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Here is one way to share. Or I can see if my team will turn into pdf for me too  

#1.

**WINNING IS NOT A
MARATHON, IT'S
A SPRINT WITH
NO FINISH LINE**

At the beginning of this book, we talked about the “language of winning” and some of the idiotic expressions that mean nothing, slow you down, and end up knocking you right out of the race. I intentionally saved one of these clichés until



now, because it's so wrong and misguided

now, because it's so wrong and misguided that it's getting its own chapter.

"It's a marathon, not a sprint!"

Stop it.

I'm sure this means something to someone, because people use it all the time to identify a dramatically challenging long-term journey, a prolonged mission that requires tremendous patience.

To me, it's about procrastination, uncertainty, and a total lack of focus.

Folks: You don't have that much time.

If you want to win, a marathon *is* a sprint.

You want to debate this with me? First do this: Get on a treadmill and try to run a mile in under five minutes. That's a slower pace than the top marathoners would run, but close enough to make a point. They do it for 26.2 miles. I'm asking you for one.

Then come back and tell me whether it felt like a marathon or a sprint, if you can still stand up and breathe.

You get my point? Competitive marathoners push the entire distance. At no

point do they say, “Eh, it’s a marathon, I can take my time here.” They may change speeds along the way, but to win a marathon, to even finish near the top, they’re going hard for 26.2 miles.

And yes, you can finish a marathon

without ever sprinting, you can go at your own pace, and it's still a great accomplishment. But we're talking about Winning here, not just finishing.

Every team finishes the season. Only one will win the title.

When people use the marathon/sprint line, they're usually trying to say, *Pace yourself, you have a long way to go.* That may be true, but more likely, it just rationalizes an excuse. *Slow down. What's the rush? Take your time. Don't overdo it.*

Usually, the people who use that line have never run a race of any kind, and certainly not a marathon. They want you to go as slow as they do, so they can feel better about their own lack of progress.

And while they're taking their time, going slow, pacing out that long mara-

thon, someone else just sprinted past them and grabbed their dream.

No matter how long the distance, you have to treat every step as if it's the most important, because it is. In a real race, you don't have the luxury of stopping at the water station for five minutes. You run right through it, grab a cup as you go, and keep moving.

What the hell does it mean when people say, "It's about the journey, not the destin-

ation”? If you don’t care about the destination, why take the journey? Just so you can wander around, dreaming about what might happen if you ever get somewhere? You don’t run a race for the journey, you run it to arrive.

Whatever you’re chasing in life, it’s not an option to sit back, skip a few days, think about it for a month, and see how you feel in a year. It means doing it consistently, with purpose and focus, from start to finish. And when you get to the finish, you should already see the next starting gate



in front of you. That's how a marathon becomes a series of sprints.

Winning has all the time in the world. You don't.

Technology, science, communication, transportation... everything in our world is moving faster, and it's not enough to just keep up; you have to move ahead.

Maybe you've heard the other dumb expressions along these lines: "Rome wasn't built in a day!"

No, it wasn't. It was built every day, for thousands and thousands of days.

That's how champions and competitors win. They deliver every day for thousands and thousands of days.

How about this one: "It's just one game."

HOW ABOUT THIS ONE. IT'S JUST ONE GAME.
If that somehow makes you feel better
after a loss, you don't deserve to win. It's
"just one game"... until you miss the play-
offs or lose the season by just one game.

Just one game... just one meeting... just
an idea... just a mistake.

Translation: *It's not that important. I
have plenty of time.*



No, you don't.

Take out that one little word "just" and
the whole meaning changes

~~the whole meaning changes.~~

It's one game. *You're not getting it back. It mattered.*

It's a meeting. *If others are taking the time to participate, contribute something of value.*

It's an idea. *Work with it, don't overthink it or dismiss it.*

It's a mistake. *Admit it. Own it. Don't repeat it.*

Winning's unforgiving race doesn't allow you the luxury of shortcuts and procrastination. It wants to see you sprinting.

. . .

