

Focusing Lessons from an Elite Ironman Triathlete: Chris McCormack.

Karine **Grand'Maison** and Terry **Orlick**, Canada

Karine Grand'Maison completed her Master's degree in Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa under the supervision of Terry Orlick. For her thesis, she examined the psychological skills and mental preparation strategies used by world class Ironman triathletes. She also passed her Quebec Bar exams and is currently working in a Montreal law firm. Karine has completed two Ironman-distance triathlons and is now training for the Boston marathon. She has embraced the challenge of distance sports and has a passion for working with and learning from elite long distance athletes. Karine plans to apply some of the wisdom she has gained from elite athletes to her work as a lawyer and to consulting work with both lawyers and athletes in pursuit of excellence.

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Chris McCormack, originating from Australia, is one world's best Ironman Triathletes. As a part of a larger thesis study exploring the mental skills of Ironman competitors, some of the world's leading Ironman Triathletes participated in in-depth interviews. This interview was conducted by Karine Grand'Maison, a graduate student at the University of Ottawa, whose thesis supervisor was Terry Orlick. The following interview with Chris McCormack is centered on the mind-set and focus required for excellence in Ironman. Chris shares some powerful insights on how he has become such a great athlete and there are many lessons from which we can all gain when trying to excel in demanding pursuits.

Website: <http://www.chrismccormack.com/about/>.

Chris McCormack (also known as Macca) has won almost every major short course title on the global triathlon calendar including the **ITU World Cup Series**, **Escape From Alcatraz Triathlon** as well as four of the sports most prestigious triathlon events, **GoodWill Games**, **Mrs T's Chicago International Triathlon**, **WildFlower Half Ironman** and more recently the **Ironman Australia Triathlon**. McCormack's shift in focus to Ironman racing has seen him win **Ironman Australia** on debut and then defend that title in 2003. His first race at the distance in Europe resulted in one of the sports greatest races in Roth Germany, where he was beaten in a sprint finish by Ironman's greatest ever competitor Lothar Leder (winner of more than 13 Ironman events). McCormack has proven himself as one of the fiercest forces in triathlon. With one of the best resumes in the sports history, he owns almost every triathlon title available and holds more international titles than any triathlete in history. (at last count McCormack has won over 130 triathlon races globally - at all distances). For more information, visit his website:

Karine: In racing Ironman how do you think your mind is important?

Chris: Your mind... I think it's important and not just in the race. It's the whole package, I think the training, because it is such a monotonous sport, monotonous workloads. I think your body has its bio-rhythms so as it gets tired, mentally you lose motivation so your mind plays an important role in the fact that it keeps you motivated. You have to try to remain positive because when you're not positive many times in training you're like... **pfeew!**

Karine: And how do you do it, for you?

Chris: I worked before I did sport, I was an accountant in Australia. I finished college and I was an accountant and for me remembering how monotonous and mundane being an accountant was (for me), which is to a lot of people the real world, I think this keeps me motivated because I don't want to ever go back to that. I am very blessed and lucky that I'm able to do triathlon and make money from it because for 95% of people who do triathlon do this as a hobby, things I do for love, and as a professional you turn that a hobby into a job. So it becomes more difficult. But I try to use that approach and think OK, what else would I be doing today, I'd be at work. It's hard for everyday people getting out at seven o'clock in the morning to catch the train to work in the city. They start working at 8:30, they work until... this is also mundane. That's how I try to keep myself motivated, and say you know, that is good.

Karine: In the racing itself, how do think the mental aspect of the race is important?

Chris: I think in the Ironman, it's probably 50% of the battle. You know everyone's

physically fit. You know a lot of people say it's 90% mental. I don't believe it's so much mental. You have to be physically conditioned. But at that elite level, everyone's very physically conditioned, and then obviously genetics comes a lot into play. But mentally, I look at my to Ironman failures, I've had six Ironman races, four successes, two failures, so I have a 66% success rate. And I try to compare why I was bad in the ones I was bad and I why was good in the good ones. I think in the ones that went bad, I allowed outside sources of negativity to move into my race a lot more. Things weren't going my way, I went for hard sections, the pace was fast, it was hot, windy, and it wasn't what I expected, and I allowed those things to influence my race. And once you start down its like the dark side of the force in Luke Star Wars, once you start with the negative it's easy to quit mentally. Once you switch off mentally in the Ironman, it's over. So I think in Ironman, more so than in the short course, especially when it gets hard and tough, it's very important that you be tough.

Karine: So now how do you do it to not switch off and continue?

Chris: I have a new concept now ... a new way of approaching things is to treat it all like a circle. I think of it like OK, I start at seven o'clock, no matter what I do in the day I'll be doing the race, so I can't control that. I'm a professional athlete, and this Sunday, I'm racing an Ironman. So that's uncontrollable. So the way I try to think of it is: in my perfect scenario, I lead out of the swim by five minutes, I have a 10-minute lead to out of the bike and I run great and I win by... that's a perfect scenario, but it's not gonna happen, you know, so the way I try to think of it is like a circle, no matter where I am in that circle I'm going to have obstacles and I

deal with those obstacles as they arise. So if I'm swimming and I'm behind, I deal with it. You know, 'OK, I have to make up the distance, and concentrate on the now and not the future or the past'.

Karine: What would be some obstacles you encounter?

Chris: OK in the swim, everyone has a plan for the race. My plan is to swim off and go with the front people, if that's working, if that's happening that's great, I concentrate on that; if it's not, then when I am in the now I think: 'OK, let's lengthen my stroke, how can I get back to where I want to be' and I focus on those things, and meet those obstacles as they arise. I look at those races where I said I did bad, and I didn't deal with the now. I was like 'ahhhhh, it's over', you know, 'it's finished' instead of meeting the challenge. I think a lot of people do that.

I think that's where the mental side as opposed the physical side is more important, because I think in those bad races, physically I could've been very successful, but I allowed the negative and those obstacles to stop my progress. Instead of meeting them and fixing them or dealing with them and going 'okay, let's concentrate, this has happened and let's focus on what we're doing and deal with this', I allowed that to become an issue that I couldn't get past the barrier. I never completed the circle, I stopped here, and I never finished.

Karine: So now what do you say to yourself to not allow the negativity to affect your performance?

