

OFFICIAL EVENT EDITION

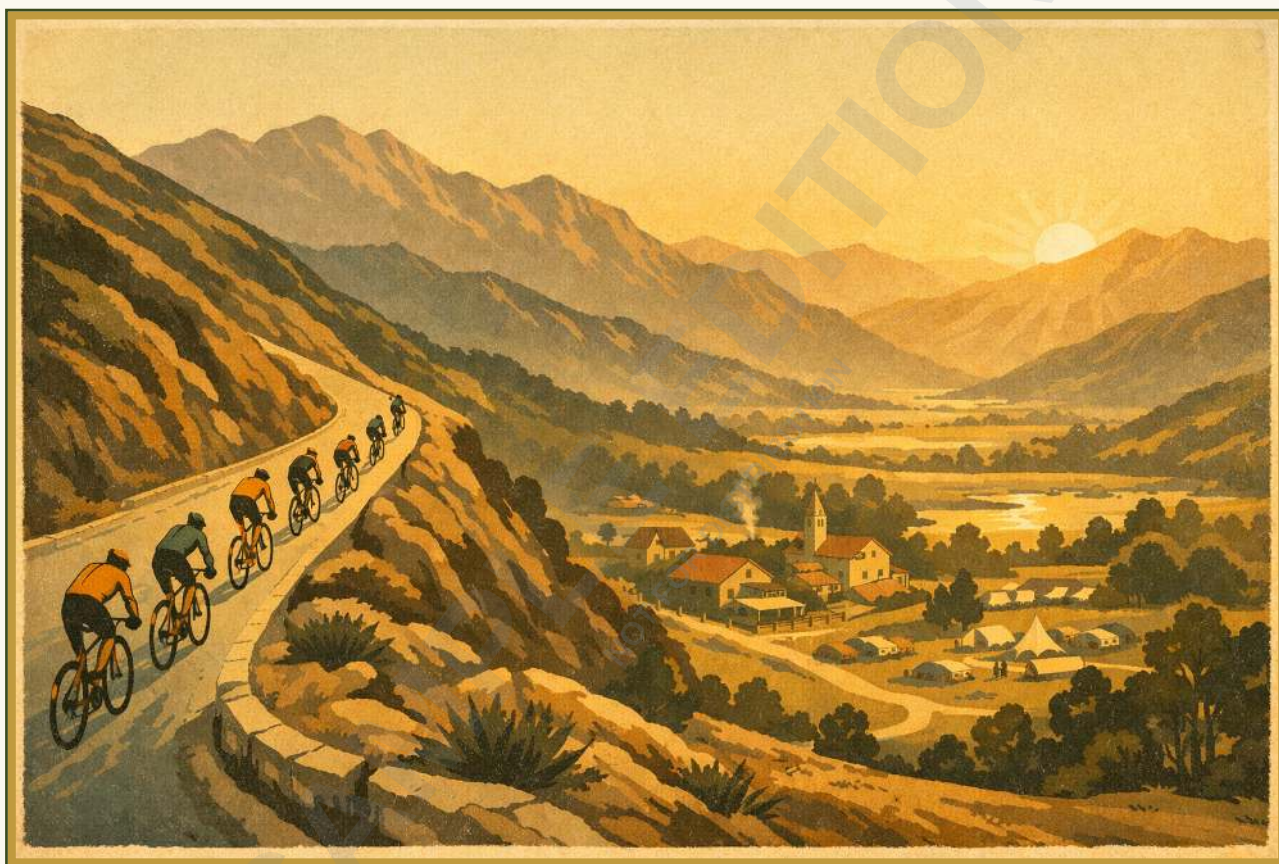
Ridgeway Cycling Academy



The Wisdom of Cycling — The Ride of Life and the Life of the Ride

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A word from the organisers



Ridgeway Cycling Academy

A word from the organisers

Dear Sample Reader,

This copy is yours. Your name is on the cover, and it is inside on the pages too, because it was made for you and for nobody else. No two copies of this book are the same.

We wanted to give you something that outlasts a fixture list. Kit wears out. Medals go in a drawer. But the hill does not care how you feel, and that is why we ride it, and that is worth writing down somewhere you will find it again.

What follows are the real voices of this sport — players, coaches and writers, most of them talking about the parts nobody puts on a highlight reel. There is a section on pressure, and what the people who handle it best actually do differently. One on trust, and why a group that trusts each other beats a group that is merely talented. One on losing, which is the section we would ask you to read twice, because everyone in this sport has lost and everyone worth knowing came back. There is a section on joy, which is the reason any of us started. One on mastery, and the unglamorous patience it asks for. One on rivalry, and the respect that runs underneath it. And one on belonging — on being part of something whether or not you are the one on the field.

You do not have to read it in order. Keep it in the kit bag. Open it the night before a hard one. Let it fall open at whichever page finds you, and if a line is worth keeping, keep it.

The game has taught you things already — about nerve, about other people, about getting up. These pages are simply the same lessons in other people's words, gathered in one place so they are there when you need them.

Thank you for everything you give to this. It is noticed, and it matters more than the results ever say.

— **The Committee, Ridgeway Cycling Academy**

Foreword

Cycling is watched from a metre away, for free, by anyone who cares to stand at the roadside — and what passes is honesty at speed. The mountain examines everyone in public; the wind is shared or it is fatal; the winner is carried to the line by teammates the cameras barely name. Wherever the road goes, from the great tours to a club race past a farm gate, the sport teaches the same things: pace yourself through what cannot be rushed, take your turn in the wind, start again in spring, protect the joy of simply riding, respect the unseen kilometres, honour the rival who shares your escape, and wait — together, gladly — for what you love to come past.

This collection gathers the voices of the road — the riders, the team captains, the great watchers and writers who loved the sport best — arranged around seven themes that belong as much to life as to cycling. Each chapter opens with an image and an idea, then hands the floor to the voices themselves.

Read it the way you would watch a mountain stage: patiently, for the long unfolding — and for one moment of brave colour you will remember for years.

Ways to Walk with This Book

A collection like this is not meant to be read once and shelved. It is meant to be lived with — kept close, opened often, and put to work. Seven ways to begin:

- **The daily voice**
open anywhere each morning and take one voice with you into the day.
- **The reflection pause**
choose the theme your week is testing, read its essay slowly, and write one honest line of your own in response.
- **Match-day ritual**
before the big broadcast, read the theme the fixture will examine — rivalry before the derby, pressure before the final.
- **The team talk**
captains, coaches, teachers, parents: one voice a week is enough to open a changing room, a classroom or a dinner table.
- **The hard-week medicine**
when life tackles you, the defeat chapter is waiting. It was written for exactly that week.
- **The gift of a voice**
photograph the quote a friend needs today and send it with their name on the message.
- **The long read**
one theme per Sunday evening — a handful of weeks, properly kept.

However you use it, let it stay within reach of wherever you watch.