Kobe sprinted through life like no one I've ever known.

He had no hobbies or distractions. Didn't play golf, didn't hang out with buddies, didn't go to parties. Occasionally,

he'd decide to see a movie and would rent out the whole theater so he could take a small group of friends or family to see it



privately, usually twice in a row. Otherwise, he trained. He practiced. He studied film. Besides his beautiful family, which was his top non-basketball priority, his entire focus centered on one obsession: Winning.

For twenty years in the NBA, Kobe sprinted from season to season, game to

game, quarter to quarter. He never slowed down, and he couldn't comprehend those who did. He'd hear about a group of players heading to a concert or a party or another sporting event, and he'd rarely join them. *You go ahead and do that*, he thought. *I'll be right here doing this*. That was his time to elevate himself, to do the work others weren't doing. He believed the extra work added years of advantage and experience to his skill set.

He had no patience for waiting or rebuilding. He began and ended every season the same way: racing toward a championship.

Even when he retired in 2016, he kept up the same pace—with new obsessions—

and had more wins in his forty-one years than most people could accomplish in several lifetimes. A remarkable life, with remarkable achievements. Which led many to ask: How was he able to achieve so much in the time he was given?

Kobe's secret weapon: He had the unfaltering ability to focus on what he was doing, for as long as he needed to, until he got the results he wanted.

Most people worry about how long something will take. Winners just keep going until it gets done.

Kobe didn't measure time; he didn't care how long it would take or what else he had to do. He only cared about whether it would contribute to his results. It didn't matter to him if we were in the gym at 3:00 a.m. or 3:00 p.m. He didn't know how many years he'd play, he just knew how many rings he wanted. He didn't have a timetable for writing a bestselling book or producing an Oscar-winning film, he just wanted it done. *Now.*



You can't achieve that level of success by wondering how much time you have. You can only focus on the results, and keep sprinting toward greatness until you're forced to stop.

It took death to make Kobe stop.

In the words of Kobe's great friend and mentor Michael Jordan: "I've never lost a game. I just ran out of time."

Most people never think about running out of time. They look ahead and see days and months and years of empty dates on the calendar, and assume they have plenty of time to fill them.

Kobe's success wasn't the result of managing his time. It was the result of his relentless focus on results.

We allow time to dictate so many of our decisions *How long will it take? When is it*

decisions. How long will it take? When is it due? How much time should I put in? It's late, I need to stop. What time does this end?

Stop managing time, and start managing your focus.



Winning doesn't care if you have time. It expects you to *make* time, because nothing is more important.

Attaining your dream is about managing results, not managing the clock.

I know there are countless books and experts and theories on time management. I understand the value of scheduling and organizing and fighting procrastination. It's a great form of discipline.

Of course, if you were more focused, you wouldn't be procrastinating, and you'd already be disciplined.

Time is undefeated. No matter what you do, it will outlast you, outsmart you, and paralyze you—if you allow it to.

You can't control it. But you can control its hold on you... by controlling your focus on the end result.

Think about it: You're working on something that has to be completed by the end of the day. You feel pressure. You're watching the clock. A voice in your head keeps saying, *Come on, come on, what's*

taking so long? You have four hours left.



Next time you look, you have three hours left. You've received seven emails asking when you'll be done. Two hours left, and you're nowhere near finished. You get up, go to the bathroom, get a snack, check your phone, again. Tick tick tick... you're stressed and distracted. With an hour left, you're rushing, making mistakes, and taking shortcuts. You know it's not your best work. It might be your worst work ever.

But you got it done “on time.” Congrats.

How would this have played out if you were focused on the work, instead of how long it was taking?

Winning requires results. And results require focus.

Turn off your phone. Turn off the TV. Close your door. You don't need to ask eight people what to do. It's just you and the work now. No distractions, no clock. Focus on what you're doing, not what you're missing. You control everything.

And when you're finished, you'll have achieved the results in half the time, and doubled the quality.



Is it easy? No. Winning never is. But those who can master this type of focus will separate themselves from everyone else in the race.

