I don’t care how good you think you are, or how great others think you are—you can improve, and you will. Being relentless means demanding more of yourself than anyone else could ever demand of you, knowing that every time you stop, you can still do more. You must do more.

Being relentless means demanding more of yourself than anyone else could ever demand of you, knowing that every time you stop, you can still do more. You must do more. You must do more.

To be the best, whether in sports or business or any other aspect of life, it’s never enough to just get to the top; you have to stay there, and then you have to climb higher, because there’s always someone right behind you trying to catch up. Most people are willing to settle for “good enough.” But if you want to be unstoppable, those words mean nothing to you. Being the best means engineering your life so you never stop until you get what you want, and then you keep going until you get what’s next. And then you go for even more. Relentless.

Most people give up because everyone has told them what they can’t do, and it’s easier to stay safe in the comfort zone. So they sit on the fence, unable to decide, unable to act.

But if you don’t make a choice, the choice will be made for you. It’s time to stop listening to what everyone else says about you, telling you what to do, how to act, how you should feel. Let them judge you by your results, and nothing else; it’s none of their business how you get where you’re going.

Let them judge you by your results, and nothing else; it’s none of their business how you get where you’re going. If you’re relentless, there is no halfway, no could or should or maybe. Don’t tell me the glass is half-full or half-empty; you either have something in that glass or you don’t. Decide. Commit. Act. Succeed. Repeat.

Success isn’t the same as talent. The world is full of incredibly talented people who never succeed at anything. They show up, do what they do, and if it doesn’t work out, they blame everyone else because they believe talent should be enough. It’s not. If you want to be truly successful, you can’t be content with “pretty good.” You need to find an extra gear.
Don't Think
But I guarantee you that everything I know, everything in this book, comes from unlimited access to some of the most excellent and elite performers in the world; I understand how they think, how they learn, how they succeed and fail. . . . what drives them to be relentless. It's not all pretty, but it's all true.

Don't Think
This book is about following those instincts, facing the truth, and getting rid of the excuses that stand between you and your goals, no matter how complex and unattainable they may seem, no matter how many people tell you it can't be done. It can be done. Here's the key: I'm not going to tell you how to change. People don't change. I want you to trust who you already are, and get to that Zone where you can shut out all the noise, all the negativity and fear and distractions and lies, and achieve whatever you want, in whatever you do.

Don't Think
Success is about dealing with reality, facing your demons and addictions, and not putting a smiley face on everything you do. If you need a pat on the back and a “Good job!” to get your ass off the couch, this is not the book for you. Because if you want to be unstoppable, you have to face who you really are and make it work for you, not against you. Truly relentless people—the Cleaners—are predators, with dark sides that refuse to be taught to be good.

Don't Think
Because if you want to be unstoppable, you have to face who you really are and make it work for you, not against you. Truly relentless people—the Cleaners—are predators, with dark sides that refuse to be taught to be good. And whether you know it or not, you do have a dark side. Use it well and it can be your greatest gift.

Don't Think
If you're aiming to be the best at what you do, you can't worry about whether your actions will upset other people, or what they'll think of you. We're taking all the emotion out of this, and doing whatever it takes to get to where you want to be. Selfish? Probably. Egocentric? Definitely. If that's a problem for you, read the book and see if you feel differently afterward.

Don't Think
He was so distracted by his fear of losing that he couldn't focus on what he had to do to win, couldn't stem the wave of frustration and emotion that was drowning all his natural ability and confidence. His negativity on the court was evident; he was rolling his eyes at his teammates and coaches, grimacing as if he were dying out there.

Don't Think
His teammates began to see that, and suddenly they were like troops marching into battle without their leader, completely shutting down. That's how great teams lose: the leader doesn't show up.

Don't Think
We learned from each other. We never saw obstacles or problems, we only saw situations in need of solutions. And since there had never been a player like Michael Jordan, we encountered a lot of situations without known solutions.
Forget what you thought, what you believed, whatever opinions you have . . . we start over right now. Empty glass. Those last few drops are the mental barriers that will prevent you from being better. We’re going somewhere completely new.

**The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get**

“In order to have what you really want, you must first be who you really are.”

April 29, 2013

**The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get**

Being relentless means never being satisfied.

April 29, 2013

**The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get**

Being relentless means never being satisfied. It means creating new goals every time you reach your personal best. If you’re good, it means you don’t stop until you’re great. If you’re great, it means you fight until you’re unstoppable.

April 29, 2013

**The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get**

Greatness makes you a legend; being the best makes you an icon. If you want to be great, deliver the unexpected. If you want to be the best, deliver a miracle.

April 29, 2013

**The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get**

Remember, it’s not about talent or brains or wealth. It’s about the relentless instinctive drive to do whatever it takes—anything—to get to the top of where you want to be, and to stay there.

April 29, 2013

**The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get**

A Cleaner’s attitude can be summed up in three words: I own this.

April 29, 2013

**The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get**

He just knows. Being a Cleaner has almost nothing to do with talent. Everyone has some degree of talent; it doesn’t always lead to success.

April 29, 2013

**The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get**

Those who reach this level of excellence don’t coast on their talent. They’re completely focused on taking responsibility and taking charge, whether they’re competing in sports or managing a family or running a business or driving a bus; they decide how to get the job done, and then they do whatever is necessary to make it happen.

April 29, 2013

**The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get**

Why do I call them Cleaners? Because they take responsibility for everything. When something goes wrong, they don’t blame others because they never really count on anyone else to get the job done in the first place. They just clean up the mess and move on.
The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get
They just clean up the mess and move on. Think about the custodian who quietly works alone, late at night. He calls no attention to himself, no one sees him work, no one knows what he does, but the job always gets done. It has to, so everyone else can do their jobs efficiently. In his own way, he’s the most powerful guy in the building. He has unlimited access, he knows where everything is and how it all works.

The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get
In his own way, he’s the most powerful guy in the building: He has unlimited access, he knows where everything is and how it all works. He has the keys to every single door; he can go anywhere, unseen. He knows what everyone else is doing, all the dirty little secrets: who didn’t go home, who snuck in late at night, who left the empty whiskey bottle under the desk, who left condom wrappers in the trash. If you have an emergency, he’s the guy you call.

The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get
Cleaners are rule-breakers when they have to be; they only care about the end result. When things go wrong and everyone else starts to panic, the Cleaner is calm and unflappable, cool and steady, never too high or too low, never too happy or too depressed. He never sees problems, only situations to resolve, and when he finds the solution, he doesn’t waste time explaining it. He just says, “I got this.” And when it’s over and he gets the results, all the others just stand there, shaking their heads in disbelief, wondering how he did it. Failure is never an option; even if it takes years, he’ll find a way to turn a bad situation to his benefit, and he won’t stop until he succeeds.

The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get
They never stop working, physically or mentally, because it gives them too much time to think about what they’ve had to endure and sacrifice to get to the top. Most people are afraid to climb that high, because if they fail, the fall will kill them.

The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get
Everything he does is to feed that addiction. It’s not that he loves the process, he just loves that end result. I know you’ve absorbed a lifetime of advice about this: “Love what you do and you’ll never work a day in your life!”

The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get
Let’s face it: At the highest level of success in any area, everyone has reached some degree of outstanding achievement, so we’re talking about shades of greatness. But if you want to be the very best of the best, it’s the details that make the difference.

The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get
Coolers, Closers, and Cleaners. Good, Great, and Unstoppable.

The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get
The Closer can win the game if given the opportunity, but the Cleaner creates the opportunity. The Closer can be the star, but the Cleaner maneuvered him into the job. Cleaners never need a kick in the ass. Everyone else does. Good, Great, Unstoppable.
As you’ll see, each is labeled #1, because if you give people a numbered list, they think #1 is the most important and the rest just follow behind. If it’s a long list, they lose interest after #3 or #4. But on my lists, everything is equally important. If I give a player a list of things he must do to stay strong and healthy, and he skips any step, none of it works. So I don’t number anything #1, #2, #3, #4 . . . I number everything #1.

