

THE
Endurance
LEADER



Leadership Longevity
In A Fast-Paced World

ANN BOWERS-EVANGELISTA



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The Endurance LEADER

Leadership Longevity In A Fast-Paced World

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Use of Pseudonyms and Real Names

Throughout this book, I have used pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of individuals. Some characters are indicated by first name only. Where first and last names are listed, I have received permission from these individuals to use their real names. I am grateful for their willingness to be a part of this work.

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Foreword

by Dr. Marshall Goldsmith

The Endurance Leader by Ann Bowers-Evangelista offers a groundbreaking leadership approach that nails the very essence of what I speak about in my book *The Earned Life* that our lives only make sense when we are aligned with our greater purpose. Ann's four-part Endurance Leader model not only helps leaders develop the right mindset to live their purpose but also how to build the discipline, skills, and support structures to help them lead successfully with energy, resilience, and meaning for decades.

Do you ever wish you didn't feel like you were sprinting a marathon every day? Do you ever wonder how you'll keep up your energy to lead for the next twenty to thirty years? Ann's extensive research and interviews with successful long-term leaders and endurance athletes, as well as her unique lens as a twenty-five-plus year business psychologist, Ironman triathlete, and marathon runner, ground *The Endurance Leader* in theory and practical realities. Ann shows how, when you start putting aside the 'tyranny of the urgent' to focus your mindset and actions like an endurance athlete, you are less likely to experience the ongoing stress, anxiety, burnout, and work dissatisfaction that are all too common in today's business climate.

This book isn't about quick wins; it's a masterclass in building leadership that stands the test of time. Ann's model is a compass that guides leaders through the labyrinth of their leadership journey, stressing the importance of mindset, discipline, skill, and support. This is the very fabric of a leadership capable of withstanding the relentless marathon of today's demanding business world.

Chapter by chapter, Ann weaves together the stories of everyday leaders and extraordinary athletes to show how *The Endurance Leader* model really works. Providing real-world coaching questions and training plans, she helps you apply these concepts in practical ways. You don't need to be an Ironman triathlete to make these concepts work; you only need a heart to live your ultimate purpose and the willingness to reach for fuller, longer-lasting effectiveness.

Each chapter feels like a personal coaching session, full of stories and strategies that'll make you nod in recognition and scribble notes in the margins. Ann offers actionable coaching tools and developmental plans, extending an invitation to transcend short-term gratifications for a lasting impact. It's for anyone who's tired of the daily grind and looking for more—more depth, more satisfaction, more longevity in their leadership journey. This is a journey of transformation, not just for the elite, but for any leader seeking to cultivate a legacy of meaningful influence.

Ann's work is a testament to the power of perseverance and the pursuit of excellence. Embrace this book as a mentor for your leadership growth—a guide that your future self will regard with pride and gratitude. It's a clarion call to leaders: to craft a narrative of leadership that's not just effective for today but one that you can be proud of for a lifetime.

Life is good.

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith is the *Thinkers50* #1 Executive Coach and New York Times bestselling author of *The Earned Life*, *Triggers*, and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*.



Preface



*We are different, in essence, from other [people].
If you want to win something, run 100 meters.
If you want to experience something, run a marathon.*

EMIL ZATOPEK

The Big Question

What do you think? Is life (and leadership) a marathon or a series of sprints?

We live in an era that hails the temporal. We are regularly deluged with people celebrating their most recent victory, whether finishing a local 5K run or announcing quarterly profits on a shareholder call. Pressures for quick wins seem ever-increasing in business: leaders are continually pushed to do more, go faster, and use fewer resources.

In my coaching and consulting practice, I often encounter leaders who feel they are running as fast as possible to deliver impressive results but are barely keeping up. They think doing *more* is the only way to advance in their careers. They try to manage unrelenting expectations by working more hours or pushing their team harder.

While these solutions are sensible, they tend to be shortsighted. Often, they result in fatigue, burnout, stress, and relationship challenges. One female leader recently said, “I can’t keep up with all the pressures and responsibilities; I constantly feel like I’m failing at home and work.” This might feel like sprinting a marathon, as leaders try their hardest to keep up a blistering pace but, ultimately, cannot sustain it.

Are you looking instead to build leadership that remains resilient in the face of adversity, helps you manage setbacks, and compels you to perform at your absolute best, professionally and personally, for years to come? Do you desire to create a leadership legacy that will inspire your contemporaries and future generations? If so, the endurance leader model can help you achieve it.