You can practice this, by the way. Start training yourself to experience what focus really feels like. Simple exercise: Do something with the opposite hand. Eat, write, throw a ball, swing a bat, brush your teeth. Something you do all the time that's completely automatic with your dominant hand. You don't think about the mechanics of brushing your teeth, it requires no focus. But try it with the opposite hand... it's awkward and uncomfortable and requires massive focus to execute. You've

quires massive focus to execute. You're fighting your brain to stay locked in on this simple task. Can you do it for thirty seconds? A minute? Can you go longer? I'm not comparing wielding your toothbrush to sprinting a marathon, but if you can't control this, how are you going to manage that?

Here's another way to retrain your mind: Count up to a deadline, not down.



Time forces you to count down to the finish. 5 4 I have so much left to do 2

1511. 3... 4... I have so much left to do... 3...
*hurry up, I'm running out of time... 2... I'm
not going to make it... 1. Time's up. The clock
ran out.*

Focus counts up. The numbers are infinite, and the clock never runs out. 1...
*2... Here's what's ahead to reach the goal...
3... Let's get started... 4... Stop counting and
just do the work.*

It's not about how much time you have left, it's about how much you can still do in the minutes, hours, weeks, and months that remain. Instead of counting down to the end of the calendar—and blowing off December because of holidays and parties and year-end fatigue—count each and every day that you can still accomplish something before the end of the year, as everyone else checks out. When you count up, you never get to zero, so you never lose

momentum; you can start the new year at full strength, while everyone else tries to remember where they left off.

Time tells you what you didn't accomplish. Focus turns off the clock and directs all your energy to the result.

If you're focusing on a time limit, you can't focus on the moment. Time pressure kills performance—if your mind can't block it out. You see this all the time in

sports—for example, a quarterback folding under pressure or a basketball player who can't take the last shot. They start counting down in their heads, instead of executing. Most players are painfully aware that the clock is running out, and they panic: *I've got three seconds, I gotta get this shot off*. They're so distracted that they overthink, make careless mistakes, and lose control of the moment.

The greats are always in the moment: If MJ or Kobe had three seconds on the clock, they weren't thinking, *Can I do this in three seconds? Do I have enough time?* They knew *exactly* what they could accomplish in three seconds; their focus was strictly on getting the job done. *Three seconds? Get me*

to that spot, I got this. One: I'm here. Two: I'm there. Three: basket.

Even the score counts up.

Focus is the ultimate weapon in the war on time. While time is trying to get in your face, waving its arms and setting off alarms to remind you how late you are, focus takes you to that place where you have no idea how much time has passed, and you don't care.

Time reminds you how much you didn't get done. Focus locks you in, until

you finish.

Time tells you to stop what you're doing and get some sleep. Focus tells you there's more to do. You can sleep when the job is done.

Time pressure is external. Focus comes from inside you, where no one else can control it.

Time creates distractions. Focus blocks them out.

Time tells you to hurry. Focus tells time to STFU.



When you're managing time, all you can see is how long it will take. When you're managing focus, you don't care.

Time is about others. Focus is all about you.

. . .

Ever been in total focus mode? You start something and realize hours later that you haven't moved, eaten, peed... you have no idea if the earth is still turning. You don't know if its noon or midnight. You're just locked in on what you're doing.

When I'm with an athlete, everything else falls away. I'm not thinking that I also need to go to Costco and walk my dog and answer my email. I'm concentrating on what we're doing and what we need to

on what we're doing and what we need to do next. I might be counting how many steps he's taking, whether he's landing on the right or left foot, how his form holds up when he's fatigued, the smallest details that most overlook. If I'm at one of his games, I'm not taking selfies, or walking around the arena shaking hands, or post-

ing pictures to show off my seats or what shoes I'm wearing. I'm in my seat, fixated on every moment. I rarely know who's sitting around me and if you come in to

ing around me, and if you come up to me during a game, I probably won't even notice you standing there. I'm not being rude. My focus is just elsewhere.