The Cleaner You Are, the Dirtier You Get
THE RELENTLESS 13

I won’t ask you to transform into something you’re not and don’t aspire to be. I simply ask that you open your mind to the possibility that you can do so much more with what you already have. If you’re serious about going where you’ve never been, pushing higher and further than you or anyone else thought you could, it’s time to trust the voice inside telling you to do what you know you can do and become truly relentless.


day. Challenge yourself to be uncomfortable, push past the apathy and laziness and fear. Otherwise, the next day you’re going to have two things you don’t want to do, then three and four and five, and pretty soon, you can’t even get back to the first thing. And then all you can do is beat yourself up for the mess you’ve created, and now you’ve got a mental barrier to go along with the physical barriers.

And then all you can do is beat yourself up for the mess you’ve created, and now you’ve got a mental barrier to go along with the physical barriers.
April 29, 2013

... You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.
Yes, I know it’s uncomfortable. I’m not telling you to love it. I’m telling you to crave the result so intensely that the work is irrelevant. If it makes you feel better, I don’t make things comfortable for myself either. I could take these great athletes, maintain their level of fitness, keep them healthy, and everyone would be content.

April 29, 2013

... You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.
Bottom line if you want success of any kind: you have to be comfortable being uncomfortable. Every time you think you can’t, you have to do it anyway. That last mile, the last set, the last five minutes on the clock. You have to play the last game of the season with the same intensity as you played the first.

April 29, 2013

... You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.
You have to play the last game of the season with the same intensity as you played the first. When your body is screaming and depleted and telling you, “No way, asshole,” you work harder and tell yourself, “Do it. Now.”

April 29, 2013

... You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.
I’m always thinking up new ways to see how I can push someone, shock the body and rock the mental stamina. If you do what you always do, over and over, you’re always going to get the same result. My goal is to make it so challenging in the gym that everything that happens outside the gym seems easy.

April 29, 2013

... You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.
The work is about testing yourself and preparing all your options, so when you’re performing, there’s nothing to think about. Do the work before you need it, so you know what you’re capable of doing when everyone else hits that panic button and looks at you.

April 30, 2013

... You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.
Then I take all that information, process everything, and decide: Am I willing to push this a little bit further? Because if I do, his progress is going to double in half the time. But he has to be willing to deal with what I’m asking of him.

April 30, 2013

... You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.
But I’m not going to make it comfortable. Why should I? Comfortable makes you good. We’re going for unstoppable, and there’s a price to pay for that. I’m not going to hurt you, but if you don’t trust me to take you where you have to go, we can’t get this done. I’m never going to put you in a situation you’re not ready for, but I’m going to put you in that situation quicker than most people would. Because if I allow you to get there at your own pace, we’re never going to get there.

April 30, 2013

... You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.
If anything, it’s the opposite: Whether you’re a pro athlete or a guy running a business or driving a truck or going to school, it’s simple. Ask yourself where you are now, and where you want to be instead. Ask yourself what you’re willing to do to get there. Then make a plan to get there. Act on it.

April 30, 2013

... You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.
I don’t want to hear about workouts you can do in five minutes a day, or twenty minutes a week; that’s total bullshit.
You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.

Don't tell me about a workout that’s “easy” and done in the “comfort of your home.” Any workouts involving the words easy and comfort aren’t workouts. They’re insults. You can work out at home, but if whatever you’re doing makes you feel “comfort,” something is very wrong.

April 30, 2013

You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.

I’d estimate 85 percent of all physical discomfort comes from being overweight. Explain to me: If you can choose between being uncomfortable because you’re overweight and sick, or uncomfortable because you’re sweating at the gym three times a week, why do so many people choose the discomfort that leads to complete physical failure?

April 30, 2013

You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.

Explain to me: If you can choose between being uncomfortable because you’re overweight and sick, or uncomfortable because you’re sweating at the gym three times a week, why do so many people choose the discomfort that leads to complete physical failure?

April 30, 2013

You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.

I know it’s not easy, but you can’t stay in your comfort zone and expect results. Challenge yourself. Don’t be afraid to be uncomfortable. We can’t help people committed to failure.

April 30, 2013

You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.

Those are the guys I want, the badasses who will take chances and push themselves.

April 30, 2013

You keep pushing yourself harder when everyone else has had enough.

Not me. Get comfortable being uncomfortable, or find another place to fail.

April 30, 2013

You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.

But one way or another, we’re gonna get it lit. Maybe I’ll mention what another player did . . . and pull out that button for you. I’ll repeat something I heard from the coach . . . another button ready to go. After an unbelievable performance, I’ll ask what you did last night, because you need to do that again before the next game. Or I’ll tell you I’m going back to the hotel to pack your bags because you’re playing as if you’ve already left town. More buttons. Then I’ll have someone get aggressive with you during a workout . . . and boom. That was the button you hit, and for the next hour, you can’t be stopped.

April 30, 2013

You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.

You never, ever, challenge Michael Jordan and expect to come out ahead. Michael literally stopped on the court. Looked at the guy. Shook his head and said, “Let a sleeping dog lie.” The dark side said, “Kill this motherfucker,” and he went into attack mode, straight into the Zone. Result: unstoppable.

April 30, 2013

You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.

You can tell someone all day, “You need to relax, you need to focus.” But what does that actually mean? You’re not giving him anything he can use. He’s looking for someone to tell him what he’s doing wrong because he thinks he’s relaxing and clearly he’s not.

May 1, 2013

You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.
But once a Cleaner steps into the Zone, he’s detached from everything on the outside. Whatever else is going on—personal, business, anything—it can’t affect him until he’s ready to return. That, by definition, is the Zone. No fear, no intrusion. Total concentration. You’re not thinking, because thinking turns your thoughts on to everything, and the Zone is about the opposite, turning your thoughts off to everything except the task at hand.

... You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.

When you consider that Michael’s career shooting percentage was 50 percent—meaning the ball found its mark one out of every two times, with three guys hanging on him and twenty thousand cameras flashing every time he took a shot—you can begin to appreciate how deep in the Zone he was for every single game, every quarter, every play. There was no difference between what he did in practice and what he did in the game, his mechanics were consistent in any environment. I can’t stand hearing athletes say, “When I’m under the lights, that’s where I turn it on.” No. When you’re in the Zone, you shouldn’t even notice the lights. Or need them.

... You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.

Why do teams play better at home than on the road? Why do some athletes perform better in certain stadiums than others? They can’t reproduce that environment that puts them in the Zone. They’re thinking about being in a different atmosphere, instead of instinctively knowing how to adapt to their surroundings. Instead of dictating the outcome of the event, they’re letting the event dictate the outcome to them. Instead of feeling steady and steely, they start feeling unsure and worried.

... You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.

The fastest way to tumble out of the Zone is to allow emotions to drive your actions.

... You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.

Again: emotions make you weak.

... You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.

The only exception to the emotions rule is anger: controlled anger is a deadly weapon, in the right hands. I’m not talking about a raging volcano that can’t be managed from inside or outside, but anger you can restrain and turn into energy.

... You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.

Emotions pull your focus and reveal that you’ve lost control, and ultimately they destroy your performance.

... You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.

But the difference between Cleaners and everyone else is their ability to control those feelings, instead of allowing those feelings to control them. Even Michael used to say he had butterflies before a big game. “Get ’em all going in the same direction,” I’d tell him. They’re not going away, but now you’re controlling how you feel about them, instead of allowing them to make you feel nervous. Energy instead of emotion. Big difference.

... You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.

A Cleaner thinks, If I’m feeling nervous, how the fuck are they feeling? They have to deal with me.

... You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.
While others are getting heated up, I want you to start cool and stay cool, because anything that starts too hot can only get cold. When you want to preserve food and keep it fresh, what do you do?

... You get into the Zone, shut out everything else, and control the uncontrollable.
Finding your way into the Zone begins with trusting those instincts, and that's where we're going next.

May 1, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
Babies are completely, naturally, insatiably relentless.

May 2, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
You can't put your values on him or explain why he can't eat right now. Babies tell everyone how it's going to be, and that's how it is. They follow their instincts, they thrive, they get what they want.

May 2, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
We take all those powerful natural instincts, those instantaneous gut reactions, we chalk them up to bad behavior and do everything possible to shut them down. What a waste. All that natural energy, drive, intuition, action... reduced to a time-out in the corner.