Reality Check

Let’s experiment to determine where you are in your endurance leadership journey. Read the two lists below and determine which one has more statements that resonate with you. You may find yourself in both camps, but one may ring truer for you than the other.

Group 1 Statements

- I need to be better at prioritization and time management.
- I just want things to slow down so I can get organized.
- I want to be the best _____ in the company (salesperson/operations leader/etc.).
- I need my team to stop fighting with each other.
- I wish the company would just get rid of that person.
- I want to double my salary in the next five years.
- I only need to finish this one thing _____ (email/project task/checklist), and I can get on with my more important tasks.

Group 2 Statements

- I want my work to reflect my commitment to serving others and showing my daughters what working moms can do.
- My goal is to be known as the best boss my team has ever had.
- Our team has some challenging personalities, but we can sort through our differences over time.
- I want to keep a solid balance between my work and family, allowing me to continue loving what I do in and out of the office.
- I want to lead with greater resiliency to continue to perform even when things are tough.

Be honest; where did you find yourself? If you resonated primarily with Group 1 statements, you may be thinking like a sprinter. While you may meet many short-term goals, you may have difficulty finding the energy and resources to keep your leadership strong over a lifetime. If you find yourself more aligned with Group 2 statements, you may already be thinking like an endurance leader. You recognize the need for a long-term perspective and a deep connection with what matters to keep you going. In either group, you may find the frameworks and strategies in this book useful.

Endurance And Everyday People

Besides spending twenty-five years advising top leaders and executives on strategies to build long-term success, I am an endurance athlete. I have completed over sixty endurance races, including a full Ironman race (which is comprised of a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike, and a 26.2-mile run) and several half-Ironman races (half those distances). I have also enjoyed working with, training alongside, and observing a legion of endurance athletes. As my experience in consulting and endurance sports grew, their relationship became ever more apparent. And I realized that leaders could benefit from leveraging endurance qualities to build their long-term leadership success.

Like well-known, long-term successful leaders, professional endurance athletes are a rare breed. Most people competing in endurance races are

not elite athletes; they are *everyday people* like you and me. We comprise 99 percent of entrants in any endurance event. We enter long, grueling races not with the expectation that we will win the event but rather for the opportunity to challenge ourselves, see what is possible, and possibly find the best version of ourselves.

Leadership is the same: most leaders will not be hailed in *Harvard Business Review* or praised on the cover of the *Wall Street Journal*. But like endurance athletes, endurance leaders are *everyday people* seeking to improve their impact. Their resources and tools may not be the most sophisticated, and they probably won't have eight hours a day to dedicate to improving their leadership. But, with the right mindset, heart, determination, and support, they can create a lasting impact for themselves and their families. This book is for *everyday people*.

The endurance leader model is not about *elite* performance but about *lasting* performance. It is about cultivating ways of thinking, acting, and engaging that are satisfying and sustainable. It is not about winning races but the strategies to repeatedly get you across the finish line. And no one understands the requirements of that success better than the endurance athlete.

I started the book by asking if life (and leadership) is a marathon or a series of sprints. Which would you pick? Which do you think I would pick? Spoiler alert: My answer is both. I believe longevity in life and leadership requires a series of sprints within a marathon. My rationale will become clearer as you read on.

Preparing For This Book

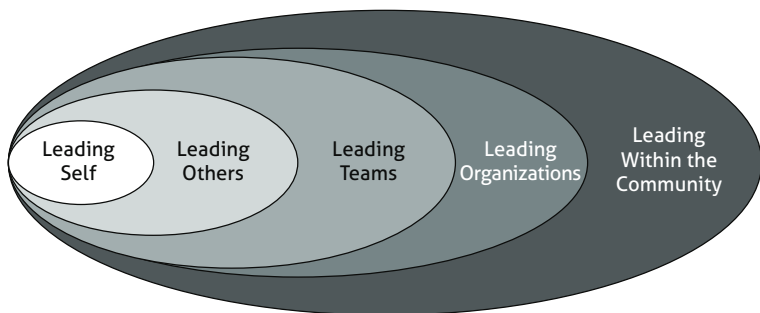
If you feel motivated to read this book, here are a few pieces of advice as your endurance leader coach:

- *Decide if the book is for you.* You may find yourself looking for a ready-made prescription or tools and tricks to help you deliver in the face of overwhelming demands. Indeed, there are plenty of old-

school and tech-intensive resources to help you manage your email, build your presentation skills, or network like a pro. This book is not one of them, however. If your goal is cultivating a framework and roadmap to sustainable leadership success across your lifetime, this book is for you.