The Seven Themes

1. Defeat & Bouncing Back	7
Crashes, time cuts and the broom wagon — the sport that always starts again in spring.	
2. Pressure & Nerve	14
The mountain does not negotiate — what the long climbs ask, and how the brave pace themselves through.	
3. Teamwork & Trust	21
Domestiques, lead-outs and the shared wind — the lone winner carried to the line by everyone.	
4. Joy & Love of the Game	28
The first bicycle and the open road — riding because riding is the point.	
5. Mastery & Practice	35
The perfect line, the read wind — hundreds of thousands of unseen kilometres.	
6. Rivalry & Respect	42
Breakaway companions and mountain duels — enemies who share the wind.	
7. Watching & Belonging	49
Camped on the hairpin since dawn — waiting hours for ten seconds of colour.	
About Ridgeway Cycling Academy	56
Between the Whistles — a closing word	58
Go Deeper with SportSmart	59

THEME 1 OF 7

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Crashes, time cuts and the broom wagon — the sport that always starts again in spring.



The broom wagon sweeps the road, never the will — spring always brings another race.

Defeat & Bouncing Back — in the game, in life

Cycling keeps a vehicle for defeat: the broom wagon, sweeping along behind the race for the riders whose day has ended. It is the sport's bluntest honesty — abandonment is so ordinary here that it has its own transport. Crashes on wet descents, a fever on the wrong morning, the time cut missed by ninety seconds after two hundred kilometres of trying: the road hands out endings that have nothing to do with deserving. And the watchers see all of it, because cycling hides nothing. The rider remounting with torn kit and gravel in his skin, chasing for an hour to finish a race he can no longer win — the roadside applauds him harder than the leaders, and the applause is correct. Finishing, in this sport, is its own category of victory. The sport has also had to remount as a whole. Its history holds seasons it is not proud of, eras it has had to face in full daylight and pedal away from — and the fans stayed, not because they were fooled, but because they believed the road itself was still honest even when some of its riders were not. That is worth something: loving a thing enough to demand it become worthy of the love. Your own broom wagon will pull alongside some year — the venture that fails, the body that betrays the plan, the season swept up early. The riders' rules travel. Grieve on the bike, not in the ditch. Distinguish the endings you chose from the ones the road chose for you, and carry shame for neither. Then start again in spring, because the calendar's whole mercy is that there is always another race — and the ones who line up again are the ones the sport remembers.

“Roubaix is a lot of suffering for the body. Fifty-five kilometres of cobblestones is not normal, it's not okay for the body. The winner doesn't feel anything, and the losers are completely dead. Body empty.”

— Johan Museeuw

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“No, monsieur, I'm the bloke who won it twice.”

— Laurent Fignon

“Of course, it will always be a part of my book, me lying there on the ground, believing that I'm going to die.”

— Jonas Vingegaard

“The truth isn't what I said, and now it's gone -- this story was so perfect for so long.”

— Lance Armstrong

“The truth is a living thing. The truth can't be denied or locked away.”

— Tyler Hamilton

“Every setback teaches you something. This one reminded me to slow down, heal and enjoy the simple things in life.”

— Chris Froome

“His specialty was the sprint for sixth place; in that he was truly invincible.”

— Tim Krabbé

“I could have quite easily have gone to my grave and not told anyone about it, but what was stressful was knowing that it was wrong not to talk about it.”

— Emma O'Reilly

“You have one chance at the truth. This is it.”

— Betsy Andreu

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Cheating to win bike races, lying about it, bullying people.”

— Lance Armstrong

“I'm happy. I can't even describe how happy I am, after two tough years in the Tour de France.”

— Tadej Pogačar

“A dropped rider loses his strength and his willpower, he stands still.”

— Tim Krabbé

“I raced with my heart.”

— Annemiek van Vleuten

“I don't think you can talk about the reaction. I just opened my eyes and was very happy to be alive.”

— Alex Zanardi

“I don't think I won silver. I lost gold. I think I can say that I was the best man in the race but that doesn't buy me anything.”

— Wout van Aert

“Vous êtes des assassins! Oui, des assassins! (You are murderers! Yes, murderers!)”

— Octave Lapize

“I had some internal bleeding that means I'd either drown in my own blood or die from bleeding to death.”

— Jonas Vingegaard

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"There was a huge pressure on me back home with all the critics because I never won at the Tour de France. Now I feel a huge amount of relief and satisfaction."

— Robert Hunter

"I'm not going to judge a lifetime of success by a maybe less-than-perfect performance at the end."

— Victoria Pendleton

"Mentally it was a huge switch. I had to be patient and wait for the best Remco to come back. That made me stressed. I wasn't the Remco I wanted to be. I wasn't myself."

— Remco Evenepoel

"The accident made me realise I could overcome any kind of difficulty."

— Alex Zanardi

"Secrets are poison. They suck the life out of you, they steal your ability to live in the present."

— Tyler Hamilton

"It was and still is known for gangsters and drugs. It wasn't easy for me and my twin sister, Nikita, living there. My mum would have to leave us really early in the mornings to do her job as a cleaner."

— Nicholas Dlamini

"I think it's good to close the chapter and the story about this crash, and the bad memories I had in the past, just to give it a place and recover 100 percent."

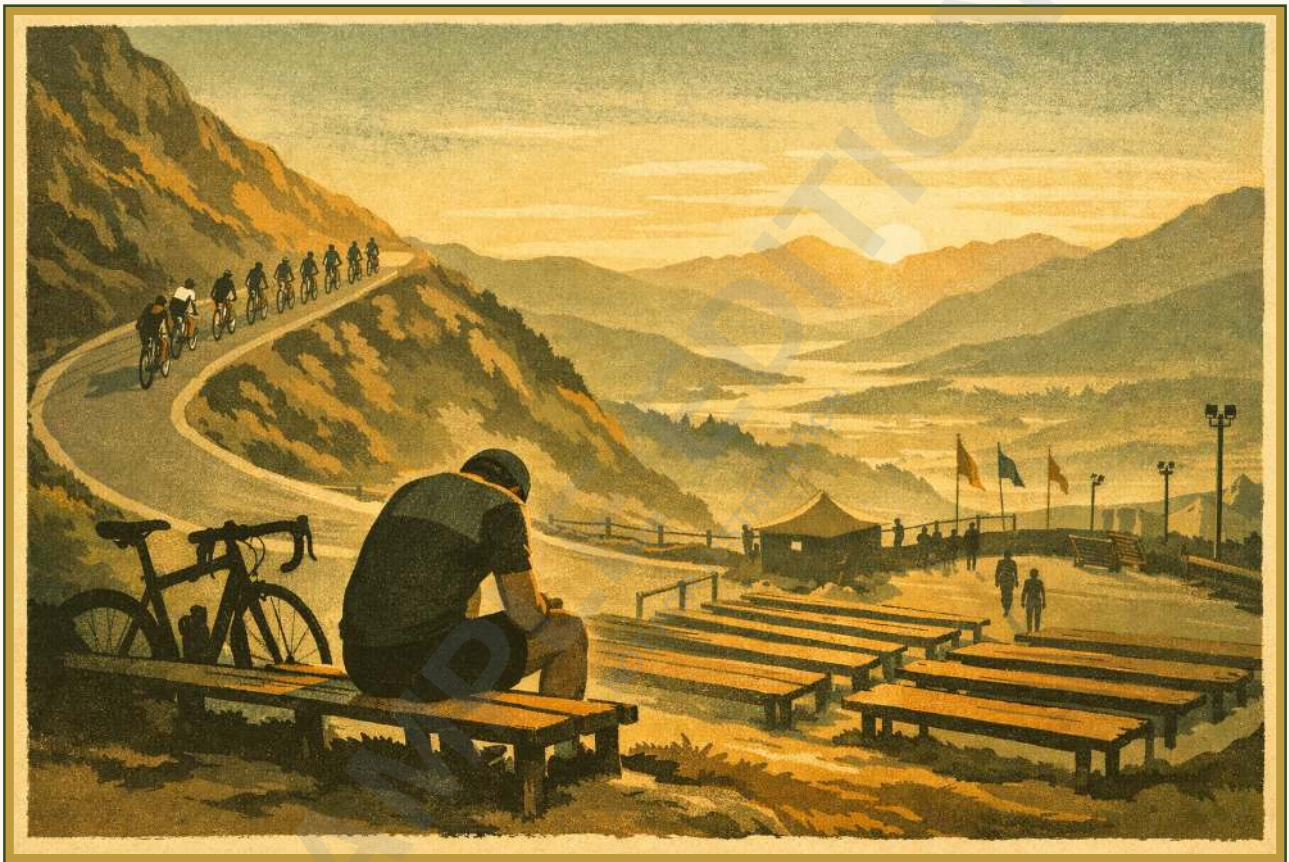
— Remco Evenepoel

"If Lance is clean, it is the greatest comeback in the history of sport. If he isn't, it would be the greatest fraud."

