



WHEN ENDURANCE BECOMES THE STRATEGY



"No pain, no gain!" "Do not give up!" "Do more with less!" "Cut costs and increase effectiveness!" We hear of those sayings or similar ones when times get tough, and corporations and individuals are striving to survive in the global recession, geo-political wars, tariffs and trade wars, impacts of A.I. on technology, production, and labor force. There are no "silver bullets" that could solve those problems because the mega trends are beyond our control. So, many business leaders turned inward to boost productivity, only to find it declining as sustained pressure drained employees' motivation, energy, and health.

I know a friend who worked in a well-known software technology company some years ago. He was a project leader of a software development team. There was a new project, and the division manager posted the project specifications among the project leaders and had them bid for the project by time (i.e., whoever bids for the least time gets the project). My friend, as an ambitious and talented software engineer in his prime time of his career, bid the project for 10 days to deliver the results. Everybody was amazed by his daring attempt. He then started his "non-stop" work in the next 10 days to push himself towards the finishing line. After 10 days, he made it and completed the project with good results. His boss and colleagues praised him saying "Awesome!" On the eleventh day, he collapsed and was sent to the hospital. The doctor told him that his immune system had been badly damaged by his literally "non-stop" work in those 10 days (i.e., he told me that he refrained from eating, sleeping

and going to the toilet to focus on his work). He was hospitalized for three months and later resigned from his promising job.

True resilience and wellness lie in knowing when to work, rest, and stop. A resilient mind and healthy body are two sides of the same coin-driving performance, productivity, and life-and must be cultivated at individual, team, and organisational levels.

There's a line from the Bible that captures this tension well:

"What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?" (Luke 9:25 NIV) *.

*Editor's note: In the pursuit of success, it's worth pausing to ask: what is the value of gaining everything externally if it comes at the cost of losing yourself?



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