- *The endurance leader model is a personal leadership journey.* There are thousands of leadership books focusing on leading others, leading teams, and leading organizations. The endurance leader model focuses squarely on the leading self domain (see Figure 1). To succeed in those other domains, we must first focus on developing our mindset and personal self-management practices to ensure we are true to ourselves. Without that, we will forever depend on others to anchor our activities and experiences in meaning, which is a risky proposition at best and disastrous at worst. Investing in the endurance leader concept means investing in yourself so that you may serve others most effectively.

Figure 1: The Five Levels of Leadership¹



- *This book is designed for everyday leaders, not those aspiring to elite status.* The ideal reader is probably in the middle stages of leadership. They are still developing the strategies and solutions to master their leadership craft. That does not mean expert or elite leaders cannot benefit from the ideas here; they may find the frameworks helpful if they find themselves stuck, burned out, or trying to reignite

their motivation for the next career phase. But if you are looking for strategies to help you get promoted, accelerate up the success ladder quickly, or earn your place in the rarified air of some status position, this may not be the book for you.

- *You do not need to be an athlete to benefit from reading this.* You can know nothing about sports or even dislike them (I won't tell). But you might find it valuable if you have marveled at the incredible capacities of leaders who have led successfully for decades and seem to love doing it. You will meet several of them in this book. And if you are an endurance athlete or a long-time sports performer, you will find a natural home here.
- *Treat it as a type of playbook.* Each chapter's end will have opportunities for self-reflection (Coach's Questions) and action (Training Plan). You are encouraged to write in it, scribble, doodle, or think on paper. Really use it!
- *There are many resources to substantiate the book's premises and help you.* Leverage these to help you become an endurance leader.
- *Challenge the content.* Nothing is as fun as a healthy skeptic with a sense of humor. Challenge the assumptions and compare them to your own experience. You will get much more out of it.
- *Have fun with it.* This book is intended to make you a stronger and more effective leader—for longer. Yes, it's work, but don't be afraid to try new things, laugh at yourself, screw up royally sometimes. If building long-term success isn't fun, we are doing something seriously wrong.

I look forward to this journey with you and will be here every step of the way.

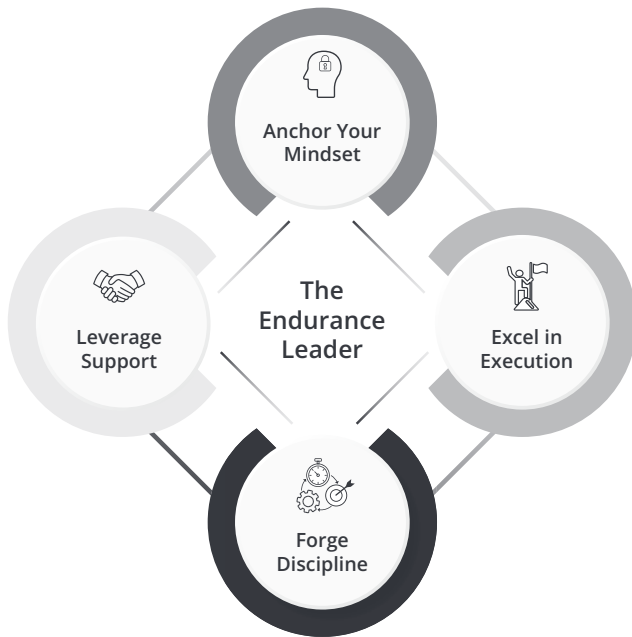
Ann B-E

Washington, D.C.

PART I



The Endurance Leader Model





Chapter 1

The Endurance Leader

*You will make better decisions once you begin thinking
long-term rather than short-term.*

ADAM SMITH

The Need For Endurance In Leadership

“I just don’t know how long I can do this.” Preethi and I weren’t far into our coaching conversation before she slumped in her chair, rubbed her weary eyes, and made this sobering declaration. As vice president of operations at a large equipment manufacturing company, she had been sitting at her desk since 3:30 a.m. and looked exhausted and beleaguered. She had been working twelve-hour days for months, navigating new and unprecedented realities in her business, prompted by global health and economic crises.

