

What's in a Woman's Feat?

Suzanne (Sooz) Flannigan, PhD

Remarkable feats affect us – they transform those who do them, and inspire those who stand by and watch them.

When we hear about the woman who broke every course record in her age group in a 7-race running series, we are touched on various levels, whether emotionally, physically, mentally, perhaps even spiritually. We imagine she must be a gifted athlete, someone far more physically talented than we will ever be. We are sure that hers is a singular act and we applaud her efforts, but we rarely connect her accomplishments to our own potential.



When we hear about the woman who ran the marathon at the end of an Ironman in her socks, we are awed, moved more deeply on all levels. We imagine she must be a phenomenon with exceptional fortitude, internal strength far exceeding anything we could ever manifest. Some of us find ourselves amazed and yet confused about how she could have done such a feat that reaches beyond the traditional concept of a woman's capacity. We are deeply affected. We shake our heads, question our own potential, find ourselves facing a crossroads of possibility and impossibility, as though with a decision to make that we had not anticipated.



When we hear about the woman who has outright and definitively beaten an entire field of men and women in the ultra marathon, we find ourselves in a powerful vacuum with the opportunity to fill it with a new, broader, more audacious view of what is possible. We realize that the social boundaries that have defined what we think we know about women's strength, fortitude, capacity, potential is vastly different from what it actually is, and perhaps more importantly, what it could be! As Mark Twain once wrote, "What gets us into trouble is not what we don't know. It's what we know for sure that just ain't so."

More and more women are deciding that the impossible is no longer so. Women everywhere are exceeding expectations, blasting through social norms and stereotypes, and delivering remarkable feats. Remarkable feats that startle us, shake us, stretch us – make us realize there is so much more potential than we know. Remarkable feats that frighten us, confuse us, exhilarate us and press us to rethink what is impossible.



Remarkable feats that challenge us to look at who we have been, who we are, who we can be and most profoundly, who we want to be.

Suzanne (Sooz) Flannigan, PhD is a nationally certified triathlon coach who has been involved in triathlon for two decades. Sooz has extensive administrative and coaching experience, particularly in annual training plans, long course triathlon, technique and efficiency improvement, core fitness, nutrition and race day strategy. Sooz also owns and operates a studio that specializes in developing core strength and flexibility using her own unique combination of yoga and functional core fitness principles. For more information or to contact Sooz, visit www.soozsports.com or email info@soozsports.com