



# Anything For a T-Shirt: Fred Lebow and the New York City Marathon, the World's Greatest Footrace (Sports and Entertainment)

*Ron Rubin*

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"Fred Lebow was a dreamer, the kind of dreamer who pursued his dream and made it a reality. And the world is still reaping the rewards." So begins this uplifting chronicle of a humbly born Holocaust survivor who parlayed natural marketing smarts and a vision into a major position in recent American sports. He started the New York City Marathon, an event that transformed footracing from an elite, austere sport into a wildly applauded, attainable pursuit.

Forging a path across the city's five boroughs, the Marathon covers a daunting 26.2-mile course. Ron Rubin's fascinating book tells how Lebow popularized the race. With a stroke of marketing wizardry he turned it into the world's largest block party: a gritty mix of urban theater and kindly entrepreneurship. It honored the spirit of the moment, imbued competition with joy, and celebrated play. In so doing, it put winning within the realm of every man and woman became a race for all runners. Lebow mainstreamed the notion of marathoning into popular culture; some half million Americans now run marathons. Finally, the book describes how Lebow scored his greatest personal victory by racing in the marathon he had created even after being diagnosed with brain cancer.

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