



ALSO BY TIM S. GROVER

Jump Attack

RELENTLESS

FROM GOOD TO GREAT TO
UNSTOPPABLE

TIM S. GROVER

WITH SHARI LESSER WENK

SCRIBNER

New York London Toronto Sydney New Delhi

Certain identifying characteristics have been changed.



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To my parents,
Surjit and Rattan Grover,
whose love and support taught me
what it truly means to be relentless.
Everything I have, everything I am,
is because of them.

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A NOTE FROM TIM GROVER

In April 2013, four days before the initial release of this book, my longtime client Kobe Bryant tore his Achilles tendon.

It takes years of tireless dedication and unimaginable hard work to build a legacy like Kobe's. It takes a single instant to change everything. One minute you're finishing the regular season and preparing for the challenge of the playoffs, the next minute you're preparing for surgery and the challenge of rebuilding your body and your future.

I'm not talking about the split second it takes to sustain a potentially career-ending injury. I'm talking about the moment immediately after the unthinkable happens, when your instinctive reaction determines everything else that's about to happen.

No one would have blamed Kobe for collapsing in pain and frustration. He could have allowed his teammates to carry him off the court to the predictably solemn applause that loyal fans give their fallen heroes.

Instead, he went to the free throw line to finish his work.

To me, the only question was whether he'd make one shot or two.

Made them both.

Then he walked to the locker room.

That is relentless.

For Kobe, there was no time to think or plan or decide. No time to wait for instructions or hesitate. There was only his instinctive drive to keep going, to stay strong, to never quit. Even with a devastating injury, he finished the free throws and began the next chapter of his career.

That's what this book is about. You don't wait to be told, you don't waver from your goal. When it's time to act, you act, instinctively and without hesitation. As you will read in these pages: Done. Next.

The word *relentless* is used in sports to describe the most intense competitors and achievers imaginable, those who stop at nothing to get to the end result. In sports, being relentless is measurable by victories and trophies and championships and rings.

In real life, being relentless is a state of mind that can give you the strength to achieve, to survive, to overcome, to be strong when others are not. It means craving the end result so intensely that the work becomes irrelevant. Not just in sports, but in everything you do.

The ability to be relentless is in all of us.

In the weeks and months after this book was published, I was blown away by the emails and letters and social media messages from people who identified with

the mental toughness and steely focus of those who never give up, never say “enough,” never stop until the end result is in hand. People wanted to talk about “Cleaners,” my name for the ultimate competitors and achievers who refuse to be satisfied with just trying or merely giving it “their best”; they recognized themselves in those individuals who don’t just do a job, they define the job—champions like Michael Jordan, Kobe, Dwyane Wade, and many others in every walk of life. Almost every person I heard from wanted to analyze whether he or she had the mental toughness to be a Cleaner, or perhaps instead a Closer or Cooler, the other types of competitors you’ll meet in this book. Cooler, Closer, Cleaner . . . good, great, unstoppable. You can be whichever you want. If you want to be unstoppable, you’ve got to make the commitment.

Most of those who reached out to me weren’t star athletes working on their games (although I heard from them too); these were teachers and firemen and soldiers and CEOs and kids. I talked to countless coaches from youth leagues to the highest level of the pros; from the high school coach who brought his team together over the summer to sit in a classroom and read the book as a group so they could have chapter-by-chapter discussions, to the NFL coach who finally understood he wasn’t the only one who went to the “dark side” to connect with his truly competitive instincts. I heard from a plastic surgeon who related to the book because his work was all about precision and detail and he could never settle for anything less than perfection; a teacher who dealt with the most difficult kids in the school and understood the way to get

the most out of those students was to let them be who they really were, not who others wanted them to be; a chopper pilot in Afghanistan whose job did not allow for hesitation, doubt, or failure; his goal every day was to get the end result or risk the lives of others.

They talked about the loneliness of chasing goals most others considered “impossible,” and how no one could ever understand how hard they had worked to achieve them. They couldn’t believe someone had put a name—Cleaner—to their ability to trust their instincts, shut out doubt and fear, and keep going when everyone else had given up. They understood that while most of the examples in this book are about elite athletes, it’s the mind-sets of those athletes that allow them to dominate, not their physical skills. What they do in competitive sports, you can do in your life if you are relentlessly tough from the neck up.

Others weren’t so sure. After every big athletic event, I’d get emails and tweets arguing that certain athletes were Cleaners because they had a great game.

