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Leadership — It's a Marathon, not a Sprint

By Meb Keflezighi

This February 16th, I had the honor to be the keynote speaker at the TECO Energy Center for Leadership's (CFL) Leadership Summit at The University of Tampa Leadership. Being a relatively new Tampa resident, it felt invigorating to be among business and community leaders who have been contributing to our city's commercial and civic life for a far greater period than I have. I am certain that I took away far more than I contributed. The panelists--Bill Goede (President, Tampa Bank of America), John Bell (CEO of Tampa Theater), Suzanne Perry (founder and owner of Datz and Dough), all generously recounted their successes and challenges, especially stemming from the pandemic. I commended the CFL for assembling these notable Tampa leaders for the benefit of their students.

Fittingly enough, the conference theme, "Leadership - It's a Marathon, not a Sprint" is a topic near and dear to my heart. As a professional marathoner, over time, it became apparent to me that the daily habits, behaviors, and lessons learned in my marathoning career, were also serving me well in all aspects of my life. This became the premise of my book, "26 Marathons - What I Learned About Faith, Identity, Running and Life from My Marathon Career."

To hear my fellow panelists discuss cite leadership lessons during our panel discussion left me honored and proud. Who would've thought an athlete could lend guidance to these already successful and esteemed leaders? But to take an even bigger step backward, who would've thought a child born in Eritrea, Africa in 1975 during a war would be able to write such a book,

and subsequently sit among such distinguished panelists?

My life began as the 4th child born to my parents in an Eritrean village amidst a war of independence with Ethiopia. My father was a wanted man. When I was about 5 years old, he began an arduous journey to Sudan (over 200 miles walking through rough land), and ultimately found his way to Italy. There he worked numerous jobs to save money so that our family could leave Eritrea and rejoin him in Italy five years later.

I think back and am in awe of my father's bravery and my mother's wisdom. Breaking up a family with so many young children wasn't easy, but they both knew that his departure to Italy would save his life and create the potential for future family success — what turned out to be unimaginable success. How could they imagine that one day their family would grow to 11 children who have become doctors, lawyers, Engineers, graduates of higher education degrees (Ph.D. and MBA) and me, the Olympic silver medalist?

Life can present heartbreaking circumstances, but also a pathway toward better circumstances. That pathway can be difficult and disruptive. In our case, it meant a lengthy family separation and leaving our beloved home soil. Yet, my parents felt their commitment to each other and to their children left them no choice. My parents were the first leaders of my life and I thank my lucky star every day for their bravery, wisdom, faith, and example.



Meb Keflezighi

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Leadership — It's a Marathon, not a Sprint

I don't wish to imply that any of this was easy. Nor is running a marathon easy! Along the way we received tremendous support and guidance. On some occasions, this meant accepting charity or government support. My parents are proud people, yet they were willing to accept this help to benefit our family. My father's Italian employer, Dr Brandicci, unexpectedly gifted him the balance of funds necessary to fly our entire family to rejoin each other and to start our new life. How do you repay this type of gesture? By impressing upon your children that we now had a duty and obligation to be the best successes that we could be.

In my case, I've been fortunate to start my own charitable foundation, the MEB Foundation, which stands for Maintaining Excellent Balance, to support youth health, education and fitness. It thrills me to think that funds raised and deployed through my Foundation might impact the future of a young person in the impactful way that Dr. Brandicci's act of charity benefited my family.

In 1987, our family journey brought us to the United States of America, specifically to San Diego. This is where I spent my formative years and it's also where I discovered my athletic talent. Task number one was to learn English. My Dad woke me up and my older brothers at 4:30am to go through the dictionary. By the end of the school year, we were not only conversant and fluent, but my oldest brother Fitsum had actually been named the Most Outstanding Student in his 9th grade class. Fitsum and my other older brother AK soon joined the high school cross- country team and started seeing athletic and academic success.

My role models were multiplying. There were my parents, my older brothers, Dr Brandicci, and now many other coaches, teachers, and mentors. All of these people were positively impacting my life. When I reflect, it is clear to me, that their example drove my success. And I was also very willing to accept their example and guidance. Ultimately,

this led to a full scholarship at UCLA where I won four (4) NCAA titles and graduated with a Communications Degree and a Specialization in Business.