Ensuring employees and facilities were safe while maintaining production volume and low overhead costs was a daily challenge. Considered essential workers during a major public health crisis, Preethi and most of her staff came into the office every day while many others in her company worked from home. This created additional stress on her and her team. Meanwhile,

her children had shifted to virtual school, and Preethi had to quickly pivot to find childcare when few people wanted to be in others' homes. It seemed there was a fresh perdition arising with every passing day.

When I began coaching Preethi a few months prior, we'd built her strategic thinking and delegation skills. However, for several weeks before this conversation, much of her energy was spent trying to hold her head above water. She felt overwhelmed, stressed, and unsure of how to forge ahead. With almost no time to rest and reflect, she found it hard to plan much further than one to two days, let alone meet our development objectives. More than once, Preethi had said, "I feel like I'm in a constant sprint."

The Challenge Of The Constant Sprint

Does this sound familiar? Do you feel like you've been sprinting a marathon for the past few months (or years)? With business demands unrelenting, change happening faster than ever, and global issues fundamentally altering how we live, many people feel they are struggling to stay upright. And the impact is taking a massive toll on our physical, emotional, and mental health.

Some alarming statistics:

From The 2023 American Psychological Association's 2023 *Stress in America* survey:²

- Chronic illness in the US increased from 48 percent in 2019 to 58 percent in 2023 among adults ages 35–44. This group also experienced the highest increase in mental health diagnoses, from 31 percent to 45 percent.
- Adults ages 18–34 had the highest rate of mental illness in 2023, at 50 percent (in case math isn't your strong subject, it means that *one in every two adults* in this age range carries a mental illness diagnosis).
- "Women report feeling stressed, misunderstood, and alone at higher rates than men."³

- “Gen Z adults and younger millennials are ‘completely overwhelmed’ by stress.”⁴

From the Gallup organization’s December 2023 findings:⁵

- Daily stress among employees globally remained stubbornly high through 2022, with 52 percent of employees in the US and Canada reporting they experienced a lot of stress the previous day.
- Managers, constantly trying to do more with less and manage continually changing priorities, are more likely to be disengaged, burned out, and job hunting than nonmanagers. These statistics are signs of a workforce experiencing prolonged stress and increased risk of depression, anxiety, or other mental health challenges.

Gallup’s meta-analytic study of its Q12 engagement tool stated, “The 2020 meta-analysis verified once again that employee engagement relates to each of the eleven performance outcomes studied. Gallup also finds that the strong correlations between engagement and performance are highly consistent across different organizations from diverse industries and regions of the world.” They also consistently found that companies with high employee engagement have higher earnings per share.⁶ In other words, employees who are more engaged perform better.

Even a company that doesn’t prioritize wellness or engagement might want to stand up and take notice. However, most organizations find it challenging to shift their expectations to reward long-term thinking, leading, and acting because the business climate incentivizes short-term profitability. With the accelerated pace of change in every industry, organizations must move faster and work harder to keep pace.

This brings us back to Preethi. Preethi’s company has not lessened its expectations of her and her team. Pressures increased as change and uncertainty multiplied. Her boss, while sympathetic, was not able to do much to alter the organization’s expectations. So, what’s Preethi to do? Just grit her teeth, hold her breath, and hope the continued sprinting will

pay off? As I watched her in this uncomfortable state, I knew that would never result in an optimal outcome. Instead, Preethi needed a longer-term perspective that could help her see beyond her immediate challenges. She needed something that would inspire her, compel her to stand firm amid difficulty, and ultimately help her persevere in achieving what is deeply important to her. We will check in with Preethi and her Endurance Leader journey later.

Endurance Leaders And Endurance Athletes

Over my career, I've worked with leaders from virtually every walk of life—young and old, novice and veteran, private and nonprofit—and from every race, color, gender identification, and many countries of origin. I've observed that some are better than others at maintaining a long-term vision and commitment, even in the face of tremendous obstacles. I call these people *endurance leaders* because they share essential qualities with *endurance athletes*. Both build a specific way of thinking, a core sense of discipline, and a commitment to execution that drives long-term leadership success. Don't get me wrong; they must be successful in the short term to have a shot at making those long-term impacts. However, they are unique among their colleagues for their disciplined and focused approach to leadership anchored in something beyond the moment.

