

Your Motivation

It's been about six weeks since we started this journey! We have enjoyed sunshine, beautiful weather, new knowledge, new running shoes, and new friends. Some of you are beginning to adjust to this new path you're on; you take steps daily toward a healthier active lifestyle. It's not training just for today; it's training for a lifetime.

As the weather starts to turn cold and the sky is sometimes gray, the mileage starts to increase, rain drops may be falling on your head, the busy holiday season is upon us and getting out for your run can become a little more difficult. Running tests your physical strength and mental strength (perhaps more mental than physical at times).

Somebody asked me how to stay motivated. The educator in me knows that if one person asks a question, it's quite likely others may be wondering about it too.

Motivation is unique. Motivation is personal. What motivates you to leave a warm bed on a cold morning to run in the rain won't work for somebody else. Motivation doesn't just happen. You have to nurture the highs, lows, and places everywhere in between.

Perhaps some of these ideas may work for you. If not, dig deep and find what will make you successful and then please share with the team.

***Listen to music.** This is debatable. Some can't run with music. Others can't run without it. The type of music people listen to varies greatly. Google "running music" if you need suggestions. If you do run with headphones, safety must come first! Wear only one ear bud so you can hear others and traffic around you. If you're in a highly congested area, turn it off. Never compromise your own safety.

***Find like-minded friends.** Seek out people who are motivated to live a healthy lifestyle. It's not uncommon for non-running friends to think you've "lost it" when you share your new goal! Have you heard something like this? "You're going to do what?" They may make unencouraging comments to you (usually out of their own guilt because you've committed to take care of yourself.) Like-minded friends, on the other hand, will encourage you, run with you, check in with you, and listen to you!

***Sign up for the marathon** (full, half, or 5k). Once you're paid, you've made a financial commitment to your goal. Race fees are always non-refundable.

***Find out why.** Ask yourself why you're on this journey. Is it so you can be healthier for your family? Chase after your children? To feel better? Look better? Lose weight? In honor of a loved one? Somebody shared the story of losing a loved one to cancer. In permanent marker, he wrote "Cancer" on the bottom of his running shoes. He "stomped on cancer every time he ran." Whatever your reason, remind yourself of it when you feel your motivation is low.

***Reminders.** Place your inspiration prominently around your living and working spaces. Leave your running magazines on the coffee table. Post motivational quotes on your computer, bathroom mirror, car, desk, nightstand, on that box of chocolates that continues to call your name, and anywhere else you can think of.

***Celebrate milestones.** Every time you run further or longer, that's an accomplishment. Hitting five miles, ten, fifteen, then twenty is quite a feeling. Your legs and feet will be tired, sore, and you may wonder why you continue, and then amazingly enough, once again you're lacing up those running shoes to do it all again! Mark the milestone with something you enjoy (an indulgent guilt-free afternoon nap??).

The feeling you get from a good run far surpasses the uncomfortable feeling you get from sitting around just thinking about doing it. Some days you can think of some great reasons not to run...dishes in the sink, laundry is piled up, the dog hasn't been walked, the lawn needs mowing, I must go to the grocery shopping, I need to fix the sprinkler, my son lost his jacket at school, my kids need homework help (why do those teachers give so much?), I can't find my favorite running shorts, I haven't called my grandmother in two weeks, I went to bed too late, I woke up late, I just don't want to... I can think of only one reason why you should run...YOU'RE WORTH IT!

Way to go on your lifelong journey...

John Bingham said, "The miracle isn't that I finished, it's that I had the courage to start."

For you, you've already started!