Upon graduation, I was blessed to embark upon a career as a professional athlete. Many people are unfamiliar with the leadership aspects of a professional athlete, particularly as an athlete outside the major sports. Effectively, I was an independent contractor and became the CEO of my career. The first step was assembling a team, figuring out a training situation, and determining my short term and long-term career goals.

This first step of assembling team sounds so obvious, but over time, I learned that having the right team, and a complete trust in that team, allowed me to reach my best athletic potential. That core team grew to include my coach, Bob Larsen (who was with me my entire career, starting as a UCLA freshman), my agent Hawi Keflezighi (also my brother and a UCLA law school graduate), and of course my wife, Yordanos Asgedom (a Tampa native!). They dedicated themselves to my career and allowed me to focus on all of the little things that it took to build longevity that brought a 4th Olympic Games at the age of 41.

What did I learn most from being CEO of my own career? I learned to trust my team. Yordanos, Hawi, and Bob dedicated themselves to my success and brought all of their accumulated talents and expertise. There were also training partners, physical therapists, nutritionists, chiropractors, masseuses, doctors, and countless others who did the same. Every one of them contributed to my success. But this can only happen when you, the leader, allow the team to thrive.

The final leadership aspect that I would like to touch upon is inspiration and attaching yourself to a cause far bigger than yourself. As I entered my late 30's, I was already a three time Olympian, Silver Medalist and winner of the New York City Marathon, I considered my career to be 99% accomplished. There was still that Boston Marathon title, though. Truth be told, it was a

bit of a selfish goal. It was a checklist item. A huge checklist item that would tell me that I had risen to an all-time great status. Then April 14th, 2013, happened. The nightmare explosions that tarnished the finish line, killing three, maiming many others, and leaving all a memory of shock and horror. A few days later a police officer fell victim to the same killers.

That day I made a goal to reclaim the finish line for my fellow runners and the City of Boston. The next year presented the usual assortment of training injuries and life challenges, while also providing moments of inspiration and repeating the phrase Boston Strong. Seeing the 2013 Boston Red Sox place the World Series trophy on the Boylston Street finish line fired me up. I was committed that I was going to give them Boston Strong - Meb Strong at next year's race.

Come Marathon Day, I was ready. I used all my tactics and strategies accumulated throughout my career. I also wrote the names of the 2013 victims on my race bib, close to my heart. I am not afraid to admit that they were the guardian angels that guided me to the finish line. That day, I was not only the first USA winner in decades. I was also the first among my 36,000 fellow runners and countless spectators to reclaim the finish line.

Leadership - it's a Marathon! So is life. Be inspired, grab a greater cause, trust your team, have the courage and wisdom to seize opportunities, follow your own path, and most of all, give gratitude to those who guide and inspire you along the way. Those have been guiding forces in the life that has taken me from a small Eritrean village without electricity to the top of the podium at the most prestigious marathon in the world.

A Triple-Dog Dare: To Pause, To Reflect and To Recalibrate

By Erik Ronne, vice president and senior manager, T. Rowe Price

If you had \$86,400 deposited into your bank account today with no strings attached, how would you spend it? Shopping spree? Paying down debt? Investing? Charitable giving? The list can go on. Now, what if I told you that whatever was not spent by 11:59 p.m. disappeared and a new round of \$86,400 was deposited at midnight; and you had until 11:59 p.m. to spend it, and this cycle went on for the rest of your life. How would that change your life? What would you do differently?

While you do not have \$86,400 deposited into your bank account each day, you do get a deposit of 86,400 seconds to spend as you choose. The time is a "present," and a new batch is deposited each day until you exit Planet Earth. How are you spending your 86,400 seconds, and are adjustments needed in your life to better use that time?