Chris: If it's on the bike and I'm behind and I think OK, I look at my pace I look at my gear: this is my pace. This guy is going well, maybe he's going too fast. You know, you have to obviously revert back to what you're

physically capable of doing. If I'm behind on the bike and everything is going good then I just go ok, I reassure myself that this is good, he's going too fast for me at the moment. It's a long day. We have eight-nine hours, maybe he's pushing too hard. So I have to deal with what I can control, my variables. Maybe I'm going for a bad section, if it's tough and I'm losing because it's tough then I'm constantly saying 'it's OK'. Your body is not too smart, you know, your mind is amazing, your body is not too smart. It starts to think what you tell it, if you start thinking I'm tired, it's hot, your body will react so as to make you tired, it's actually lazy I think. It wants to stop, it doesn't want to be there so it constantly sends these messages that it's uncomfortable. So if you keep telling yourself: I feel good, I feel good, this is a problem, but we'll deal with it, it's OK. It starts to feel tired, so take some food in maybe it's food. Let's go for that step. Usually when you're tired, you might be running out of fuel, you know, you need to get out of the saddle, and shift, change gears. You try to control the things within that environment to take your mind off (what isn't helping you) ... does that make sense?

Karine: It does, absolutely.

Chris: Ok. ... So if I'm losing time on the bike: number one, if I'm not tired maybe it's because that guy is going too fast. If I am tired and I'm losing time, the first thing is, what can I control, maybe it's fuel. Let's get some fuel, let's drink, let's shift the gears, maybe I'm pushing too big a gears, rest the back. Just take your mind off, control the things you can control, and ride out of the storm. You keep telling yourself, it's normal, this is normal, this is an Ironman. It's a long day, eight hours. It's bio-rhythms. You're gonna have good times and bad times, you expected that, you are going for a rough patch at the moment, and we'll come good.

You know, maybe get some caffeine in and spark yourself up and nine times out of 10 you ride out the storm and BOOM! You're back! It's a bad patch, it lasts for five minutes. I've been in some races where you deadset think you're gonna die and then 10 minutes later, you are Superman again, you know your body is OK.

Karine: How did you do that switch?

Chris: How the switch happened? Like I said you just deal with that time, it's like time stands still for five or ten minutes, you're sort of dealing with these problems and trying to control, OK I'm tired, let's have some fuel let's have a bit of Coke, let's have a Shot, salt tablets, we'll change the gears, we'll adjust. A lot of people have a pattern of things that they might do. For me, whenever I tend to go for a bad patch, I always stand up, especially if I'm on the bike. I get out of the saddle, I change gears, cause you want to change the rhythms, so you might be pushing the gears for so long your body is just in a 'brrrrrr same gear'. I might pick up the cadence a bit, I might have some food, adjust, have a drink, put some water on my head, stretch my back a bit, get back down and then, 'OK, let's just ride out of the storm, it's an uncomfortable section' and then your body reacts. As long as you stay positive, as long as you don't say, 'Oh no it's over, here we go, I'm blowing up'. You've got to just remain in a positive frame of mind. And positive is not saying 'Great, I feel great, I feel great', cause you're not stupid, you don't feel great, you're not going to believe that. Positive is, like, it's an obstacle you're gonna make it, it's like OK, here's obstacle one. The day has begun I've felt great all day, suddenly I'm starting to feel tired, let's deal with this problem now OK, what can we do to control it, fix this up and just ride out of the storm. Sometimes it could be 10 minutes, sometimes it could be 20 minutes,

sometimes it could be a hill, 30 seconds, you know. And once you've rode that out, you actually feel stronger because you think, wow I just dealt with that. 'Ok we're back, I'M BACK!'

Karine: And when you're back, what are you thinking about?

Chris: Ok number one you're back, let's get back in our race plan, which is pick up the intensity, pick up the pace. You know, get back into the gear that we were using before, on the bike say, or on the run, pick up the tempo. And that's all times, it's a race and if you're behind, you're like 'OK, we might have lost 30 seconds there, let's pick that up, let's take it back, let's move in'. I'll never look behind. You know I want to know where the people are but I'm not going to look for them, look back and look for them. So if I'm in front, I'm thinking we've lost some time there, let's pick this pace, again, back on my pace, I feel good, your body is not the smartest thing. You're so physically fit that once you feel good, it's normal. It's like 'I'm back' you know I've rode this 70 times in training, the pace I'm going do in the race. When you have a bad patch, you know you're having a bad patch, because number one, you're pace slows down and you're not feeling good, and once you come out of that it's back to normal, so it's you're not really thinking anything. You're like 'Wow I'm back! Yeah, beauty! This is great and I'll start riding to pick up the tempo, and I'll work. When I feel good I capitalize on it. When I feel bad, I get on defense mode, I'll deal with the problem and I'm prepared to lose time when I feel bad. When I feel good, I'm on the attack.

Karine: What does it mean attack for you, what are you thinking about ?

Chris: On the attack means I'm racing my race. I'm an aggressive racer. I think that's why I'm successful here in Europe. I'm BANG from the start, aggressive, go! Catch me if you can, usually leading all the time, always like to be in the front of the race, always in control, an aggressive racer and put the pressure on everyone else. And when you race with that mindset, there's only two ways of thinking: You're on the attack or you're on defense, and the only time you're on defense is when you're feeling bad. And you're GONNA feel bad because you're pushing a lot harder than the guys who start out slowly. They're not going to have a bad patch until very very late in the race, maybe 10 km from home on the run. Whereas I could have a bad patch of very very early because I'm very aggressive and their Europeans are very much like that and that's why you see here in these races here in Europe, that times are so very very fast compared to an Ironman in American where it's a lot more reserved. A lot of the American Ironman competitors are very reserved. They pace themselves, very paced out, they plan the day accordingly. The guys in America tend to run quicker, but the guys here tend to swim and bike a lot harder.

Karine: You said you expect the bad patch, do you also expect pain?

Chris: Yeah, you expect pain, but...It's a different pain. I come from short course racing, where the pain is intense. Ironman pain is just a general fatigue. You're just tired, the muscles are sore, it's a pain I prefer more than short course pain, which is gut-wrenching. You know, blood in your throat, tough pain. That's the pain I don't like. Ironman pain is nice [laugh].

Karine: It's nice [laughs]? How do you deal with it?

Chris: It's another thing I expect. I think anyone doing an Ironman knows it's gonna be uncomfortable. I always think of it as, you know you're going to get sore, it's going to be painful but you're going to be close to the finish, that's how I always think. When the pain is coming, it's nearly done. The day is nearly done, honestly in the Ironman 70% of it is comfortable. The swim is easy, the first half of the bike is controlled, you can talk, you feel good, and then it starts to come and you're halfway through the race. Like I said, I'm in a circle. I always think okay, I'm here in the circle. I have to complete the circle. I've done so much I only have a little bit to go, this pain is honestly, it's not... I actually... funnily enough enjoy it.