— Greg LeMond

RIDGEWAY CYCLING ACADEMY

More from Defeat & Bouncing Back



The walk back.

"I don't want to be part of the problem any more."

— Floyd Landis

This copy belongs to: Sample Reader

Ridgeway Cycling Academy · Defeat & Bouncing Back

A few more from Defeat & Bouncing Back



And then you come again.

"I deserve to be punished. I'm not sure that I deserve a death penalty."

— Lance Armstrong

"Empty, sour, proud. I feel really empty after today's effort, but of course also a bit disappointed that I couldn't win the yellow jersey by just four seconds. The way I raced today, I can be proud of that."

— Demi Vollering

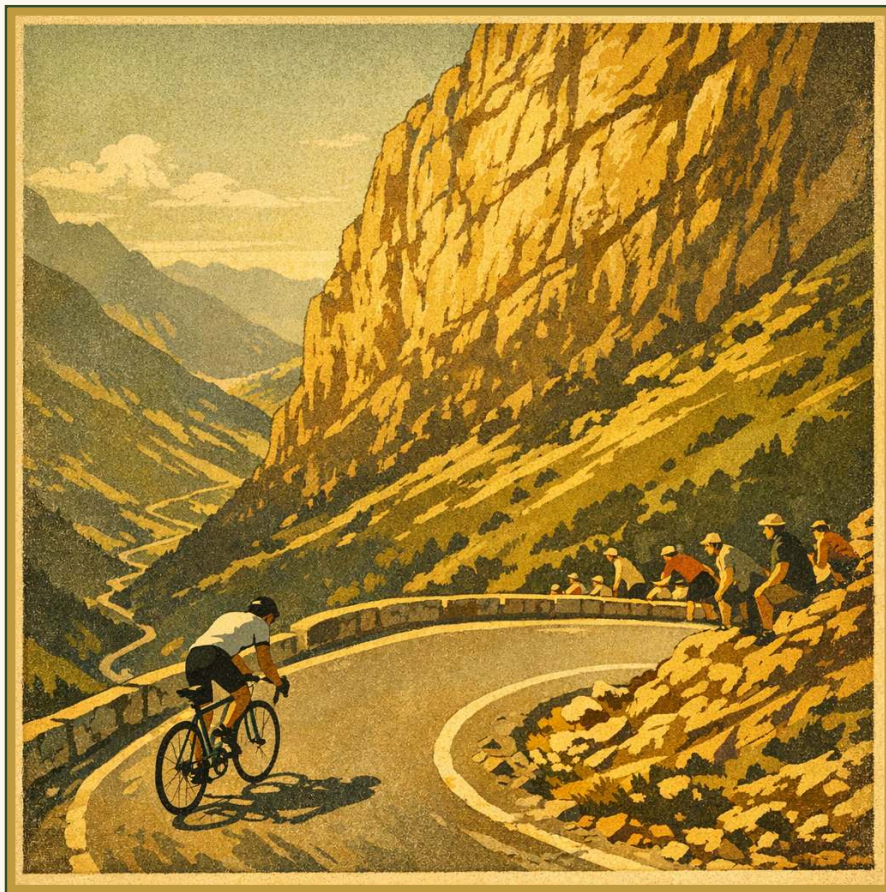
"You don't go from being the best in the world to not being even capable. How has it happened? It turned into stress at home. I was a nightmare to live with."

— Mark Cavendish

THEME 2 OF 7

Pressure & Nerve

The mountain does not negotiate — what the long climbs ask, and how the brave pace themselves through.



The mountain asks one question for a whole hour — and the only answer that holds is your own pace.

Pressure & Nerve — in the game, in life

Cycling does its examining in public and at length. A mountain does not arrive suddenly the way a penalty does; the riders can see it for an hour before it begins, a pale ribbon folded up the horizon, and everyone in the bunch knows exactly what it is going to ask. That is the special cruelty and the special truth of this sport: pressure here is not a moment but a slope, and there is nowhere on it to hide. Watch the contenders as the road tilts. The chatter of the peloton dies. Helpers drift back one by one, their work done. What remains is a handful of humans alone with their breathing, riding at the exact edge of what they can sustain, while the crowd leans in close enough to hear it. The mountain cannot be bluffed, and the watchers know it — that is why they climb up the day before and sleep in the meadows: to see people meet an examination that accepts no excuses. And notice what the best do under it. They do not surge to the crowd's rhythm; they ride to their own, a pace chosen in cold blood and defended against every provocation. When rivals attack, they climb at the effort they know they can hold, and trust arithmetic over adrenaline. Life sets its gradients too — the long project, the slow illness, the year that must simply be gotten through. Take the climber's counsel. Do not race the foot of the hill. Settle early, breathe, and hold your own sustainable effort while others blow past and blow up. Pressure that lasts an hour is not answered with courage. It is answered with pace.

“I was pretty emotional on the podium. I was standing there and thinking 'This is it.' - this is the proudest moment ever of my career. I don't think anything will ever top this. That's not to say I'll never be able to do it again, but not in this way. It's like winning the jackpot.”

— Daryl Impey

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"We're athletes, we're not robots. You got to be able to enjoy it and say, 'You know what, today I'm just going to have a little cruise, enjoy some time with my friends, refresh.'"

— Charlotte Worthington

"People didn't believe I could win another stage."

— Mark Cavendish

"Ask the obvious question and don't be deterred from asking it, and if you feel everyone in the press room is looking at you funny, regard that as a tribute."

— David Walsh

"It's in my character never to give up. I don't race to sit up after five laps."

— Wout van Aert

"I've got my running shoes in the car so I am ready for Ventoux."

— Chris Froome

"I chose to lie over killing my dream. I chose to dope. I am sorry for that decision, and I deeply regret it."

— Jonathan Vaughters

"I viewed this situation as one big lie that I repeated a lot of times."

— Lance Armstrong

"You have to be very strong mentally. A lot of riders are prepared physically but it's the mental side that gives you the edge."

— Miguel Indurain

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“What I did was too big a thing to do to be wrong.”

— David Walsh

“Here is the secret: You can't block out the pain. You have to embrace it.”

— Tyler Hamilton

“I nearly passed out. A friend called me just after the Tour organiser started to put the teams on Twitter. I honestly had chest pains and wasn't breathing. When we saw MTN's name there, I had to read it five or six times. I didn't really believe it.”

