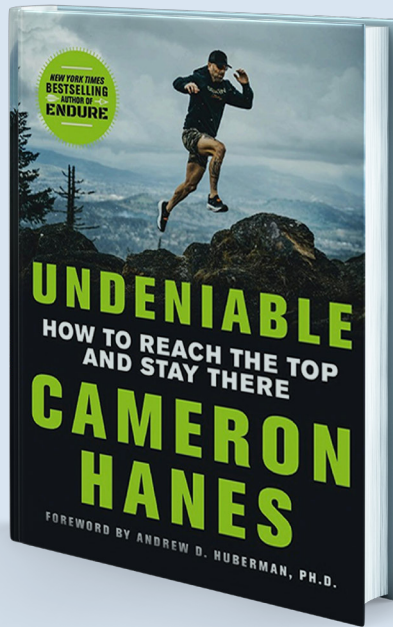


# Book Snaps™

In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.



## Undeniable

How to Reach the Top and Stay There

By Cameron Hanes

Cameron Hanes is a passionate bowhunter who dedicates himself year-round to preparing for the physical and mental challenges of hunting in the remote wildernesses of the West and Alaska. He shoots his bow daily, trains in the gym seven days a week, and runs 200+ mile ultramarathons in the off-season to push his limits in pursuit of becoming the “Ultimate Predator”—a goal he acknowledges is unattainable but drives his relentless effort. Known for his intense discipline, Cameron has inspired millions through his writings, TV appearances, and social media.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

## Undeniable Grit, Unmatched Results

Cameron Hanes is a bowhunter who prides himself on facing the toughest challenges he can find. Every day he is committed to shooting, running, and lifting in order to become the best he can. He started running and lifting to help him with his hunting as hunting the toughest terrains and predators on the planet takes significant stamina and strength. He has come to realize that becoming the best and doing what most others think is impossible is not as much about innate ability as it is about being able to withstand pain in service of a greater good. In his book, ***Undeniable: How to Reach the Top and Stay There***, he tells his own story as well as that of other people he deems undeniable, those whose success and determination cannot be denied. In his ten chapters, he tells the stories of these individuals as he illuminates key lessons that can be of use to readers and to anyone in search of greatness in any arena.

### The Value of Suffering

In his first chapter, Hanes discusses resilience. Suffering is inevitable, he writes. Hanes believes that part of his success can very well be attributed to the fact that he is “good at suffering.” He has lived through difficult circumstances including the divorce of his parents as a child. Chris Williamson, one of the people Hanes spoke with, had a similarly difficult time as a child. Williamson was teased at school and was bullied. Hanes quotes him as saying, “Most of the high performers that I know about are coming from a place of insufficiency... They’re trying to prove something to that parent, that teacher, that bully, that group of friends or whoever from their childhood that they actually are worthy of love or praise or acceptance or admiration.” Suffering will happen in everyone’s life. Hanes believes that the best way to prepare for these unplanned sufferings is to choose your own suffering.

Balance is a popular phrase in culture today, and it is often extolled as being a virtue that leads to peace and contentment. Hanes questions the worship of balance, however. Discussing people who exercise and also indulge in sweets in the name of balance, Hanes notes how these people are quite different from undeniable people. Undeniable people will not reach the

heights they do by putting balance above all else. Additionally, he does not know if peace can be found with balance, at least not for him. Hanes does not feel peace when he is not pushing himself. For example, he writes “I have a hard time sleeping because I’m like, ‘I should be putting in miles, doing work. I’m wasting time sleeping.’” He likes ending his days physically exhausted. His efforts do not go unrewarded in part because they are what prepare him for extreme adventure hunts. He writes, “We put ourselves in those positions over and over and over again. Places of pain and pressure. Moments where we felt miserable. Hours of being on our own.” Suffering, for Hanes, comes with a reward.

## Determination and Focus

Hanes turns to determination which becomes crucial when obstacles present themselves. Those who become undeniable choose to do more than anyone else they know or know of. Hanes writes about Nedd Brockman who decided as a young adult to run “50 marathons in 50 days” to raise money to help those living in poverty. Brockman could not see any reason why he could not do this even though a doctor called him and told him that both he and the medical professionals he spoke with said this is an impossible feat. Brockman remained undeterred, telling Hanes that “There are always people who say you can’t do that because they put their own limits on it.” Not only was Brockman able to complete his 50-day streak of marathons, but he did it while continuing to work his job as an electrician. He believes he thrives when he has made up his mind to do something, and his plan is always simply to “find a way.” This is the same lesson Hanes has learned bowhunting, writing “One thing I have learned over the years is that successful bowhunting is more about overcoming obstacles than anything else.”

