

THE HINGE

The Importance of Mental Toughness



Dr. Rob Bell

Advance Praise for The Hinge...

"The key to mental toughness is knowing that it only takes one. Dr. Bell takes that fact a step further in The Hinge"

— DAN JANSEN, OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST
.....

"This book provides a different perspective on mental toughness. We have to be ready for the Hinge moments in our lives."

— JOE SKOVRON, PGA TOUR CADDY
.....

"The Hinge makes you see 'moments' in a new light. From moments in history to the one's we face in our own lives. A truly inspirational story of mental toughness."

— JOSH BLEILL, COMMUNITY SPOKESPERSON
FOR THE INDIANAPOLIS COLTS
.....

"Dr. Rob Bell reminds us that we can only control our response and our approach to what occurs - but that can make all the difference."

— NATHAN WHITAKER, CO-AUTHOR **QUIET STRENGTH**
.....

"Dr. Rob Bell has captured the essence of exactly what it takes to perform at a high level and enjoy what you do."

— JOHN BRUBAKER, AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF
THE COACH APPROACH AND SEEDS OF SUCCESS
.....

"Dr. Bell's insight and strategies for mental toughness in The Hinge will open doors to success for athletes and coaches in all sports."

JENNY MOSHAK, ATC, CSCS
AUTHOR OF **"ICE N' GO"**
.....

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ALSO BY DR. ROB BELL

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THE HINGE

The Importance of Mental Toughness

Dr. Rob Bell

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Introduction

“If fate had not intervened, I would never have gone to UCLA.”

— JOHN WOODEN

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When one door closes, another opens, is a cliché that has meaning because of The Hinge. Certain moments, events, or persons can act as “hinges” in our lives, opening us to experiences we might have missed, connecting who we are with who we become. That is The Hinge. It makes all of the difference. Will you be ready?

Each one of this book’s 38 stories illustrates how one person or event changed an outcome. These are The Hinge moments that build mental toughness. You’ll discover the five maxims of The Hinge, gain insight into a Rusty Hinge, and even learn what happens when the door comes off The Hinges. For every Michael Jordan, there is an Earl Manigault—a thousand superior athletes that don’t make it. What takes place off the field becomes more important than what occurs on the field.

The idea for the book began with John Wooden, considered the greatest coach of all time in any sport. It’s tough to argue with a streak of 88 consecutive wins at UCLA and 10 national championships in 12 seasons. Here was a legendary coach who focused only on winning the next game, developing character, and teaching. There was one Hinge moment for John Wooden.

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John Wooden, Indiana born and raised, played and won a national championship at Purdue. He began coaching college basketball in 1943 at Indiana State University. In 1948, he became head coach at UCLA and the rest is history.

The Hinge...

While living in the Midwest, John Wooden was offered two coaching positions, one at UCLA and the other at The University of Minnesota. He intended to accept the head coaching position at The University of Minnesota, because his wife wanted to stay in the Midwest. He was expecting a phone call from Minnesota officials at 5:00 p.m. and another from UCLA at 6:00 p.m. on the same day.

However, unbeknownst to Coach Wooden, a snowstorm hit Minnesota and the university official could not complete the call. 5:00 p.m. passed with no call. No such issue in California. UCLA called at 6:00 p.m., but instead of declining the UCLA position like he had planned, John Wooden accepted it. Minutes later the University of Minnesota call came through. The official explained the situation and offered Wooden the job. However, Coach Wooden had already accepted the job at UCLA and did not renege on his commitment.¹

Moving a 25-ton Door

“A door with no hinge is a wall.”

— DR. ROB BELL

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Hinge (definition): Noun—A movable joint or mechanism... that connects linked objects. **(v):** A circumstance upon which other events depend.

The Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, WV, is one of the finest resorts in America. Coined “America’s Resort,” it has hosted legions of presidents, dignitaries, and foreign diplomats.

The Cold War had escalated in the late 1950’s, so President Eisenhower, a frequent guest at The Greenbrier, decided to build a shelter in case of foreign attack. Thus, a secret bunker was built inside the hotel. Located about four hours from Washington D.C., this underground bunker actually became a part of U.S. defense.

The bunker was built to survive an indirect bomb strike, relying on the secrecy of its location and the West Virginia mountains for protection. If needed, it would have housed the entire Congress as a fallout shelter.

The bunker possessed three massive, blast-proof doors, each weighing 25 tons. The doors were fifteen feet high, thirteen feet wide, and 20 inches thick. Despite the enormity of these doors, it only took fifty pounds of pressure to open and close them. The reason one person could operate these enormous doors was the hinge. The stronger the door the more important the hinge, and the hinges for the blast doors weighed 1.5 tons each. Without the hinge, the massive bomb doors would not have moved.

What allows a door to open or close is its hinge—a door without a hinge just doesn’t work. Even a 25-ton door without a hinge would have become a wall. Doors are entryways into or away from one area to another. In our lives, The Hinge connects who we are with who we become.

THE HINGE OF MENTAL TOUGHNESS

It will be the people, events, or moments that make all the difference and it only takes one! All of us will experience The Hinge at various points in our lives. Although we don't know how events are going to turn out we have to be ready. Our role is to be prepared and to act. In order for The Hinge to connect, we must possess mental toughness.