— Doug Ryder

“There's always a finish line with everything in life. Whatever happens, no matter how bad something gets or how bad you think it is, the one thing is you don't give up.”

— Mark Cavendish

“I take the curves like a wooden puppet, afraid that my center of gravity is going to wind up in the ravine.”

— Tim Krabbé

“It's so cool to feel this pressure. I love it. Just being in your bubble and you know that everyone is waiting for you and you have to make it that day.”

— Pauline Ferrand-Prevot

“When the race comes down to the sharp end, when everyone is prepared to bare their teeth, it is the one who is prepared to bite that will win.”

— Sean Kelly

“The Tour's geography, too, is entirely subject to the epic necessity of ordeal.”

— Roland Barthes

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Most of the battle for me with cancer hasn’t been physical. For me, it has been in my head. Hand on heart, I’m pretty positive most of the time and I have genuine happiness... This is about appreciating life and finding joy.”

— Chris Hoy

“The Tour is not finished. There could be a crash, many things can still happen. But if we have a war, it’ll be a fair war and the stronger one will win.”

— Bernard Hinault

“That ruthless desire to win. Win at all costs, truly.”

— Lance Armstrong

“I wanted to show that the jersey gives me wings. At least I felt like flying in the last 10 kilometres.”

— Wout van Aert

“It’s just a game. It’s fun, you want to win, but it’s not everything.”

— Tadej Pogačar

“It’s one of the hardest races I’ve ever done.”

— Mathieu van der Poel

“This is the first Grand Tour where I had confidence every day.”

— Tadej Pogačar

“Panic is a bad advisor.”

— Patrick Lefevere

More from Pressure & Nerve



The moment before it starts.

“It struck me that we should think small, not big, and adopt a philosophy of continuous improvement through the aggregation of marginal gains. Forget about perfection; focus on progression, and compound the improvements.”

— Dave Brailsford

A few more from Pressure & Nerve



Nerve is not the absence of fear.

“Fortunately, I never considered pressure to be a big adversary of mine.”

— Peter Sagan

“Oui, mais pas de femme tout de suite.”

— Stephen Roche

“Shifting is a kind of painkiller, and therefore the same as giving up. After all, if I wanted to kill my pain, why not choose the most effective method? Road-racing is all about generating pain.”

— Tim Krabbé

THEME 3 OF 7

Teamwork & Trust

Domestiques, lead-outs and the shared wind — the lone winner carried to the line by everyone.



The winner crosses the line alone, carried there by everyone.

Teamwork & Trust — in the game, in life

Cycling looks like an individual sport until you watch it for one honest hour. The winner crosses the line alone, arms raised — and every second of that image was manufactured by other people. The teammate who rode on the front for a hundred kilometres into the wind and climbed off before the cameras cared. The one who dropped back through the convoy for bottles, ferrying water like a waiter at forty kilometres an hour. The one who gave up his own wheel at the roadside and stood in the grass, race over, so the leader could ride on. The sport has a beautiful word for these riders — domestiques, servants — and some of the deepest careers in cycling are careers of almost nothing but service: two decades of shelter given, of pace set, of ambitions folded neatly away so someone else's could stand up. Even between rivals, the road demands cooperation; a breakaway survives only if enemies share the wind, each taking a turn at the front so all of them keep their improbable hope alive. The peloton itself is a rolling truce — two hundred riders saving each other strength they will later use against one another. Watch long enough and the lesson assembles itself: nearly all victory is borrowed, and the borrowing has to be repaid somewhere, by someone, usually out of sight. Your life has domestiques — the colleague who edits your work at midnight, the parent who rode the unglamorous kilometres, the friend who gives you their wheel. Ride in their slipstream honestly: say their names when the cameras find you. And take your own turns on the front, in the wind, where nothing is owed to you. The ones who pull hardest there are the ones the whole road quietly trusts.

“Unbelievable. The team all the race since the start we controlled. I don't have any words for my team. I'm really happy. Unbelievable. Until I start the Giro we had the possibility to win, to make good results, so this is also part of the success of our team, my family, everybody. I'm really grateful and happy about what I did.”

— Biniam Girmay

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“It’s the only sport in the world where teamwork is completely imperative to win a race, and an individual is the one who wins.”

— Jonathan Vaughters

“The whole principle came from the idea that if you broke down everything you could think of that goes into riding a bike, and then improved it by 1 percent, you will get a significant increase when you put them all together.”

— Dave Brailsford

“My leadership and mentorship is the reason why I’m still around.”

— Ashleigh Moolman-Pasio

“How do you convince really ambitious professional athletes to give up all of their chances of winning a race to help somebody else do it? That is where the magic is in managing professional cycling.”

— Jonathan Vaughters

“Perhaps the most powerful benefit is that it creates a contagious enthusiasm. Everyone starts looking for ways to improve.”

— Dave Brailsford

“I always needed to win one more, more, more. It takes a lot to get there every year. I’ve got incredible people around me.”

— Mark Cavendish

“The evidence shows beyond any doubt that the US Postal Service Pro Cycling Team ran the most sophisticated, professionalized and successful doping program that sport has ever seen.”

— Travis Tygart

“Sometimes it may look bad as I’m at the back of the peloton a lot, but they believed that I could deliver.”

— Steve Cummings

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“The team did a massive amount of work. I couldn't have done it without them. They rode on the front all day. They got me bottles. Everyone did something. Everyone pitched in to get me this yellow jersey. This is super special for me, and it's a massive moment for South African cycling.”

— Daryl Impey

“Man for man we might not beat Peter Sagan, but together we can.”

— Patrick Lefevere

“We've been so ambitious with our African quota in the team. Some people said that we were on a five-to ten-year plan, so to do it in three years with our team that is so new and inexperienced from a Euro racing and youth perspective, that's incredible.”

— Doug Ryder

“For the job that I do, I fully embrace it because I get the respect from others on the team and you feel valued. I love it, that's my job. If I walk down the street and no one knows, I am completely happy.”

— Rory Sutherland

“We are probably the only team in the world that works with a strong set of values. It helps us to come through crisis and hard times because we have someone to lean on.”

— Bjarne Riis

“The name started as a joke but it has grown and grown. But the collective mentality has always been there.”

— Patrick Lefevere

“Four seconds seems magical now. I'm super happy, and to be honest, I feel like, throughout my whole career, there were so many times that I would miss out on victories because of something, and I feel like this was perfect for me and my team.”

— Kasia Niewiadoma

“It's all about trust, transparency and honesty.”

— Marc Madiot

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Bicycles change lives.”

— Team MTN-Qhubeka / Qhubeka charity

“You can't improvise being a manager. Being a good manager is a 365-day-a-year job. Your management must evolve every day. Good management is based on human relations, a sense of hierarchy and credibility.”

— Cyrille Guimard

“He's attacked me from the beginning... he's never helped me once.”

— Greg LeMond

“Between Hinault, Fignon and LeMond, you really had three completely different personalities, cultures, and characters. They were united only by their desire to win.”

— Cyrille Guimard

“We try to maintain a family atmosphere where there's continuity and trust.”

— Marc Madiot

More from Teamwork & Trust



Nobody does this alone.

“You have to have people that are entirely selfless and then you have to have more people that have the mentality that are more selfish. They serve different roles on the team, and it's a tough balance.”

