

Wynne Leon (00:01)

What if second place is not failure? What if second place is actually preparation? What if the thing you thought you lost is actually the place where life is quietly teaching you how to be ready? Welcome to the Life of Try. I'm Wynne Leon, and in this episode I want to talk about the hidden power of being in position. Even when you are not out front, even when you're not getting the applause.

Wynne Leon (00:28)

Even when it looks like somebody else has already won. Because sometimes the win does not go to the person who starts in front. Sometimes it goes to the person who keeps running. One of the most memorable lessons of my early career came from loss. My team had pitched business to a big company. We'd spent hours in meetings, going back and forth on the proposed solution.

Wynne Leon (00:54)

We sharpened every pencil, adjusted every number, and done everything we could to make the offer right. I thought we were gonna win. I really did. But we didn't. And my boss said something I've never forgotten. It's okay. Being in second place works too. We might not get the business this time. But when the firm that won the bid messes up, we'll be there to pick up the slack. At the time, I did not love the answer. I wanted the win.

Wynne Leon (01:24)

I wanted the proof, I wanted the finish line right then. But what he was teaching me was patience. He was teaching me positioning. He was teaching me that sometimes second place is not the end of the story. Sometimes second place is the place where readiness is built.

Wynne Leon (01:44)

I was reminded of that lesson when I read Brian Hannon's post about Nathan Martin, a 36-year-old substitute teacher who coaches high school cross country team in his spare time. Martin pulled off one of the most dramatic finishes in marathon history, winning the 2026 LA Marathon by defeating Kenya's Michael Kamani Kamal by point zero one seconds. Kamal had led much of the race.

Wynne Leon (02:12)

But stumbled during the home stretch, and Martin surged past him to claim the victory. You should read Brian's post, and I'll link to it in the show notes because he captures the spirit so perfectly. But I'm gonna read just a snippet from his piece. It's a sprint to the finish line, and the winner is. Brian writes, I'll remember Martin's win for a long time. I'll forget where the race took place. I'll forget his race time, but I'll long remember.

Wynne Leon (02:42)

His effort. When TV cameras first pan out from shots of Camau approaching the last half mile or so of the race, you can't even see Martin. He's not even in the picture. Life is kind of

like that for all of us. It has a way of challenging us. But even though you couldn't see him, Martin was still running.

Wynne Leon (03:05)

Martin told the media that around mile five he took off and nobody went with him. So he decided to push. He decided to fight. He said he was not thinking about winning at that point. He was focused on giving the effort he had. And then, with about a mile to go, he saw a chance. With 800 meters left, he told himself, I have to go for it. I have to at least try. That's the life of try right there. Not certainty.

Wynne Leon (03:35)

Not guaranteed results, not a perfect plan, just this. I have to at least try. We remember wins, but what moves us is effort. We remember the person who kept going when the pitcher did not include them yet. We remember the person who did not pull up, did not settle, did not decide too soon that the race was already over. Life gives us so many reasons to slow down.

Wynne Leon (04:04)

We do not want to look foolish. We do not want to fail publicly. We do not want to end up with egg on our face. We want to protect the solid hand we already have. But here's the truth. Effort keeps you eligible. Effort keeps you in the race. Effort keeps you close enough to see the opening when it appears. That is true in business. That's true in athletics. It also is true in writing, creating, healing, leading, parenting,

Wynne Leon (04:34)

Building and beginning again. So many authors write for ten years before the publishing contract comes. Some carry a book in the drawer or the back of the mind for decades before it lands on paper. The audience sees the finished book. They see the launch. They see the moment it looks like arrival, but behind that moment is someone who kept lining things up for years.

Wynne Leon (05:01)

It reminds me of the Dutch Brothers coffee story. From the outside, the company's IPO in 2021 can look like a breakthrough moment. But the real story began nearly 30 years earlier, when two brothers in Grants Pass, Oregon tried to find a way forward after their family dairy business ran into hard times. Dane and Travis Borsma traded cows for coffee. They

Wynne Leon (05:27)

bought an espresso machine, rolled a pushcart into town, played music they loved, and started serving drinks near the railroad tracks. But what they were really serving up was energy, connection, and the belief that even a quick coffee stop could feel personal. That was the seed. Not a perfect strategy, not a national rollout, just a small start with big personality. And over time,

Wynne Leon (05:52)

One customer at a time, one stand at a time, one relationship at a time, that seed grew. By the time Dutch Brothers reached Wall Street, the public saw a success story. But the success had already been built in the unseen years, through reinvention, persistence, culture, grief, loyalty, community, and the discipline to grow without losing heart.

Wynne Leon (06:18)

So maybe the question for us is not, am I winning right now? Maybe the better question is, am I still in position? Am I still showing up? Am I still building? Am I still practicing? Am I still learning? Am I still close enough that when the opportunity appears, I can respond? Because second place might not be the loss. Second place might be the training ground. Second place might be the preparation.

Wynne Leon (06:48)

Second place might be the place where you learn to keep going without applause, without certainty, and without anyone else seeing the finish line you are still willing to chase. And then one day, the opening comes. When it does, I hope you have kept running. I hope you have kept building. I hope you have kept trying. Because you never know.

Wynne Leon (07:16)

When second place is about to become the place where everything changes. Thank you for listening to The Life of Try. Until next time. Keep showing up. Keep giving your best effort and keep trying.

Wynne Leon (07:29)

And if you like this episode, please check out Encourage Effort, Not Results, How to Build Resilience and Confidence. I think you might also like the courage to try something new with Lindsay Goldson and how to write the book you've been dreaming about with Dr. Vicky Atkinson. I appreciate you as listeners and fellow tryers. Thanks for being part of my tribe. Please like and subscribe.

Wynne Leon (07:54)

For more life of dry goodness.