
SAN PALMA

THE MIND RUNS FIRST

Quick lessons for a
stronger mind in sport



CMTEAM

bePatient | beHumble | beStrong

San Palma and CMTeam
present...

The Mind Runs First

Quick lessons for a stronger mind in sport



Before any victory, there is a mind that
decided not to stop — built in silence, with
discipline, persistence, and attention to the
details most people ignore out of haste, ego,
or anxiety.

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Introduction

Everybody wants to win!

But few are willing to do what it really takes to transform. In endurance sports, it's not the most talented who wins. Nor the strongest.

The one who wins is the one with the best-prepared mind. The one who learned to endure. To wait. To keep going.

This book is not a technical manual.
It's an invitation.

A call for you to go beyond the obvious — and start training what really keeps you standing when things get tough: **your mind**. Here, you'll find ideas that are simple, but deep. You'll recognize situations you've already lived through. You'll understand that you're not alone.

And, above all, you'll realize there is enormous power inside you — waiting to be trained.

This is the first step.

The beginning of a turnaround.
Let's go all the way, together.

Chapter 1

Why does the mind come before the body?

You've been there: that moment when your whole body seems to be begging you to quit. The workout has barely started, but your legs already feel heavy, your mind is scattered, you can't find your rhythm. The urge to stop is real. And everything inside you starts building excuses: "Today's just not my day," "I'm tired," "It's been a rough week." And yet, you keep going. A few more steps. You breathe. You focus. And you keep going.

And suddenly, your body starts to respond. Your mind settles. You find your rhythm again. And when you least expect it, you're flowing. You're in it. You're doing it.

That's a moment no watch will ever record. No VO₂, pace, or power number can explain it. It's the moment your mind decides to keep going — and your body obeys.

That's why we need to talk about it. Because most athletes still believe performance starts with the physical. With the workouts, the training plan, the volume. And all of that matters, yes. But it isn't enough. Because in endurance, what really keeps you standing when everything falls apart... isn't the training you did. It's the mind you have.

The mind comes first. Always.

It comes before the first stride. Before the hardest climb. Before the muscle pain. Before you hit the wall. It comes even before doubt. Because it's the mind that decides how you'll react when doubt shows up.

As a coach, I've seen extremely well-prepared athletes fail at decisive moments — not for lack of preparation, but for lack of inner control. And I've also seen “ordinary” athletes surprise everyone, simply because they refused to quit. They didn't have the best pace, or the most refined technique. But they had something non-negotiable: a mindset built to endure.

And that is training. It's not a gift. It's not talent. It's not a privilege for those born with

discipline. It's training. Mindset can be trained, too.

Except that, unlike physical training, nobody holds you accountable for mental training. There's no training plan. No effort zone. It's just you, alone with yourself. It's what you think when you're alone. What you decide when no one is watching. How you react to discomfort.

Your mind starts getting trained when you choose not to give in to the first urge to stop. When you understand that pain is not a sign of failure, but part of the process. When you start accepting discomfort as part of the build — not as an enemy to avoid.

Endurance isn't about comfort. It's about consistency. About showing up whole even on the days when everything seems to be against you. And that only happens when you build a mind strong enough not to depend on motivation.

Because, let's be honest, motivation is going to fail. There will be days when it simply doesn't show up. There will be workouts that feel pointless. There will be mornings when getting out of bed takes more strength than running twelve miles. And that's the day that separates those who train the body... from those who train the mind.

The mind doesn't get stronger by "wanting it badly." It gets stronger through silent execution. Raw discipline. Daily commitment — even when no one is watching, even when no one is going to applaud.

And that's the mind you'll need on race day. It doesn't matter if it's a marathon, an IRONMAN, or a trail ultra. There will come a moment when it gets really hard. And that's when you'll realize: what's in charge isn't the training you did. What's in charge is the mind you built.

This book starts here because this is where everything starts. Physical training gives you the engine. But it's the mind that's behind the wheel.

And if you really want to go far..
you'd better learn to drive.

Chapter 2

The truth about pain, fatigue, and pushing through

Pain will show up. It's not a possibility. It's a certainty. If you want to grow as an athlete, you need to understand this once and for all: **there is no performance without discomfort.**

But not every discomfort is the end. In fact, it's often just the beginning.

