

“Now if you are going to win any battle you have to do one thing. You have to make the mind run the body. Never let the body tell the mind what to do. The body will always give up. George S.Patton

This quote from a WWII General holds true not just in the battle of war but in our everyday battles.

We battle getting out of bed while it's dark to head to the pool to train, we battle tiredness during our work day, we battle lack of motivation to train, and we battle our demons during a race wondering if we can do it.

As a kid I watched IMWC on the TV from “the hot lava fields of Hawaii” I sat memorized at these super human beings pushing themselves beyond their perceived boundaries. I never thought that someday I would be doing a triathlon let alone an Ironman. At the age of 40 I decided I wanted to have a go at triathlon. I had never swum beyond 25metres in one go (we were taught to swim as kids so that we wouldn't drown). I cycled to school and university which was about 5km in distance and I had done some marathons, which led me to believe I could try a triathlon but never did I think I would progress to any long endurance events.

I decided to go swimming to see if I could train to go beyond 25 metres, I bought a bike that wasn't a commuter bike and I set about putting a plan into action. My main aim was to finish and hopefully not too far behind everyone else. My training was haphazard but it was enough to get me through the race, not gracefully, not painlessly and somewhere in the later part of the pack.

But none of this mattered. I learned then that I was not competing against anyone else in the race but against myself. I will never be competing for prizes in big races but my mind is strong enough to believe that if I do the work, I can achieve the goals I have set out for myself. A lot of people worry about everyone else in the race and how they do compared to them but if I know if I trained full time, there are so many people I would still not beat, I have learnt how to strive to be the best that I can be given my own abilities and how I use them.

This is where a strong mind can give you an advantage, it is said that approximately 85% of a race is mental and 15% ability and training. On any given day I can finish ahead of someone who is more talented than me but on that day, their mental game is lacking. The mind is telling them they are tired or they can't do it, or they have fallen behind and the motivation to “race” has dwindled. Before race day arrives, the mind is still playing a crucial role. Getting up and out for training on a regular basis when it's cold, when your friends want to go out, when you feel tired and want to spend the day in front of the TV.

Don't let anyone including yourself tell you that you can't do something, how do they know. Dream big, put in the work and remember you will always have a “Personal Best” at your first race.