Karine: You enjoy it?

Chris: Yeah, I like that part of the race.

When it comes, what do you think?

Hmm... [asking himself] "yeah, what do I think when it's painful?" [pause 3 seconds] That's sort of the whole reason you start doing it I guess. To push yourself and push yourself and push yourself. Because you've got to differentiate between pain and feeling horrible. There's a difference, you know like you can be in pain or uncomfortable, but still in control, and that's different to a bad patch which I talked about before, where you can be feeling great and have an absolute horrible patch or feel terrible, but it's not painful. You just feel weak and tired. That's one of those patches. I'll say you have to deal with it and take fuel. When you're at the later part of the races you have painful periods, but you can be in pain but in control, and that's the most, that's the greatest part of the race when you're on this line and push yourself and push yourself and push yourself but you're somewhat in control it feels. The

endorphins are flowing, it's like a high you know, that's the buzz I think of Ironman racing. I think that's why everyone does it, for that's the buzz! I think that's the high and mentally that's not tough. Mentally it's tough when it's painful and you have one of those bad patches you know that's the toughest combination you can possibly have later in the race, maybe on the run 5 km from home. Your legs are very tired you're tired, physically exhausted, and you've been pushing yourself, and pushing yourself, pushing yourself and suddenly you run out of glycogen, you've got no fuel left and you suddenly feel terrible, absolutely terrible, weak and tired as well as in pain.

Karine: How do you deal with it then?

Chris: For me I'm always close to home so I just think, just deal with that.

Karine: But how do you deal with it? What do you say to yourself?

Chris: 'It's nearly home, it's nearly home, it's nearly home.' And it's the most uncomfortable and painful thing and you feel horrible. And you're just trying to put in the fuel and Coke and sugar and you did the things you could control. Firstly, you feel horrible. The first thing in Ironman is, everyone's going to grab Coke for sugars, because the reason you feel so bad is because you run out of sugars. So you put Coke, Red Bull, caffeine, anything that peps you up, and falsely tell yourself, stimulate your mind, you know it's OK. For me I'm thinking it's 15 minutes, 15 more minutes and this is over, we're finished this. I'm always saying that myself. Complete the circle, complete the circle, finish the circle, 15 more minutes and we're done, we'll pack it up, go home, it's done. And if it's half an hour from home, it's like 30 minutes. It's a Seinfeld episode. These are the kinds of things. Or you, you

picture things in training, sessions you've been training.

Karine: Tell me about that.

Chris: Like you might be 30 minutes from home and for me I always picture my favorite running, where I always do my long runs in Sydney. I always say to myself: 'You're at the Springs' which is 30 minutes from home. How many times have you run from the Springs home. Now you try to visualize that run of the Springs, I'm at the Springs I've done this a million times. Today it sucks, I don't feel good, but just run home from the Springs. Put one foot in front of another and Bang Bang Bang and you just... honestly. It's like a trance. You just keep thinking...

Karine: When you visualize what do you see exactly?

Chris: For me when I visualize the Springs. I've done the Springs a lot, I always tend to suffer the last 30 minutes, because I'm so aggressive early in the race. I picture the Springs, I just see the Springs, where we run, a little waterfall. I always picture, it's a little climb that we come up and picture that. It's the first thing you see whenever you'll hit the Springs. It's like, ok I'm at the Springs you picture that. And then I try to think, ok its flat down, I picture the run from the Springs. I'm no longer running in the race. I'll probably be going [up that hill, going up that hill, let's try up, downhill...] you project yourself back there, the whole time, on the path and you come back and forwards in between (the race and the Springs). You'll be like, all this sucks! or someone will yell something from the crowd, but a lot of the times you're so tired physically and mentally, and emotionally tired at this point of the race that everything sort of becomes a blur, you sort of see things, see people. So I'm thinking about ok you're at the Springs

you're at the Springs come on, we'll probably get up that hill 2 km, 15 minutes, and THIS - IS - IN THE BAG! Done, we're done. ..and it's just boom, you just control what you can control and you get to the finish line. Last year, here, I had that going on and also a competitor right beside me so you always try to think Oh! come on, let's get home, let's get home you're at the Springs.

But I was also thinking, your competitive instincts are there, you're looking across and the whole time, it was a really strange sensation, because last year (this race) was a real cat and mouse bluffing game. I was trying to look great even though I felt terrible and speaking to Lothar, he said the same, he was absolutely destroyed. He said with eight kilometers to go he had nothing left, and I said 'WOW you looked great! You know I looked across and...' It was the biggest bluff! I just put my chest out, and that was a big mind game between the two of us. I remember last year thinking ok, when we get four kilometers from home, that's it. I took my belt off, I'm racing I don't care how much this hurts. And for me that last 4 km for me is just a blur. I don't remember anything. I don't remember, I just put my head down and ran and all that I remember is the whole time seeing Lothar's arm side by side with me. I just focused on the run, I don't remember the people coming the other way. I just kept running and running.

Karine: What were you thinking about?

Chris: I don't know! That's the funny thing, I don't know. I remember, it's like in flashes I remember coming down the hill and working together side-by-side and the hill went to the left and Lothar had the inside and I remember immediately thinking to myself, because it turned left and I was on the right hand side, I guess it's because he raced there so many times. The only mem-

ory, I think I remember is saying to myself: He's got the inside. He's gotta come out of this corner in front, bad move bad move. You're so stupid, you're stupid, you should've got the inside. We came out of the corner and he had one step in front, and it stayed like that the whole last 500 meters, one step in front. The whole way into the finish. I could not catch him. At that point, I remember I was looking, pumping my arms, thinking 'just run past him, run past him.' Because you want to, you just can't! Come on, run past him, just go, run past him! And he's just one step the whole way and all the people were going nuts. You see the photos, it's quite funny in speaking to Lothar, he said the same, as we don't remember so many people until we see the photos. I just remember looking at his shirt with Deutsche Post, a yellow shirt, and I was going 'Run past him, just go past him' and it stayed like that the whole way. And I think when I look back now physically that race blew me for the season, because I think you dig so deep and I think your body can do that only so many times where you can really really dig as deep as that. And I think it takes something from you, and for the rest of the year I was really tired emotionally and mentally very exhausted. I found in training I just didn't want to go back there again. You get to a point where your body is just like, you know what? I don't want to hurt like that anymore. So I had a good time off and I was being good. But I remember thinking for this year, this race, I don't want to tax myself like that again. I will again, maybe for Hawaii but my objective is Hawaii later.