What separates those who grow from those who break **isn't the presence of pain**, but the way each one interprets what they're feeling. The physical pain of a hard workout, the accumulated exhaustion of a heavy week, the mental fatigue of a packed routine... it's all real. But what you do with it is what defines the outcome.

Some athletes feel fatigue and think they're going backward. They think they weren't born for this. They start doubting themselves, the plan, the process.

And then there's another kind of athlete. The one who feels the same fatigue — the same pain — but reads it differently. They think:

"This is where I get stronger."

"This is where my body adapts."

"This discomfort is what will prepare me for what comes next."

It's not masochism. It's awareness.

Because fatigue, when well dosed, is part of growth. Pain, when controlled, is a sign you're driving an adaptation. Discomfort, when accepted, turns into strength.

But none of this works if you treat every bad sensation as a danger alarm. Not all fatigue is injury. Not every pain means you should stop. And not every hard workout means the plan is wrong. Sometimes the workout is exactly right — and that's why you're being challenged so much.

You need to stop running from pain and start **understanding it**. Learn to listen to it, interpret it, tell the pain that builds... from the pain that

destroys. That's emotional intelligence. That's athletic self-awareness. That's sporting maturity.

And there's no shortcut: you only learn this by **living it**. Making mistakes. Trying. Listening to your body. Learning to separate the voice in your head that wants to protect you... from the one that wants to limit you. Because many times your mind will try to convince you that it hurts too much.

And all you have to do is not believe it right away.

You'll have to test your limits.

You'll have to deal with that inner voice that says "enough" — and still push through one more interval.

You'll have to wake up early even when you're tired.

You'll have to finish workouts with no records, no glory, no kudos on Strava. And you'll have to repeat that many times... until your body understands. Until your mind stops sabotaging you.

Until discomfort becomes routine — and routine takes you to the next level.

Pushing through isn't something that happens at the finish line. It's what you do **every single day**, in the workouts no one sees.

It's the silent choice to keep going, even when stopping would be easier.

It's the commitment to your process, even when it feels unfair.

And you know the most beautiful part?

The pain passes.

The fatigue passes.

What stays...

is who you become because of it.

Because every hard workout shapes you.

Every challenge you face makes you stronger.

Every day you could have quit — but didn't — builds one more layer in your mind.

And when race day comes, you'll be there.

With your body prepared.

But above all, with your mind ready to do what needs to be done.

And at the end of the day, that's what matters.

Pain will come.

So will fatigue.

But you'll know: this isn't a sign of weakness.
It's part of the path.
And you're not here to run from the path.
You're here to face it.

Chapter 3

Discipline: the choice you have to make every day

A lot of people confuse discipline with motivation.

But the truth is, they're almost opposites.

Motivation is an impulse — it comes from outside, it depends on your mood, the context, the right song, the right video, the energy of the group.

Discipline doesn't.

Discipline is what's left **when motivation walks away.**

It's easy to train when the day is beautiful, your body feels light, and you're excited about your next race.

What's hard is training when it's raining, when the alarm goes off and you barely slept, when

nobody will ever know whether you showed up or not.

And that's the moment the choice happens.

That silent choice no one sees — but that defines who you're going to become.

Discipline isn't something you're born with.

It's something you **build**. And have to rebuild, every single day.

It starts when you say “yes” to your process, even when you feel like saying “no.”

When you do the workout the way it was prescribed — not the way your ego wanted. When you respect your rest, even when you want to do more. When you follow the plan, even when your ego is screaming for freedom.

Because true discipline **doesn't look for instant reward**.

It plays the long game.

It understands that every workout done with awareness, every choice made with intention, every sacrifice made with purpose... is one more step toward what really matters.

But there's an important detail: discipline isn't perfect.

It fails.

You'll slip. You'll miss sessions. You'll falter.

The difference is what you do afterward.

The undisciplined athlete makes excuses.

The committed athlete corrects course.

And that's what discipline really is, deep down:
a non-negotiable commitment to what you want
to build.