Along with determination, focus is important both in bowhunting as well as in performing any high level feat and in living an undeniable life. Bowhunting is a high pressure sport. It is about performing at your best during the most difficult of circumstances. Because of this, Hanes has learned to incorporate distractions into his training to best learn how to perform during crunch time. For example, he sometimes shoots through his truck window so he can better learn to eliminate distractions. Another high pressure situation he put himself in was to cut the ribbon of a Cabela store that was opening up in his hometown. There would be thousands of people there, and it would also be televised. While this is not a particularly difficult shot, he knows that people miss easy shots all the time especially when under the effects of adrenaline. This is not just in bowhunting, as Hanes explains that most basketball players would prefer to try to make a game-winning shot during normal game play than from the free throw line because of the pressure the free throw line presents.

While Hanes admits that not all people desire to become undeniable, he says that those who do “have to force [themselves] to focus under extreme pressure.” Fear, Hanes states, is often the biggest deterrent to focus, and as such, high performers must learn to overcome their fears if they want to perform at elite levels. One of the best ways to overcome fear is through preparation.

Not every element can be controlled for, but Hanes always tries to prepare for any obstacles he can anticipate. This allows him to focus when the time comes for performance. The good thing about focus is that it gives people a place to put their energy.

## Consistency and Discipline

While determination and focus are crucial aspects of success, consistency is of equal value. Hanes defines this trait “as the quality or fact of staying the same at different times.” Hanes spoke with Joe Rogan on the latter’s podcast, *The Joe Rogan Experience*. Hanes told Rogan that his daily routine is to “Lift, Run, Shoot.” Hanes went on to explain that this is his routine seven days a week. He does not take any days off including Sundays.

Hanes tells the story of Nick Bare. He was an average athlete growing up and while he suffered at a young age from an eating disorder, he was able to overcome that and enter the Army. When he left the Army, he solidly claimed that he would never again run another day in his life. Surprisingly to him, however, he came to see that he missed running. Eventually he came to run 100-mile races. He credits part of his success with something that happened to him while he was training for a marathon. He was eighteen miles into the training when he started to question everything he was doing. He was suffering. He chose to continue going because, in his mind, if he quit on this, then he would have nothing to stop him from quitting in other areas of his life. This led to his motto of “one more” because after he finished that difficult eighteenth mile, he was able to successfully finish his training. For Bare, making a decision and sticking to that goal is the key to success. Courtney Dauwalter who competes in Tough Mudder echoes this sentiment when she tells Hanes, “It’s tiny, consistent blocks that you’re adding, or grains of sand on the pile. Like you’re just putting one more grain on there, one more tiny block each day, but that consistency is a huge thing.” She goes on to say that someone pursuing the goal of running five miles should not start out trying to run five miles but rather should start out simply by running around the block. The grains of sand add up over time.

Any undeniable person must have discipline. In his chapter on discipline, Hanes specifically writes about self-discipline. Part of this self-discipline is being able to avoid sabotaging oneself and undoing hard work through poor choices, specifically regarding food and drink. Many of the outliers Hanes spoke with had to overcome addictions of various kinds. Hanes quotes Robert Frost’s poem, “The Road Not Taken,” when he writes, “Two roads diverged in a yellow wood.” Hanes believes that we all come to a “fork in the road, where we face having to choose which path to take.”

At one point in his life, Hanes life motto was “same shit, different day.” When he was seventeen, he found himself sleeping wherever he could when his mom, stepdad, and siblings moved away, but he chose to stay in Oregon. While he had different living situations over the next few years, his low self-esteem combined with his low ambitions and expectations did not take him far. He drank frequently. He hit a low point after crashing his truck, and it is then that he realized he could either choose



## Evergreen companies are concerned with Pragmatic Innovation. They seek continuous improvement.”

the trailer park or the mountains. He says that all of the outliers he spoke with faced a similar fork in the road. “Sometimes to be undeniable, you have to choose to *deny yourself* of something,” he writes. He no longer drinks any alcohol because it will affect his training. Hanes ends his chapter writing, “Whatever talent you have – and we all have some untapped talent inside of us – if you don’t sacrifice, then you won’t reach your full potential. That’s what they call wasted potential. Don’t ever live with that.”

### Confidence and Tenacity

Confidence is “a feeling of self-assurance arising from one’s appreciation of one’s own abilities or qualities.” Hanes knows the importance of confidence. He has had to have confidence in himself in his bow hunting and also in his more public work and when working with brands. He tells the story of one time his confidence paid off for him. He had been working with the brand Under Armour for a while. Up until 2018 he had been going bowhunting, and then the film about that hunt would come out months later. He did not want to work with this model anymore. Instead, he wanted crews to accompany him on his hunts so that he could post one-minute clips on his social media every day to show his followers what he is doing. He truly believed in this vision of his, so he was adamant to make it happen regardless of the difficulties inherent in it. Under Armour agreed. The task was without challenges and a significant expense, but in the end it was worth it as the film that came of it, *Cam’s Bull of a Lifetime*, “is the second most popular video on [his] YouTube page, with over four million views.” “Success, confidence, self-belief – it’s a mindset. You have to find it in the morning and carry it up the daily mountain,” Hanes writes.