Karine: What do you think is the hardest challenge for Ironman racers?

Chris: I guess the challenge is the volume of work, the training, the time that needs to be committed to the sport for the three disci-

plines, a lot of volume of work, it uses up a lot of time.

Karine: Speaking of that how do you manage to get all your training done and the rest you need and your little daughter, and everything in your life?

Chris: I'm pretty good, yeah I have a very understanding family, my wife is amazing. But I'm a very hard trainer. I think anyone who trains with me (knows that), I always tend to recycle people a lot. Only because I like standing at the start line thinking: "there's not a person here who's trained harder than me". So for me that's a positive, when I'm standing at the start line, in there swimming fighting in the water going ok, we've got eight hours of pain, but no one here has been through what I've been through. And every I need to in every race I do. It gives me confidence, and it gives me the edge when you're meeting those obstacles during the race and there's someone up the road you're going Oh! he's up the road, but I've been through this a million times before, you've done a thousands of these, you've hurt like of this 1000 times before, and he hasn't trained as hard as you did. They are the things you're telling yourself, you know you're ready for this, don't be soft. If I came to an Ironman and I knew I hadn't trained well, maybe I'd been injured, it becomes a lot more of a mental game. I've never been in that position, but I know, maybe I'd be thinking Oh I'm feeling bad, because I haven't done enough training. 'Oh, no, you knew this would happen' and that's when you start going in the negative path. I knew this was going to happen, hey you haven't done enough **bike** working, you're starting to get tired. You don't want those thoughts.

When you've had good training, and you're standing on that start line and going OK,

there's nothing more I could have done to be more ready for this phrase and physically I think I'm the best in the world. So there's no one here who should beat me. So anyone who's in front of me shouldn't be there and the only person who's stopping me from winning is me. When you have an obstacle you deal with it, you deal with this thing, otherwise this guy's going to beat me and he doesn't deserve to beat me, because he's not as good as you are and that's how I deal with things.

Karine: So you truly believe that you're fit, and you deserve to win.

Chris: Yes and you might ask what happens if you're not feeling good, well I have never been in that position so I couldn't tell you.

Karine: So you make sure that you're not in that position.

Chris: Exactly. Last year, I have had a terrible race in Hawaii, that I went there thinking I was super fit, but when I look back at my training, I was terrible, I got married and I partied for seven weeks and now I look back and think that's the reason. But for every race I do, I try to be 100% ready.

Karine: Do you always evaluations of your races and preparation like that?

Chris: Every time, whether I win or lose.

Karine: What do you think about or focus on for your evaluations?

Chris: For me, Ironman is new. In this race I've done less Ironman's than any other pros, even the young guys like Farris and Timo Bracht who's done eight Ironman's. This is my sixth Ironman. So for me it's a learning curve. I like to write everything down, all my training, my races, what works, what

doesn't. For the successful races I can look back, if I have a bad race, what went wrong, why, when did I feel bad, and it's just so you can replicate good things. You form the model for your training, so you can take the next block of work. For this race I've tried completely different training, because I've got a model that works, that I think works, but I'm trying to do three Ironman's a year. So it's works for two Ironman's, I won last year in Australia and I was second here, but in Hawaii I was very bad. So this year I've won Australia again, I'm back here, but I've tried to do completely different work. I'm physically fit for this race, but I have done different training. So after the race, on the weekend I'll go okay, I was successful or I wasn't successful and if I was successful, and I go on to be successful in Hawaii, that will be the model I'll replicate next year as opposed to the model I did last year. So you're always trying to find what works, what doesn't and your body is an amazing instrument. It has its bio-rhythms and sometimes you're going to feel good, and sometimes you're going to feel bad, but I think it's also a very simple, simple machine.

If mentally you know something worked in the past, replicate it again. I have done that in my short course career. My whole career, people were asking, how are you so successful? I was like well, I won a race doing that, did it again I won again, just did it again, did it again, did it again. It's simple, and people try, and coaches, to complicate things, and do this and that and try to do this... It's such a simple thing, swim, bike, run, be good at them, find something that works for you and just replicate it. As you get stronger, you might do a race and realize you might require a bit more bike volume, a bit more bike strength. You obviously make adjustments to your training, but you stick to the same patterns that work.

Karine: What race would you say was your best?

Chris: I think my best race was when I won the world [short-course]. For Ironman, I think my best performance was this year in Australia. I just think **I ruled** the way the day went. I was physically super fit, my training was exceptional, but I had a lot of things on my plate that took away from my recovery in my lead up to the race. I just started a bike shop, so I spent a lot of time in the shop, I trained all day, and then I spent all night in the shop, whereas the years before, I would have been watching television. I just had a baby girl. So there was obviously a lot of time with Talia [baby girl]. So going into Australia, I was a little bit nervous because the model I replicated and used for the last years was slightly different because of the training was the same but the recovery and all the factors that I couldn't control, well that I could control, but really couldn't control, had to come in. So I was a bit nervous coming into the race. But I ruled. I felt incredible in the swim.

Karine: So if we take that race. In the days before how did you prepare?

Chris: When I talked about the model, I have the same model for every single race. Today [two days before the race], I always have a day of relaxation. And relaxation means just away from the sport, I'll get away for lunch, you know go to hang out, you're not thinking about the race, you're just relaxing your mind because it's a big challenge in two day's time and a lot of thinking, so today I try not to think. So I might just watch television and do nothing. And tomorrow is the day of packing and planning for the race, which is: swim, what do we need, we put that together, the bike bags need to be done, we get all the bike fitted out, how much energy work we're going to take in the

race, what calorie consumption we are going to use.

Karine: It's all planned?

Chris: Yes it's all planned but it's just replicate from the years before, and its setting it up in the bags on the bike, making sure I've got all the equipment, that I haven't forgotten anything. It's the bike and the bike shoes and everything is done. I check in, I do little swim, maybe 10 minutes just to feel the arms. To feel good. I do a bit of the bike ride, do a bit of a run, 20 minutes it's pretty much 20 minutes of the three disciplines. Just to make sure everything is ready for the race, and I always eat lasagne. I have to have lasagne! I've had it since I was running as a 10-year-old. My mother used to make me lasagne, and whenever I didn't have it I raced bad. It's just a superstition, I guess. I have lasagne and then I try to sleep, the day before the race the sleep (afternoon sleep) isn't important. Tonight's sleep is the important one.