— Jonathan Vaughters

A few more from Teamwork & Trust



Trust, built in the ordinary weeks.

This copy belongs to: Sample Reader

Ridgeway Cycling Academy · Teamwork & Trust

THEME 4 OF 7

Joy & Love of the Game

The first bicycle and the open road — riding because riding is the point.



Before the race radios and the numbers there was a bicycle, an open road, and the first taste of freedom.

Joy & Love of the Game — in the game, in life

Almost everyone who loves this sport learned it the same way: not in a grandstand but on a bicycle, small, wobbling, suddenly free. The first ride without a steadying hand is many children's first taste of independence — the discovery that your own legs can take you out of sight of the house and, more astonishingly, bring you back. Cycling never quite loses that. Under the tactics and the suffering, the professionals are people who once rode to the edge of town because the edge of town was there, and the roadside crowds are full of adults who remember. That is part of why they come — why families ride up the mountain themselves the day before the race, why the verges fill with people who arrived on the machines they love. It is the rare sport whose spectators reach it by doing the thing itself, badly and happily. And you can see the old joy break through the racing, and it is always the day's warmest moment: the winner freewheeling the last metres like a twelve-year-old, the breakaway rider grinning through the rain because the escape was glorious even if it failed, the whole bunch soft-peddalling through a village while children pace them on the pavement. The lesson is waiting in your garage. Somewhere in most lives there is a bicycle-shaped thing — an old delight, rusting gently, that once meant freedom and asks nothing but to be taken out again. Take it out. Do it slowly, do it badly, do it with no data and no destination. The professionals suffer magnificently for their living, but even they will tell you the sport's deepest secret: the bike was never the job. The bike was the escape — and it still works.

“If you've ever experienced a moment of awe or freedom on a bicycle; if you've ever taken flight from sadness to the rhythm of two spinning wheels, or felt the resurgence of hope pedalling to the top of a hill with the dew of effort on your forehead; then we share something fundamental.”

— Robert Penn

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I'm in a little bit of disbelief. I put a big gamble on this year to make sure we are good here at the Tour de France."

— Mark Cavendish

"I was really proud yesterday on the podium. [At home] they're really very proud of us and they are really supporting. With this jersey, it is a dream that has come true."

— Daniel Teklehaimanot

"I've been given enough time. I've learnt to live in the moment, and I have days of genuine joy and happiness."

— Chris Hoy

"When man invented the bicycle he reached the peak of his attainments. Here was a machine of precision and balance for the convenience of man."

— Elizabeth West

"I'm more happy in my skin than I've ever been."

— Bradley Wiggins

"Cycling doesn't define me anymore. I'm still really passionate about it and committed to it, but there's a lot more going on in my life now."

— Lizzie Deignan

"Cycle tracks will abound in Utopia, sometimes following beside the great high roads, but oftener taking their own more agreeable line amidst woods and crops and pastures."

— H.G. Wells

"My adventure on this Tour opens a new chapter in the history of cycling, for us Eritreans and Africans. We've been cycling for a long time, but winning stages and a green jersey, it's now possible. It's something special."

— Biniam Girmay

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Their passion and joy are palpable and often so overwhelming it has reduced me to near tears.”

— Matt Stephens

“Winning this race means basically everything to me.”

— Wout van Aert

“Let me tell you what I think of bicycling. I think it has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world. I stand and rejoice every time I see a woman ride by on a wheel. It gives woman a feeling of freedom and self-reliance.”

— Susan B. Anthony

“For me, I like the competition. I like to race my bike, and I like to win. And I love to have an objective and go for it.”

— Alberto Contador

“I ride to rest and to tire myself out; I ride to do myself good and to do myself harm.”

— Paul Fournel

“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”

— Albert Einstein

“Right, we're just going to draw the raffle numbers now.”

— Bradley Wiggins

“I wish he could have been here and had a photo together, him in his yellow sponsors shirt and me in the leader's one, so sad he's not here.”

— Mathieu van der Poel

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"It's just a whirlwind. Obviously crossing the line there was massive emotion."

— Geraint Thomas

"I'd dreamed and dreamed of this my whole life and it actually happened."

— Chris Hoy

"After the finish all the suffering turns to memories of pleasure, and the greater the suffering, the greater the pleasure."

— Tim Krabbé

"Imagine if my grandfather Raymond was here, how proud he would be?"

— Mathieu van der Poel

"The moment she takes her seat she knows she can't get into harm unless she gets off her bicycle, and away she goes, the picture of free, untrammelled womanhood."

— Susan B. Anthony

"The fans are the lifeblood of the Tour. Without them, it's just bikes on a road."

— Matt Stephens

"To ride a bicycle properly is very like a love affair; chiefly it is a matter of faith. Believe you do it, and the thing is done; doubt, and, for the life of you, you cannot."

— H.G. Wells

"I had goose bumps going around there. To ride around wearing this is a dream."

— Geraint Thomas

RIDGEWAY CYCLING ACADEMY

More from Joy & Love of the Game



Why anyone starts.

“As unnatural as it feels, this is nature. You know, we were all born and we all die, and this is just part of the process.”

— Chris Hoy

This copy belongs to: Sample Reader

Ridgeway Cycling Academy · Joy & Love of the Game

A few more from Joy & Love of the Game



The part nobody has to be told to love.

"I don't ride my bike all over the place because it's ecological or worthy. I mainly do it for the sense of freedom and exhilaration."

— David Byrne

"You're faced with your mortality a lot younger than you would normally expect, and I think that in some ways it's actually really good, because you start to appreciate the smaller things. You bring yourself back to the present more."

— Chris Hoy

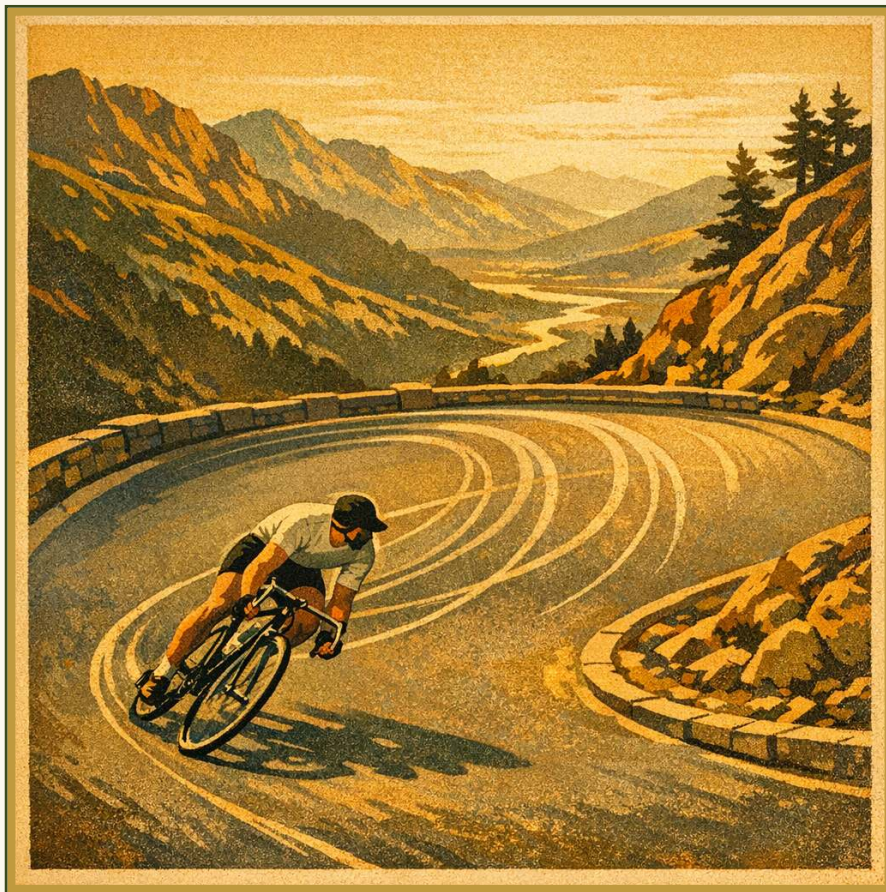
"She who succeeds in gaining the mastery of such an animal as Gladys, will gain the mastery of life, and by exactly the same methods and characteristics."