A constant reminder that **what you want right
now can't be bigger than who you want to
become.**

Discipline gets no applause.

It's silent.

It happens when you choose to go to bed earlier,
when you say no to excess, when you give up
something good for something necessary.

It lives in the small things — and precisely
because of that, almost no one notices.

But at the end of the season, on race day, at the
moment the truth shows up, it shouts.

Because those who had discipline... arrive
different.

Consistency changes you.

Not overnight, but day after day.

And when you look back and see how far you've come, it wasn't motivation that got you there.

It was discipline.

It was the workouts you did without wanting to.

It was the days you wanted to stop, but didn't.

It was the moments you could have chosen comfort, and chose the truth.

So stop waiting to feel like it.

Don't wait for life to be perfect.

Don't wait for the ideal scenario.

Do what needs to be done.

With discipline.

Every day.

Because what you build in silence... sooner or later, will echo loud and clear.

Chapter 4

Failure is part of victory, too

Nobody likes to talk about failure.

In the world of sport especially, it seems like everything revolves around triumph, medals, personal records, performance. But the truth — the one nobody likes to tell — is that behind every great achievement...there's a collection of failures.

And once you understand that, everything changes.

Failure isn't the opposite of victory.

Failure is part of the process.

It's a stage every athlete who truly wants to grow will have to go through.

But most try to avoid it.

They run from it. Hide it. Disguise it.

As if making a mistake were a sign of weakness.

As if one missed workout, one bad race, one wrong choice put everything you've built so far into question.

But it doesn't.

What really puts everything at risk is the way you react to those moments.

Because some people fail and sink.

They build a story of defeat. They start defining themselves by the stumble. And some people fail... and grow. They look the mistake in the eye. Take the lesson. Correct course. And keep going.

Failure has nothing to do with losing a race.

It has to do with **not learning from it**.

It has to do with repeating the same patterns, closing your eyes to the signs, refusing to mature.

The athlete who grows is the one with the courage to look at their own mistake and say: "This is where I lost. And this is exactly where I'm going to get better."

That takes humility.

And it takes confidence.

Because facing failure without letting it define your identity is one of the greatest tests of mental strength you can go through.

Some athletes, when they fail, disconnect from the process.

They feel unworthy.

They shrink their own story because of one bad result.

But what if, instead, you saw failure as part of your résumé?

As a necessary chapter?

As a real test — not of your physical capacity, but of your capacity to keep going even when everything went wrong?

The pain of failure can run deep.

It bruises the ego.

It makes you want to disappear.

But if you stay, if you hold on, if you don't quit... that pain will turn into fuel.

Because failure cleanses.

It shows what really matters.

It separates those who were only there on impulse... from those who are there with purpose.

It breaks pride — and reveals the essence.

And the truth is, every real athlete has failed.

Some have dropped out of races.

Others have trained poorly for weeks.

Many have lost to weaker opponents, made bad tactical decisions, blown their pacing, lost the mental game.

But all of them **came back**.

And came back stronger.

Not because they won.

But because they learned to **get back up after the fall.**

In the end, failure is an invitation.

An invitation to look inward.

Review. Reorganize. Rebuild.

And come back — with more maturity, more hunger, more clarity. So the next time you fail, don't be ashamed. Use it.

Because if you have the courage to learn from it... failure can become the best coach you've ever had.

Chapter 5

The Three Pillars of Mental Strength: Patience, Humility, and Courage

Mental strength isn't just about pushing on when everything is hard.

It isn't just about resisting pain, or getting through a tough workout.

Mental strength, in sport and in life, is something subtler—and deeper.

It's an invisible structure that holds everything up from the inside.

And for that structure to be solid, it needs three pillars: **patience, humility, and courage.**

Patience may be the most underrated of them all.

Because we live in a world that values right now.

Immediate performance, quick results, visible improvement.

But sport doesn't respect hurry.

Your body doesn't speed up because you want it to.

The process doesn't move at the speed of your anxiety.

Patience is accepting that what you're planting today... will only bloom further down the road.

And planting anyway.

It's trusting accumulation.

Repetition.

The workouts that seem too small to make a difference — but that, added up, build the foundation of a performance no one sees coming.

Patience is training without urgency.