Karine: So when you wake up in the morning how do you feel?

Chris: Actually I'll get excited. And I think it's because it's still new to me, Ironman. If I compare it to when I used to get up for short course races, it got to a point, where I was like, ah here we go again, this is gonna hurt. But for the Ironman it's still a buzz. Because it's been such a long planning, it's been 12 weeks worth of work, you've thought about this moment a lot, here's the race, you've thought about the other competitors and looking forward to compete against them, and you sort of wake up and I go: wow, this is it! And the good thing about Ironman racing is it's not a rush like short course. You get there in the swim and boom you swim, you're swimming along and obviously with the front bunch, but I'm used to getting

bunched up and dealing with it. That's for me a relief, because a lot of the Ironman competitors, they only know Ironman racing, they've never done the short, aggressive Olympics and those sort of Olympic-distance type events.

Karine: They find the swim hectic.

Chris: Yeah they find the swim very hectic, whereas I enjoy it. It's very enjoyable.

Karine: You were saying earlier that you thought about your competitors a lot. When did you think about them and what did you think about?

Chris: Oh! Just in training. I know for this race Lothar is here and we've raced so much around the world and I know he is average in the swim, not a great swimmer, very strong on the bike and very strong on the run. I know, as he would know my strengths. I wonder if he'll keep up on the bike, I wonder how he is. And today is the day where you're going to find out. So it's actually a little bit exciting. You know a lot of people, they get nervous but I never really get nervous. I get excited.

Karine: So what do you do from the moment you wake up until maybe 30 minutes before the race?

Chris: I count my calories.

Karine: You count your calories?

Chris: Yeah, to make sure I have enough fuel. I have those tins out there of liquid food. I have one of those. I make sure there's enough fuel, enough calories. I count my calories, I make sure I'm drinking and fluids and eating enough, and starting the race with a full tank. That's my primary concern race morning, getting enough fuel. Because a lot

of people get nervous, and they forget to eat and the nerves are burning off energy and they don't replace energy. A lot of people start Ironman three quarters full, three quarters' tank. I want to make sure I start with a full tank, calories in. Make sure you drink during, drink and drink and that's why I try to reinforce myself as I get into the transition area. I make sure that I've eaten enough and 'Drink, drink Mecca' try to get the calories and then I'm just watching the time. Knowing when the start is, going through my warm up routine. Just a typical routine that I do for pretty much every race, start with a run then the bike then the swim. So that I finish in the water for the start of the race. And I tend to be very, in the swim I'm always laughing, 'yeah' whereas a lot of the guys are very reserved and quiet and I don't know if it annoys people, but I'm excited.

Karine: So let's say fifteen minutes before the start, you're in the water now. What are you thinking about at that moment?

Chris: 'This is it, yeah, beauty!' As a professional, I think that's you what you trained for. That's what I look forward to. The race is the bonus, it's the training that is the monotonous part, the training in the rain and the wind and the cold, and the time away. The race, **it's always the best** so I'm excited. It's like finally here, finally this is it, I've never been nervous, like a lot of people ask me are you nervous for this race. Not at all. I don't think about it, it's like, this is cool, I'm going into the battle, let's rock-and-roll. You want to beat me, try to do it. And if you do, well done. You know, and I'll finish this race, if I come fifth, I'll go ok, what went wrong. That's how I look at it and I'll adjust it and next time I won't be fifth. It's just like a game, you're playing and playing and playing until you find the perfect race, I think everyone is searching for the perfect

race. And I don't think I've had mine yet. I've had great races, but not the perfect race...

Karine: And 30 seconds before the race?

Chris: I make sure I don't miss the start. That's sort of when I get a little bit more serious. I don't miss the start, or I don't do something tactically stupid, which is like talking to someone. I'll look for Stephen and think, ok place myself among the good swimmers and lets rock-and-roll.

When the gun goes, I'll find where Stephen is and all the good swimmers and I'll get ready to go ... looking forward. It's treading water and then go!

Karine: Once the gun goes off, what are you thinking?

Chris: Long strokes, like you've done so many times in training, long strokes. That's all I think about. I'll pick up my rate [turn-over of the arms] and long strokes, long swim strokes, come on. Because the first part is fast and I'm always aware of where, I'll usually position myself next to Stephen so my whole philosophy in that sense is, he's going to be the first out of the water. So all I have to concentrate on is his suit. Obviously you look up every 10 or 15 strokes, but I just focus on swimming next to him, boom, his suit, his suit. So I don't look up or anything for maybe the first three or four minutes. We start to get into clear water, and then he might start to pull away because he's a bit stronger, and the group starts to establish themselves, and then my focus is just staying where I am, staying with the front guys. If they're obviously too fast, they'll swim away. But my aim is just to keep my tempo, the things that I've trained, the pace I've trained at, which is usually in the front group. Sometimes someone's hitting you,

and things like that that annoy you. I'll move out of the way or... if someone is deliberately (doing it)... **I've lashed out** a lot in races but I tend to just move away.

Karine: So now we are close to the transition. Any special thoughts at that moment?

Chris: 200 meters out from the transition, I'm starting to think about the bike. I might be kicking a bit more to get some blood into the legs, and I'm thinking ok, where's my bike, I picture where it is. And I'll start to have a look at who's around me then. You'll sort of get a feel during the swim who's around you, what competitors are there. It's a hectic start, it starts fast and then it sort of settles into a nice pace in the middle and it's quite comfortable. And you sort of have a look around at who was struggling or who's in the group or you sort of get an idea of who is in the pack. Hopefully, your main competitors aren't there. For me, I don't expect Lothar to be in the front pack. But if he was there I'd be going well, Lothar is having a great swim, you know, those are things you tend to think about. And I'm concentrating on the bike getting out, getting my wetsuit off, where did I leave my bag, you've walked the transition chute so you know where stuff is so you get out of the water and you just follow your path that you've done in training. It goes quick, boom on the bike. On the bike I'm aggressive early.

Karine: So what are your thoughts of that moment?

Chris: Let's go! I'm a land mammal, the swim is probably my weakness, even though I'm in the top group, but the bike and run I say is a distinctive strength. And it's like for me, now we're on the land, this is where I'm good. So boom, I'm immediately, shoes on, and rock-and-roll. I set a really good tempo,

and I try to draw, especially the younger guys into my pace, because I want people with me if I can.

Karine: Why is that?