Let me illustrate with two examples: an endurance athlete and an endurance leader. Can you spot the similarities?

In 1986, eighteen-year-old Scott Rigsby underwent a life-changing event. In a highway sideswipe, Rigsby was pulled from the pickup bed where he'd been sitting and dragged over 300 feet underneath a three-ton semi tractor trailer. He survived, but barely. Rigsby lost one of his legs and had over twenty-six surgeries in the first year to repair the other. Within a few years, his remaining leg was so painful that he decided to amputate it too. For years, Rigsby struggled to find purpose and meaning in his life. Seeing his future altered forever, he had neither the mindset nor discipline

to face the adversity in front of him. He went through almost two decades of anger and grief, using alcohol, drugs, and violence as a result. He battled depression, at times contemplating suicide.

Around 2005, Rigsby went through life-changing experiences that altered his mindset. He also took up the endurance sport of triathlon, which requires swimming, biking, and running. Rigsby learned to swim without legs and used modifications to help him cycle and run. In 2007, Scott became the first double amputee to complete the Ironman World Championship race in Kona, Hawaii. The race is one of the most difficult athletic feats in the world, requiring participants to swim in rough waters, bicycle through high winds in the island's lava fields, and then run in temperatures often well above ninety degrees Fahrenheit. The task is arduous for anyone, but for Rigsby, the obstacles were tremendous: for example, with three miles left to run, sweat pooled in his prosthetic legs, ripping the skin off Rigsby's legs. "How do you push through that kind of pain when you're that close to your finish line?" he asked a reporter in an interview. "You won't. You'll give up, you'll quit—if you're not playing a role in a bigger story."⁷

Rigsby was completing the race for a bigger story: inspiring other amputees and wounded military members. He was also doing it for his older brother, who was born with disabilities. He established a nonprofit, The Scott Rigsby Foundation, which helped other amputees achieve extraordinary goals. His mindset, determination, and strength of character helped him achieve goals that many nondisabled people could never achieve. That is an endurance athlete!

My friend Ji-Ho (Jimmy) has been a successful executive for decades. Starting his career in finance, he rose from accountant to comptroller to CFO and, eventually, to CEO. In a new CEO opportunity, Jimmy was challenged to build a new hospital from the ground up. Some team members privately voiced concerns about his ability to lead a long-term, complex, high-stakes project. However, after learning that Jimmy was also

an ultramarathon runner, one team member said, “Well, we have nothing to worry about. We’ll be fine.”

Indeed, Jimmy and his team built a world-class hospital facility, ranking in the top ten in its class two years after opening its doors. However, the project was not without its challenges: Construction delays, high-level staff changes, and technological challenges plagued the project. Jimmy had many sleepless nights. But he continued to push the project forward, dig deep when things were tough, and promulgate the vision he and the hospital board had for a life-changing institution for thousands of children. He held fast to his true mission and achieved—in fact, exceeded—the goal.

In an interview, Jimmy told me: “A project of that significance [the hospital] is like training for a marathon: you must have the vision, to plan it, and part of the goal then is never to give up. It’s the ID I wear on my wrist and my shoelaces, ‘Never give up.’”⁸

Do you find similarities between these stories? While Jimmy’s story isn’t as dramatic as Rigsby’s, you can bet the financial, time, and human investments created an Ironman-type intensity for him. In both cases, you see people who delivered incredible results despite daunting challenges and obstacles. They were inspired and motivated by things beyond the moment, and they could call upon those motivators at their darkest hours to help them push back pain, frustration, and the desire to give up.

Endurance And The Everyday Leader

You may think, “I don’t have much in common with Scott Rigsby or Jimmy.” Indeed, these are impressive individuals who have been superstars in their areas of expertise. Does this endurance leader thing pass muster with regular leaders?

Let’s look at Kalisha, a leader I consider an endurance leader in the making. She had remarkable success early in her career as a strategist at some of the most prestigious universities in the world. In her late thirties, Kalisha sought coaching after taking on a new position with significant operational and financial oversight and managing a 400-person team.

Moreover, she had returned to work after parental leave—another novel experience and form of adjustment.

Aware of her natural propensity to “sprint in everything I do,”⁹ Kalisha’s coaching goal was to build an approach to leadership that would not constantly deplete her energy and resources. She left her last job feeling drained and discouraged. She wanted to cultivate a connection to her new job, new team, and family that would keep her motivated and energized through the inevitable challenges while still maintaining her passion for the work she cared about deeply.