It's respecting your body's timeline, your mind's timeline, life's timeline. It's knowing that a poorly executed training block today can cost you dearly tomorrow. It's understanding that every shortcut you try to take actually pulls you further away from where you want to go.

And if patience teaches you to respect time... humility teaches you to respect the path.

Humility is knowing you're never fully ready.

That there's always something to learn, something to adjust, something to listen to.

It's running a race with an open heart, even after years of experience.

It's listening to your coach.

It's knowing the training plan isn't a suggestion — it's a pact.

It's understanding that a good result doesn't make you invincible... and a mistake doesn't make you incapable.

Humble athletes don't think they're bigger than the plan.

They don't train to prove anything to anyone.

They train to evolve.

And that's why they're always willing to learn.

Even when they already know a lot.

Humility protects the athlete from arrogance.

And arrogance is the beginning of the fall.

Finally, the third pillar: courage.

And here we're not talking about blind boldness, or Instagram bravado.

We're talking about real courage — the kind that shows up behind the scenes.

The courage to try again after failing.

The courage to admit you were wrong and start over.

The courage to keep training when no one else believes in you.

The courage to put yourself at emotional, physical, and mental risk — because you believe in what you're building.

Having courage means not running from discomfort.

It's facing the climb.

It's knowing it's going to hurt — and taking the first step anyway.

Patience. Humility. Courage.

If one is missing, the others wobble.

But when all three are solid, the mind finds its balance point. And at that point, the athlete grows. Not because everything got easier, but because they got stronger on the inside. If you want to become someone truly resilient, consistent, mentally strong... you don't need to look for magic formulas. You need to cultivate these three pillars.

Every day. In silence. In practice.

Because that's how you build what truly holds a real athlete up.

On the inside.

Where no one sees.

But where everything begins.

Chapter 6

How to train your mind every day (even when you're not motivated)

Motivation is a great starting point, but a terrible thing to depend on.

It inspires, pushes, lifts you up.

But it's inconsistent. It comes and goes.

And if you still only train when you're motivated... you need to understand that you're still just playing at being an athlete.

The athletes who really grow are the ones who **keep going even when they don't feel like it.**

Not because they're machines, cold or insensitive.

But because they've learned that the mind needs repetition, too. Routine. Training.

The mind is like a muscle: if you don't train it, it gets weaker. And the more you let it dictate what you're going to do — based on your mood, how you

feel, or the weather that day — the more fragile it becomes.

It gets used to the comfort zone.

And it pulls you back there every time a challenge shows up.

That's why mental training **doesn't start when things get tough.**

It starts long before.

In your routine.

In the details.

In the way you react to small setbacks.

In how you deal with silly frustrations.

In your ability to be present — even in workouts that seem too simple to deserve your attention.

Training your mind doesn't require a protocol.

It requires attention.

And a decision.

Attention to notice the moments when you're being driven by laziness, fear, or ego.

A decision to do the opposite of what's easiest.

Saying “yes” to the 5 a.m. alarm is mental training.

Not taking your anger out on a workout is mental training.

Doing your recovery run the right way — without trying to prove anything to anyone — is

mental training.

Resisting comparison is mental training.

Accepting a bad day without sabotaging yourself over it is mental training.

Every day, you are challenged.

Not by big races or epic decisions.

But by small opportunities to be someone better than you were yesterday.

And every time you choose the right path, even silently, your mind understands:

“Someone’s in charge here.”

That’s the secret.

It’s not about willpower — it’s about decision power.

You don’t have to want it badly.

You have to **decide, every time.**

Motivation can give you a push at the start.

But if you want consistency, results, and real growth, you need to stop depending on it. You need to accept that the mind will only get strong... if it’s trained every day.

And it can be. So can you.

Because being an athlete, for real, isn't about training when it's easy. It's about training **when it's necessary.**

Even without wanting to. Even without the spark. Even in the dark.

Because you know that what you're building is worth more than any excuse.

And in the end, the mind learns:

"I'm the one in charge here."

FINAL BONUS – Practical checklist

8 habits to flip the switch in your mind

If you've read this far, you already get it: the mind is the starting point. Now it's time to put it into practice — every day. Below are **8 simple but extremely powerful habits** that shape a strong mind.