— Frances E. Willard

THEME 5 OF 7

Mastery & Practice

The perfect line, the read wind — hundreds of thousands of unseen kilometres.



The ten seconds that win the race were paid for by a hundred thousand kilometres nobody saw.

Mastery & Practice — in the game, in life

From the roadside, a bike race is a blur of colour; on television it can look like mere endurance. But cycling is a craft sport disguised as a suffering contest, and the fans who love it longest are the ones who learn to see the craft. The line a great descender takes through a wet corner — entering wide, apexing late, upright and calm at eighty kilometres an hour — is as practised as any concert piece. The echelon that forms in a crosswind, riders fanned diagonally across the road like geese, is a piece of instant geometry that takes years to read and a career to master. Even the humble acts of eating inside a moving bunch, or dropping back through the cars for bottles, are skills with apprenticeships. Watch an experienced rider hold position near the front through a chaotic finale: nothing dramatic happens, which is exactly the mastery. The crashes happen behind them, not by luck but by a thousand small readings of wind and wheel and nervousness — a fluency in the road bought over hundreds of thousands of kilometres, most of them ridden alone, in winter, unwatched. The sport's arithmetic is merciless: the ten-second attack that decides a race is funded by years of unrecorded mornings. And that accounting governs everything difficult in life. The colleague who seems effortlessly calm in crisis has usually been quietly practising crisis for a decade; the writer's easy sentence is the visible last centimetre of an invisible ride. So respect the hidden kilometres, in others and in yourself. Keep a private logbook nobody audits. And when you watch a champion make the impossible look boring, name what you are actually seeing: not talent in bloom, but practice — arrived, at last, in daylight.

“Cycling is quite a pure sport in that sense: it is mainly about suffering, whether you are climbing the Tourmalet, racing up Mont Ventoux, trying to survive in Paris-Roubaix, or doing a club ten-mile time trial on your local course. You're just trying to hang on to a pace.”

— Bradley Wiggins

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I'm not the best climber, but I'm one of the better ones. I'm not the best sprinter, but I'm one of the better ones. But on every aspect, I was above average. I think that makes me so strong in mountain biking."

— Nino Schurter

"The champions have better bikes, more expensive shoes, many more pairs of cycling shorts than we do, but they have the same roads."

— Tim Krabbé

"People who think time trials are boring should find another sport to watch."

— Miguel Indurain

"I could only dream of this when I was a kid. The rainbow jersey makes it even more special. I think I had one of my best days ever on the bike."

— Mathieu van der Poel

"It was a great distraction for everything else in my life that normal people would get time to get over."

— Bradley Wiggins

"I always wanted to respect the sport, respect my team and honour my dream to try and finish the race. I'm just going to keep going. I think that is something I will forever be happy about."

— Nicholas Dlamini

"I don't think I'm the best rider out there, I just try to do my best, be the best I can."

— Tadej Pogačar

"Cycling's such a mental game. You have to create the right circumstances for you."

— Tom Boonen

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I can't say I really like racing, but I like winning. Maybe it can be a bit pretentious to say like this, but if I want to race, it's because I want to win."

— *Pauline Ferrand-Prevot*

"I began to feel that myself plus the bicycle equaled myself plus the world, upon whose spinning-wheel we must all learn to ride, or fall into the sluiceways of oblivion and despair."

— *Frances E. Willard*

"I've got to the point where I've started to think the accident was the greatest opportunity of my life because, for sure, I would not be involved in all the things I'm doing these days."

— *Alex Zanardi*

"Tourists and locals are watching from sidewalk cafés. Non-racers. The emptiness of those lives shocks me."

— *Tim Krabbé*

"I really hope I can inspire the kids in the townships to have a go at racing. I think this could be a reference of hope for them, and they will be able to see that with hard work, anything is possible."

— *Nicholas Dlamini*

"It's the most beautiful thing that there is in the world. If nature has given exceptional ability it would be a shame not to use it. You have to work on what you are given. Otherwise you will have achieved nothing in your life and wasted what you have in you."

— *Eddy Merckx*

"He is dancing on the pedals in a most immodest way."

— *Phil Liggett*

"You grow up and the Tour is a dream; the first time I was here [with Sky in 2010] was a dream. Then after I won a stage of the Vuelta, I thought if 'I've done it in the Vuelta then why can't I do it in the Tour?'"

— *Steve Cummings*

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“It's not always about giving 100%, 100% of the time.”

— Lizzie Deignan

“It's really important that I have someone pushing my limits, and I do the same with him as well - we make each other stronger. It's getting bigger than the sport itself.”

— Mathieu van der Poel

“I actually suffered less at Roubaix. In Flanders there are always more people who can win. At Roubaix, if you do your thing and you're good at it, you end up in the final eight guys.”

— Tom Boonen

“Because I can.”

— Kristin Armstrong

“I found a whole philosophy of life in the wooing and the winning of my bicycle.”

— Frances E. Willard

“In every race, regardless of its significance, I always give my absolute best. When I cross the finish line, I know I've achieved the best possible result for that day.”

— Peter Sagan

“I find when I stay relaxed, I go faster, and my opponents seem to suffer more.”

— Sven Nys

“I loved it. I thought 'This was journalism, this was what our game was about' – asking questions that people didn't want to answer was actually the life blood of journalism for me at that time.”

— David Walsh

More from Mastery & Practice



The thousandth repetition.

*“I was never scared to follow my instinct and then attack. That's how I won the biggest races.
If you hesitate or hold back, your chance has gone.”*

— **Vincenzo Nibali**

A few more from Mastery & Practice



Hard-won, quietly.

“We are a product of our childhood and upbringing and I think that never leaves you.”

— Bradley Wiggins

“I wasn't brilliant. But I was good, and learned early on that if I wanted to win a race I had to practise a lot and train really hard.”

— Chris Hoy

“I've learned that I'm capable of much more than I thought I was.”

— Lizzie Deignan

THEME 6 OF 7

Rivalry & Respect

Breakaway companions and mountain duels — enemies who share the wind.



For a hundred kilometres they share the wind; in the last one they find out who it was carrying.

