

Nathan Deakes spoke at AHRI's (Australian Human Resources Institute) HR Education Day earlier this month. Nathan, Australia's elite race walker and Dual Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist (2006), provided an entertaining and interesting insight into his life as an athlete. Sport frequently offers inspiration to managers and leaders. Read Nathan's tips below, and as you do, reflect on how you can translate them into your life, your teams and your organisation.

Nathan's keys for success:

- work hard, train hard
- eat well
- build regular mental, physical and relaxation recovery practices
- train as though you're second best: if you think you're already the best, there's no room for improvement
- set goals and act on them
- seek out new challenges to keep yourself motivated
- surround yourself with a good, supportive team who respects you and whom you respect
- plan meticulously
- practise good time management
- "being an elite athlete is not a sacrifice, it's a choice"
- to keep going, do your homework, concentrate, break the big things into sub-goals
- when racing, Nathan is 'in the zone' i.e. "50km went very quickly, you don't feel the pain at all"
- in times of adversity and setbacks, reassure yourself with the goal, trust your team and do strengthening exercises to get back out there
- "half the battle is in the head"
- "win the battle between the ears"
- have something to fall back onto
- team reward and recognition: "it's the little things", be very appreciative, don't take people for granted
- "each time I get up to train when the weather is cold and wet, it's a show of thanks to the team that they put in the effort for me – and in return I will put in the effort when things are tough"

Working in organisations requires positive practices.

Thinking about Nathan's tips, consider these questions:

- What's your recovery routine? Your team's? Do you build in strengthening exercises to maintain your mental, emotional and physical energy levels?
- Is your attitude that work is a sacrifice, or do you acknowledge the choices you make and therefore display a positive attitude?
- How do you help with the "battle between the ears" – yours and your team's?
- How do you show appreciation and acknowledgement?
- How effective are you as a role model?
- How can you create more of those moments when you and your team are 'in the zone'?

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About this article

Each monthly email aims to provide you and your teams with information for your professional and personal development. Topics are based on areas of interest raised by clients and colleagues, with material drawn from journals, books, articles and shared experiences.

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