May 2, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
All that natural energy, drive, intuition, action... reduced to a time-out in the corner. From the time you're a toddler to the time you're an adult, you've been taught to be "good." What's wrong with the way you were?

May 2, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
Born relentless, taught to relent.

May 2, 2013

Picture a lion running wild. He stalks his prey, attacking and killing at will, and then goes in search of his next conquest. That's what his lion instincts tell him to do, he doesn't know anything else. He's not misbehaving, he's not bad, he's being a lion. Now lock him up in the zoo. He lies there all day, quiet and lethargic and well fed. What happened to those powerful instincts? They're still there, deep inside, waiting to be uncaged. Let him out of the zoo and he goes lion again, preying and attacking. Put him back in the cage, he lies down. Most people are the lion in the cage. Safe, tame, predictable, waiting for something to happen. But for humans, the cage isn't made of glass and steel bars; it's made of bad advice and low self-esteem and bullshit rules and tortured thinking about what you can't do or what you're supposed to do. It's molded around you by a lifetime of overthinking and overanalyzing and worrying about what could go wrong. Stay in the cage long enough, you forget those basic instincts.

May 2, 2013

Again: Can you be the best? Of course you can.

May 2, 2013

Then why are you still questioning your ability to do it? Quick answer: because at some point, you made something simple into something complicated, and you stopped trusting yourself.
May 2, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
But taming means training them to be something less. As the boxer Leon Spinks once said when asked what he does for a living, “I knock motherfuckers out.” That’s it. Simple. You don’t mess with it, alter it, teach it to be something different. That’s natural instinct. Leave it alone.

May 2, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
No thinking. Just the gut reaction that comes from being so ready, so prepared, so confident, that there’s nothing to think about. If you’re driving, and suddenly the car ahead of you slams on its brakes, do you pause to consider all your options or stop to ask for advice? No, you slam on the brakes. No thought, no hesitation. Instant response, based on experience and preparation. If you think, you die. When you just know, you can act.

May 2, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
Go back to that lion stalking his prey. Silent, determined, focused ... instinctively knowing that whatever the victim does, he has no chance. The lion waits ... waits ... waits ... until that inevitable moment of weakness.

May 2, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
The lion waits ... waits ... waits ... until that inevitable moment of weakness. Attack. Done. Next. He doesn’t have to be shown what to do or how to think. He knows. So do you.

May 2, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
Anyone who has actually experienced its raw power knows it can’t be summed up in a couple of words. And most people who claim to have killer instinct rarely do, because when you have that kind of power, you don’t talk about it. You don’t think about it. You just use it.

May 3, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
When you become too focused on what’s going on around you, you lose touch with what’s going on deep inside you. Those are the guys who are perfect in practice, but blow it when it counts. They can’t find the Zone, they’re distracted by their own thought process, and they don’t trust themselves.

May 3, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
When you’re willing to hit the gym three times a day to take shots and work on every detail of your game as Kobe does, you’re pretty much ready for anything. He watches a ton of video, breaks down every shot ... but he also works relentlessly on what he learns from that video. That’s a Cleaner, not just learning but taking what you’ve learned and creating ways to improve on it.

May 3, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
That’s a Cleaner, not just learning but taking what you’ve learned and creating ways to improve on it.

May 3, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
Stop waiting to be taught something you already know. How many millions of diet and exercise books are sold every year?

May 4, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
Oprah once said, “Every right decision I’ve ever made has come from my gut, and every wrong decision I’ve ever made was a result of me not listening.” Exactly.

... You know exactly who you are.
“In order to have what you really want, you must first be who you really are.”

May 4, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
When you look on the outside, you can only see images and what people want you to see, a manipulated picture of the truth. Ask yourself, what would it feel like to just let go of all the external pressure and expectations and just be yourself?

May 4, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
If it were easy, everyone would do it. Lots of people start things; few are able to finish. Why? They don’t trust themselves to get to the end. They start thinking about everything that could go wrong, second-guessing their choices, listening to others instead of listening to themselves. Anyone can have a great idea ... it’s what you do with the thought that defines you. In a Cooler, an idea will travel from his brain to his mouth—he has to talk about it, discuss it, share it with others for feedback and approval.

May 4, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
When you’re great, you trust your instincts. When you’re unstoppable, your instincts trust you.

May 4, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
No, I’m going to train pro athletes. There is zero chance you’ll get anywhere if you allow yourself to become paralyzed by soft excuses and countless reasons why you’ll never get to where you want to be. Trust your gut to navigate the hard road to get there.

May 4, 2013

... You know exactly who you are.
Stop thinking. Stop waiting. You already know what to do.

May 4, 2013

... You have a dark side that refuses to be taught to be good.
Of course, Hyde was a psychopath, and I’m not suggesting you go that far off the rails. But if you want to climb out of your rut and get up to the next level, you have to leave your baggage behind.

May 4, 2013

... You have a dark side that refuses to be taught to be good.
But if you want to climb out of your rut and get up to the next level, you have to leave your baggage behind.

May 4, 2013

... You have a dark side that refuses to be taught to be good.
It’s Superman shedding “mild-mannered” Clark Kent’s suit and glasses, the Incredible Hulk going green, Batman putting on the cape, the Wolf-man howling at the moon. It’s the ability to voluntarily or involuntarily drop all the bullshit and inhibitions and allow yourself to just do what you do, the way you want to do it, performing instinctively at the most extraordinary level. No fear, no limitation. Just action and results.

May 4, 2013

... You have a dark side that refuses to be taught to be good.
Deep inside you, there’s an undeniable force driving your actions, the part of you that refuses to be ordinary, the piece that stays raw and untamed. Not just instinct, but killer instinct. The kind you keep in the dark, where you crave things you don’t talk about. And you don’t care how it comes across to others because you know this is who you are, and you wouldn’t change if you could.

\[\text{May 4, 2013}\]

\[\ldots\] You have a dark side that refuses to be taught to be good.
Zero. The satisfaction doesn’t come from the risk, it comes from mastering it. I own this.

\[\text{May 5, 2013}\]

\[\ldots\] You have a dark side that refuses to be taught to be good.
Staying safe means being limited, and you can’t be limited if you’re going to be relentless.

\[\text{May 5, 2013}\]

\[\ldots\] You have a dark side that refuses to be taught to be good.
If you’re so intensely wired to attack and win, you can’t just turn that on and off, it’s who you are, it defines you. Never exhaling. Never satisfied. We’re talking about day after day, year after year, getting on top and staying there. Being the best and still wanting to improve. Not just thinking about success, but striving to prove it, prove it, prove it. No days off. What are you going to do instead to satisfy that craving?

\[\text{May 5, 2013}\]

\[\ldots\] You have a dark side that refuses to be taught to be good.
I wanted him to go out there and show he was still in command of who he was, still a killer, raising his game even higher to show he was still the guy in charge. There is no better way to intimidate the competition: I went through all of this, and my game went up? You fuckers have no chance.

\[\text{May 5, 2013}\]

\[\ldots\] You have a dark side that refuses to be taught to be good.
Be honest: Would you be as successful if you followed all the rules and always behaved and never took chances? No, you’d be just like everyone else, scared about failing and worried about being liked.

\[\text{May 5, 2013}\]

\[\ldots\] You’re not intimidated by pressure, you thrive on it.
Honestly, if I were you, I’d be insulted if someone said I had a clutch gene. It’s not a compliment when people say you step up for the big games. Where were you all the other games? Why weren’t you that solid and aggressive and effective all the time?

\[\text{May 5, 2013}\]

\[\ldots\] You’re not intimidated by pressure, you thrive on it.
But being relentless means constantly working for that result, not just when drama is on the line. Clutch is about the last minute. Relentless is about every minute.

\[\text{May 5, 2013}\]

\[\ldots\] You’re not intimidated by pressure, you thrive on it.
Because if you’re content to wait until that last minute, you are way too safe the rest of the time, taking it easy, coasting along in your comfort zone. A lot of guys won’t take that last shot, not because they’re afraid they’ll miss, but because if they make it, they have to keep making it.

\[\text{May 5, 2013}\]

\[\ldots\] You’re not intimidated by pressure, you thrive on it.
For a lot of guys, it’s easier to stay in the comfort zone, close to the ground. Minimal expectations, minimal pressure . . . minimal rewards. But you’re safe.
May 5, 2013

You’re not intimidated by pressure, you thrive on it.
Now you have to get started on doing it again, so you can do it again the year after that. Anyone who is content with one ring and doesn’t feel the pressure to earn another needs to retire, effective immediately.