Rivalry & Respect — in the game, in life

The breakaway is cycling's strangest theatre of rivalry. A handful of riders escape together, and for a hundred kilometres they are colleagues — sharing the wind, rotating turns, shouting encouragement, united against the pursuing bunch. Then, inside the final kilometres, the alliance dissolves by unspoken agreement, and the same riders who worked for each other all afternoon begin to study each other like chess players. Nowhere else in sport do opponents cooperate so completely before contesting so fiercely — and the crowd loves the breakaway precisely for that double truth, the friendship and the betrayal scheduled into the same afternoon. The sport's great eras have always been duets: two riders trading a mountain range blow for blow, attack answered by attack, each dragging the other to heights neither would have found alone — and, decades on, speaking of one another with something close to tenderness. Cycling's iconic images are full of it: rivals riding a climb shoulder to shoulder, a bottle passed between enemies, the beaten man congratulating the winner while still gasping. The road is too long and too cruel for hatred; anyone who has suffered beside you for six hours holds a kind of citizenship in your story. Which is the lesson, almost undisguised. The person whose excellence torments you is also the wind you are riding in — remove them, and you would slow down. Envy studies a rival's victories; wisdom studies their training rides. So take your turns honestly, even with people you intend to beat. Attack when the racing demands it, ungrudgingly and in the open. And when one of you finally wins, let the other's hand be the first you reach for — because nobody else on earth knows what the escape cost.

“Road racing imitates life, the way it would be without the corruptive influence of civilization. When you see an enemy lying on the ground, what's your first reaction? To help him to his feet. In road racing, you kick him to death.”

— Tim Krabbé

Rivalry & Respect

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“You almost have to be your own rival because you have to keep challenging yourself. But your biggest rival is the race itself.”

— Miguel Indurain

“Wout is more of a rival than a friend. But there has always been respect, and that is the best way to deal with each other.”

— Mathieu van der Poel

“We had the same career, the same experiences ... we really moved the sport on as a pairing and as a rivalry that really captured a lot of people's imagination.”

— Victoria Pendleton

“We'll never change. This rivalry has made us who we are and it's not finished.”

— Wout van Aert

“It would also be crazy to become friends just because he makes sure you have to be at your best.”

— Mathieu van der Poel

“Yeah, I was a bully. I tried to control the narrative.”

— Lance Armstrong

“I am glad it got to that stage because I believe she's the best rider on the field. I wish her all the best.”

— Victoria Pendleton

“Victoria's such a hard-fought opponent and she's dominated the sport for so long. It's been such a difficult challenge and to be able to win the Olympic title for me, it's so special.”

— Anna Meares

Rivalry & Respect

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I have to thank him. Because I got stuck in his wheel I finally got into my rhythm. Merci Mathieu."

— Wout van Aert

"Marc Madiot asked me never to speak about doping again. I replied that I had convictions and that I would not change my mind."

— Christophe Bassons

"The whole point of a race is to find a winner. I chose to race, so I chose to win."

— Eddy Merckx

"It was choreographed."

— Greg LeMond

"Always attack as late as you can, but before the others do."

— Henri Pélissier

"The biggest motivation for me to race is my love of cycling. I love the game, and I love the competition of the race."

— Marianne Vos

"He said what I was saying wasn't true, that it was bad for cycling, that I had no right to be a professional cyclist, that I should quit."

— Christophe Bassons

"Can you believe he's looked at as a failure, rather than the winner that he actually is?"

— Greg LeMond

Rivalry & Respect

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I still believe in myself. I still believe my legs will get better throughout the race, so the fight is not over."
— Jonas Vingegaard

"It's not taking anything from the great Eddy Merckx, it's just a number. Eddy Merckx is Eddy Merckx."
— Mark Cavendish

"You can't just stay at one steady pace, especially if you want to be a multiple winner."
— Charlotte Worthington

"I'll return with a lion. I want to have it stuffed and give it to Bartali."
— Fausto Coppi

"Because I felt like it. If he doesn't buckle, that means he's a champion."
— Bernard Hinault

"Women's cycling is at the point where things can explode, and it can become really popular, but if we're not careful, there is the danger that we follow the same path as men's cycling."
— Ashleigh Moolman-Pasio

RIDGEWAY CYCLING ACADEMY

More from Rivalry & Respect



Opponents, not enemies.

“This way of racing suits me — the harder the race, the better for me.”

— Mathieu van der Poel

A few more from Rivalry & Respect



Respect, earned the hard way.

"I think we will always be mentioned in the same breath, but we also owe a lot to each other."

— Mathieu van der Poel

THEME 7 OF 7

Watching & Belonging

Camped on the hairpin since dawn — waiting hours for ten seconds of colour.



They wait all day on the mountain for ten seconds of colour — and the waiting is the belonging.

Watching & Belonging — in the game, in life

Cycling's spectators do a thing no other fans do: they wait. A family drives up the mountain the evening before, sleeps in the car or a small tent among a thousand others, spends the morning guarding a metre of verge — all for the ten or fifteen seconds it takes the race to pass. Measured in ordinary arithmetic it is madness. Measured properly, it is devotion made visible: the whole day was the point, the waiting was the belonging, and the ten seconds of colour and wind were the sacrament that blessed it. This is also sport's most open door. No ticket, no turnstile, no seat number. The race comes down public roads, past farm gates and village squares, close enough to touch — the only great sport that tours to its supporters rather than summoning them. Grandmothers watch from kitchen windows; children are held up at hairpins; the names of heroes are painted on the tarmac by fans in the night, so that the road itself cheers. And on the mountain, strangers become a village within hours — food shared, radios passed around, a hundred nationalities leaning into the same bend. Nobody checks whether you belong; standing there is the membership. When the race has gone and the road empties, the village packs up softly, already telling the story. Which is what the roadside knows and the busy world forgets: belonging is mostly waiting together. The choir, the club, the congregation, the friends who keep the same table — none of it is efficient, and all of it is the point. Find your verge and guard your metre. Wait with people for something you love. The race always passes quickly. The waiting, done right, is the life.

“I would like my performances here to help inspire and motivate a lot of youngsters, especially young Africans who find it very hard to believe that they can get out of Africa and get on to the European scene, or make it into a pro peloton. My experiences are an example that if you really want to make something happen, you will find a way.”

— Chris Froome

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“There is an onomastics of the Tour de France which in itself tells us that the race is a great epic.”

— Roland Barthes

“The ultimate crime is the betrayal of these people that supported me and believed in me, and they got lied to.”

— Lance Armstrong

“The bike is the equalizer that brings people together but the virtual cycling world is the web that connects us.”

— Ashleigh Moolman-Pasio

“You make the Tour de France more than a race. You make it a celebration of everything glorious, ridiculous, and deeply human about sport.”

— Matt Stephens

“I see this as a sort of a duty, to pay back some of the fortunes that I received through the course of my life.”

— Alex Zanardi

“I felt more connected to the life on the streets than I would have inside a car or in some form of public transport. I could stop whenever I wanted to.”

— David Byrne

“Cycling is really a big sport at the amateur level in South Africa. But the structures of competitive cycling aren't good enough to bring the sport up to the level there that it is in Europe. This stage win will boost [the sport and] get more young riders. There's a huge amount of talent there.”

— Robert Hunter

“Riding in the yellow jersey was a childhood dream of mine.”

— Wout van Aert

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"It just makes you realize how fragile life is. Everything can be going along perfectly, and then suddenly — boom — you're dead. The accident made me realize that a healthy family is the most important thing in the world to me."

— Greg LeMond

"It makes me happy that the public sees me not only as a successful rider but also as a showman."

— Peter Sagan

"I think it's a pretty dull climb. Sure, there's all the history of it, but in my mind it's more of a cycling stadium than a beautiful road."