Life continues to be busy. As society continues to adjust to a "new normal," many things have changed. From hybrid work and school environments to less shopping in person to Zoom being a big part of human interactions, life is different. Despite going through a pandemic, society as a whole continues to be fast paced; and most humans (including myself) find it challenging to slow down or wait. Watch the non-verbal language of those in line at a store waiting for service or to check out. Many seem like they are going into battle or are preparing for a major catastrophe. The stress from the inconvenience of having to wait radiates from their faces and bodies and provides free entertainment for people watchers like myself. Another comical example is watching people try to avoid speed bumps in parking lots or areas with high foot traffic. The thought of slowing down to 5 mph also stresses many people out, and I've watched people come close to wrecking their cars or running into other parked cars just to avoid speed bumps. The reality

is they spend far more energy and time trying to avoid the speed bump than simply going over it at the recommended speed.

In a fast-paced society that continues to get faster and puts constant demands on your time with seemingly little to no relief in sight, it is time for a triple-dog dare: to pause, to reflect and to recalibrate.

Dare #1: To pause. The pandemic taught valuable lessons, and two of them are spend your time wisely and do not take anything for granted because you never know what tomorrow will bring. For many, recalibrating focus and goals was and is needed. However, before you can recalibrate and make changes, you have to stop and push pause. The key to pausing is intentionally blocking any distraction or stressor (i.e., smart phones, computers, screens, people, calendars) and take time to stop and exhale; and this could be 10 minutes, an hour, a day, or a week. You might think, "I don't have time to pause" and the reality is you cannot afford not to pause. You cannot afford not to step away from the busyness of life and allow your mind to rest and slow down and change the scenery to something enjoyable or that brings you peace. Have you ever had a brain cramp and could not think of something and sat there trying to think about it for 15 minutes (or longer) with no success; and then you give up in frustration and walk away only to remember it hours later or after you changed the scenery? The human mind is powerful, and when you pause and allow it to rest, it's amazing what can be accomplished.

Dare #2: To reflect. When you take time to pause, you become more aware of the thoughts that are flowing between your two ears. What's bothering you and why? Do you like the way your life is going? What's stopping you from improving your life? What needs to change, and how quickly

can those changes be made? What changes have you previously made that

worked, and which ones did not work so well? When the chaos and noise are paused, reflection is more easily prompted. Years ago, I read a neuroscience article from Nature Publishing Group titled "Remembering the past to imagine the future: the prospective brain." As a former psychology major, this type of work intrigues me, and I geek out a little. Long story short, "a rapid growing number of studies show that imagining the future depends on much of the same neural machinery that is needed for remembering the past." While walking down memory lane can be fun and exciting or painful and stressful, it can also be quite rewarding in preparing for what may be next in life and planning for the future. By design, your mind is able to take what was and help you contemplate and design what might be.

Think about how much time and mental energy is wasted each day on things out of your control, which in turn increases your stress levels and blood pressure and decreases your effectiveness with the things you can control and the satisfaction of accomplishing them. By taking time to pause and reflect, you also become more aware of the details that are easily and normally missed while speeding through each day. Think about the last time you walked down a street that you normally drive and see things you never saw before and think, "I never knew that was there." Pausing and reflecting allows your mind to adjust and sort through the facts and flush out the fiction. It is easy to spend way too much time worrying about and focusing on the things you cannot change instead of actually doing something through the things you



Erik Ronne

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A Triple-Dog Dare: To Pause, To Reflect and To Recalibrate

can control and change. Most leaders and influencers are selfless and constantly pour themselves into others, and they rarely take the needed time to be poured into. They are quick to give and help but often find it difficult to receive help or ask for it. Yet, they often wonder why the "gas tank" is empty, and they are not able to make as much progress as desired. The common theme: they are not taking the needed time to pause and reflect and make themselves better. When they make themselves better, they are enabled to make others better.

Dare #3: To recalibrate. Recalibrating is making changes to an existing process to bring it back to proper alignment or the way it was designed. These are normally small changes. An example of this is the front-end alignment of your car. Hitting speed bumps too fast or driving through holes can knock the alignment slightly out of balance. You notice when your car starts to drift to one side or the other instead of going straight. Over time, the drift gets worse, and the impact is seen in your tires, which wear down at a much faster pace than when the alignment is correct. To fix this, a mechanic will assess the alignment and recalibrate it back to where it needs to be. The same can be said for the areas of your life that

may feel like they have drifted and need to be corrected.