May 5, 2013

You’re not intimidated by pressure, you thrive on it.
I always felt Michael’s legendary trash talking wasn’t meant for the other guy; it was another way for him to heighten the pressure he put on himself, because once you’ve told others how bad you’re about to fuck them up, you’re gonna have to deliver on that promise.

May 5, 2013

You’re not intimidated by pressure, you thrive on it.
I don’t want to hear that someone can’t “handle pressure.” Everyone can handle pressure. Most people choose not to because it’s easier to stay safe in the comfort zone. But if you want to be successful, to have that place in the sun, then you have to leave the shade.

May 5, 2013

But if you want to be successful, to have that place in the sun, then you have to leave the shade. It’s not easy to leave the shade; it’s cool and comfortable, compared to the hot discomfort of the sun. But you can’t be relentless if you can’t take discomfort, and you can’t be unstoppable if you only deal with pressure when you have no choice.

May 5, 2013

Use it, don’t run from it. When it makes you uncomfortable, so what? The payoff is worth it. Work through the discomfort, you’ll survive. And then go back for more.

May 5, 2013

“You had a great season? So what? Those other guys had great seasons, they’re still playing, and you’re not. It’s not enough to get to the top. You have to stay there. Feel that pressure, and fight to stay there. You have to work for that. It’s not owed to you.”

May 5, 2013

He does not care what you think. He steps out of his comfort zone and challenges himself to get to the next level.

May 5, 2013

It all goes back to confidence. When you’re challenged, do you bring the pressure, or do you let the other guy push you into a corner? Do you feel trapped like a rat or do you attack first? Do you pull back, afraid of the fight, or do you make the other guy get in the mud with you? Wounds heal, scars don’t; those are your combat medals. In the MJ days, we’d say, “Go get some on ya.” Go get dirty.

May 5, 2013

When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
If that sounds like arrogant swagger, fine with me. I’m confident in what I do because I know whatever happens, I’m going to adjust and keep rolling. Not everything works the first time, sometimes it doesn’t work at all.

May 5, 2013

When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
Not everything works the first time, sometimes it doesn’t work at all. But there’s a difference between confidence and cockiness: confidence means recognizing something isn’t working and having the flexibility and knowledge to make adjustments; cockiness is the inability to admit when something isn’t working, and repeating the same mistakes over and over because you stubbornly can’t admit you’re wrong.

May 5, 2013

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
I hadn’t worked closely with him for two seasons, so basically, I had three hours to learn about the last two years to get through the next five days before looking ahead to the next two seasons. But when I see a challenge that everyone else has failed to own, I’m going to own it.

May 5, 2013

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
Because when the series ended, Dwyane was holding up that trophy, and that’s the payoff no words can describe. You take the risk to taste that greatness.

May 5, 2013

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
A Cooler takes no risks. A Closer takes risks when he can prepare in advance and knows the consequences of failing are minimal. Nothing feels risky to a Cleaner; whatever happens, he’ll know what to do.

May 5, 2013

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
Why? Same talent, same routine they’ve gone through a thousand times. Why can some adapt to an unexpected twist, and others completely fall apart?

May 5, 2013

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
Few people have the ability to adapt on the fly and make quick adjustments that work. You can plan and prepare for ten different scenarios, be completely ready for every variable you anticipated . . . and you can be sure there will be an eleventh scenario you never saw coming.

May 5, 2013

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
You can plan and prepare for ten different scenarios, be completely ready for every variable you anticipated . . . and you can be sure there will be an eleventh scenario you never saw coming. Most people are ready for one scenario, they can’t even envision ten; they’re completely paralyzed by all the possible variables, and when one thing goes wrong, they can’t adjust.

May 5, 2013

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
Most people are ready for one scenario, they can’t even envision ten; they’re completely paralyzed by all the possible variables, and when one thing goes wrong, they can’t adjust.

May 5, 2013

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
You have to be willing to fail if you’re going to trust yourself to act from the gut, and then adapt as you go. That’s the confidence or swagger that allows you to take risks and know that whatever happens, you’ll figure it out. Adapt, and adapt again.

May 5, 2013

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
I don’t think you can really understand relentlessness until you’ve faced your worst fears, and you’ve experienced that internal response telling you what to do.

May 5, 2013

. . . When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.

Being relentless means having the courage to say, “I’m going for this, and if I’m wrong, I’ll make a change and I’ll still be fine.” You can’t control or anticipate every obstacle that might block your path.

May 5, 2013

. . . When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.

He feels no pressure when he screws up and has no problem admitting when he’s wrong and shouldering the blame: When a Cooler makes a mistake, he’ll give you a lot of excuses but no solutions. When a Closer makes a mistake, he finds someone else to blame. When a Cleaner makes a mistake, he can look you in the eye and say, “I fucked up.”

May 5, 2013

. . . When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.

You tell me you messed up, take responsibility . . . now you’ve gained my trust. As soon as you start giving me reasons and rationalizations, I know you have something to hide, and you’re not ready to take ownership. Save us both the time. You fucked up. Say it. There is not a faster way to alleviate pressure. “Man, I fucked up.” Okay. There’s no comeback for that, you owned it. Now fix it. You can’t fix something unless you admit it.

May 5, 2013

. . . When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.

False. The ability to put your hands up and say, “Yep, my fault,” is the greatest way to stop the pressure.

May 5, 2013

. . . When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.

Cleaners will just get in your face and announce that you fucked up; they’re completely desensitized to criticism and blame, and they expect you to be the same. To you it feels like an attack; to them, it feels like a couple of guys working out a situation.

May 5, 2013

. . . When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.

To you it feels like an attack; to them, it feels like a couple of guys working out a situation. Their confidence level is so high they have no problem admitting when something has gone wrong. They know they can make it right. No problem.

May 5, 2013

. . . When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.

But I never think of them as failures. Failure to me is when you bring other people into it, when you’re looking for an out instead of accepting your own mistake and planning a route to resolving the issue. Once you start blaming others, you’re admitting you had no control over the situation. And without that control, you can’t create a solution.

May 5, 2013

. . . When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
My mistake, my miscalculation, and I told him that after the game. That’s internal pressure at work, getting on yourself for something no one else would even notice and challenging yourself to get it right. Not because you have to, but because you want to.

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
Have the confidence to say when you’ve screwed up, and people will respect you for it.

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
If you want your opinions to have value, you have to be willing to put them out there and mean what you say. Two things you can’t let anyone take from you: you can’t let them take away your reputation, and you can’t let them take away your balls. That means accepting the pressure of taking responsibility for everything you say and do.

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
Here’s the example I give my players: Two bulls stand on top of a hill, a father and a son, looking down on a field of cows below. The son can’t wait: “Come on, let’s go, we gotta run down and get some of those cows!” And the father looks at him slowly, wisely, and says, “No, let’s walk down and get all the cows.” Instinct, not impulse.

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
When you’re young, you have one speed—fast. As you mature, you learn to vary your speed based on the situation: you know when to go slow, when to go full out. Here’s the example I give my players: Two bulls stand on top of a hill, a father and a son, looking down on a field of cows below.

... When everyone is hitting the “In Case of Emergency” button, they’re all looking for you.
Cleaned. That’s what Cleaners do, they ignore the panicking and complaining, they clean up the problem and they make it work.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack.
That’s how Cleaners compete. They dish it out, they take it, and they make sure everyone else does too.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack.
They’re just emotional softies. They can be complete killers in competition, but they’re also the guys you have to pat on the back, boost their confidence, and make them feel good about what they’re doing. The little guys? You can call them every name imaginable and they keep right on going.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack.
And every day, those teammates had to show up to face him in practice, completely dreading what was ahead, not because practices were hard but because they knew they had to deal with #23 and that legendary mouth. Every. Fucking. Day. Just absolutely going after each and every guy, pushing, demanding, challenging, abusing, finding every possible way to get under their skins and make them go harder.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack.
Get on my level, or get the hell out of my way.
You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack.

