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Subject: You can win
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Greetings -

What a great story and first-person account by Ian Dille in *Bicycling*: [I Made a Deal in a Bike Race—And It Haunted Me for 15 Years](#). It's a story about two cyclists in a 2001 [crit](#) — the under-23 national championship — and how it changed their lives.

It's hard not to spoil the article by discussing what I want to discuss next, but I'll do my best. [If you trust me enough to read this article without knowing any more, please stop reading this email now, as it sort of dilutes the effect of reading the article without knowing anything...]

I think this shows the power that both actions and words can have on us, and also how shame can travel with us for years and color our actions until we resolve it.

"You can win." These three words said in the moment had a tremendous impact on the lives of these two individuals for almost two decades. Disbelief, rage, and resentment for one. Denial, shame, regret for the other.

Just as powerfully, a few words, "I cheated. I'm sorry," were all it took to help undo these feelings.

It's also remarkable how one act can seemingly define you, and how someone else defines you. One act can change how you see yourself, and another person. Does one bad act make you a bad person going forward? Does one good act make you good? Granted, not all acts are created equal.

- Peter

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