Print it, write it down, stick it on your mirror.

Because if you practice this consistently, **change will come.**

1. *Start your day with clarity, not hurry*

Before you open your phone, breathe.

Remember why you're training.

Take mental control before the world runs you over.

2. Train even when you don't feel like it

This is the real mental training.

When you choose execution over emotion, your mind understands that you're the one in charge.

3. Correct your inner voice

Caught your brain saying "I can't," "this is too hard," "what's the point"?

Interrupt. Breathe. Change the script. You don't have to believe everything you think.

4. Nail even the simplest workout

The mind gets stronger through discipline, not glamour.

Full focus, even on recovery runs.

That's what builds excellence.

5. Accept bad days as part of the process

Don't sabotage yourself over a weak workout or a rough phase.

Start again the next day. No drama. Just consistency.

6. Choose silence over comparison

While others post, you work.

Your growth happens far from the spotlight.
And that's a superpower.

7. End each day with one simple question

"Was I, today, the person I want to be?"

If the answer is "yes," celebrate.

If it's "no," learn.

And the next day, come back better.

8. Trust your coach — and the process

Don't second-guess. Don't question everything.

Your coach sees what you can't see yet.

Listen. Execute. Learn.

Growth happens when you give yourself to the process, not when you resist it.

You don't have to be perfect.

You have to be present.

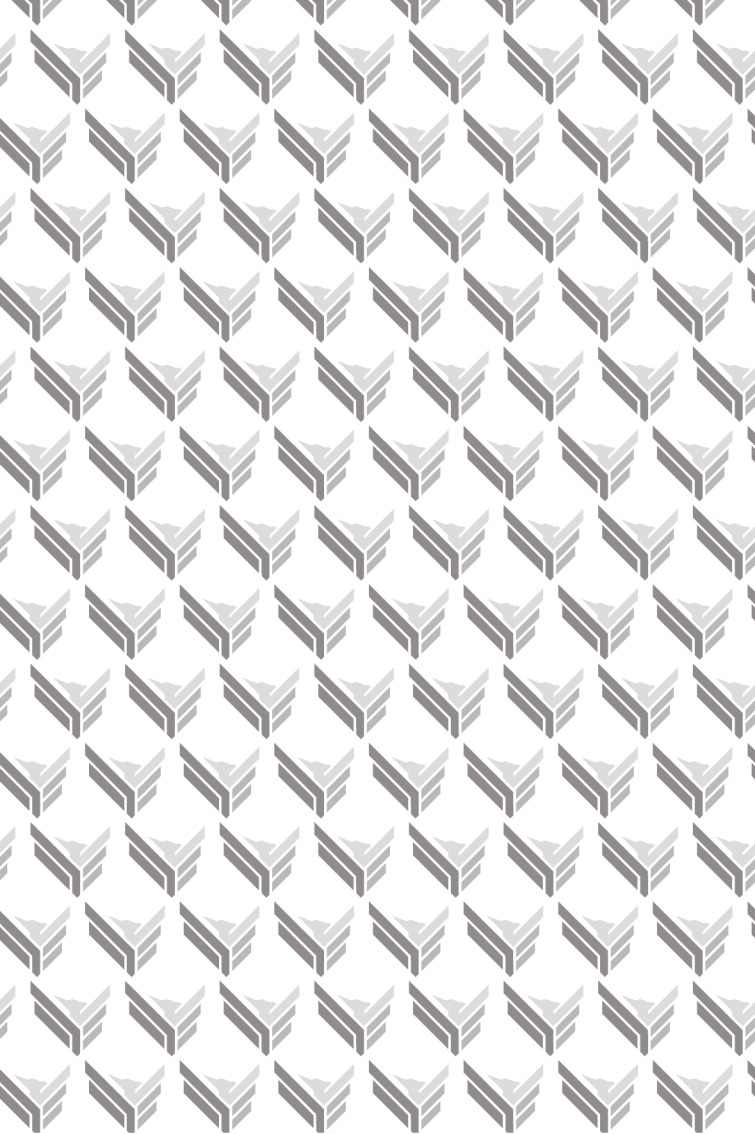
And willing to build a mind so strong... that your body has no choice but to follow.