— Andy Hampsten

"I want to be motivational and inspirational for everybody: my big aim is more women on bicycles."

— Marianne Vos

"Back in '87 I said: 'Do what you want. I ain't going home.'"

— Stephen Roche

"Paris-Roubaix is a horrible race to ride but the most beautiful one to win."

— Sean Kelly

"With the broad and powerful sweep of the arm that Zola gave to his ploughman in La Terre, L'Auto will fling across France today those reckless and uncouth sowers of energy who are the great professional road riders of the world."

— Henri Desgrange

"It's great to have exposure, but we need continuity of exposure because that's how you build the fan base."

— Ashleigh Moolman-Pasio

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“People wanted to believe the story. Journalists are human, and this was a great story that made their readers feel good about life.”

— David Walsh

“In Colombia, it's a job that has a special prize — the prize of enjoying what I do every day. I feel free in Colombia. I feel peaceful.”

— Nairo Quintana

“A lot of people come to the race because of you, and it is important to spend time with them. When you understand that, you become a real champion.”

— Peter Sagan

“A Paris-Roubaix without rain is not a true Paris-Roubaix. Throw in a little snow as well, it's not serious.”

— Sean Kelly

“I started cycling because I watched the Tour on television.”

— Biniam Girmay

“To get on a bike is to take possession of the landscape.”

— Paul Fournel

“There is in the bike an animal relation to the world: the mountains you see are there to be scaled, the valleys are for hurtling down into, the shade is made for hiding in.”

— Paul Fournel

“That thin ribbon of burning asphalt, covered in graffiti, between two deafening walls of spectators.”

— Philippe Brunel

More from Watching & Belonging



Belonging, in the stands.

“Don't forget, cycling is fun!”

— Peter Sagan

A few more from Watching & Belonging



The people who turn up.

“Riding between amazing crowds and meeting a lot of your fans: it still motivates you.”

— Wout van Aert

“It is a big step for African cycling, and I feel really proud at the moment because I have this jersey. I am proud to be African, and I am proud to be Eritrean.”

— Daniel Teklehaimanot

“Even crashing on the velodrome in front of my fans I don't care, because one crash more or less changes nothing for my career.”

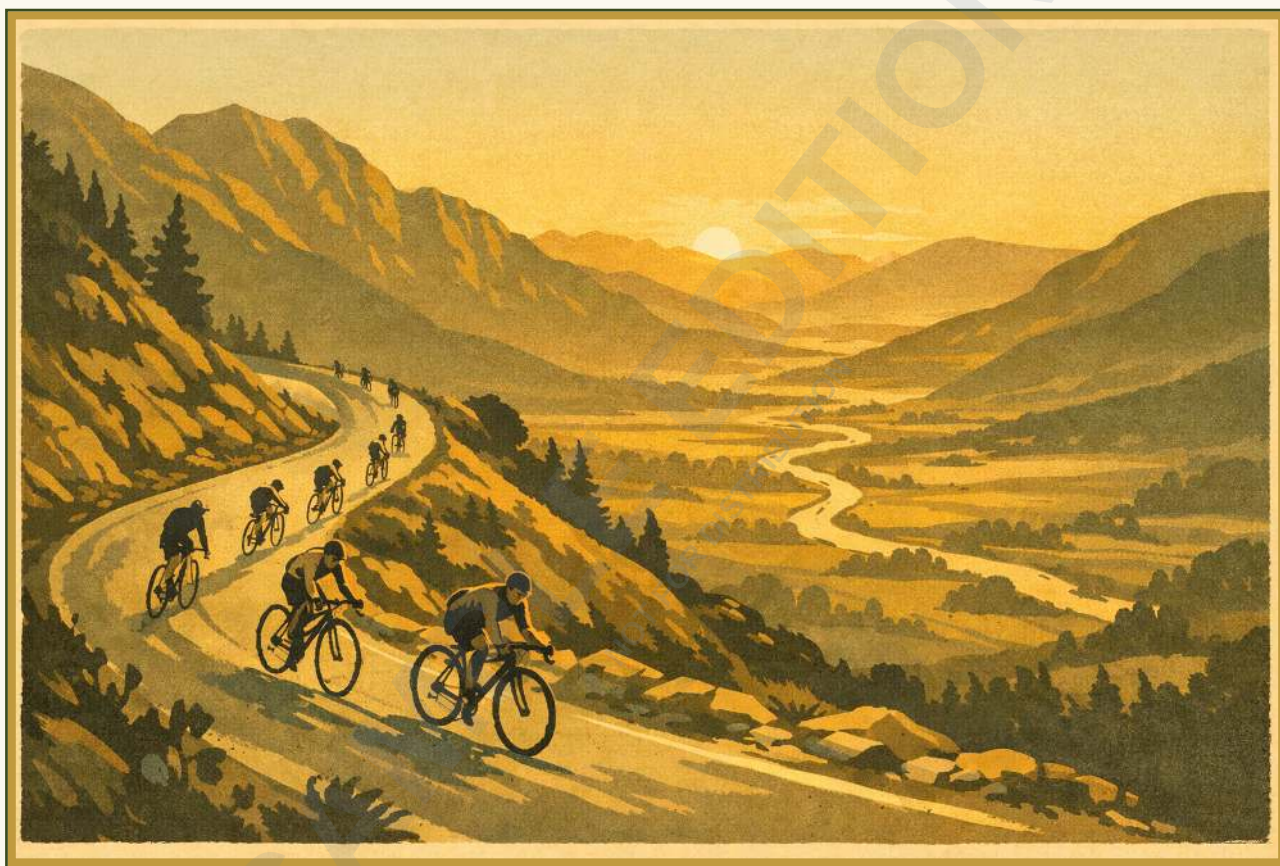
— Fabian Cancellara

About Ridgeway Cycling Academy

Ridgeway Cycling Academy is a demonstration client, invented to show how a branded edition looks and reads. In a real edition this page carries your own history, your own words, and the details your people would want to keep.

Website: sportsmart4life.co.za

After the final whistle



Until the next one.

Between the Whistles

The finish line is only ever half true. Somewhere a wheel is already turning — a club run rolling out at dawn, a child wobbling down a driveway for the first time, next season's race being dreamt over a winter map. May the voices in this collection walk with you between the climbs of your own life.

SportSmart4Life is the intelligent spectator's toolkit — learn the games you love, watch them smarter, and let the wisdom of sport walk into your life. Explore the sports, SpectatorIQ and the Voices of the Game at sportsmart4life.co.za.

Go Deeper with SportSmart

This collection began as a way of watching. If the voices in these pages made you want to watch with sharper eyes — and let more of the game walk into your life — here is where the journey continues.

- **The Cycling Spectator Module**

eight tools that teach you the game itself — read the play, know the laws, follow the season's plots, and grow your Fan IQ match by match.

sportsmart4life.co.za

- **SportSmart4Life Membership**

the intelligent spectator's home — modules across 80+ sports, one member dashboard, and wisdom tools that turn watching into wellbeing.

sportsmart4life.co.za

- **SpectatorIQ — the Quiz Show**

test your sports brain in our quiz show — ladders, live rounds and power-ups across every sport we cover.

sportsmart4life.co.za

- **Voices of the Game**

the living library behind this book - thousands of verified voices to explore, sport by sport and theme by theme.

sportsmart4life.co.za

Every quotation in this collection is real, verified and honestly attributed — that is the Voices of the Game promise.