Sam Parker and Mac Andersen, in their book "212: The Extra Degree," describe how little changes can make a big difference. The premise: at 211 degrees, water is hot; at 212 degrees water boils, boiling water produces steam, and steam can power a locomotive. When water changes by just one degree from 211 to 212, physical and chemical changes occur that create a new form of energy. Recalibration is similar where small changes are done, and these changes can have a big impact on the underlying system, object or life. When you build a repeatable process to pause, reflect and recalibrate, you enable the little things that can and do make a big difference. Your confidence and sense of self-worth start to improve, and you realize how rewarding life and leadership can be when you focus on what you can control. You realize that mediocrity can be conquered, and you feel empowered to pursue the goals and dreams that were previously delayed or discarded. You realize operating at your best and full potential is possible, and it does not take a rocket scientist to make the paradigm shift.

Leaders and influencers do not wake up with an agenda of being mediocre, but certain actions or lack of certain actions can lead to mediocrity. Mediocrity breeds complacency and complacency breeds neglecting the factors toward success and putting those factors into motion. It's ok not to be the best at something but still be effective, which

may come as a shock to some. The key is giving your best in all you do and looking for ways to constantly improve. As you accept the triple-dog dare to pause, reflect, recalibrate and make it a sustainable and repeatable habit, you will be less inclined to be satisfied with the status quo and stuck in the trap of mediocrity and be more inclined to rise above them and live life to the fullest as a leader and influencer. If that is the case, I'll leave you with your next set of dares.

Dare to set goals that are challenging and will push you towards high quality results. Dare to change the things in your life that are so-so, every day, and/or undistinguished and prevent you from pursuing the extraordinary, superior and incomparable. Dare to get out of your comfort zone and do everything within your control to the best of your abilities. Dare to redefine your presence and image through bridging the gap between perception and reality. Dare to take the long, hard road and trailblaze through unchartered territory and equip you with the best experiences possible despite what the nay-sayers and those stuck in the trap of mediocrity say. Dare to set an example for others to follow that will inspire them to follow your example. Dare to challenge your family, peers, co-workers, and all in your sphere of influence to maximize their talents in all they do.

Little changes over time that make a positive impact will create exponential results you never knew were possible, and it all starts with learning to pause, reflect and recalibrate.

Knowing Who You Are

By Bob Johnston, Chief Excitement Officer, Front Burner Brands and The Melting Pot Restaurants

When Professor Bella Galperin asked me to speak with students about the culture within our organization, one critical concept immediately leapt to mind. Know who you are! Without this, the chances of crafting a cultural foundation that is authentic and will last is less than average.

For Melting Pot, the journey began in 1985 when

my two brothers, Mike and Mark, and I purchased the concept from the founders when there were only a handful of locations. I was 21 years old at the time, wide-eyed and not schooled on business. Consequently, we struggled and made almost every mistake imaginable in our first decade of business. In a last-ditch effort to figure out what

was wrong with our business, we looked in the mirror, perhaps for the first time. We realized that there was nothing wrong with the business, but a lot wrong with us.

We were so



Bob Johnston

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focused on figuring out how to turn a profit that we were ignoring our most valued stakeholders: our guests and our team members. This realization started us on a journey of discovery that lead us to the Ritz Carlton organization. They had just received the Malcom Baldridge award, the first – and to this day, only – hospitality company to achieve this recognition, and the only organization to achieve this honor more than once.

We flew our ragtag group of franchisees to San Francisco and stayed one night (because that is all we could afford). As you would expect, they treated us with the utmost courtesy and respect, in spite of our not being their target customer. What drove them to be willing to have their management team meet with us for the day and share their secrets? Their culture. They didn't judge us or treat us as if we were beneath them; they served us as if we were their best customer.

The Ritz has something called a credo card that summarized the principles of the organization. This tri-fold card is given to each employee and is the basis of their training and life as a Ritz team member. The opening words on the card are, "We believe that we are ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen." This firm belief, that each team member is no different – no better, no worse – than the guest, struck a chord with us.