That carries over into every part of my business. You need me to be in this city or country by tonight? I'll make it happen. You need to change our meeting from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.? Done. The gym at your hotel is closed? I'll find a new one, or work you out in your room if I have to. I don't stop to think: *That won't work, I had these plans and that appointment and it's too complex and...* no. When I'm locked in, that's it. Total focus on our results.

But that's when most people make excuses: *Don't worry about it, things happen. It's a marathon, not a sprint!*

Winning is watching, waiting to see if you're willing to settle for that kind of BS.

I never settle. When a client shows up a half hour late (although the best of the

best are never late) and tells me we won't have enough time, I'll tell him: *Oh, really? You got twenty-five minutes? Let's go for twenty-five minutes then. It'll be the most focused twenty-five minutes of your life.*

You didn't have time to finish your work? Yes you did, you just didn't have the focus to finish your work. The time was there. Your head was somewhere else.

Focus is about minutes, not hours or days or years. If I need you for one hour, you can't lose focus at fifty-nine minutes. After that, you can go watch cartoons or call your broker or find your friends. But for that hour, all sixty minutes... we sprint.

MJ's focus began the minute he started his workout in the morning, and usually ended when he returned to his hotel or home after a game. For that time, he was centered on what he needed to accomplish in those hours. Nothing was unplanned, and nothing escaped his focus. After that, he could exhale and relax for a short while... until the next day when he started

all over again. He knew no other way. That was his direct link to Winning. Still is.

Many pro athletes received a lesson in focus during the Covid-19 pandemic, when quarantines and precautions meant playing without fans at the games, and in some cases, living in a secure “bubble” without family or friends. Few could remember the last time they’d played to empty stadiums and arenas: Grade school? The playground? Their entire sporting lives had been filled with parents, friends, family, and eventually, hundreds of thousands of screaming fans.

— “The Last Game,” by John Grisham, *Grisham’s* (1994), p. 100

Now, for the first time... silence. No one cheering or heckling, no vendors, no tickets to distribute, no worries about where friends or family were sitting. They could hear the sounds of the game; they could hear each other. A completely different experience. Some said it didn't affect their game at all. Some felt that the lack of distraction allowed them to focus more on the game itself, not what was happening on the periphery. Others said that without

the crowd buzz they had a harder time

the crowd buzz, they had a harder time getting into the Zone, where your focus is so heightened you can't even explain it.

Focus isn't the same as the Zone, which we talked about in *Relentless*. The Zone is unconscious; your skills and expertise are so highly developed that you don't have to think about what you're doing, the action just flows. Focus is highly conscious; it requires you to be sharp and aware of every moment, and allows you to work on skills so intently that you eventually no longer have to think about them. You just execute. You can't enter the Zone until you've mastered focus; focus is the training ground.

Think about where you are in your life right now. Maybe you feel you haven't done enough—haven't reached your goals. You're disappointed in yourself because

...that happened in your career because you know you could have done more, but something stopped you. You lost your direction, not for a minute or hour, but for a long, long time.

That's all about lack of focus.

Why do people tend to wait for a loss or disappointment to start focusing? They fail at something, get cut from the team, lose a big sale, don't get the job or the raise—*then* they want to buckle down. *Now* they're going to get serious. Everything

is going to change. One question: Why weren't they *already* serious? And how many get hit by that disappointment and *still* don't get focused?

Focus is about controlling your behavior, so it becomes easier to do the right things, and harder to be distracted by the wrong things.

I'm not telling you to stay this way 24/7; you need some distractions that allow you to relax and give your focus a rest—kids, naps, exercise, vacation. Use that time to energize your focus.

But control that time. Choose it. Do it because you want to do it, not because someone demanded it.

Obviously, you can't give everything in your life equal focus and dedication, so whatever you choose to focus on, it better

be something you want for yourself, not what someone else wants for you. Because it's impossible to focus with sufficient intensity on something you don't really want.

How do you know if a goal is worth it? Ask yourself three simple questions. And if the answer to all three isn't *yes*, Winning would like you to move on to something else.