Confidence must be combined with tenacity, “the quality displayed by someone who just won’t quit – who keeps trying until they reach their goal.” Hanes opens his chapter about tenacity by discussing a commercial he did for Under Armour in which he had to face a snarling wolf. The filmmakers told him that this 11-year-old wolf had been trained since it was five weeks old. In order to get the wolf to look fierce and to snarl, they had to give it meat multiple times and then take it away. Hanes was warned that the wolf could not be used in any other capacity the rest of the day because it would remain too angry. Hanes saw a lesson in this, writing that even after all that training, “he was still a wolf. He still had that tenacious heart beating inside of him.”

Hanes then describes MMA and UFC fighter, Michael Chandler, as “an example of tenacity in action.” Chandler did not always have the confidence to act with tenacity, however. When he was younger, he was a walk-on to the wrestling team at the University of Missouri. He worked harder than everybody else

on the team, but he never truly believed he deserved success. His outcomes matched with his belief in himself, and he eventually came to believe that he would have to believe in himself if he was to ever succeed. Chandler knows that he may always suffer with confidence even though he has proved himself to be undeniable, but he believes that “everybody has something that they need to work on. Everybody has these doubts and fears and insecurities.” Hanes ends his chapter by writing that he is the person that he always wants to beat. He does what he does for himself.

### Passion, Toughness, and Purpose

Passion is key to success at very high levels. Hanes writes about neuroscientist, Dr. Andrew Huberman. One night Huberman gave a talk at the University of Oregon that over 500 people attended. Hanes finds it shocking that this many people attended a talk given by a scientist. Huberman is known for his podcast *Huberman Lab* and is a celebrity of sorts. Huberman always loved learning from a very young age. He often got teased because of just how invested he was in his interests and the degree to which he spoke about them. He struggled in his teen years after his parents divorced, and he admits to having bad attitudes in college. He was bitter that teachers were not able to instill an excitement in him about what he was learning, but one day he decided that he was going to do what needed to be done even if he did not have the most amazing professors, going so far as to memorize textbooks. He earned his Ph.D. and became a Stanford professor in Neurobiology. It took Huberman decades to get to where he is right now, but he learned that he is capable of doing hard things. Huberman was lucky in that he found his passion when he was young. The key is to find that passion and to be intentional about following it.

When writing about toughness, Hanes uses the phrase “Roy Tough: Unable to be broken; able to endure hardships and misery for reward.” The Roy that Hanes is referring to is his deceased friend Roy Roth. Hanes tells the story of when he and Roth were out on Kodiak Island. They were in a tent after hunting very difficult terrain for twelve days and were thinking about their successful trip and discussing what they would eat when they returned home. They wanted pizza and cheeseburgers. Suddenly Roth realized that he still had a deer tag, and he was determined to stay, saying that a hamburger was not worth leaving when he had the tag. “Roy was committed to *more success* and willing to stay in the wild of Kodiak Island alone to achieve it. The next day Roy ended up arrowing his biggest buck.” Hunting in Alaska is significantly more difficult than hunting in the lower 48 is, and according to Hanes, Alaskan Roth “set the bar for toughness.”

The last principle Hanes writes about is purpose. He believes that to truly live an undeniable life, a person must have a purpose and must be willing to accept criticism if others disagree with that purpose because it is purpose that gives everything in life meaning. Hanes's life and career has not been without its critics. He finds people even criticize the attention he brings to bowhunting as these people wish the world of bowhunting to remain smaller. Hanes does not agree with them. After all, if nobody had ever introduced him to the world of bowhunting, where would he be? He wants to spread love of the sport that has made such an impact on his life.

One person Hanes respects greatly for her sense of purpose is Hawaiian Tulsi Gabbard who is a veteran, former US representative, and former presidential candidate. Gabbard began working for a better world as a teenager when a landfill was proposed "over one of the largest water aquifers on the island." She formed a nonprofit to fight this landfill, and she continued to serve her community in different capacities throughout her life, always inspired by a desire to serve God and to serve others. She eventually joined the world of politics, but this was never her ambition; it just seemed to her to be the best way at that time to serve people. Of her faith she says, "It's everything. I draw strength and clarity and courage." Every day she prays to God to help her be of service to others. This faith and her desire to be of service helps her when she faces inevitable criticism. This keeps her focused because her happiness derives from her service, not from the approval of others.

Hanes book, *Undeniable: How to Reach the Top and Stay There*, is one of inspiration. It tells story after story of people who were able to complete the seemingly impossible. These people are willing to submit themselves daily to suffering and to sometimes overwhelming obstacles so they know that they have done what very few or any other people can do. While Hanes believes that anybody is capable of undeniable success, he notes that there are key attributes and mindsets that the truly undeniable carry, and these are the attributes he illustrates in his book. This is not a how-to book of simple principles for success. Rather Hanes shows his readers how people achieve true success through his own gift of storytelling. This book leaves the reader with all the inspiration they need to go about achieving their own wildest dreams, to become undeniable, and to never shrink in the face of an obstacle.

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