When you’re the guy at the top, it’s on you to pull everyone else up there with you, or everything you’ve built comes crashing down. Not so easy for a Cleaner who demands excellence of himself and has no tolerance for those who can’t or won’t rise to that level.

His message was clear and unrelenting: Hey, I’m not bringing my game down so you can look better; you bring your game up so you can look better. He refused to put his own game in the backseat just to give other guys more action, unless you proved to him you could handle the responsibility.

But Michael never showed it inside the lines during a game. He always stayed positive, always had fun out there. After the game he was like Genghis Khan: he’d go after your balls and your head and everything in between. But during the game, while he was in that Zone, it was all about taking control, staying cool, and getting that end result.

But during the game, while he was in that Zone, it was all about taking control, staying cool, and getting that end result.

Every game Rodman missed, Michael and Scottie played as if it were for a championship; there was zero chance Michael was going to allow Rodman the opportunity to say the Bulls needed him to win. And he didn’t talk about it behind Rodman’s back, he said it straight to his face: your bullshit won’t fly here, we will win with you or without you. Get on my level.

But you’ll never hear Dwyane say any of that or take any credit because, in his mind, that was his job. A great leader knows the best way to get people to raise their performance is to put them where they can truly excel, not just where you want them to excel.

You don’t realize the impact you have on everyone else because your wiring is completely different. When you’re shaking your head or yelling at them, they shut down. And I know you love these guys, so they need to feel that you’re backing them, not turning against them. “I’m not doing that,” he said. Yes, you are. When you say something to an individual, and then you turn away before he can respond or make a comment back to you, you’re making your point, and you’re not letting him have his say. You have to see how someone reacts, so you know what’s coming next. Is his head down? Is he angry? Are you motivating him or doing the opposite? When you hit someone with a negative attack, it doesn’t energize him, it just brings him down. You’re not going to win these guys over by making them feel worthless.

He got it. By the next game, he was literally meeting his teammates at half-court, patting them on the ass, showing his support . . . and if that’s what it takes, that’s what you have to do.
Not just in sports, but in anything. When you’re the guy they hired to make things happen, those things better happen or you won’t be that guy for long. You are responsible. If there’s going to be a mistake, you have to be the one to make it so you can turn it around immediately and get everyone back on track. It’s all on you.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack. But as that guy, you also need to have everybody else, all the chemistry, going the same way with you.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack. For every chief, there has to be a tribe, and at some point you have to let everyone in the tribe experience what it’s like to be the chief so they can all see the intricacies and issues and texture of what happens at the top and recognize what’s happening in the big picture rather than getting stuck in their own little scenes. And usually, as soon as you give them the entire view and tell them it’s theirs to manage, every little detail and personality and weakness and strength, as soon as you give them that moment of complete power and control, most of them say, “Um, no thanks.” Easier to stay where they’re at, safe and comfortable.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack. You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack. No one knows that better than the coaches, who not only have to figure out the tribe but manage the chiefs as well. The good ones understand the dynamic: let your Cleaners do their thing.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack. The good ones understand the dynamic: let your Cleaners do their thing. Those who can’t give up that control eventually coach themselves out of a job. A Cleaner player needs a Cleaner coach because they’ll understand and respect what each other has to do.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack. Mike Krzyzewski and I have a good relationship; we’ve spent a lot of time talking over the years. He’s the best at bringing in players who he knows will work in his system—I have this big stud here, that guy with the high basketball IQ over there, this guy with the jump shot—and he pieces them together so it all works. They’re not always the most gifted athletes, but he knows exactly what will work for his team, recognizes what they can do, and puts them in situations where they can shine.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack. They’re not always the most gifted athletes, but he knows exactly what will work for his team, recognizes what they can do, and puts them in situations where they can shine.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack. But regardless of how you build that team—any team, in sports or business or any endeavor—no matter how you snap the pieces into place, you need that one guy who never needs a fire lit under him, who commands respect and fear and attention and demands that others bring the same excellence to their performance that he demands of himself.

... You don’t compete with anyone, you find your opponent’s weakness and you attack. But regardless of how you build that team—any team, in sports or business or any endeavor—no matter how you snap the pieces into place, you need that one guy who never needs a fire lit under him, who commands respect and fear and attention and demands that others bring the same excellence to their performance that he demands of himself. He doesn’t have to be the most skilled or gifted guy on the team, but he establishes an example that everyone else can follow.
May 8, 2013

You don't compete with anyone, you find your opponent's weakness and you attack. Professional, cool, focused. If you had a bad night and you can't show up the next day ready to go, or you can't show up at all, that doesn't affect just you, it affects everyone around you. A professional doesn't let other people down just because of personal issues. If you need to show up, you show up.

May 8, 2013

You don't compete with anyone, you find your opponent's weakness and you attack. You might detest every individual in the room, but if your presence makes them all feel better, if it pulls the team together, if it results in better performances, then you've helped yourself to get one step closer to your own goal. That's how you get others to come up to your level: show them where it is, and set the example that allows them to get there.

May 10, 2013

You make decisions, not suggestions; you know the answer while everyone else is still asking questions.

Where are the results? People who preach inner drive are dreamers with a lot of ideas and a lot of talk, and zero production. They tell you everything they're going to do, and then they do nothing. That's inner drive.

May 10, 2013

You make decisions, not suggestions; you know the answer while everyone else is still asking questions.

Passion: a strong feeling or emotion for something or someone. Very nice. Now what? Are you just feeling it, or are you going to do something about it?

May 10, 2013

I love hearing motivational speakers tell people to "follow your passion." Follow it? How about work at it.

May 10, 2013

How about work at it. Excel at it. Demand to be the best at it. Follow it? Eh.

May 10, 2013

I'll give credit to the Coolers for this: they have the flexibility and willingness to rethink their decisions and change directions if you give them a reason. A Cleaner will just tell you to fuck off.

May 10, 2013

I don't believe in thinking positive or thinking negative. Plenty of "experts" have made a lot of money taking a stand on this; good for them, but keep them away from my players. The positive thinkers want you to only visualize your success; the negative thinkers want you to focus on everything that could go wrong. Well, visualizing anything doesn't make it a reality, and overthinking imaginary problems just generates fear and anxiety. I want you armed with reflexes and instinct, not Xanax.

May 10, 2013

Instincts don't recognize positive or negative. There's only a situation, your response, and an outcome.

May 10, 2013

Good things come to those who wait. No, good things come to those who work. I understand the value of not rushing into things—you want to be quick, not careless—but you still have to work toward a result, not just sit back and wait for something to happen.
You make decisions, not suggestions; you know the answer while everyone else is still asking questions.

I understand the value of not rushing into things—you want to be quick, not careless—but you still have to work toward a result, not just sit back and wait for something to happen. You can’t wait. The decision you don’t make on Monday will still be waiting for you on Tuesday, and by then two new decisions will have to be dealt with, and if you still don’t make those decisions, you’ll have three more on Wednesday. Pretty soon, you’re so overwhelmed by everything you still haven’t dealt with that you become completely paralyzed and can’t do anything.

You can’t rely on others to jump up and make your dreams happen. They have their own dreams, they’re not worrying about yours.

Is it going to be a priority in your schedule, or are you going to fit it in around your other commitments? Make a plan that truly reflects your goals and interests, and you’ll be more likely to execute. Why pretend you’re going to work out every single day when you know you’re only going to do it three times a week?

Come on, you already know what’s going to happen if you go into it that way—whatever you started is going to fall apart. But that’s what most people do, they “test the waters” before jumping in. Why? Unless you suspect those waters are churning with crocodiles, what’s the worst thing that can happen if you take the plunge? You get wet. A Cleaner thinks, “No problem, I’ll swim.” Most people just stand at the edge shivering and looking for a towel.