Mental toughness allows The Hinge to connect. It's the skill that keeps us in the moment, to keep our head when others are losing theirs. Mental toughness involves grit, resiliency, and hardiness, traits that enable us to perform well under pressure and to cope with struggle. We all will experience times of pressure and breakthrough moments and we will also experience roadblocks, setbacks, hardships, doubt, and frustration.

We control the door—our mental toughness, and in order for The Hinge to connect, the door must be strong. We also control the handle—our decisions or actions that reflect our mental toughness.

Thanks to The Hinge, the door can swing either way, positive or negative. The experience may seem negative at first—a toxic relationship, a death, an addiction, abuse, injury, any bad event. Somehow, though, our test often becomes our testimony. Our mess becomes our message.

A positive hinge on the other hand only takes one person, moment, or event, which cements or ignites the belief in ourselves— a catch, a victory, a twist of fate, a decision, any successful outcome. It serves as proof that we are exactly where we are supposed to be.

"Tomorrow might not be here for you."

—LYNYRD SKYNYRD

.....

Lynyrd Skynryd was one of the most popular bands in the 1970s. They had iconic signature hits like, *"Free Bird," "That Smell," "Tuesday's Gone,"* and *"Sweet Home Alabama"* among many others, and became known as the greatest Southern Rock band. They would eventually be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Ronnie Van Zandt was the lead singer and strangely enough often prophesied that he would not live past age 30.



On October 17, 1977, Lynyrd Skynyrd released the album, *Street Survivors*. However, just three days after its release, on October 20, the band's plane crashed, killing lead singer, 29-year-old, Ronnie Van Zandt, along with other band members, including lead guitarist Steve Gains.

The Hinge...

Earlier in the summer of 1977, two members from another band wanted the same plane, the Convair CV-300. However, when the flight operations manager for that band went to book it, he decided against it, reporting that the plane and crew weren't up to standards. It was a gut feeling to reject the plane.

The two band members who wanted the exact plane that crashed were Stephen Tyler and Joe Perry of Aerosmith.²

The Hinge...

This band from Boston, Aerosmith, had some big hits in the 1970s, with "Sweet Emotion," "Dream On," and "Back in the Saddle." However, Aerosmith struggled during the late 1970s and early 80s with drug use. Their follow-up albums after these hits were flops and internal conflict within the band tore them apart.

In 1986, nine years after Aerosmith passed on leasing the plane that crashed with the Lynyrd Skynyrd on board, three guys from Queens, New York, were influenced by Rick Rubin to remake a song.

The hip-hop group Run-DMC teamed-up with Stephen Tyler and Joe Perry to remake the song "Walk This Way," changing the entire music landscape forever.

It was the first rap/heavy metal crossover song and it connected the entire rap world with mainstream rock. Run-DMC sparked a movement in rap that broke all cultural barriers. They became the first rap group to make the cover of Rolling Stone magazine, the first to have a multi-platinum album, the first with videos on MTV. Run-DMC changed the game; they were the first

non-athletes to endorse the Adidas brand, and those shoes and the band's image became staples in suburban America.

Most every single rap/hip-hop artist points to Run-DMC as the group that made it happen. The group was also voted as the greatest hip-hop group of all-time.



The Hinge...

"Walk This Way" revitalized Aerosmith's career as well. This American rock band that had been dormant, followed up the song with a string of multi-platinum albums and hits on their way to the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame.

One of the maxims of The Hinge is that things happen for a reason. Without these strange twists of fate, would it all have worked out the same? It's a struggle to visualize Lynyrd Skynyrd, jamming with Run-DMC.

Life is a Mystery

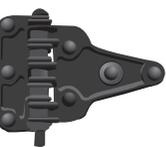
"You may never know what results from your action. But, if you do nothing, there will be no results."

— GANDHI

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As a teenager, my grandmother used to give me the awesome gift of, wait for it, *Reader's Digest*...As a fifteen year-old, *Reader's Digest* really didn't fit my needs. However, it did become great bathroom material and I would read it while on the porcelain throne. Well, within *Reader's Digest*, I once read a story about the "runner's high," the physiological and psychological effect that runners would sometimes encounter during long runs. It was like "being in the zone." The *Reader's Digest* article summarized a study that looked at how the personality traits of distance runners may transfer into other areas of their lives.... Fast-forward eight years to the end of college. I had to choose a research project in my advanced Psychology class to graduate. I immediately remembered the "Runner's High" story in *Reader's Digest* and replicated the same study, with no further thought.





I knew early on that Sport Psychology would become my chosen path in life, so I applied to Temple University's graduate school, despite a less-than-brilliant undergrad record. I was a hinge candidate at best.

The in-person interview went surprisingly well and, in fact, the Temple University professor repeatedly probed at length my little research project on the "Runner's High." I was actually accepted and even received a graduate assistantship that paid for school. Turns out, my professor, Dr. Michael Sachs, was the one who coined the phrase, Runner's High...

The Hinge....

If it weren't for my grandmother supplying me with Reader's Digest subscriptions as a teenager, I would not have been accepted into Temple University's graduate program, nor met my wife, nor continued on to graduate work at the University of Tennessee, nor caddied on the PGA Tour, nor been privileged to work with so many gifted athletes. My story and this story would have been different. That was a Hinge.