The first thing Kalisha and I worked on was understanding her ultimate mission. What is it that she wants to be known for thirty years from now? What would she want her child to be saying about her toward the end of her career? Kalisha recognized that her two main goals—having a successful professional career and being a great mother to her children—could coexist (previously, she felt like she had to choose one or the other). Furthermore, she recognized that part of her professional success needed to incorporate something intrinsically tied to her happiness—dance—whether in physical form or metaphor.

Acknowledging the importance of these two realities helped Kalisha make different choices as she began her new role: She set clear boundaries regarding working hours and expectations with herself, her boss, and her team. She opted to be more transparent with her team about her life priorities than in the past, which helped her live more authentically at work (something she strived to improve). It also provided her with a human connection with colleagues she hadn’t previously appreciated or leveraged.

To ensure she was executing successfully upon her ultimate mission, Kalisha targeted small, incremental behaviors that could enhance her success as a leader and remain engaged with what mattered most to her. This kind of minimum viable effort (MVE) is the smallest unit of effort Kalisha could make to create sustainable change. (Stanford Researcher BJ Fogg first introduced this concept and later referenced it in his book *Tiny*

Habits;¹⁰ it is also referenced in James Clear's book *Atomic Habits*.¹¹) Kalisha selected small behaviors to set the tone she intended in her leadership; for example, she began incorporating dance metaphors into her work lexicon. As she did, she noticed her colleagues taking notice and paying more attention to her contributions. In her effort to be more authentic, she was becoming more influential.

Another focus for Kalisha has been getting the proper support straightaway. As she approached her new position, she recognized she could not achieve her long-term goals (developing a more accessible and practical leadership style while remaining strategic and visionary) without the proper coaching and guidance. As a result, she reached out for coaching well before starting her new role. By having a coach help her remain accountable before she even began in the new role, Kalisha hit the ground running and avoided the leadership habits that had previously interfered with her long-term success.

Kalisha's story isn't finished—far from it. Her long-term goals—building a legacy in her work and at home—are still decades in the making. But by starting her endurance leadership work now, she is choosing her leadership style with intention, focus, and the right priorities to keep her energized as she moves forward. Like all of us, she will face struggles and challenges. But by using excellent support, she can keep herself accountable, remain agile and adaptive, and execute in a disciplined and focused manner.

The Endurance Leader Model

The Endurance Leader Model (Figure 2) captures the foundational elements that endurance athletes and long-term leaders share. It establishes what is at the heart of delivering greatness in the long term.

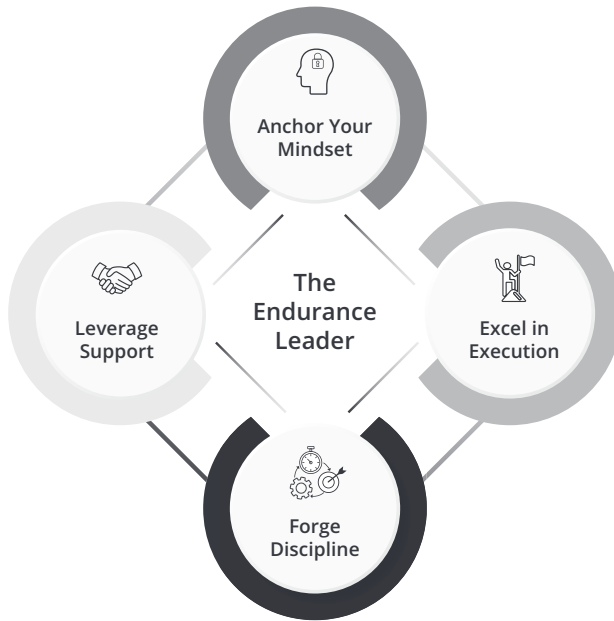


Figure 2: Endurance Leader Model

Within each quadrant are 4-5 core principles. The language comes from athletics, but as you will see, each element applies equally to the endurance leader.

To give you a flavor for the model's elements, you might enjoy seeing how they apply to some people you just met (see Figures 3, 4, and 5).

