

SIRIUS MUSINGS



Siri Lindley

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A world champion athlete herself and now one of the most revered triathlon coaches in the world, Siri enables athletes to become the champions and the people they were born to be. With an ability to see things in people they cannot see in themselves, Siri is driven by a unrivalled passion for triathlon and the people within.
<http://siri-lindley.com>

Go forth and conquer

As an athlete, the thing that inspired me the most was this – I felt I had been blessed with not only an ability, but the desire to work hard to hone this ability to be the very best that I could be.

I was blessed with not only the opportunity to chase my dreams, but also with the ability to actually have a shot at making those dreams come true. I was desperate to show my gratitude, by doing everything in my power every single day, to the very best

of my ability. I wanted to use these strengths and opportunities to the fullest.

In doing this, I was honoring the higher power I believe in, and myself. You have to lay it all out there, give it all your heart and soul, and appreciate and recognise that you have these abilities, so use them to the fullest!

This inspired me to race until I dropped, to push until I could no longer push and to withstand as much pain as possible, to know that when I crossed the finish line I had given it everything I had. Now, as a

coach, I hold that same philosophy true and dear to my heart.

I want to give everything I have to help my athletes achieve their dreams – to help them recognise their God given talents, and use them to the fullest. I want to use all my brains, all my energy, all my emotion, all my skills to help bring out the best in each and every one of them.

As they say in my all time favorite TV show *Friday Night Lights*, “Clear eyes, full heart, can’t lose”.

‘Can’t lose’ means you cannot be unhappy or unsatisfied, knowing that you gave it your absolute heart and soul. Some days that will lead to a literal win, but on all days it leads to the satisfaction of knowing you did the best that you could, with all that you had.

Coaching to me, is a gift, an honor, and one I take very seriously. All I want is to see my athletes achieve their dreams, and in the process, experience life to the fullest – to become stronger, more robust individuals with life experience, joy, passion and satisfaction in their hearts.

As we head into the meat of our racing season, with Olympic qualifying races, Ironman World Championships qualification, and the big races themselves, everyone and everything is in a highly sensitive mode. I’m aware of the importance of ensuring that my athletes are doing everything right, and that we are walking the line of working enough, but not working too much. I have to constantly balance the beam of keeping them motivated and inspired but also patient and composed. We have all got to keep a close eye on the mental and emotional mindset each athlete is in, while we ensure that each athlete is prepared for their big goal, their big task, and their big event.

This sport, to me, is all about mind, body and spirit. As a coach, you need all three working in unison, in a healthy manner, in order to produce the best possible results.

Every athlete of mine is different. It’s not just their physical strengths and weaknesses that separate them. It’s how I train them as a coach, it’s about what motivates each one of them personally, and finding out what brings out the best in them each and every day, as well as what keeps them balanced mentally, physically and emotionally.

I have some athletes that need structure and a plan that doesn’t change, but one that

evolves week after week – a plan of repetition and consistency that shows continual progress. This uncomplicated approach makes them feel safe, confident, and continually motivated to be one step, or stroke better than they were the week before.

I have other athletes that need to be constantly stimulated, ones who need new challenges, to keep it fresh and exciting. The new challenges feed their adventurous spirit and keep them hungry to step up to the ultimate challenge of their big event.

These are the differences in training protocol. There are also vast differences in the emotional and mental preparation of my athletes.

My overall philosophy is *Honest Work brings Honest Confidence*. All my athletes

pressure and expectation, all of which can be a heavy burden that is hard to overcome on a daily basis.

These athletes are driven and inspired by encouragement, and are most successful when they see their training as an adventure, or an epic opportunity to do something they love. They have the ability to be inspired by seeing just how fast or far they can go, and how relentless they can be. The great adventure is the fuel beneath their fire, while the fun and satisfaction is what brings them back day after day to step up to the next challenge.

The real differences come to light on race day itself. At last year’s Ironman World Championships in Kona, I had five athletes racing – Mirinda Carfrae, Yvonne Van

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know that their confidence will not come from my handing it to them through praise and encouragement. Instead, it will come by my giving them sessions, or goals to accomplish in training, and having them successfully achieve them. The work I give them ultimately shows them what they are capable of and is the proof as to how tough they are. This helps them to attempt to do tasks that seem so difficult or insurmountable that when they successfully complete that task, they have then proven to themselves that they can!

Some athletes want facts. They want to be shown the improvement over time, in a certain area, to see the numbers, graphs, and the facts. Other athletes want to stay away from the numbers, as that can induce

Vlerken, Jodie Swallow, Mary Beth Ellis, and Amanda Stevens. If someone was a fly on the wall for each and every one of my pre-race talks, they would think I had multiple personality disorder. The approach I took with each of these athletes was entirely different – no conversation was like the next. They each had an individual race plan to follow, and needed their thoughts to be directed accordingly.

Some needed to just be reminded of all the great work they have done, and to be reminded that race day is a celebration of the hard work they have done, and the commitment they have made. Others needed to go through their race day plan minute by minute, offering up countless scenarios of what could happen, and how



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JOB DONE: Siri’s approach to training continues to be successful as she congratulates Mirinda Carfrae on her 2014 Kona win.

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they will deal with those things if and when they happen. I went through minute-by-minute plans, the ideal mindset to tackle it with, and a methodical approach to what needed to be done in the race.

Others don't want to talk about the race at all. They have done the work, they are ready to step up and get the job done. When saving their emotional, mental and physical firepower for race day, the best way to help this athlete is to keep them busy focusing on everything else but the race. Surrounding them with the type of energy pre-race that allows them to fill up their tanks with the best, most productive energy in preparation for race day is often the game plan. Another would need to just be reminded of the sessions they have done, the targets they have hit, the day after day of leaving no stone unturned.

The day before the race, everyone starts experiencing doubts or fears – this is normal. The key for this athlete is to remind them that they have done the work, and are ready for anything come race day. I have them look through their training diary, to remind them of the facts that prove they are ready for the big challenge ahead.

Another just needed quiet time, saving every ounce of energy for the big day. No words are needed when the work is done, and we know the plan. Laser focus and be ready for battle.

I felt so honoured to have such a brilliant group of athletes racing last year in Kona, and so proud of the amazing work that led all of them to that start line. Celebrating each one individually for their commitment to their dream, and their willingness to do whatever it took to give

them every chance of making their dream come true was subliminal.

By race morning, as the coach, I had exhausted all my energy, trying to give each athlete what she needed to be on that start line. I was ready to celebrate each athlete and the incredible journey they would have on that day.

The gun goes off and my job is done. I watch with pride, excitement, and a feeling of such gratitude to be on the beautiful island, witnessing all these extraordinary human beings pushing themselves to their limits physically, mentally and emotionally. It is a beautiful thing, a blessing in fact, to be inspired to this extent every single day.

On that day, my athletes will give their hearts and souls towards racing to their utmost potential. And on that day, my hope is that the heart, soul, direction and guidance that I gave was powerful enough, and effective enough to allow that to happen for them.

Be brave, be real, and give it all you've got. Then embrace the adventure, celebrate the effort and create a memory that will last for a lifetime. AT

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