

Caledon resident Lisa Bentley, a former Ironman winner, releases new book - An Unlikely Champion



Written By JASEN OBERMEYER

Lisa Bentley, a resident of Caledon and a former triathlete, has released her first book, which she hopes will help others carve out their own path to success.

Called 'An Unlikely Champion,' she described it as chronicling her path from 'no-talent' high school runner to champion triathlete, and my transition from hiding my cystic fibrosis to seeing it as a gift that enables me to bring hope to others and meaning to my own career.

The book is not about winning races or Cystic Fibrosis (CF), 'It is about finding a path to fulfillment even when every path looks impassable,' and 'having the courage to get out of your comfort zone, to never stop learning and to turn seemingly inevitable failure into victory.'

In an interview with the Citizen, Bentley, 49, said writing the book wasn't difficult, and felt amazing to write it. 'I really had to look inside myself.'

She competed on the Ironman race series since the late 1990s, winning 11 Ironman competition from 2000 to 2007, her best was finishing third in 2006. She also won seven Ironman world championships, her highest placement being second in 2006.

'I've learned so many things through racing,' she told the paper. 'As I evolved as an athlete, I had to learn tactics to be successful.'

She represented Canada on multiple National Teams and at the Pan American Games and was ranked top 5 in the world for a decade. She competed at the highest level despite having Cystic Fibrosis, a genetic lung disease resulting in chronic infections and limited lung capacity. 'I trained hard, I worked really hard and I managed my illness.'

An Ironman Triathlon is a series of long-distance triathlon races, that consists of a 3.76 kilometer swim, then a 180.25 kilometer bicycle ride, followed by a 42.20 kilometer run, all without a break.

It is often considered one of the most difficult one-day sporting events in the world. Most Ironman events have a limited time of 17

hours to complete the race.

She explained she would get up early, to ensure there no distractions, and with repetition, it was just like any other situation to prepare for. ?Those are tactics of a high achiever.?

A runner in high school and university, Bentley decided to do a triathlon when she met friends in university, and decided to do it as a social event. ?It was the greatest thing.?

She described them as fun, and helped improve her running. ?I thought it was just such a great way to stay fit, great way to meet nice people, and it still is.?

Bentley said the triathlon is challenging, but ?living in the moment is what it's all about. You don't want to think too far ahead. You want to anticipate things, but you really want to be completely enrolled with it.?

For her, the best part was the run, but being at the end it is the hardest. ?So if you haven't been keeping on top of your nutrition or hydration, it'll always creep up on you on the run. Doesn't matter how good of a runner you are.?

She said when she was diagnosed with CF in university, it was late, because usually you're diagnosed shortly after birth. ?It explained why I had been sick as a kid, it explained why I was always on antibiotics.?

Bentley said that she looked at it as a benefit, and her ?internal desire? is what pushed her to keep going, thinking of other diagnosed with CF and those who would love the chance to compete in the race.

She added that by not doing her best and not having a good time would ?be against everything that I was raised to believe.?
To order her book, visit www.AnUnlikelyChampion.com.