Figure 3. Endurance Leader Model application – Scott Rigsby

Scott Rigsby

Endurance Leader Quadrant	Commitment/ Behavior	Manifestation
Anchor Your Mindset	Driven by renewed energy and self-awareness, he vowed to reclaim his life and health.	In 2007, he became the first double amputee to complete the Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii.
Excel in Execution	Commitment to training for over a year to complete the race.	A stringent training schedule and proclamations to friends and media held him accountable.
Forge Discipline	Dealt with the inevitable setbacks that occur during training and the race itself.	Finished the race despite agonizing pain and exhaustion.
Leverage Support	Leveraged a coach throughout. Trained for a purpose, specifically, supporting his charity.	Constantly used feedback to improve his timing, inform him of his liabilities, and adjust. Supporting others made the goals bigger than himself.

Figure 4. Endurance Leader Model application – Jimmy

Jimmy

Endurance Leader Quadrant	Commitment/ Behavior	Manifestation
Anchor Your Mindset	Motivated by his commitment to service, he vowed to leverage his skills and abilities to lead others.	Positive results for the hospital (best in class) within two years.
Excel in Execution	Countered work stress with running, rest, meditation, and daily use of the action-reflection cycle.	Set and achieved challenging but achievable milestones for building the hospital. Made progress every day. Committed to not working twelve- to fourteen-hour days.
Forge Discipline	Lessons from early life and endurance sports: "You make a commitment; you stick with it."	Worked through the obstacles and hard times to build a world-class facility. Dug deeper into his ultimate mission to stay focused and on course. Pivoted when needed.
Leverage Support	Used a myriad of leadership coaches, mentors, and his spouse as coaches and support.	Maintained perspective and focus throughout the hospital-building process. Remained focused on the bigger picture of life and personal priorities.

Figure 5. Endurance Leader Model application – Kalisha

Kalisha

Endurance Leader Quadrant	Commitment/ Behavior	Manifestation
Anchor Your Mindset	Aspiring to build a life and career that will make her child proud, she is committed to leading by enabling others.	Using a life passion (dance) as a metaphor, she is shifting dynamics within her team to build greater interdependence.
Excel in Execution	As a doer, she is challenging herself to set aside time to think and reflect.	Making incremental progress toward goals with realistic timelines. Using MVE, creating better balance, ensuring focused delivery as well as proper recovery.
Forge Discipline	Articulating new goals to others to stay accountable and stepping out of her comfort zone to try new leadership techniques.	Building agility in her leadership and getting recognized for a more authentic leadership style. Creating more spaces to try her new approach so she is not reliant on a single condition or instance to practice.
Leverage Support	Using a leadership coach. Requesting input from colleagues to help her calibrate progress.	Finding more gratitude and joy in her work. Feeling more internally congruent and eager to help others.

These leaders exemplify a common core: the discipline and character to push themselves for greatness—even when obstacles abound and the stakes are stacked against them—and the guts to thrive in adversity and move past quick wins to what truly matters.

Can You Be An Endurance Leader?

These stories may feel distant from your current challenges: You may be more worried about managing a hybrid team, the emerging role of artificial intelligence in work, or keeping your staff motivated when changes are constant and unpredictable. You may think the endurance leader model suits athletic-minded people, but not you. But the truth is, you *can* benefit from this model by asking yourself some critical questions, putting strategies into action, and holding yourself accountable. It can help you achieve your goals, but as the old saying goes, “It only works if you do!”

I invite you to reflect upon the Coach’s Questions and make specific commitments in the Training Plan. Remember what I said in the preface: This is meant to be a workbook, so I encourage you to write in it, highlight it, or tear out pages and put them in your journal—whatever helps you get closer to being the leader you were meant to be.

Coach’s Questions

- How long do you want to be leading: Five years? Ten? Thirty? How clear is your plan for creating successful leadership over that time horizon?
- How are you currently managing your stressors? How effective are your strategies? If we asked your spouse/family/friends, what would they say?

- Where do you see yourself as strongest in the four parts of The Endurance Leader model? Where are you weakest?
- What do you want to achieve by reading this book? Where could you apply the principle of MVE to help you get closer to your goal?

Training Plan

- Set aside weekly dedicated time to focus on your long-term leadership development. Be specific and discrete about that time and determine how you will hold yourself accountable.
- Articulate the resources you will need on the journey to your destination: physical, emotional, tactical, and supportive. Who and what will you need to support you and keep you focused and energized for this work?
- What keeps you tough during the most challenging moments? Write that down and keep it handy, as you will need it throughout this journey.

Lao Tzu famously said, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” Are you ready to take the first step to becoming an endurance leader?