Michael asked him how many people use that target range. He said, “Just me.” So unless he had visitors like us, which didn’t happen too often, he was alone working on this one shot, over and over, so when people in the military need someone who can hit that kind of target, they call him. No one knows what this guy does every day to be this good. People just know he can deliver results. Figure out what you do, then do it. And do it better than anyone else.

One of the hardest decisions for an athlete is to determine how much fatigue and pain he can endure, and how far he can push himself. Everyone plays with pain, there’s always something going on physically. The question is, how do you keep that from affecting you mentally? If you know you’re going to have constant pain, can you get comfortable being uncomfortable?

Amazing what someone can do when everything is on the line.
May 12, 2013

You make decisions, not suggestions; you know the answer while everyone else is still asking questions.

After every game, I used to ask Michael one question: Five, six, or seven? As in, what time are we hitting the gym tomorrow morning?

And the next morning at whatever time he’d decided, he’d awaken to find me standing outside his door. No matter what had happened the night before—good game, bad game, soreness, fatigue—he was up working out every morning while most of the other guys slept.

Interesting how the guy with the most talent and success spent more time working out than anyone else.

But it’s still not easy, and Kobe makes that decision, every day, to do the work. Again: the most talented guy working harder than anyone else. It’s a choice.

That’s how the best get better—they sweat the details.

But he does the work because if he can’t put that ball in the hoop, everything else goes away. That’s a choice.

It all comes back to this, no matter what you do in life: Are you willing to make the decision to succeed? Are you going to stand by that decision or quit when it gets hard? Will you choose to keep working when everyone else tells you to quit? Pain comes in all sorts of disguises—physical, mental, emotional. Do you need to be pain-free? Or can you push past it and stand by your commitment and decision to go further? It’s your choice. The outcome is on you.

A Cleaner doesn’t think about the money; he just does the work and knows you’ll be grateful for the privilege of paying him.

Most guys, on the day they’re drafted, go out to celebrate. Kobe went to the gym to practice.

True for any business; getting the job doesn’t mean you’re keeping the job; winning the client doesn’t mean he’s staying forever. Most people seem to understand that. They get a big opportunity and usually realize they now have to go out and earn that salary, working even harder to prove they deserve it.
You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.

I’m using athletes as an example here, but you know it applies to anyone else as well: What have you been handed and what are you willing to earn?

Then what? Doors swing two ways. Did you shut it on the competition or on yourself?

If you think it’s “not hard” to take the best and find ways to make him better, you’ve never had to face that challenge. It’s easy to improve on mediocrity, not so easy to improve on excellence.

Even the lottery isn’t about luck: there’s a set of numbers, either you get them right or you don’t. When the game is on the line, you don’t want to hear “good luck”; it suggests you’re not prepared. When you’re headed to a job interview, you don’t need luck. You need to know you’re prepared and in control, and you’re not relying on some random events or mystical intervention. Luck becomes a convenient excuse when things don’t go your way, and a rationale for staying comfortable while you wait for luck to determine your fate. You can’t be relentless if you’re willing to gamble everything on the unknown.

You cannot understand what it means to be relentless until you have struggled to possess something that’s just out of your reach.

But something inside you—that killer instinct—makes you keep going, reaching, until you finally grab it and fight with all your might to keep holding on. Anyone can take what’s sitting right in front of him. Only when you’re truly relentless can you understand the determination to keep pursuing a target that never stops moving.

The challenge is staying there, and most people don’t have the balls to put in the work. If you want to be elite, you have to earn it. Every day, everything you do. Earn it. Prove it. Sacrifice.

No shortcuts. You can’t fight the elephants until you’ve wrestled the pigs, messed around in the mud, handled the scrappy, dirty issues that clutter everyday life, so you can be ready for the heavy stuff later. There’s no way you can be prepared to compete and survive at anything if you start with the elephants; no matter how good your instincts are, you’ll always lack the basic knowledge needed to build your arsenal of attack weapons.

There’s no way you can be prepared to compete and survive at anything if you start with the elephants; no matter how good your instincts are, you’ll always lack the basic knowledge needed to build your arsenal of attack weapons. And when you’re surrounded by those elephants, they’ll know they’re looking at a desperate newcomer.
You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.
People who start at the top never understand what they missed at the bottom. The guy who started by sorting the mail, or cleaning the restaurant late at night, or fixing the equipment at the gym, that’s the guy who knows how things get done. After he’s eventually worked his way up through the ranks, he knows how everything works, why it works, what to do when it stops working. That’s the guy who will have longevity and value and impact, because he knows what it took to get to the top. You can’t claim you ran a marathon if you started at the seventeenth mile.

You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.
Most people are looking for an elevator instead of taking the stairs—they want the easy route. People quit their workouts and diets because they’re too hard. They stop advancing in their careers and lives because it’s too much work. Guys make it to the pros and then don’t want to play for coaches who are too tough. They can’t deal with being uncomfortable so they seek the shortcut, and when they can’t find it, they quit.

You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.
Those basic moves he had practiced over and over and over since he was a kid made everything else possible. He didn’t work on being flashy, he worked on being consistent, and he worked on it relentlessly. Cleaners don’t care about instant gratification; they invest in the long-term payoff.

You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.
Cleaners don’t care about instant gratification; they invest in the long-term payoff.

You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.
Ask yourself honestly, what would you have to sacrifice to have what you really want? Your social life? Relationships? Credit cards? Free time? Sleep? Now answer this question: What are you willing to sacrifice? If those two lists don’t match up, you don’t want it badly enough.

You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.
But usually, those are the same people who look around at others who have more success and say, “I can’t believe how lucky that guy is, I could do that if...” Stop. You could do that if... what? If you put in more time and effort? If you commit to whatever is making it work for him? If you’re willing to pay the price he’s paying? What’s he doing that you can’t do?

You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.
That’s what I thought. You could do the same, and so much more. What’s stopping you?

You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.
Don’t be jealous of someone if you had the same opportunity and you let it slip away.

You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.
But here’s my question: Why were the players out of shape, poorly conditioned, and unprepared to play?
May 12, 2013

... You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.

Seriously, all those months, sitting around waiting for the lockout to end... what else did they have to do? When you use your body for a living, you have one job and it requires one thing: work hard to stay in peak condition. That’s it. Protect your body and your skills, get in shape and stay that way. It’s a year-round commitment, not a hobby. You’re supposed to be the best in the world, you’re one of only a few hundred athletes who get to have this job, and you can’t work out because you don’t know when the season is starting? Who the hell cares when the season is starting? Get your ass in the gym!

May 12, 2013

... You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.

In anything you do, it takes no talent to work hard. You just have to want to do it.

May 12, 2013

... You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.

You just have to want to do it. I could tell you so many stories about athletes blessed with incredible physical talent—size, power, pure athletic excellence—who end up playing sports only because that’s where their gifts direct them.

May 12, 2013

... You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.

Anyone can start something. Few can finish. Priorities change if you don’t constantly protect and defend them. You stop caring about keeping up with the competition, unless you mean the competition to have more stuff than the next guy, and instead of being addicted to building your career and your legacy, you become addicted to building bigger houses and more garages and adding more names to the party list.

May 12, 2013

... You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.

Cleaner Law: When you’re going through a world of pain, you never hide.

May 12, 2013

... You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.

Cleaner Law: When you’re going through a world of pain, you never hide. You show up to work ready to go, you face adversity and your critics and those who judge you, you step into the Zone and perform at that top level when everyone is expecting you to falter.

May 12, 2013

... You don’t have to love the work, but you’re addicted to the results.

Neglecting your body and your skill... not professional.

May 14, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.

A Cooler keeps his opinions to himself. A Closer will say what he thinks, but only behind your back. A Cleaner will tell you straight to your face what he thinks, whether you like it or not.

May 14, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.

We’re not talking about Cleaners here; a Cleaner wants to beat you when you’re at your best, not when you’re standing there without the ball. A “freeze-out” is the kind of petty bullshit you typically see from younger players who start feeling a little proud of themselves, and decide to show the chief that the tribe is taking over.

May 14, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.


A Cooler is liked. A Closer is respected. A Cleaner is feared, and then respected for doing exactly what everyone feared he’d do.