Chris: Because it makes it a lot easier with people around you. When you're solo all day for hours on the bike, it's just lonely, it's good to have other people around. And plus, if they tend to have bad patches, you drop them. You take their energy and you feel good about it. It's like yeah, he's gone, you know, good bye, see you later, have a good day! You sort of steal their energy. I like having people around me and battling with people. I draw from that I think, I get energy from that. That's why I like this race, the people, the crowd, it keeps me pumped up. More so than if I get to an Ironman in say, Korea, where there's like five people clapping. It's not motivating for me.

Karine: On the 180 km ride you get plenty of time to think. What are you thinking about?

Chris: "What am I thinking about?" You keep repeating the circle. For me, it's like ok 500 calories in per hour, I'm going to have a Cliff Shot every 15 minutes, I'm going to drink that bidden of water within this hour. I'm going to have this, **in surplus** in the hour, make sure you replace it. Every 15 minutes you're riding along and you're like ok, there's an aid station: Cliff Shot, drink and then it's 120 calories, and when you start counting calories it's amazing how quick, that part goes, because 10 minutes on the road is not (that long)... because you're thinking in small increments all the time, you might start thinking, you might have a chat to the guy next to you, "hey, how are you going?" because it's so small, it's not four and a half hours, it's divided. You're like ok, there's an hour, have I got 500 calo-

ries in? Yep, boom start again. Making sure you're fuelled up, fuelled up, fuelled up, Oh, I'll grab a cookie! Have I got enough water? What gear am I pushing? Is the pace good? You're thinking so many things... in my first Ironman, this was my biggest concern. I was like, what the hell am I going to think of for 4 ½ hours? I remember thinking, how boring, it's going to be sooo long! And I was absolutely amazed how quickly it went. Sometimes you do Olympic-distance races and they tend to drag on...because in Olympic distance, you're not thinking of nutrition, you're just going as hard as you can. For Ironman, there is so much of thought involved that it goes of relatively quick.

Karine: And then you're out onto the run. Any special thoughts?

Chris: I'm a runner. But the run still very much intimidates me. Every Ironman I've done, I have led off the bike. So the two where I've failed, I failed on the run. So I have never had a bad experience on the bike or a bad experience on the swim. My bad experiences have always been on the run. So in the last 5 km on the bike I always think **pfew**, ok that felt good, but geez, I hope I feel good on the run. I get off the bike and the first thing I'm thinking about is, how are of the legs feeling. Oh! they feel good, and then my whole race now for the run is structured around my watch. I go ok, boom, start the watch. Now I'm going to run four minutes a kilometre, I know I can do that, I've done it one million times in training, I know I can do it comfortably, I know I won't be in any trouble, and if I run four minutes a kilometre, no one will catch me. A 2:48 marathon will win it for me, no matter what. Because the guys who can run quicker will be too far behind. So that's it, bang, I start my watch. I go for the first kilometre, too fast or too slow. And usually it's too fast, because the hype and the pump, so you tend to

just adjust your pace, you take your fuel in, and the run, really, is quite easy for the first 10 miles.

Karine: What are you focusing on at that time?

Chris: Just stay controlled, stay on the pace, this is the pace, try to stay relaxed. Obviously, you want to know where the competitors are, you're thinking, How far in front am I? How good are they looking? But I NEVER – look – back. Never, never, never, never. It's just a **motto** from running that I learned. I want to know where people are, but I'll NEVER look for them. Because I always try to think that, I'm in the lead, everyone is feeling equally as uncomfortable as I am. I consider myself one of the best guys in the world at this so anyone who is behind me, is behind me because they're not as good as me. And they're feeling just as bad as me. So to catch me, they have got to make up time, they've got to run quicker than I am right now and they can't do it. These are the things that you think to yourself. I'm running four minutes a kilometre I've got a five minutes on Lothar, if he wants to catch me, he is going to have to do something amazing, something that no one's ever done before. If he does, he has to pay for it. If he catches me and I hold this pace, then he's going to pay for it later on. Sometimes you get to a turn-around point and you come back and you'll get the times, but you'll see them for the first time, and you always try to look good. And you think geez, they look good! And you just keep saying to yourself, ok they're four minutes back, ok, we're 20 kilometres from home, he has to take one minute every 5 kilometres out of me, he can't do it man! If I'm hanging on to this pace, he can't do it. Now if you have a bad patch then, you know the time and you might have a bad patch and think ok, whew, I'm going for a real rough spot. If

I'm having a bad patch, I'm looking for the Red Bull. I have some Red Bull, and you ride out the storm. And I'll never think about my competitors when I have a bad patch. You don't think about that. I'm thinking, how are we going to ride this out? We're going to get out of this, OK, fuel, caffeine, we need sugar. OK, let's slow it down a bit, slow the pace, and you know you're in the circle, you're expecting it to happen. I'm not going into this race on Sunday expecting not to have any bad patch, it's going to happen. You just think ok, this is a bad patch, you expected this to happen, let's go! I've done this 50 times before in races, I wonder how long this is going to last, and sometimes you think, "Oh... here we go. 5, probably 10 minutes of this, so it will probably be that bridge down there." You're like, "I'll probably feel uncomfortable up to that bridge, let's just run to that bridge." Okay fuel up, get some stuff in, slow it down a bit, and then your body will adjust and you'll come out of it. It's amazing how it does it! It's like your body is trying to punish you for doing this sport, so it goes, 'take that! feel bad!' And when you show it that you're not going to stop, it goes ok, it goes back to being good again. Yeah, you have to not give into your body, because if your body senses that your mind is going to be weak and give in to it, it will SHUT DOWN! It will go, "Yeah, beauty, I win!" It's like a little battle your body and mind have with your **soul**. And once you ride out of the storm, my first concern is, how much time did I lose? And you're also thinking to yourself, they're going to have to go for a bad patch too, they're not superhuman. They are going to have a bad patch. When you're feeling good, you capitalize (on it) and when you're feeling bad, you can slow it down. If you're capitalizing when they are going for a bad patch, it ends up helping yourself out. At the end of the day, it's the person who has the least bad patches who wins the race.

Karine: Are there other obstacles, you can have an Ironman?

Chris: I think, personally, no. I think for other people, self-doubt is the biggest killer, it's the biggest killer for anyone. And that's why I like to start any race, feeling like I've done everything I can to be ready for this race. I think if you've got self-doubt, that can kill an athlete, that can take a winner away.

Karine: Do doubts creep in your mind sometimes?