To be clear: one great performance—or even a great season—doesn’t make you a Cleaner; you’re supposed to play well, that’s your responsibility. It’s the ability to repeat that result over and over, season after season, never satisfied, never letting up, that makes someone truly relentless. Working through physical challenges that would put others on the bench just so you can taste the sweetness of winning one more time—that is what separates the good and great from the unstoppable.

For example: many players get that first ring and find

it extremely difficult to withstand the unthinkable pressure and expectations needed to stay at the top; they just can't sustain the drive and desire to do the work. Dwyane Wade got his first ring in 2006, and endured countless obstacles trying to get another (including multiple injuries and surgeries and an extremely challenging rehab with me). So when LeBron James and Chris Bosh joined him in Miami in 2010, he could have taken their arrival as an opportunity to exhale, knowing he was no longer expected to carry the entire team by himself. Instead, he was able to share the physical demands of the season while adapting to his new role and showing LeBron how a championship team works together, that it's not about one guy shouldering the entire load. In any given game, there was a Cleaner and a Closer on the floor, with Dwyane and LeBron changing roles as needed, one or the other taking charge on any given night; they didn't have to discuss it, they just knew. Yet even with less pressure on him, Dwyane never allowed his mental focus to waver, despite severe chronic leg injuries. End result: the second ring in 2012, a third in 2013.

Yet for Dwyane, even after the 2013 Championship there was still more to do.

I hadn't worked with him regularly for several years. He had been training with teammates in Miami, and I was working with other players elsewhere. We always kept in touch, I was always there when he needed me, but we weren't doing the kind of intense daily work we had done years before. I'm rarely the first guy players reach out to when they want to train; I'm the last. In case of emer-

gency, break glass. There are plenty of trainers who will just give you a workout. That is not me—we train for one thing and one thing only: a championship. Lots of guys say they’ll do anything for that ring, but there’s a difference between saying it and actually *doing* it. So when a guy commits to train with me, it means he’s really serious.

When Dwyane called me after the 2013 season he was really serious.

“I’m not done yet,” he said.

That is a Cleaner. You don’t have to love the hard work; you just have to crave the end result.

On the question of who’s a Cleaner and who’s not: as you will see, I say repeatedly in the book that prior to the 2013 NBA season, LeBron still had something to prove before he could be considered one of the “best ever,” which is what others were beginning to call him. To me, he was still not a Cleaner. He had won a single championship, and I wanted to see him do it again. He didn’t have to take full responsibility for the entire team as a Cleaner does. He was playing alongside Dwyane, one of the greatest players in the game. Everything had been handed to him since he was a kid in high school; I wanted him to show he had earned it. Everyone was comparing him to the greatest legends of the game—show us you deserve the comparison.

He did.

His physical gifts and superlative talent had very little to do with ultimately making him a Cleaner because it’s

not about skill or talent. It was the fact that he took the pressure from winning the first ring in 2012, used it to drive himself harder for the second ring in 2013, and carried his team on his back to get it. Complete focus, in the Zone, never letting up until he got the end result. And as soon as that second championship was his, he immediately said: I'm going to come back a better player. Still not satisfied. That is a Cleaner.

That's the core message of this book. I understand it's a message that truly motivates some readers, and infuriates others. I read and appreciated every comment and review, positive and negative; you can't keep improving if you fear others will disapprove of what you're doing. The only difference between "feedback" and "criticism" is the way you hear it, and I heard it all. And while most of the response was overwhelmingly positive, or at least fair, I was intrigued by this occasional comment: "It doesn't tell you what to do."

That is 100 percent accurate.

Why should anyone want to be told what to do? The whole point of this book is that in order to be successful, to truly have what you want in your life, you must stop waiting be told what to do and how to do it. Your goals, your decisions, your commitment. If *you* can't see the end result, how can anyone else see it for you? I can't give you a ten-step process or a checklist for accomplishing your goals; no one can do that for you, nor should you ask them to. What I *am* giving you is insight into the mentality and guts of those who have found unparalleled success by trusting their own instincts to get to where

A NOTE FROM TIM GROVER

they want to be. They do it in the sports world; you can do it in your world. It's a mind-set for mental toughness. Tell yourself what to do, and stop waiting for others to lay it all out.

Can anyone do this? Do you have to be born this way, or can you learn it?

Here's my answer, and what I hope you keep in mind as you read this book:

You don't have to play basketball like Michael Jordan to have his mind-set and mental toughness, and apply it to whatever you do. You don't need Kobe's athletic skills to attack your dreams the way he attacks his. You don't have to overcome injury and impossible odds like Dwyane Wade to overcome whatever obstacles are standing between you and your goals.