Train your mind.

Every day.

Even when you don't feel like it!

Especially when you don't feel like it.



Epilogue

You made it this far. You read every chapter.

Maybe you got emotional. Maybe you saw yourself in these pages.

Maybe you remembered moments only those who live the sport understand. This is your sign.

It's no longer about knowing what needs to be done — now it's about **doing what needs to be done.**

You won't become mentally strong by accident.

You'll become strong because you **chose this path.**

Because you decided to face discomfort with courage.

Because you understood that the mind is what holds everything up.

The mind runs first!

And the body... simply follows the command.

But if you felt this book move you... then get ready. Because this was only the beginning.

Very soon, we'll dive deeper together.
More real. More intense. More transformative.

Strong mind. Unshakable performance.

Behind the scenes of endurance, of hard decisions, of the pains no one sees — and of the strength no one can take from you. The next book is on its way.

And when it arrives... it will change the way you train, compete, and live. The journey has already begun.

Now it's up to you...

The CMTeam Manifesto

This book was written to remind you that the mind runs first. That the body obeys when the mind is strong. And that there is no real performance without purpose.

But maybe you're looking for more than just running better. Maybe you're looking for **belonging**. A philosophy. A team. A way of life.

If that's you... Welcome!

CMTeam isn't just a group of athletes. It's a group of people who chose to live differently. Who train with soul, who respect the process, who value the journey.

What you're about to read isn't a rule. It's an invitation. A mirror. A path.

This is our Manifesto.

**More than athletes,
builders of paths!**

Here, we don't train just to swim, bike, or run.
We train to live better.
To think more clearly.
To be stronger, more whole, more present.

At **CMTeam**, the journey is built on three pillars that hold up everything we are:

» *bePatient*

Because real growth takes time.
Because those who respect the process reap the results.

» *beHumble*

Because no one is ever fully ready.
Because those who learn every day keep growing forever.

» *beStrong*

Because the strength that matters is the one that lifts you when everything feels heavy.
Because body and mind need to be in the game together.

And we have one extra...

» beRelentless

Because the only condition for getting there is not stopping.

Because going slower is sometimes the only way to go farther. This is the element that strengthens the three main pillars.

It doesn't replace them. It adds to them.

It shows up at critical moments, when the journey demands something more. We use — and will keep using — **beRelentless** at special moments, when we need to remember what keeps us going, even when everything says stop.

Every workout.

Every choice.

Every fresh start.

It all builds.

It all matters.

It all adds up.

**We don't chase perfection,
we chase consistency.**

**We don't run to show off,
we run to become.**

CMTeam

bePatient | *beHumble* |

beStrong | *beRelentless*

And never — never ever — stop building your path.

About the Author

San Palma has been a coach for more than 22 years and an athlete for more than 30, dedicating his life to sport and to the development of athletes of every level. As founder and head coach of **CMTeam**, he has helped thousands of athletes around the world reach their potential in endurance sports, from amateurs to high-level competitors.

Throughout his career, he has coached and qualified athletes for some of the biggest races in the world, including ITU and IRONMAN world championships (70.3 and 140.6), and has served as coach of the Brazilian national triathlon team at international competitions. His approach values patience, sporting intelligence, and consistency, promoting sustainable, balanced growth.

Founder of CMTeam, he developed a methodology grounded in **science**, **purpose**, and **consistency** — focused on building complete athletes, prepared not only to cross finish lines but

to sustain high performance with health, intelligence, and longevity.

He believes that true success in sport goes beyond numbers and results — it lies in building a legacy, in personal growth and, above all, in the strong, conscious mindset that allows an athlete to grow in and out of sport.

This book was born from real experience. It reflects a personal and professional journey, with lessons earned step by step, workout by workout, athlete by athlete. It's not just about running, biking, or swimming. It's about growing as a human being through sport.



THE MIND RUNS FIRST

Maybe you're looking for more than just running better. Maybe you're looking for **belonging**. A philosophy. A team. A way of life.

IF THAT'S YOU...

WELCOME!



@cmteam