!

Anyway, I had 60 and 70 year old men passing me in that last mile and it didn't matter. Why should Tabitha be any different? I'll tell you why. I'm now 47 and Tabitha is now 38. Quick math and you got it. Tabitha was a 7 year old girl. Passing me in the last mile. Remember that I said I had nothing left? Wrong. I just didn't have the proper incentive! That's right – pride kicked in and my revised goal was now to finish my marathon, not stopping, AND ahead of Tabitha! By the way, she had a brother running with her. He was 8 at the time. He didn't matter to me. It was all about Tabitha.

So as she passed I just inconspicuously let my foot drift out a bit and down she went. Goal accomplished. Kidding. As she passed I got motivated and found some energy I didn't know I had. I finished the race at 3:33:13. Tabitha finished at 3:33:16. Yep. Kicked her 7 year old butt! And her brother's too! So proud!

Frankly, Tabitha had no idea who I was or that I had a target on her back. Doubt she would have cared either. The point is this: my original goal drove me. It drove me to train right. It drove me to think right. It drove me to finish as planned. My new goal drove me to perform even more than planned.

What goals are driving your performance? Without them, you'll never do what could have been done. Find a goal that matters, that energizes you and chase it. Even if you fall short, you fall further, while learning and growing in the chase.

*Hard work beats talent when
talent doesn't work hard.*

- Unknown

Time Out 2 Got Heart?

I love watching Mitchell, our 15 year old son, play tennis.

A few weeks back he might have had the match of his career. Coaches generally say that if you just return the ball successfully 3 times, you'll almost always win the point. Yep – in most cases. Nope – not this time.

It was sunny, 80ish degrees, and they were playing their nemesis team. Mitchell was to play an 8 game set (first to 8 wins) in singles. He was matched against a common foe, though they have developed a healthy respect for each other over the years. Points were lasting far beyond the average 3 time return standard as the boys were committing very few unforced errors. And they weren't just returning; they were being aggressive, placing, spinning, charging the net – all of the above. They were both scrapping! I've played in rallies like this with Mitch, and it's very difficult to keep your form and footwork with that much energy being expended so quickly. And I'm a runner. These kids never gave in.

In fact, at one point, with Mitchell down in games 5-7 (his opponent needed one more game to win the match), a rally went for at least 40 or 50 shots – almost unheard of in tennis. It was eternal for us, the spectators; I cannot