You just need to share their relentless drive for the end result. And let nothing stand in your way of achieving it.

TIM S. GROVER

SEPTEMBER, 2013

RELENTLESS

DON'T THINK

It was 10:00 p.m. when the black Suburban pulled up to the security gates of Attack Athletics, my training facility on the West Side of Chicago. Not unusual. Pro athletes would show up at all hours to the place where Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, and Dwyane Wade had permanent lockers, where countless superstars would work out or play ball or just hang out with other guys who got it.

On this particular night, though, only one guy is in the gym, and no one else knows he's there. Not his team, not the media, not his family. His teammates are in a hotel two thousand miles away; reporters are blowing up his phone with calls and texts.

And it's the middle of the NBA playoffs, with less than seventy-two hours until he has to be back on the court.

The night before, the whole world watched him limp off the floor in pain. Now everyone wants to know the story. Is he okay? Can he play? "I'm fine," he said at the postgame press conference. "He's fine," said the coach, who has no idea where his star is tonight. "We'll get him

some treatment and he'll be good to go," said the GM, who already knows the player won't go near the team's training staff.

Finally, when he's alone in the privacy of his room at the team's hotel, he makes one call, to the confidential number saved in the phones of countless athletes around the world.

"Need some help," he says.

"How soon can you get here?" I answer.

Getting to me without anyone knowing is the easy part when you're an elite athlete: call for a plane, grab your security guy, and go, confidentiality guaranteed. Typically, the hard part comes when you arrive, whether you're in need of emergency intervention or a long-term program or a psychological kick in the ass. Some guys arrive thinking they're going to fill out paperwork and stretch a little, and within the first hour they've sweated through three T-shirts and they're puking in a trash can.

But that night, the player and I knew the real issue wasn't physical; it's the end of the season, everyone has injuries. I'm not going to fix anything major in a few hours, and the team's training staff could have handled the usual aches and pains. Let's be honest: you don't secretly charter a plane and fly two thousand miles to get iced and taped. We can adapt around the limitation—here's how you adjust your shot, push off this way, land that way, do this before the game, do that at halftime, get something done to the shoes. Ignore the pain for now. You're going

to be uncomfortable, get used to it. Lay out the whole script, leaving nothing to chance; if he follows the plan, he'll be physically ready to play. Or as ready as he can be.

But mentally, that's another story . . . and that's why he made the call to me. He's listening to all the talk about whether he'll be ready to go, whether he can get the job done, whether he's lost a few steps. And now he's not even sure himself.

The pressure is getting to him. External pressure that distracts and derails, not the internal pressure that can drive you to overcome anything.

And instead of shutting it all out and trusting his instincts and natural ability, he's thinking.

He flew two thousand miles to hear these two words: *Don't think.*

You already know what you have to do, and you know how to do it.

What's stopping you?

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.

If that describes you, this book is your life story. You're what I call a Cleaner, the most intense and driven competitor imaginable. You refuse limitations. You quietly and forcefully do whatever it takes to get what you want. You understand the insatiable addiction to success; it defines your entire life.

If that doesn't describe you yet, congratulations: you are on a life-changing journey to discover the power you already possess.

This isn't about motivation. If you're reading this book, you're already motivated. Now you have to turn that into action and results.

You can read clever motivational slogans all day and still have no idea how to get where you want to be. Wanting something won't get you anywhere. Trying to be someone you're not won't get you anywhere. Waiting for someone or something to light your fire won't get you anywhere.

So how are you going to get there?

Believe this: Everything you need to be great is already inside you. All your ambitions and secrets, your darkest dreams . . . they're waiting for you to just let go.

What's stopping you?

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. 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.

Everything in this book is about raising your standard of excellence, going beyond what you already know and think, beyond what anyone has tried to teach you. Kobe says he wants six rings? I want him to have seven. A guy tells me he wants to come back from an injury in ten weeks? I'll get him there in eight. You want to drop thirty pounds? You'll drop thirty-four. That's how you become unstoppable—by placing no limits on yourself. Not just in sports, but in everything you do. I want you to want more and get everything you crave.

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.

The minute your mind thinks, "Done," your instincts say, "Next."

What you won't find in this book is a lot of garbage about "passion" and "inner drive." I don't have any feel-good strategies for dreamers who love to talk about "thinking outside the box." There is no box. I'm going to