

would react if he missed. He was fully absorbed in his performance because he expected to win.

Superstars deliver great performances because they have this same belief that they can make the important shots. When Sam Walton was in high school, he was quarterback of the football team. Even though he was small and slow and didn't throw the ball well, he always found a way to help his team win. During his years as quarterback, his team was undefeated and won the state championship. In looking back he reflected:

I think that record had an important effect on me. It taught me to expect to win, to go into tough challenges always planning to come out victorious. Later in life, I think Kmart, or whatever competition we were facing, just became Jeff City High School, the team we played for the state championship in 1935. It never occurred to me that I might lose; to me, it was almost as if I had a right to win. Thinking like that often seems to turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy.⁴⁰

Unlike Sam Walton, not all superstars initially start out expecting to win. They have to work at building a winning attitude. This happened to Susan Butcher, a four-time-winner of the Iditarod, the grueling 1,150 mile dog race across the heart of Alaska. Before she won her first Iditarod, she kept coming in second even though she had a powerful team of dogs and knew that she had the potential to win. In order to win, she had to convince *herself* that she could win.

I would often finish a race an hour or a minute or a split second behind someone else, but I'd have the strongest and fastest team. So in 1986 I learned how to pull it all together. I told myself that not only could I win, but that I deserved to win and that I could win today. I knew before that, that "someday" I would win the Iditarod, but I didn't see myself as a winner today. So I kept failing.⁴¹

Like Susan Butcher, we often fail to win because in our hearts we don't truly believe that we can win. We embrace what Stan Shih, founder of Acer, calls "negative thinking."⁴² This causes us