Chris: The two Ironman I've failed have been Hawaii. So for me the obstacle is going back there now. In Hawaii this year, I'm going to have rough patches, and now ... they are the issues I'm going to deal with. Here I've been successful, I've been successful in Australia. It's easy to be positive because you've had positive results in those races. My big obstacle, I'll be working on for Hawaii will be having no doubts. I'm ready to race.

Karine: How will you deal with it?

Chris: Doing everything I can, I'll be training in the heat, I'm going to Hawaii on a training block for 10 days, to race the course, run the course, learn the course, KNOW the course.

Karine: That's important.

Chris: It's important just for visualization, you might be going for a rough patch in the race, and go, "I've run home from here, remember the training camp we did here, you sprinted home from here that day!" Just picture, remember I was talking about the Springs? It's all about visualization and convincing yourself that everything is good.

Karine: Do you do a lot of visualization?

Chris: In the race you do it subconsciously. You don't realize you're doing it. I tend to use that a lot. Just put myself in a positive environment, where I've had a positive result. Like the Springs I've run home so many times, I always use the Springs in 90% of the races I've done. Because I've run so well from the Springs home in so many training sessions and felt like Superman. I always try to think of my best, best times at the Spring, best run. Put yourself in that situation, "how were you feeling, how did you hold yourself, how did you feel"... And like I said, your body is just, is dumb, it will do it. I don't know any other words to use, your body is not the smartest thing. It will do anything your mind will tell it to do. You've seen these athletes start wobbling during their race, and they're physically shutting down but their mind keeps telling them "Everything is good, everything is good, keep moving forward, keep going forward." And then sooner or later, they start getting the wobbles and stuff, because their body CAN'T do what their mind wants them to do. I think the perfect person to speak to for that is Chris Leigh who just won Ironman Coeur d'Alene, who lost half his intestine in Hawaii. If you watch the video coverage of it, he said that he was in fifth place, he said in the last 8 miles he was gone but he just kept saying, "keep pushing, keep pushing, push yourself, you're good, you feel good, you feel good, you feel good, you feel good, you feel good". I think everyone says the same things. He got within two hundred meters from the finish line and his body just shut down, and he just kept collapsing. And you could see him laughing to himself, and people don't realize, you're still mentally alert. Like you know what's going on, you know...I've had some races where I've got the wobbles a lot, in some hot half Ironman in Malaysia. And you're alert, you know,

even though you're seeing pictures of people wobbling on the roads, looking like they're drunk and stuff. But you're not drunk. You just can't believe it's happening. You're like, come on, just run to that point, and your body just won't do it. And if that's why I said, your mind is so powerful and your body is dumb, because it will do everything your mind will tell it to do until it can't do it anymore. And then it will still try if the mind keeps telling it to do it. Chris Leigh tried to do that. And actually his solid intestine and everything shut down, died, and he just kept pushing forward. Falling down and getting back up, pushing forward again, going down and getting back up. I talked to him, I was like, do you remember that? He's like, "totally! I couldn't believe it..." I was looking at the finish line and thinking, run to it! And he just fell over and he was like "man, you're on the ground again! Stand up! Run to it!" And he kept falling over.

Karine: You've got to be tough mentally to push your body to do things it doesn't want to do.

Chris: I think I've always been able to do that, so I don't know the other option. I guess because I've done running in sports, since I was little. I don't see this as pushing, I see this as a physical challenge. I've always enjoyed it. I enjoy putting myself in that position and pushing myself, and pushing myself. You get immense satisfaction out of it, personal satisfaction. I don't know why, you just, you get a buzz I think. If I was going to do these Ironmans and it didn't hurt, I don't think you'd do it, would you? There is no buzz to it.

Karine: Hawaii, what do you think it takes to win it?

Chris: I think to win Hawaii, you have to be brave, take a chance. Because it's the hardest

race in the world, the hardest single day in any sport in anything in the world. And someone's going to win. I arrive in Hawaii every year and I'm 100% convinced I'm going to win. But to win, you have to be brave, you have to take a chance. There's been a lot of times in races where I've been riding with the guys, thinking you feel good. I might think I'll stay here (at this pace), you know, it's a long day. And you see people step up the pace, take the chance and end up winning the race. Then you'll think "Hey, I can beat him!" That's what it takes to win Hawaii, if you watch Peter Reid, last year, he took a chance. He is usually a very very strong biker, and he worked a lot on his run, and he took a chance early, he went out very very hard in the first six miles (on the run). I thought it was a suicidal pace. He went 35 minutes in the run. He stayed back on the bike, he wasn't so aggressive and on the run he went whack! And I was running under four minutes a kilometre and I thought pfeeew, you're an idiot. You're stupid, it's too fast. And the last 10 kilometres for him were very very painful. He was in absolute pieces. But he took his chance. He went, "You know what? Here's my chance. I'm gonna run with what I've got, catch me if you can". If you look at all the winners, all the people that have been successful in Hawaii, they've taken a chance. They've gone, you know what, it's the world's championship, and I want this more than you, and I'm gonna ride like that. So a lot of people have "died" trying and they don't become stars, but I respect this more than the guy who is racing for fifth. The person who wants to win Hawaii, the person who wins Hawaii, ultimately, number one arrives thinking he can. And I think there's only a handful of guys that turn up in Hawaii this year, thinking they can win. I think of the hundred pros (competing), honestly, there's 10 that think they can win. The rest are there for fifth place. They would be over the

moon with fifth, so they race like that. And some of them (there to win) got third, because some of them blew their paces. They took a big chance, but I respect those guys a lot more. They are more the brave athletes. The guys racing for fifth place, I can't work out why you want to race for fifth.

Karine: You wouldn't do that?

Chris: Never. I'd rather die trying, than never try at all. It's just the way I am and I guess in Hawaii, I've blown up the last two years trying. The first one I had a 10min lead off the bike, first ever in Hawaii. I went pfeeew, 10 minutes, catch me if you can. Blew the pace in the marathon. Walked the marathon. Last year, I attacked the last half of the bike. And I got away and took my chance and blew up 6 miles away, I lasted 20 miles, where the year before, I only lasted 12. So I got closer but I still failed, you know!

And everyone keeps saying, you should wait, you should relax, you have to pay your dues. You need to come tenth, fifth. Forget that! I don't want to come 10th. I'm a competitor, I'm a racer. It's in me. I don't train for 12 weeks, and go without spending time with my family, and live this harsh lifestyle to come tenth, you know! [laughs] 10th What's that? I do this to win,, if I come second I fail. That's how I am on myself.

Karine: You're pretty hard on yourself.