May 14, 2013

\[textbf{\ldots You'd rather be feared than liked.}\]
This is what makes Kobe one of the greats of all time: He doesn’t tell you what he’s thinking or what he’s going to do. He just does it. He makes others fear his next move and respect his ability to execute it.

May 14, 2013

\[textbf{\ldots You'd rather be feared than liked.}\]
Fear and respect: let them know you were there by your actions, not your words or emotions.

May 14, 2013

\[textbf{\ldots You'd rather be feared than liked.}\]
You don’t have to be loud to be the focus of attention. Think of the Godfather, world-class Cleaner and the quietest guy in the room, surrounded by everyone else waiting to see what he would do or say, and he never had to say a word to get his message across.

May 14, 2013

\[textbf{\ldots You'd rather be feared than liked.}\]
He’s never the blowhard telling you how great he is; he’s the quiet guy focused on results, because results are all that matter. A thief doesn’t walk into a crowded store screaming, “I’m stealing!” He comes in quietly, subtly executing his plan before anyone notices. And he’s long gone by the time you notice your watch is missing.

May 14, 2013

\[textbf{\ldots You'd rather be feared than liked.}\]
I’m sure most people respect swimmer Michael Phelps for all the medals. I respect him more for his ability to let those medals do the talking.

May 14, 2013

\[textbf{\ldots You'd rather be feared than liked.}\]
I don’t work out like these guys do, I don’t have to. They don’t need me to be on their level physically, they need me to exceed their level mentally. I hear from young trainers all the time; they tell me about all their athletic achievements and how many years they’ve been working out.

May 14, 2013

\[textbf{\ldots You'd rather be feared than liked.}\]
So are the athletes you want to train, and they’re probably a lot more fit than you. Can you make the transition to becoming mentally fit as well? Are you learning and studying your craft so you know everything out there, or are you content to just show your biceps and hope that earns you respect in the gym? Few people cross that bridge successfully, in any endeavor. They think talent is enough. It’s not.

May 14, 2013

\[textbf{\ldots You'd rather be feared than liked.}\]
And he says, No one else is going to put on a suit. I need to fit in with the team. If I wear a suit, I’ll stand out.

May 14, 2013

\[textbf{\ldots You'd rather be feared than liked.}\]
And then my guy comes down in the elevator, and he looks worse than anyone else. This is the star of the team, a so-called role model, and he’s dressed as if he were going to wash the car. I hustle him into a corner away from the media and lay into him: This is the Finals, this is what you’ve worked for, you’re on the biggest stage where everyone is watching—fans,
... You’d rather be feared than liked.
You’ve done all this work to be exceptional, to rise as a superstar, to set the bar higher, and now you want to blend in with everyone else? When you’re the guy at the top, you show others how to act, you don’t drop down to their level. You command respect and make them measure up to your standards, not the other way around.

May 14, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.
You’re not here to make friends. You’re here because you’re the best, and you’re not afraid to show it. And if that means setting yourself apart from everyone else, good for you. It means you’re doing something right.

May 15, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.
But don’t be surprised if you do. Coolers are nice; they compensate for their competitive deficiencies by being likable. Cleaners don’t have to do that. They set themselves apart from their colleagues and peers, distinguishing themselves by rising to a higher level.

May 15, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.
Kobe rarely goes out with teammates, he’d rather work out or watch game film.

May 15, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.
Kobe rarely goes out with teammates, he’d rather work out or watch game film. And he’d much rather have your respect than your friendship.

May 15, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.
You can’t get to the top without stepping on some people, but a Cleaner knows where to step without leaving footprints, because you never know when you may need those people again.

May 15, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.
Cleaners don’t make big, bragging announcements about how they topped someone else; they let their results do the talking.

May 15, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.
I want to be noticed for the excellence of my work, that’s all. When people rip me for being an asshole or motherfucker—and they do—to me it means I’m on a level they can’t attain or comprehend.

May 15, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.
That’s fear. When others have to fight you by flinging insults, you’ve already won; it means they have no idea how else to compete with you.

May 15, 2013

... You’d rather be feared than liked.
To me, it means nothing when people say they “like” you. Like is average. It leaves no impact, no heat, nothing memorable. It’s like being “nice”. . . it’s just okay.

. . . You'd rather be feared than liked.
It's like being "nice". . . it's just okay. But it's a million miles from respect, admiration, trust, and an instinctive connection and understanding that you’re on the same wavelength and share the same objective.

May 15, 2013

. . . You'd rather be feared than liked.
The greatest compliment to me is "He's an asshole but he's the best at what he does." Thank you. There is no higher praise for a Cleaner. But then you'd better be the best at what you do, or you're just an asshole. Can you back it up, or are you just posing?

May 15, 2013

. . . You'd rather be feared than liked.
And not just any asshole, but the asshole. I'll tell someone he's the biggest asshole I've ever known, and right away he points to another guy and says, "He's a bigger asshole." No, he's not, and you didn't get it: I was giving you a compliment. Take it as a sign that you're doing something right, because if you're truly focused on winning, you're not concerned with friendship or compassion or loyalty, you’re not worried about how others will judge you.

May 15, 2013

. . . You'd rather be feared than liked.
Take it as a sign that you're doing something right, because if you're truly focused on winning, you're not concerned with friendship or compassion or loyalty, you’re not worried about how others will judge you.

May 15, 2013

. . . You'd rather be feared than liked.
Take it as a sign that you're doing something right, because if you're truly focused on winning, you're not concerned with friendship or compassion or loyalty, you’re not worried about how others will judge you. You know what people say about you, and it just drives you harder.

May 15, 2013

. . . You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
Coolers are afraid of the truth because they can't deal with it. Closers dig for the truth and get upset when it's not in their favor. Cleaners know when you're lying and wait for the truth to show itself, knowing whatever it is, they'll handle it.

May 15, 2013

. . . You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
My guys know to never bring the entourage around me because I'll go up to them and say, “Explain to me why you’re hanging around here for the next six hours while we’re working out. Go read a book, get the car washed, pick up the cleaning, just get out of here, you serve no purpose.” And technically, I guess that’s false, because they do serve two purposes: telling a superstar how great he is and acting as PHDs—Professional Holders of Dicks. One day I’m going to make PHD T-shirts, congratulate these guys on their accomplishment, and hand them out; those guys will wear anything they get for free.

May 15, 2013

. . . You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
Our relationship has to be based on trust, or we can’t get anywhere.

May 15, 2013

. . . You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
I never said a Cleaner was a model citizen. I said he gets results by any means possible. If that makes him a bad guy in your eyes, he can live with that, he doesn’t care. You don’t have to like him. You just have to trust him to finish what he started.

May 15, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
We talked earlier about trusting your instincts to make decisions, and a big part of that is knowing whom you can trust, or whether you can trust anyone at all. Because no matter who you are, part of success means recognizing the people who can help you get where you want to go, putting all the best pieces in place.

May 15, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
Because no matter who you are, part of success means recognizing the people who can help you get where you want to go, putting all the best pieces in place. You have to surround yourself with people who can operate at your level of demanding excellence.

May 15, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
You have to surround yourself with people who can operate at your level of demanding excellence. You can’t be unstoppable, or even great, if you can’t do that. And it’s probably the hardest thing for a Cleaner to do.

May 15, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
It’s still your responsibility to surround yourself with excellent people and keep those people accountable, which is especially challenging when you’re extremely successful.

May 15, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
Everyone wants to be part of the action. You have to be careful about whom you choose to keep close, and who needs to find a different day job.

May 15, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
What are you doing?” The whole team has to have one goal so we can all reach that end result together: it can’t be about individual priorities. A good team looks at everything: Should we be making this appearance or attending that function, or do we need to be working out or practicing or getting healthy?

May 15, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
The Cleaner has to be able to trust that everyone around him has his back and isn’t operating under some separate agenda. When you’re an A+ person, you want A+ people around you, and everyone has to be accountable for doing A+ work. And part of making the Cleaner look good is having the balls to tell him the truth, even when he doesn’t want to hear it.

May 15, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
And part of making the Cleaner look good is having the balls to tell him the truth, even when he doesn’t want to hear it.

