

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>

The power of gratitude

GratITUDE. I have this word tattooed on my wrist, because I believe it is one of the most powerful words in my life.

My understanding of the power of gratitude has truly changed my life.

It started when I was an athlete. I had put my heart and soul into my dream of becoming a world champion in triathlon.

Now this really was the impossible dream: I learned how to swim when I was 23 and looked like a human washing machine doing it. I rode my first road bike at that same time. I had run before, but just sprinting up and down a lacrosse field, chasing after a ball. So, really I had no talent in this sport at all. The problem was, I had fallen madly in love with the sport and wanted nothing more than to devote my life to being the very best that I could be at it.

Through years of full-time work, and part-time training, embarrassing mistakes and big gains, I never ever stopped believing that if I put my heart and soul into this goal, one day I could achieve it.

Incredibly, somehow I did achieve that goal. I became World Champion and earned the number one world ranking two years in a row. It was an absolute dream come true.

The word gratitude came into my life in my first year of 'winning'. It was 2001 and for the first time, I was starting to see the results I had dreamed about the previous decade. I had worked my body into a powerful machine that was capable of swimming in the front pack in World Cup races, able to bike at the front, and to run away to win races. I had an awesome coach, great training partners, and a mum who had supported my dream since the day I took on this challenge in 1996.

I felt so blessed and grateful for the opportunities and abilities I had been given.

I was grateful that even though the dream seemed impossible, I never ever gave up on it. I never stopped believing and those closest to me, didn't stop believing either.

When I started winning races, I was suddenly faced with a great fear – the fear of losing. I had started winning and it felt so good. I felt so complete, motivated and fulfilled. But now, winning became even more important – it was like a drug, I had become addicted to the feeling of being at my very best; the thrill of pushing myself to the utmost limits.

At the time my attitude was not healthy. I was being driven by fear, while constantly being worried about losing what I had, instead of appreciating it. I had reached a crossroad and had to decide whether I wanted to keep living my life from a place of fear or start appreciating what I had and celebrating it.

I realised then that I was looking at things in all the wrong ways. It wasn't about winning. It was about being the very best that I could be in training, in every race, and as a human being. It was about focusing on what I had – desire, determination, focus and strength – and putting it to good use everyday.



The quote that epitomised my motivation was one by running legend Steve Prefontaine: "To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift." I had that ability and by giving my best each and every day, I was appreciating this gift and celebrating it.

I developed an incredible desire to show my gratitude for the blessings in my life, and started looking into all the things in my life that I felt grateful for – my health, my dreams, my beliefs and my motivation. The harder I worked, the stronger I felt. The stronger I felt, the more confidence I had. The more confidence I had, the more others around me believed in my dream. The more others believed in my dream, the more support I felt around me. The more support I felt, the more fearless I became, and the more fearless I became, the greater achievements I could make.

I felt the need to show my thanks to the universe for the blessings in my life. Despite the extreme difficulty in getting from point A to the point B at that time, I was grateful for the journey. Every trial or challenge was incredibly painful, but out of every one of those things, something great was always the outcome.

To give anything
less than your best
is to sacrifice the gift

—Steve Prefontaine

Training with legendary coach Brett Sutton was the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. The way he made me face my greatest fears and challenged me to overcome them was torturous at times, but through it all I gave myself an incredible gift – the proof that I am strong. I could do things that seemed impossible!

I decided then that my greatest motivation was to express my gratitude for the abilities I had, and the opportunities I had been given to put them to good use. My way of showing gratitude was to apply myself 100% to the tasks at hand every single day in training, and to never hold back.

By doing this, I expressed my appreciation for the abilities I had. I valued the strength that I had acquired, and I treasured this amazing life I was able to lead. Incidentally, this was when I started winning races.

It wasn't easy and there were many hurdles to overcome, but when you live with gratitude, you accept that these challenges are opportunities for growth, and are part of the road you must travel along to reach the destinations you dream of.

I had, many times in my life been encouraged to use anger, pain, or fear to drive me to achieve more. But this "strategy" was painful, and eventually wore me down. Instead I focused on all the positive attributes I possessed within myself, and used gratitude as my fuel.

The more you focus on what you have, not on what you lack, the more you will acquire – whether it is joy, fulfillment, or success. If you focus on using what you have to your utmost potential, you are bound to get more out of it – and it will feel good! Focusing on negative energy can propel you to dig deeper or find more in a given circumstance, but it is not sustainable.

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that." — Siri Lindley



THOSE MOST DEAR TO SIRI: Clockwise from above left: Wife Rebekah Keat, Mum Astrid and beloved pooches Sparky and Calvin are with her & Team Sirius every step of the way.

So, focus on your abilities, strengths and what you can do. You can strengthen your weaknesses, overcome difficulties, and resolve arguments. Most importantly, you have the ability to make your dreams come true.

The power of gratitude is undeniable. Hone it, and use it to help you not only achieve your athletic dreams, but to increase the joy in your life immensely. **AT**