

One More Lap

Written by Lillian Chebosi
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This is the last of a series of three articles on a few lessons learnt from my early days in Mark Batterson's "Win The Day" book. If you are just joining us, I recommend that you put a pause on this read and first read the last two posts before this. Start with "Excellence is mundane" then "Consistently consistent" then come back to this one.

[Related article: Consistently Consistent](#)

This third lesson is on persistence. Mark used the example of another swimmer to demonstrate the lesson. "Compared with his compatriots, Rowdy Gaines got a late start at competitive swimming. He took up the sport at seventeen, but he made up for lost time with a grueling work ethic. Gaines won three gold medals at the 1984 Olympics, the year before Michael Phelps was born. He set eleven world records during his storied career."

Here is where it gets good, Mark continues. "Rowdy Gaines once calculated how many cumulative miles he had swum. Because America boycotted the Moscow games in 1980, Rowdy spent eight years training for races that lasted less than one minute. That's worth repeating - eight years for one minute! Add up all the laps, and Gaines swam twenty thousand miles in fifty-meter increments! Or as he put it, "I swam around the world for a race that lasted forty nine seconds!"

Now that's the mundanity of excellence. As Mark puts it, "the mundanity of excellence is one more lap. It's choosing the pain of present discipline over the pain of future regret. That's the difference between good and great. And it's not true just in the Olympic pool; it's true in the kiddie pool."

Research has found that better performance in any field usually has more to do with effort than ability. Mark gave the example of a study of first graders where students were given a difficult puzzle to solve. The researchers weren't interested in whether the children could solve the puzzle. They wanted to see how long they would try before giving up.

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The researchers concluded that the difference in math scores has less to do with intelligence quotient and more to do with persistence quotient. Mark concluded this section by saying "that study does more than explain the difference in standardized math scores. It doesn't matter whether it's athletics or academics, music or math. There are no shortcuts. There are no cheat codes. The only magic is outworking everyone else!"

For His Glory,

Lillian Chebosi