To craft our own collection of principles and beliefs, we met with our team members, the franchisees, and suppliers, and began to document what was important for us to stand for. We knew that it had to be based on who we were, so it was authentic and comfortable. All too many businesses write clever things on posters and hang them on the wall, but what is going on around them does not resemble the written words.

From there, we identified what our mission was and from that, our heroic cause. We believed that the guest did not come to us just to eat – they could go anywhere for that. They chose us because something special was going on in their lives, and they wanted to celebrate it in a fun and memorable way. We felt it was our duty to make their night perfect, so the memories created around the fondue pot would last. This worked,

and it was easy for our team to buy into the mission. And the better we became at delivering on this promise, the better we performed as a business.

Soon, we felt a pull to do right in addition to doing well. We forged a now 16-year-old relationship with St. Jude Children's Hospital and began raising money to support the groundbreaking research undertaken there. Why St. Jude? Because they share the research they do freely with the world, and because culture drives their service to their patient families at their most frightening and vulnerable times. Their culture and our culture were a perfect fit. Because of our beliefs, our team members wanted to become part of something beyond the work. Working with St. Jude has met this need, and we believe it attracts talent to the company and keeps them with us longer. Our young workforce has been positively impacted by the culture of the organization and the ideals we stand for.

As the company journey continued, and we began to be met with greater business success, we focused on improving our leadership. Because of the cultural foundation supported by our principles and beliefs, it was simple for us to adopt Servant Leadership as our leadership model. We believe in serving first in order to lead well.

This decision provided us a second heroic cause. Most of the young team members we serve are with us temporarily. The casual dining business is notorious for being a stepping-stone employer for its workforce, often made up of students. This brings me to our obligation to the team – we feel we make a bargain with the team to do more than just provide a day's wage for a day's work. We have a deep sense of duty to help each of them along the way. To make them better than when they arrived, no matter what path they put themselves on. We know they won't stay forever, but that fact should not diminish our commitment to them.

This journey and the learnings along the way have helped us weave a strong cultural fabric that, while far from perfect, provides a foundation from which to recruit, coach and develop our most



Melting Pot Restaurant in Pittsburgh

valued assets, our team. Taking care of this is the responsibility of leadership as well as everyone else within the organization. If left alone or neglected, like everything else in life, it is likely to slip into an unacceptable state of entropy. Building culture that endures requires it to be authentic and accessible. Being true to our principles and beliefs and weaving them through all that we do every day with energy and focus keeps this culture safe and sound.

This foundation has provided a platform for growth as well. We are basing our two new growth concepts on this same cultural foundation. ORONZO, a fast casual uncommon Italian concept with our partner Dan Bavaro has recently opened its second location in the Midtown Tampa project, the first location being in New Tampa. Melting Pot Social (aka "MeltSO") has opened in Asheville, NC last summer with the second location coming to downtown Tampa near the Straz Performing Arts Center later this year. Neither of these new concepts could have lifted off were it not for the culture within the organization. All this to say, knowing who you are helps you get where you want to go.



ORONZO Restaurant in Midtown Tampa

Leadership Development and Building Partnerships

By Bella L. Galperin and Stephanie Thomason

On April 5, 2022, the TECO Energy Center for Leadership had the pleasure to welcome Tampa General Hospital (TGH) participants to The University of Tampa campus for the Modern Advances in Leadership Certificate. After pivoting to remote instruction for the last two years due to the pandemic, we were excited to host the Spring 2022 cohort in person. This year's cohort comes from a wide range of departments including radiology, facilities construction, primary care and cancer care.

David Howard, co-director of the People Development Institute (PDI) at TGH, expressed enthusiasm for the Modern Advances in Leadership program: "We're thrilled to be able to collaborate with the wonderful faculty at The University of Tampa to bring such a unique leadership training program to our team members. We look forward to this year's cohort being able to learn and benefit from this partnership." The Modern Advances in Leadership program allows leaders to design a set of educational experiences to best meet learning needs and career aspirations. The program includes a diverse range of topics: leading teams and increasing productivity, legal issues in human resources, multi-generational implications for the future at work, negotiations, mastering innovation, strategic thinking and from blue ocean strategy to blue ocean leadership.

