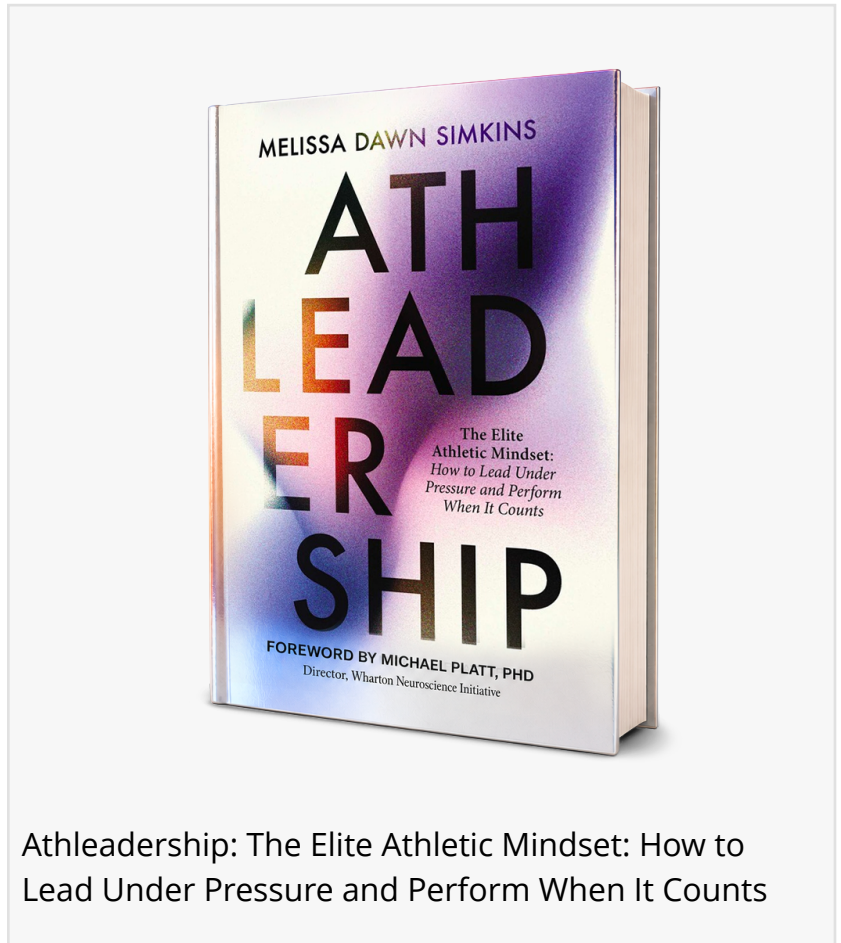


# New Book Athleadership Challenges Conventional Leadership Wisdom, Revealing Why Leaders Are Built, Not Born

*Melissa Dawn Simkins Introduces a Neuroscience-Backed Leadership Conditioning System for Thriving Under Pressure in an Era of Constant Change*

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, June 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As artificial intelligence reshapes industries, workplace expectations evolve, and uncertainty becomes a daily reality, leadership is entering a new era. Today, leadership conditioning pioneer, edtech entrepreneur, and founder of Athleadership® [Melissa Dawn Simkins](#) announces the release of her highly anticipated new book, [Athleadership: The Elite Athletic Mindset: How to Lead Under Pressure and Perform When It Counts](#) (IdeaPress Publishing), available now wherever books are sold.



Featuring a foreword by renowned neuroscientist Dr. Michael Platt, Athleadership introduces a groundbreaking leadership conditioning system inspired by the way elite athletes condition to perform under pressure, recover from setbacks, and adapt to constant change.

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You don't have to be an athlete to think and perform like one.”

*Melissa Dawn Simkins*

In a world where knowledge is increasingly commoditized and disruption is accelerating, Simkins argues that the new competitive advantage is not what leaders know, but how well they are conditioned to navigate uncertainty.

"For decades, leadership development focused on what people needed to know," said Simkins. "In an AI era where knowledge is democratized, the greatest advantage is no longer intelligence alone. It is the ability to adapt, recover, make decisions under pressure, and lead through uncertainty. Athleadership introduces Leadership Conditioning to help people build those capabilities. You don't have to be an athlete to think and perform like one."