Chris: I'm hard on myself, because I think I'm physically good enough to win. If I was riding the Tour de France against Lance Armstrong, I wouldn't be hard on myself if he rides 20 minutes faster than me. But in this sport I'm hard on myself because I think I'm good enough to win and if I don't win it's because I've done something wrong or the person was better and I need to adjust and

make changes, so it doesn't happen again. There's no one in the sport that I have seen yet that scares me, that I think you're better than me. In short course, Simon Whitfield is a better runner than I am. I've trained with him, he's one of my best friends, and I know if we ever came together off the bike and have to run side-by-side he would beat me every single time. And it's a hard thing to swallow as an athlete. It's the first time ever in my sport where I've had to go, he is better than me. I cannot beat him in the run. But in the Ironman if I was racing Simon, I would never let myself be in that position.

Karine: So what would you do?

Chris: I would be aggressive on the bike because I'm better than him on the bike. I don't want to start the run with Simon. I've watched these World Cup races on television, with all these guys riding along with Simon and I'm thinking, What are you doing? You're never going to beat him (that way)! And they're happy to come second. "I've got second to Simon Whitfield, it's a great..." Pfeeew! But in an Ironman, there's no one I've seen who I cannot swim with, I cannot bike with, and I cannot run with. No one scares me. No one. And I think it sounds arrogant, there's no one here I don't think I'm a better runner than, I don't think I'm a better bike rider than, and that I don't think I'm a better swimmer than. Maybe there's a few people that are better swimmers, but I think I can outbike anyone and I can outrun anyone. So for me it's a big positive, and I try to think that.. I try to start the race thinking that way...

Karine: So do you think about that during, or before your race?

Chris: Yeah, I always think that when I'm in the race, I think it's something I take with me every day in training.

Karine: Everyday?

Chris: Everyday! I think, man you're one of the best, you're one of the best in the world. And that's why I think I train so hard, and I recycle my training partners. I have four or five and I recycle them, they tend to last four weeks and then they're in a heap and they have a week off. And I use the next guy up and then the other guy comes back, I tend to recycle training partners because I'm so hard and committed in training. I'm showing them how strong I am. It's very much an ego thing. As much a boost for myself and just to pick at them 'this is how quick the good guys are'.

Karine: You're very committed.

Chris: Oh I'm very committed. I say this is because I'm blessed. I found that I was great at this sport and it has provided me with a great lifestyle. And now it's only a short period of time that I can do it for and I try not to waste it. In my early racing career, on the ITU World Cup circuit, I was in Australia and winning World Cups, having a lot of money, being single and traveling around the world. I was partying and going to all these places and just party and then suddenly I was 27 years old. And at one point I remember saying. I want to make sure I don't waste my time.

Karine: At one point, you said that?

Chris: Well, I missed the Olympics. Because everything happened so easy: I've won the World Championships, I've won the World Cup series, I've won so many World Cup races, partying and drinking, having fun and thinking, "This is the greatest sport in the world, I'm so talented, look how good I am". And then all these guys beat me and I missed making the Olympic team. I couldn't believe it. I thought, I am going to have to

wait four more years, if I want to go again. You know what? I'm not going waste my time anymore. And I think I became a professional athlete in 2000. I was a professional athlete before that, but not professional with everything, my whole program. I think since 2000, that's why I think I have been so successful. I'm very very consistent. I win 95% of the races I do, and if I don't win I podium. I don't think I haven't podiumed in four years. Except for Hawaii.

Karine: So your goal is to win Hawaii?

Chris: Ah, that's all I want to win. My focus is to win Hawaii, and then end my career in Beijing at the Olympics. And that will do me.

Karine: So you will go to the Olympics?

Chris: I think so. Only if I've won Hawaii. I like to win things twice to show that the first time wasn't a fluke. So win Hawaii and then I'd like to replicate that and then that would do me with Hawaii. I'm happy to do that, and then I'd like to break eight hours for the Ironman.

Karine: Have you have always had goals?

Chris: When I first started triathlon I had the list of all the things I wanted to do. I'd write down I wanted to be a world champion, I wanted to win the World Cup Series, I wanted to win the National Championships, I wanted to win the French Iron Tour. Iron Tour is like the Tour de France for triathlon in seven days. I wanted to win Chicago, I want good to win Wildflower, I wanted to win Alcatraz. And I wanted to win the Hawaiian Ironman, and I wanted to break eight hours. That was it. I wanted to be the first man to break eight hours because when I wrote the list, they hadn't broken eight hours yet. And I tick them off. I won

the Worlds, I won the World Cup, I won Alcatraz, I won Wildflower and the only two left for me are eight hours and Hawaii. The Olympics was never on my list because triathlon wasn't part of the Olympics, and so the Olympics suddenly was added later, but I still have the list, it's on a piece of paper, it's in an old training diary.

Karine: You still have it?

Chris: Yeah! It keeps me... motivated. I've still got the ticks next to the done, done, done, and the there's two things left. And I think if I could take them off I will be able to retire for from my sport and not feel like I didn't achieve everything I wanted to achieve. And that's what I had to ask myself last year when I was walking in Hawaii. I had to ask myself, Do I want the Olympics or do I want Hawaii? So I decided Hawaii is what I wanted. Because if I finish my career in five years time, without ticking off the Hawaiian Ironman, or without ticking off the sub-eight hour race, I think I'd be disappointed.

It's not hard. It's just, I think, setting a goal and wanting to achieve it, and that's my goal.

And until I achieve that, I won't relax, I will continue to be hard on myself. I will continue to assess races, I will continue to learn from what am I doing wrong. I will continue to fly to training camps and go to different places and go and meet up with sport scientists and do tests in labs and spend time away from my family. Because I think when I'm done it will be an accomplishment, something I can be really proud of. Like, Wow! That was cool! That was cool!

Karine: Is there anything else you would like to say ?

Chris: Mentally I think I'm just driven by my desire to achieve those things. It's not so much, I'm very hard on myself. I always like to use the circle thing, because that's how I think of it to myself. It's like there's no avoiding it, you either deal with the problem in the race now, or you don't. And if you don't it's going to finish you, the race is going to finish and there's nothing worse than being in the car driving after the race going, I should've done this, oh man, if only I had

gone with Lothar, if only I'd sprinted earlier, if only I'd eaten that food, if only... I never like to have 'if only's'. I want to just do it, just do it, deal with it, do it. And if you pay for it later, you can look back and say well, I blew up because... but at least you took a chance. It's better to die trying than to never try at all. That's how I like to think. Catch me if you can you know! Catch me if you can. And if you do it, well done.