An integral part of the program is leadership coaching. Janet Krawczyk, manager of organizational development at TGH, also noted that the Modern Advances in Leadership

certificate program "provides leaders and emerging leaders at Tampa General Hospital with evidence-based best practices for leadership excellence. Classroom discussion, combined with individualized coaching sessions and presentations, gives participants a supportive environment to evaluate their own leadership behaviors while incorporating what they've learned in the program. The success of the program can be measured, in part, by the number of participants who have been promoted within the organization."

Organizations are increasingly seeing the benefits of workplace coaching. According to a recent article in Gallup, coaching is the key to excellence and often influences employees' engagement, performance and development (Kar & Watkinson, 2021). A meta-analytic study by Jones, Woods, and Guillome (2016) also supports the benefits of workplace coaching; the authors found that workplace coaching enhances employee learning and development, whether conducted face-to-face or electronically mediated. Similarly, another study also found that individual coaching was effective in reducing procrastination and facilitating goal attainment (Losch, Trautt-Mattausch, Muhlberger & Jonas, 2016).

As the TGH leaders embark on their leadership journey, we look forward working with the cohort as the team develops their interpersonal and leadership skills, attains its career objectives, and enhances its involvement in the TGH and Tampa Bay community.

MODERN ADVANCES IN LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Aug. 30-Nov. 1 | 6-9 p.m.

**Select Tuesday evenings
The University of Tampa
Sykes College of Business, JS 131**

This certificate program in leadership is designed to provide transformative and interactive learning experiences for individuals and organizations seeking to refresh, re-equip or advance their leadership skills. Each course, throughout the program, focuses on a unique area of leadership prominent in the ever-changing business world. The interactive approach in this program teaches both future and current business leaders how to implement each unique leadership practice.

The program is open to UT graduate students and beginning-mid level professionals in the business community who seek further leadership development. Leaders with three or more years of experience are encouraged to apply. Participants will receive a certificate upon completion of the program.

Program Objectives:

- Sharpen your leadership acumen.
- Improve your leadership mindset.
- Enhance your negotiation skills.
- Develop your entrepreneurial leadership spirit.
- Discover your potential through team leadership.
- Understand the contextual factors in the workplace.

As part of this program, each participant will receive three complimentary leadership coaching sessions by professional coaches.

Tuition:

Early Bird Registration: \$1,350 (Available for a Limited Time)

Non-Profit Organization Registration: \$1,350

General Registration: \$1,500

www.ut.edu/cfl/leadershipdevelopment

UT graduate students register via SpartanNet | Registration required

For questions about this program, please contact:

Dominique Walker
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Wednesday,
Oct. 5, 2022
4:30-5:30 p.m.

Vaughn Center
9th Floor, Crescent Club

QUESTIONS?

Please contact:
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THE UNIVERSITY
OF TAMPA
SYKES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
TECO ENERGY CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP



LEADERSHIP SPEAKER SERIES SAVE THE DATE

DAVID (DAVE) DENO

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
BLOOMIN' BRANDS

Dave Deno was named chief executive officer of Bloomin' Brands and a member of the Board of Directors in March 2019 after serving as the company's chief financial and administrative officer.



As CEO, he is responsible for developing and executing the company's long-term objectives, growth strategies and initiatives for its portfolio of casual and fine-dining brands, which include Outback Steakhouse, Carrabba's Italian Grill, Bonefish Grill, Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar, and Aussie Grill by Outback.

Previously, Deno was responsible for the company's business analytics and global strategy, as well as all areas of financial planning and reporting for Bloomin' Brands, including accounting services, corporate tax, treasury and investor relations. His scope of responsibility also included global supply chain, development and productivity.

He joined the company in 2012 from Best Buy, where he served as president of Asia and chief financial officer for Best Buy International. His hospitality industry career has included more than 15 years in senior level operations and financial positions at PepsiCo/YUM Brands and eight years at Burger King.

Deno earned an MBA from the University of Michigan and a bachelor's degree in economics and political science from Macalester College. He has been a Macalester College trustee since 1998.

TECO ENERGY CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP

For program details, contact the TECO Energy Center for Leadership:

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