Drawing on more than two decades of leadership development experience, Simkins delivers a proven ed-tech platform to global organizations that delivered increased performance, retention and advancement for top talent. The insight was the conditioning methodology. Rooted in applied neuroscience and the elite performance practices of the world's elite athletes. Simkins translates the proven habits and leadership conditioning through agility, resilience, alignment and well-being techniques anyone can develop.

In Athleadership, Simkins focuses on the diagnosis of the problem which she calls The Performance Paradox. This is the growing phenomenon of high achievers who appear successful on the outside while privately struggling with burnout, exhaustion, and mounting pressure. Through research, personal stories, and actionable tools, Athleadership offers a new model for sustainable performance where wellbeing and achievement work together rather than compete.

The framework was drawn by building an ed-tech platform that delivered real results for organizations to retain, develop and advance talent faster than their environment. Realizing that conventional leadership advice often failed to prepare people for uncertainty, Simkins developed a conditioning-based approach that has since helped more than 250,000 leaders across 26 countries strengthen resilience, adaptability, and performance under pressure.

As Simkins writes in the book: "We don't rise to what we know. We fall to what we have conditioned."

In Athleadership, readers discover a practical leadership conditioning system that helps individuals, teams, and organizations perform at the speed of change. Through the Athleadership Core 4™, they learn how to:

- Build Agility to adapt quickly, make confident decisions amid uncertainty, and embrace change



Melissa Dawn Simkins, Leadership Conditioning Pioneer, EdTech Entrepreneur, and Founder of Athleadership®

as a competitive advantage.

- Develop Resilience by conditioning the mind and body to recover faster, sustain performance under pressure, and lead through adversity.
- Create Alignment by transforming mission, vision, and values into daily behaviors that strengthen trust, accountability, and organizational culture.
- Elevate Wellbeing as a strategic performance driver that fuels energy, focus, innovation, and long-term leadership effectiveness.
- Shift from training to conditioning, replacing one-time learning with neuroscience-backed practices that create lasting behavioral change and prepare leaders for continuous disruption.
- Build organizations that lead at the speed of change by creating a shared operating system that enables people, teams, and cultures to adapt, collaborate, and perform together in the AI era.
- Think and perform like an Athleader, proving that elite performance isn't reserved for athletes—it's a mindset and conditioning system anyone can develop.

Early Praise for Athleadership:

"Athleadership isn't theory, it is proven to build the mindset, discipline, and resilience leaders need to perform at the highest level, no matter the arena."

— Oguchi Onyewu, Vice President, Sporting, U.S. Soccer Federation

"As a former student/professional athlete, and now an executive, life experience has shown me that lessons learned through playing sports go far beyond the game. Discipline, resilience, teamwork, and purpose shape leaders who can serve their families, businesses, and communities well. In her book, Athleadership, Melissa captures how the mindset developed in athletics prepares people to lead when it matters most."

— Troy Vincent, Executive Vice President, Football Operations, National Football League

"In Athleadership, Melissa Dawn Simkins explores the connection between elite athletic mindset, neuroscience, and the demands of leadership. Her reflections on preparation, accountability, resilience, and teamwork offer a thoughtful perspective for leaders seeking to strengthen performance and support their teams' growth."

— Johnny C. Taylor Jr., President and CEO, SHRM

"Building a category taught me that leadership today isn't about playing it safe—it's about making decisions in uncertainty and driving impact that shapes industries. Athleadership feels less like another leadership program and more like a movement to build the kind of leaders this moment demands."

— Julie Wainwright, Founder of The RealReal and Author of Time to Get Real

## About Melissa Dawn Simkins

Melissa Dawn Simkins is the founder of Athleadership® and CEO of Velvet Suite®, an Inc. 5000 company. For more than two decades, she has worked at the intersection of elite athletic performance, and leadership—helping more than 250,000 leaders navigate disruption, uncertainty, and high-stakes change. Her clients and collaborators have included Fortune 500 companies, professional sports organizations, and elite performers across the NFL, NBA, NCAA, WNBA, and U.S. Soccer, as well as brands such as P&G and Verizon. Featured on CNN, CNBC, and Fox Business, Melissa is pioneering a new category called Athleadership, a neuroscience-backed leadership conditioning system built on a timely idea: in a world where knowledge is increasingly democratized by AI, competitive advantage belongs to those who are best conditioned to think, adapt, and perform under pressure.

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Author: Melissa Dawn Simkins

Foreword: Michael Platt, PhD, Director of the Wharton Neuroscience Initiative

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