May 15, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
When someone says, “I need to be surrounded by positive people,” I just laugh. You know what that really means? I want people who will lie to my face and make me feel better. You didn’t hire me to tell happy, shiny lies, my job is to set people straight, no matter what the consequence.

May 15, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
You didn’t hire me to tell happy, shiny lies, my job is to set people straight, no matter what the consequence. And if that makes me sound cold or harsh, I’m fine with that.

May 15, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
And if that makes me sound cold or harsh, I’m fine with that. It’s made me very good at what I do.

May 16, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
But the boss doesn’t always need to be happy. Sometimes he needs an honest smack in the head.

May 16, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
Sometimes he needs an honest smack in the head. You want to be the most valuable guy in the circle? Be the one who looks the Cleaner straight in the eye and tells him what everyone else is afraid to say.

May 16, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
Be the one who looks the Cleaner straight in the eye and tells him what everyone else is afraid to say. He might hate it, and hate you for saying it, but a true Cleaner knows when he’s being bullshitted and when he’s being set straight. And guaranteed, the next time he needs to know whom he can trust, he’ll be looking for you.

May 16, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
Someone asks you to do something you don’t want to do, and you start explaining, that person is going to ask you again and again and again. Don’t explain, don’t make excuses. Truth takes one sentence. Simple and direct. A question, an answer.

May 16, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
Cleaner Law: surround yourself with those who want you to succeed, who recognize what it takes to be successful.

May 16, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
Cleaner Law: surround yourself with those who want you to succeed, who recognize what it takes to be successful. People who don’t pursue their own dreams probably won’t encourage you to pursue yours; they’ll tell you every negative thing they tell themselves.

May 16, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
When a Cooler speaks, you have doubts. When a Closer speaks, you listen. When a Cleaner speaks, you believe.

May 16, 2013

... You trust very few people, and those you trust better never let you down.
Always for them. If there’s a choice between being the asshole who tells them things are about to go bad, or the good buddy who lies to their faces and tells them everything is great, guess what: I’ll be the asshole who keeps them from failing. They’re used to people showering them with roses, and I’m bringing the thorns.

\[May 17, 2013\]

... You don’t recognize failure; you know there’s more than one way to get what you want.
What most people think of as failure, a Cleaner sees as an opportunity to manage and control a situation, pulling it around to his advantage, doing something everyone else says is impossible.

\[May 17, 2013\]

... You don’t recognize failure; you know there’s more than one way to get what you want.
Let’s make this simple: Failure is what happens when you decide you failed. Until then, you’re still always looking for ways to get to where you want to be.

\[May 17, 2013\]

... You don’t recognize failure; you know there’s more than one way to get what you want.
It’s Dwyane refusing to go down with that bad knee in the playoffs, or Kobe refusing to sit out with multiple injuries—including the concussion—that would have staggered anyone else. That’s how you decide to not fail.

\[May 17, 2013\]

... You don’t recognize failure; you know there’s more than one way to get what you want.
That’s how you decide to not fail. You go, and you go, always looking for the unexpected option that keeps the situation in your control.

\[May 17, 2013\]

... You don’t recognize failure; you know there’s more than one way to get what you want.
One person’s idea of success might seem like a complete failure to someone else. You must establish your own vision of what it means to be unstoppable; you can’t let anyone else define that for you.

\[May 17, 2013\]

... You don’t recognize failure; you know there’s more than one way to get what you want.
You learn, and you adapt. When everyone else is talking about how you “failed,” you show up like a professional, remap your course, and get back to work. That’s the progression of good-great-unstoppable.

\[May 17, 2013\]

... You don’t recognize failure; you know there’s more than one way to get what you want.
When everyone else is talking about how you “failed,” you show up like a professional, remap your course, and get back to work. That’s the progression of good-great-unstoppable. No one starts at unstoppable. You fuck up, you figure it out, you trust yourself.

\[May 20, 2013\]

... You don’t recognize failure; you know there’s more than one way to get what you want.
But when you’re the best at anything, you wear a big target on your back. When your colleagues and friends and enemies start talking and sniping behind your back, you know you’ve done something right if they care that much about you and your business, and whether you’re going to “lose.” Lose? What I lose you never had.

\[May 20, 2013\]

... You don’t recognize failure; you know there’s more than one way to get what you want.
And he knows, without a doubt, that whatever happens, he’ll find a way to come out on top. If you ever find me and a bear wrestling in the woods, help the bear.
You don’t recognize failure; you know there’s more than one way to get what you want.
The Cooler admits defeat. The Closer works harder. The Cleaner strategizes for a different outcome.

Admitting defeat has no place in this discussion, or in this book, because the words quit and relentless just don’t work together in any productive way. People who admit defeat and say they had no choice just aren’t serious about success, excellence, or themselves. They say they’ll “try” and then give up when that doesn’t work. Fuck “try.” Trying is an open invitation to failure, just another way of saying, “If I fail, it’s not my fault, I tried.”

You tried your best? Or did you do your best? Huge difference. “Well, I tried.” Okay, now tell me what you did. Do, or don’t do. Do it, and if it doesn’t work, do it again.

You tried your best? Or did you do your best? Huge difference. “Well, I tried.” Okay, now tell me what you did. Do, or don’t do. Do it, and if it doesn’t work, do it again.

If you aim at excellence, you have to be willing to sacrifice. That is the price of success.

I earned it. But to become the best, I had to learn a lot of lessons about always being prepared to change direction, and refusing to get sucked into other people’s opinions of what it means to succeed or fail.

That’s how I learned: Don’t try. Do.

Just don’t expect everyone else to understand or agree with your new plan. Most people are either content to stay with the safe thing, or they’re too scared to leave a bad thing, and they’ll put all that fear and doubt on you. They anticipate failure; you anticipate opportunity.

With athletes, you have to realize that every day brings them closer to the end of their careers, closer to that decision about whether to walk away or go harder.

A Cooler is first to arrive at the celebration and last to leave. A Closer will make an appearance, then go out with his own crew. A Cleaner just wants to get back to work.

Let everyone else celebrate. You’re still not satisfied.

That’s the relentless pursuit of excellence, always believing in your ability, demanding more of yourself than anyone else could ever ask of you.
May 21, 2013

... You don't celebrate your achievements because you always want more.

“Do you truly want to get even with everyone, or do you really want to get ahead of them? Why stand next to anyone when you can push beyond them? In the game of basketball, you get around someone so you can get past them. Play this game the same way. You go for the win, you don't settle for a tie.”

May 23, 2013

... You don't celebrate your achievements because you always want more.

Nothing else matters. You hear people say that all the time, “I'll do whatever it takes!”—but he truly lives it. Every detail of his life, every hour of his day, the lonely time he spends in the gym, the people he seeks out to help him maintain that excellence, everything revolves around being on top and staying there.

May 23, 2013

... You don't celebrate your achievements because you always want more.

People think success will make them happy, but when you experience it, it’s usually different from what you imagined. You’ll have what you desire, but be prepared for the possibility that you’ll be standing alone because you had the balls to take the unpopular path and you went to extremes that others won’t ever understand.

May 23, 2013

... You don't celebrate your achievements because you always want more.

I’ve accomplished and experienced enough “impossible” things to realize that nothing is impossible, and every day I crave the challenge of proving that.

May 23, 2013

... You don't celebrate your achievements because you always want more.

Every dream you imagine, everything you see and hear and feel in your sleep, that’s not a fantasy, that’s your deep instinct telling you it can all be real. Follow those visions and dreams and desires, and believe what you know. Only you can turn those dreams into reality. Never stop until you do.

May 23, 2013

... You don't celebrate your achievements because you always want more.

The greatest battles you will ever fight are with yourself, and you must always be your toughest opponent. Always demand more of yourself than others demand of you. Be honest with yourself, and you’ll be able to meet every challenge with confidence and the deep belief that you are prepared for anything. Life can be complicated; the truth is not.

May 23, 2013

... You don't celebrate your achievements because you always want more.

Whatever drives you, let it take you where you want to be. Everything you want can be yours. Be a Cleaner and go get it. Be relentless. Done. Next.